

"Gold, fresh smelted from the furnace"—DEAN ALFORD.

FRESH MINTED GOLD

Original Meditations
on
A Variety of Subjects and Portions of the
"Word of our God."

BY
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Witherto through storm and tempest,
He has shielded, guarded, kept,
Granting patience under trial,
Sweetest comfort when we wept.

Not one single moment passes,
But is laden as it flies,
With some precious gift of blessing,
Which His loving care supplies.

B.H.

FOREWORD

"**FRESH MINTED GOLD**" is a title out of the common, but that it is *apt* is shown by the following renderings of Revelation 3. 18. "Gold fresh smelted from the furnace" is the interpretation of the learned Dean ALFORD. "Gold, *tried out* of the Fire," is the rendering in Dr. YOUNG'S "Literal Translation;" "Gold *purified* by fire," that of one of the most spiritual of translators, J. N. DARBY; "Gold *coin fired* out of the fire," the free translation of ROTHERHAM; and, enlightening still, "Gold *hot*—purified by fire," that of the Variorum.

These combined renderings give the idea in this collection of hot-minted papers, consisting mostly of Addresses at large Conferences throughout Britain, involving careful thought and much more time in preparation than in giving or reading, and naturally having three characteristics:—

I. **Originality.** Whilst ever seeking to gather honey from every available source, we have ever felt free to supply liberally our own thought as to explanation of subjects and passages, and more so as to the practical application to the Children of God to-day.

II. **Variety.** Messages to audiences so varied as to size, district, need, and conditions at the time compelled variety. It was ever our purpose to seek under God's guidance, even at the last moment, to *adapt the message* to the persons then assembled, rather than hold to some fixed, better known, and probably more acceptable theme. What applied to the Message by *voice* equally applies to that by *pen*.

THE TEST.—Is any *afflicted*, let him turn to page 27; is any *depressed* on account of the way, let him turn to "The Triumphs of the Risen Saviour" (page 27), and join in His Triumph; any one faced with *problems* almost

beyond his grasp, in church, world, business, or family, let him turn to "The Mystery of Good and Evil" (page 84), and see there Paul's solution, nay, God's solution; is any *tried* almost beyond measure, let him turn to page 45, and read "The Path Through Trial to Triumph," (page 45); is any feeling he is not making headway, *stationary* in the Christian life. The remedy is clear in "How to Make Spiritual Progress" (page 19); is any *gloomy*, as all are apt to be at times, read "Christ is All" (page 62), or "The Glories of Christ" (page 52), and hope will spring eternal in the breast; is a *special effort* ahead, read the vastly important paper on "Soul-winning" (page 70); is a *survey of life*, which all take at one time or another, causing a little sadness, looking BACK read "Loved Ones Before" (page 137); looking FORWARD read "The Unchangeable" (page 149), or "Eventide Light" (page 167); in addition to *other occasions* and moods, *if any one is in need of soul-cheer*, he need only turn to the first article, "Himself" (page 9); "Altogether Lovely" (page 79); "Hitherto—Henceforth" (page 141), or to the Hope of all hopes—"The Coming of the Lord" (page 174). Thus in whatever condition of "spirit, or soul, or body," here is "gold coin" fresh from the Furnace to warm and cheer.

III. Loyalty to "God and the Word of His Grace" (Acts 20, 32), has ever been the watchword, in "bringing out of the Treasure" for behoof of listening men and women of the moment, or reading brothers and sisters in distant lands and different times.

If the number of applications for Addresses to be printed, and even offers to pay for same, as well as letters of thanks for help received, form any criterion for the "Coin" herein, we send them forth with unabated confidence that He Who so greatly helped "hitherto" will abundantly bless in the unknown "henceforth" of His own, on their Pilgrim Way. HYP.

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“JESUS HIMSELF.”

MARVEL not that Christ in Glory
All my inmost heart hath won !
Not a star, to cheer my darkness,
But a light beyond the sun.

All below lies dark and shadowed,
Nothing there to claim my heart ;
Save the lonely track of sorrow,
Where of old He walked apart.

I have seen the face of Jesus,
Tell me not of aught beside ;
I have heard the voice of Jesus,
All my soul is satisfied.

In the radiance of the glory,
First I saw His blessed face ;
And for ever shall that glory
Be my home, my dwelling place.

FRANCES BEVAN.

“The Lord Himself

“**HIMSELF**”—not a doctrine, not a creed, not a community, not a theory or a thing, but a glorious, living, loving Person. Precious as is doctrine, concerning which all should be clear; necessary as is creed for the defining of “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3); blessed as is a community of saints, wherein we “forsake not the assembling of ourselves together” (Heb. 10, 25), all combined do not make up for the lack of the presence and power of “the Lord **HIMSELF**.”

“**Himself**”—Sacrifice and Saviour.

“The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave **HIMSELF** for *me*” (Gal. 2. 20).

The Chief Apostle is far advanced on his pilgrim journey, the end is now much nearer than the beginning, events of tragic

10 "The Lord Himself."

importance during those years of traversing dark continents and crossing wild seas rise before his vision, but towering above all is that sight on the Damascus road when he saw the risen Lord, and realised that, rebel though he was, it was "the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." That "sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5. 2) turned his whole life into "a living sacrifice, acceptable unto God" (Rom. 12. 1).

So with each truly born-again person, however far on the heavenly way. Depths of sorrow, heights of joy, length of days, nor breadth of possessions can ever eclipse that vision of the sacrifice of "Himself," so beautifully expressed by R. C. Chapman, the Barnstaple patriarch:

" That visage marred, those sorrows deep,
The thorns, the scourge, the gall,
These were the golden chains of love,
His captive to enthal."

"Himself"—the Bond of Union.

"Paul, an apostle, and all the brethren which are with me. Grace be to you, and peace from God the Father, and from *our* Lord Jesus Christ, who gave HIMSELF for *our* sins, that He might deliver *us* from this present evil world, according to the will of God and *our* Father" (Gal. 1. 1-4).

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Paul could say, "Himself for *me*." "All the brethren" could say, "Himself for *me*." The humblest believer, the veteran elder, and all the saints in "the churches of Galatia" could join in unison: "Himself for *our* sins."

The Apostle might speak of them as "foolish" and "bewitched," as turning again to "weak and beggarly elements" and in danger of being "entangled again with the yoke of bondage," yet he found a bond of union between heart and heart which led him to sound the triumphant note: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of Christ" (Gal. 6. 14).

Two brothers called upon a missionary in a foreign land. One was a Freemason, the other a "freeborn" Son of God. The Christian and the missionary had a very happy conversation concerning the Lord Himself, His person and His work in different lands. When they came out the Freemason said to his brother: "I say, John, where did you meet that gentleman before?" "Never saw him before," said John. "Well," said the Mason, "during the last half hour you have been like brothers;" then after a pause he exclaimed, "Why, John, this beats Freemasonry!" Thank God there is a bond, the Blood

12 **“The Lord Himself.”**

bond of Calvary, which unites all saints heart to heart now, and by and by shall unite all “eye to eye” (Isa. 52. 8). May we ever see each other in the light of the supreme Sacrifice, when “He gave Himself for *our* sins.”

“Himself”—the Chief Corner Stone.

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ HIMSELF being the chief corner stone” (Eph. 2. 20).

Prophetic Truth, or the manner of rightly dividing the Word of God, was probably never more studied, and certainly never more needed than in these days of upheaval, when everything indicates that we are nearing the close of the Times of the Gentiles. Apostolic Doctrine and Practice were perhaps never less in vital evidence in the saints, and certainly never more at a discount in Christendom than to-day. Yet however much more prominence we desire for Apostles and Prophets in their teaching and example, the pre-eminence must ever be given to “Jesus Christ Himself.” They are foundation stones, He is “the Chief Corner Stone.”

Show me a company, rich and increased with goods, having all things but the savour of “His presence,” and I will show

“The Lord Himself.” 13

you a company “wretched, and miserable, and poor,” with the Master Himself outside the door (Rev. 3. 17-20). Alas, such there are!

But show me a company of “feeble folk,” with little gift, less gold, yet with hearts aglow concerning the One whose “visage was so marred more than any man” (Isa. 52. 14), and the love of Christ constraining them as ambassadors for Christ to beseech men “in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5. 20), and you will behold a hearty, happy band bringing glory to God and goodwill to men. And, thank God, many such there are.

“Himself”—Comforter and Guide.

“And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus HIMSELF drew near, and went with them” (Luke 24. 15).

The Emmaus road will ever be a memorable way in the history of the Church. It has been trodden by many since that journey of the two, it will continue to be the path of many weary feet as the days darken and the “night cometh.” One name alone is given, Cleopas, the other may be left blank for each one to fill in as they reach the road.

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They had "trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel," they had seen Him condemned, crucified, buried. The third day came, the tomb was searched, the body was gone. Angels they had seen, but "Him they saw not." On the seven-mile journey they sought to extract comfort from each other, but found none; then they had tried to "reason" out the problem, only to continue the walk and be "sad."

At this juncture "Jesus Himself drew near," exhorted them to faith, confirmed the message of the prophets, showed the meaning and value of His "sufferings," and cheered them with hopes of "His glory." Their eyes were opened, their "heart" burned, they hasted back to tell the good news, "the Lord is risen indeed."

Wherever in the wide universe is found a "sad" saint treading the Emmaus road of doubt, difficulty, trial, sorrow, there "Jesus Himself" is waiting to draw near, and, as with the disciples, not only to "draw near," but to *walk* "with them." Yea, more, to "expound unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (v. 27). Blessed Emmaus road!

“Himself”—the Centre of Gathering.

“And as they thus spake JESUS HIMSELF stood in the midst of them, and saith, . . . Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself” (Luke 24. 36, 39).

Whatever view may be taken as to the composition and significance of this gathering, one thing is clear, Christ was the centre, and the result was they worshipped Him, returned with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.

So to-day “where two or three are gathered together in His Name,” He who was in the midst of two thieves on Calvary (John 19. 18), and shall be “in the midst of the throne in Glory” (Rev. 7. 17), has declared, “There am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18. 20).

Not a certain number of articles, a collection of sermons, a set of rules, agreement as to certain truths, or other human devices, however excellent, but the peerless Person of God’s beloved Son is the true centre of gathering of His saints to-day, as He shall be through endless ages.

May the number of those who truly say, “Let us go forth unto Him” (Heb. 13. 13)

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be mightily increased in view of the Day approaching.

"Himself"—the Blessed Hope.

"For the Lord HIMSELF shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17).

1. In the SAVIOUR'S DECLARATION He says, "I will come again and receive you unto MYSELF" (John 14. 3). The "Father's House" may speak of family friendships, the "many Mansions" of eternal plenty and glory, the "Prepared Place" for the prepared people of the lavishness of His love, but the heart "ravished" with His love still sings:

"I will not gaze on Glory,
But on the King of Grace."

2. In the ANGELIC CONFIRMATION the hope set before the men of Galilee who stood gazing up into Heaven was, "This SAME JESUS shall so *come* in like manner as ye have seen Him *go*" (Acts 1. 11). How did He go? With uplifted, nail-pierced Hands of blessing (Luke 24. 50,

51). How will He come? “In like manner.” Still upon His hands the nail-prints, with sheaves of blessing shall He come in the clouds for His own, “and then shall every man have praise of God.”

3. In the APOSTOLIC REVELATION “the Lord HIMSELF” begins the words of comfort, and “so shall we ever be with THE LORD” closes the revelation. The dead in Christ shall be raised, the living changed, both caught up “together” to be with Him and like Him for ever. Well may we be kept “looking for that blessed Hope and the glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour Jesus Christ who gave Himself for us” (Titus 2. 13, 14).

“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” Say to one another, the path may be difficult, the trials may be numerous, sorrows may be abundant, death may divide friend from friend, but the One who passed through all the waves and billows when He “by Himself purged our sins” is coming quickly. The sufferings for “a while” will be followed by the Eternal Glory with Christ Jesus.”

“Himself”—All in All.

“That He might present it to HIMSELF a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” (Eph. 5. 27).

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Christ loved the Church, gave Himself for the Church, sanctifies the Church, cleanses the Church, nourishes the Church, cherishes the Church, and waits for the consummation of the “great mystery” when He shall present the Church without spot, telling of internal blemish ; without wrinkle, telling of external decay ; wearing only the love marks of eternal perfection.

Thus shall He who “glorified not Himself” (Heb. 5. 5) receive the united and everlasting glory of the individual believer changed into the same image, the Bethany families reunited and feasting with Him, the Church for which He prayed at last manifestly “one,” Israel in Palestine restored, the wide World blessed under His sceptre of “righteousness and equity,” the groaning Creation for ever hushed, things in Heaven and things in Earth reconciled unto Himself, the New Heavens and the New Earth established, and the eternal purpose of God manifested “that in all things He might have the pre-eminence” (Col. 1. 18, 20).

Meanwhile, in joy or sorrow, service or suffering, life or death, may our hearts be kept true to

“The Lord Himself.”

How to Make Spiritual Progress.

AS each anniversary of the day on which we were "born again" approaches it is fitting to examine our Christian course and inquire as to whether or not we are making true spiritual progress.

For those who have not attained the desired development, for the young Christian starting out on an eventful life, and for all facing the trials of an unknown future, we venture to suggest five out of the many helps to real progress in the divine life.

I. Communion with God.

"Truly our *fellowship is with the Father*, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1. 3). Fellowship indicates partnership. Called out of an ungodly world, made a partaker of the divine nature, set apart unto Himself, the most marvellous fact facing me at the opening of each day is that I am called into partnership with God, to hold communion with Him, and to carry out commissions for Him.

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A natural result of "fellowship" will be daily reading and meditation on the Word of God. Then as a sequel to meditating on His Word there will be communion with the Author. "Sanctify them through Thy truth" (John 17. 17; see also Col. 3. 16; 1 Peter 2. 2, etc.). May each of us have to say at the close of each new week, month, or year: "The Word of the Lord was precious in those days" (1 Sam. 3. 1).

"Father" also indicates family relationship: "Our Father," "All ye are brethren." He is not an "austere man," but "my Father." Some of us remember when we went to school in days long past how we feared the old dominie, how we tried the sum again and again, only to tremble more and more as we thought of facing the master. When we got home father inquired what was wrong. We told him. He took the slate, drew us between his knees, and went over the sum with us. The marvel was how we could go wrong! Ah! it was no longer the master, it was "father."

So moment by moment, "in everything by prayer and supplication and with thanksgivings" (Phil. 4. 6), in things large and small, in joys and sorrows, "our Father" would have us commune with Him during the days of our Pilgrimage Heavenward.

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II. Occupation with Christ.

“ We all, . . beholding as in a mirror the *Glory of the Lord*, are changed into the same image from glory to glory ” (2 Cor. 3. 18). Occupation leads to transformation. Centre the mind (Rom. 12. 2) on any subject, theory, pleasure, theme, or person, and heart and life will follow. “ Beholding as in a mirror ”—clear and near—the glory of our adorable Lord, we seek to absorb His Spirit (Phil. 2. 8), remember His words (Acts 20. 35), walk in the ways which be in Christ (1 Cor. 4. 17), and mould our lives after our great Exemplar (1 Peter 2. 21). Occupation with Christ will produce “ like-ness ” to Christ (Rom. 6. 5).

Not only will it regulate within in heart and ways, it will stimulate to activities without—in care for the Assembly, the welfare of all Saints, and manifest interest in Gospel work, whether amongst old or young, in the respectable hall, or in the needy villages or despised slums. His spiritual life could never have been satisfied with being found in the “ upper room ” *only* on the first morning of the week, neither should mine.

I used to wonder how Blondin managed to do such wonderful things on a tight-rope stretched across Niagara. Recently I saw

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it stated that he had a golden star fixed on the other side, and in walking along the rope he kept his eye, not on the rope, or the torrent, or the crowd, or on himself, but on the golden star. Certainly if we keep our eyes "looking unto Jesus the Beginner and Finisher of Faith" (Heb. 12. 2), and our hearts longing for the outshining of "the Bright and Morning Star" (Rev. 22. 16), it will keep us right within, enable us to make progress in service for Him, and lead to our daily "Looking for that Blessed Hope" (Titus 2. 13).

III. Guided by the Spirit.

"He will *guide* you into all truth" (John 16. 13). "*Changed* into the same image . . . as by the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3. 18). "*Access* by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2. 18). The Holy Spirit is God's paraclete or agent ; *in* me, for God to guide me in all my ways ; *for* me, before the Throne, making intercession "with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8. 26). With such a mighty force within, and for us, how is it that so many of us live grovelling, easy-going, low-plane lives instead of "*pressing* toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus?" (Phil. 3. 14).

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Let us not think that the Holy Spirit is given only for Sunday services and sacred duties. "All truth" surely implies the duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, subjects or sovereign, and all matters relating thereto.

I have heard of a converted country smith who developed marvellous skill in making entrance gates for mansions and other noble edifices. Some one inquired as to the secret of his skill. "Well," replied he, "I judged that the same Spirit who guided Bezaleel to work cunning works in brass and other metals (Exod. 31. 4) might help me to fashion iron gates. I put Him to the test, and praise Him for His guidance." Let us avoid the unhappy distinction so commonly made between things *secular* and things *sacred*, and rather make all our service to be "doing the will of God from the heart" (Eph. 6. 6); then may we count implicitly on the guidance of "the Lord the Spirit."

IV. The Control of Self.

"Keep *thyself* pure" (1 Tim. 5. 22).
"Exercise *thyself* unto godliness" (1 Tim. 4. 7). Whilst we rejoice that concerning every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ He shall yet say, "Those that Thou gavest Me

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I have kept ” (John 17. 12), yet let us remember the counter truth, “ Little children, keep yourselves from idols ” (1 John 5. 21). “ Keep yourselves in the love of God ” (Jude 21), “ unspotted from the world ” (James 1. 27).

“ Endeavouring to keep the unity of *the Spirit* in the bond of peace ” (Eph. 4. 3) would surely keep me from the spiritual evils mentioned at the close of the second Church Epistle—“ debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults ” (2 Cor. 12. 20), evils so abundant on every hand to-day.

“ I keep under *my body*, and bring it into subjection ” (1 Cor. 9. 27), would lead to purity of life, guide me as to meats, drinks, habits, and things “ lawful but not expedient,” and cause me to exercise great care to avoid putting any stumbling block in the way of my weak brother. I can surely deny myself a little for his sake “ for whom Christ died ” (1 Cor. 8. 11-13).

“ To keep himself unspotted from *the world* ” (James 1. 27) would guide me as to whether it is right for a Christian to dance, go to the theatre, frequent the picture palace, and otherwise act “ according to the *course* of this world,” instead of as one “ quickened together with Christ, raised up

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together, and made to sit together in heavenly places " (Eph. 2. 2, 6).

If we " abstain from all *appearance* of evil " now, we will have less cause to " be ashamed before Him at His Coming."

V. Compassion for Others.

" When Jesus saw the *multitudes*, He was moved with compassion on them " (Matt. 9. 36). " And of *some* have compassion, making a difference : and *others* save with fear, pulling them out of the fire " (Jude 22, 23). Of the twelve or more mentions of " compassion " in the New Testament, eight times it is the compassion of Christ. What a lesson for Christian workers who seek to manifest " Whose I am, and Whom I serve " (Acts 27. 23). Communion with God, occupation with Christ, the energising of the Holy Spirit, and even self-preservation, combine to urge one and all to share the burden of the Chief Apostle : " Yea, *woe is unto me* if I preach not the Gospel," privately or publicly, from door to door, or from shore to shore, and to adopt his motto : " By all means save some " (1 Cor. 9. 16, 22).

" Pulling out of the fire " and " by all means " suggest other efforts than merely holding a Gospel service once a week in a

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hall little known. Trustworthy reports from various sources show that those who have "launched out" into neutral halls, cinema theatres, with portable halls or wooden-sided tents, amongst unevangelised masses at exhibitions, football matches, and in other "deeps," have met with considerable blessing. May such abound more and more.

In view of the world "waxing worse and worse" (2 Tim. 3. 13), the Church becoming more and more "lukewarm" (Rev. 3. 16), the love of many individual believers "waxing cold" (Matt. 24. 12), and a quickly coming Lord, shall we not awaken from our lethargy, encourage ourselves in God, and "GO FORWARD" (Exod. 14. 15).

Triumphs of the Risen Saviour.

MANY Bible students have noticed the contrast between the closing of the last book of the Old Testament and the last book of the New Testament, the last word in the Old being "curse," the last chapter in the New, "no curse." Why the change? Because in between "He was made a curse for us" (Gal. 3. 13). Few have observed the contrast between the close of the first book of the Old Testament and the first book of the New Testament, between the "Saviour of the World" in Genesis and the "Saviour of the World" in Matthew.

Look first at the close of Genesis. After the pit and the prison Joseph is exalted to the Palace. "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. According to thy word shall all my people be ruled. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah." (Gen. 41. 39-45), which in the Egyptian means "Saviour of the World."* "So

*The Vulgate, Jones' "Proper Names of the Old Testament," "Young's Analytical Concordance," and other authorities.

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Joseph died, and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt'' (Gen. 50. 26). Beginning in chaos and ending in a coffin, the book of origins rightly indicates the first and last of man, as man, be he prince or peasant.

Look next at the close of Matthew, chapter 27. 66: "So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." The priests and Pharisees remembering the Saviour's word, "After three days I will rise again," come to Pilate and ask him to give command that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day. Pilate seems uncertain that even a Roman command would have the desired effect. Probably he had heard of the three-fold triumph over death of Him who seemed now to be under its domain. The raising of the child dead (Matt. 9. 24), of the young man dead and carried forth (Luke 7. 12), and of Lazarus dead and buried (John 11. 43), doubtless caused him to say, in substance: "I am not sure that even the trinity of Priests, Pharisees, and Pilate can *make it sure*, 'Ye have a watch, go your way, *make it as sure as you can.*'" Then behold the great stone, the imperial tape and seal of Rome, and the soldiers, of which Josephus informs us there were sixty.

Triumphs of the Risen Saviour. 29

Had the life of lives ended thus? Had the death of Jesus been as the death of Joseph? Had Matthew ended as Genesis? What issues hang upon that one word RESURRECTION. Well does "our beloved brother Paul" in his masterpiece of logic (1 Corinthians 15) point out that "If Christ be not raised,

- (1) our preaching is vain;
 - (2) your faith is also vain;
 - (3) ye are yet in your sins;
 - (4) they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished; and
 - (5) we are of all men most miserable"
- (vv. 12-19).

Well also does he ring loud and clear the note of triumph, "But now is Christ *risen* from the dead;" and "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the *victory* through our Lord Jesus Christ" (vv. 20-57).

Hence, instead of finishing with the coffin and the grave we have an added chapter in Matthew, giving us some of the victories of our Risen Lord. There are many, but we will notice seven.

I. A New Day.

"In the *end* of the Sabbath, as it began to *dawn* toward the first day of the week" (verse 1).

30 Triumphs of the Risen Saviour.

The end of the day of the shadows and strivings of Judaism; the dawn of the new, brighter, and better day of Christianity. The change from the seventh, or Sabbath, to the eighth, or first, the Resurrection or Lord's Day, indicates a revolutionary event, changing days, seasons, and celebrations, so that the Lord's death is shown forth in the Lord's Supper on the Lord's Day, in view of the Lord's Coming again.

Let scoffers sneer, and infidels (reprobate or religious) deny, the fact remains that He who was born in a stable, laid in a manger, brought up in a carpenter's home, never travelled more than a hundred miles from His native city, died a felon's death, and was buried in a borrowed tomb, is worshipped and adored nineteen centuries after by millions of mankind on His own new day all the world over. The new day of the new era proclaims with voice that cannot be controverted, "He is risen!"

II. A New Power.

"And, behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it" (v. 2).

Compare the power of earth with the

Triumphs of the Risen Saviour. 31

power of Heaven. The mighty stone, the huge official Roman seal, the lifeguards of the legion becoming guards of the dead. The rabble, the Rabbi, and the rulers combine to guard the dead. Who ever heard of such efforts to keep a dead man dead? What a monument to the life, the words, and the power of the lowly Jesus! If a "deceiver" (chap. 27. 63), only "the carpenter's son" (chap. 13. 55), a man and nothing more, His heart has been pierced, Pilate has certified that He is "already dead" (Mark 15. 44), what more can happen?

Yet they were ill at ease concerning their apparent triumph, and well they might, for down came not a legion of angels to match the legion of Rome, but one angel; rolling went the stone, even though it "was very great" (Mark 16. 4); flying went the official tape, clay seals, and imperial stamp of Rome's mighty Emperor; flat went every one of the soldiers, and "became as dead men."

Then comes the sweet touch of the divine Author, "and sat upon it." Instead of rushing back to Heaven, the angel calmly, quietly sits upon the stone, faces the combined powers of earth and Hell, and contrasts them with the power of Heaven.

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Focus that picture in your mind, fix it upon your heart, face the darkness and despair of heart and home, and the difficulties innumerable in the Church and in the world, and in the all-conquering "power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3. 10) onward go more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

III. A New Motto.

"And the angel answered, and said unto the woman, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified: He is not here, He is risen" (vv. 5, 6).

"FEAR NOT," the true note of the messenger of glad tidings sounded at the beginning o'er the lowly Babe "lying in a manger" (Luke 2. 10-12), at the end o'er an empty tomb (Matt. 28. 6), and for ever from "the First and the Last" (Rev. 1. 17) on Heaven's throne.

What an omnipotent link! With one hand the Heavenly Visitor defies the power of earth, lays low the lifeguards of Rome (deigning not to pick them up), and manifests the Victor as having left the tomb; with the other he dries the tears and calms the fears of a few weeping women. In verse 4 the keepers shake for fear; in verse 5 the seekers cease from fear. How like

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our Almighty ever gracious God. One moment upsetting a throne, creating a nation, changing the face of a continent, or speaking with the voice of thunder, earthquake, disaster, or volcano to the whole earth; the next moment calming the fears of a broken-hearted widow in some humble cot, drying the tears of the sorrowing o'er loved ones gone before, allaying the anxiety of honest hearts concerning trials at home or perplexities in business, encouraging the drooping worker to carry the battle to the gate, or spreading His shekinah cloud over His myriad host marching through "this great and terrible world-wilderness."

IV. A New Leader.

"Behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: lo, I have told you" (Matt. 28. 7).

The Good Shepherd had been "smitten," the sheep had been "scattered" (John 10. 4), but the great Shepherd is "risen again" (Matt. 26. 32) to gather together the "one flock" for the appearing of the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5. 4). This He does by "going before," leading, not driving.

How mighty has been that "going before." Acts 1, 120 in an upper room;

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Acts 2, 3000 in one day (memorable day); Acts 4, the number of the men, about 5000; by the end of Acts, a brief period of thirty years, probably 50,000; by the end of the dispensation, "a great multitude which no man can number." Yea, in such power was His going forth that within a few brief years the capital of the mighty Empire of Rome was to be undermined with 580 miles of catacombs, in which there are computed to be seven million bodies, mostly of the saints who have followed the New Leader in persecution, distresses, affliction, peril, the sword, and even in death itself. "Behold He *goeth* before" even yet!

With the individual saint, He who was wearied, hungered, thirsted, fasted, wept, and slept; He who was tempted, reproached, despised, mocked, forsaken, and "alone;" He who died and was buried; in resurrection power "goeth before."

With each company of His own, He who was the centre of Calvary is the centre of the throne, and will yet be the centre of all Heaven, fulfils His promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20). He "goeth before" as "the Captain of Salvation" (Heb. 2. 10), and

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will lead on triumphantly till the everlasting doors lift up, and the Lord of Hosts, the King of Glory, enters in (Psa. 24. 9, 10), and as never before "there shall ye see Him" in all the manifest triumphs of His resurrection.

Contrast two conquerors. NAPOLEON, probably the greatest of earth's generals; CHRIST, the lowly Man of Sorrows. See Napoleon as he paces the shores of lonely St. Helena. In vision he looks over earth's surface, and scans the span of time. He hears again the marching hosts, the clash of arms, the victors' cheer. He hears also the wail of the widow, the cry of the orphan, and the heart pangs from the ravages of war. He thinks of his position and the position of the Christ, and utters these memorable words: "Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires. But on what did we found them? On force. Jesus Christ alone founded His on love, and to-day there are millions who would die for Him."

True, O Napoleon! For even in these materialistic days the love of Christ, if need be, would constrain multitudes to dye the heather hillsides with their blood, to light up the martyr stake, or, as of yore, to "wander in sheepskins and goatskins,

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in deserts, in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth'' (Heb. 11. 37, 38).

If such be our leader now, what will it be when "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes?" (Rev. 7. 17).

V. A New Object of Worship.

"Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him'' (v. 9).

"THEY WORSHIPPED HIM'' (v. 17). Hitherto they had been occupied with this mountain and this city, or this temple, as places of worship. Now "the temple made with hands'' and the "worship with men's hands'' (Acts 17. 24, 25) were to give place to the living stones, "fitly framed together," growing unto an holy temple in the Lord (Eph. 2. 21), with the ascended Lord as the object of the heart adoration of "the whole family in Heaven and earth."

"THEY HELD HIM BY THE FEET." Not around the neck, or by the hand, as is sometimes irreverently suggested in speech, in prayer, or in song in our day, but like the seer in Glory, who adoringly "fell at His feet'' (Rev. 1. 17).

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“THEY WORSHIPPED HIM.” Material objects of worship are transient, temples crumble into dust, wealth taketh to herself wings and fieth away, pleasures pall, “earthly friends do fail and leave us,” but the Heavenly Object of the heart’s adoration remains unchanged: “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever” (Heb. 13. 8).

Some worship wealth, some worship their homes, others the person of wife, child, or friend; others again adore principles, themes, and schemes; many set their minds on things below, instead of on things above, but in turn all perish and decay.

Like the little child who was presented with a kitten, which soon died; then with a flowering plant, which withered and died; then with a beautiful canary, which sang its lovely song for a season, then was found dead. The child was seen to be weeping, and when inquiry was made as to the cause of her heart sorrow, the wail of her heart was: “I want something to love that will never die.”

Thank God! that Something, nay, that Everything, is found in the Christ of God, of whom alone it can ever be said: “THOU REMAINEST” (Heb. 1. 11).

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VI. A New Trysting Place.

“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them” (vv. 10-16).

How the news spread we know not, but soon new hopes were raised in drooping hearts as the message went round that He whom they had last seen in the embrace of death was risen indeed, and was to be with them at the trysting place in Galilee. Did considerations of wind and weather, age and infirmities, class and clique, dress and appearance enter into their calculations? Did not each heart rebound with “By the grace of God I’ll be there?” Surely this is where He was “seen of about five hundred brethren at once” (1 Cor. 15. 6). Methinks of all the gatherings of His own on earth “I should like to have been with Him then.”

“INTO A MOUNTAIN.” Not in stately temple or princely palace, but on the hillside which His hands had made. Nothing to attract or detract from His own glorious person. Was it not in continuation of this gathering He kept tryst with the disciples in “a large upper room” (Luke 22. 12); “when they were terrified and affrighted” (Luke 24. 37); with “the

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doors shut," "after eight days" (John 20. 19-26); when they "continued steadfastly" (Acts 2. 42); in the "third loft upon the first day of the week" (Acts 20. 7-9); and throughout the ages "where two or three have been gathered" in His Name? (Matt. 18.20). Is it not to the little flock who "keep the ordinances as delivered" (1 Cor. 11. 1-30), either in Corinth or elsewhere, that He continues to keep tryst "till He come?"

VII. A New Commission.

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age" (vv. 18, 19).

Did human ears ever hear more marvellous words? Think of that hillside scene. A few days before they had seen their Master rejected, buffeted, spat upon, thorn crowned, crucified, pierced, dead. With reverent hands a few had taken down the precious body and laid it in Joseph's new tomb. To-day, on the hill overlooking the scene of that death, He stands in the midst, alive, calling, blessing, promising, conquering.

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Yesterday, "already dead;" to-day, "alive for evermore." Yesterday, "crucified in weakness," apparently with *no* power; to-day, "He is risen," with "*all* power in Heaven and in earth."

This Risen Conqueror gives them the New Royal Commission which may be summarised thus:

1. THE POWER ALL. He who was crucified in weakness and raised in power gathers His own around Him and utters the marvellous words: "All power is given unto Me." The continuity of the Church, the marvellous waves of revival at unfixed periods, the perpetual triumphs in the hearts and lives of countless saints attest the verity of this promise given to a handful of unlearned and untutored men.

As one of the Puritans said in his quaint way: "Well, Lord, if *all* power is given unto You, therefore *none* of it is mine; and if I want power I must draw it from You." Oh, to learn this lesson well, as we remember and rejoice that "the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3. 10) is available for each saint to-day.

2. THE PARISH ALL. Because Christ died for all, and God would have all to be saved, we are exhorted to pray for all (1 Tim. 2. 8), and to "Go ye and make

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Christians of all nations'' (v. 19, margin). Neither limit nor boundary can be fixed for the God-sent evangelist. Like Wesley of old he can truly say, ''The whole world is my parish,'' and fulfilling the commission like him can conclude, ''The best of it all is God is with us.''

3. THE PRECEPT ALL. ''Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you'' (v. 20). The confessions, creeds, catechisms, and codes of laws (written or unwritten) which abound are human and imperfect. The Word of our God shall stand for ever (Isa. 40. 8). Happy that people who in these last days of doubt, mysticism, fanciful theories, and abounding error are found asking: ''What saith the Scripture?'' (Rom. 4. 3), and are satisfied only with ''Thus saith the Lord'' (Exod. 4. 22, and over two hundred times more). Happy that heart which, like Samuel of old, ever says ''Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth'' (1 Sam. 3. 9), and so hears as to be able to say, ''If I can be plainly shown anything in the Word of God which I should hold or practise, by the grace of God this thing will I do.''' Nay, more, so hears as to say what is even more difficult: ''If there is anything I hold, teach, or do which can

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be plainly shown to be without warrant from the Word of God, however hoary headed and venerable the theory or practice, by the grace of God this thing will I do no more henceforth and for ever."

God keep us true to the motto: "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible."

4. THE PROMISE ALL. "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age" (v. 20). A promise worth more than all the gold of all the world, and all its wealth combined—the Personal Presence of the Risen Saviour. In days dark or bright; in days cloudy or clear; days when sick or well; days of adversity or prosperity; days of sorrow, trial, bereavement, death; yea, "all the days."

"EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE AGE." We might have expected Him to say: "I am with you for ever and ever, Amen;" but He says: "I am with you *all the days*, unto the *end of the Age*." Why? Was it not a gracious suggestion: "I will be *with you* all the days of your pilgrim journey on earth, unto the end of the age of suffering, sorrow, trial, and marchings weary—then you will come and be *with Me* in the Glory."

It is as if the Ruler of the Land were to

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say to me, "I will come and stay with you all the days of trial and sorrow." What a surprise I would get! But more so if, after staying with me for some days, he were to say, "Now I go to dwell at my Palace, and you will come with me."

So the King of Kings to-day condescends in grace to "dwell with him that is of a humble and contrite spirit" (Isa. 57. 15), and some happy day shall call His own to share with Him "the exceeding and eternal weight of Glory" (2 Cor. 4. 17).

The "going" into all the world, the loyalty to God and to the Word of His grace, the enduring hardness, the patient continuance in well-doing, the working, the watching, the waiting have all to be done in view of His coming again to receive us unto Himself, "and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4. 17).

"AMEN." There is none in Genesis. There is none needed in Genesis. As the Egyptians thought of Joseph, and how they had been forbidden to lift hand or foot without his permission, of how the heralds had proclaimed before him: "Bow the knee." As they remembered him arrayed in purple and fine linen, with the gold chain around his neck, riding in pomp in the second chariot of the kingdom, and now

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saw him dead, dusted with spices, wrapped in linen rags, laid in a mummy case, and lowered into a lonely sepulchre, there was enough AMEN in the condition and the ceremony without it being added to the inscription.

“AMEN.” There should be none in Matthew. The grave is empty, the Saviour is risen, the Lord is in the midst. His power is unlimited, His parish is unbounded, His precepts are “right,” His presence is assured unto the end of the age. He is Surely Coming again, and “of His Kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1. 33).

“AMEN.” There is none in the Christian’s course. For whether we end our pilgrimages like Genesis, with the coffin and the grave, or like Matthew, in full marching order—entering into the wide doors of the world—on the resurrection morn we shall assuredly join in the shout of “Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Then Thy saints all gathered to Thee,
With Thee in the Kingdom reign:
Thine the praise and Thine the glory,
Lamb of God for sinners slain.”

Through Trial to Triumph.

ONE of the remarkable features of the Bible is that it throbs with human life. Men and women of like passions to ourselves abound and increase in number from the Garden of Eden to the Great White Throne. According to the list in the "Oxford Family Bible" there are about 5000 proper names in Sacred History, probably half of the names are those of men and women. These thousands can be divided into three classes.

1. Those who were TRIED AND TRIUMPHED, as Abram, Moses, Joseph, David, Daniel, Mary, Martha, Paul, and the chief among the tried, as He shall be among those who triumph—our Lord JESUS.

2. Those who were TRIED AND FAILED, as Adam, Cain, Saul, Samson, Jonathan, Peter, Thomas, Demas, and the greatest of all failures—JUDAS.

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3. Those who NEITHER WERE TRIED NOR TRIUMPHED, so far as their records go, and their name is legion.

Each one of us to-day may safely class ourselves with one or the other. Class 1 demands our special attention in these days of unbounded sorrow. We select five sample cases to show that "Blessed are they that are tried, and trust alone in the Living God, for they shall surely triumph."

I. Distress. Genesis 28. 10-17.

JACOB is a fitting picture of one in distress. Through seeking the blessing in a carnal way he finds himself in the wilderness, going back from the Land of Promise, in the midst of danger, with a doubtful future in front of him—fatherless, motherless, friendless, homeless—less everything but GOD. Yet in that night of distress, with a bed of sand and a pillow of stone, he had a Vision of God. (1) "Behold a ladder" (v. 12), reaching from the wandering boy to the Eternal Throne. (2) "Behold the Angels of God, ascending and descending" (v. 12). Ascending first, because God's guardians were there before the ladder, or before Jacob saw the ladder (Heb. 1. 14). (3) "Behold THE LORD above it" (v. 13), controlling ladder, angels, darkness, cir-

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circumstances, and all. (4) "Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee, and will not leave thee" (v. 15). Well might Jacob say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13. 5, 6). A desert spot of trial become "none other than BETHEL, the House of God," the place of triumph to Jacob, as it has been to thousands in all ages who have followed in his train.

II. Disaster. Genesis 37. 24.

JOSEPH is sent by his father to look after his brethren. He follows them from Hebron, the place of *communion*, to Shechem, the *shoulder*, and to Dothan, which means *decrees*. Here all the decrees of his brethren to hinder only helped in a marvellous way to develop the counsels of God. The disaster of the Pit is followed by the tragedy of Potiphar's house, and by the greater trial of the Egyptian Prison.

You can almost understand trials coming upon cunning, crooked Jacob; but here is obedient, loving, true-hearted Joseph, *how* does trial upon trial crowd upon him?

Turn to the Period of Triumph. See him with "a gold chain about his neck," ruler over all the land of Egypt, and named Zaphnath-Paaneah, which means "the

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Saviour of the World" (Gen. 41. 40-45). See his brethren at last bow down and make obeisance before him whom they had despised and rejected. Hear Joseph give the golden key which unlocks all the mysteries of God, as he says, "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; *for God did send me before you to preserve life*" (Gen. 45. 5). They meant ill, God meant good (ch. 50. 20), and His Eternal Counsel triumphed in the case of Joseph, as it will finally triumph with all the "blessed who put their trust in Him."

III. Dearth. 1 Kings 17. 9-14.

A WIDOW WOMAN of Zarephath, rightly named Sarepta, or the smelting-house, is seen in her deep trial gathering sticks to share the last meal with her darling boy ere they lie down and die in the land of dearth. A *widow*—breadwinner gone; a *handful* of meal—barrelful gone; a *little oil*—larger supplies gone; a little flicker of flame—hope gone; a few moments more—mother, son, and all will be gone.

Now comes the test, "Make me a cake first, and after thee and thy son." God *first* even in dire moments of dearth. "She went and did" (v. 15). She obeyed,

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and she triumphed. Hear the ringing notes, "FEAR NOT, thus saith the Lord God, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail."

Hudson Taylor, of China fame, once said we should be able to sing the doxology even when the flour barrel was empty. Not many days after his wife reminded him of his boast in God, and suggested that he should put his head in their barrel, which was now empty. "I will do it on condition that you put yours in with me." There and then the two heroes sang, "Praise God" inside the barrel, then empty, but soon full, and filled for many years.

That Sarepta barrel not only satisfied prophet, widow, and son for "a full year" (v. 15, margin), but has been the bread of God to the "destitute, afflicted, tormented" as centuries have rolled by. The scraping of the bottom of the barrel precedes the song of deliverance (Psa. 32. 7).

IV. Despondency. 1 Kings 19. 2-8.

ELIJAH the Prophet is a fitting type of despondency. The victory on Carmel is followed by Jezebel's threat. He fled for his life 200 miles to Beersheba, left his servant, then to be more secure went alone a day's journey into the wilderness.

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Exhausted he sat down under a juniper tree, and uttered the despondent wail, "O Lord, take away my life; for I am no better than my fathers." Far down, indeed, must be any prophet, or any one when he confesses himself to be no better than his fathers, only fit to die.

Yet in the dire moment of weakness strength is perfected. An angel touching him, says, "Arise and eat," not once, but twice. He arose, obeyed, and was so refreshed that he "went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God" (v. 8).

V. Death. John 11. 11-44.

LAZARUS and the home of Bethany bring us face to face with the trial of all trials—Death, the king of terrors and the terror of kings. Sickness is followed by death, death by burial, burial by the lamentation—"If Thou hadst been here."

Into this, the most famed of all the scenes of sorrow and death, come the ringing notes of Resurrection triumph, which have cheered countless thousands in the hour of woe and the home of sorrow. For here we see a threefold cord of triumph.

1. A WEEPING SAVIOUR. "Jesus wept." Of all the 31,173 verses in the Bible this, though least, would be the last with which

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we would part. Which of us have not stood by the open grave of a loved one and by faith seen those true tears of sorrow fall afresh from the Man of Sorrows and felt our burdened hearts relieved as we blest His thrice Holy Name.

2. A RISEN BROTHER. "Jesus said, Thy brother shall rise again" (v. 23). Assuring us that mother, brother, son, babe, and every loved one laid to rest in lovely mausoleum or nameless grave, in quiet churchyard or battle-scarred ground, on land or sea, "*shall rise again*" (Dan. 12. 2; Rev. 20. 19).

3. A REUNITED FAMILY. "There they made Him a supper" (ch. 12. 2). MARTHA, busy serving Martha; MARY, quiet, studious Mary; LAZARUS, dead, decayed Lazarus, types of the saints of to-day, all supping with their Lord. The home of sorrow now turned into the house of fragrance, worship, and reunion, with no whisper of parting.

Bethany, "the house of humiliation," has at last become a true house of triumph, as every Bethel or Bethany shall yet become when all the purposes of God "which He hath purposed in Himself" (Eph. 1. 9 are attained, for:

"The end of all creation is leading up to this,
To God the greatest glory, to man the greatest
bliss."

The Sevenfold Glories of the Christ of God.

HEBREWS is different to most other books of the New Testament in that it has no dedication such as "To all that be in Rome," "Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth," "To Titus, mine own son," "To the seven Churches which are in Asia," etc. It begins with the majestic word, "GOD," a precursor that there is something very special to follow.

It has *no author*, although many believe that it was the same Apostle who wrote Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, and other books.

Another special feature is that of *indefiniteness* and then of *definiteness*. Notice the wording: "God who at sundry times," no definite period, dispensation, or hour named; "in diverse manners," no special manner, or method, although both abound in the Old Testament; "spake in times past," no specified date or year during the 4000 years of past time; "unto the fathers," no definite person named as Abram, Isaac, Jacob,

and others well known; "by the prophets," how easily some prophet could have been named, but all are clustered as "the prophets;" everything seems purposely indefinite, in order that no person, place, time, or theme may occupy the mind, which must now be centred on the One Figure of all time—"HIS SON."

In contrast to the indefiniteness named, the Holy Spirit delights in *definiteness* concerning the One of Whom it is His business to speak (Heb. 1. 1, 2). "Hath in these *last days*," a definite period, the terminal of the Day of Grace; "spoken unto *us*," not every one in every age (although He has done that), but unto sinners saved by Grace during the last day period; "by *His Son*," a very definite speaker, to a very definite people, in a very definite time. The word "*his*" is in italic, so that it might read "by Son;" or as Dean Alford renders the expression, "in Him who is the Son of His love."

Then we have the mention of

SEVEN OF THE EXCELLING GLORIES OF CHRIST
echoing the words: "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God" (Psa. 90. 2).

I. The Future Ruler of the Universe.

"WHOM HE HATH APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS" (v. 2). It seems remarkable that the first glory named should relate not to some great event of the past, or some wonder of the present,

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but peers forward into ages unborn, and places the Man of Calvary on the Throne of the Universe.

Various predictions have been made by students of history and prophecy. One declares the day will dawn when a person shall stand on London Bridge with the Metropolis of the world lying around a mass of ruins. Another decrees that India, the gem of the Empire, will be lost to the British Throne. A third pictures democracy of the worst type dominating world wide the weary masses of the sons of men.

These, and many more terrific changes, *may* take place; kingdoms and empires may rise and fall, monarchs without number may be dethroned, and this poor old world stagger on like a drunken man to its doom, yet one thing is assured, *Christ is the appointed "Heir of all things."* He who died on a Roman gibbet outside the gate in Jerusalem, within a short distance from the spot where He died, "this same Jesus" shall sit on a throne, as "great David's greater Son," and reign in righteousness and equity from sea to sea and shore to shore, and "of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1. 33).

Child of God, settle this in your heart, that whatever may happen in your life, in your native country, or in the world at large, the One "whom having not seen, you love" is the Destined Ruler of the Universe; and remember, "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him"

(2 Tim. 2. 12). God has decreed it, and it shall yet be manifested in Heaven, earth, and Hell that "He is Lord of all."

II. The Past Creator of the World.

"BY WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLDS" (v. 2). Naturally the glory swing is from the great unknown future to the first thing recorded of the past—"In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth." The Agent was His Son, "by whom also He made the worlds." Christ, the mighty Creator of all things, for "without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1. 3). As He could not create Himself, He stands forth as the Uncreated Creator of all things, the One who from all Eternity "was with God, and was God" (John 1. 1).

In 1905, Dr. Darwin, a relative of Charles Darwin, as President of the Royal Society, meeting in Cape Town, closed a remarkable address on "The Riddle of the Universe," with these remarkable words: "After all, the Riddle of the Universe remains unread." Yet the humblest believing Christian knows more than all these wise-heads, for he says: "Through faith, we understand that the worlds were formed by the Word of God" (Heb. 11. 3). GOD SPAKE, AND WORLDS WERE, there he rests as the simplest, most sensible, and certainly most lasting ascertained fact concerning the Origin of the Universe.

III. The Eternal Son of the Highest.

As all great men are not good, the question arises concerning this great Ruler of the Future and great Creator of the Past, what is He in Himself. A dual simile is required to express this glory.

1. "Who being **THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS GLORY**" (v. 3), that is, the effulgence or outstanding of the Glory of God. "No man hath seen God at any time, the Only Begotten Son...hath declared Him" (John 1. 18). All that the world has ever seen, or shall ever understand of the Almighty, is manifest through the Son.

Just as that Ray of Sunlight which flashes into the room contains all that is in the Sun, so in the Person of Christ "in the days of His flesh" were manifested all the essence and attributes of the Eternal. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2. 9).

2. "And **THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON.**" The thought is "the die-stamped image." When Christ said: "Whose is the image and superscription?" they answered, "Caesar's." Whatever was in the die which produced the coin was reproduced in the image on the coin. So Christ was the die-stamped image of the invisible God, the true Revealer of all the glory and the grace of His Father God. "True image of the Infinite."

IV. The Present Upholder of the Universe.

“UPHOLDING ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER” (v. 3). With one mighty sweep the Spirit traverses the space between the Creation of the world and the Consummation of all things, then centres on the Present.

In David's day it is said he had a knowledge of some 5 million stars, to-day they speak of untold millions of stars. Nay, the recent discovery of the latest planet indicates that there are millions of created things in space unreached by the eye or even the most powerful telescope yet invented. Sir JAMES JEANS, a scientist of to-day, recently made the surprising statement that there are 60 stars for every inhabitant of our little world, with many more to follow. Man is just beginning to realise the vastness of the Universe, with little prospect of ever reaching to its utmost limit. Yet sweet the thought to the Christian heart that He who in His greatness flung all the stars into space; who “telleteth the number of the stars” and “calleteth them all by their names” (Psa. 147. 4); who “upholdeth all things by the Word of His power;” in His graciousness noteth the sparrow's fall (Matt. 10. 29), and even cares for the infinitesimal, for “the very *hairs* of your head are all numbered” (Luke 12. 7). Rightly do we sing concerning such a Creator-Saviour who upholds all His own by His power:

“Worlds on worlds are hanging on His hands,
Yet His tender bosom makes thee room,
Praise His Name.”

V. The Great Sin-Purger.

“WHEN HE HAD BY HIMSELF PURGED OUR SINS” (v. 3). Someone has well said: “That is the only purgatory mentioned in the Bible; Christ went through it, therefore I shall never be in it.” Three things are implied in the statement.

1. SIN, that great blight which has fallen upon mankind; so little feared or understood in the eyes of man; so great in the eyes of Him to whom “the thought of foolishness is sin” (Prov. 12. 23), and even “the heavens are not clean in His sight.” Yet on the Cross the Holy One of God “was made sin for us” (2 Cor. 5. 21).

2. SUFFERING. “*Purged* our sins.” Purgation ever implies pain, anguish, sorrow, woe. Prof. Khodadad quotes the statement of Josephus that on the last great Passover, when the Saviour died, no less than 250,000 lambs were slain, and judges this number as not overestimated. Yet what all these 250,000 lambs could not do, the Lamb of God did on the altar of Calvary, when “He purged our sins,” and did it so perfectly that “worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins,” seeing they are thereby “perfected for ever” (Heb. 10. 2, 14).

3. SOLITUDE. “When He had *by Himself*.” At Creation the morning stars sang together, and

all the sons of God shouted for joy (Job 38. 7). In Redemption the Son of God was alone upon the Cross. His heart feelings were expressed in the words of Psalm 102. 7: "I watch and am as a sparrow *alone* upon the housetop." As in the moment of brightest glory on the Transfiguration mount, so in the moment of deepest sorrow, on the Mount of Crucifixion, "Jesus was found *alone*" (Luke 9. 36). Truly "lover and friend" were far from Him, and His acquaintances vanished unseen into darkness (Psa. 88. 18). His last sad plaintive query to Heaven was: "My God, My God, why hast Thou *forsaken* Me."

Amazing grace! Jehovah forsook the darling of His bosom, on the Cross of shame, in order that He might never forsake you and me in the Lake of Fire through endless ages.

VI. The Exalted Prince in Glory.

He "SAT DOWN ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON HIGH" (v. 3). "God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2. 36). On earth He could say: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. 8. 20). When He died "they made His grave with the wicked," and would have buried Him in one of the three holes dug for malefactors, but God saw that "He was with the rich man in His death" (Isa. 53. 9).

Indignity, shame, spitting, scorn, reproaches, and all that the hatred of man could do were heaped upon that Blessed One from the manger to the Cross; but from the moment He cried: "IT IS FINISHED," not one solitary act of shame was permitted. Loving hands took His body down from the Cross. Joseph of Arimathea, hitherto a coward, became a hero and "went in boldly and craved the body of Jesus," wrapped it in clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb (Mark 15. 43; Matt. 28. 59, 60); five hundred brethren gathered around Him in holy adoration on the appointed mountain, His disciples journeyed with Him to Emmaus and to Bethany, where He lifted up His hands, blessed them, and "was parted from them and carried up into Heaven."

Man placed Him between two thieves; God "set Him at His own right hand in the Heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1. 20, 21).

No wonder that concerning Him, unseen to sight, but realised in the heart of the believer, we use the words of the Patriarch of Barnstaple :

VII. The Coming Saviour-King.

"And AGAIN WHEN HE BRINGETH IN THE FIRST-BEGOTTEN INTO THE WORLD, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him" (v. 6); or,

as it is noted in the A.V. (*margin*), "When He bringeth again," and rendered in the R.V., "And when He again bringeth in the Firstborn into the world," referring to His Second Coming.

When Jehovah brought Him into the world the last time it was via a lowly cattle shed, as an unknown stranger, whose "own received Him not" (John 1. 11), to a life of shame and sorrow and a death of woe. When He bringeth Him in *again*, it will be to be adored by angels and men, to take His great power and reign. Last time it was as a Man of Sorrow and acquainted with grief, to die for sinners; next time it is as King of kings and Lord of lords, first to call all His own to be for ever with Him, then to reign in righteousness and equity from pole to pole.

The last great event in the world's history was the appearing of Christ "to put away sin, by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9. 26). The next great event will be the appearing in the clouds of that crucified, risen, and exalted Saviour to call all His own dead from their graves, change all His own who are alive, catch up both to Himself, and so to be for ever with the Lord. That event will take place "in a moment" (1 Cor. 15. 52), at any moment, so it behoves one and all to "be ready."

"Lord Jesus, keep us living 'neath Thy smile,
While Thou art gone our mansions to prepare;
Spending in service blest the little while,
Ere we attend Thy Home of bliss to share."

“Christ IS All.”

“THAT IN ALL THINGS...THE PRE-EMINENCE.”

THE Epistle “to the saints and faithful brethren at Colosse” was “to be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans,” therefore we judge that it has a special note for all saints in these Laodicean days of the dispensation (Col. 4. 16; Rev. 3. 14-22).

The central theme of the Epistle is found in chapter 3. 11: “Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but CHRIST IS ALL, and in all.” The apostle seems to sweep aside every one to magnify Christ. The world’s greatest language—Greek; the only Divine religion that ever was—Jew; religious ordinances, as circumcision; non-religious Gentiles and races—uncircumcised; Barbarians, or the worst kind of barbarian—Scythian; slaves who are fettered or masters who are free; all must give place to Christ, for “CHRIST IN ALL THINGS MUST HAVE THE PRE-EMINENCE.”

Naturally in an Epistle in which a great state-

ment like this climaxes, we look for stages or indications of the theme going before. One of the first of these marks is—

I. Christ All in Creation.

Chapter 1. 16: "For by Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: *all* things were created by Him, and for Him."

Not often in Scripture is there a repetition in the same verse, which could be thus rendered, "*In* Him all things were created—all things were created *through* Him and *for* Him." Here we have the sphere, the Agent, and the purpose of Creation.

However wise or carnal men may seek to evade the fact, and Modernists or Evolutionists try to explain it away, this is plain, the Scriptures declare that everything in Heaven and earth, everything visible and invisible, all temporal and spiritual forces and powers were created by Christ.

The doctrines of Grace, the discoveries of Science, the development of history and the Divine Revelation as to Creation and its development, will yet harmonise in the realisation that "Christ is the Cause, Head, and Goal of the created Universe."

II. Christ All in Control.

Verse 17: "AND HE IS BEFORE ALL things, and by Him all things consist" or are controlled, upheld, and kept in being. Not only the Creator of All, but "before all."

John the Baptist was born six months before Jesus, yet John could say, "He was before me" (John 1. 15). Abraham lived some 2200 years before the birth of Jesus, yet Christ said, "before Abram was, I AM." Not "*I was,*" but "*I Am*" (John 8. 58). The World was created at least 4000 years before Christ was born in Bethlehem, yet He spake of His being with God, "before the world was" (John 17. 5). Nay, of Him the Spirit says, "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God" (Psa. 90. 2), and to Him the Ancient Prophecy ascribes the marvellous "before all" title of "The Father of Eternity" (Isa. 9. 6, R. V., *margin*).

From this we adduce the great fact that, as He was before all, as He created all, and as He could not create Himself, He must be and is "*the Uncreated Creator of all things.*"

Verse 17: "BY HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST." Worlds, planets, sun, moon, stars, and the vast Universe of God all kept in place, controlled and guided by the One whom "they slew and hanged on a Tree" (Acts 5. 30).

Marvellous mystery! Whilst aged Simeon upheld Him, He upheld Simeon, and He upheld the

ground on which Simeon was standing! I fathom not this great mystery of God manifest in flesh, but I wholeheartedly believe it, and revel in the thought that, in Him who, for me, was "crucified through weakness" (2 Cor. 13. 4), dwelt "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2. 9).

Sweeping from the immensity of His power to the individuality of His care and love, I remember that "not a sparrow" on the lonely moor or sandy desert, unknown to and unnoticed by man, falls to the ground without His knowledge (Matt. 10. 29). We can even come to a smaller particle and rejoice that whilst "worlds on worlds are hanging on His hand," He cares for every *atom* of every one of His own, for "the very hairs of *your* head are all numbered" (Luke 12. 7).

Not a particle of the mighty Creation, or the humblest saint, but is directly and continually under His consistency and loving care. Christ All for my all.

III. Christ All in Salvation.

Chapter. 1. 20: "Having made peace through the Blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself;...whether they be things in earth, or things in Heaven."

In Philippians 2. 10 where His *dominion* is in question it is things in Heaven, earth, and Hell. In Colossians 1. 20, where the theme is *redemption*, it is only Heaven and earth. Solemn thought,

there is no "blood," and therefore no redemption in Hell. The one glad opportunity is "NOW" (2 Cor. 6. 2).

Whatever else the Scripture makes plain, it makes this plain, that Salvation is only by sacrifice, and that the sacrifice of an unblemished victim. The only Perfect Sacrifice ever offered, was when the Son of God "made peace through the Blood of His Cross," for once, and only once, did *perfect* Blood stain this sin-cursed earth, and that when "the Blood of His Own" (Acts 20. 28, J.N.D.) flowed from the Sacrifice and Victor of Calvary. "Neither is there Salvation in any other," for Christ is alone the Author and Finisher of Salvation. Well may be sung—

"All that I have e'en here on earth,
All that I hope to be,
When Thou dost come, and Glory dawns,
I owe, blest Lord, to Thee."

IV. Christ All in the Church.

Chapter 2. 19: "And not holding the Head, from which *all the Body* by joints and bands... increaseth with the increase of God."

Chapter 1. 18: "And He is the Head of the Body, the Church."

Christ loved the Church, died for the Church, nourishes the Church, cherishes the Church, and will yet present the Church faultless in Glory. He is the Object of worship, the Theme of praise,

the Centre of gathering, the Subject of ministry, the Power for service, the Object of adoration in time, and of endless and ceaseless Glory and triumph in eternity of every member of the Church.

Christ Head of the Church implies three great principles—life, unity, and rule. He is the Source of spiritual life, the centre of all spiritual unity, and the Sovereign of all saints. “One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren” (Matt. 23. 8). How solemn to acknowledge as “Head of our Church” a pope, a priest, a human being of any description, or have any centre but the God-given One—“Christ the Head.”

Lest any should think that “Christ is All” is a creational, theological, and yet not an intensely practical theme we observe next that—

V. Christ is All in Every-day Life.

Chapter 3. 17: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do ALL in the Name of the Lord Jesus.”

“Christ all” linked with our every thought, word, and deed, and with every attitude and relationship of life. Observe how this great fact is, by the Spirit, linked with—

“WIVES, submit yourselves unto your own husbands” (v. 18). They may take the word “obey” out of the marriage ceremony in the Prayer Book, but it remains firm in the Word of God. “Wives, obey,” not because inferior, or because commanded so to do, but because of the

relation to "Christ who is All" and "it is fit so to do in the Lord."

"HUSBANDS, love your wives" (v. 19). Evidently the Spirit touches the weak spot in each. Wives to *obey*, husbands to *love*. Not emotion, but devotion; not sentiment, but sacrifice. Christ is All, Christ loved you, therefore, "love your wives," and avoid any bitter words, irritable temper, unthoughtful acts, or unkind deeds. Sweet is the home life where husbands and wives "Do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus."

"CHILDREN, obey your parents in all things" (v. 20). Not answering back, not designating them "the old man" or "the old woman," and counting them as effete and to be disregarded. Christian children especially should remember Him who was "subject to His parents" (Luke 2. 51), and "obey" because "this is well pleasing unto the Lord." Pleasing Christ, we please our parents; pleasing our parents, we please Christ.

"FATHERS, provoke not your children" (v. 21). Instead of perpetually ordering, commanding, and demanding, remember that "Like as a father pitieth his children" your Heavenly Father pitied you, loved you, and bore with you "Lest children should be discouraged," sympathise with and make companions of your boys and girls, so that "Christ may be All" to parent and child alike.

"MOTHERS," strange to say, are not named.

Was it because He who said, "Son, behold Thy mother," truly knew a mother's heart, and mother love needed little exhortation "Can a mother forget" (Isa. 49. 15).

"SERVANTS, obey in all things your masters... not with eye-service, not as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God" (v. 22). Most of those to whom the letter was addressed were slaves. If the injunction applied to them, how much more to any of us in whatever position of service we may be privileged to occupy. A servant's place, however menial, is a post of honour in which he or she may glorify God, "for ye serve the Lord Christ" (v. 24). "A little maid" honoured God more than a great general in days gone by.

"MASTERS, give unto your servants that which is just and equal" (chap. 4. 1). A much needed exhortation in the days of slavery, and much needed in many places to-day. Herein lies the solution of most of the problems of classes and masses, strikes and riots, and such like. The Model master is the one who gives "just and equal," knowing that he has "also a Master in Heaven."

Thus it will be evident that in God's Universe, in Christ's Church, in the Christian Family, in every relationship of life, "Christ is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the Pre-eminence."

The Great Work of Soul-Winning

“SOUL-WINNING!” What a thrill that word ought to send through every heart that loves our Lord Jesus in sincerity.

“HAPPY” indeed must they be who, at last, standing in His holy presence, can even in the most limited measure say: “Behold I and the children whom Thou hast given me” (Heb. 2. 13).

“HUMBLED” indeed must be the worker, who, Lot like, dragged out of this Sodom-doomed world, and asked: “Hast thou here *any* besides?” (Gen. 19. 12)—sons, daughters, sons-in-law, or others saved by grace—has to respond in the sad words of Ruth: “The Lord hath brought me home *empty*” (Ruth 1. 21).

“Not one soul with which to greet Him—
Must I empty-handed go?”

In view of the great opportunities of soul-winning by tents, caravans, Bible carriages, colporteurs,

tract bands, open-air, and many other agencies, we may point out some aspects of this great work.

I. Paramount Importance.

“He that winneth souls is wise” (Prov. 11. 30); or, as it is rendered in the R. V., “He that is wise winneth souls;” or, as we have heard it quaintly and cogently put:

“He that winneth precious souls is wise,
He that winneth anything else is otherwise,”

for without controversy the subject of winning souls is of the greatest importance. However high the mount of human value, this is over and above that mount in a threefold sense.

1. FOR CHRIST'S SAKE. He who left the Glory Throne and endured the Gory Cross of Calvary, says: For My sake, “Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel” (Mark 16. 15), or save souls. As “God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4. 32), so seek ye others to enjoy that same forgiveness. Every believer, in every place, is entitled to say: “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ's sake” (2 Cor. 5. 20), and thus seek to win his fellows, whoever they may be.

2. FOR THE SOUL'S SAKE. Teach a boy a trade and you have only put him into a certain line of business. Train a man to be a soldier, and you have only increased the power of preservation and destruction of bodies. Make a man a doctor, lawyer, or schoolmaster, and you have only

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affected mind and life here. Culture the cannibal, reform the drunkard, enrich the poverty-stricken, and you mainly affect the *body*. But get a man *saved*, and you affect "spirit, soul, and body," both for this life and the life to come (1 Thess. 5. 23).

3. FOR YOUR OWN SAKE. Nothing so refreshes the tired and jaded worker like the revival stream. The greatest deterrent to residents in Grumble Corner is the absorbing engagement of soul-winning. The greatest joy under Heaven, after the joy of being saved oneself, is to be used of God to the salvation of others. Thousands count on the red letter day of their lives by speaking of it as "When I won my first soul for the Master."

A traveller crossing the Alps was about to fall down exhausted, when he noticed a boot sticking out of the snow. Thinking there might be a foot within and a leg attached, he scratched away the snow, to find a man almost dead. Rubbing the lost one into life, he found to his surprise, that in saving the man he had saved himself. Noah, in preparing an ark "to the saving of his household," saved himself (Heb. 11. 7). So do ye.

II. Unlimited Sphere.

"Go ye into all the World" (Mark 16. 15). Others may lay down limitations and restrictions, the Saviour lays down none. Some argue that a Christian should be like a pair of compasses, one

leg in the Assembly where he worships, the other just as far as it can reach therefrom; whilst others demur at preaching here or speaking there, on account of certain connections. Rest assured that wherever there is a sinner in the wide world—high or low, black or white, prodigal or publican, hero or harlot, thief or jailer, good or bad, anybody and everybody—there the soul-winner is warranted in telling that sinner the Good News that God loves him, Christ died for him, and if he will “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ he will be saved” (Acts 16. 31).

The greatest soul-winner passed on the exhortation: “By *all means* save some” (1 Cor. 9. 22), giving a fairly wide commission to the one bent on winning souls. Yet these means were legitimate and within godly bounds. He says: “To the Jew I became a Jew, and to the weak, weak” (1 Cor. 9. 20, 22). He does not say to the convivialists, “I became a clown,” as some seem to interpret the passage.

We knew a most devoted brother who suggested to a number of young men that they black their faces and gather crowds at street corners as a sort of Gospel Negro Minstrels. This certainly went far beyond the “all means” and methods allowable in making known the sacred message—the Gospel of God. Avoid lethargy on the one hand, and frivolity on the other. “The Gospel is the Power of God” (Rom. 1. 16).

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III. Essential Conditions

named by the Master are twofold. "Follow ME" (Matt. 4. 19). "TARRY...until ye be endued with power from on High" (Luke 24. 49). No worker will have a love for souls unless he is following in the Master's steps; nor will one who is not presently realising that "He loved me" (Gal. 2. 20) be momentarily burdened with the value of souls. Only he who in the power of the Holy Spirit has drunk deep into the spirit of sympathy of the One who wept over a dead man and a doomed city will be up and doing in the salvation of lost men and women.

A college or university education may be good for reading and preaching; an institute training may help in methods; books of instruction may supply useful hints for many things, but the only essentials named in Scripture are first being saved myself, then to obey the Master's command, and trust alone to the power of the Spirit for fruit in service.

Some of the most successful soul-winners have been men of little education and less wealth; yet they have ever been those who realised that they were "brands plucked out of the fire" (Zech. 3. 2), devoted to their Lord, living clean lives, and endued with that mysterious "power from on high" which alone works wonders in the Name of His holy Servant Jesus.

IV. Scriptural Methods.

“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1. 21). “And Paul, as his manner was...three Sabbath days...reasoned out of the Scriptures” (Acts 17. 2). Without doubt the God-appointed means of winning souls is the preaching of the Gospel, whether that preaching be by the *lip* of a servant maid or learned professor, or the *life* of the humblest worker or the noblest saint on earth. Witness to the saving power of Christ leads others to know that same power.

Preaching was never meant to be the work of a caste or class, whether known as minister, missionary, evangelist, or other present-day definition. As of old, “They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word” (Acts 8. 4). Poor, persecuted saints, male and female, aged and juvenile, scattered far and near through the fires of persecution, ceased not to preach and teach Jesus Christ. So should it be to-day, the removing, emigrating, thrusting forth, or other means of spreading saints on earth’s surface should only mean the spreading of the light, and the expansion of that Church to which the Lord adds daily those who are being saved (Acts 2. 47).

“WINNETH” implies the craft of the angler, the skill of the sportsman, the patience of the wooer. All that is needed is the holy ingenuity, so freely granted by God, and any worker, how-

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ever ignorant, weak, aged, or poor, in any circumstance in which God has placed him, may be linked up with the wisest and the mightiest in the great work of winning souls.

V. Glad Results.

It is never said there is joy in Heaven when a king is crowned, when a battle is won, when a fortune is made, or when even the greatest human event takes place. It is said: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one sinner* that repenteth" (Luke 15. 10). Father, Son, and Holy Spirit united in the work of salvation (Heb. 9. 14), in Heaven unite in each manifested product of that mighty sacrifice of Calvary.

The relatives, friends, and neighbours on earth have cause for joy, as in Acts 8. 8, where we read: "There was great joy in that city." A soul-saving time ought to make every one in the community rejoice, as it means renewed and cleaner lives, improved morals, better clothes and homes, more debts paid, and a "better environment" every way, in the best sense of the word.

The soul itself is made glad, nay, of all the days in any human life, it is the only one of which we can truly sing:

"Happy day! Happy day!
When Jesus washed my sins away."

And that happiness not only for a day, but for all life's journey, for the true Christian can say,

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"We joy in God" (Rom. 5. 11), the unchanging God. Nay, it is joy not for a lifetime, a century or a millennium, but throughout eternal ages, for "in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psa. 16. 11).

VI. Eternal Rewards.

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12. 3). What a promise for the "wise" who win souls; no fading wreath of earth, no monument to crumble into dust, no laudation of men to end in a forgotten oblivion in a few years or centuries, but a reward from the Righteous Judge of all motives and actions to last "for ever and ever," and that in no diminishing splendour, but "as the stars," brighter and brighter unto the Perfect Day.

The warrior soul-winner, surveying a life of "perils" and endurance for souls, looking out through the bars of his Roman dungeon, must have felt his heart throb with joy as he penned the wellnigh closing words of his last epistle: "Henceforth there is laid up *for me* a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that Day." Then looking down the ages at the hosts of his successors in living and dying for the salvation of the perishing, he adds:

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“And not for *me* only, but unto *all* them also that love His Appearing” (2 Tim. 4. 8).

With the remembrance of the certainty of “the Lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” (Rev. 21. 8) for the lost; the “eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4. 17) reserved for the saved; and the Son of God who for our sakes cried, “It is FINISHED, bowed His head and gave up the Ghost” (John 19. 30), let each redeemed one seek more and more to be wise in winning souls, remembering:

“That if one soul from my life
Meet me at God’s right hand,
My Heaven will be two Heavens,
In Immanuel’s Land.”

THE
“**Altogether Lovely**” One.

Morning Meeting Meditation.

“**WHAT** is thy beloved more than another beloved?” was the question asked well-nigh 3000 years ago. Evidently there were Agnostics then, as there are now. Those who would class or compare the Beloved along with Confucius, Buddha, Mahomet, and other leaders. But the ready response is, “**MY BELOVED IS... THE CHIEF AMONG TEN THOUSAND,**” or as rendered in the margin, “the Standard Bearer,” or the Chief and Head of all Hosts, for after attempting to describe the Beloved, and using thirteen striking similes, including, “most fine gold, black as a raven, eyes of doves, bed of spices, sweet-smelling myrrh, gold rings set with beryl, bright ivory overlaid, pillars of marble, fine gold, excellent as cedars, and most sweet,” the Spouse finds Him utterly beyond compare, and exclaims, “**YEA, HE IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY**” (S. of S. 5. 9-16).

So with the true members forming His Bride to-day, as they express their admiration of their Beloved Lord.

In His Humanity.

Not a mere perfect human, but perfectly human, for He grew, was obedient, laboured, wept,

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thirsted, hungered, was fatigued, prayed, groaned, as humans do. Mary reproved, Martha prompted, Peter rebuked, Thomas doubted Him. He was called names—the Carpenter's Son, a Winebibber, the Friend of Publicans, the Nazarene. Yet, just as a clear stream enters a stagnant pool and purifies every part that it touches, so the Holy One of God entered this sin-blighted earth, and instead of being contaminated thereby, cleansed, purified, ennobled every part touched, and all the sons of men in all the ages who have come in contact with Him. In His humanity was He not unique and "altogether lovely."

In His Sympathy.

"Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn," sings one of the world's well-known poets, yet when we think of "this Man" in His dealings with Nicodemus the good, the Samaritan woman—the bad, the helpless man at the Pool, the woman taken in adultery, the sorrowing sisters at Bethany, the doomed multitudes of Jerusalem, the widow at the gate of Nain, or a weeping mother by the Cross, we behold "sympathy" as expressed in no other person who ever trod this earth and exclaim, "Yea, He is altogether lovely," and rejoice that even to-day—

"In every pang that rends the heart
The Man of Sorrows has a part."

In His Dignity.

Few of the sons of men—sinner or saint—can stand by unruffled when their honour is assailed. Yet, behold, "this Man" among men! Shame, taunts, and vile insinuations assailed Him throughout the days of His flesh; outrage and insult were heaped upon Him on the morning and night of his betrayal; the High Priest and Elders produced false witnesses against Him, and adjured Him by the living God; Herod and his men of war "set Him at nought," mocked, sham-robed, and insulted Him; Pilate charged, threatened, and tempted Him; rude soldiers buffeted, stripped, mocked, scourged, spit upon, and crowned Him with thorns; rulers, robbers, and a rabble multitude united in deriding Him. Yet in the calmness of His spirit, and in the dignity of His Deity in "that sight" of all sights He remains to earth and Heaven the "altogether lovely" One throughout all time and eternity.

In His Death.

The most shameful, yet the most glorious of all deaths. To the Daughters of Jerusalem He said, "Weep not for Me;" to His sorrowing Mother He said, "Woman, behold thy son;" to that Disciple whom He loved He said, "Son, behold thy mother;" to the thief dying by His side He said, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise;" concerning the very persons who were nailing

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Him to the tree, He asked, "Father, forgive them;" in Holy dignity His closing words were, "Father, unto Thy hands I commend My spirit."

His was the only grave that has ever *remained* fragrant. The new tomb, wherein body had not lain, with a hundredweight of sweet spices placed therein by loving hands, and within a body that saw no corruption, it could never have been said, as was said of Lazarus and of all who have died, "By this time he stinketh" (John 11. 39).

The effect of that death was unique, the people smote upon their breasts; the High Priest beheld the veil rent from top to bottom; the rocks were rent, the graves were opened, many saints which slept arose from their beds. The centurion, and they that were with him, declared, "Truly this was the Son of God." All who are saved by His death will surely declare with a loud voice, as they gaze upon the newly-slain Lamb, "Yea, HE IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY!"

In His Deity.

"God manifest in flesh" stands out superb throughout all ages. At His BIRTH "the Morning Stars sang together;" the Angelic Host chanted the highest note of praise—"Glory to God, goodwill to Men;" wise men from afar brought royal treasures, "gold, silver, and frankincense;" the guiding star gravitated towards that lowly cattle shed; aged Simeon took Him in his arms

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and blessed Him—the Babe upheld the Universe whilst Simeon upheld Him. In His BOYHOOD see Him amidst the Doctors asking and answering questions; behold Him "subject to His parents," increasing in wisdom and in stature, ever seeking to be "about His Father's business." In His MANHOOD, or His Ministry, think of Him tired on Sychar's well, yet telling a sinful woman "all that ever she did;" sleeping on the heaving billows one moment, the next calming the raging seas by His word; multiplying more than once humble bread and fishes till thousands are fed, and there is more at the end than at the beginning; hear Him giving the command to Peter to get the stater from the fish for "Me and thee;" behold Him weeping over a dead brother, then uttering the command, "Come forth;" hear from the depth of sorrow the cry, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!"

"Yea, once Immanuel's orphan cry,
The Universe hath shaken,
It went up single, echoless,
'My God, I am forsaken!'"

And in the sense of the glory of His Divine Person the Heaven-born soul exclaims, "YEA, HE IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY!"

The Mystery of Good and the Mystery of Evil.

AS REVEALED IN THE EIGHTH OF ROMANS

BEFORE we look at the two great mysteries which contrast with each other in Romans 8, let me point out some three threefold cords for the edification and comfort of believers.

I. A valuable

Threefold Cord for Young Believers.

1. "NO CONDEMNATION" (v. 1). The latter portion of the verse, "who walk not after the flesh," has apparently been taken up from verse 4 by some transcriber; the six words are not given in the R.V. *The statement is absolute.*

Romans 1 tells us how far man has fallen, verses 24 to 32 being a terrible indictment of the nature, heart, and ways of sinful man. Romans 2 declares the favoured *Jew* guilty (v. 24). Romans 3 declares *Gentiles*, or all mankind, guilty before God (v. 19). Romans 4 tells how Abraham was justified by faith in days long past, showing the perpetual basis of justification—"by faith." Romans 5 tells of the "much more" mercy, of justification by faith, of peace

with God, and even of having "joy in God" (v. 11). Romans 6 tells us of the believer being freed from sin, alive from the dead, servants of righteousness, and the end everlasting Life. Romans 7 pictures the wretched man enslaved by sin, yet in the end delivered by Christ Jesus our Lord. Hence the "therefore" of Romans 8, and the definite and unconditional assurance that every one who is "*in Christ Jesus*" is absolutely freed from condemnation in time to come. No true child of God shall ever perish eternally. Hallelujah!

2. "NO ACCUSATION." "Who shall lay *anything* to the charge of God's elect?" (v. 33). The apostle appeals to the two highest authorities. Miss out the italics, "*it is,*" and read, "God that justifieth?" Shall a *God* who justifies accuse? Nay. Again in v. 34, "Christ that died?" Shall the *Christ* who died for me accuse me? Nay, nay. Then if God does not accuse and Christ does not accuse, little matter if demons or men do so. None shall judicially accuse unto judgment the saints in Christ Jesus.

3. "NO SEPARATION." "For I am persuaded that neither (1) death, (2) nor life, (3) nor angels, (4) nor principalities, (5) nor powers, (6) nor things present, (7) nor things to come, (8) nor height, (9) nor depth, (10) nor any other creature (and you may add as many 0's as you choose, and make it hundreds, or thousands, or millions,

or billions, or trillions, it holds equally good) shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus" (vv. 38, 39); which means no power in Heaven, earth, or Hell shall ever separate a single child of God from the love of the Almighty Saviour who has saved him.

The man who penned these words knew much of the power of each of the 10 things named as separators. His experiences in 2 Corinthians 11. 24-28 might well be interjected at the end of Romans 8; yet his "persuasion" would remain unchanged, and his boast in the Lord abound the more and more.

But note it is not from *my love* to Christ, but from *the love of Christ* to me that I am unseverable.

"My love is oft-times low,
My joy still ebbs and flows,
But peace with Him remains the same,
No change Jehovah knows."

II. In this chapter the apostle also indicates

A Threefold Cord of Service.

1. PAUL'S CONCLUSION. "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (v. 8). One of the most difficult lessons for the saint to learn, that "in *me*, that is, in *my* flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7. 18); that my thoughts, my plans, my ability, my gifts, in the flesh are in themselves worthless and useless to God.

Hence any blessing, power, or fruitfulness

must come from God, by the Spirit. Cease from man, trust in the Living God.

2. PAUL'S CALCULATION. "I reckon (or calculate) that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (v. 18). Whatever burdens, trials, persecutions, afflictions might come upon him here, they were featherweight when placed in the scales alongside "the glory to be revealed." Read his experiences in 2 Corinthians 11. 23-28, and see how his calculation was confirmed by his life. It is well to note that the "perils without number" of chapter 11 come just in front of the "third heaven" of chapter 12.

3. PAUL'S CONSUMMATION. "All things work together for good to them that love God" (v. 28). No more marvellous sentence in all the Scriptures, as we shall see as our exposition proceeds.

III. Next comes a "pillow" for the weary, the tried, and for all.

A Threefold Cord of Comfort.

A pillow for any saint on which to rest his weary head, a real basis of comfort in the midst of all the distractions of the pilgrim journey. NINE WORDS which, linked together, allay every fear, banish every care, and calm every throbbing breast.

1. "GOD FOR US." "If God be for us, who

can be against us" (v. 31). Grasp the thought, the Sovereign Eternal God, the Maker and Ruler of the Universe, "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1. 11), *for me*, a poor, unworthy sinner. Whoever and whatever may be against me, and the foes are both numerous and mighty, a Greater than all is *for me*.

The apostle had a thousand times more foes than any of us in this easy going non-persecuting age, yet he was not afraid of all, for his triumphant message applied personally was, "If God be for me, who can be against me?" (v. 31).

2. CHRIST FOR US. "*Christ* that died . . . is risen . . . who also maketh intercession *for us*" (v. 34). The Blessed Eternal Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me, at the right hand of God, moment by moment *cares for me* and intercedes for me. How often we realise that "earthly friends do fade and leave us;" how gladly we grasp the promise of the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. 18. 24), who said, "I will never, never, never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13. 5). How many soever against me, *Christ is for me*.

3. THE SPIRIT FOR US. "The *Spirit* Himself maketh intercession *for us* with groanings which cannot be uttered" (v. 26). Wondrous thought—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost all for me!

Look all your foes, trials, and adversaries

straight in the face, pillow your weary head on the bosom of Omnipotence, and "rest in the Lord."

The Two Great Mysteries.

In this Eighth Chapter of Romans we have two cardinal verses giving us what I think of as the Mystery of Good and the Mystery of Evil, or to put it in the order of the chapter:

VERSE 20. "The Mystery of Evil." "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope."

VERSE 28. "The Mystery of Good." "And (or it might be *but*) all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

Look at the two great forces in the order given:

THE MYSTERY OF EVIL.

"The creature was made subject to *vanity*." The realm of Nature was subjected to what seems a useless round of toil, producing nothing (vanity) by the Divine Fiat of God (Gen. 3. 17, 18). This was due to the Fall of man, natures overlord.

The word vanity at the time of the translation of the A.V. had scarcely the meaning it has now. The modern English meaning is rather that of an ostentatious display in some form or other. The old English word had rather the meaning, suggested in "Pilgrim's Progress," where pilgrim

lands in "vanity fair," not specially a place for the display of finery, but rather a place of idle show or empty pleasure, where the visitor simply went to see and be seen without any definite aim. In fact the thought of aimlessness or purposelessness is the real idea here in the word "vanity."

Dr. AGAR BEET expresses "vanity" thus. "That which produces no worthy result. Nature toils to little purpose. It brings forth thorns and thistles. All that Nature brings forth is doomed to die."

Contrast thus "the creature," or creation, or the universe as known to man "was made subject to *no purpose*" (v. 20); whereas, the child of God finds that all things work together for good, according to *His purpose* (v. 28).

The Subjection of the Creature.

"The creature MADE SUBJECT." On account of the terrible power of sin, a subjection was determined on the whole human race, and on the material universe. An aimlessness, a purposelessness settled down upon mankind. This explains much that is mystery in the world to-day.

Look at it——

NATIONALLY. Which of the political parties has a definite purpose and abides by that purpose whether the populace is pleased or otherwise? Their greatest aim is to capture votes for the present.

COMMERCIALLY. Is it usual to have a fixed goal and make for that, whatever the consequences? Diplomacy, make shift, gain, are pressed into service for the present, and the future is left to look after itself.

LOCALLY. How little there is, even in humble affairs, that is not tempered with a purposeless proceeding.

INDIVIDUALLY. Again and again has the heart sighed at the failings of the past, the aimlessness of the present, and the poor outlook for the future. Only when the heart is turned from man and man's ways to the Divine purpose does the calm of things lasting and eternal take possession of the soul. That peculiar soul-depression which at times settles on every spiritual soul is doubtless a partaking of this terrible "subjection;" for the believer is united to the creation by the body and to Heaven by the spirit.

"NOT WILLINGLY." Notice in the subjection there is an unyieldingness. Some have suggested that God did not willingly make man a subject of sin. That may be in it, but, I think it is rather an unwillingness on the part of the creature. Is this not manifest in the rebellion of the human heart; the lawlessness on every side, the bolshevism laying hold of communities in many lands, the spirit of the Antichrist and Man of Sin in embryo on every hand, in every land.

"IN HOPE." Even in the deepest darkness of

the unwilling subjection there arises the hope of a better day, of "a good time coming"; of the long expected Golden Age. That hope often saves from depression and animates the heart (v. 24).

Put these three things together and you have much of the Mystery of Evil explained. A Subjection—an unwilling subjection—a subjection ever having a ray of hope therein.

This is confirmed by

The Threefold Groans

which follow.

1. CREATIONS GROANS. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (v. 22). The masses of mankind, the wide arc of the universe, things animate and inanimate, on account of sin have "groans" and "pangs." *Pangs* pertain to birth, and when we think that a babe is born every minute, what must be the accumulated birth pangs rising to Heaven from a sin cursed earth? *Groans* pertain to death, and when we remember that a soul passes the bourn from which no traveller returns minute by minute, what must be the death-groans of poor fallen humanity reaching the ear of a holy God. No wonder the cry ascends on high: "O Lord, how long?" (Psa. 90. 13).

I am no musician, but I am told by those who are, that almost every note in creation is set in a low monotone. Our ears confirm this—the

screech of the sea birds, the cry of the wild animals, the wind whistling through the fir trees, the waves dashing on the sea shore, all have a depressing effect on the spirit, for "the whole creation groaneth"—man, beasts, birds, and nature itself.

2. THE SAINTS GROAN. "Not only they, but even we ourselves groan within ourselves" (v. 23). I hope my dear brother or sister you are a groaning saint. I pity the believer who is so satisfied with himself, his service, or his circumstances that he neither groans on account of the sin around him, nor longs for that sinless Home beyond this fleeting life. The true Christian dissatisfied with self says with the apostle, "I press forward"; looking around he sighs and cries for the masses "careless of their soul's immortal"; surveying the world, he beholds little but chaos and confusion on every hand, and thinking of the future he yearns for the Coming of the Saviour-God to take His people Home; and the Rightful Heir to rectify all wrongs and make this earth-desert, marred by sin, once more blossom as the rose.

Do not mistake "groans" for "grumbles." Some think that by grumbling and finding fault with everything and everybody they are manifesting a sort of perfection spirit. And notice they groan "*within*" themselves, not in the meeting, and amongst the crowds, but in the secret of the chamber in the presence of their own Lord and Master.

If any reader is living in Grumble Corner, let me advise to make a move into Thanksgiving Street. "Keep yourselves" in the warm happy atmosphere of "the love of God" (Jude 21).

3. THE SPIRIT'S GROANS. How marvellous! "The Spirit Himself (not *itself*, for the Spirit is a person), maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (v. 26). The Blessed Holy Spirit, the third Person in the Trinity takes our prayers, our needs, our heart burdens, and "helping our infirmities," presents them before the Throne in the true language of Heaven, of which the apostle says, "in words which it is not possible for man to utter" (2 Cor. 12. 4). Thus our prayers become intense, intelligent, and in the line of God's Will.

Groans and tears are ever powerful in the ears of God. It is only on record that Christ sang once, on the night of His betrayal, yet it is recorded three times that He wept (Luke 19. 41; John 11. 35; Heb. 5. 7). It is only on record that Paul sang once, in the jail at Philippi, yet he shed "many tears" (Acts 20. 19-31).

"Groans" which lead to "Good."

Many Christians read Romans 8 thus: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, for all things work together for good to them that love God." They leap from verse 1, to verse 28. But, in between, is verse 20,

"subjection to vanity"; verse 22, "the whole creation groans"; verse 23, the "children of God groan"; verse 26, "the Holy Spirit helpeth with groans which cannot be uttered." It is "groans"—"groans"—"groans," then, and then only it is "good" and "God."

Dr. HANDLEY MOULE, long known as the saintly Bishop of Durham, tells a story which summarises much that we have written above. He writes of an English music teacher who discovered a young lady with a remarkable voice. The tutor trained the young lady until he thought she had almost attained perfection. Taking her to one of the old Masters on the Continent for a commendation, after she had been tested 3 or 4 times, he was surprised to hear the comment "she just wants one thing." More tests, the same comment. What could the one thing be, for had she not voice, volume, technique, and all that made good for song? Inquiring, the old Master replied, "She just needs *a broken heart!*" She lacked sympathy, pathos, feeling, the out-flow of a broken heart. The song did not flow from heart to heart.

May it not be that the Great Master of us all is allowing us to have abundance of groans, tears, sighings and cryings here, in training for the unison in the Eternal Choir where with "loud voice" the New Song resounds, "WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN" (Rev. 5. 9-13), and the

loud and long note "as the sound of many waters,"
 "ALLELUIA FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT
 REIGNETH" (Rev. 19. 6).

THE MYSTERY OF GOOD:

"All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His Purpose" (v. 28).

A contrast is found in the first word, for Darby, 20th Century and other translations render it "*but* we know." The contrast being, "*we know not* what we should pray for as we ought" (v. 26), "*but we know* that all things work together for good" (v. 28). However imperfect our knowledge, love, prayers, service or attainments, His love remains the same, His eternal purpose unaltered. "I am Jehovah: I change not" (Mal. 3. 6).

His Purpose and His Plan.

Notice the noble edifice of eternal grace and sovereignty in the plan of this majestic verse. The foundation—

"HIS PURPOSE." The basis of all bliss. Link with this that portion in Ephesians 1. 9, "which He purposed *in Himself*." No fickle, changing, planning of man's councils or rulers, but a fixed decision in the bosom and heart of the Sovereign Eternal God.

"THE CALLED." How amazing is the thought

that God calls sinners sunk in the loathsome depths of chap. 1. 21-32, "out of darkness into His own marvellous light" (1 Peter 2. 9). The next verse explains the nature of the "call," and so long as the five links are kept in the order in which God has given them, I have no difficulty in understanding the election of God. I do not say in believing, for I believe everything in the Bible whether I understand it or not, although I prefer to believe and understand.

If you begin with a hard cast-metal *predestination*, so many bound to be saved in spite of everything, and so many destined for damnation whatever takes place, I do not understand it in the face of 100 Scriptures apparently teaching the contrary.

If you begin, where verse 29 begins, with Divine "*foreknowledge*," then I can understand a God with all wisdom, knowing "the end from the beginning" (Isa. 46. 10), on the basis of (1) foreknowledge, (2) predestinating, (3) calling, (4) justifying, (5) glorifying. The chain begins in the immeasurable past and stretches into the immeasurable future. The sovereignty of God, and the free will of man, according to the eternal plan producing "glory to God and goodwill to man" throughout endless ages.

Thank God for every one making the call effectual by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and having the assurance of an eternal salvation.

If not there, Romans 10. 9, is the portion for you.

“THEM THAT LOVE GOD.” The simplest form of expression to designate the true Christian. “Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God ... If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar” (1 John 4. 7, 20). Not the mere glib-tongued talk of loving God, but the real heart faith love in God and in His Christ. The apostle puts this “love” as the true and final test when he summarises, “If any man *love not* the Lord Jesus let him be accursed” (1 Cor. 16. 22).

One of the Greatest Facts of the Bible.

“ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD.” One of the most marvellous statements in the 31,173 verses forming the Grand Old Book! Grasp it firmly in your mind that as one who loves God, *all things* in your sojourn on earth, from the cradle to the Coming or the coffin, are definitely outworking, according to the purpose of God, “FOR GOOD.” However difficult to understand, however far beyond the mind to grasp, this holds true “*for good.*” Nothing hinders, thwarts or causes the slightest divergence from that purpose, as each “called” one, when he has attained to the fifth golden link in the plan of God, is “glorified,” looking o’er life’s chequered pathway shall assuredly proclaim “He hath done *all things well*” (Mark 7. 37).

"ALL for good." Not one in 9, not one in 99, not one in 999, but just what it says "*all things.*" Bright things, black things; nice things, nasty things; pleasant things, painful things; joys, sorrows; health, sickness; life, death, "all things." I am well aware how easy it is to preach or write thus, and how difficult it is to believe it, to live it, to rejoice in it. Yet as Thomas' doubting did not change the Saviours' loving, so "all for good" is His promise whether my poor weak faith acquiesce in it or not. "Have faith in God" (Mark 11. 22).

The Proof of this Great Fact.

But, says the heart, how does this conform with the great events and truths of Scripture, many of which seem to teach the opposite. Look at four typical cases and see how they assure that "all work for good," if in His purpose.

1. A NATIONAL CASE. Morning dawns as the people of Israel are in bondage in Egypt. A royal proclamation intimates that they are to produce the same toll of bricks without the binding straw being supplied. In addition to making bricks they have to "gather" the straw (Exodus 5. 8). Dismay seizes their hearts. God, governments and all seem against them. *Was it so?* Nay for in wandering over the fields, farmhouses and lands of Goshen, Jew like, they kept their eyes open, and knew the likely position

of every precious thing in all the land, so that when the command came to "borrow (in a sense take pay for long years of toil) jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment," they did the work so effectually that they "spoiled the Egyptians" (Exod. 12. 33-36).

If Pharaoh had had that foresight, which so many falsely claim to-day, he would have cooped the slaves in stockades that they might not get on the scent of a single piece of jewellery. But as God alone has foreknowledge, Pharaoh's cruel taskmasterdom led to a spoiled nation and a doomed ruler. Pharaoh meant it for "evil," God turned it to "good." They were more wealthy at the end than at the beginning of their bondage.

2. A COMPANY CASE. A company of 3 young men are commanded to bow down and worship the golden image, some 90 feet high, set up by Nebuchadnezzar. "We will not" for "our God is able to deliver" is their noble reply. Therefore they are bound and cast into a seven-times heated fiery furnace. *Was that for "good"?* Certainly, for the king himself asserted, "Lo, I see four men loose, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Dan. 3. 21-25).

That very furnace was the path to "promotion" (v. 80). Never shall these three forget that eventful walk with the Son of God. Never shall any saint who has been through the fiery furnace

of affliction and trodden it with the Son of God, cease to praise "the God of deliverances."

3. A FAMILY CASE which has been reproduced millions of times in all parts of the globe. Hear the sad note sounded in that happy home in Bethany—"Lazarus is dead" (John 11. 14). Was that for good? If Lazarus had not died, we should have missed three of the most precious things in the Gospels. (1) *A weeping Saviour*. "Jesus wept" (v. 35). What untold comfort this shortest and most sympathetic verse in the Bible has brought to manifold mourners throughout the ages. (2) *The mighty Victor's call*, "Lazarus come forth" (v. 43). Typical of the glad call which shall yet bring forth sleeping saints from sea and land, to be for ever with the Lord. (3) *A Reunited Family*, as presented in chap. 12. 1-8. Martha, the busy server; Mary the good-part sitter; Lazarus who had been dead and "stinking" (v. 39) unite in making the Lord a feast, and sitting with Him. Picture of that glad Day when saved fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and all loved ones "washed in the Blood," shall sit down in the Kingdom in happy fellowship with Him and with each other and "go out from His presence no more." Lord, hasten the Reunion Morning.

4. AN INDIVIDUAL CASE both tragic and typical. "Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of

lions, and a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel" (Dan. 6. 16, 17).

Surely, says someone, you do not mean to assert that to cast a faithful man into a den of hungry lions was "for good?" Well, in Heaven, if ever you get near enough to Daniel, ask him what was the happiest night he ever spent, and I am sure he will unhesitatingly reply: "The night I spent in the lions' den."

For that night had he not three kings in attendance? The *king of beasts* who, sitting by his side, said, by gesture if not by tongue, "You are all right, Daniel, but pity the next man that comes down." Which came true, for when the persecutors were cast into the same den the lions "brake all their bones in pieces, or ever they came at the bottom of the den" (v. 24). The *king of Babylon*, who could not sleep, but tossed uneasily till morning dawned and he was able to give the command to "take Daniel up out of the lions' den" (v. 22). The *King of Glory*, ever watchful over all His own, put an invisible muzzle on every lion in the den, which enabled Daniel in the morning joyfully to exclaim: "My God hath sent His Angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me" (v. 20).

"FOR GOOD." Yes, and for God's glory, too.

For has not that story encouraged myriads of young men and women, facing the dens and traps of earth, to "Dare to be a Daniel...dare to have a purpose...and dare to make it known."

The Basis of all Bliss.

Here, as elsewhere, one does not long read of blessings and good without being directed to the source of all—the Cross of Calvary. So in verse 32 we read: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Salvation free to all, good comes to all, God for all, the Cross the basis and foundation of all.

The hand and heart that gave what was most precious will never fail in bounty, liberality, and protection to His own, and thus links "all good" with "all things." Let those who will scout the Blood and relegate it to the shambles; the sinner saved by grace and bound for glory loudly sings, "Hallelujah for the Cross!"

Then surely after what we have seen—groans turned to good, all working for good, the eternal purpose of love of God to all His own, the challenge "If God be for us, who can be against us?" the Christian's life will be one of sunshine all the day and all the way. He will bid farewell to tears, sorrows, trials, and burdens. He will be inclined to sing the hymn which says, "I feel like singing all the time."

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Strange that verse 36 should follow all that has gone before and record, "It is written, for thy sakes we are killed all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter," reminding us that with ten thousand blessings and privileges the true Christian to the last day of his sojourn will be counted as "the offscouring of earth" (1 Cor. 4. 13).

Then is it hopeless? Must we give way to despair? Is the Church to be wiped out? Listen to the majestic certainty of verse 37, immediately following verse 36: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." That expression, "more than conquerors," puzzled me for long. No commentator, no Bible dictionary, offered any explanation. Till, one Lord's Day, I heard a brother, like the apostles, "unlearned and untutored" (Acts 4. 13), read this portion and exclaim, "More than conquerors! What's that?" "Well," said he, "you know what a conqueror is. A man who wins by fighting. Then a 'more than conqueror' must be a man who *wins without fighting*." Concerning the greatest of deliverances well do we sing:

"Jesus fought and won the Day,
Such a Day had ne'er been fought,
Well His people now may say
See what God, our God, hath wrought."

The Great Summary.

Realising the enormity, the effects, and the widespread results of the *purpose-less* of the creature and creation, let not the heart faint under this sin-tragedy, but more firmly grasp the grace and goodness behind the *purpose-wise* of the Creator, our Father God, and summarise as did the apostle in chapter 10. 36, at the close of this masterpiece of logic concerning God, His promises and purposes: "O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out...for of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. AMEN."

The Secret Behind the Second Chapter of Acts.

A SUGGESTION OF AN IMPORTANT THREEFOLD LINK.

WHO does not know the wonderful Second of Acts? What theories of Spirit Baptism, of prophetic speaking, of Church adding, and what Ecclesiastical deductions have been adduced therefrom! Yet it is a marvellous chapter, with simple and precious truth for all believers, as we shall seek to show.

Most commentators begin at "the Day of Pentecost" (v. 1) but I venture to suggest that the basis of the second of Acts is laid in Luke 9, and embraces a threefold link—

LINK I. In Luke 9. 30, the Transfiguration scene. "*Behold* there talked with Him *two men* which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease (or exodus, or crucifixion)" What they might have talked about! Moses of being drawn out of the river Nile; Elijah of being drawn up into Heaven. Moses of the King's Castle, Elijah of the widow's cot. Moses of lawgiving, Elijah of prophesying. Moses of dying on the lone hillside; Elijah of

never dying but being "caught up." Moses of the Exodus from Egypt; Elijah of his exodus from earth. Yet there is one subject behind all others, even on the Glory mount, a subject fitted for the great Lawgiver, the great Prophet, and the greater Son of God—

"His Decease"—

His crucifixion on Calvary's tree.

Let us see to it that however much we endorse and "establish the Law" (Rom. 3. 31); however much we value the great theme of Prophecy, and seek to "rightly divide the Word of Truth" (2 Tim. 2. 15). Yet in our heart of hearts we ever say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in *the Cross* of our Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6. 14). For certainly when we stand on the Eternal Glory Mount our central and endless note will be "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain" (Rev. 5. 12).

LINK II. Luke 24. 4, "As they were much perplexed, *behold two men...* which said, 'Why seek ye Him that liveth among the dead? He is not here, He is risen'" (v. 5, *margin*, 6). The Holy Spirit using the same expression, "Behold two men." In all probability the same two men—Moses and Elias—but with a vastly different note. The theme being, not His crucifixion, but

His Resurrection.

The glad note of Victory, but alas with them,

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as with many to-day, when the disciples repeated the Victory note, "their words seemed to them as idle tales" (v. 11. 15). Oh, to know more of "the Power of His Resurrection" (Phil. 3. 10).

LINK III. Luke 25 (I hope it is in your Bible for it is in mine) otherwise titled Acts 1, which cites "the *former* treatise," indicating that Acts 1 is really a continuation of Luke 24.

Verse 10. "And while they looked stedfastly toward Heaven, *Behold two men...* which said... This same Jesus...shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go." A third blessed theme the solver of mind problems, heart difficulties, home trials, and earth's sorrows.

His Coming Again.

Now notice the result of this threefold revelation of the two men on the Disciples. No more disputings "who should be greatest" as in Luke 9. 34; no more the words of Resurrection seem "idle tales," as in Luke 24. The threefold cord in Acts 1 is linked with an Upper Room, a united Prayer Meeting, 120 disciples, male and female, of "one accord" (v. 14) definitely linking this third visit of the two men with Acts 2. 1 when "they were all with one accord in one place."

Unless their hearts had been fully centred on "His Crucifixion," "His Resurrection," "His Coming Again," would they ever have been so united that the Holy Spirit could send such

Showers of Blessing as have scarcely, if ever, been equalled—3000 souls in one day.

Let us now turn to the Second of Acts and see what follows in the actings of these Christ-centred, Spirit-filled disciples. On the surface four results are apparent.

I. United Disciples.

Acts 2. 14. "But Peter *standing up with the eleven.*" I believe the Bible says what it means. That Peter was standing up and the 11 were standing up with him. What a sight—12 disciples so united that they lined up shoulder to shoulder, man to man, for God's glory. Would that they had had Kodaks in early days, this would have made a fitting photo for the meeting rooms of Councils, Committees, Elder brethren, and managements of all kinds.

How readily they might have reminded Peter of his fall and suggested a little less prominent position. But "one heart and one mind" sought only God's glory, and unity and peace prevailed. What a lesson for elder and for younger brethren, for each of us, to-day!

Then notice that United Disciples sought to manifest an

II. Uplifted Christ,

and observe how Peter's Pentecost Sermon re-echoes the threefold theme of the two men.

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Verse 22. "Ye men of Israel hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth (it was all about Him)...Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have *crucified and slain*"—"HIS DECEASE."

Verse 24. "Whom God hath *raised up*... because it was not possible that He should be holden of death."—"HIS RESURRECTION."

Verse 30. "God hath sworn with an oath, that He would raise up Christ to sit *on His throne*," (David's, as future King of kings). His COMING GLORY. Then he added "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, *both Lord and Christ*."

The result on the audience of the preaching of a crucified, risen, ruling and soon reigning Lord Jesus was that they were "pricked to the heart," and cried "What shall we do?" then follows the glorious sequel 3000 souls in one day—that was Holy Ghost preaching.

How is it that in our day our correct little essays on Bible themes, our studied portrayals of Bible incidents, our pleasant discourses concerning salvation, justification, assurance and such themes produce little result. Is the great lack in platform and pulpit to-day not men "filled with the new wine" of the Kingdom (v. 13) preaching a Crucified, Risen and Coming Lord and Christ, in the Power of the Holy Ghost?

For when you have United Disciples and an Uplifted Christ you are bound to have

III.—Unparalleled Blessing.

Verse 41. "They that gladly received His word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them *about 3000 souls.*" It matters little if the preachers be "unlearned and untutored men" (Acts 4. 13), if the audience be of "common people," if the Message be that of a plain blunt fisherman, if the heart is right and Christ is exalted, the Spirit will bless.

For notice it was when they were of the "same mind" (v. 1, 14) and lifted up "the same Jesus" (v. 36) that "the same day" (v. 41) 3000 souls were saved.

Here follows a solemn query. God is the same, the Risen Christ is the same, the Holy Spirit is the same, the Gospel Message is the same. Is there any reason why we should not see souls saved regularly in our Gospel meetings as in these first days, and even in days that some of us remember? Alas, the fault is in ourselves. Without blaming the preachers, throwing stones at each other, or thinking because times are different, and the masses are indifferent, such days are impossible with us, let each one get down on his face before God, humbly confess his manifold failings, and earnestly seek that blessing from on High granted

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to the lowly in Spirit and contrite in heart.
"O Lord, revive Thy Work in the midst of the years...in wrath remember mercy" (Hab. 3. 2).

It has often been said, "Like priest, like people" certainly it is true "Like preacher, like convert." So here; for the converts were not of the mere "stand up," "hold up your hand," "come to the front," or "sign a ticket" kind; they were marked by

IV.—Unwavering Steadfastness.

Verse 42, "they *continued* stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in Breaking of Bread, and in prayers" (v. 46), "they *continued* daily with one accord in the temple."

FOUR THINGS IN WHICH THEY "CONTINUED,"
as do all healthy converts.

1. DOCTRINE, or "the *Word*." Many decry doctrine to-day, but the first need of new converts and older Christians is to be grounded in the great basal doctrines of the Christian Faith. Every Christian should study well the first great doctrinal epistle in the Bible—ROMANS.

Many say "Creed" does not matter, it is "character" that is wanted. Yet it is creed that produces character; not character first, then creed. The Book says "As a man *thinketh* in his heart (creed) so is he (character)" (Prov 32. 7). Paul exhorts his young son Timothy to be "nourished in the words of faith and of

good doctrine" (1 Tim. 4. 6). Hold fast to what Luke terms "things most surely believed among us" (Luke 1. 1).

2. FELLOWSHIP, or "the *Work*." I take this to be not that thing called "fellowship" by so many to-day. If you meet in a certain hall, with a certain company, or in a certain circle, you are said to be in "fellowship," although both life and doctrine *may* be a virtual denial of such. Here the Bible fellowship, or partnership is meant. A real working fellowship, as in Luke 5. 7, when the net brake and they were in difficulties, the disciples "beckoned to their *partners* which were in the other ship, that they should come and *help* them." That sweet *partnership* of Peter, James, and John (v. 10) seems to have developed throughout the years.

Active and Sleeping Partners.

The converts were not merely visible during the Revival, or spasmodic attenders thereafter, they "continued stedfastly" at the prayer meeting, the ministry meeting, the worship meeting, and wherever "help" was wanted and talent could be used for the good of His Own. Such a thing as "sleeping partners," which abound to-day, must have been unknown in Apostolic days. At least if they started as "sleeping" when they should be awake, they evidently so developed into "disorderliness" that grace gave them a long

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“sleep” (1 Cor. 11. 30). God sound in all our sleepy hearts: “Awake thou that sleepest...and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph. 5. 14).

3. BREAKING OF BREAD, or “the *ordinances*” (1 Cor. 11. 1). Not once a year, once a quarter, or even once a month, as satisfies so many to-day, but “Upon the first day of the *week* the disciples came together to break bread” (Acts 20. 7).

One great fact holds good throughout the Ages. The palmiest days of the Church have ever been when the ordinances were kept well to the front. And the saddest days when the ordinances have been well-nigh forgotten, or set aside altogether. No company of Christians has ever flourished for long years who have dared to set aside the two ordinances of the New Testament—Baptism and the Breaking of Bread. The Quakers to-day are visibly decaying, and those who live long enough will see the Salvation Army follow suit, remaining perhaps as a great social force, but at real salvation work a thing of the past. And these are no exceptions to the above law of cause and effect.

Dangers and Delights at the Supper.

Admitted there may be a danger of making the Lord's Supper a soul-saving ordinance, or a fetish, contending for the “reservation” of the bread, and such like ideas. Yet whilst ever abhorring either the doctrine of transubstantiation or consubstantiation, or anything which makes

the elements other than "only bread and only wine," there is a blessing and a joy in fulfilling the Saviour's own request: "This do in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22. 19).

Whenever health permits, opportunity occurs, and it is possible to join with fallen sinners saved by grace thus to "proclaim the Lord's Death till He come" (1 Cor. 11. 26, *m.*), may we like these early converts therein "continue stedfastly." Remember there is ever One heart gladdened by your presence at the Memorial Feast, the One whose body was broken and whose blood was shed for you and who said, "*This do.*"

4. "And in PRAYER." The crying need of the Church to-day is "prayer," the one thing missing in many homes is family prayers; the greatest need of the individual saint is "more prayer."

Not the well-phrased, long-winded prayers of some elders in the prayer meeting, who wander on for fifteen and even twenty minutes, and pray what I call "locust prayers," for they eat up every "green thing" (Exod. 10. 15), and leave neither meeting nor person for the young Christian, the nervous, or the novice to pray about; but the short, sharp, heart-felt ejaculatory prayer, like Peter in Matthew 14. 30, or Elijah in James 5. 17, 18.

It was said of C. H. SPURGEON that "he never prayed longer than ten minutes, yet he was never ten minutes without prayer." Lord, "teach *us*

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to pray" (Luke 11. 1); teach us to pray for "all saints" (Eph. 6. 18) and "all men" (2 Tim. 2. 1); teach us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5. 17); teach us to pray "with the Spirit, and with understanding" (1 Cor. 14. 15).

A Glorious Sequence.

Thus wherever you have disciples right at heart, Christ in His true place, and blessing flowing, you will get a glorious sequence. Men say it is bad grammar to use too many "ands." Read verses 41 to 47, emphasizing the word "and," notice the flow of the 10 in connection with this first Church Révival. And what a glorious finish to the chapter. Of the converts it is said: "Praising God and having favour with all the people" (v. 47). Not "praising Peter" and proposing to get such a remarkable man for the next mission, but "praising God," and bearing such witness that tradesmen, relatives, and even enemies admitted it was a genuine Revival, and they were genuine converts.

In conclusion, observe the closing sentence: "And the Lord added to the Church daily, such as were being saved." And praise God, His adding has continued, does continue, and will continue till "the Day of JESUS CHRIST" (Phil. 1. 6). "Unto Him be glory in the Church... throughout all AGES, world without end. AMEN"

“Things which God hath Given.”

MANY are the gifts of God. Time would fail to recount and speak of them all, yet it is ever an enchanting theme to recount the beneficence of God. We shall look at five which are distinctly stated to be “God-given.”

I. A God-Given Name.

“Wherefore God hath given Him a Name which is above every name” (Phil. 2. 9). That God-given Name is the simple, sweet, and precious word—“JESUS.” “Sweetest Name on mortal tongue.” The lowly Name is mentioned some 709 times in the New Testament, whilst the fuller title, Lord Jesus Christ, is mentioned 88 times, and Jesus Christ 197 times.

We thoroughly agree with those who discount the too familiar use of “Jesus,” “Jesus,” “dear Jesus,” “sweet Jesus,” and such like; we also deprecate those who would forbid the reverent use of that God-given Name—“JESUS.”

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For is it not a striking fact that this Name in Gospels and Epistles is associated with His birth: "Thou shalt call His Name Jesus" (Matt. 1. 21); with His baptism, "Jesus also being baptised" (Luke 3. 21); with His life, "Jesus walking by the sea" (Matt. 4. 18); with His miracles, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus" (John 2. 11); with His parables, "Jesus had finished these parables" (Matt. 13. 53); with His death, "Jesus died and rose again" (1 Thess. 4. 14); with His resurrection, "He hath raised up Jesus" (Acts 13. 33); with His standing in Heaven, "Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7. 55); with His crowning, "We see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2. 9); with His Priesthood, "Our great High Priest, Jesus" (Heb. 4. 14); with all the ransomed dead, for they "sleep in (or through) Jesus" (1 Thess. 4. 14); and with His Coming again, "This same Jesus shall so come" (Acts 1. 11).

Not only these, but many others, and here where the God-given Name is stated it is declared to be the one honoured Name in Heaven, earth, and Hell—"that at the Name of JESUS every knee shall bow, in Heaven, and on earth, and under the earth" (Phil. 2. 10).

In contrast, and to see how carefully the Holy Spirit indited the Scriptures, read Col. 1. 20. "Having made peace through the Blood of His Cross, by Him to *reconcile* all things unto Himself . . .

whether things in earth or things in Heaven.” There is no “under the earth,” or in Hell here.

When it is *reconciliation* it applies only to Heaven and earth, for there is no blood, no forgiveness, no reconciliation, and no hope in Hell. “He that is filthy, let him be filthy still.”

When it is *dominion* or authority, “every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” in Heaven, earth, and Hell. Solemn thought, that every human being—the atheist, the blasphemer, the bolshevist, the apostate, “every tongue” shall yet own the Lordship of the lowly and despised JESUS! Thank God for all who, through grace, have learned to own Him Saviour, Master, and Lord, now, and who will gladly crown Him Lord of all in the Day to come.

II. A God-Given Guide.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect” (2 Tim. 3. 16).

We prefer the Authorised, to the suspected Modernist translation of this verse in the Revised Version, which reads: “Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable,” which might imply that some Scripture is not so “inspired.”

God has given us a Guide Book, which, as this portion shows, is sufficient to guide from infancy to infinitude. Verse 15 says, “from a child

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(literally an *infant*) thou hast known the Holy Scriptures." Verse 17 speaks of the man of God attaining "*perfection*" and being "fully furnished."

This Guide Book proves itself to be God-given and God-inspired in a threefold way.

1. It is the only book that CAN "BORN AGAIN" PERSONS (1 Peter 1. 23). Cases can be cited where individuals who had no missionary or teacher, only the New Testament, have by reading, been saved and blest.

2. It is *the* MATCHLESS CLEANSER. No man can read the God-given Book sincerely and keep on sinning. For a "young man" or an old man, it cleanses his ways (Psa. 119. 9; John 15. 3).

3. It is the only Book that LEADS TO PERFECT-ION. Think of the saintly names of the ages—Bernard, Guyon, Rutherford, M'Cheyne, Bonar, Muller, Havergal—every one made "holy" by contact with the Word of God.

It is the complete and only genuine Guide for every saint, all the way from earth to Heaven. It furnishes all the instruction he needs concerning his life in the family, the world, and the Church. It is a complete "inquire within" as to the doctrine of the Christian Faith, the constitution and government of the Church, the future of mankind, and the eternal state of all. Catechisms, creeds, confessions, the tomes and opinions of men, and all human-made documents must stand aside; the appeal must be ever and only to "What saith

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the Scripture?” (Rom. 4. 3). May each reader whole-heartedly exclaim: “Stablish Thy Word unto Thy servant” (Psa. 119. 38).

III. A God-Given Title.

“And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch” (Acts 11. 26). WM. LINCOLN, the able expositor of Beresford Chapel, London, contended that this could be read, “called of God Christians,” for it was a God-given title. Dr. YOUNG’S literal translation renders it, “divinely called;” 1 Peter 4. 16 certainly confirms it as a God-accepted title: “If any suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed.”

Whether given by the Devil in derision, or as a Divine title, it is certainly an honoured name, for it indicates that the disciples were so like Christ that they were called *Christionoi*, Christ-ones or Christians. Would that this had applied throughout the ages.

If all believers on the Lord Jesus had been satisfied with this God-given title of “Christian,” and had eschewed all man-made titles, such as Anglican, Baptist, Congregational, Presbyterian, Methodist, Moravian, Episcopalian, Scientist, Adventist, and such like, how different things might have been to-day both in Church and world.

There is not the slightest warrant in Scripture for any company calling itself after a *Nation*, as

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Church of England, or Scotland, or Ireland, of Canada, of China, or any other land. The earthly title indicates the earthly origin; or after a *method* of gathering, as Presbyterian, Congregational; after an *ordinance*, as Baptist. Why not have Breaking of Breadist? And less still for calling themselves after a *man*, as Lutheran, Calvinist, Wesleyan, Morrisonian, or any other title.

Called of God "Christians" was sufficient at first, should have been sufficient all along, and more than ever should be sufficient to-day. Refuse every man-made, God-dishonouring, and unscriptural title, and hold fast to the Christ-exalting, God-honouring, and Scripture warranted title of "Christian."

IV. A God-Given Centre.

"And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1. 22, 23). In Colossians it is stated that "He is the Head of the Body" (chap. 1. 18), and they are exhorted to "Let no man beguile you...in not holding the Head" (chap. 2. 19). One Church, one Body, one Head. If you saw a man in the street with one body and 2, 3, or 5 heads you would consider him a monstrosity. Yet what must be said of the many heads claimed by the members of the "one Body." Some have a head in Rome, some in

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Canterbury, some in London, some in New York or Boston, some in a synod, some in a legal hundred, some in an elderhood, some in a “General,” and so on. Why should not all be satisfied to say, “Our Head is in Heaven” (see Eph. 6. 9).

“THERE IS ONE BODY” (Eph. 4. 4), and there should never have been any more than “*one*,” both visible and invisible. Alas, that man has made “bodies” many, “heads” many, and churches many. The Saviour prayed concerning His own, “I will that they all may be *one*” (John 17. 21). Whereas the Enemy has peeled, scattered, and divided the saints till to-day there are over 300 leading denominations and numberless smaller sects, parties, and divisions, most of them having a recognised head, leader, or earthly centre, instead of owning *only* the one Head in Heaven (Eph. 5. 23).

After speaking on this line in a large meeting, a lady approached me and said: “Might I ask, to what Church do you belong?” I replied: “The same as St. Paul.” “Oh,” she said, and after a pause, added: “And to what Church did he belong?” “The same as I do,” I replied, and then added the solemn statement: “*The only Church that anyone has any right to belong to—the Church of the living God.*”

There is nothing in Scripture to warrant membership in a stone and lime building called a

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church; in a human combination of men and women calling themselves a church; or in any human organisation, confederation, or association.

The Bible speaks of "many members in one Body" (Rom. 12. 4), of "members one of another" (Rom. 12. 15), of "God set members in the Body" (1 Cor. 12. 18); or "ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. 12. 27); or "members of His Body" (Eph. 5. 30); but it nowhere speaks of any other membership.

Someone may reply: "But there are no churches such as you indicate to-day, so we must associate with one sect or party or another." "Indeed! The truth is that there are not hundreds, but thousands of companies of Christians who own no Head but one, Christ in Glory; no creed or set of doctrines but one—"the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible;" no circle of fellowship but one, "the Church, which is His Body;" no authority but One, the Son of Man who still holds the seven stars in His hand, controlling and directing (Rev. 1. 13), not having delegated one to any Pope, Archbishop, Priest, Presbyter, Elder, or any mere man; in fact, whose creed might be summed up in three words—"CHRIST IS ALL" (Col. 3. 11).

Make inquiries and you will find such a company, then cease from all human, Modernist, or doubtful associations, and, like Paul, be "with them, coming in and going out" (Acts 9. 28).

V. A God-Given Hope.

“God our Father hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and GOOD HOPE through grace” (2 Thess. 2. 16). “Looking for that Blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2. 13).

Anyone looking over the vista of the ages, at the world-field at large, the state of society in civilised and semi-civilised lands, the problems of politics leaving all kinds of politicians “at their wits’ end,” the hopeless mixture of Church and world in the many-branched tree of Christendom; in fact, looking anywhere “under the sun,” is left without hope.

Anyone thinking of the purpose of God, not to save the world, but “to take out of the Gentiles (nations) a people for His Name” (Acts 15. 14); accounting that what “He had promised, He was able to perform” (Rom. 5. 21); and remembering the Promise of the Master: “If I go, *I will come again* and receive you unto Myself” (John 14. 3), has a HOPE sure and certain anchored within the Veil.

That Hope is that at *any moment* He who bowed His holy head in death on Calvary, who was exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, may leave Heaven’s Throne, descend into the clouds above London, Melbourne, New York,

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Hong Kong, and every other place, give a "shout" which will raise all the dead saints whether buried on land or in the sea; speak with Arch-angelic "Voice" (His own voice), and instantly change every living saint into His own image; then blow the "last trump"—the trump of the boatmen or the huntsmen—and catch away every true child of God, every one washed in the Blood of the Lamb, to "be for ever with the Lord" (see 1 Cor. 15. 51-57; 1 Thess. 4. 14-17).

That is the Hope held by many of the ablest "ministers of the Word" to-day of various schools; and by thousands, nay, millions, of intelligent Christian men and women of all parties and places. It is the only Hope set forth in the Scriptures for the individual Christian, the bereaved family, the sorrow-stricken Church, and the sin-stricken world. The rightful Head of the Church is Coming to claim His own; the rightful Ruler of Israel is Coming to make the dry bones live and once more cleave bone to bone till they become "a very great army" (Ezek. 37. 1-10); the Rightful Ruler of earth is Returning to see all wrongs righted (James 5. 1-8); and make this desert world "blossom as the rose" (Isa. 35. 1).

With such a Hope shining in our hearts, we close our paper in the closing words of Holy Writ: "He which testifieth these things saith, *Surely I come quickly,*" and may each heart reply, "Even so, COME, LORD JESUS."

Living Witnesses to the Lord's Coming.

IN the New Testament God has given us two real living specimens of waiters for their coming Lord (Luke 2. 25-32; 36-38). A man—SIMEON; a woman—ANNA, telling us of male and female watchers for the Coming. Their names indicate the class of people waiting for the Coming then, and those who are waiting for His Coming to-day.

SIMEON means "hearing with alacrity." Are these not the very Christians who are interested in the Coming to-day? Those who have "gladly received His Word," and who, in reading the Scriptures, say: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. 3. 9). However men may deride the thought of Christ coming back to earth, these Christians accept the plain statements of the Lord: "I will come again" (John 14. 3), and of His Word: "This same Jesus shall come" (Acts 1. 11).

ANNA, or Hannah, means "grace" or "gracious." And is it not "sinners saved by

grace," turned from idols, who are "waiting for His Son from Heaven" (1 Thess. 1. 10)? Note how interesting the details. Anna "was the daughter of PHANUEL, which means "the face of God." Is it not the fathers and mothers who often see "the face of God" in prayer, who see their sons and daughters "sinners saved by grace?" Further, she was of "the tribe of ASER or Asher." That is the tribe I belong to, and I hope it is the tribe you belong to, for Asher means "happy." It is the happy tribe, and the believers who are truly waiting for the Coming of the Lord are the happiest people on earth, for their eyes have been turned from everything under the Sun to the Man at God's Right Hand, whom they are looking for to "appear without sin unto Salvation" (Heb. 9. 28).

Before we look at the seven marks which the Holy Ghost has given concerning these two Living Witnesses, let me point out the twofold aspect of the *first* Coming. In Luke 2 the Lord comes personally, privately, to the few in the midst of a great remnant, to the lowly and the looking ones. In Luke 19 there is a more public manifestation, and the cry goes forth, "Blessed be the King that Cometh in the Name of the Lord" (v. 38). Not two Comings, but two aspects of one Coming. So in the *second* Advent. He shall come first *to* His own, secretly, quietly, quickly; not to the world, but to the saved,

“who believe that Jesus died and rose again” (1 Thess. 4. 14); then He will come *with* His Own, to the earth, “in power and great glory” (Matt. 24. 30). Distinguish these two aspects of the Second Coming, and you will find many portions of Scripture made clear and plain.

Now let us look at the

SEVEN MARKS OF A LIVING WITNESS,

which I am not making, but taking from the Scriptures.

SIMEON has 4 marks. The first is not anything great, or showy, or sensational.

MARK I.—A Just Man.

“The same was JUST” (v. 25). Not only was he justified, he was “just.” A manward aspect. He was known as true, honest, just, faithful, everything which a Christian ought to be. His word was as good as his bond. His practice was equal to his profession. He carried out in the home, in business in the City, the things which he most surely believes. He believed in God, and people believed in him.

Alas! how many of us fail in this simply elementary piece of Christian evidence. We are too like a brother of whom I heard. In a meeting he was boasting of being redeemed, head-redeemed, hand-redeemed, feet-redeemed, and so on, then stamping on the platform, he

exclaimed, "I'm standing on redemption ground."
"No, you're not," said a voice from the audience.
"You're standing in a pair of boots you haven't
paid for." Let every one who talks about
expecting the Lord see first and foremost that
his actions are "JUST."

MARK II.—A Devout Man.

"The same man was just and DEVOUT" (v. 25).
Just to men, devout to God. The good old
English word, often used with scorn, was true
of Simeon. He was "*pious*," sincere, devout.
Long before the exhortation of Philippians
1. 10: "That ye may be *sincere* and without offence
till the day of Christ" was given, it was practised
in the daily life of Simeon.

It is said that the English word "sincere"
is derived from two words used in connection
with buildings in Rome. At times when there
were cracks or flaws in the marble, dishonest
builders filled up the cracks with wax, which
was all right till a few sunny days disclosed
the deception. Hence in contracts it became
customary to insert the words "*sine ceres*,"
without wax. No sham, no shoddy, trans-
parent, sincere, devout in the Presence of God.
What else could any one be who was momen-
tarily expecting the Return of his Lord? And
who remembered that "every one of us must give
account of *himself* to God" (Rom. 14. 12).

MARK III.—Patiently Waiting.

“The same man was . . . WAITING for the consolation of Israel” (v. 25). It had been revealed to him that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ (v. 26). Whether that sight was to be morning, noon, or night; whether it was this year, next year, or years hence, the aged veteran in full assurance of faith had only one thing to do, “be-waiting.” Others might calculate, fix dates, talk about signs, and mislead many. Simeon chose to “wait.” The exhortation of James 5. 7: “Be *patient*, therefore, brethren, unto the Coming of the Lord,” was exemplified before it was written, in this venerable Hebrew patriarch.

“Christ is coming.” *How* we know, *when* we know not; our only business is to keep “*waiting* for His Coming.”

MARK IV.—A Spirit-Filled Man.

“And the Holy Ghost was upon him” (v. 25). The man who was just to man, devout to God, patient in waiting, was the one who was filled with the Spirit. Therein lies the secret of his correct dealing with God and man. Because the theme of the baptism, filling, or enduing with the Holy Spirit has been abused by many and travestied by others, many neglect the subject altogether, and seldom if ever give it

a thought. But let us not forget, there is very much in Scripture concerning the Holy Spirit, as befits one of the Persons in the glorious Trinity.

There is THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT. "By one Spirit are we all baptised into one Body" (1 Cor. 12. 13). That occurs the moment of conversion, and is never repeated. To speak of a repeated baptism of the Spirit is unscriptural. The words in Acts 19. 2: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost *since* ye believe?" often used to prove more baptisms than one, rightly read in the R.V.: "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost *when* ye believed?"

There is also THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2. 4; 4.31). Peter, Acts 4. 8; John, Luke 1. 41; Elizabeth, v. 41; Zacharias, v. 67; Stephen, Acts 6.5; Paul, Acts 13. 9; and the disciples, Acts 13. 52, are all spoken of as being "filled with the Holy Ghost." The exhortation is not to be *baptised*, but to be *filled* with the Spirit (Eph. 5. 18). Baptism can be only once, filling a continuous act.

Dr. CHARLES INWOOD, the most explicit exponent of what is known as "Keswick Teaching" in recent years, made this strong statement not long before his unexpected Home-call.

"Let me ask you to remember that there is no such thing as a once-for-all fulness; it is a *continuous appropriation* of a *continuous supply*

from Jesus Christ Himself—a moment by moment faith in a moment by moment Saviour, for a moment by moment cleansing, and a *moment by moment filling*. As I trust Him He fills me; so long as I trust Him He fills me; the moment I begin to believe, that moment I begin to receive, and so long as I keep believing, praise the Lord! so long I keep receiving.”

May each of us, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, ” know more and more what it is to be “filled with the Spirit.”

We pass now to the woman, ANNA, of the “Happy” tribe, and note that she was

MARK V.—A Consistent Woman.

“She DEPARTED NOT from the temple” (v. 37). She had many good reasons for retiring and handing on the work to others. “She was of great age,” for she must have been about 111 years old. Say she was married at 20, lived 7 years at least with her husband, “had been a widow even *for* 84 years” (R.V.). Yet she stuck to the work which God had given her.

Doubtless then as now some of the younger sisters gave her the hint that it was time she was retiring; they could do the work so much quicker and better. Others made remarks about her age, her little failings, her persistency; yet instead of doing what so many do, take the huff and

retire, Anna counted she had received the call to the work, and the strength for the work, from God, and until He thought fit "she departed not," but "served night and day."

Notice that it is a negative mark, for God notes the negative as well as the positive. He records in His book what we "do not" as well as what we "do." The three Hebrew children, even faced with a burning, fiery furnace, said: "We will *not* . . . worship the Golden Image" (Dan. 3. 18). And God writes it in His Book to their eternal credit. The feeble believers in the Church at Pergamos, "even where Satan's seat was," had "*not* denied My faith" (Rev. 2. 13); and some in Sardis had *not* defiled their garments (3. 4); others in Philadelphia had "*not* denied My Name" (v. 8); and the record stands to their credit in the closing book of the Bible.

My brother, remember, your *denials* are often as much value to God as your *assertions*, and will be equally rewarded (Matt. 16. 24; Titus 2. 12). "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast"—CONSISTENT (1 Cor. 15. 58).

MARK VI.—Love's Service

was another mark. "But SERVED GOD with fastings and prayers" (v. 37). If the first womanly mark is negative, the second is distinctly positive. Whilst she did yeoman service for the saints, the motive power was "she served God."

“With *fastings* and *prayers*.” Not with feasting and rejoicings. Is there not a danger to-day that in order to get numbers of saints together, there must be a feasting of some kind, singing, and rejoicing. Certainly there are few who come together “only for prayer,” and fasting is a thing almost unknown in the Church of to-day. Probably if we had more of the “waiting with fastings and prayers” we would have more of that for which so many long—revival; aye, and more of “the blessing which maketh rich.”

“NIGHT AND DAY” (v. 37). Not spasmodic, not when praised or patted on the back, not when well rewarded, not in times of special missions, but under the eye of God, through evil report and good report, in the limelight—*day*; and in the dim light—*night*; love continued its lowly and persistent service. “Always abounding.”

MARK VII.—She was Christ-Centred.

“She . . . gave thanks . . . unto the Lord, and SPAKE OF HIM to all them that looked for redemption in Israel” (v. 38). Why did she speak of Him. Because her mind and heart were full of Him. She might, like her successors of to-day, have spoken of the home of Mrs. Abraham (the neighbour of her day); of the dress of Mrs. Isaac; of the sayings of Mrs. Jacob; or of the peculiarities the failings, and other things of many another, but she spake of the only Person worth speaking

about, the One for whom she was looking, "the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2. 26). Oh, that our looking for the Lord might deliver us more and more from the world's "filthy conversation" (2 Peter 2. 7); draw us into the line of the saints' "chaste conversation" (1 Peter 3. 2); and like one of old enable us to "order our conversation aright" (Psa. 50. 23), so that, Anna-like, we may be found to "speak of Him."

A Twofold Object.

In closing, notice that SIMEON "waited for the *consolation* of Israel" (v. 25); whilst ANNA spake to them "that looked for *redemption* in Israel" (38 m.). Are these not the two triumphs for which we wait, at the Coming of the Lord? *Consolation* for all the sorrows, the heartburnings, the weepings, the burdens of the way, "when Jesus comes." *Redemption* from sin, the grave, the Devil, our own wicked hearts, false brethren and all. Redemption for the whole being, "spirit and soul and body" (1 Thess. 5. 20), the moment the Voice is heard and the Trump of God sounds.

"And God has fixed the Happy Day,
 When the last tear shall dim our eyes;
 When He will wipe all tears away,
 And fill our hearts with glad surprise.
 To *dwell with Him, to see His face,*
 And *sing for ever* of His grace."

Loved Ones Gone Before.

A Word of Comfort for the Bereaved.

LITTLE is said in the Scriptures concerning our loved ones who have gone before, but that little how precious. Eight words practically convey what is known concerning their eternal felicity.

Where are They?

“To depart and to be *with Christ*” (Phil. 1. 23). If no other words had ever been revealed than these two words, “*with Christ*,” they would have been sufficient to tell us of peace, grace, glory, and all that we could possibly desire for any loved one. “In Thy Presence is fulness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psa. 16. 11).

The question, *Where is Heaven?* is one that is often discussed. Many and varied have been the suggestions as to the place, nature, and other matters. Scripture seems to make clear one thing—Heaven is where Christ is; and where Christ is is Heaven. The lines of the hymn put it most tersely, “’Tis Heaven where Jesus is, and nowhere else beside.”

“*With Christ*” surely includes all that anyone need desire to know concerning the habitation of our loved ones gone before.

“*With Him* in the Holy Mount” (2 Peter 1. 18), was a scene which never faded from the memory of the Apostle Peter, nor of his colleagues—Moses, Elias, James, and John—in that Shekinah scene (Mark 8. 4). The Voice from the excellent Glory concerning the “beloved Son,” once heard, could never again be forgotten.

“*With Him* in Glory” (Col. 3. 4) shall “appear” all the Ransomed, when “they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more...for the Lamb who is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living Fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Rev. 7. 16, 17).

How Do They Fare?

“To be with Christ, which is *far better*” (Phil. 1. 23). “Very far better” (R.V.), “Very much better” (J.N.D.), “Far the best” (Moffatt). “Better” is given in Dr. Young’s Concordance as meaning “stronger, more powerful,” and is the same word translated “*so much better* than the Angels” in Hebrews 1. 4.

The Prodigal went into “a *far* country” (same word, Luke 15. 13). The Christian on his Home-call goes into a “*far, far better*” condition, in a better Country.

However loved, cared for, favoured with circumstances, and the good things of this life, by sovereign grace, the Christian in the life to come

is "*far, far better.*" "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2. 9).

How Do They Feel?

"We are willing to be absent from the body, and to be *present* with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5. 8). "*At Home* with the Lord" (R.V.); "*Reside* with the Lord" (Moffatt). "To be among one's own people, to be at Home" (Young).

How many times have we wondered, days, weeks, or months after our loved ones have crossed the bourne, how they feel in their new abode, amongst so many to whom they are unknown? As truly as they were "at home" amongst loved ones on earth; nay, more truly are they "at Home amongst their own People in Glory, where

"Not one will be a stranger,
Though never met before."

How are they Employed?

"His servants shall *serve Him*, and they shall see His face" (Rev. 22. 3). "Serve and worship Him" (Moffatt). Dr. YOUNG renders it, "serve publicly or reverentially." It is the same word that is used in Matthew 4. 10: "Him only shalt thou *serve*," and by Paul in Acts 27. 23: "Whose I am and whom I *serve*."

As happy and as hearty as the apostle served

the Lord He loved during the 30 strenuous years of his pilgrimage, so—yea, even more so—shall our loved ones Redeemed by precious Blood serve the Lord, whilst through endless years they gaze upon His face.

The usual thought of sitting on thrones, wearing crowns of gold, clothed in white robes, and tuning harps is not the climax of the Servant. Not inanimate, but *active* service is depicted in the “following of the Lamb whithersoever He goeth” (Rev. 14. 4). “Know ye not that the Saints shall judge the world” (1 Cor. 6. 2).

Our blessed Lord has not been inactive during the days of His absence, nor shall His own be inactive during the endless days of the enjoyment of His Presence. Everything pertaining to homeliness, activity, and hope is suggested in the promise of God. “Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with man, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and He Himself will be with them, and be their God” (Rev. 21. 3).

What more glory or bliss could we wish our loved departed than to know that they are “WITH CHRIST”—“FAR BETTER”—“AT HOME”—“SERVING CHRIST.” And, “Yet a very little while” (Heb. 10. 37, R.V.) and the Reunion Morning, in the Land where partings are unknown. “Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

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STANDING at the Portals of the opening Year, the mind naturally takes a three-fold look—A survey of the months, or years, or parts of a century of the Christian life now *past*; a look around at the events of the year just closed and at things *present*; a glance into the *future*, at the months or years which may elapse before our exodus to be “with Christ,” and what will follow when He Comes to take us to be with Himself for ever.

In our survey three striking scenes, linked with three great words, rise clearly before our eyes. Viewing the past, as in First Samuel, chapter 7, we can say with Israel of old,

“HITHERTO—the Lord.”

In Scene I, then, as now, the people were WEARY (v. 20). “How long” was the cry, for it was twenty years since the Ark had been taken. The Visible Presence of God was no longer with them, and “all Israel lamented after the Lord.” How many saints to-day are inclined to say, “My Lord delayeth His Coming!”

They had sadly “DEPARTED FROM THE LORD” (v. 3), in that strange gods, Baalim and Ash-

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taroth, were set up in their midst. Have we not all to admit "departure" in heart or in ways to-day?

DIFFICULTIES abounded. *Within* the cry was, "Give us a king" (chap. 8. 6). Make us like the nations around. Let us have something visible and great for our eyes to feast upon. *Without* "the Philistines had gathered together" (v. 7) against them in such hosts that Israel "was afraid." It looked as though they were to be blotted out, until the Lord "thundered with a great thunder" (v. 10), and that changed things.

Then "Samuel took a sucking lamb" (v. 9). THE LITTLE LAMB WAS THE CENTRE. That meant deliverance, and safety, and gladness. So to-day "the little Lamb" (Rev. 5. 6, twenty-eight times so rendered) is the centre of the Church on earth and in Glory, and is their hope, and joy, and glory.

Yet in weariness of heart, with dangers great without and difficulties abounding within, by the blood and power of "the Lamb" in the midst, they were enabled to say, "HITHERTO—THE LORD."

And notice where they said it, "between Mizpah and Shen" (v. 12). Shen means the Crag; and Mizpah, the Watchtower. So we to-day, between the rugged Cross on the Crag of Calvary and the moment of hearing from the

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Watchtower the Cry, "Behold, He Cometh," can say, in spite of difficulties, trials, adversaries, and the hosts of Hell and earth against us—"HITHERTO—THE LORD HATH HELPED US."

"HENCEFORTH—the Crown."

The Second Scene is a prison in Rome, where the Chief Apostle lies waiting his execution. The one so like his Master in life, is also like Him in death. As a poet has said concerning this noble Warrior of the Cross:

"Lo, at last, a Roman dungeon
And a felon's chain,
Suffering, care, and broken friendships,
All his present gain."

Thirty years of ardent WARFARE lay behind him, during which he had been "in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft" (2 Cor. 11. 23). Yet he could say, "I have fought a good *fight*." Gripping the blade of truth that day the Lord met him on the Damascus road, he had used it valiantly during all these years as "a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2. 3).

The COURSE had at times been tortuous. Listen to his list: "In perils of waters, in perils by robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren" (2 Cor. 11. 26).

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Yet he persisted steadily. No short cuts round the course, no taking it easy, no dodging, no retiring; a steady, straight run to the end, enabling him to say, "I have finished my *course*."

The FAITH, which even he at one time sought to "destroy" (Gal. 1. 23), had by some been denied (1 Tim. 5. 8; Rev. 2. 13), by others resisted (2 Tim. 3. 8), by others made shipwreck of (1 Tim. 1. 19), whilst others had become "reprobates" concerning it (2 Tim. 3. 8). Multitudes had "turned away their ears from the truth, and had turned unto fables," yet looking back on numerous wrecks on the shores of time, he could say, "I have kept the Faith."

Even at that moment he solemnly added, "I am now ready to be offered"—to be an oblation or a sacrifice—the tramp of the executioners' men is just about to sound in his ears, his days on earth are few, his end is certain.

Yet, looking back o'er the thirty years of hardships and toil, looking around at the days darkening, and looking for the moment of "departure" so near at hand, hear his exultant cry, "HENCEFORTH—THE CROWN!" (2 Tim. 4. 7).

And note how he who had been the narrow-minded Pharisee (Acts 26. 5) is now the large-hearted Christian as he adds, "and not to *me* only, but unto *all* them that love His appearing"

(v. 8), "them that are Christ's at His Coming" (1 Cor. 15. 23). The basis grace from first to last.

"HEREAFTER—Full Knowledge."

The Third Scene is one beloved by all. The Master is gathered with His own loved disciples at supper. The multitudes are outside, His own People, to whom He came, have rejected Him. He is "about to depart out of this world unto the Father" (v. 1), hence He speaks words of comfort and cheer to the few who shall soon realise the enmity of the world.

During the feet-washing, in reply to the objection raised by Simon Peter, He utters the wonderful words, "WHAT I DO THOU KNOWEST NOT NOW; BUT THOU SHALT KNOW HEREAFTER" (John 13. 7). Primarily the word "hereafter" may be local, as some translations have it "afterwards," and may apply to the knowledge that Peter would acquire as he sought to "follow in His steps;" yet the word doubtless has a deeper and a wider significance.

How many things we know not now—Why He set His heart upon us? Why He "called" us? Why the Church has been so rent and storm-tossed? Why missionary effort has been so slow? Why the good suffer and often the wicked go free? Why loved ones are called away? Why the monster death strides world-wide through the centuries? Nay, a thousand "Whys" echo "thou

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knowest not *now*," and re-echo "thou shalt know **HEREAFTER.**"

What we shall Know "Hereafter."

Among the many things to which we shall attain "full knowledge,"

We shall know **GOD**. 'Tis eternal life to know Him now (John 17. 3), and, like Paul, we aspire to be "increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1. 10); but only in the Glory Land shall we in the fullest sense know "the only True God" (John 17. 3). Then also "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11. 9).

We shall know **CHRIST**. Blessed be every one who can say with the Chief of Sinners—"I know *whom* I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that Day" (2 Tim. 1. 12), and who like Peter has made the bold confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6. 69). May the deepening desire in the hearts of all such be, "That I may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection" (Phil. 3. 10).

Indeed the knowledge of Christ should, and will, continue to expand "until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4. 13).

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When we “see Him as He is” (1 John 3. 2), as He lays His hand upon us, shall the scar marks of Calvary not help us to know more of Him who “was dead,” and the perfection of our minds not enable us to know Him who “is alive” and “alive for evermore” (Rev. 1. 17). John the beloved knew Him thus, shall not all the beloved have that endless vision of the Glorified One?

Shall we Know one another?

We shall know EACH OTHER. How often is the question asked, “Shall we know our loved ones in Heaven?” David expected to see and know his loved babe on the other side (2 Sam. 12. 33). Though Jacob thought Joseph was dead, he spake about going to him in the spirit world (Gen. 37. 35). Hundreds of years after their decease, Peter, James, and John needed no introduction to Moses and Elias on the Holy Mount (Matt. 17. 4). The dying thief was surely meant to see and know Him whom he called “Lord” (Luke 23. 43), and shall not each sinner saved by grace equally know Him and the loved who have gone before?

Not of every one who has gone, but of every one who has truly “believed on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 16. 31) can we assert reunion and bliss. Only the saved can use these words, “Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but *then shall I know even as also I am known*” (1 Cor. 13. 13).

When we get the Key.

When Joseph reached the Throne, and looked back upon the chequered course through which he had attained thereto—the dry pit, the wicked wife of Potiphar, the forgetful companions of the prison, the why and the wherefore was given him from the Lord, and he declared to his eleven wicked brethren, “Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry...for *God did send me before you to preserve life*” (Gen. 45. 5). No pit, no twenty pieces of silver, no prison would have meant a father, a family, and probably a nation dying with starvation—but God meant salvation.

So when we stand on the Golden Strand and look back o’er life’s chequered course, and remember the disappointments, trials, disasters, tragedies, and even death itself, having “full knowledge” of the purpose and ways of our God, shall we not with hearts o’erflowing with adoration at the realisation of “the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God” (Rom. 11. 33) exclaim, “He hath done all things well” (Mark 7. 37).

Meanwhile, as we set out upon the unfried path of another year, let our prayer be—

“Great Shepherd! firmly grasp my hand
And lead me while I go,
For Thou hast said Thy purpose grand,
Which yet I do not understand,
HEREAFTER I shall know.”

The Unchangeable.

THE embers of the evening fire were burning low. I sat musing o'er the flight of Time. The mark of change and decay seemed to be stamped on everything. Kings and empires rise and fall. Wealth taketh to herself wings and flieth away. Earthly friends do fade and leave us.

Lord Tennyson, the poet laureate, could think of nothing more permanent in the whole earth than the babbling brook, of which he sings:

“ Till last by Philip's farm I flow,
To join the brimming river;
For men may come, and men may go,
But I go on for ever.”

Look around to-day on the wide, wide world and behold the unrest, the anxiety, the change—international, national, ecclesiastical, commercial, industrial, domestic, and personal.

What an emphasis to the contrasts of Hebrews 1. 11, 12:

They shall perish, . . . *but* . . . Thou remainest.

They all shall wax	}	<i>but</i>	{	Thou art the
old,				same, and
They shall be				Thy years shall
changed;				not fail.

The weary changeable sea of the seen and temporal dashing against the serene and changeless cliffs of the unseen and eternal.

Let us turn to seven out of the many "unchangeables" in God's blessed Word.

I. An Unchangeable God.

"For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3. 6).

The days were dark at the close of the reign of Law, almost as dark as they will be at the close of the reign of Grace. High-handed heresy and cold-hearted orthodoxy abounded, yet mid the changing nations, ways, and time, the unchangeable Jehovah attracts the eye, and draws the heart of the faithful remnant to Himself, to the Book of remembrance, and to the day of recompense.

Notice the precious link—Jehovah with Jacob. Had it been "ye sons of Abraham," the "*faithful*" (Gal. 3. 9), we might have feared to claim the promise on account of our unfaithfulness; had it been "ye sons of Isaac," the *obedient*, we might have felt

our failures in obedience; but with "ye sons of Jacob" we link the promise, "Fear not, thou *worm* Jacob" (Isa. 41. 14), and think of his character—"supplanter;" and with ten thousand changes and failings, within and around, we look up to the unchanging Jehovah, and confidently exclaim, "I will trust, and not be afraid" (Isa. 12. 2).

Mid days of declension let us "hold fast" to the unchangeable character of our God as:

1. CREATOR. "God that made the worlds" (Heb. 1. 2), "so God created man" (Gen. 1. 27), discarding the popular fallacy of evolution through protoplasm, tadpoles, frogs, mammals, monkeys, men.

At the meeting of the Royal Society in the year 1905 Dr. Darwin, a relative of Professor Darwin, the originator of the evolution theory, closed a memorable address with these words: "After all, the Riddle of the Universe remains unread."

The accumulated wisdom of the society of the wisest of men failed to solve what the humblest believer understands. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God" (Heb. 11. 3). No more simple, sensible, yet sublime creation idea than that of Genesis 1. 1:

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“In the beginning God created.” God spake—worlds were.

2. REDEEMER. “God so loved the world” (John 3. 16), “God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3. 16), discarding the modern bloodless theories of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

3. JUDGE. “God shall judge the secrets of men” (Rom. 2. 16). “Every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14. 12), discarding the lawless spirit of the age which repudiates responsibility in family, national, and spiritual spheres, and places human reason on the throne of judgment.

With a clear discernment of the times we look away from the turbulent sea of earth to the heavenly hills, and with adoring hearts exclaim, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever” (Psa. 45. 6).

II. An Unchangeable Saviour.

“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever” (Heb. 13. 8).

The Lord Jesus Christ shining in the first verse of the Bible (“GOD” Elohim, the Hebrew plural, not implying two, but three or more, and occurring over three thousand times in the Scriptures) and overshadowing with His “grace” the closing

verse of the sacred Word. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all" (Rev. 22. 21).

Had any man been writing the Bible he would have been content with "yesterday, to-day, and *to-morrow*," but the divine Author ascribes unchangeableness to His beloved Son, and to all united to Him by faith, and links yesterday and to-day with "*for ever*."

Linked with this unchangeable Person is the promise, "He hath said, I will *never, never, never* leave thee, nor forsake thee" (v. 5). Some take the threefold never (for such is the force of the word) as indicating the never of the Father, the never of the Son, and the never of the Spirit. Precious and true as this is it seems to refer primarily to those to whom it was given, "for He hath said." To whom did He say it?

1. TO JACOB ON A STONE. "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for *I will not leave thee*, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Gen. 28. 15). A friendless, homeless, bedless stranger, with a stone for his pillow, yet he was not godless, for when every earthly friend had failed, all human hopes had perished, and

darkness and gloom was his portion, God promised, "I will not leave thee."

2. TO MOSES ON HIS DEATHBED, to pass on to Joshua, who was to lead the children into the land: "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them; for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; *He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*" (Gen. 31. 6). To the aged patriarch the weary desert journey lay behind; to the young commander bitter battles with thirty-three kings lay before; to both the joy and stay was, "God is faithful."

3. TO DAVID ON THE THRONE. "And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it; fear not, nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee, *He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord" (1 Chron. 28. 20). All his sinnings past, his wanderings over, his enemies subdued, David sits firmly on the throne of Israel; his son, who is to be known as "Solomon in all his glory," is to succeed him. Yet for the father putting off the crown or the son putting it on there is one rock of hope: "MY GOD—He will not fail."

Hence you and I may boldly say, whether we spend our future sleeping on a stone or

sitting on a throne: "The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (v. 6). And should the last enemy, death, lay his cold hand upon us we can, like David, transpose this promise into song, and say: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me" (Psa. 22. 4).

Blessed, unchangeable Saviour, yesterday, as the Spotless Sacrifice, He bare our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Peter 2. 14); to-day, as the Great High Priest, He bears our sorrows on the throne; to-morrow, as the Coming King, He will bear ourselves—spirit, soul, and body—to be for ever with Himself (1 Thess. 4. 17).

III. An Unchangeable Holy Spirit.

"Jesus saith,..Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more;..I will not leave you comfortless (or orphans);..I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever" (John 14. 9-20).

What a precious promise!—"Another Comforter."

"ANOTHER," indicating that whatever the Master Himself had been in the days of His flesh—Guide, Comforter, Sustainer,

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Ruler, Friend—such the Holy Spirit is to be to every true disciple during the days of His absence.

“COMFORTER”—Paraclete, Agent, or Advocate. Indicating that the “little flock” would continue to be “as sheep in the midst of wolves” (Matt. 10. 16), “pilgrims and strangers” (1 Peter 2. 11), having “here no continuing city” (Heb. 13. 14), and ever needing a Comforter to whisper all through the desert drear, “Fear not;” an agent to “help infirmities” and to “make intercession” (Rom. 8. 26, 27).

Thank God, such a One we have in the Holy Spirit, who though often grieved (Eph. 4. 30), or quenched (1 Thess. 5. 19), yet never ceases to abide with every genuine believer, for the Master promised, “He shall abide with you for ever,” and every believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1. 13).

How He has made known “the God of all comfort” (2 Cor. 1. 3) in the hearts of the distressed only those who have passed through Baca’s valley can confirm. Recently I sought to comfort a brother who had lost a son and then a daughter. Not knowing quite how to begin, I was stumbling on, when he said, “Look here, my

brother, I would not have missed passing through what I have passed through for all the world. In the darkest hour, when the second one lay still in death, God the Holy Spirit flooded my soul with a comfort which I cannot express." Two strong men, as we were, we could only weep together and praise God for "another Comforter," unfailing, unchanging, and abiding for ever.

Meanwhile let us redeem the time by joining in the closing cry of the Spirit and the Bride to those who know not "another Comforter." "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, Come; and whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely" (Rev. 22. 17).

IV. An Unchangeable Word.

"The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Peter 1. 24, 25).

"The Divine Library," as Jerome rightly called the Bible, is unchangeable in its claim to supremacy as to its inspired whole (2 Tim. 3. 16)—writers (2 Peter 1. 21), words (2 Peter 3. 2), letters (Gal. 3. 16), and minutest detail (Matt. 5. 18). Unchangeable in its power for regeneration

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(1 Peter 1. 23), growth (1 Peter 2. 2), cleansing (John 15. 3), establishing (Acts 20. 32), and perfecting (2 Tim. 3. 16). It is a complete guide from childhood to perfection (2 Tim. 3. 16).

As was said concerning Herod and the Christ, "For they are dead which sought the young Child's life" (Matt. 2. 20), so it can be said concerning Payne, Bolingbroke, Mirabeau, Hume, Renan, Voltaire, Strauss, Mill, Bradlaugh, Ingersoll, and numerous others, "for they are dead which sought the destruction of the Word."

It has been refuted, demolished, exploded, and overthrown, but, like David meeting bear, lion, giant, and overcoming all, it marches on its conquering career, and year by year increases in circulation, influence, and power, towering above all other volumes as the Book of books, "the Word of our God which shall stand for ever" (Isa. 40. 8).

If tempted at any time to doubt the unchangeable character of the Word of God let this one fact allay all fears. Since the Saviour died sixty generations of men and women, many of them heroes, martyrs, Covenanters, and the noblest and best of men, have pillowed their dying heads on the precepts and principles contained

therein, passed triumphantly through the valley of the shadow, and entered the land of fadeless day.

Rather let us unite in the stirring parody by T. Baird, and say:

“ I love it, I love it, who dare me rebuke,
For loving, still loving, this Grand Old
Book?
I’ve treasured it long as an artful prize,
I’ve bedewed it with tears, I’ve embalmed
it with sighs;
’Tis bound by a thousand bands to my
heart,
Not a word will break, not a promise start.
Would you know the spell? For a Saviour
I look,
And Him I have found, through the Grand
Old Book.”

V. An Unchangeable Inheritance.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 1. 3, 4).

Like beginning, like ending. The child of wrath, begotten by an unchangeable God, reaches the goal of an unchangeable dwelling-place reserved for him. Incorruptible by “moth” attacking the unused,

“for they rest from their labours” (Rev. 14. 13), or by “rust” affecting the used in the wear and tear, for “His servants shall serve Him” (Rev. 22. 3); untouchable by “thieves,” for all there “steal no more.” Undefined by sin, sinners, Satan, and such-like, for “there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth” (Rev. 21. 27). Unfading in its bliss, for they shall hunger no more, thirst no more, feel the sirocco blasts of the desert drear no more, sorrow no more, suffer no more, weep no more, die no more, for “God Himself shall dwell with them, and be their God” (Rev. 7. 16, 17; 21. 3, 4).

Thus even when the revolutions of earth cause us to join with Habakkuk, and say, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation” (Hab. 3. 17, 18). “Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12. 2), we can confidently

exclaim, "All may perish," but "THOU REMAINEST."

VI. The Unchangeable Throne.

"But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy Kingdom" (Heb. 1. 8).

The first king so named in the Bible—AMRAPHEL, king of Shinar, on which plain stood Babel's tower, and in whose land was founded Babylon's Empire—was mixed up in rebellion, battle, and slaughter (Gen. 14. 1, 4, 17), and most of earthly kings have followed in his train.

The first King of Israel—SAUL—had anything but a happy reign, and perished miserably on the battlefield. His successors had varied experiences, but most could have said, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," and "Uncertain is the throne where sits a king."

In the history of the nations of the world what changes have been as "the potsherds of the earth" (Isa. 45. 9) have striven with each other.

In the brief span covered by the lives of those living to-day what changes have taken place amongst the monarchs of earth, by death, suicide, murder, abdication,

revolution, or other causes. Nations which for centuries had remained firm in their allegiance to one form of government or one line of rulers, have suddenly awakened from slumber, upset the throne, and changed the whole form of government.

As the stream of time nears the great falls of the coming Crisis, thrones and rulers will be more surely caught in the whirlpool of democracy and satanic power. Of not one monarch on earth has it been said, or shall it be said, "Thy throne is for ever."

"BUT UNTO THE SON," the Babe laid in the manger, the Man tired at the well, the Saviour who hung on Golgotha's tree, the One "who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*" (Gal. 2. 20), "He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." He rules to-day in glory; He is Governor among the nations of earth (Psa. 22. 28), although unseen to mortal eye; He reigns in the hearts of millions of His subjects in all lands under Heaven; He is coming in power and great glory. "The Lord God shall give Him the throne of His father David" (Luke 1. 32) in the Jerusalem below, and the throne of God and the Lamb shall be the centre of the Jerusalem above.

Thrice happy the heart which in all

conditions and under all circumstances can truly sing:

This Saviour is my Saviour,
This Friend is my Friend,
This King is my King,
Henceforth and for evermore.

VII. An Unchangeable Kingdom.

“Giving thanks unto the Father...who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son” (Col. 1. 12, 13).

“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the Everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1. 11).

FAMILY LIFE was the primal mode, and probably the ideal in God’s plan, for we read, “He setteth the solitary in families” (Psa. 68. 6), and Fatherly love and care is ever manifest in His dealings with the sons of men.

COMMUNAL LIFE was introduced as the family increased and migrated from the land of bondage to the “land flowing with milk and honey” (Exod. 3. 8). Had they been satisfied with the One who fed them with food convenient, gave them water out of the Rock of flint, led and protected them with pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, and was all in all to them,

this form of common weal might have remained in the world and in the Church as at the beginning (Acts 2. 44). Each working for the good of the whole, with God over all, blessed for evermore.

NATIONAL LIFE followed, for we read, "*Afterwards* they desired a king" (Acts 13. 21). Getting their eyes off the "Unseen and Eternal," and looking at the nations surrounding them, the chosen nation said, "Give us a king to judge us...like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8. 5. 6).

God lets us into the secret of the change from the commune to the nation in His answer to their desire for a visible head. He says: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself,...I gave thee a king in Mine anger, and took him away in My wrath" (Hosea 13. 9-11).

The divine description of a Model King is given in Deuteronomy 17. 14-20. It need only be read and contrasted with the kings of Jew and Gentile, past or present, to see how imperfect have been all the rulers of the earth, and how hopeless to look for the Model Kingdom among the kingdoms of men.

But will the Ideal never be attained? Assuredly. Here let me *suggest* how near may be that attainment.

Look at the divine list of Empires which you carry about with you in the series of maps at the back of the Bible. Therein are depicted five nations of the past, each growing larger in area and longer in duration. They may be *roughly* memorised as follows:

Three in the East.

1. The Assyrian, capital Nineveh, lasting in its power about 50 years.

2. The Babylonian, capital Babylon, about 100 years. The head of *gold*.

3. The Persian, capital, Shushan, about 200 years. The breast of *silver*.

Three in the West.

4. The Grecian, capital Athens, about 300 years. The trunk of *brass*.

5. The Roman, capital Rome (afterwards divided between Rome and Constantinople), about 400 years. Legs of *iron*.

6. The Ten Kingdoms shall yet arise. Who they are, or will be, will be known at the time of federation, but even now "the United States of Europe" are freely written about, and everything indicates their near approach. Their history will be brief in period, satanic in power, and tragic in passing away. Then shall come

The One Universal.

7. The **Everlasting Kingdom**, foreshadowed by Solomon in 1 Kings 4, described in Zechariah 14, and fulfilled in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The "stone" not made with hands shall break in pieces all the iron, brass, clay, silver, and gold kingdoms of earth, and Jehovah shall "set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed."

This kingdom has two glorious marks borne by none of the others:

The King is Eternal, . . . 1 Tim. 1.17

The Kingdom is Everlasting, 2 Peter 1.11

Mid scenes where change and decay is stamped on all we see, with the groans of creation swelling louder and louder in volume, and the whole wide world in turmoil. Well may our hearts cry: Lord, haste that happy day when He who had diadem of monarch, but of thorns, shall take the throne of David, His father, and with many crowns on his fair brow:

" Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journey's run;
His Kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

“At Eventide—Light!”

“**A**ND it shall come to pass in that Day that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one Day, which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light” (Zech. 14. 6, 7).

A certain day (it is known to Jehovah), a day unique in its aspect of unbroken gloom till the late even, ending in the shining forth of a glorious light. Three things are apparent—the allotted day, the deepening darkness and gloom, the bursting forth of light at last. **DAY—EVENTIDE—LIGHT!**

To what Day does this refer?

I. It is usually applied to

The Individual Eventide.

If asked what individual is referred to in the Bible few could reply, for that is not the setting of the verse. Yet we make no objection to the application of the principle underlying the text to the eventide light which dawns upon many a sorely tried saint.

JACOB-like they pass through their sorrows, and with broken heart can use equivalent language to “Joseph is not,

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and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. *All these things are against me*” (Gen. 42. 36). If asked to sum up their three score years and ten, or by reason of strength their four score years, they would probably use Jacob’s words: “*Few and evil* have the days of the years of my life been. I have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers” (Gen. 47. 9).

Yet see how the eventide of gloom at the end of his 130 years of a crooked path breaks forth in light. Hear the aged pilgrim as he blesses the mightiest monarch in the world at that time (Gen. 47. 10); listen to his grand prophetic utterance concerning “the twelve tribes of Israel” and “the last days” (Gen. 49); hearken to the triumphant note of praise of the dying patriarch: “And Israel said to Joseph, I had not thought to see *thy* face; and, lo, God hath showed me also *thy seed*” (Gen. 48. 11); see the sons that “were not” and the sons that had brought down his grey hairs with sorrow in visible unity around his dying bed; behold how hope springs eternal in his breast as he speaks of MACHPELAH, which means “double doored,” telling of entrance and exit, death and resurrection; and finally commends his loved

ones to the covenant-keeping God in the assuring words, “Behold I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers” (Gen. 48. 27). Truly in this as in every other individual case where the heart turns to God, it can be said, “AT EVENTIDE—LIGHT.”

II. Others see in the promise a reference to

The Family Eventide,

to which we make no demur, for it has thus been evident in many families all down the ages.

Like the loved family at BETHANY (John 11), given to hospitality; the fragrance of the costly ointment of adoring worship ever fills heart and home (v. 2); service, even to being cumbered that the Master may have the best, is followed by sickness, sorrow, death, and weeping.

Yet in the eventide of gloom the “two days” end, the Master appears, the majestic words, which have comforted countless families beyond Bethany, are uttered, “I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (v. 25), the loved brother “comes forth,” and the glory of God is “seen” (v. 40).

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Nay, more, the *sorrow* of chapter 11 is superseded by the *supper* of chapter 12, with the happy trio drinking anew with their Lord in the Home so loved by all.

Had there not been the family eventide of sorrow we should never have had the threefold cord which has bound up many a broken heart: (1) A weeping Saviour, (2) a risen brother, (3) a reunited family. Truly in the family aspect it was “AT EVENTIDE—LIGHT.”

III. Once more we may apply the principle to

The National Eventide.

Think of that lone man chosen of God “on the other side of the flood” (Joshua 24. 2), led, preserved, and multiplied, until a 3,000,000 host marches out of Egypt, “redeemed by great power, and by a strong hand” (Neh. 1. 10), traverses the desert, crosses the Jordan, enters the Promised Land. Then think not only of the dark days of the Judges, of the time when God gives them a King in His anger, of David in the cave of Adullam, and of his numerous battles and towering sins remembered unto this day, but remember how the eventide of kingly gloom was followed by the light of “SOLOMON in all his glory” (Matt. 6. 29).

How much we dwell on David's dark days, how little on Solomon's bright reign, when there was “peace on all sides round about,” when “every man sat under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan to Beersheba,” nay, when “they lacked *nothing*” (1 Kings 4. 24-27). Upon the gloom of the kingly period of Israel's history LIGHT burst forth AT EVENTIDE.

IV. This brings us to the Divine setting of the Eventide promise. For the words appear in Zechariah, the Apocalypse of the Old Testament, the Prophet of the Restoration, the meaning of his name being “*Jehovah remembers,*” and of Berachah, his father, the consequent result “*Jehovah blesses.*” The true setting distinctly relates to

The World's Eventide.

In chapter 13 we have the eventide of sorrow. “Sin, uncleanness, idolatry, and the unclean spirit” (vv. 1, 2) requiring “a fountain to be opened to the House of David”—the “fountain filled with Blood” of which we love to sing.

The Jewish nation, brought face to face with the dark tragedy of Calvary, and the untold sufferings of the two millenniums during which that Blood has been upon

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them and upon their children, exclaims, “What are these wounds in thine hands?” Hear the answer and explanation in the heart-cry of Jehovah of Hosts: “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd and against the MAN that is MY FELLOW; smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered” (v. 7). “A Man—My Fellow—smitten” The mystery of the Atonement made clear to Israel at last, so clear that Jehovah cancels “Lo Ammi” (not My People) and says “MY PEOPLE,” with the resultant response, “Jehovah, MY GOD” (v. 9).

It shall be Light.

In chapter 14 (the last chapter of the last *prophetic* book of the Old Testament) the long, dark eventide of the world's history is illumined with a radiant light at last. Solomon in all his glory, Israel in all her prosperity is as the candle to the sunlight compared with the “greater than Solomon” who “is here” manifest in power and great glory.

Adore, my soul, thy Redeemer, as those beautiful feet, pierced on thy account, once more touch the slopes of Olivet, and living waters gush forth with unceasing flow (v. 8), causing even the deserts of earth to blossom as the rose. See the brow

that once with thorns was bound crowned with many crowns as Jehovah-Jesus is proclaimed KING OVER ALL THE EARTH.

The day of creation when the morning stars sang together, or the day of incarnation when the Angelic Hosts heralded forth the glad message, “Peace on earth, goodwill to men,” will be eclipsed a thousandfold on the day of manifestation of “Jehovah, my God, and all the saints” (v. 5), when the Messiah-expecting Jews out of all the tribes of Israel, the blood-washed Gentile multitude which no man can number out of all kindreds, and tongues, and peoples, and nations, joined by every creature which is in Heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, re-echo the “Glory and goodwill” note in “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto the LAMB for ever and ever” (Rev. 5. 13).

Thus to the individual heart bowed and broken; to the family whose ties have been rudely rent asunder; to the Nation, bleeding, crushed, devastated; and *especially* to a wrecked and war-weary world, as ointment poured forth, comes Jehovah’s promise: “AT EVENTIDE—LIGHT.”

THE COMING OF THE LORD.

WHEN Sir Wm. Herschell was scanning the heavens with a more powerful telescope than he had hitherto used he saw for the first time the planet the Georgium Sidus (afterwards named Herschell). So great was the discovery that he almost fainted with surprise and gladness.

Many Christians have discovered an even brighter star than Herschell—"THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR" (Rev. 22. 16)—to their overwhelming joy and unbounded stimulus in Christian Life and Service. They have learned that the One who loved them unto death, the One who was raised after the power of an endless life, the One who lingers in grace on the throne of Glory, may descend into the air, raise all the saved dead, change all the saved living, and *in a moment*, in the twinkling of an eye, all will be caught up together to be for ever with the Lord.

Such is the Christian's Pole-star, called

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in Scripture "that Blessed Hope" (Titus 2. 13).

In order to get a graspable idea of "the Coming of the Lord," especially for those young in the faith, we will look at this precious theme under four heads.

I. THE REALITY.

So glorious the thought, so powerful the impress, that the question has naturally arisen: Is it a simple romance or is it a spiritual reality?

A subject which is mentioned 318 times in the 260 chapters of the New Testament, or once in every 25 verses, must be of importance and have the plainest of proofs as to its confirmation from the Word of God. It is questionable if there is as strong a threefold cord of testimony on any other doctrine as on the Promise of His Coming. We have

Strand 1. The Saviour's Declaration. One thousand years before His birth He said: "Lo, *I come*" (Psa. 40. 7). He kept that promise. Near the end of His earthly sojourn He said, "O Father, *..I come to Thee*" (John 17. 11). He kept that promise; all Heaven welcomed Him Home. Just as He was about to leave His own He says, "If I go, *I will come again*" (John

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14. 3). One thing, and only one, must take place before He comes. He must *go*. The testimony of Paul at his conversion, and myriads more who have been converted; the testimony of Stephen at his martyrdom, and myriads more who have willingly laid down their lives; the testimony of "the Faithful and True Witness" in the final page of Holy Writ, the continuity of the Church in all lands and all ages declare with emphatic voice: "He is risen." "If I *go*"—He has gone. "I will *come*"—He is Coming. In the well-known type Isaac was last seen on the way to the altar (Gen. 22. 6); next it is said, "Isaac came to meet" his bride (Gen. 24. 62, 65).

We know that "Jesus is Coming" because He said so. If there was not another sentence in the Bible, this would be sufficient.

Strand 2. The Angelic Confirmation. No sooner has He gone than "two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said: This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go" (Acts 1. 11). Direct from Headquarters, these special messengers revealed:

(1) WHO IS COMING? "This same Jesus."

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Not another Jesus, not a mystic Jesus, but the *same*, who sat wearied at Sychar's well, who lay asleep in the fishing boat, who wept at the grave of Lazarus, and who groaned and died on Calvary. The same loving, sympathetic Jesus is coming.

(2) HOW IS HE COMING? "AS ye have seen Him go." How did He go? "He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands to bless them. And *while He blessed them* He was parted from them and carried up to Heaven." "SO shall He come." The last sight which His own saw of their beloved Lord was with outstretched, nail-pierced hands of blessing. The next sight of His own will be "that same Jesus," with pierced hands brimful of blessing, for "then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4. 5).

We believe Jesus is Coming because God sent two special messengers direct from Glory to confirm the fact.

Strand 3. The Apostolic Revelation. One of the five special and direct revelations "received to hold" by the Apostle Paul gives special details concerning the Personal Coming of our Lord: "For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the Coming of the Lord, shall not prevent

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(or go before) them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord'' (1 Thess. 4. 15-17). Here we have made clear and plain by special Revelation:

(1) THE PERSON who is Coming—“The Lord Himself.” Not an angel, an archangel, or a seraphim, but “Himself.” A *person*, not a city (Jerusalem) or a land (Palestine) as the Jew looks for. A *person*, not an event, like the battle of Waterloo or the return of the Jews to the land of Palestine, as so many fix their minds on. A *person*, not “death,” as some assert. Death is dark, separating, and pertains to sin and judgment. The Coming is bright, uniting, apart from sin, and unto Salvation. Over 110,000 die daily. If death were the Coming, what then? Nay, “we wait for His Son from Heaven, even Jesus” (1 Thess. 1. 10).

(2) THE PLACE from which He is coming—“Heaven;” to which He is coming—

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“the air;” and to which He is taking His own—“Heaven.”

(3) THE PURPOSE of the Coming. To gather “together” the children of God scattered abroad.

(4) THE PLAN by which this will be accomplished. His mighty “shout” will raise all the “dead in Christ” from the ancient catacomb, the quiet graveyard, the lonely desert, the rude battlefield bed, the deepest depths of ocean, or wherever a redeemed body may be found. His “Voice,” as of Archangel, will assemble all the living in Christ out of all kindreds, peoples, and tongues. Then at the mighty blast of the “trump of God” the hosts of the Ransomed shall march through the uplifted everlasting doors, and proclaim Him “King of Glory.”

(5) THE PERFECTION at His Coming. “Caught up together,” manifestly “one,” He shall be able to say, “None of them is lost” (John 17. 12, 21). “And so shall we *ever* be with the Lord.”

II. THE RAPIDITY.

If any aspect of the Coming impresses itself upon the mind of the believer it is the instantaneous or extreme suddenness with which it will be accomplished. In

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the great Resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15. 51, 52, we have the Apostle exclaiming: "BEHOLD, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Then he gives a threefold simile of surprise.

1. "In a moment." Not a day, not an hour; not a minute, but a moment. Astronomers compute that it takes light eight seconds to travel the 92 million miles from the sun to the earth. Less than a "second" will be taken by the Ransomed.

The Devil showed the Saviour "all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time" (Luke 4. 5). Jehovah will give Him all the Ransomed of the Ages "in a moment."

Lazarus was raised in a moment. Elijah was caught up in a moment. Pictures of how this corruptible will put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality "in a moment," as we triumphantly exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

2. "In the twinkling of an eye." As if to impress our minds an everyday expression is used, indicating that as rapidly as the downward movement of the eyelash, so will be the *descent* of the Saviour; and as the upward movement, so will be the *ascent* of the Saved.

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Have you ever put your hand on your heart, and said: "Marvellous grace, one throb will be in a body of flesh, liable to sin and subject to infirmity; the next will be in a body of glory, freed from sin, bearing the image of the Heavenly?"

3. "At the Last Trump." The figure used is the third or last trump of the Roman army. *Trump* 1 sounded "Get ready." That has been sounding long and loud. "Be ye also ready." *Trump* 2, "Fall into line." That is sounding more loudly to-day than ever. "Endure hardness," "endure afflictions" (2 Tim. 2. 3; 4. 5). At the sound of *Trump* 3 every Roman soldier went marching forward. That may sound to-day, and every "good soldier of Jesus Christ" will march forward to Victory, assured and eternal.

III. THE RESPONSIBILITY

It has been suggested that the theme is visionary and unpractical, but when reviewed in the light of Scripture the truth of the Lord's Second Coming is seen to be pre-eminent in the New Testament as a motive force. Not even the Love of Christ, precious and stimulating as it is, is used as an incentive to the practice of most Christian duties and graces to the same degree as

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the Imminent Hope of His Coming. It is connected with

1. **Steadfastness.** "Little children, *abide* in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His Coming" (1 John 2. 18). Every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is in present possession of Everlasting Life, and shall never come into Judgment for his sins. But he may so live that he may be "ashamed" at his lack of love, poverty of service, and little fruit when he appears before his Lord. Some may be "afraid," but many will be "ashamed." Hence the incentive to so "abide" under the shadow of Calvary, knowing the power of His Resurrection, in a daily Emmaus walk with Him, that we may neither be ashamed nor afraid, but welcome the Master with joy "at His Coming."

2. **Godliness.** "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the Coming of the day of God?" (2 Peter 3. 11, 12). If we believe in "the Promise of His Coming" (v. 4); the destruction of the old world by the Flood (v. 6); the coming conflagration which shall burn up the present world (v. 10); the doom of the ungodly (v. 7); surely our conversation,

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manner of life, domestic and commercial activities, should be entirely unlike "those who go down to the Pit."

"Come to the theatre to-night," said a gentleman to a young Christian. "No," was the courteous reply, "the Lord may come to-night, and I do not wish Him to find me in a place where He would not be welcome." Lookers for "new heavens and a new earth" (v. 12) will seek to walk as strangers and pilgrims in the old earth, manifesting by a godly life that they are on the road to the land wherein "dwelleth righteousness."

"To *be*" is ever more important than "to *say*" or "to *talk*." The near approach of the Lord echoes, "What manner of persons ought ye to BE" in all holy conversation and vital godliness?

3. Moderation. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4. 5). **EXTRAVAGANCE** is one of the outstanding marks of the last days. "Boasters, proud, blasphemous, fierce, heady, highminded—waxing worse and worse" (2 Tim. 3. 2-13), are some of the signs of the last days visible on every hand. **MODERATION** in habits, dress, speech, temper, and ways should ever mark the child of God.

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No special uniform, costume, badge, button, or outward mark is ever hinted at in Scripture. The true *inward* "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3. 4), will ever manifest the *outward* adornment of "moderation" in all things, which in the sight of men is of great price.

4. **Patience.** "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5. 8). The implication is that the "last days" will be marked by greed for unholy gain. Corrupted riches, cankered gold and silver, heaped-up treasure, have been accumulated by "fraud," and at the cost of the blood and tears of the toilers and their dependents, widows and orphans. But their bitter cries have entered into the ears of "the Lord of Hosts" (vv. 2-4).

The exhortation is not to meet force by force, not to covet and "grudge" those apparently favoured, but to await "the Judge," who is at the door for the unsaved and will rectify all wrongs; and "the Lord," who is Coming for His Own, to conduct them to the "many Mansions" in the Father's House above.

The husbandman ploughs, furrows, sows, and waits through winter's chill

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and summer's scorching rays till his "long patience" (v. 7) rejoices in the harvest safely gathered in. "Be ye also patient" —the last sheaf will soon be garnered, the Harvest quickly cometh when both sower and reaper shall "rejoice together" (John 4. 36).

5. Zeal. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4. 7) were the words with which the noble warrior Paul summed up his service at the close of his eventful life. What led to such devotion and fired the zeal which induced him to cross continents, sail wide seas, plant churches in many provinces, reach out to the "regions beyond," receive the 195 stripes, suffer perils innumerable, endure hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness, stripes, stoning, shipwreck, yet withal to "glory that the power of Christ may rest upon me?" (2 Cor. 11. 23-27; 12. 9). Was it not that he ever remembered: "Henceforth a crown at His Appearing?" (v. 8).

"My Lord *delayeth* His coming" (Matt. 24. 48) may lead the servant to eat, drink, and quarrel with his fellows in a spirit of indifference to the interests of his Lord.

"Surely I come *quickly*" (Rev. 22. 20) will ever lead to love for his Lord, zeal in

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His service, and a careful and prayerful spirit concerning the true interests of the One who is the Master—even Christ.

What impelled Lord Shaftesbury, Hudson Taylor, George Muller, C. H. Spurgeon, D. L. Moody, Dr. A. T. Pierson, and hundreds more to do “exploits” for God? (Dan. 11. 32). What keeps the thousands of missionaries, and tens of thousands of Christian workers in all parts toiling on amid dangers, difficulties, and disappointments innumerable, but the Hope of His Coming and “the recompense of the reward?” (Heb. 11. 26).

The days are darkening, the Church is slumbering, the world is in the grip of the Wicked One, the hearts of statesmen and rulers are failing them for fear; let us who are of the Day look up, the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

“ So will we take
Fresh hope and courage to our fainting hearts,
And patient wait, though every joy departs,
The Day will break.”

IV. THE RESULT.

Volumes have already been written as to the glorious achievements of the Victor of Calvary to be manifested at His Coming. Fifty results might readily be named, five must suffice, as relating to:

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1. **The Individual.** ALL SAINTS WILL BE CHANGED (1 Cor. 15. 51). Naturally we think of ourselves first. How sadly most of us "have borne the image of the earthly." How gloriously shall we be changed and "bear the image of the Heavenly." Now tears, death, sorrow, crying, and pain are the portion even of the saved; then these shall have "passed away" (Rev. 21. 4). "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face" (1 Cor. 13. 12). And this shall be the portion of "all saints," "for whom He justified, *them* He also glorified" (Rom. 8. 30).

2. **The Home.** FRIENDS WILL BE REUNITED. "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. 4. 14). Which of us has not stood by the graveside of one we loved and realised that death meanwhile retains its "sting?" What saint has not sorrowed o'er a babe, a wife, a mother, a loved one, even if that sorrow has been sweetened "with Hope?" Was there ever a day when so many hearts were bowed with woe o'er brave sons laid in a battle grave? Is it not a solace to be assured that "yet a little while" (Heb. 10. 37) and the reunion morning in the "House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens" (2 Cor. 5. 1).

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3. **The Church.** THE CHURCH WILL BE UNITED. "That they all may be ONE" (John 17. 21) was the Saviour's prayer nearly 1900 years ago. *Has it been answered?* Nay, the Church is peeled, scattered, and divided. With some 300 leading sects or denominations, some ten parties claiming to be gathered to the Name of the Lord, with offshoots and upstarts without number, it is difficult to sing to-day: "We are not divided,
All one body we."

Will it be answered? Yes, thank God, when He comes real Church unity will take place. "Together" will be the word as "all saints" are caught up and He presents to Himself "a glorious Church, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners" (S. of S. 6. 10). So that even in days of deepening gloom we may loudly sing:

"Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane,
But the Church of Jesus
Constant must remain."

4. **The World.** ALL WRONGS WILL BE RIGHTED. "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5. 8, 9). The corrupted gold, the cankered silver, the

“fraud” methods of commerce, the upheavals of men and nations, are evils which will not be rectified by Parliaments or federations of earth. Their voice reaches the ears of the Lord of Hosts! His command is not “Be resentful,” “Be rebellious,” but “Grudge not, brethren, be patient unto the Coming of the Lord.” Then all wrongs will be righted, all groans hushed, all the travail-pangs of earth cease, when the Heir of all things and the joint-heirs with Christ are “glorified together” (Rom. 8. 17, 22).

5. **The Lord Himself.** Last of all, and best of all, CHRIST WILL BE SATISFIED. Then in its fullest fruition “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied” (Isa. 53. 11). That Blessed One, who fasted alone in the wilderness, agonised alone in Gethsemane, died alone upon Golgotha, shall yet “see” ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands from the east, and the west, and the north, and the south, gathered around Him in Glory, to swell the new and endless song, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.”

Genesis 45 gives us a lovely prophetic picture of this time. Jacob’s sons return with the news, “Joseph is yet alive, and he

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is Governor over all the land." Remembering their former untruthfulness, "Jacob believed them not." They confirmed their testimony with evidence of the wealth and glory of Joseph, and we read, "When he saw the wagons, Israel said, ENOUGH!" One word, the most difficult word for Jew or Gentile to say, "Enough!" His heart was fully satisfied, he had enough.

So when the Lord Himself looks over the ranks of the ransomed, sees "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1. 18), He shall be fully and eternally "satisfied." Then shall each saint also exclaim, "As for me, I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness" (Psa. 17. 15).

"He which testifieth these things saith, SURELY I COME QUICKLY." May each heart promptly and joyfully respond, "AMEN, EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."

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

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