

# WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE  
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

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## “Faint Not.”

**A**S we are about to enter upon another year, through the mercy of God, it will help to encourage us to dwell for a little on the two words which stand at the head of this paper.

The Lord Himself says (Luke xviii. 1), “Men ought always to pray and not to faint.” In unwearied grace our God is ready to hear and to give the strength needed to carry us through the difficulties of the way. Truly “*He fainteth not neither is weary.*” And the Lord Jesus, who knew so perfectly the love and unwearied interest of the Father in His children, encourages His disciples with that blessed word “always”—men ought always to pray and not to faint. Such is the God who is the unfailing resource of His people.

The Apostle Paul, too, in two passages in 2 Cor. iv., tells those believers not to faint. In drawing the contrast between what characterised those of old under law and those under Christianity, he shows that it is our privilege to look *up* by faith and see all the glory of God reflected in the face of the Lord Jesus (2 Cor. iii. 18). And even if we meet afflictions in His service or in our walk here, we know that they are light and momentary, compared with the eternal weight of glory which is to come.

He also exhorts the Ephesians (iii. 13) not to faint on account of the trials which he endured in proclaiming the gospel and in the ministry of the Church. His soul is filled with the sense of the greatness of the counsels of God and what He has done in the riches of grace in bringing those once “afar off” into such a place of nearness to Himself. What a ground for the exhortation “faint not”!

Again, in 2 Thessalonians (iii. 13) and Galatians (vi. 9) the same Apostle encourages us to faint not—nor to “lose heart” (as some translate it) in well doing. We are in danger of fainting if we look *within* or at the difficulties and discouragements of the times. We

see on every hand the general weakness of the children of God, the want of a pronounced stand for the truth in the face of attacks on the Person of Christ and the Bible.

But, thank God, we have every encouragement to persevere, seeking to hold up the hands of all who stand for Christ, and to help them in both temporal and spiritual things as far as we can. May we, then, carry with us during the coming year, should the Lord tarry, the encouraging words, "faint not."

### Prayer.

**T**HERE is probably no one in the christian pathway who does not feel the importance of the above subject. Many of us of late have had it impressed upon us, how little we realise as we should, the privilege of prayer. This is to our individual loss and that of the Church of God.

The following paper is submitted in the hope that it may be used by the gracious Spirit of God to set the matter before us in a scriptural light and to remove hindrances to believing prayer.

In considering this subject, we have the immense advantage of seeing in the Man Christ Jesus, a perfect illustration of the use of prayer, so we will first of all seek to learn what the Scriptures teach concerning the prayer-life of this blessed, obedient and dependent Man. Let us consider who He was "in the days of His flesh." He was the Son of God, one with the Father, exercising the powers of Godhead, forgiving sins, cleansing lepers, raising the dead, and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart.

At the same time He was a perfect, holy man, begotten of the Holy Ghost, "who knew no sin," "who did no sin," and "in Him is no sin." A perfect man indeed, and as such, needing food and drink; feeling weary after a long journey on foot, glad to take the opportunity of a voyage across the Lake to get the sleep He so much needed. This as to the physical side

of His humanity; and then on the spiritual side we find Him "grieved for the hardness of their hearts," and later on, in His great sorrow, seeking for comforters and finding none.

We might have thought that this holy Man, in whom no thought of sin could find a lodgment, would have had no need to pray; but, blessed be His Name! He came not only to make God known and to lay the foundation for His righteousness in justifying the ungodly, but He set Himself to walk in the path of obedience and to meet the world, the flesh, and the devil, with exactly the same weapons as are available for us, viz., the Word of God and prayer.

Psalm xvi., as is well known, sets Him before us in the path in which we are called to follow Him, and in the first verse we find Him in absolute dependence on, and absolute confidence in, God. The remaining ten verses of the Psalm trace His pathway of dependence through death to the right hand of Jehovah. It is thus that our Lord is presented to us in the gospels, and it is in this character that He gave His own such encouragement when He said, "These things I have spoken to you that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; *I have overcome the world.*"

There are five great occasions in the Lord's life in which it is recorded that He was found in prayer:—

1. At His baptism by John (Luke iii. 21).
2. The night before He chose the twelve apostles (Luke vi. 12).
3. When He was transfigured and acclaimed from the glory (Luke ix. 29).
4. When He was in anguish in the garden (Luke xxii. 41).
5. When He raised Lazarus from the dead (John xi. 41, 42).

On three occasions he spent the whole night, or a great portion of the night, in prayer:—

1. When, after feeding the multitude, He sent the

disciples away by ship and He Himself went up into a mountain to pray. About the fourth watch (i.e., the last watch before the morning) He rejoined them, walking on the sea (Mark xi. 46).

2. When, on the second occasion referred to above, He was about to choose the twelve apostles, He "continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke vi. 12).

3. When on the mount of transfiguration, whither He had gone to pray, we read that "Peter and those with Him were oppressed with sleep" (New trans.), and He did not come down from the mountain until the following day (Luke ix. 28-37).

But probably the passage of Scripture which gives us the best view of His life of prayer is that which describes the scene at the grave of Lazarus. Jesus, about to call forth from death and corruption Lazarus whom He loved, lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always." So we see here our Lord giving thanks for prayer heard, and letting us know that He ever had the assurance of being heard.

One more passage we may perhaps look at before we seek to apply the lesson to ourselves, and it is with deep reverence we would do so. In Matthew's account of the scene in Gethsemane, we get the outpouring of His soul twice repeated, but in the second utterance there is a change.

First (chap. xxvi. 39), there is the unburdening of His holy soul with earnest desire, but always subject to the Father's will; then on the second occasion (ver. 42) the acceptance of the cup, if the Father's will could not be accomplished in any other way. Thus we find the Lord casting His burden upon Jehovah according to Ps. lv. 22; not getting His request as in ver. 39, but saying, "Thy will be done" with a whole heart, and for the third time "saying the same words."

And now let us try to learn of Him in the matter of prayer. In doing so we are at once confronted with the immeasurable difference between Him and our-

selves. He was holy, we carry about with us a sinful nature. Still God has made provision for this, and so we go on to remind ourselves of what is the actual position of the believer before God to-day.

Our Lord, who before the resurrection spoke of the Father as "My Father," on that morning said, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father," and later in the same day, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." This, then, is the place in which the believer is set as the result of redemption accomplished, and in the enjoyment of which he is maintained by the Holy Spirit. Our Lord's instructions to His disciples are fully in keeping with this; out of many passages, we will refer to John xvi. 23, as it is emphasised by those words, "Verily, verily." "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name He will give it you . . . . ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full."

Thus, through infinite grace, we are placed in the relationship of children with the Father and entitled to ask in the Name of the Son. To exercise this privilege we must have His interests at heart and be governed by His word. This, of course, raises questions on our side and we find that prayer is subject to two conditions :—

1. Faith, and
2. Being right with God.

As regards the first, little need be said. It will be sufficient to refer to the two following Scriptures, Mark xi. 22, 23, and Hebrews xi. 6.

But one fears that the lack of the second condition is the cause of much of our failure to prove the efficacy of prayer.

The allowance of sin is a bar (see Ps. lxvi. 18, Isaiah i. 15, and many other passages). With this is included hard thoughts against others (see the passage in Mark xi. already referred to). The new nature consents to this; and in our weakness, if we earnestly desire to gain the victory over sin, we can always count upon the prevailing intercession of our great High Priest.

The observance of the above two conditions removes *hindrances to prayer*. But one feels that much more than this is necessary if we are to realise "prayer and supplication in the Spirit" as Paul speaks of it in Eph. vi. 18. Why did our Lord spend whole nights in prayer, and the Apostle Paul labour whole nights in prayer, even for those who had not seen his face in the flesh? Surely because, in the Master's case, the need of prayer outweighed all natural considerations; and with His servant, the saints were those for whom Christ died, and the love of Christ constrained him. May our hearts be more in His interests, and so our prayers shall be more abundant and in the Spirit.

A great deal more might be said on such an important subject, but it is hoped that the above may be useful and produce exercise which shall be fruitful. As to our ways in prayer—one feels that the realisation of the fact that we are speaking to a Person, and that Person the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, would save us from the formulæ of words into which we are so apt to fall, and preserve us from irreverence in our attitude when in prayer.

May we "yield ourselves to the Lord" and thus be "filled with the Spirit," to the praise of His Name and to the joy of our own souls.

J.M.W.

### **Psalm xlv.**

**T**HE word of God often warns us of the danger of speaking too much, as, for instance, in Eccles. v. 2: "God is in heaven, thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few." In Prov. x. 19: "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin." In Jas. i. 19: "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak." But here in Ps. xlv. we find a remarkable exception to the general rule, one who wishes to speak much and rapidly; who wishes his tongue to be as the pen of a ready writer. I once watched the pen of a ready writer, and it moved so swiftly that my eye could not follow the black point over the white paper.

How is it that this exception to the rule, "Be slow to speak" is allowable? I think there are two reasons for the permission: firstly it comes from the heart, "welling up" as the word for "inditing" can be rendered. It is of all importance that what we say in public about the Lord should be that which our own heart has enjoyed, and not only that which the mind has grasped. In this connection it is well to remark that he says "the things which I have made." It was all full conviction in his heart before he spoke, not something occurring to him on the spur of the moment. How blessed would our prayers and praises in public be if we were careful only to bring that which we had enjoyed in private previously, and perhaps even spoken of to the Lord when all alone with Him.

The second reason for this wonderful liberty of speech is that he wishes to speak of the King, and in no wise of himself. There is one Man whom God delighteth to honour, and if by grace our hearts are led to praise Him, it is well-pleasing to our God and Father, and the Holy Spirit will give us liberty of utterance and naturalness of expression, which will gladden the hearts of all saints in leading them to forget self and think of the Lord only.

"Thou art fairer than the children of men." This could not be said absolutely of any of us, for we are all merely children of men; but the King, our blessed Lord, is more than man, He is God manifest in the flesh, a divine Person and yet perfect man, spirit, soul and body. Now, what is the first thing our Psalm draws our attention to as to Him? It is His grace. "Grace is poured into thy lips." We find the same blessed truth in our Lord's opening ministry on earth: "And all bare Him witness and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth" (Luke iv. 22). There are many reason why God has blessed Him for ever, but how comforting and encouraging to find here mentioned as the first reason His grace or graciousness, although He is the great

King. Thus also David, when firmly seated on his throne, was led by the Spirit of Christ to show "the kindness of God" to unworthy objects. Then, in the next verse, the power and the majesty of His person shines forth: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness."

How many conquerors have ridden forth to victory in this world, but how few indeed have had in view the object mentioned in the fourth verse: "Because of truth and meekness and righteousness"? Here we find the reason why power must be put forth to repress evil; it is for the sake of truth and meekness and righteousness. Men are rising up all over the world in this day of decadence to impugn God's righteousness and justice; and, copying the example of Cain, they say: "My punishment is greater than I can bear"; "Eternal punishment would be an injustice." A judge who would not condemn and punish the guilty could never be a protector of the truthful, the meek and the righteous.

Written on stone over the facade of the great Court of Justice, the Old Bailey, in London are the words:

Defend the Children of the Poor:  
Punish the Wrongdoer.

The first requires the second.

The Lord will one day have to finish reading the verse, Isaiah lxi. 2, the latter half of which He omitted to read, as we are told in Luke iv. 19; and which He has deferred reading for nearly nineteen hundred years in order to give the word of grace full course. Many have drunk of these streams of grace since then, and, through mercy, we also are of the number. But how sad to think that many use this grace as an excuse to continue in sin: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore, the heart of the

sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccles. viii. 11).

We find in verse 7 a second reason why God has exalted the Lord Jesus: "Thou lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity, therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." In Heb. iii. 14, the word "partakers" is the same Greek word as "fellows" in Heb. i. 9; so we see that the One addressed as God in verse 6 of our Psalm has condescended to become a Man among men in verse 7. And as such He loved righteousness and hated iniquity. No one can love good strongly without hating evil. One must hate that which makes the objects of our love unhappy. The shepherd who cares for his lambs cannot help hating the wolves. May we learn of Him to love and to hate. Our danger in the present day is indifference and neutrality.

And yet, as the pendulum goes as far to the left as to the right, there is a danger of seeking to meet indifference by an excess of zeal and strictness. "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. ii 16). "But our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. iii. 5). If we abide by the word of God we shall be safe, but if we add our rules to it we shall never be at rest. God's word alone can satisfactorily define righteousness and wickedness, can teach us what to love and what to hate. The enemy meets the natural revulsion of the human mind against gross infidelity by preaching superstition. Thus one cannot be surprised to find that Roman missionaries are having success in English towns where Protestant ministers are preaching rationalism; it is the back-swing of the pendulum.

Those who give up the knowledge of God and of His revelation become a prey to superstition or spiritism; for nature abhors a vacuum, and even ungodly men are not satisfied with a negation. Only those who have a worthy object for their hearts are satisfied. Oh, how thankful we should be that we can say of Him whom

God has given us as our object: "Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips." May we trust Him more and love Him better.

T. W. B.

## Christ and the Church—2.

**L**AST month we looked a little at the Church as the body of Christ, as that truth is expressed in the words of the Apostle, "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." Christ fills all in all and the Church is His fulness or completeness. One cannot transcribe such words without the soul being deeply sensible of the infiniteness of the grace which could bring those once so far off into such a place of nearness to Himself.

What a loss it would be to any Christian to neglect or overlook such wonderful truths, and yet it is to be feared that many stop short and are satisfied with being saved; like the two tribes and a half who decided to take up their inheritance on "this side of Jordan," they fail in the energy of faith in taking actual possession of what God had given them.

Let it not be supposed that the truth of the Church of God is more or less visionary; it is, on the contrary, most practical and affects our enjoyment of communion with the Lord as well as with His people. No wonder the Apostle Paul should write to the Colossian saints and speak of the great conflict he had for them, that they might enter into "the full knowledge of the mystery of God; in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 2, 3, new trans.).

In addition, however, to this aspect of the Church of God in its place of privilege and blessing as the body of Christ, Scripture speaks of it as a building, and the Apostle could write to the Ephesians saying, "In whom (Christ) all the building fitly framed together groweth

unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Thus believers from amongst both Jews and Gentiles were united in one—a thing unknown in Old Testament times—and composed this spiritual building, an holy temple, an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Of old God dwelt amongst His people in the tabernacle and in the temple, but within the veil, for the way into the holiest of all was not then made manifest and the veil was still unrent. But when Christ died, atonement was accomplished, God's holy claims were met and His holy nature glorified as to the question of sin; then the veil was rent, and God could righteously come out in blessing, and every Christian has boldness to enter into the presence of God at all times.

But God does not now dwell in a material building as of old, His habitation now is amongst His people, dwelling there by the Spirit. Blessed and holy privilege, but also what a solemn responsibility! No bricks and mortar, or stones, are to be found in the house of God on earth. It is, as Peter tells us, a "spiritual house." No lifeless material enters into it, only "living stones"—persons who have been born again and quickened with divine life—such is the only building suited to the presence of the "living God."

How great then is our privilege as belonging to the house of God, the place where He dwells!—but how great also is our responsibility! And if we look back, even within one's own recollection, how many things would have been left undone and how differently we would have sometimes acted, had we remembered this.

In the first epistle to Timothy we have instructions given to an individual servant of God, Timothy, as to how to behave himself in the "house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth." The Church of God is not an assembly of

persons still "dead in trespasses and sins"; God is the "living God" and *His* assembly is built, as we have already said, of "living stones." And in spite of the Church's present fallen state it is still the "pillar and base of the truth," for we cannot find the truth elsewhere than in Christianity.

No doubt when the gospel was first preached, after the resurrection of Christ, and the blessed work of the Holy Ghost was seen in gathering souls, as recorded in the early part of the Acts, those who professed the Christian faith were, perhaps we might say almost without exception, real believers, saved and quickened souls. The energy of the Holy Ghost also was manifested, and when evil did come in it met with summary judgment, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v.).

But soon the enemy sowed tares amongst the wheat, mere professors came in, and so the professing Church became more and more corrupt until it reached a climax in the Middle Ages. It is in view of this that the Apostle warns those who take the place of builders in the house of God, to take heed what they build upon the foundation, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. iii.).

That which at the beginning was according to God's mind, His house composed only of true believers, soon became a building in which men built—some built good material, likened to "gold, silver, precious stones"; others, mere rubbish, "wood, hay, stubble," that which would not stand the test.

Again, in 2 Tim. ii., we find that the house of God is likened to a great house, which contains not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, some to honour and some to dishonour. Now this is just what Christendom is like to-day. Within the Christian profession there are all kinds of people: true believers, and a vast number who, though they bear the name of Christian, have no part or lot in the matter. Nay, there are even those who teach and

propagate antichristian doctrines, such as "Christian Science," "Millennial Dawnism" and many others; these doctrines are nothing more or less than the work of Satan to destroy the truth of God.

What can we say but that such teachers and evil workers "defile the temple of God"; and it is written of him who does so, "him shall God destroy." Solemn and awful will their judgment be!

F.G.B.

## Ebed-Melech and Baruch.

Jeremiah xxxix. and xlv.

**I**T is blessed to see how God takes notice of those who have befriended and helped His servants. Ebed-melech was not one of the chosen people of Israel, but an Ethiopian, a servant of the king of Israel. He it was who interceded for the prophet Jeremiah and got the king's authority to take him up out of the dungeon in which he nearly lost his life.

The New Testament tells us that, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Heb. vi. 10). The promise to Ebed-melech was that, although God was about to judge the city of Jerusalem, his life would be given him for a prey, "*because thou hast put thy trust in Me.*" Faith in God always brings a blessing, and it is especially needed in a dark day.

Baruch was also a faithful helper of the prophet in his time of trial. Under the pressure of the circumstances he had said, "Woe is me now! for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and find no rest." But there was One who knew all and never failed. God tells him beforehand what would take place on account of the wickedness of the people, "Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land."

Here it is to be remarked that that which, in its beginning, was God's own work, and which had become corrupt in the hands of man—that is the very thing which would be the subject of judgment—it would be “broken down” and “plucked up.” When that which is set in this world as a testimony for God, becomes a witness of the unfaithfulness of His people, it *must* be judged. Thus the professing church, in the end, is spued out of Christ's mouth as utterly nauseous to Him.

But in such a state of things, the humble place is the only right one, “Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not.” The apostle Peter puts it in a very expressive way when he says, “Be clothed with humility.” Naturally, we all like “great things” for ourselves: but let us remember that our blessed Master was *the* lowly One.

Then God tells Baruch, through the prophet, that He would give him his life as a prey no matter where he would be. When judgment was falling on others he would be spared. This is God's provision and the expression of His mercy towards those who serve and fear Him, and who stand true and faithful in an evil day.

### Fragments.

*Denominationalism.*—Said a Cabinet Minister in the Education debates of 1902: “The old denominational barriers are growing shadowy and unreal; the real division that is coming is between those who believe that the Bible is the Word of God, and those who do not.”

\* \* \* \*

*Scripture Authority.*—Let us pray continually for a revival of sound doctrine, a revival of the authority of Holy Scripture, based not on an inherited orthodoxy, but on an experimental knowledge of their power and truth in the lives of believers.

## In Me . . . In Him.

"In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing"  
(Rom. vii. 18).

"In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"  
(Col. ii. 9).

"Looking off unto Jesus" (Heb. xii. 2).

SAVIOUR, from ourselves with loathing,  
Now we turn to gaze on Thee—  
Ours the sin, the shame and sorrow,  
For *we* nailed Thee to the tree!  
'Twas *our* sin, Thou blest Redeemer,  
Pierced Thy hands, and feet and side,  
Whence in answer, for our healing  
Flowed that precious crimson tide.

And e'en now, though washed, forgiven,  
Ransomed, Saviour, by Thy blood,  
Naught have we wherein to glory—  
Naught of self to bring to God.  
Naught are we but utter vileness,  
Jesus! Thou art perfect good;  
'Tis Thyself we would delight in,  
Man may feast on "angels' food."

"Bread of God" art Thou, Lord Jesus,  
Object of the Father's heart,  
And *our* hearts, of self so weary,  
Share His joy in all Thou art—  
Feeding on Thee in Thy dying,  
As the patient, suffering One,  
Feeding on Thee in the glory  
Whither, Saviour, Thou art gone.

Abba, Father! low in worship  
All our inmost soul would bow;  
All things are of Thee, and gladly  
Of Thine own we bring Thee now.  
'Tis Thy Christ to Thee we offer—  
Christ, Thy peerless gift so free,  
And from these poor hearts, O Father!  
'Tis *Thy* love flows back to Thee.

C.H.v.P.

## Doxologies of Scripture.

**I**T would be a profitable study to go into the Doxologies found in the New Testament, but we can only here draw attention to four of them.

In Romans xi. 33-36, we have the Apostle Paul's exclamation as his soul is filled to overflowing with the sense of the depth of the riches of God's knowledge and wisdom. It comes in at the end of a section (chap. ix.-xi.) where questions, which would seem unanswerable difficulties, are adjusted and set at rest by divine wisdom, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! . . . to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

In 1 Peter iv. 11, and again in chapter v. 11, we have the ascription of praise to God, "To whom is the glory and the might for the ages of ages. Amen." In the first, it is to the God who supplies strength to minister the divine oracles, His Word; in the second it is to the "God of all grace," who is able to "perfect, stablish, strengthen, ground" us, even in the midst of suffering and trial.

In Revelation i. 5, 6, we find that beautiful note of worship, the moment the name of Jesus Christ is mentioned, "Unto Him that loves us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood . . . to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." John expresses his own (and the Church's) relationship to Him who is all that verse 5 declares Him to be. He is the One who "loves us," and from that love flows every blessing which His grace has conferred. Then follows the spontaneous note of praise quoted above. Can we not re-echo John's words and add, with our whole heart and soul, "Amen"?

## God Dwelling With Men.

**I**T is not till we come to the book of Exodus—the book of redemption—that we read of God dwelling with His people. He *visited* Adam in the garden of Eden, He *appeared* to Abraham and conversed with him by the oaks of Mamre, but when Israel had crossed the Red Sea they could sing a song of triumph and speak of preparing a habitation for Jehovah their God.

When God commanded His people to bring Him those things which were needed for making the tabernacle He said, “Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them”; and when the tabernacle had been completed and the priesthood established He said, “And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them” (Exodus xxv. 8; xxix. 45). This was His settled purpose and His heart’s desire.

How precious and how comforting to know that it was *God’s own desire* to dwell amongst His people, to have them near Himself and happy in His presence! When they dwelt in a tent, pitched on the desert sands, God dwelt with them there, in all their wanderings and in spite of their ways, He could say later on, “I have gone from tent to tent and from one tabernacle to another.”

Then when Solomon built his great temple, he said at the dedication of it, “I have surely built Thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for Thee to abide in for ever”; for God had said to him, “I will dwell among the children of Israel” (1 Kings viii. 13; vi. 13). But, highly favoured as they were in having the privilege of God’s dwelling among them; it brought with it also a weighty responsibility, that everything should be in keeping with the holiness of the One of whom it is written, “Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever.”

In Leviticus xxvi. 11, God says, "I will set My tabernacle among you." But, as the chapter shows us, these blessings under the law were dependent on an "If"—"If thou wilt walk in My statutes," etc.—they were conditional. Alas! Israel soon fell into the evil ways of the surrounding nations and lost their special place of blessing; but God's resources were not at an end.

What marvellous overcoming grace shines in those words in John i. 14, "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us"! The blessed Son of God had come down here, sent by the Father, truly man and dwelling amongst men, making known the love and grace and goodness of God. And what was man's answer to it all? Rejection, hatred, a cross and a grave.

And still God's purpose was not frustrated, for the risen and glorified Saviour sent down the Holy Ghost to form the Church, and now God dwells in His Church by the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22). What grace on His part; what privilege and what responsibility on ours!

And even if the Church of God, too, has failed, sadly failed, yet in that eternal state of blessing which is to come, "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them" (Rev. xxi. 3). Here no power of Satan and no failure can come, but God Himself will find His heart's satisfaction in dwelling among men in unalloyed and eternal blessing. Oh, that we might rise in faith to what He is, what He has done, and what He will do!

## The Gibeonites and Their Wiles.

Joshua ix. 3-27.

**W**HEN the Gibeonites came to the camp at Gilgal, Israel was not prepared for them, they had not on "the whole armour of God." The leaders of the people did not discern what the simple ones foresaw, at least not for the moment.

It is often thus : humility goes along with a "single eye" and this alone can give true intelligence according to God. "Make a league with us," said the Gibeonites. What a fine opportunity for Israel ! "You have the enemy in front of you," whispered Satan into their ear, "here is an excellent way of overcoming him !"

These people came feigning all sorts of good intentions, seeking to make a league with the people of God and fully recognising their spiritual and moral superiority. "We are thy servants," said they to Joshua—a thing well calculated to make him favourably disposed towards them. Then they proclaimed the power of the God of Israel and what He had done in Egypt and in the wilderness. They do not say, it is true, a word about what He had done in Canaan : Satan would betray himself if he spoke of the heavenly places and of warfare there.

Now you will notice that the Gibeonites have a very marked character ; one of a most pronounced religious form. True, but they are Canaanites in disguise—they are the world under the outward form of piety—but it is the world all the same. Israel had been kept hitherto from seeking any human help ; but how resist those who profess to have the same object and the same aspirations ? Is not a league quite a legitimate thing ? "We recognise the Lord just as you do, your servants will be able to co-operate with you when you need them," said they, in effect. Ah ! how little the children of Israel thought at that moment that the Gibeonites were those same Canaanites whom they had been called upon to exterminate from the promised land !

Thus they were caught in the enemy's nets, they had neglected to consult Jehovah ; they took, as a mark of communion, of the men's (the Gibeonites') provisions. The covenant is concluded with them, *the world is introduced into the assembly of Israel*. What a diabolical artifice ! Satan offers the people the means of overcoming the enemy, the world ; and this means is to introduce the world into the camp ! Satan proposes to

conquer himself ! He knew well that, from the moment the door was opened to that element, every other means of attack would be easy for him.

Do not these things recall to us the history of the Church? The souls of the Christians were already seduced even in the times of the Apostles by the specious appearances assumed by an earthly and worldly religion which sought to insinuate itself amongst them. This caused them to lose sight of heavenly interests and objects, and its effect was to drag down their hearts into an alliance with a world which had crucified Christ. Satan gained his point. He set up his throne in the midst of the Church, and the Apostle has to say at the end, "among you, where Satan dwelleth" (Rev. ii. 13). Henceforth, alas ! the battle is, not only with enemies outside ; it is a question of standing against the power of evil within the Church. . . .

May God give us to depend continually on Him so that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. This chapter gives us only one of his snares ; but if we have the eye opened, we shall perceive that all his artifices have as their object to cause us to lose sight of heavenly things and to lower our Christianity to be nothing more than that which the world can share with us.

H.R.

## Companionship and Its Results.

Luke viii. 22-25.

**T**HE two previous chapters show Jesus using divine power for the good of men and speaking as "never man spake " principles of holiness and love for practice in an evil and selfish world, and of which He was ever the perfect exemplification. A great multitude came to hear Him or to be healed by Him. They thronged Him to touch Him and virtue went out of Him and healed them all. From a distance He heals the dying servant of the centurion. Pitying Nain's widow

bereft of her only son, He makes Death relinquish his prey, restoring him alive to his mother. And He was forgiving iniquities as the Lord of Psalm ciii.

What wondrous grace that this glorious Saviour should choose a few fishermen and others as disciples to be with Him, His constant companions! It reveals a love which never tires nor will be satisfied until each one of "His own" be ever with Him.

*"Let us go over unto the other side."* How precious is that little word *us* as used by Jesus here! It teems with His rich grace. "God over all blessed for ever," how His lowliness shines out in this simple and sweet linking of humble disciples with Himself in His mission of mercy.

*"And they launched forth."* May we ask the reader, Have you launched forth with Jesus? Has He chosen you for a companion? Has He said to you, "Let us go over unto the other side," or its equivalent? If so, "sing on your heavenly road"; rejoice evermore; give no place to complainings or fears. Rather, let His praise be continually on your lips, for His love brooks no interference with its purposes.

Companionship with Jesus brought His disciples into difficult circumstances. Here, it is the heaving and tossing on the tempestuous lake. For a storm of wind sweeps down and so agitates it that the boat is filled with water and the disciples' hearts with fear. But how could they perish if He were there—He who "made the seas" and "held the wind in His fist"? In their own fearful thoughts they had taken themselves out of His gracious "us." How much better, had they taken up the words of the Psalm, "Thy right hand hath holden me up, Thy gentleness hath made me great." Was it not a higher honour, a more precious privilege, with far greater guarantee of safety, to be with Jesus in the storm-tossed, water-logged boat than to ride with Tiberius in the city of Rome? An edict of the proud emperor of Rome might fail, but Jesus' word never. Had it ever failed, even when addressed to the dead young man

of Nain? If Jesus says to a man with a withered hand, "Stretch forth thine hand," no ban of Pharisee or Sanhedrim could hinder that hand going out and being restored to perfect soundness.

The disciples had seen this, too, but how little had they learned of Jesus. Was a little rough tossing to make them forget the grace with which His works of power had ever been accompanied? Had they but perceived—as the woman of the city who was a sinner perceived—His matchless grace, they would have known that He would allow no storm to hinder His purpose of blessing.

And then if we may say so, was ever sleep so well earned? What weariness to induce a sleep so sound amid the turmoil of the storm. But they, thinking only of themselves, disturb it. How beautifully He met these selfish fears which had disturbed His repose. He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging water and there was a calm. Then, as well He might, He asks them, "Where is your faith?" The storm, if of the enemy's raising, was permitted to test their faith. What a humiliating question! Has He to put that question to reader or writer? When all is calm the disciples can think of the glory of His Person, but what evidence had He given them to think of it all the day long. Even then it was with fear in the very presence of His lovely tenderness.

We have seen the reality of the companionship of Jesus with His disciples though some of them accepted its privileges more fully than others. It is recorded for our comfort and joy, how one reclining on His breast could ask Him a question that the others dare not. Do we enjoy this intimate companionship as a matter of every-day experience? Are we near enough to hear all He has to say to us? Doubtless, we all know something of it, but perhaps few of us have risen to the full height of our privileges. Truly blessed for us it is to be His companions though it may bring us into many a trial. Which of us have not known something of this

rough tossing on the sea of life—a great storm raging around us, filling the boat so that we have felt ourselves to be in jeopardy. As a little company, too, what storms we may have of Satan's raising, and the Lord may seem to our sometime faltering faith to be asleep. But is He unmindful of us? In the story of Mordecai and Esther, the name of God is not mentioned. There was a terrific storm of the devil's raising. Everything seemed gone. Queen Esther was to perish, Mordecai to be hanged, the Jews annihilated. But He who keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. He gave Ahasuerus a restless night, and through this the evil scheme was upset. The very storm that threatened to engulf them was made the means of Esther's increased favour, Mordecai's exaltation and great blessings to the Jews in that land. God is not baffled by any storm of man's or Satan's raising but calmly works out His purposes.

What majesty there is in the Lord's gentle sleep in that raging storm! What an example for us! It is just the lesson we need to-day. The outlook is indeed dark—an encircling gloom. Rebellion and unrest in the world; evil and trouble in the church. In spite of it all God will accomplish His purposes and the consummation is at hand. We are called to His patience to await with Him the moment when He will arise and say to the raging tumult of this world, "Peace, be still." Swords shall be turned into ploughshares, spears into pruning hooks, the groaning creation delivered, gladness and plenty shall pervade the scene.

But, first of all, He who companied with His disciples in His lowly path down here will have ushered them with us into His own home in the Father's house, there to realise, in full measure, the blessedness of fellowship with the Father and the Son. There, as prodigals, cleansed and embraced, received and robed, wearing the pledge of eternal love, oh! how satisfied, to hear the Father's "us," "Let *us* eat and be merry"; and to enter into the never-ending joy of sharing in the Father's delight in His own beloved Son. A.J.H.

## Christ and the Church.

**I**N this, the closing article on the above subject, let us look a little at the present state of the Church of God and its future destiny.

We have, in the addresses to the seven Churches (Rev. ii.-iii.), a divinely-given outline of the history of the professing Church from the beginning to the end. The last four of these give us, more especially, the Lord's judgment of the Church as it is to-day. Being *His* judgment it is a true and righteous one; unlike a judgment by men—even by good men—which may be swayed by wrong motives and which may err in being either too severe or too lenient.

In the address to the Church at Sardis, we have a state of spiritual death, while there is a name to live. Their works were not completed before God, and consequently there was the tendency to go back instead of forward. It is the state into which Protestantism settled down after the Reformation. It started well, but leaned on the worldly powers for protection and support, got mixed up with the world, and failed to go on in the energy of faith in God alone.

Lastly, we have Laodicea, the worst of all in the Lord's eyes, because they were neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm. What marked them was lack of *heart* for Christ, the worst of all evils. Besides this, there was pride and boastfulness as well as utter lack of spiritual discernment as to what was suitable to Him. This is a solemn warning to us to keep clear of all that which savours of the spirit of that religious pride, self-occupation and self-complacency, which has such a deadening and darkening effect upon the soul of the Christian.

Between these two, we have the address to Philadelphia: a refreshing picture to turn to amidst the prevailing decline and apostasy. Not that this Church presented much that was attractive to the eye of man; they had "little strength," but this only caused them to lean upon the arm of the Lord as a weak infant does

upon the arm of its mother. Then they had kept Christ's word and had not denied His Name—a characteristic which was precious in His eyes, all the more so because of the general unfaithfulness around.

That Name was the name of the Holy and the True One—the One who was, not only intrinsically holy in His own Person, but who kept Himself from all defilement as He passed through this world, being separated to God as the true Nazarite. And as they maintained the Name of the "True One," the Word of God assumed, for them, a special importance, for He Himself has said, "Thy Word is truth."

But it is well for us to remember that Philadelphia does not represent a compact *body of people* but a *Church state*, so that a claim to be Philadelphia is entirely out of keeping with the true spirit of that Church.

And the Lord fully recognises what He finds in this Church, feeble as its state may be. What characterised it answered, in some measure at least, to what He was when in this world. Though God over all blessed for ever, Christ was the humble One, the lowly man; marked by apparent outward weakness—"A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench." As the dependent and obedient One, He drew all His resources from the Father above. He, most truly, kept the Father's Word and confessed the Father's Name in the face of all opposition.

They had also kept the "Word of His patience"—waited in the same spirit as He waits for the moment when it is the Father's will that He should take the kingdom. And the Lord set before them an "open door." For this very reason the preaching and testimony of the Gospel will surely have the deepest importance for all those who are marked by the spirit of Philadelphia. To them also the Lord says, what those four precious words convey so touchingly, "*I have loved thee.*"

We have dwelt at some length on this Church because the message to Philadelphia is specially encouraging to all who desire to learn what suits the Lord in His people. But to-day the professing Church has sunk to the level of the world. It accepts the world's honours and preferments, it looks for the world's patronage, and it does all it can to gain the world's approval. Shorn of its *heavenly* character, it has adopted the world's ways and maxims, and has become like a worldly association of religious bodies; which, alas! have been becoming more and more leavened with unbelief and anti-christian doctrines.

Yet the path of the simple Christian is plainly marked in the Word of God. It is, indeed, to follow closely in the footsteps of the Lord Himself; finding in Him his life, his righteousness before God, his Saviour (in the full sense of that word), yea, his *all*.

But how encouraging it is to look at the Church's destiny and future prospects! It is written, "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it." His is a love superior to all failure, a love which no decline or failure on the part of the Church can possibly set aside. What should we do if it were not so?

And the day is coming when, in that same love, He will present the Church to Himself "glorious, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." Who can hinder it; what power on earth or in hell can prevent it?

According to Rev. xix. 7, 8, the bride was arrayed in a beauty not her own; "To her was *granted* that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white." Every glory in which she shall shine and every beauty which is hers, is a *conferred* glory: it is the expression of a love and grace which is perfect because it is Christ's.

In Rev. xxi., we read of "the bride, the Lamb's wife," shown to us under the figure of "the holy city, Jerusalem," which has the glory of God, and her shining "like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone," etc. The glory of God will enlighten

this heavenly city and the Lamb is the light thereof. And from Rev. xxi. 2, it would seem that the Church would maintain its own special place even in eternity itself, after the millennial kingdom is over.

Surely the consideration of these blessed hopes and prospects, if indeed we have the heart to dwell upon them and the spiritual intelligence to take them in, is enough to sustain the faith of the people of God, even amidst the broken and declining state in which the Church of God is found to-day.

F.G.B.

### “Spirit and Soul and Body.”

**I** PRAY God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. v. 23). These words come in at the conclusion of the first epistle to the Thessalonians.

No doubt the Apostle Paul, guided by the Spirit of God, had a good reason for dividing the whole man, or personality, into these three parts. Leaving aside the speculations of human reason, let us follow the Word of God, His revelation; where we learn that the Word is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating till it has divided between soul and spirit, the joints and marrow, criticising even the thoughts and intents of the heart. It is not a dead letter but a living and operative Word, given by the Holy Spirit, to whose eyes all things are naked and laid bare.

(1) **SPIRIT.** This word stands for the intellectual power. We understand it to be an invisible breath which God has breathed into man; with the spirit we grasp our relation to God, to the universe and to ourselves. “The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly” (Prov. xx. 27). It is, as it were, the arm with which we grasp divine things so as to appropriate them—the eye with which we see things unseen. It is the seat of wisdom and knowledge, of conscience and reason: the attributes which distinguish us from the lower animals.

(2) SOUL. This stands for the emotions, it is very closely related to the spirit. It is the seat of the emotions and feelings; of the will, the expression of the personality. Animals also possess these qualities in *some* degree. Scripture often uses, as a figurative expression for the soul, the words "heart" and "reins"; "I Jehovah search the heart, I try the reins." The word "soul" sometimes even stands for the entire person, just as the name for the most precious part of anything may be used for the whole. Nevertheless the "I" (*ego*), in its full significance, consists always of spirit, soul and body; a wonderful mysterious unity, only to be parted (as to the body) at death.

(3) BODY. This is the dwelling-place of the spirit and soul. It is the part allied to the senses; one can both touch and see it. It is the wonderfully organised edifice in whose good condition both the spirit and soul have the liveliest interest.

Thus it is plain that man is to be considered in relation to spirit, soul and body—though the three form a close unity. Man stands before us in three aspects of his life: formed by God out of the dust of the ground, quickened by His breath (or spirit) and therefore a living soul: God's own image.

But alas! a fearful distortion of this beautiful image has come about through sin. Man has shown himself unable, in humility, to submit his personality to the far greater one of his Creator. He listened to the voice of the tempter and fell. This temptation appealed to him in a threefold way—to his spirit it offered the knowledge of good and evil; to his soul (or higher senses) it offered what was enticing in appearance; to his body, what had a refreshing taste. This is just how the world is seducing men to-day; by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

The soul or heart of man is poisoned by sin and out of it proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, etc., and thus the body becomes a slave to sin, as we read, "God gave them up . . . to dishonour their bodies"

(Rom. i. 24), "ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness" (Rom. vi. 19).

In the face of this threefold wretchedness, God has shown mercy and opened a way for the Christian out of our misery. Christ, the Second man, the last Adam, "delivered up His spirit" (John xix. 30), "poured out His soul unto death" (Isaiah liii. 12), and gave Himself for us. "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. viii. 16. R.V.); His divine power also delivers the *soul* from bondage to sin, as it is written, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit" (1 Peter i. 22). The whole personality is changed and instead of sinful lusts, the heart brings forth the fruits of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, etc.

And not only so but the *body* benefits more or less in this life by the blessed change; it becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost, and the members are "yielded as instruments of righteousness unto God," responding willingly to the Holy Ghost's action.

Yet the Christian needs to be ever on the watch; having still the old nature in him he needs to be on his guard against being carried away by his feelings, emotions, pride of intellect; or those things which appeal to the lusts and desires of the body. Each one of us has his own special danger and we need to "reckon ourselves dead" and to walk in the power of the Spirit.

When the Apostle commends the whole spirit and soul and body to the sanctifying power of "The God of peace," he has in mind the Lord's coming, when we shall each give an account of ourselves to God. In His blessed presence the new life shall no longer be hindered by the sinful nature; we shall know as we are known, death will be swallowed up in victory, and the glorified body will make us complete in the image of Christ's likeness.

On the other hand, how solemn to think that, where there is no divine life in the soul; the fallen spirit, with the unredeemed soul in a lost resurrection body—the

whole personality—shall be “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” !

*Précis of an article by H.R. & K.N. (China).*

### Cleaving to the Lord.

**O**BERVE, they are exhorted with *purpose of heart* to cleave to the Lord. A distracted heart is the bane of a Christian. When my heart is filled with Christ, I have no heart or eye for the trash of the world. If Christ is dwelling in your heart by faith, it will not be the question, What harm is there in this, or that? rather, Am I doing this for Christ? Can Christ go along with me in this? If you are in communion with Him, you will readily detect what is not of Him. Do not let the world come in and distract your thoughts.

I speak especially to young ones; we who are older have had more experience of what the world is, we know more what it is worth, but it all lies shining before you. What else does it fill its shop windows for? Its smiles are all deceitful, still it is smiling upon you. It makes many promises it cannot fulfil; still it *promises*. The fact is, your hearts are too big for the world, it cannot fill them: they are too little for Christ, for He fills heaven; yet will He fill you to overflowing.

Observe again, it is to the Lord they were to cleave; not to duty, or law, or ordinances (though these are good in their places), but to the *Lord*. He knew how treacherous the heart was, and how soon it would put anything in *His* place. You will have to learn what is in your heart. Abide with God, and you will learn your heart with Him, and under His grace; else you will have to learn it with the devil through his successful temptations.

But God is faithful, and if you have been getting away from Him, and other things have been coming in and forming a crust round your heart, and you want to get back again, God says, What is this crust? I must

have you deal with it, and get rid of it. Remember, Christ bought you with His own blood, that you should be His, and not the world's. The denial of this fact is an artifice of the devil. Do not let the devil come in between you and God's grace.

One word more. Talk with Him. Never be content without being able to walk and talk with Christ as with a dear friend. Be not satisfied with anything short of near intercourse with Him who has loved you with such manner of love.

J.N.D.

### The Pathway.

**L**ORD, while we wait the moment,  
When we shall see Thy face;  
We daily find the sweetness  
Of Thy sustaining grace;  
Yea, daily learn the comfort  
Of Thine unfailing love,  
And we shall know its fulness  
When with Thee, Lord, above.

And yet while in the desert,  
What lessons do we learn!  
As on our homeward journey  
Thou mak'st our heart to burn;  
The living water flowing,  
From life's perennial spring,  
The daily manna coming,  
Fresh praises daily bring.

And O! what loud thanksgiving,  
Shall fill those courts of love,  
As we survey the pathway,  
Which led to Thee above:  
There in the light unsullied,  
We'll learn how great the care  
Which watched our every footstep,  
Till we Thy rest should share.

## Watching.

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. . . The Lord's coming is near but in no sort of way connected with passing events. When the Lord speaks of *these* in Matthew, Mark, or Luke, He always says, "The end is not yet." The last four verses of Mark xiii apply to "*watching*," i.e., occupation with the "*Master's*" *thoughts and interests*, from the very moment when He went away, as in Colossians iii. 1-4, I apprehend. And both Matthew and Mark's account of Gethsemane prove this. When the Lord left the *three*—Peter, James and John—the *first* time, He said, "*Watch with ME.*" They failed in that, and the *second* time He said, "Pray" (practically) "for yourselves." They failed again, and Peter, as we know, *fell*. But how little we understand the work of the "porter" to *watch*, have the house in order and be looking out for the Master *Himself*. In Mark it is figurative, but Luke shews that *every one* who is the Lord's ought to have the character of a "porter" (xii. 34-37).

W.J.L. (Oct., 1917.)

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I believe that in all times blessing within is in the measure of Evangelisation. The reason is very simple. It is the presence of God which blesses, and God is love, and it is love which makes one seek souls. But God loves souls, and if we do not seek them, He will set His testimony elsewhere. He loves us, I believe, but He has no need of us. May he give us only to be faithful to Him, and He will certainly bless us.

J.N.D.

I cannot live *to* God till my accounts are settled *with* God,

## “This One Thing I Do.”

PAUL'S experience, as given us in Philippians iii., is very encouraging, and yet one never can read it without feeling some measure of rebuke, seeing that most of us know so little about it experimentally. Here was a man absorbed with one object, and that object was Christ. He is running a race, pressing towards the mark or goal—absolute conformity to Christ in glory.

Arrested on the road to Damascus, he had been taken up for this, and now his one desire was to lay hold of that for which he had been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Nothing short of this was the motive which governed Paul's life, it was his aim and his object.

And in this epistle Paul is not speaking of himself as an Apostle, but as a Christian—he is a pattern man, as he says, “Brethren, be followers together of me.”

This complete renunciation of self and the world in its various shapes and forms, was not like a duty imposed upon him by a religious system or any outside influence of that kind. No: what energised him and enabled him to run the race was that Christ had so taken possession of his heart, and won such a place there, that he could say, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”

Is it possible for the Christian who goes through the world in the ordinary circumstances of every-day life, as most of us have to do—in business, in family life, in the work-shop or at the desk—is it possible for us to know anything of such an experience? Certainly it is. Paul made his tents when he worked for his own living, he had the difficulties and trials of life to encounter; but his *heart* was where Christ was, and his whole soul was filled with an earnest desire that the Christ to whom he owed everything, should be magnified in him, whether in life or in death.

We may well feel how far we lag behind in the race, but let us remember that we have the same blessed *object* for the heart as Paul had, the same Saviour and the same Holy Spirit to engage our hearts with Him. One thing much needed by us all is to *persevere*. There was, probably, a lapse of thirty years or so between Paul's experience in verse 7 and verse 8 of this chapter; yet he could say, not only "I counted," but "I *count*" all things but loss: he kept to it all along the road.

It was the attractive power of the object (Christ) which so governed his whole life and heart and soul; this was the secret of that spiritual energy which carried him over every obstacle, and made all the best things the world could offer to be but dung and dross in his eyes. Such is true Christian experience; and in spite of the fact that he had been four years in prison, he speaks of *joy* in every chapter in the epistle. May it be ours to be "imitators" of him!

## The Church of God.

**T**HERE are three aspects in which the Assembly is viewed in Ephesians ii. (1) It is the *habitation of God*, His dwellingplace, the expression of the greatness of the privilege which is granted to us of being so near Himself, in the place where He desires to dwell with us (ver. 22). (2) It is the *house of God* (ver. 19), where His authority and the Lord's rights should be recognised and His holiness manifested amongst His own (Ps. xciii., 5). (3) It is the *temple of God* (ver. 21) prepared, ordered and adorned according to His counsels, and where His glory, His majesty, and His greatness should be made known. It will be so in its perfection when, the work of grace being finished, His Assembly will be the temple in which He will display His glory for ever.

Let us recall two passages which present to us (1) the *collective* blessing of the saints and the responsi-

bility which flows from it; "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii., 16). (2) Their *individual* blessing, also the walk which should result from it; "Know ye not that *your body* is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" (1 Cor. vi., 19).

The Church of God is seen in two aspects in the Word. (1) It is considered as the work of Christ Himself alone. It is He who built it (Matt. xvi., 18), bringing into it "living stones" only; added to the foundation stone, by faith. This "Chief corner stone,"—precious for those who believe in Him, although rejected by men—is the "Rock" (Matt. xvi., 18), that is to say, the Person of the Son of the living God, which assures the eternal blessing of His Assembly, the fruit of His work of redemption.

(2) On the other hand, in His work of gathering His Church, the Lord uses human instruments. "As a wise masterbuilder," Paul had laid the foundation of the house of God, and others builded on this foundation. Some brought good material; "gold, silver, precious stones"; others bad material which could not stand the test of the fire in the day of Christ; "wood, hay, stubble."

Let us watch over our walk and our service in the house of God, so that we may not be "saved so as by fire" which would consume all our work. Let us not bring anything into the temple of God which would profane it, because His presence is found there. May He give us to have, in respect to His Assembly, the feelings of Christ, for He nourishes and cherishes it with unfailing love and care. And may it be dear to our hearts, because we love Him—the One who "first loved us."

A.L.

## 1st Corinthians and Colossians.

**B**OTH these epistles deal with three forms of evil which ensnare the Lord's people to-day, viz.

- (1) The activity of the natural mind;
- (2) The indulgence of the body, and
- (3) "Religion" of human origin.

This is the order in 1 Corinthians, but in Colossians (3) comes before (2).

It is profitable to compare the points of view from which these evils are regarded in the two epistles, their consequences and the remedies provided for us.

*1 Corinthians* looks at the relationship of believers towards one another. The three forms of evil are shown to produce partisanship, jealousy, pride, division and other evil results. Examination will show that the divisions between Christians, manifest in the appalling number of sects and denominations into which professing Christians are divided, can be traced directly to one or more of the forms of evil named above.

The work of the Holy Spirit, in the believer individually, and in the company of believers when come together, is presented as the remedy for this state of affairs—The Holy Spirit is the One through whom God reveals the "things of God." He is the teacher. Our body is His temple. He is the One who works all the gifts, dividing to every man severally as He will. It is by Him that believers are all baptised into one body. You and I, as individuals, are to subject ourselves intellectually, physically, and spiritually to the guidance of the Holy Spirit—so, too, should every company of Christians desiring to "come together" in accordance with the Scriptures.

*Colossians*, on the other hand, takes up the subject from the point of view of the relation of the believer to the Head of the body, the Church. These evils "spoil" the believer, beguile him of his reward, satisfy his flesh, result in his "not holding the Head." How solemn is the thought of a part of the body acting in-

- dependently of the Head ! No human skill can remedy such a state, however much human regulations may be introduced to produce uniformity.

The Person of Christ Himself is presented to us to counteract these evils. In Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. There is no room for the speculations of philosophy where this is truly believed. The believer is "complete in Him, buried with Him, risen with Him." Further, all ordinances, even the God-given Mosaic law, have been blotted out, taken out of the way, nailed to His cross. They are but shadows, whereas Christ is the substance. Rules and regulations of human origin are "not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh." God has put Christ in the pre-eminent place. He is the Head of the body, the Church. Nothing can take the place of the Head from whom "all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

As regards the indulgence of the body, we have died with Christ and are risen with Him, so we are to live as those whose "members which are upon the earth" have been put to death; as those who have put off the old man and have put on the new, and are living where Christ is all and in all.

May I suggest to young Christians who are perplexed by the sects and divisions of the present day, that the first steps in the right path are *individual*. Do you and I each give the Holy Spirit the place which He should have in us according to 1 Corinthians? Do we each give Christ the pre-eminent place which is His right according to Colossians? Let us seek earnestly to answer to the teaching of these epistles as individuals, and then walk with others of the same mind. J.C.K.

## The Passover and the Red Sea.

**I**N the Passover we find typified the Cross of Christ which shelters us from the judgment of God. God says, "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night . . . and against all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment" (Exod. xii., 12). Now Israel themselves could not be sheltered except by the blood of the paschal lamb, placed between a sinful people and God who was their Judge. That is *expiation*. The blood averted God's judgment, and, so to speak, kept Him outside the house and put them inside, "When I see the blood I will pass over you."

Only let us not forget that it is the *love* of God which provided the sacrifice adequate to meet His own *judgment*. In this way love spared the people who, of themselves, could not avoid having to do with the Judge any more than the Egyptians.

The Passover presents to us yet another truth. The blood was that of the paschal lamb entirely roast with fire—type of Christ who has submitted, in the completest way, both outwardly and in the depth of His being, to the judgment of God for us and in our place. Whilst they were under the shelter of the blood the Israelites, and especially the believers amongst them, found a food for the heart; they fed upon the roasted lamb (type of Christ in His death) with a deep sense of the bitterness of sin—the bitter herbs—but of sin completely expiated.

In the Red Sea we find a second aspect of the Cross of Christ; that is *Redemption*; "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth Thy people which Thou has redeemed." Now if God delivers and redeems us, is He not then *for* us, instead of being *against* us? In fact He says, "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (Exod. xiv., 14).

The Passover prevented God from coming in as a Judge and put Israel in the place of safety: in the Red Sea God intervened in favour of his people as a Saviour (Exod. xiv., 2). They had nothing to do but to be the

subjects of God's deliverance, "Stand ye still and see the salvation of the Lord." In Redemption God considers as being against Himself those enemies who were against us—enemies that we were entirely unable to overcome. At that solemn moment, what a terrible and critical situation was that in which the people of God were placed! The enemy desired to seize upon his prey, he pursued Israel, closely pursuing and driving him towards a sea which could not be crossed.

It is just the same with sinners. The power of Satan urges them on towards death, and death as *the judgment of God*. "It is appointed unto men once to die—after this the judgment." Now the soul must have to do with this latter, directly, personally, for it is placed in immediate contact with death which is the expression of it. There is no means of escaping. The people were unarmed against the enemy; without resources against the power of death.

It is at this extremity that God intervenes. The rod of judicial authority in the hand of Moses is stretched out, not over Israel, but in their favour, over the sea. Death becomes a road instead of being a gulf to the people. They can cross it dry shod; it is a new way, a solemn hour when the whole people pass between these liquid walls raised up on the right and the left under the action of the "East Wind," between these masses which, instead of swallowing them up, formed a wall for them! The solemnity of the scene remained, the horror of it passed away for ever.

We find in this scene a type of death and judgment borne by another. For us the Lord Jesus is presented in it. This horror of death, Christ has entirely borne, He alone felt it in the infinite depths of His holy soul.

Yes, the people cross the sea dry shod. Judgment finds nothing in them because it is exhausted in death; and so it is for us, in the Person of Christ on the cross. They pass over safe and sound to the other side. In this we find another type—not of the death only, but

also of the *resurrection* of Christ for us. The enemy's arm is destroyed, he finds his grave there where we found our pathway. All alarm is past; we can walk in peace on the other shore in the power of a resurrection-life which has passed through death.

It is faith which gives us a part in this blessing. "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians essaying to do were drowned." Whilst faith passes through it, the world, which tries in its own strength to meet death and judgment, will be swallowed up. H. R.

## The Righteousness of God.

THERE can be no doubt that one reason why some of those who look only to Christ for salvation have not settled peace and assurance is because they have never understood what it is to stand before God in divine righteousness. Like Job, they still ask the question in their own mind, if not in words, "How can man be just with God?"

Let us turn to the epistle to the Romans and see how God has taken pains, so to speak, that we might have a full and complete answer to every difficulty on this subject—an answer worthy of Himself and to His own glory.

And, first, we have to learn that man has no righteousness for God; "There is none righteous, no, not one." The Psalms and the Prophets are brought up as witnesses to this. But oh! how slow we are to believe it. Jew or Gentile, religious or irreligious, every mouth is stopped and all the world is pronounced to be, "Guilty before God." Now this complete setting aside of man's righteousness leaves the way clear for the bringing out of something infinitely better, namely, the righteousness of God.

And note, it is *God's* righteousness: His consistency with Himself. Not merely His grace in saving, but

His righteousness—His consistency with His own character as a righteous God. God's righteousness is said to be :—

*Revealed in the gospel.* It is revealed "from faith to faith," that is, it is not on the principle of works or law, but on that of *faith*, wherever that faith is found, whether in a Jew or a Gentile. This is a most important truth to lay hold of and it delivers us from trying to work out a righteousness suited to God by our own efforts. Let us then ask the question again, "How can man be just with God?" Certainly not by the deeds of the law, for "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. iii., 20).

*Manifested and witnessed.* Observe the two words with which verse 21 of Romans iii. begins, "But now." After proving man to be utterly bankrupt as regards righteousness, that little word "but" brings in a complete change. For we have just seen the utter hopelessness of gaining righteousness on the ground of law or works. And yet, alas! how many sincere souls are trying to do so. But since Christ came it is *manifested*, being *witnessed* by the law and the prophets. Isaiah speaks of it frequently, and he says it is that which is "near to come." And it is seen to be on the ground of faith, by grace. This opens the door to *all* without distinction. It is offered to all; "*unto all*": but everyone does not get this blessing, it is "*upon all them that believe.*"

*The basis of it.* It is on the ground of *redemption*. God has set forth Christ, a "Propitiation through faith in His blood." Do we all understand the meaning of the word "propitiation"? Well, it means a "mercy-seat," and this brings us back to that solemn day in Israel, the Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi.). On that day the high priest went in, within the vail, carrying the blood of the victim, which he sprinkled once upon the mercy-seat and seven times before the mercy-seat.

This was typical of the precious blood of Christ, shed upon the cross, and in virtue of it God can be a just God and a Saviour, all His holy claims having been met by the blood. In Old Testament times God passed over the sins of believers of those days, the Abrahams, Davids, etc., looking forward to the blood of Christ to vindicate Him in His forbearance, and so we read, "For the shewing forth of His righteousness, in respect of the passing by the sins that had taken place before, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. iii., 25, new trans.). But He does not "forbear" now; the blood has been shed and God is righteous in forgiving and justifying the believer in Jesus.

*God's righteousness demonstrated.* This has been done, and righteousness has been *proved*, in setting Christ at His own right hand in glory (John xvi., 10).

*Righteousness reckoned to believers.* Romans iv. shows us that the believer is reckoned righteous, not on the ground of works or law, but on the ground of faith. And in the end of that chapter we find that righteousness is reckoned to him who believes on *God*; the God who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Christ gave Himself to bear our sins, and they are all gone; but above all, there is the fact that God has been glorified by that same work, and in proof of this He has raised His own Son from the dead and crowned Him with glory and honour in heaven. This is the public demonstration of *His* estimate of the value of that work.

What shall we say to these things? What can we say but bless our God who has so acted for His own glory and our blessing? And the result of what we have just seen is, to bring the most profound peace to those who rest upon it in faith. It is not the work of the Holy Ghost *in* me that gives peace (important as that is in its place), but the work of Christ *for* me and God's perfect satisfaction with what He has done.

When the prodigal son was clothed with the "best

robe" provided by the father, he could sit down at the table both safe and happy; because that robe was his father's own provision and therefore suited to all His requirements. So the believer is in Christ, has Christ as his righteousness, and can sing :—

"And now a righteousness divine  
Is all my glory, all my trust;  
Nor will I fear since that is mine,  
While Thou dost live and God is just.

Clad in this robe, how bright I shine!  
Angels possess not such a dress;  
Angels have not a robe like mine—  
Jesus, the Lord's my righteousness."

F.G.B.

### Translating the Bible.

**T**HIS subject is of importance just now on account of the many new versions of the Bible which are being issued from the press (see inside back cover of this month's number). The principles set forth in the preface to the German translation, made some years ago by the late Mr. Darby and others, are, we believe, the right principles which should be kept in view by translators of the Scriptures, but unfortunately they are made little account of in the present day :—

The Holy Ghost Himself calls our attention to the necessity of understanding the divine will as a means of safety in the last days; and regard for the holy Scriptures is in these days a proof that God is honoured. The efforts of the enemy also are chiefly directed against His Word. Now whilst the learned can examine the original text, this privilege is out of the reach of the unlearned, and of those unacquainted with that text.

It has, therefore, been our endeavour and object to give a helping hand to the latter class, and to furnish them, at a small cost, with as faithful and exact a representation as possible of the divine Word in their own language. Undoubtedly every translation must be

more or less defective, and we by no means value our work so highly as that we would set aside one more perfectly executed by another hand.

How great the difficulties are of conveying the expressions of one language, especially of the rich Greek, in another, those alone can tell who have tried to make a translation. We can, nevertheless, maintain with good conscience, that we have devoted the utmost care to the work of presenting the Word of God as faithfully as possible, and we therefore cherish the hope that even the most unpractised reader will find our translation simple and comprehensible.

We might indeed have clothed many passages in more elegant German, but, without being in bondage to words, we have been governed throughout by the thought that the faithful rendering of the original text outweighs every other consideration; and the more so because we believe, with the very fullest conviction, the divine inspiration of the holy Scriptures as the revelation of the infinite wisdom of God, and the expression of His gracious character in Jesus Christ.

But since no one is able to grasp the whole expanse of this revelation, and often a meaning beyond the comprehension of the translator lies hidden in a sentence, which would be lost in a free translation, but may be found in a more literal one, through deeper teaching of the Holy Spirit—it is evidently necessary to reproduce the original text as in a mirror. Yet, of course, the limits of this literalness or exactitude must not be drawn so close as to render the sentence translated into another language altogether incomprehensible, and to remain, consequently, destitute of meaning.

Another ground for making the translation as literal as possible was, the conviction that it would not be without profit to a reader unacquainted with the original, to learn something of the style, the customs, the thoughts and the manners of the writers of the Gospels.

For, since the heart, as well as the mind, finds food in the Word of God, the forms of expression chosen by the writers are not without importance; and by changing them, even if the meaning of the sentence remains unchanged, the sensibilities of the heart's feelings may often be lost. Above all, we have been throughout influenced by the deep sense that it was the *Word of God* which occupied us, and we have therefore striven to accomplish our work as intelligibly, and at the same time as literally, as was at all possible; submitting it to the judgment of thoughtful critics.

### “Who Art Thou?”

**T**HIS was one of the questions asked of our Lord by the Jews in the discourse recorded in John viii. Let us meditate a little upon it and seek to understand the meaning of His reply.

In the New Translation, which gives the meaning of the words more exactly, the Lord's reply reads, “Altogether that which I also say to you,” and a note at foot of page referring to the first words of the answer reads, “‘In the principle and universality of what I am;’ i.e., His speech presented Himself, being the truth.”

“Jesus is not merely the way and the life, but the truth. He is, in the principle of His being, what also He speaks. . . . He alone of men could say as much; yet he was the lowliest of men. His ways and words were in perfect accord and all expressed the mind of God. It is not merely that He does what He says, but He is thoroughly and essentially what also He sets out in speech.” (W.K.)

“The words of Jesus expressed what He was; and being thus the true expression of God manifested to man, they put man into the place of either receiving or rejecting God, and God as light of man. If God speaks, and expresses Himself, man accepts what He is, or rejects Him.” (J.N.D.)

No one could so speak except the divine and eternal Son of God, the Son of man, the Christ. His words were the true and perfect expression of what He was. There was no faultiness nor putting before men in words, things which were not the true expression and reflection of what He was in His own Person and being. On the contrary, His words and Himself were in perfect accord.

This is just one of those touches which gave expression to the divine glory and perfection which attaches to the Person of Jesus, which it was the special office of the Apostle John to clothe in words inspired by the Holy Ghost. These words are indeed few in number and simple in themselves; but what a profound depth is in them, and what a theme for our soul's meditation !

## Questions and Answers.

*Should we use the Lord's Prayer?* Some time since we were asked by one interested in the work of God to say a little on this subject. The question might be better stated thus: Is the prayer given by our Lord to His disciples suited for the use of Christians now?

We need hardly say that the prayer itself is a beautiful one and was perfectly suited to the circumstances of those to whom it was given. But three important events have taken place since then:—(1) Christ has died; (2) Christ is risen and has ascended to glory; (3) the Holy Ghost has come down, "shed forth" on the day of Pentecost.

When the Lord Jesus was just about to leave this world, He gave His disciples many instructions for their guidance during His absence. These we have very fully in John xiv.-xvi. In chapter xvi. He tells them to ask the *Father in His name*, and He would answer their requests. They would then have received the Holy Ghost as an in-dwelling Spirit, they would have the blessed consciousness of their relationship to God as *Father*, and they would have all the value of

Jesus' name to plead before the Father. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name : ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

The prayer given to the disciples, commonly called "the Lord's prayer," had to do with the kingdom of Messiah on earth, which every godly Jew looked forward to with desire ; also with what was connected with that kingdom. We (Christians) look for *heavenly* blessings as our proper portion, though of course we ask God to meet our daily needs also. And we are encouraged to come, in prayer to God as *Father*, looking to Him about our every need and want.

Let us remember also that this new relationship of "Father" was first fully declared by the *risen* Saviour in the message sent to the disciples through the lips of that devoted woman, Mary Magdalene, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father ; and to My God and your God." No man has a right to call God "Father" unless he has been "born again" and has received Christ as his Saviour (see John i., 12, 13).

Thus it is well to distinguish things that differ, and not to allow prejudice or habit to dim our eyes to the deeper and fuller blessings and privileges which we have in and through a *risen* and *glorified* Christ ; as compared with what the disciples had before His death and resurrection. We do not find any reference to the disciples' prayer, or indeed to any *form* of prayer, in the Acts or the epistles, because the Holy Ghost was to guide, not only into "all truth," but also in the right expression of our needs (Jude 20).

But in Christendom commonly, thousands even of those who are not true believers and know not God as Father, say the prayer, "Our Father," over and over again without ever thinking of what they are saying. It is, for them, going through a religious routine or form, using "vain repetitions," which the Lord condemns (Matt. vi. 7).

## The Street Preacher.

**N**O crowd encircled him about,  
 He stood despised with two or three ;  
 But like a spring in summer drought  
 The word he uttered quickened me.

Around us Oxford dome and tower  
 Majestic breathed her charm august,  
 But which of all her spells had power  
 To raise the wretched from the dust?

What Oxford could not do, Jesus did,  
 Bared to my eyes the depths of grace,  
 And all the unguessed treasures hid  
 Beneath the dust of common place.

Since then I tread the pilgrim's way,  
 Still plodding on through sun and rain,  
 But like a star shines out that day—  
 The day which saw me born again.



*Fragment.* If we did but know a little more of the comfort and joy of drinking into the fulness of God's love, we should feel present circumstances to be as nothing. Nay, if we entered a little more into His purpose towards us, we should say, "Let Him deal with us, let Him chasten us, let Him uproot us as He will, so that we have but full fellowship with His love." Oh, let us not be satisfied with small portions of blessing—low measures, low enjoyments; let us press forward, let our eyes look right onward, let us seek, through the power of the Spirit, after the realization of all that is ours in Jesus. J.N.D.

## “Every Scripture is God-Inspired.”

**T**HE conflict which rages in Christendom is directed against the Scriptures in more ways than one. On the one side there is the so-called Higher Criticism, which is really an infidel attack on the Bible. On the other side there is Ritualism and Romanism, which say to the ordinary layman, in effect, “You should not read the Bible for yourself, you would take a wrong meaning out of it. You should let the Church interpret it for you.”

All these attacks, from whatever source they come, are the work of the enemy; they either allege that God has not spoken, or that if He has, it is in such a way as to be unintelligible to those He addresses. Now this ignores the fact that there is a divine teacher on earth, the Holy Spirit, who is able to teach and instruct, and to lead the believer into “all truth.” And yet such is the determined effort of both these schools of unbelief. However opposing they may appear to be, they agree in depriving the ordinary Christian of the Word of God.

Let us take the Apostle’s statement as it stands, quoting from a revised translation, “Every Scripture (is) God-inspired, and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto every good work” (2 Tim. iii. 16).

Everything that comes under the title “Scripture” is divinely inspired: let us hold tenaciously to this.

But can a man who is not “born again,” who has not the Holy Spirit, receive the things of the Spirit of God? He can neither receive nor understand them because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. ii. 10-16). For the humble Christian, this settles the whole question; he decides at once for God’s inspired Word against all the specious reasonings of the mind of fallen man.

But, say the Ritualists or the Romanists, “If you come to us you will find a harbour of refuge from the rationalism of the day.” “No,” we reply, “in keeping

clear of a ditch on one side of the road, there is no need to fall into one on the other side." God has given to every believer and every servant of His a sufficient guide and resource in the Scripture, so that he may be fully equipped for every good work.

But, let us beware of another snare. How many Christians who glory in an "open Bible," do not read it at all as they ought. Many allow the reading of the Word of God to be, more or less, *crushed out* of their daily lives by other occupations, perhaps even by the reading of too many good books. Let us remember—nothing can possibly take the place of the careful and prayerful reading of Scriptures daily, if we are to go on with God and to stand for Him and witness for Him in this evil day in which we live.

### A Serious Call.

**T**HE desire expressed by some pious and sincere Christians to understand better the truths which constitute the testimony of God for the times of the end, would encourage us to redoubled zeal in placing these truths plainly before them. We joyfully devote ourselves to this task, for we know by experience that the result will be, for our brethren as it has been for us, a source of joy, spiritual power and liberty; and that it will help these Christians to honour, by a still more faithful walk, the beloved Saviour whom we all desire to serve.

Let us begin by strongly affirming that those precious blessings cannot be attained unless these Christians have an implicit faith in the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and that they reject, as being the work of the enemy, every attempt to make a difference, in this connection, between the Scripture and the Word of God. To cast any doubt upon the inspiration of the Bible, even in its details, is to nullify it by opening the door to the negations of infidel rationalism.

As to the truths of which we speak—it is now nearly

a century since the Lord brought them to light again. At the Reformation, by means of the Scriptures recovered after the lapse of ages, the truth of justification by faith, consequent on the death of Christ upon the Cross was brought out once more.

But where was the heavenly position of the believer in virtue of the Resurrection of Christ preached then? And further, where was the coming of the Lord to introduce His Church into His own glory preached in those days? These important truths were ignored before the awakening of the last century took place.

The late war, the serious moral disorganisation which has been the consequence of it over the whole world, the shaking of even the foundations on which the moral principles of society are established, have awakened in souls a desire to understand better the important truth which is at the base of the Christian testimony in our day; viz., the hope of the near coming of the Lord to take His saints to Himself in glory, whether those of them who will be raised or changed.

A large number of Christians who formerly took a most decided position in opposing this hope, zealously preach it to-day. This near coming of the Lord, if it is received by faith, will have as its result to detach Christians from things here below and attach them to the things which are above, where Christ is, at the right hand of God.

But how can I be delivered from the world if I am not *dead with Christ*? How live to God if I am not *risen with Christ*? Here then the knowledge of deliverance in Christ comes in—deliverance from sin, from the law, from the world—a vital truth of Christianity, without which the soul will never enjoy true peace and liberty.

Are these then (besides the preaching of the gospel of salvation addressed to the world) all the truths that the testimony of the times of the end is called upon to present to the soul and conscience of God's people? No; there is still one which we have not touched upon—

that of the *worship* of the children of God. In this connection how important is the truth of the Church or the christian Assembly, the house of God, the bride of Christ, the body of which He is the Head, bound to Him by an inseparable bond of union, the object of His love, for which He gave Himself, which it is His heart's desire one day to present to Himself a glorious Church, and which will reign with Him!

Has this truth of the Church taken a place in the affections of Christians as well as those truths which are connected with it? Or rather have they not buried it under many mistaken and unscriptural ideas? Or, again, is the Church, for them, what it is for Christ—He who was the merchantman seeking for goodly pearls—is it a pearl of great price; one for which He sold all that He had that He might become possessed of it?

Does not this short summary suffice to enable souls who are pious and desirous of serving the Lord, to understand the immense value of the blessings of which many have been deprived hitherto? If God has revealed them in His Word, it is in order that we should carry them out *in practice*, although it be in imperfection here below, whilst awaiting the day when He will come "to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (2 Thess. i. 10).

Thank God, there is still time to consider these things in the light of the inspired Word, under the eye of God, with the desire to obey Him in all things.

H. R.

### Fruit Bearing.

**F**RUIT is the name by which the Spirit of God speaks of the manifestations of divine life in the believer.

It is proposed in this short paper to examine the Scriptures with a view to have brought home to us the beautiful fitness of this epithet as applied to that which

God looks for in His people and which it should be our aim to yield to Him.

On the third day of the ordering of the earth God said "Let the earth bring forth . . . the fruit tree yielding fruit" (Gen. i. 11), and in v. 29 of the same chapter this fruit was given to man for food. One tree alone was excepted, man's place of obedience being thus maintained. But alas, we know, tested in this way, the race fell under the power and condemnation of sin. Cain's offering, though beautiful in itself, could not be accepted, for it took no account of the Word of God and of his own sinful state. Thereafter violence and corruption marked the scene and God had to say after the flood as well as before it, "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."

But what if God were pleased to reveal Himself to one man (Acts vii. 2) and bless him and his children after him—should there be no return to Him for all His goodness? This is the question discussed in Isaiah v. 1-7, where is set forth most touchingly, under the illustration of a vineyard, how Jehovah had done everything for His people so that he says, v. 4, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes brought it forth wild grapes?"

Our Lord used the same illustration of the vineyard in Matt. xxi. 33-41, in bringing home to the religious leaders of the people their guilt in outraging the rights of Jehovah by ill-treating His servants and slaying His son instead of "rendering Him the fruits in their season."

Very touching, too, is the closing appeal in the prophecy of Hosea, where, after all the pleading of Jehovah with His unfaithful people, we read in the last chapter, v. 4, "Ephraim shall say, 'What have I to do any more with idols?'" and Jehovah's answer, "From me is thy fruit found."

Thus far, from man as a whole, the result had been

failure. But in the first Psalm we read of the "blessed" man that "he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." There can be only One who answers perfectly to this refreshing picture given to us by the Holy Spirit through the Psalmist. It is He who, in fulfilment of Matt. xxi., referred to above, when about to give Himself up to those who sought His life, said to His disciples, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman" (John xv. 1). O, what rest and joy is conveyed to the intelligent soul in contemplating these words! After 4,000 years of failure to produce fruit for God here is One, "a root out of a dry ground"—an oasis in the desert in which there was nothing to give refreshment and satisfaction, and yet "like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season."

Let us note that not only did our Lord announce Himself as the true vine in contrast with Israel's failure in the place of responsibility, but He speaks of His Father as the Husbandman, thus bringing before us the One, who had a right to expect fruit, and who is glorified when fruit is borne as the result of abiding in Christ.

It is not possible for us, here, to go through the Scriptures and show that all the fruits of the Spirit were found in Him, although this would be our delight as we study His ways, but the whole ground is covered by His own statement (John viii. 29), "I do always those things that please Him."

In v. 5 of John xv., our Lord adds to the statement, "I am the vine," the further statement, "ye are the branches," and emphasises the fact that abiding in Him and He in us, we shall bring forth much fruit. Thus we see the wisdom and grace of His ways—*wisdom* that "without Him we can do nothing," and *grace* in that all those moral beauties manifested in Jesus may be seen

in His disciples as they are kept in communion with Him.

But "who is sufficient for these things?" Certainly there is great failure on our part, yet we know that if we are subject to His word, He will make these things good in us by His Spirit. For it is by the Spirit that the fruits are produced in us, as shown in Gal. v. 22, 23. And in that passage it is beautiful to see that the *fruits* of the Spirit are contrasted with the *works* of the flesh. Fruit is not produced by effort, but is the natural result when the plant is in health. In the parable of the sower (Luke viii. 14) we get some of the hindrances to fruit as the result of the seed sown in the heart, and it lies with us to see to it that, by God's grace, these things do not choke the word and render it unfruitful.

If we turn to Colossians i. we find divine instruction on the subject before us. First of all, the apostle (v. 6) speaks of the gospel as bearing fruit in them, and then being much concerned about their walk, he sets forth in vv. 9, 10 the divine order in which the work of God should proceed in their souls; firstly, that they "might be filled with the knowledge of His will"; secondly, that they "might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being *fruitful* in every good work."

Of this order, Mary of Bethany furnishes us with a notable example, in that she first "sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word," so that when the time came—an opportunity which would never recur—she was ready to pour out her treasure on the person of her Lord, and thus to offer to Him those blessed fruits of intelligent affection which He appreciated to the full.

So may it be with us! His word being increasingly precious to us the life which we have in Christ shall be in health, and the good works which we may be privileged to do shall be of the nature of *fruit*, pleasing to the Husbandman and the result of His own grace working in us.

It is not every member of the body of Christ that has

a gift either as teacher or evangelist. There are many who are precluded from preaching the word in any public way. But to every believer is given the privilege of bearing fruit and thus glorifying God even the Father. In Galatians, v. 22, we learn the *character* of these fruits, and, dear fellow-Christian, is it not a joy for us to know that you and I may be bearing these fruits day by day? May all our service flow from communion; as it must, if it be of the character of fruit; and then shall we "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." "At His feet giving Him thanks" (Luke xvii. 16) is the proper attitude for this. So may our "Beloved come into His garden and eat His pleasant fruits" (Canticles iv. 16).

J. M. W.

## Heard and Seen.

**W**E have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work Thou didst in their days, in times of old" (Ps. xlv. 1). So say the pious souls of whom this Psalm speaks prophetically when they find themselves driven out of Jerusalem on account of the oppression of the Antichrist. They are obliged to fly precipitately in order to escape death and we see them dispersed among the nations, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Their soul is bowed down to the dust; and all this has happened to them in spite of their faithfulness to Jehovah.

These believers have not forgotten their God, they have not been unfaithful to His covenant, their heart has not turned back, their steps have not gone astray from His paths. Why then does He hide His face from them? Does He forget their afflictions and their oppression? Their faith is subjected to a severe trial; where are all the wonders of which their fathers have spoken to them—where is the God who caused them to go out of Egypt by His great power and who brought

them into the promised land? "Why sleepest Thou, O Lord?"

In Psalm xlv., which follows this one, the scene suddenly changes; Christ appears in His glory. Who can depict their blessing? Their heart bubbles up within them! No, He has not forgotten them, but has heard their cry and He comes Himself to deliver them and to pierce through the heart of their enemies. He sits upon His throne for ever.

And so the deliverance of His people is great—greater even than when they were delivered from the hand of Pharaoh and from Egypt. Now it is no longer, "*We have heard*," but it is, "*As we have heard, so have we seen*" (Ps. xlviii. 8). Notice that this verse 8 of Ps. xlviii. is the answer to Ps. xlv. 1. Their faith has been changed into sight. Thankfulness springs from their hearts; they go to the temple and there they think of the goodness of their God. "We have thought of Thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple," etc. Is there any joy like this? They are in the city of the Lord, and they are there for ever! What blessing after so much distress!

Is it only for the Jewish Remnant that these things are written; are they not also for our instruction? Are not the saints to-day an object of the hatred of a hostile world? Many in past ages have been esteemed as sheep for the slaughter, and have been obliged to fly or to be killed. If He who opens and none can shut had not set before us an open door which none can shut, where should we be and what should become of us? We should not forget this.

We have also heard of an Enoch who was taken and who was not found for God took him, of an Elijah who went up to heaven in a chariot of fire, and of the Lord Jesus who has gone up from the earth and has sat down at the right hand of God.

And He said before leaving His own, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." Times have gone

by; long have His redeemed ones awaited the fulfilment of His promise and have sighed after Him and for the Father's house. Often have they cried, "Lord, how long?" We do not forget what is said: "As we have heard, so have we seen." The mockers may say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" What matters it? We know that He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent. He has promised; will He not fulfil?

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, those over whom we weep will be raised, and our weak and frail bodies will be changed into bodies like His body of glory. The power which He displayed when He rose victorious from the grave will be applied to our mortal bodies; our faith will be changed into sight and we shall see Him with our own eyes, we shall see Him as He is.

We know not how soon that moment may come, for yet a very little while and He that shall come will come. "As we have heard, so shall we see." "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, Come, Lord Jesus."

A.G.

### "AS" and "SO" in John's Writings.

**T**HE study of these two little words, which are frequently used in John's writings, opens out for us a blessed field of truth concerning the Father and the Son, and our relationship to both. We can only briefly touch upon the subject here, hoping that the reader may take it up for himself.

The Gospel of John presents to us the Lord Jesus as God, as the Word, the divine and eternal Son, the Light, the Life, the Truth, etc.

We know that God dwelleth in the light to which no man can approach, in His own unseeable Majesty (1 Tim. vi. 16). But Christ, the Son, who dwelt ever in the bosom of the Father, in all the intimacy of that relationship, came into this world to make Him known

to us. In Him there was the perfect revelation of God, of the Father Himself. Grace and truth came in the person of Jesus Christ—grace heaped upon grace.

Now these two little words “as” and “so,” scattered here and there through the writings of John, let us into some of the wonderful results of this revelation of the Father in the Son, and the mutual relationship of the one to the other. And (what grace !) they show us also the way in which we, objects of divine love, are brought into the place where we can have communion with the Father and the Son also (1 John i.).

**“As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them ; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will ” (chap. v. 21).**

**“As the Father hath life in Himself ; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself ” (chap. v. 26).**

This chapter (v.) brings before us the perfect equality of the Son with the Father—a truth most important for us to believe in our hearts and souls, and to confess boldly in the world to-day. “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,” such is the Lord’s declaration ; and the Jews well understood the import of His words, for they sought to kill Him because He was making Himself equal with God.

And yet the Son does nothing independently of the Father. “The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do” : obedience and dependence was the true and proper place for man, and Jesus takes it loyally and perfectly. Equally with the Father He quickens dead souls ; and He quickens “whom He will.” But He is alone in judging, for all judgment is committed to the Son, that all men might honour the Son as they honour the Father.

The same truth is maintained in verse 26. The having “life in Himself,” as the source and fountain of life, is what could only be said of a divine Person—it is said of the Father ; and the Son, *as man*, says it of Himself, as that which is “given” Him of the Father.

**"As the living Father hath sent Me and I live on account of the Father, he also who eats Me shall live on account of Me" (chap. vi. 57. New trans.).**

Is this, to us, "an hard saying" as it was to the Jews? It is the word of the Lord, and it is for our profit. Let us remember that chapter vi. presents to us the incarnate Son, the One who would give His flesh for the life of the world, the living bread come down from heaven. Perfectly in keeping with the position He has taken, it is said that He lives "on account of the Father," inseparably from Him.

True, our finite minds can little understand the depths of such truths, but let us rest a little on the shores of infinitude and seek to gather up some of the precious things which God in His grace has given us. And may we not connect with this what the Lord says to His own in chapter xiv. 19, "because I live ye shall live also"? Our life is inseparable from His. How blessed the links of divine grace! Christ is the *source* of life, the stream is in us, but so united is that perennial stream with its source in Him, that it can be said "because I live ye shall live also."

**"As the Father knoweth Me and I know the Father" (x. 15).**

It is unfortunate that in the A.V. much of the force of the words here is lost. It would be better read, "I am the good Shepherd; and I know those that are mine, and I am known of those that are mine, as the Father knoweth Me and I know the Father." It is the mutual knowledge of the sheep and the Shepherd, and (wonderful to say) it is after the pattern of the Father's knowledge of the Son and of the Son's knowledge of the Father.

**"As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you" (xv. 9-12. Note "as" occurs three times in these verses).**

Truly there was, between the Father and the Son, the perfection of divine love; and in the life of Jesus down here, it being a life of perfect communion with the

Father, there was the full enjoyment of that love. The context shows us that, walking in the same path of obedience, glorifying the Father and bearing fruit, the disciples too were privileged to enjoy the same character of love on the part of the Son : it is *as* the Father loved Him, He loved them.

**“As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world ” (xvii. 18).**

As “not of the world” they were sent into it, as Jesus Himself was. What a position to be placed in, and what a responsibility ! No doubt it was primarily true of the Apostles, but in some measure it is true of us also. They were sent to be witnesses for Him, as He was for the Father. To this we may add chapter xx. 21, “As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.” This was spoken by the *risen* Saviour, who then breathed on His disciples, that they might have, not only life, but the Holy Spirit as the *power* needed for service and testimony.

**“Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me ” (xvii. 23).**

What a wonderful character of love this is ! Loved by the Father *as* Jesus Himself ! Oh, for faith and spiritual intelligence to take it in ! Their being in the same glory with Christ would be the perfect and complete fulfilment of the purposes of this love ; but for this we wait. But Jesus is not satisfied with its being merely a hope, of which we have the knowledge in the *mind*, however good this is. Therefore He adds those words in the last verse, “I have made known to them Thy name (the name of “Father”), and will make it known that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

This goes right on down to the end,—till He comes again. He is Himself “in them” (His own) still making known the Father’s name (by His Word and His Spirit, as I take it), so that His own beloved ones, those

*given* Him of the Father, might *now* have the full enjoyment of the Father's love, *before* the day of manifested glory dawns.

“ **As He is, so are we in this world** ” (i. John iv. 17).

This is the perfecting of divine love “with us,” or “in our case.” We are, even in this world, *as* Christ is, before God. Is He not the victorious and risen Saviour, who is in all the sunshine of the Father's love? Well, so are we *now*; not, indeed, in ourselves, but in Him. It is God's provision for His people, right up to the day of judgment; and this “perfect” love of His, must cast all fear out of the heart.

Fellow-christian! What have we to say to these wonderful words of grace, and what effect have they upon us now?

F. G. B.

## Questions and Answers.

*What is the meaning of the word “Castaway” in 1 Corinthians ix. 27?*

There is really no difficulty as to this word, nor is there any need to pare it down or try to explain away the force of it. What makes a difficulty in some minds is, bringing in the thought that it may mean that a real Christian, one who has been born again and has eternal life, might be finally lost.

But the Apostle is not speaking of a *Christian* and a castaway, but of a *preacher* and a castaway; and, alas, we know that there are many such. In verse 26 he says, “I therefore so run, *not* as uncertain.” When he says “I myself,” he does not mean that the actual man, Paul, might be a castaway, but he makes use of the personal pronoun “I,” to illustrate a fact; just as when he says in chapter iv. 6, “And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes.” (See also the same principle in Rom. iii. 7; 1 Cor. x. 30).

There is plenty of Scripture to prove the absolute security of the believer's position (John x. 27-30; Rom. viii. 38, 39; Eph. i. 4-7, etc.), but the warnings of Scripture are good and wholesome also, and 1 Cor. ix. 27, is a solemn warning to all preachers.

### "Even So."

**O**H for the meeting in the radiant air,  
Caught up to meet Him, all His glory share;  
Changed to His likeness, gazing on His face,  
Know the deep meaning of His matchless grace.  
Even so, Amen.

In the night watches ere the flush of day,  
May come the summons, calling us away;  
Or from the surges of life's rolling tide  
We may mount upward with Him to abide.  
Even so, Amen.

Out of the partings, there to part no more,  
Into the glory of the golden shore;  
Out of the conflict to where conflicts cease,  
Into His presence, which is rest and peace.  
Even so, Amen.

If it be dying, this means "with the Lord,"  
Living or dying, He shall be adored:  
It may be waiting, as on earth we roam,  
Let us wait singing, "Come, Lord Jesus, Come."  
Even so, Amen.

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"But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered," etc. There is nothing that more strengthens one who is bearing witness for the truth than the consciousness of God's love, and that the least one, or thing, that pertains to him is of interest to God.

## The Lord's Supper.

**T**O remember the Lord Jesus in His death, according to His own desire, is one of the greatest privileges the Christian can enjoy. There, we stand between two great events; the Lord's death and the Lord's coming again. We look back to remember Him in the former, and we look on to wait for His coming. When he comes there will be no need for the Supper, for we shall be actually in His presence; but the same song of praise which we sing here below shall be continued above. Not, indeed, in weakness as now, but in power and glory, together with the whole Church of God.

Yet there are one or two remarks it is well to make for our practical good. Why should there be long pauses, as is sometimes the case, at the meeting for breaking of bread? Surely if we come with over-flowing hearts, our lips must be readily opened in His praise. On the other hand, the mere restlessness of the flesh is equally wrong and is a hindrance to the Spirit of God who is there to lead and guide in worship. The great thing is *simplicity*.

Then again, Why should the breaking of the bread and giving thanks for the cup be deferred till late in the meeting? We come together for the express purpose of remembering the Lord in His death, and this should not be put off, but have an early place in the worship of the Assembly. Also, if our worship is in the Spirit and under the leading of the Spirit, we must take in, in our hearts and affections, every member of the body of Christ on earth. Christ's desires take them all in, He loves all those whom the Father has given to Him with a perfect love, and if we are in communion with Him, we must take them all in also.

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Common grace will do when the Church itself is in its place, but *uncommon* grace is needed to sustain the faithful when the Church is not keeping its place.

## God for us.

**G**OD IS FOR US; what a tranquillising truth this is for the soul! It is, as someone has said, the great central truth of grace. Here, in Romans viii., it is put in the form of a challenge, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Certainly every power and every person is infinitely below God, and we may well rest in the fact that *He* is for us.

The Psalmist said, "Jehovah is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (Psalm cxviii. 6). Our faith may be tried, difficulties and storms may arise, as they did when the disciples were crossing the lake of Galilee; but Jesus, our beloved Saviour, has passed through all and much more, and He has marked out the path for us, proving perfectly what it was to find His resources in God in every circumstance He passed through.

It is not only what God is doing *in* us by His Spirit, in teaching and in forming His people after Christ who is their life and their object, but what He is Himself *for* us. We have a blessed proof of what His heart and His grace is, in the fact that He *gave* His beloved Son, the One who was nearest and dearest to Him. And we may rest assured that, with Him, He will freely give us all things.

Yet, as we look round us in the world, we see many a true Christian going through circumstances of trouble and trial. Such is the groaning creation in which we are, where everything is out of course. Still we can triumphantly say, "God is for us." Not only is He for us in giving, but in justifying; so that we can be without fear or the possibility of a charge being brought against us. Who could effectually bring a charge against anyone whom *God* has justified? It would be impossible. This brings the most perfect rest and calm into the soul, for every question for time and eternity is divinely settled by God Himself.

Thus God's wondrous liberality has been shown by the gift of His own Son, and every charge which might be brought against us has been triumphantly answered by the fact that He Himself has justified. And not only so, but Christ has died, is risen, has ascended to the right hand of God, and is interceding for us. One challenge still remained—Could anything separate from the love of Christ? Emphatically NO!—nothing can separate from the love of Christ and from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### Ministry.

**G**OD is the great minister. He serves all His creatures in their place and according to their order. He serves out the rain and sunshine and fruitful seasons, filling the heart with food and gladness. And when the need came, He spared not the Son of His love.

The Lord, the Son, is the personal and manifested minister. In every passage of His life He was the Servant of man's sorrows and necessity; and though now in heaven He is still the Servant of His people's interests, and will be the Servant of their joy in the coming glory (Rev. vii. 17; Luke xii. 37).

The Holy Ghost is the hidden effectual minister. He is ever tending the church, serving out to each saint the things of the Father and of Christ, and sustaining and comforting and teaching according to God, helping our infirmities. And thus we get a blessed display of ministry in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The angels are in ministry. "Are they not all ministering spirits?" And those of them who stand nearest the throne are perhaps the most abounding in ministry; as well they may be from their nearness to that source of goodness. For Gabriel again and again appears in ministry; and he could say of himself as being thus very near the throne, "I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God."

The church is in ministry, divine ministry, ministry in the grace and presence of the Spirit. And the nearer we stand to Christ, the brighter and more abundant that ministry is, as we have seen in the angels. Thus in Paul, who stood so near to Jesus, what do we see but one unbroken course of self-sacrifice and service? He is in sympathy with every infirmity of the saints. Who was offended without his burning? The care of all the churches came upon him daily. If he were afflicted or comforted, it was for others. Death worked in him, but life in them.

But every saint has some office to fill. We are all to be found in the great divine ministry of reconciliation which the Lord is now conducting in this world of sinners. If we are not ambassadors, yet we are appointed to fill some place in the great ambassador's train, if it be but in washing a saint's foot, or being in any wise a fellow-helper of the truth (2 Cor. v. 17-21).

And thus we have ministry down from God in the highest to the weakest and most distant companion in the ranks of the redeemed. And when the glory comes, when the kingdom is established, there will be ministry still. The Lamb shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; the Lord of the kingdom shall gird Himself and wait upon His people. The water of life shall flow forth, and the leaves of the tree shall be for healing. The heavens will hear the earth, and the earth will hear the corn and the wine and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel. The less shall be blessed of the better even all through the kingdom.

J.G.B.

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When that which bears the name of the Church of God is nigh unto cursing, is going to be spued out, then a double measure and peculiar character of grace is needed to sustain the faithful ones in the narrow and often lonely path in which they will be called to walk.

## The Church of the Living God.

**“Upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”** (Matt. xvi. 18).

**“That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”**

(1 Tim. iii. 15)

**I**T has been suggested to the writer that the truth of the Church is but little understood by the young in these days; especially in relation to its calling, hope and destiny. This has inspired the thought that a few articles on the subject might be helpful to the younger readers of *Words of Help*, and perhaps older ones too.

We would remark, in the first instance, that nowhere in the Old Testament is the revelation of the Church\* given. It was, at that time, a secret hidden in the bosom of God. The impregnable Rock on which the Church is built had not then been manifested: for this depended on the Son, who dwelt ever in the bosom of the Father,—His co-equal,—becoming incarnate and taking His place here as man. Many writers and readers of 1 Tim. iii. 15, cited above, have got into confusion through not seeing this fundamental fact. The revelation of the “Assembly of the living God” is found in the New Testament *only*.

Where, then, is the first announcement given of this important subject? If we turn to Matthew xvi. 13-18, we shall see the revelation of the Divine Founder, and the foundation on which the Assembly is built. But there is another revelation to which we would draw attention first, viz., that made to the heart of a sinner saved by grace, “And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which in heaven” (see also Luke v. 8).

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\* We shall use the word “Assembly” instead of Church in these papers in order to make the matter clearer.

We also come in here surely, so let us see what is implied. There were then certain speculations concerning this glorious Person, as is the case in our own day. The Lord therefore puts a crucial question concerning Himself; and on the answer to this depends our blessing for time and eternity. But let us look at the question—or we might say the questions—one concerning men generally and the other concerning ourselves individually. We say this because the answer is a revelation given by God.

Mere speculation never arrives at a right understanding of any communication God has given to men. Speculation is the reasoning of the human mind, and if not guarded against, will eventually lead us into infidelity. Many have foundered on this deceitful rock; and indeed it is a masterpiece of Satan.

“Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” Let us consider this question first. As we have said, speculations were rife amongst men as to Him. The title Son of man is one specially belonging to Christ. The prophet Ezekiel is frequently addressed by this title also, and Daniel is so once (chap. viii.), but clearly in a different sense, for of no prophet could it be said that he was the inheritor of all that the counsels of God had designed for man, as is the case with Christ (Psalm viii; Heb. ii., etc.).

Adam was not called Son of man. Immediately Christ took His place as Son of man come down from heaven, He became the object of Satan's attack. Three instances of this come before us: first the temptation in the wilderness, then in verses 23-24 of our chapter, when the very disciple who confessed Him, was used of Satan to deter Him, if possible, from going to the Cross; and finally when, in Gethsemane, He faced, alone with His Father, the cup of which He was about to drink.

As Son of man, and Son of God, He laid down His life, doing the will of the Father perfectly (John xiv. 30).

These attacks of Satan have continued ever since in one form or another, and, sad to say, *men* are the instruments that he uses—men blinded by their own reasonings, and, alas! even disciples.

Beloved fellow-believers, young or old, beware! Let us take what is written in this "Mystery of godliness" as little children, and then we shall be safe. But to proceed:—Having heard their answer to the first question, He now proceeds to the second, "But whom say ye that I am?" The right answer to this could only be by revelation from the Father. This is essential to see, for "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (chap. xi. 27). His blessed Person is still a mystery, though revealed. No finite mind could comprehend the infinite.

Peter and the others had received Him as the anointed Messiah, but the answer of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," is precedent to what follows. Two things are made known by the One so confessed, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee [man is entirely left out save as an instrument of revelation] but My Father which is in heaven."

This blessedness, be it understood, belongs to all those who receive this revelation, and who confess Him. But further, "And *I* say also unto thee [the *I* is emphatic] that thou art Peter [a stone—it was Barjona before] and upon this rock I will build My Assembly; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Here we have unfolded this "Wonderful" (Isaiah ix. 6) Person whom Peter confessed as Son of the living God, and the great purpose of His counsels concerning His Assembly. The reader will notice that the work of building it was yet future in His gracious mind. But another work had yet to be accomplished by Him in order to give effect to this purpose—the great work of Calvary, His resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God (verse 21).

Peter did not grasp this (do we?), hence Satan made him an easy prey. The reader may not have been struck with the charge the Lord gave His disciples in verse 20, "Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ." This can be understood by its sequel. The disciples had proclaimed Him as Christ to a people who were ready to cry out, "Away with Him, Crucify Him." It is as the rejected Messiah that He now becomes the foundation of the Assembly.

A new era thus opens in the ways of God (comp. Isaiah xlix. 5; lxxv. 1). We have said that Christ had not yet commenced the building of His Assembly and that, for obvious reasons, stones, "living stones," like Peter, would compose it; but they were not yet placed in position. We might add, in closing, that there is a precious kindred thought between the stone and the Rock; and what passed between the confessor (Peter) and the confessed (Christ) suggests it. In our next article we hope to look at the actual commencement of the building.

H.L.

## Who first introduced Modern Theology ?

**I**F I understand aright, what characterises Modern Theology is the ignoring of the awful heinousness of sin, and, consequently, the denial of the necessity of the atoning death of the Lamb of God; the death of the blessed Saviour being looked upon more as the climax of His sufferings at the hand of man for righteousness sake, and not at the hands of God as a sin-offering. This reduces the cross to a mere martyrdom. This way of thinking is by many considered to be modern, but is really very old, and was the basis of Cain's conduct. Cain was outwardly a pious man, who wished to be a worshipper of God, but on his own terms; just as is the case with the modern theologian, who prefers his own ideas of religion to Holy Writ.

Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, although every thorn or thistle of the ground testified to the curse pronounced in Eden from which man had been driven.\* The cherubim with the flaming sword guarding the way to the tree of life were a standing testimony to the sin which had separated man from God, and which Cain sought so sedulously to ignore. He came to worship the Lord as if there never had been a question of sin between God and man.

Alas, that so many in our day think also thus lightly of sin and its consequences !

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts” (Heb. xi. 4). How hard it must have been for Abel to believe that he was now righteous ! His own heart and conscience would say to him : I brought the lambs and their fat as a sacrifice because I was not righteous, and now God testifies that I am righteous. It is just so in the present time with the seeking and repentant sinner who cannot grasp the greatness of God’s mercy, and the wonder of grace which declares him to be justified by faith (Rom. v. 1). I remember getting up in the night to try and find a text to allay one’s fears of being lost for ever. Oh, how keenly we felt that we deserved to go to that place where there will be no more hope, but only weeping and gnashing of teeth !

“The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering ; but unto Cain, and to his offering, He had not respect” (Gen. iv. 4-5). Poor disciple of modern theology, God has not respect to your offering, for you do not bring Him a true Christ as atoning substitute, but only your own natural worship, the fruit of man’s unenlightened mind and man’s own piety. We are all sinners and

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\* Modern research has found no thorns or thistles in the fossils before the advent of man on the earth.

our best worship is tainted by the natural sinfulness of our minds and dispositions. However sincere we may be in offering our worship to the true God, He can only accept those who trust in Christ's work on the cross for their justification and cleansing from their sins.

"And Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell" (v. 5). Here we find the same deadly enmity to the life of faith that we feel and see around us among legal-minded and self-righteous men of our own time. Although manifested in politer forms, the underlying opposition to the truth that man is a sinner and lost, is very apparent, even among religious people. The Scribes and the Pharisees were indeed wroth with the Lord when He told men what their righteousness and their pretensions were in the sight of God (Matt. v. 20). Saul of Tarsus, when he made havoc of the church, followed but in the same self-righteous spirit as Cain. He hated those who trusted in the precious sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

What gentleness, what long-suffering and mercy is manifested in the Lord's patient reasoning with Cain! "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door" (v. 7). The word "sin" can also be translated, as elsewhere, "sin-offering." Whether we read the word one way or the other it shows the Lord wishes Cain to bring an offering as Abel had done. If Cain would thus humble himself and take his right place as a sinner before the Lord, he should retain his pre-eminence as the first-born, and Abel's desire should be toward him, and he should rule over him. In chapter iii. 16 we find a similar expression defining the relationship of the wife to the husband.

Cain did not answer the Lord or thank Him for His gracious and merciful remonstrance. How solemn to think that some of my dear readers may still owe God an answer to many warnings and many offers of mercy. Surely, nothing hardens more than continually hearing the pleadings of mercy and not accepting them. Give

God an answer now, to-day, dear friend, for to-morrow may lead you farther away from God, as was the case with Cain. None can know how far the enemy may lead us, if we neglect God's offers of reconciliation. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. v. 19). How happy are those who can say: "We also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. v. 11).

"And Cain talked with Abel his brother." The word "with" should be "to." I used to think when young that Abel might have said something that Cain could have taken offence at; but the Scripture is wonderfully precise, and does not say that Abel spoke. So also we read that the blessed Lord did not answer one word to that which the false witnesses laid to His charge. This did not, however, appease His adversaries, who were only the more incensed against Him and slew "the Holy One and the Just" (Acts iii. 14).

In verse 8 we see that the self-righteous Cain is in the hands of him who is a murderer, and in verse 9 of him who is "a liar and the father of it" (Jno. viii. 44). What a lesson it teaches us of the danger of disregarding the Lord's warnings, and of the length we can be carried to when pride leads us into the condemnation of the devil (1 Tim. iii. 6).

Verse 10. "What hast thou done?" Every unrepentant sinner must one day hear this question from the throne of God, and the opened books will give the answer. (Rev. xx. 12). Blest indeed will my dear reader be if on the day when the secrets of all hearts are revealed it is found that he has repented of what he has done, and taken shelter under that which Christ has done!

"My punishment is greater than I can bear" (v. 13). Here again we have the language of Modern Theology or Rationalism in the mouth of Cain. What punishment could be too great for a man who had slain his

own brother? Has my reader ever thought of the patience and forbearance of God towards such a one as Cain? How He allowed him many years for repentance, while his condemnation to a life of wandering would continually remind him of his need for it? Alas! he did not bow and accept the chastisement, for instead of remaining a wanderer he built a city.

Later on we find his posterity possessors of wealth in Jabal (for cattle were the first form of wealth), of science and art in Jubal, and of industry in bronze and iron, and thus of weapons, in Tubal-cain. And thus they made the world pleasant for themselves, far away from God, till the flood came and swept them all away. What efforts the enemy is making in our day to persuade men that the punishment decreed in Scripture is greater than we can bear. The "larger hope" on the one hand, and annihilationism on the other hand are preached far and wide, and people are told that no great punishment for sin is impending. Thus men professing to be religious are free to follow in the footsteps of Cain's descendants and seek riches, pleasures, accomplishments and power in this world while the question of sin is still unsolved. Oh, may we all be wise in time and come to the Lord while the door of grace is still open, and the voice of mercy still invites and even urges us to come.

T.W.B.

## Faith and New Birth.

**I**T has been taught that, except in one passage (1 John v. 1), the force of which is sought to be explained away, New Birth is not in Scripture linked with faith; or, as otherwise expressed, that New Birth is the sovereign operation of God apart from faith.

Negative statements of this kind are always dangerous, and the raising of subtle questions in what is plain for those who are simple can but unsettle souls. If it

be asked, Do you really mean to separate faith from the divine operation in a soul called "New Birth"? no distinct answer is given, but a pretentious adherence to the words of scripture is advocated, to cover the theological doctrine. It is an old device of the enemy who knows how to use the *letter* which kills in order to quench the power of the *spirit* which gives life.

New Birth has been taught to belong to "earthly things," in a way that implies it has little or nothing to say to "heavenly things." It is hard to believe that Christians should yield themselves to such reasoning. But as this "strange doctrine" is spreading, I have felt called upon to invite attention to the following passages of scripture:—John i. 12-13: "But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become children of God, even to them that *believe* on His name; which *were born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.\* The 13th verse describes as "born of God" those who have faith in Christ's name (ver. 12). Is this not linking New Birth with faith? The whole gospel is "written that we might *believe* that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing we *might have life* THROUGH HIS NAME" (John xx. 31).

There was indeed a faith "in His name," which did not involve any change of heart in some of those who followed Jesus. It arose simply from human intelligence exercised correctly, though not spiritually, upon the evidence of the miracles which they saw. That was

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\* The historical application of the passage, deeply interesting as it is, is not our present subject. The point of the passage is that Jesus, being rejected as Messiah by "His own," introduces a new kind of relationship in connection with the revelation of the Father's name, as in Matt. xi. 25-30. Israel is set aside, and the new-covenant blessings are forfeited by the nation. But the Son reveals the Father, and introduces a new relationship with God, that of Children, which depends upon the revelation of the Father's name (John xvii. 3, 6, 8, 11, 12, 26).

not saving faith. To such, Jesus had to say, as He did to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." That is to say, the faith must be of divine origin, not a mere conviction produced by man's wisdom or understanding. More than this, Jesus explains it in detail as the necessity of being born of *water* and of the Spirit. The *water* purifies the heart, by the application of death morally to the natural man; the *Spirit* communicates a life which did not exist before; for in believing, we pass from death to life (John v. 24). Is not the water a well-known symbol of the *Word*? "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Read Isaiah lv. 1, 2, 3, 10, 11; Luke viii. 15.

Here again, then, faith is not only linked with New Birth, but the Lord insists upon divine intervention as being necessary in order to produce the only faith which is of avail, and then shows that the Son being the object of it—the Son of Man lifted up, and the Son of God,—he who believes *has* "Eternal Life." Blessed truth!

And one may ask, why is it only in John out of the four Gospels that we find the New Birth? Why does not Matthew speak of it, if it is to be limited to the earthly things of the new covenant?

The Epistle of John shows that, in its special present application, it characterises Christianity, even as it is said elsewhere, "Ye are all SONS OF GOD, by *faith* IN CHRIST JESUS (Gal. iii. 26). We should not expect to find much about faith in the Epistle which is especially devoted to unfolding the character of the life; but here we read, "Whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ is *born* OF GOD; and everyone that loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him." (1 John v. 1). Blessed, precious words! How simple! How intimately linked together are New Birth and faith in Jesus Christ. He is the object of faith, and marvellous indeed is the blessing involved, as we read again: "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is *born* of Him. Behold,

what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God: therefore the world knoweth us not because it knew Him not." (1 John ii. 29; iii. 1). May God grant that the holy life of Jesus may be more completely reproduced in everyone of His own in an unworldly, devoted walk in faith and love—that we may be found walking, indeed, "even as He walked" (1 John ii. 6). "This is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment" (1 John iii. 23).

1 Peter i. 22, 23: "Seeing that ye have purified your souls in *obeying the truth* unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; being *born again*, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by THE WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever." With this we may compare Acts xv. 8, 9: "And God which knoweth the hearts bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS BY FAITH." Is not "obedience" to the truth an expression of "*faith*"—the reception of the Word of God "in an honest and good heart"?

James i. 18-21: "Of His own will BEGAT He us with the WORD OF TRUTH, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures. . . . Receive with meekness the ENGRAFTED WORD, which is able to *save* your souls."

Again, when the Lord is speaking of those who were "offended" at His doctrine, He says, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you they are Spirit, and they are life: but there are some of you that *believe* not" (John vi. 63, 64).

How all these passages—to say nothing of the uniform teaching of Scripture on this subject—associate in the

closest way faith with quickening, or the being born anew! We may add the remarkable one in Eph. ii. 8-10: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast; for we are His workmanship,\* created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them."

If New Birth were apart from faith, what necessity would there be for a revelation of God to the soul? We should in that case have a soul made alive by divine operation, but in no relationship with God at all. New Birth is the ushering of a soul into life by divine power,—life which is not of the flesh nor of this world, but divine in its origin, source and character, unending, and holy. But it is also a universal principle of Scripture, that "the just lives by *faith*." Now the life communicated at the present time is called "eternal life," in the sense that Christ, as the Son of the Father, is the expression of it. The Holy Spirit is the power of the life, not only as giving the sense of the relationship with God, but power for enjoyment and communion, and also for fruit-bearing and walk. "Because ye are

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\* In the song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 18), the two thoughts of *begetting* and of *creating* are associated in the closest way, both referring to the outward position in which the nation of Israel was set, on the ground of redemption. The name of "father" is there used (ver. 6) as expressive of what God *does*, as Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer. Our present relationship with God as Christians depends upon the unfolding of what He *is*, as revealed by and in the Son (John i. 18). In the detail of the revelation, John gives the *begetting*, Paul the *creating*. John presents the Son as the *only begotten* of the Father, and speaks much of the communication to us of eternal life, and of our being *born* or *begotten* of God. Paul sets forth Jesus as the First-begotten *from among the dead*, and speaks of the new *creation*, in connection with the putting forth of God's mighty *power* in raising up Christ and setting Him at His own right hand; his gospel is the "*power* of God unto salvation to every one that *believeth*." God's righteousness is therein "revealed on the principle of faith" (Rom. i. 16-17).

sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Let us not forget that Jesus said, in speaking of one born of the Spirit, "*Thou canst not tell* whence it cometh, and whither it goeth" (John iii. 8).

W. J. L.

## A Praise Song.

*(To the Father and the Son.)*

Tune : "Connemara," or S.S. 568.

**F**ATHER!—O what grace has given !  
 Thy beloved One,  
 He who filled the courts of heaven,  
 Thine eternal Son ;  
 Object of Thy heart's affections,  
 In those ages past :  
 Godhead glory, all perfections—  
 His—for ever blest.

Now Thy saints, as here assembling,  
 Celebrate His praise,  
 As we view His wondrous pathway,  
 Glad our songs we raise :  
 All the fragrance that ascended,  
 Rising to Thy throne,  
 Every grace in Jesus blended ;  
 Thy beloved Son.

Soon the Church in heavenly glory,  
 Shall surround the Lamb ;  
 Every voice shall tell the story—  
 One harmonious psalm :  
 Loud His praises shall be sounded,  
 Through the vault of heaven,  
 Worship, honour, strength unbounded,  
 All to Him be given !

## “A Consuming Fire.”

**W**E often delight to speak of God as “Father,” that name which is so precious to us, and which was first declared by the Lord Himself after He rose from the dead. It speaks to us of relationship, of intimacy, of nearness and of love.

But it is well to remember another truth, especially in these days when a light and even flippant way of approaching God is so prevalent in Christendom. It is written in Hebrews xii. 29, “Our God is a consuming fire.” This is not “God out of Christ,” as some have falsely said; it is *our* God—the Christian’s God. Surely “reverence and godly fear” should always mark us when we approach Him in worship, in prayer, or in service.

And here it is instructive to note that the same word “fear” is used concerning the Lord Jesus in chapter v. 7, when, in the garden of Gethsemane, He made prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, and was heard “in that He feared.” For Him, His “fear” was His “godly piety.”

“Jehovah thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God,” said Moses in addressing the people in Deut. iv. 24, and the prophet Isaiah says, “I am the Lord; that is My name; and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images” (Isaiah xlii. 8).

The atmosphere that surrounds us in the world is always a danger to the Christian, and the present day is increasingly one in which men treat the things of God in a light way, forgetting that He is a God of holiness and truth as well as of grace and love. We need therefore to be on our guard against the irreverent spirit of the age.

It is in view of the promise, “Yet once more I shake not the earth only but also heaven,” that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews exhorts us to reverence and godly fear. So also in the 2nd Epistle of Peter, speaking of the dissolution of all things, he appeals to us,

saying "what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." Where the soul is in the presence of God about everything, there must be seriousness and a sense of the majesty and holiness of the One with whom we have to do.

Can we not already see the foreshadowing of the "shaking of all things"? In the political, the religious, and the social world there is a deep-seated spirit of unrest and uncertainty; and it is increasing. What will it be when the Church of God is taken to meet the Lord in the air and the restraining power of the Holy Spirit is no longer here? May these facts have a sobering and solemnising effect on the people of God now, and produce in us a deeper reverence for His holy name and truth.

### **"At Hand."\***

**James v. 8.**

**T**HERE is, among a happily increasing number of saints, a growing feeling deep down in their souls that our longed-for Lord Jesus Christ is about to come. Is not this the work of the Spirit of God, as giving an anticipation of the "shout" that will be heard as He descends from heaven together with "the voice of the archangel and the trump of God"? If the present position of the nations is what is indicated by the

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\*It will add interest to the following article for the reader to know that it was written by Mr. J. Reader, of Canada, who, for many years, laboured amongst the Indians in the Northern part of that territory. In a letter written from his sick bed he says, "What a blessed work is going on in the harvest field! May we all have some sheaves to lay at the feet of 'the Lord of the harvest'! How He will rejoice! and so shall we. And if we, by grace, hear Him say just two words, 'Well done,' that will be enough (Ps. cxv. 1). . . . O that the saints may be stirred up to *expect* the Lord to come at any moment! I long to see Him. I am now so feeble and have a very trying time of suffering, day and night, 'but now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.' Blessed hope!"

legs and feet of the great historic image which Nebuchadnezzar saw (Dan. ii.), Christendom is certainly developing into what is described in the last of the seven letters to the seven churches (Rev. iii. 14-17). "The signs of the times" are such that no intelligent Christian can doubt for a moment that the end of the present age of grace is looming.

But those signs (most valuable, as indeed they are, with regard to the coming of Christ to set up in power His earthly kingdom) yet have no *direct* reference to what is specially before the writer in this article, namely, the coming of the Lord for His church—that church which began at Pentecost, and which, when complete, He will suddenly remove from this scene, and present to Himself, as recorded in Eph. v. 27. There is a long interim between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel ix., during which the church period comes in. And it is remarkable that in Ephesians iii., from verse 2 to the end of the chapter, there is a grammatical parenthesis, where Paul makes known the revelation he had received concerning the mystery of the church, "which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." But the coming of the Lord to complete this parenthetical period is "at hand."

Through the pen of inspiration the Holy Ghost has used two Greek words which, of late, have been much before the present writer in reference to the heading of this article. Those words are variously translated as "at hand," "draweth nigh," "nigh," "near," and once the comparative "nearer." The Greek words referred to are *eggus* (pronounced *en-gus*), and *eggike* (*en-gi-ke*). The first is an adjective, the other is the past tense of a verb. *Eggus* is used in the New Testament about 25 times, and *eggike* 10 times. Now while both words express *nearness*, *eggike* is used for *expecting to happen at any moment that which is referred to*. It was thus used first by John Baptist, then by Christ and His Apostles, when announcing,

"The kingdom of heaven is at hand." That, however, was not a positive statement for immediate realisation; but, as another has said, "that no known or predicted event must intervene." Christ, the King, was there; and if the nation had received Him, the earthly kingdom promised by God in Luke i. 32, 33, would have been set up. That was *the next thing to be expected* in the course of events.

But the Messiah was rejected, and the kingdom postponed. Therefore in Matthew xvi. the church is first mentioned. "Times and seasons" (1 Thess. v. 1-3) do not belong to the rapture of the church, but will usher in "the day of the Lord" in connection with the kingdom. There is absolutely nothing for us to expect as the next event but the Lord Himself to "descend from heaven with a shout" to claim His own from among the living and the dead, and to change us all into the likeness of His body of glory. Is that the "blessed hope" of all who read these lines? Let us not only *wait*, but also *watch*, for Him. Some, alas! are like travellers at a railway station, taking it easy in the waiting-room, indifferent as to the arrival of the train. Then, when it is announced, there is a rush. But others, happily, resemble those who long for home, or are waiting for, and expecting, the coming of dear ones. Such are on the platform *watching*; and eagerly *looking* in the right direction, they catch the first sight of the train. Thus let us watch for the sure coming of the Lord. He says to the angel of the church in Sardis, "If . . . thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Rev. iii. 3). May we be among the few ". . . who have not defiled their garments" (Rev. iii. 4) by the love of money and worldly pleasures. How blessed it will be to "walk with Him in white"! (Rev. iii. 4).

"The coming of the Lord is at hand." The present writer may not be here at that longed-for moment,

though intensely waiting and watching for it day and night. Owing to increasing sickness he may fall asleep at any time, but it has been on his heart to seek to stir up the dear saints of God, daily to *expect* to hear the "shout"—the voice of Jesus Himself as the very next thing to happen. And if any unsaved person reads what has been written, let him repent and believe the Gospel. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15). Accept this Gospel; and then, whether present in, or absent from, the body, we all shall have the joy of meeting at His coming, and together realise the greater joy of meeting the Lord in the air. "And so shall we ever be with the Lord."

J. R.

### **"The Assembly of the Living God."—2.**

**"Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."**

(Ps. lxxviii. 18.)

**"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."**

(Acts. ii. 1.)

### *The Building Commenced.*

**W**E will ask our readers to accompany us in retrospect to an upper room in the city of Jerusalem famed and sanctified by its associations. It was a room chosen by the Lord, and in which He spoke those memorable words, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15); an occasion fraught with immense moment, not only for them, but for us all. It was the room, too, in which He again appeared to them on the evening of the day of His resurrection, quelling their fears by His triumphant salutation, "Peace be unto you," and showing them His hands and His side—another occasion of immense moment for them and for us (John xx. 19, 20). It was also the room destined for the great event which constitutes the subject which is now before us (Acts i. 13).

In our last article we drew attention to the fact that the Lord had the building of His assembly in view as a purpose still future; that He had already instructed His disciples to no longer proclaim Him as the Messiah to the people to whom He was first sent, because they received Him not (John i. 11). Again, He must take His place as Son of man at the right hand of God according to the counsels of the Godhead concerning Him. This is what the prophetic announcement of Psalm lxxviii. 18, cited above, refers to, and Ephesians iv. 8, confirms its fulfilment, only there it is said He "gave gifts unto men." In order to take this place, He must first descend into the lower parts of the earth (the grave). This triumph being completed, the building of His Assembly begins. We say "begins" because Pentecost is the inauguration of that great work.

In the annals of God's ways with men, Pentecost constitutes an important era; the forecast of which we have in one of the "Feasts of the Lord" in Leviticus xxiii. If the reader will turn to that chapter and read verses 15 to 21, he will see the details concerning this feast or celebration. It is called Pentecost in Acts ii. 1, but in the Old Testament it is spoken of as the "feast of weeks" (Deut. xvi. 10). Seven distinct Sabbaths were to be counted; and on the morrow after the seventh Sabbath (i.e., from the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits), on the first day of the week, this important feast began. The second Scripture cited refers to this, "The day of Pentecost was fully come."

It is not our purpose to refer to all the details of this feast as set forth in Lev. xxiii., but to draw attention to verses 15—17, which may help us in furtherance of our object. Verse 15 sets forth, in type, the "wave offering," which applies to Christ in resurrection; He is the "firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20). Acts i. gives the account of His ascension, a necessary preliminary to the coming of the Holy Spirit which He promised His disciples they should receive; and He

instructed them to tarry at Jerusalem till this great event took place.

But we must pause here to note a special feature of the instruction given by the Lord to Moses in relation to the feast already mentioned in Leviticus xxiii. 16, 17. Taking the latter clause of verse 16, "And ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals : they shall be of fine flour ; they shall be baken with leaven ; they are the firstfruits unto the Lord."

There is a significant feature in this detail of the feast which we may note for our spiritual instruction. A *new* meat offering was to be waved before the Lord. Its composition forbids the thought that this represented Christ, for although the ingredients suggest His perfect humanity (compare Lev. ii. for type, Luke i. 35 for anti-type), these loaves were to be baken with leaven (a type of sin in our nature) before presentation. These are designated "the firstfruits unto the Lord." We cannot but conclude that God had an ulterior purpose in this instruction to His servant Moses, and it definitely points on to the Pentecost of Acts ii. 1, the supreme occasion of the coming of the Spirit to begin the work of the building of the Assembly of which Christ spoke in Matt. xvi. 18.

But the question may arise here, why "two wave loaves," and why "baken with leaven"? The answer is, the mighty triumph of God in the dispensation of His grace. We get a forecast here of what He had before Him as that of which His Assembly is composed. It was His purpose to gather out, both from the nation of Israel that had refused Christ as their King, and from the nations that were without God in the world (Eph. ii. 12), a vast company of redeemed sinners to constitute His dwelling-place even on earth, till the dwelling in glory should come (Eph. ii. 21, 22). We have already remarked that the coming of the Holy Spirit was the inauguration of this great work, and we

will close this paper by noting a few facts in relation to this momentous event.

First let us note; there were about one hundred and twenty disciples gathered with one accord on this occasion, when, "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting."\* Thus, indeed, the Holy Spirit came in this demonstrative way, and these disciples there gathered, who, prior to this, were individual units, though "living stones," were constituted *one* Assembly. John the Baptist foretold of this when he said of Christ, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matt. iii. 11).

Thus the building of the Assembly of the living God was commenced. On the same day there were about three thousand souls added (ver. 41) and later on about five thousand are enumerated (Acts iv. 4). That great work is still going on, growing unto an holy temple in the Lord; and we, who are redeemed of the Lord, are privileged to know that we form part of this great Assembly as "lively (living) stones" (1 Peter ii. 5). In our next article we shall (D.V.) consider "The Purpose of its Construction."

H.L.

## Some Aspects of Christian Responsibility.

**I**N a day like the present, it behoves all who really desire to have the Lord's approval to cultivate a deep sense of what christian responsibility really is according to the Word of God. That Word is our only standard, as it is also a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. It gives us light for our whole path, from the moment of our conversion till we reach the glory. The path of the just thus becomes as a shining light, going on and brightening until the day be fully come.

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\* Compare John iii. 8, only there it is His sovereign action in the new birth.

When we look at the blessed One who has trodden the path before us; the author and finisher of faith; we see One who, as man, glorified God in everything He said and did, and was without a flaw in His service. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously," etc. Christ is set before us, then, as our great example, that we, having died with Him to sins, should live unto righteousness. This shows the nature and measure of our responsibility.

The very presence of Christ in this world—He who was the true light—placed man in a position of responsibility. Thus the Gospel of John opens with the truth that "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (chap. i. 4, 5). There was no question of the light not shining; the fault was not in Him—but so great was the darkness that it was not dispelled by the light. Indeed the very brightness of the light exposed the evil and drew out the hatred and opposition of the world.

Thus the heart of man was closed against the Son of God come in grace. All this is summed up in a few brief words, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Thus the door was closed for the world (apart from grace); but the way was fully opened for the display of God's sovereign love in the Lamb of His own providing, of whom it is said, "He taketh away the sin of the world."

Moreover the wellspring of infinite love has been opened for us in the gospel, and now "Whosoever will" may come and take of the water of life freely. And the blessings that flow from His grace are infinite; "As many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the children of God, even to them that believe

on His name," so that we may truly say, "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace" (John i. 10-14).

What believers largely need to-day is to drink more of this fulness which is in Christ, so that there may be a larger outflow for others (John vii. 38). It is not so much more knowledge that we need, as to put in practice what we do know. This is our responsibility as Christians. And the truth works from the inside out: it is in the measure in which Christ is dwelling in the heart by faith, that Christ will come out in the life and walk of the believer.

Further, we have in Philippians ii. a seven-fold way in which Christ is presented to us as taking that great step down from glory to Calvary's depth of woe, and then God raising Him from among the dead and highly exalting Him; giving Him a name which is above every name, in glory. This "mind" that is thus seen in Christ Jesus is intended of God to give its character to all our experiences as His children; for we are now called upon to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, seeing it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. ii. 12-13). The "willing" here comes before the "doing"—a principle which runs all through God's Word.

So then we find that Christian responsibility entails: (1) obedience to God; (2) complete submission to the will of God; (3) a blameless life; (4) being harmless, or "sincere" in our ways; (5) children of God without rebuke (see Matt. v. 45; Luke vi. 36; Eph. v. 1); (6) shining as lights in the world; (7) holding forth the word of life.

This is the high privilege of the Church to-day—to testify for Christ and walk as He walked. We might bring forward many other Scriptures in support of this, but one must suffice here:—"As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. . . . Neither pray I for these alone, but for

them also which shall believe on Me *through their word*; that they all may be one," etc. (John xvii. 18-20). This shows that Christians are sent into the world to pass on their (the Apostles') word to others, so that they also may be drawn to Christ and may be "one in us"—a unity as to which it was God's desire that it should be so manifested amongst believers, that the world would believe that the Father sent the Son.

Then if we look at our subject in its connection with the highest ordinance given to the Church, namely, that of the Lord's supper, we read, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye *do show* the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26). Again, in connection with priesthood, the Christian is a holy priest *within* the veil to offer up worship; and *without* in the world, he is a royal priest, in service, to "show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter ii. 9). In all these passages we find we are responsible to be obedient to the Word, thus realising our privileges to show forth Christ's death and His excellencies, as well as "holding forth the word of life."

The seven qualities already noted in Philippians ii. were all manifested in the life of our blessed Lord, who could say, "I do always those things that please Him (the Father)." Of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, it is written, "Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." May this be true of each of us, whether in our capacity as individual Christians, or collectively. May we have a deeper sense in our hearts of what Christian responsibility really is, and thus be better able to say, with Paul, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

R.W.K.

## Strong Consolation for Weak Faith.

Hebrews vi. 9-20.

**A**T this time those of the Hebrews who confessed Jesus as the Christ were forbidden to enter the temple and were cut off from the commonwealth of Israel. Many who had done so felt keenly the complete severance from their national privileges. Some were even turning back to Judaism. This necessitated the rebuke and very solemn warning of the opening verses of the chapter. But the inspired writer immediately follows these up with most precious encouragement. He hastens to reassure their hearts by addressing them as *beloved*. This is the more marked as being the only occasion in which such a term of affection is used in the Epistle.

How blessed this is for us as for them in a day of small things. Rebuke may be required, warning may be needed, but the Lord would assure the youngest or feeblest of the constancy of His love.

The apostle would fain have led these Hebrew Christians into a fuller understanding of the deep things in the counsels of God revealed to him. But if they were as "babes," still engaged with the alphabet, so to speak, of spiritual things; content with principles common to Judaism and Christianity instead of going on to that which was distinctly Christian and heavenly; well, encouragement and exhortation should be adapted to their condition. He could only speak of them as having "fled for refuge." As this phrase would recall one fleeing to the City of Refuge pursued by the avenger of blood, how expressive is it of weak faith! He places himself amongst them, and so may feeble ones of to-day; for even to such is here given the sweet assurance of eternal salvation and blessing according to the acceptance of Christ on high.

And this is characteristic of the Lord's grace. When, in the course of His blessed mission to this world, the woman with the issue of blood pressed through the

throng, touched the hem of His garment and got healed, He would not allow her to slink away, trembling, in the crowd. He would have her hear from His own lips the beautiful confirmatory word, "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole."

So here, strong consolation is provided for the weakest faith in the promise, the oath and the hope.

How tenderly the Apostle, by the Spirit, deals with these Hebrew Christians. He tells them he has seen in "their work and labour of love which they showed toward His name in ministering to the saints," the evidence of salvation, and reminds them of their sure reward. He rouses them from their tendency to apathy and gloom and raises their vision to heights where hope in full assurance fixes her gaze—far above blessings or difficulties that are temporal or transient. He stimulates them to diligence and zeal as followers of them who through faith and patience inherited the promises.

And these exhortations are salutary for us in our day which has its own difficulties. We too, have need of faith and patience in order to persevere in the pursuit of things unseen. What a place is given to patience in Scripture. It is the first fruit from the deep ploughing of tribulation. It occupies the central place of the seven graces which we are exhorted to cluster on to our faith. And how essential it is for the race of the twelfth chapter. May we let patience have her perfect work.

The apostle reminds them of their father Abraham. When by faith Abraham had offered up Isaac, when he had patiently endured the trial, God gave him the reward in a confirmation of the promise by His oath. God in wonderful condescension and considerateness would thus more abundantly show the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel. All the promises of God are Yea and Amen in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In Him all the covenant blessings are made sure. In His resurrection and exaltation and the consequent

coming and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, what a confirmation we have of the immutability of His counsel.

Then he sets before us the hope, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast." The soul is like a ship tossed to and fro by the waves of the sea, exposed to the temptations of Satan, the difficulties and dangers of our earthly course. But we have the anchor, hope. An anchor does not stay in the waters but penetrates the ground beyond them and fastens itself in it. So our hope is fixed in that which is entirely beyond this scene, the immutable counsel of God in Christ—in God, Himself. Hence the Psalmist's disquieted soul was tranquillised by the appeal, "hope thou in God." What an anchorage! how sure, how steadfast! In Rutherford's words, "the strong rope of our fastened anchor is the oath and promise of Him who is eternal verity. Our salvation is fastened with God's own hand and Christ's own strength to the strong stake of God's unchangeable nature."

"And which entereth into that within the veil." Having cast anchor in an infinitely safe anchorage we then enter upon that which is within the veil before we get to the heavenly shore for ever. There, as the ninth chapter shows us, the golden censer, the ark with its blood-sprinkled mercy seat, its pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant, all speak of the Person and work of our well-beloved Saviour. There He has entered as our Forerunner, the accepted and glorious guarantee that at the ordered time we shall be with Him. He is there, too, as our one only High Priest, not after the transient and successional priesthood that pertained to Israel but after a new and eternal order—"saluted a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Infinite blessings are thus eternally secured to us. But we must ever remember at what a cost. "By His own blood He entered in once for all . . . having obtained eternal redemption." "By Him therefore let us offer the

sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name."

A. J. H.

### Sychar.

**T**HROUGH the green pastures of the Word  
My spirit wanders free ;  
I love the hill of Nazareth,  
The lake of Galilee.

Fair Cana's happy bridal feast,  
The grief and joy of Nain ;  
The glory-mantled mountain's top,  
The cities of the plain.

But, dearer to my soul the scene—  
More dear than words can tell—  
A lonely, weary traveller  
Beside an Eastern well.

The cloudless sun upon His head  
Pours down its fervid heat ;  
The burning desert sand is spread  
Beneath His weary feet.

No shadowing rock for His relief,  
No gracious sheltering tree ;  
Distressed, deserted, and athirst,  
With none but God to see.

The One at whose almighty word  
The first-born fountains burst ;  
Weary and travel-stained, and weak  
Sat by the well athirst !

Ah, had He breathed a single word  
Across the rocky brim,  
The happy waters would have heard  
And leapt to succour Him.

No brimming pitcher waited Him,  
No vessel there to dip;  
No friendly hand to hold a cup  
To Jesus' parched lip.

But, miracle was never wrought  
To ease the Saviour's pain;  
The thirsty lips unceasing sought  
A sin-stained soul to gain.

Oh! bow with me at Sychar's well,  
And there adoring think;  
The Lord of fountains thirsted there,  
That all the world might drink!

A. W.

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The Word of God which searches the heart and ways (Heb. iv. 13) is the true help, the mighty instrument of God to judge everything in us that would hinder us from pursuing our course through the wilderness with joy, and with a buoyant heart strengthened by faith and confidence in Him. Precious instrument of a faithful God, solemn and serious in its operation; but of priceless and infinite blessing in its effects, in its consequences.

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“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” Thus He, who fills all things with His glory, fills the heart Himself, with a love more powerful than all the glory of which He is the centre. He is to us the strength which enables us in peace and love to contemplate all that He has done, the wisdom of His ways, and the universal glory of which He is the centre.

## Dangerous Rocks.

**T**HE mariner at sea needs to be constantly on the watch as he approaches land, against dangerous rocks only visible at low water. He also needs the guidance of the friendly light shining from the lighthouse to enable him to get into port safely.

This simile may well remind us of the Apostle's concern as to his beloved brethren at Colosse when he prayed that they might be filled with the full knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so as to walk in a way worthy of the Lord and to be fruitful in every good work, growing by the true knowledge of God.

Those believers had their special dangers just as we have. They were assailed by "philosophy and vain deceit," corresponding to our "Modernism," on the one hand; and they were in danger from Ritualism, on the other. This latter took the form of religious observances—meats, drinks, observing days, etc.; in fact, it was turning back to the shadows and losing sight of the substance, which is Christ. Hence he says, "And not holding fast the Head," etc. : for the moment Christ, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, ceases to be the enjoyed and sufficient object before the soul, the door is open to all sorts of decline and departure from God.

Let us not suppose that we, too, are not in danger from these very things because God has mercifully given us to know the truth with a certain measure of clearness. Those great systems which we see in Christendom as it is, are just the outcome of principles and doctrines which came into the early Church at its very beginning. At first they came in the most specious guise, pretending to deeper truth and greater piety; but they were the teachings of men and "not after Christ."

Why is it that we sometimes find meetings—even meetings of true Christians—getting into a formal state and lacking in freshness and vitality? It is largely

because other things have come in and taken the place that Christ should have in the heart, hence "first love" and devotedness has declined, and there is not the response there once was to His love and grace.

We have left aside formalities it is true, but we have hearts just the same as those who are deep in them. And if we are not walking in communion with the Lord in our daily path, our assemblies may become just as dead and as formal as any. Let us then see to it that the Holy Spirit is ungrieved and unhindered in our midst so that He may be free to minister of the fragrance and preciousness of Christ to our souls, and to lead us in prayer, worship and thanksgiving.

Nor need we think that an ecclesiastical position—be it ever so correct—will preserve us. We need to "hold fast the Head" from whom the nourishment needed by all the body is ministered, so that it may increase with the increase of God. Did we but enter better by faith into what it is to be dead and risen with Christ, and united by the Holy Spirit to our glorified Head in heaven, how small and vanishing it would make all the best things of this world to appear! And then when we came together there would be an outflow of praise and worship, as well as an outgoing in devoted service to the Lord, and in His interests here.

## Tribulation.

(John xvi. 33; Rom. v. 3.)

**W**HILE it is quite true the Church will not go through the great tribulation, which will come on all the inhabited world, to try them that dwell on the earth, but will be mercifully kept from it (Rev. iii. 10); yet, as the responsible witness for Christ, suffering is inevitable in a world that rejects Him. Moreover, though "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory," tribulation nevertheless is an important and necessary factor in the practical carrying out of God's pre-arranged

plans of the earthly lives of His blood-bought people. As surely as man in general "is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward," so surely must as many as are, by grace, "born again," "enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations."

If our great Example "learned obedience through the things which He suffered," how much more should we! God has foreknown it all; and His purposes in the counsels of eternity regarding us are marvellously interwoven with the net-work of our circumstances down here. But everything is in view of the future: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord" (Is. lv. 8). And again, "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jer. xxix. 11). How gracious! is it not?

There are three characters of God before the writer in connection with the word at the heading of this article: First, as the Husbandman; second, as The Weaver; third, as The Potter. And in each character His perfect wisdom, matchless grace and surpassing love, brightly shine in their exercise on our behalf, to His own praise and glory. Let us then first look at some of God's ways with us in His character of THE HUSBANDMAN. In John xv. the Lord Jesus says, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Thus in the profession of Christianity God wants, and must have, *reality*. If the fruits of the Spirit be not forthcoming, the professor is not a true child of God and will ultimately be removed from even the outward sphere of profession. But the fruitbearing branch is under the gracious eye and care of the Husbandman. To produce more fruit it needs to be, and must be, *pruned*. A knife is required there; and we all know in measure what that means.

But it is the only way to keep the branch in normal condition to produce more fruit. Our God loves us too much to allow us to grow according to nature. "As many as I have affection for I rebuke and chasten" (Rev. iii. 19).

Was there ever a time when such pruning was needed more than now at the end of the Church's history on earth as the responsible witness for Christ? This is especially applicable to young Christians, whom Satan, "the god of this world," is increasingly hindering from fruitbearing, by placing before them all the attractions of modern pleasures. Doubtless this is why we have the words contained in Revelation iii. 19 given to us in the last letter to the Churches; which words are immediately followed by the most touching and gracious appeal ever made to the individual heart by the voice of affection. "Therefore, let us not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when we are rebuked of Him." It is all a proof of His love for us; and if endured in exercise of soul and humble "subjection to the Father of spirits," it will yield the fruit of holiness and righteousness. Instead of being displeased at the application of the sharp pruning knife, let us rather do as Paul did with the "thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him"; for he gloried in infirmities and tribulations (2 Cor. xii. 9; Rom. v. 3), "God's grace is sufficient," and "tribulation worketh patience." We shall yet thank and praise Him (if we have not already done so) for all the trials and lessons of the wilderness. Thus, by bearing "much fruit" we become true "disciples of Christ," and "His Father is glorified" (John xv. 8).

"And when we've learned our lesson;  
Our work and suffering done,  
Our gracious, loving Father,  
Will welcome every one."

Another trait in the character of the Husbandman, viz., that of dealing with us as with wheat, will (D.V.) appear in another article.

J. R.

## **“The Assembly of the Living God.”—3.**

**“And let them make Me a Sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.** (Exod. xxv. 8.)

**“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”** (Eph. ii. 19-22.)

**T**HE contrast between the two Scriptures cited above is apparent, and yet in them we discover the set purpose of God to have a dwelling-place amongst men—a home, so to speak, for His glory; the one being material, the other spiritual. It is well to give our earnest attention to this, so as to discover the part which God, in His grace, has called us to share in this great and blessed purpose, and on which His heart was set from eternity. “My delights were with the sons of men,” thus speaks His “Wisdom” in Proverbs viii.

“And couldst Thou be delighted  
With creatures such as we,  
Who, when we saw Thee, slighted  
And nail’d Thee to a tree?  
Unfathomable wonder!  
And mystery divine!  
The voice that speaks in thunder  
Says, ‘Sinner, I am thine’!”

But, to proceed:—Reference to a few other Scriptures might help us in a further elucidation of the subject. “So Moses finished the work” (i.e. of the tabernacle). “Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (Exod. xl. 33, 34).

“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded!” said Solomon at the dedication of the temple (1 Kings

viii. 27). "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet. Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will ye build Me? saith the Lord; or what is the place of My rest? Hath not My hand made all these things?" (Acts vii. 48-50).

We think these passages will confirm us in the fact that it was not God's final intention to dwell with men in a *material* tabernacle or temple; but these served His purpose in the dispensation to which they were attached, and, so to speak, have fulfilled their mission (save, perhaps, as to the temple at Jerusalem, the city of God's choice for Israel in a future day).

They have now given place to a spiritual building where God Himself can dwell in a glory that "excelleth," and "remaineth" (2 Cor. iii. 10, 11). This was His great purpose all down the ages; and this building is composed of men—saved men, redeemed to God through the triumph of the Son of God, who took a body (Heb. x. 5, last clause). It was He who said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John ii. 19)—"but He spake of the temple of His body."

This body was prepared for Him—a body of flesh and blood, so that in it He might accomplish the work of redemption in the shedding of His blood, and thus bring to pass the building of His Assembly for a habitation of God through the Spirit as a present fact, and, finally, as a temple to His praise in the glory.

Christ, therefore, is both the rock-foundation and the chief corner stone of this spiritual "House of God, which is the Assembly of the living God"; and all is designed for the praise of the glory of His grace. It owes its beauty and embellishment to the fact that it is graced by His presence in it as being composed of living stones, "built up"; of which He is the "elect, precious," "chief corner stone" (1 Peter ii. 6).

Again, it is written of Him, "In the midst of the

assembly will I sing praise unto Thee" (Heb. ii. 12). God is thus with His people who, in their corporate character, constitute His Assembly all through its chequered history in the desert pathway of this world where He found her; and the day is fast hastening on, when, freed from all her spots and blemishes through His faithful love, and, like backsliding Israel of old (Zephaniah iii. 17) He will joy over her with singing and rest in His love.

We would emphasise here the blessed fact that all true believers of the present era constitute this Assembly, this habitation of God through the Spirit. The recognition of this by faith would remove untold difficulties from many minds as they behold the present chaos amongst the people of God in the world around them.

In the early apostolic days, before the wolf succeeded in scattering the flock, there was a visible unity, but alas! through internal dissensions and strife, this soon ceased to exist. Nevertheless, in all ages, loyal hearts have always found their resource in God, in seeking to keep Christ's word and not deny His name. If there were no difficulties faith would do no exploits. Faith, too, will always act on God's principles, and pressure of opposing forces will bring it more into evidence as recognising His claims. This we find everywhere in Scripture, for God is sovereign, and goes on to the accomplishment of His purpose in spite of His people's failure.

The next time God's Assembly is seen, after, alas! its degenerate history on earth is closed (see Rev. ii., iii.) is in heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband. For, as we read, "Christ loved the Assembly and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Assembly, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 25-27). Thus

we have linked together the past, the present and the future—the cross, His present service, and His coming again.

Meanwhile, we hear the Lord's faithful call to those for whom His love never declines, even though that love may need to be exercised in a discipline needed for their sanctification. But, think of where He stands in doing it! "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. iii. 20). He seeks our communion, dear reader—and that, too, amidst the corrupt influences of the religious systems around us to-day; but this means that "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever" (Ps. xciii. 5).

H. L.

### Caleb—The Man of Faith.—1.

**C**ALEB is the type of the perseverance of faith. His name is mentioned for the first time in Numbers xiii. When Moses sent forth one man out of each tribe to spy out the land of Canaan, Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Oshea the son of Nun, whom Moses named Joshua, were amongst them.

From that moment we find the name of Caleb so intimately bound up with that of Joshua that we might almost say they are inseparable. They spied out the land together, marched through the desert together, and entered Canaan together. Doubtless they were united by their special character as men of faith, but there is another blessed reason for this association which the Word notices for us. Joshua is a type of Christ, of Jesus the Saviour, leading His people into the promised land, and Caleb walks in company with him.

The great name of Joshua overshadows, so to speak, that of Caleb, and impresses his character upon him.

These two men have the same thought, the same faith, the same confidence, the same courage, the same point of view, the same path, the same perseverance, the same object.

Is it so with us, dear reader? Are we so associated with Christ that our name can hardly be pronounced without His, and that our entire existence gets its value from the fact that we have become, by grace, fellows or companions of our Lord Jesus Christ?

In Numbers xiii. the twelve men sent by Moses came to Hebron, then passed from there as far as the brook Eshcol from whence they brought back the excellent fruits of the land of Canaan, in order to show how good the land was. But it is not, as we might think, Eshcol which captivated Caleb's eyes and heart; his faith led him to find something better. Hebron, where he set his foot, is given to him (Jos. xiv. 9). From that time he carried that name on his heart for forty-five years, until the day when, appearing before Joshua, he claimed as his own "this mountain whereof the Lord spake in that day"—this Hebron—for his everlasting possession.

This same place did not cease to be a celebrated one. To the eyes of the flesh, it could only inspire one with fear. The formidable Anakims dwelt there—these giants whose name alone caused the heart of the people to melt. But what a vivid recollection it carried with it to the soul of Caleb, seeing that it was the place of his fathers' sepulchres! The place which recalled such stirring memories became the reward of this man of God.

There it was that Abraham, the father of the people, chose to make his habitation (Gen. xiii. 18) when Lot had preferred the cities of the plain; there he built an altar to the Lord and received the promises of God (Gen. xviii. 1); but Hebron was, above all, the *place of death*. It was so in the first instance for Abraham. It was there that Sarah died (Gen. xxiii. 2), there that she was buried, and Abraham also (Gen. xxv. 10); then

Isaac (Gen. xxxv. 27, 29), then Jacob and the patriarchs.

Yes, Hebron was especially the place of burial, the place of death, the end of *man*. But what may we draw from that? Nothing, if it be a question of the natural man: everything if it is a question of faith. Hebron signifies the special place where the believer comes to an end of himself—it is the Cross of Christ. But further, it was from there that Joseph started in search of his brethren (Gen. xxxvii. 14).

Later on, Hebron became one of the cities of refuge and the property of the Levites (Jos. xxi.). Then, it is the starting-point of royalty in David (2 Sam. ii. 1-4), for it was in virtue of His death that Jesus has been raised up and crowned with glory, and that the diadem of royalty will be placed upon His head. Finally, it is there that all the tribes of Israel recognise their King and come to make supplication to him (2 Sam. v. 1).

Is not this a marvellous place? What a great series of blessings! Hebron, the place of death, of refuge, starting-point of Israel's blessings, of the promises, of the royalty and of the glory, rallying-centre when the glory shall have come; and, besides all that, the permanent object of the heart and affections of a poor pilgrim, who has found there his own starting-point, and who finds there also his goal and his everlasting rest! Ah! how this place—one which *in appearance* would be least attractive—was prized by Caleb! He desired it for an everlasting possession; and *our* eternal portion will be to fathom the depths of what this particular place expresses for *us*.

Caleb's faith could understand, from the very first, what the faith of Abraham had found there—the end of himself, the complete setting aside of self, old things passed away, and a man who walked as not counting in any way on himself, but depending only upon God. He walked, as far as he had attained his object, in

the full enjoyment of the promises, to the very place where man, as such, has come to his end.

We have just considered two points which characterised Caleb. The first is, that his name is inseparable from that of Joshua; the second, that a special object had engaged his affections, which had so taken possession of his heart, that he had retained the remembrance of it all through his pilgrimage in the wilderness. And, may I add, our affections are always active when they have as their object Christ dying on the Cross, giving Himself for us; whilst a glorified Christ imparts energy to press on, to reach Him where He is (Phil. iii.).

H. R.

### Psalms xxii., lxix. and cii.

**T**HESE three Psalms bring before us the sufferings of Christ, but each in a different way. In the Gospels we have more of the historical account of those sufferings, but in the Psalms we have the inward feelings of His heart and soul in all that He passed through. It is a solemn and serious subject and one which speaks to the heart more even than to the mind or intelligence of the Christian.

*Psalm xxii.* is the great atonement Psalm—His expiatory work upon the Cross. It has been said that the first verse of a Psalm often gives us what is the burden and weight of the Psalm. The solemn words with which Ps. xxii. opens, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" are surely the special subject and burden of this Psalm. The forsaking of God upon the Cross was, above all else, that which weighed upon the soul of Jesus at that moment when, alone, He had to meet, in judgment against sin, the One of whom it is written, "Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."

In verse 2 we have "daytime" and "night season," in both of which Christ cried but was not heard. The

righteous and godly ones in Israel had cried and were delivered; but here was *The righteous One* forsaken. Besides this, scorn, reproach and indignity was His portion: yet what far surpassed all that was outward was the forsaking of God in that solemn hour when the great question of sin was being gone into and settled, finally and for ever, between a holy God on the one hand, and the spotless Victim on the other.

In verse 21 the whole scene changes. The morning breaks after the "night" of suffering—the three hours of darkness upon the Cross were over. This may account for the title of the Psalm, "Aijeleth Shahar," the hind of the morning, or the breaking of the early dawn: the dawn, surely, of the "day" of blessing which succeeded the "night" of suffering.

Once the morning breaks and He is heard, in resurrection, there is no limit to the widespread circles of blessing which flow from the complete and glorious work, in virtue of which God had been glorified and all the requirements of His holy nature met, satisfied, and vindicated. The victory had been won, to the eternal glory of God and the everlasting blessing of the saints.

First, the Lord declares the Father's name, as He did when He sent the message through Mary, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." He also leads the praises in the midst of His redeemed people now (v. 22); and He will yet do so in a future day in the great congregation of Israel—the whole twelve tribes restored and blessed under the Messiah (v. 25). Then blessing goes out to the ends of the world, the nations, and even to generations to come.

Could anything affect and move the heart of the Christian more deeply than the consideration of the sufferings of Christ? It is indeed a subject on which we may well meditate with the greatest profit and blessing to our own souls; not surely in a simply intellectual

way, but with the deepest reverence and with a spirit sensible of His wondrous grace and the divine perfection of His love, as well as of the debt of gratitude we owe to Him who did it all.

“O what a debt we owe  
To Him who shed His blood,  
And cleansed our souls and gave us power  
To stand before His God.”

\* \* \* \* \*

*Psalm lxix.* This Psalm also brings before us the sufferings of Christ, but in a way quite different from Ps. xxii. It is not those inward sufferings which He passed through in that dark hour when He was making expiation upon the Cross, but those sufferings which were His as the object of the hatred of His enemies, and the enemies of God. As He said at the close of His life, “They hated Me without a cause,” and again, “They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.”

And how fully the Lord tasted of what reproach and the malice of wicked men was!—as the Psalm puts it: “Reproach hath broken My heart, and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.”

Nothing is more sweet to the heart than sympathy and comfort in sorrow, but the Lord did not find comforters, though He *did* look for them. Did He not say to His disciples, “Tarry ye here and watch with Me”? but, alas, they were soon sleeping. Perhaps the one who entered most into His thoughts as the moment of the Cross drew near was Mary of Bethany who anointed Him for His burial.

In Christ's sufferings from the hands of men His people can have some part also. Those very disciples experienced it, also many of the martyrs; but in His sufferings in atonement for sin, at the hands of a

righteous God, as in Ps. xxii., we have no part whatever, though we do share in the blessed results of His work upon the Cross.

The contrast of the close of this Psalm, as compared with Ps. xxii. is also very striking. The former ends in nothing but blessing—widening circles of blessing—but this one ends with imprecations of judgment upon His enemies. Righteous retribution is a principle laid deep in the ways of God with men; and besides, the wicked must be put down before a rule of righteousness can be established in this world.

The Psalm closes with a note of praise and thanksgiving to Jehovah, including in it, the heavens, the earth, the sea and everything that moveth in them. Finally, it ends with the blessing of Zion, the inheritance of His servants in a day yet to come.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Psalm cii.* This Psalm also gives expression to the Lord's sufferings, but in still a different way. It is not here a question of His expiatory work, but there is the most extreme sense of loneliness and isolation, like a pelican in the wilderness, an owl in the desert, a sparrow alone upon the house top. Taking all these Psalms together: What sorrow was absent from the cup which Christ had to drink? Not one! And what ineffable grace and perfect self-surrender was His, in that He was willing to go through all for His people, and in obedience to the Father's will!

His position as thus humbled, is contrasted with the enduring nature of Jehovah. His days were shortened and Himself cut off, but Jehovah's years were throughout all generations. The Psalm looks on to the time when the affections of the Remnant of Israel for the dust of Zion would be renewed: and when Jehovah builds up Zion He will appear in His glory. But how could He be there to bring about the future blessing of Zion seeing that He Himself was cut off in the midst of His days?

On the answer to this question hangs all the future blessing of Israel; yea our blessing also, and that of the whole world. Hence from verse 25 to 27 is quoted in Hebrews, chapter i. 10-12, to show that Jesus was Jehovah and would infallibly 'secure the blessing of Israel in a future day. He was indeed the supreme and eternal One, the Creator of all, the One who would endure for ever, even when He Himself would fold up and change all created things.

Who could have conceived such a contrast between the position of utter abasement and humiliation, and the supreme and eternal glory of the Person of Jesus,—who but a writer inspired by the Holy Spirit, who foreknew all and could sound the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of God? Truly the transition in the language of this Psalm, from its depths to its heights, bears the impress of a hand far greater than human.

F.G.B.

### Forgotten—Remembered.

(Gen. xl. 14-23; Luke xxiii. 42; 1 Cor. xi. 24-25.)

“**R**EMEMBER me when all is well with thee,  
For nothing have I done amiss, indeed;  
And when the mem'ry of this bitter past  
Touches the brightness of thy coming joy,  
Think thou of him whose words brought cheer to thee,  
And plead for me.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Only three days and free and glad once more  
He holds at Pharaoh's side his former place,  
And Joseph in his prison lies forgot.

“Remember me when to Thy Kingdom fair  
Thou comest, Lord; for I have sinned indeed,  
And this I suffer is my just reward;  
Whilst Saviour, Thou hast nothing done amiss,  
Yet when Thy bitter suffering is past,

Think Thou of him who hung beside Thee here  
And plead for me."

\* \* \* \* \*

Only that eve, in God's sweet paradise,  
The Saviour and the sinner met again.  
The sinner saved, the sin alone forgot.

"Remember Me when at My table, spread  
With emblems of My love e'en unto death;  
Your sins forgiv'n, eternal peace secured  
And mansions in My Father's house on high.  
For this, indeed! for Me the cross impends;  
The Shepherd must be smitten for His sheep;  
As suff'ring God's forsaking for your sins,  
Oh! think of Me."

\* \* \* \* \*

Yea, holy Lord, Who gav'st Thyself for us,  
Thy sweet desire, renewed from highest heav'n  
Till Thou com'st for us, shall never be forgot.

H. and H.

### Occupied with Christ.

**T**HE following is an extract from a letter, written to her sister, by a Christian lady who was dying of a most painful disease and in trying circumstances.

"Every evening when I have taken my cup of tea, and daylight has faded away, I nestle down on my pillows, and remain alone with Him who is the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely.

"Then, indeed, *I live*. I am occupied with Him—engrossed—ravished—satisfied. His precious word—His smile—Himself—make my heaven, and I only await His call, Come up hither, and my spirit with one bound shall be absent from the body, present with the Lord,—unless, indeed, He shall come Himself to bear us all away, whilst yet this poor frail body holds on."

Her last words were, "More than conquerors through Him that loved us."

## The Presence of the Holy Spirit.

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**T**HE coming of the Holy Ghost, the "other Comforter," was one of those promised blessings with which the Lord Jesus comforted His disciples when just about to leave them (John xiv.-xvi.). After He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, the "day" came of which He had told them, when the Holy Spirit would be, not only *with* them, but *in* them as an indwelling Spirit.

This then is one of those great truths which specially mark this present period of time between the Lord's departure and His return, during which the Church is being gathered out. But it is also, we must acknowledge, one of the most neglected and forgotten truths in the so-called religious world, and indeed amongst true believers, at the present day.

In 1 Corinthians xii. the Apostle Paul speaks of the gifts given by the Holy Spirit in the assemblies of believers. He gives these gifts—wisdom, knowledge, faith, &c. to each severally as He will. In chapter xiv. we find that these manifestations of the Spirit are for the good and edification of the Christian assembly. And if they are not used for edification, and in such a way as to promote godly order, their exercise is certainly not of the Spirit. All was to be done subject to His leading and guidance.

This is surely a subject which calls for our prayerful consideration. The Holy Spirit may be "quenched" in an assembly by setting up a rule or system which hinders His free action by whomsoever He wills. Or He may be "grieved" in an individual believer by a careless walk. Every member of the assembly is responsible to see that nothing which he allows in his daily life is a hindrance to the work of the Spirit, or to the worship in the assembly of saints.

Where the Holy Spirit is free to act in power and blessing, Christ will be glorified, the people of God will be helped and encouraged, and blessing will overflow to others. We have heard lately of Christian assemblies in some parts of the world, where perhaps there is less general knowledge of truth than in our more favoured lands, but where freshness and spiritual power mark the meetings and the work of the Lord goes forward happily.

The subject is one which we do well to think over seriously and to pray over too. It is true that we live at the end of the dispensation, when everything is in disorder in the Church of God, yet we know well that God is sufficient for any difficulties and for every eventuality in the history of His people on earth.

The great point we need to remember is that, if there is to be blessing and the power of the Holy Ghost in our midst, there must be a state in keeping with God's holy nature, there must be practical godliness and separation from the world. Where the heart and conscience of the believer is in exercise in God's presence, there will surely be found also an humble and contrite spirit—this is the only one which becomes us in view of the broken state of the Church of God in which we have all had our part in some way.

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## Tribulation.—2.

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**T**HERE is another trait in the character of God as the Husbandman, namely, that of dealing with us as with wheat. In John xii., when "certain Greeks" desired to "see Jesus," a very impressive shadow of the cross and resurrection, with its eternal results, fell upon His path; and He referred to Himself by saying, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the

ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Perhaps the principal thought in the Lord's mind was about "the joy that was set before Him," at the realisation of which, "He will see of the travail of His soul, and will be satisfied."

He would have been alone in the glory: not one of us could have been there with Him, had He not "endured the cross" with all its agonies and shame. The one grain of wheat had to die first; and in His glorious resurrection He is "the Firstfruits of them that slept"; and the guarantee of the resurrection of all the sleeping bodies of the saints (1 Cor. xv. 20, 23). To attain that glory which was beyond millennial splendour, and have human beings with Him in it, death must intervene. There was no other way for sinners to be brought to God. Therefore "the Just suffered for the unjust," "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."

Praise the Lord for what He has accomplished for the glory of God, and for our souls; and for what He will yet do for the redemption of our bodies. Some day Jesus will have the joy of His express wish in John xvii. 24, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me." He will not lose one of them. How blessed for us to know that even now we are associated with Him in His death and resurrection (Col. iii. 1, 3). But those who are not, and whose affections are set on the present life, will find out when too late that they have lost the opportunity of a living association with the risen Christ (John xii. 25). There is no link between man in the flesh and God. The cross has put an end, in judgment, to the old creation, and Christ's resurrection is the beginning of the new.

Now while we live in a tabernacle of sinful flesh and blood, God as the Husbandman deals with us as wheat in order to prepare us for the better enjoyment ("in the sweet bye and bye") of what "He has prepared

for those that love Him” In verse 26 of our chapter Jesus says, “If any man serve Me, let him follow Me,” which should be coupled with the same line of teaching in Luke ix. 23: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” To practise that involves suffering, something like that of Paul in Philippians iii. 7, 8.

Before ever the wheat can be gathered into God’s granary, it must be both thrashed and winnowed. The flail is needed for separating the wheat from the chaff, and the latter must be blown away from it. In other words: besides being separated to God at our conversion, we are put through a process, in which we are made to feel practically His sanctifying power and love in separating us from worldliness and all the sinful desires of the flesh. The exhortation in 2 Corinthians vii. 1, is not to be passed over. All bad habits need correction, and must be cast away: for, “What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.” Moreover we always reap in result what we sow, “Sow a thought, reap an action: sow an action, reap a habit: sow a habit, reap a character: sow a character, reap a destiny.”

It becomes us to “humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God; and He will exalt us in due time,” when He gathers the wheat into His granary. The process of thrashing and winnowing will lay many a “cross” athwart our path; and such cannot be borne without feeling its weight. “But God is faithful,” and “His grace is sufficient” to enable us to bear it.

It is worthy of remark that the word “tribulation” is derived from the Latin *tribulum*, which means a thrashing instrument or sledge. Let it do its work, and let us “hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter i. 13).

The following lines, by the late Capt. Hatton Turnour, may well be quoted here.

He will not lose one single grain of all the golden  
store,  
As patiently He sifts His wheat upon the threshing  
floor.

He winnows with the Spirit's fan;  
And every grain His eye doth scan.

With tender care He separates the precious from the  
vile,  
And purges all the dross away that would the gold  
defile;

He sees within the husks of earth  
A treasure hid of priceless worth.

The thrashing sledge must do its work, and other  
hands are used;  
But though the outer shell be crushed, the corn must  
not be bruised:

Through tribulation it must be  
Preserved for Him eternally.

One grain there was which fell beneath Jehovah's  
flail and rod;

'Twas crushed and bruised, that He might yield a  
harvest rich to God.

His smitten body low must lie,—  
Yes, Christ the Son of God must die.

Low, low it lay in rocky cave, away from mortal eyes;  
But life lay hid in folds of death; and then in fairer  
guise

It rose, and filled the earth with fruit,  
Upspringing from this hidden root.

And now upon the world-wide floor He spreads His  
precious grain:

The travail of His suffering soul, the fruit of all His  
pain,

And winnows it, till pure it lies,  
For garn'ring above the skies.

He will not aye be thrashing it: 'tis but "a little while,"  
And then each shining grain of gold shall thrill beneath  
His smile:

And bursting through the shrouds of gloom,  
Shall rise to light and deathless bloom.

J.R. (*Canada*).

## **“The Assembly of the Living God.”—4.**

### **The Purpose of its Construction.**

**“Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house : they will be still praising Thee. Selah.”**

(Ps. lxxxiv. 4.)

**“Ye also, as lively (living) stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”**

(I. Peter ii. 5.)

**T**HE Scriptures frequently give us blessed comparisons, as well as striking contrasts; and the citations above, at least in their moral and spiritual application, confirm us in the former, for there is but one note for the redeemed—Worship.

This supplies us with the thought of a further purpose God had in view, viz., praise suited to His presence in the assembly of His saints. This could not be fulfilled in its true essential character, in relation to the earthly Temple, for the people of that dispensation stood in relation to God on the ground of a typical redemption (Exodus xiii. 13), of carnal ordinances, and a worldly sanctuary (Heb. ix. 1-10). Nevertheless, we often find a deep spiritual tone of worship in the Psalms; accompanied by the Spirit of Christ in the remnant, who found themselves driven from the privileges of the earthly sanctuary because of the discipline of God upon the people for the nation's sins. Hence the longing desire expressed in the Psalm cited above, to be where God dwelt (in figure). In fine, it was the home of the psalmist's spirit in the midst of the ruin. This is a salutary thought for us in what appears outwardly a chaotic state of things in the Assembly of God of to-day.

The First Epistle of Peter, chapter II., refers to such a remnant, cut off from their earthly privileges on account of their nation's greater sin—the rejection of their Messiah; but who by faith had embraced the Gospel sent down from heaven, by the coming of the Holy Spirit, from a glorified Christ. As an elect remnant from among God's earthly people they had been "begotten again unto a lively (living) hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" (chapter i. 3, 4.). Thus, they had lost their earthly inheritance, and had gained a heavenly one. Peter informs them (and us), that having accepted a rejected Christ, He had become the chief corner stone of God's spiritual house, of which they formed part. We say of which they formed part, for Christianity makes no distinction, the middle wall of partition having been broken down through the Cross (Eph. ii. 14-15).

Let us bear in mind, too, that through that same cross God has made known to us the "Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross" (Col. ii. 14). We do well to bear in mind also that it is *God* who did this. When the wicked Jews (they were the instigators, though the Roman soldiers did the act), nailed Christ to the cross, that document which Moses took and sprinkled with blood, as well as the people upon whom it was enjoined (Heb. ix. 19, 20), was nailed there too. The system of ordinances has been cancelled by God, and to re-introduce that system in a different phase, under the name of Christian, is denounced on the authority of God's Word, as being after the elements of the world, and not after Christ (Col. ii. 8). Christians are warned against it (verse 18).

But we will turn to a happier theme. In the well-known incident at the well of Sychar, in John iv., the

woman of Samaria introduces the subject of worship, which gave the Lord the opportunity of making known His mind (the mind of God) concerning it. There are two propositions set forth, one negative, the other positive. We will cite the passage. "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship *the Father* in spirit and in truth; for *the Father* seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (verses 21-24).

It will be seen from the above that the Lord Himself was bringing in the worship of God as *Father*—a thing entirely new. The Samaritan system was idolatrous, the Judaic system outwardly orthodox, but faulty. The Lord put His ban upon *it*, as we find in Matt. xv. 8, 9, but this gives place to a new revelation on the important subject of worship—a spiritual fitness in the worshipper is needed, and God is revealed in a new relationship. "The *Father* seeketh such to worship Him."

It is a wonderful fact, dear reader, that the Son on earth was in quest of such worshippers, and this brought Him across the path of such sinners as this woman of Samaria. His "meat" was found in such cases, in doing His Father's will (verse 32).

We have spoken of a spiritual fitness in the worshipper; this can only be found in the new birth, and the power of the Holy Spirit; there is also the blood of Christ by which alone our conscience is purged from dead works to serve the living God, and this service is within the habitation of His holiness. May we suggest that this fitness in the worshipper, is what the Lord implied to the woman when He said, "But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well (fountain) of water springing up into everlasting life" (verse 14).

We have now to consider, in conclusion, the worship of the Assembly. Referring again to 1 Peter ii. 5, we note that the saints are not only built up a spiritual house, but are constituted "An holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (compare Eph. v. 19; Heb. xiii. 15). Ritualism is not associated with true Assembly worship; all saints are a family of priests (Heb. ii. 13 last clause) unto God. Even an Apostle takes his place with such (Rev. i. 5, 6), and we make bold to say that sacerdotalism is an innovation. How blessed and acceptable to the Lord it is to be simply gathered together in His name with the Holy Spirit to guide us, as worshippers once purged, having no more conscience of sins! (Heb. x. 2).

H.L.

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## Forgetting—Remembering.

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**M**AN'S instability, so generally manifested in a readiness to forget benefactors is a well-recognised if an unpleasant truth. The infallible mirror of Scripture reflects it, not as to one class or age alone but as to men generally, throughout the world's history.

In very early days, Moses, under divine inspiration, gave us the pathetic and thrilling story of Joseph who, in his abasement and sufferings and ultimate glory, presents such a significant type of our blessed Saviour and Lord. Joseph, for no fault of his own, was sold by his brethren to Ishmaelites and resold by them in Egypt to Potiphar, the captain of the guard. There, his probity aroused the vindictiveness of Potiphar's

wife, through whose lying words he was cast into prison. To the prison came also the king's butler and baker, who were placed under his charge.

Joseph, though himself evilly entreated, was compassionate to them. He listened to the dreams which had saddened them and cheered them by his confidence in God to interpret them. The butler's dream of pressing ripe grapes from a three-branched vine into Pharaoh's cup Joseph interpreted to be the restoration to his butlership in three days. "But think on me when it shall be well with thee and show kindness I pray thee unto me and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house" was his touching appeal so soon to be ungratefully forgotten. If it were Joseph's way, God had a better one. He must remain two further years in prison under God's wonderful schooling. Then, instead of being just brought "out of this house," he is set among princes, made lord over all, to become, in a sense, the saviour of the world.

Later on, the wisest of men marks this failing in the allegory of the poor wise man who delivered a beleaguered city by his wisdom, but was immediately forgotten. The allegory doubtless points on to One who was Wisdom personified who became poor in order to be the Saviour of the world, but is, nevertheless, so widely forgotten in this present day of grace. He is "despised and left alone" (Isa. liii. 3 new trans.).

God's chosen people are a further illustration. Neither the solemn warnings of their wonderful mediator, the sweet singing and skilful guiding of their shepherd-king nor the energetic remonstrances of their great prophets could keep them long in remembrance of the God of their salvation. Amidst many a soul-stirring appeal their prophets had to give the heart-breaking testimony, "ye have forgotten Me" (Jer. ii. 32; Eze. xxiii. 35; Hos. xiii. 6).

In blessed contrast to this failing of the first man is the pathway of Jesus the Son of God through this

world. Having in surpassing grace become a Man "a ruined world to save," He set Jehovah *always* before Him. His "meat," His "delight" to do His will, He did *always* those things that pleased His Father. As the meat-offering typified, all His ways went up to God as a sacrifice of sweet savour. Toward men He showed divine compassion, feeding thousands, healing their diseases, even raising the dead to life, yet His own people rejected Him and demanded His crucifixion. To this Pilate consented while testifying to His innocence. What a scene ensued! All classes and peoples combine to revile the blessed One whose only crime was love. In His stedfast purpose to save others, He could not save Himself; and notwithstanding this concentration of enmity, He prayed, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." One of the thieves who were crucified with Him repenting, rebukes the railing of the other. Admitting the righteousness of their own punishment, he justifies the One nailed to the central cross. He owns Him Lord and King and appeals to Him to *remember* him when He should come into His kingdom. This thief was no benefactor but was one of the unjust ones for whose sins the Just One was about to suffer the judgment of God. But will Jesus forget that appeal for remembrance? No: the immediate blessed response is,— "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise"—a response that went far beyond even the precious faith that prompted the appeal.

At the beginning (Jewish time) of that terrible day, Jesus had kept the Passover with His disciples and instituted the Lord's supper as a *memorial* of the sacrifice of Himself to which for 1,500 years the Passover lamb had pointed *forward*. He had given them the bread and cup separately with the significant words, "This is My body which is given for you" and "this is My blood which is shed for you, this do for a remembrance of Me." What touching tenderness of desire! How infinitely precious! Sovereign, unsought, His

love needing no worthy object to draw it forth or to sustain it, yet such His delight in us that He hungers for response from us and desires our remembrance in this supreme expression of His own love to us. The Lord's supper thus constitutes a continuous loving appeal to "His own" for their remembrance of Him. Can any of His blood-bought ones resist such an appeal? To them, surely, this commandment cannot be grievous. Will they not rather find it their greatest joy to respond to His last loving desire before enduring the cross?

"Remember Thee in all Thy pains  
And all Thy love to me?  
Yes, while a breath, a pulse remains,  
I must remember Thee.

"Remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead, of the seed of David according to my gospel" was the exhortation of the dying apostle to Timothy. What an inspiration for the servant who was to carry on the work of the Lord, dreading the difficulties and shrinking from the sufferings before him. Their Lord, too, had once suffered. He was once dead but now is alive for evermore, victorious over every enemy. He was the Fulfiller of the promises, the Heir of predicted blessings awaiting only the appointed time to reign; Paul must live with Him and reign with Him. His gospel of the glory of Christ was verified and final liberty and victory must be the portion of the imprisoned apostle and of Timothy also.

The evils of which the apostle warned Timothy are with us now, but the same inspiring word with which he strengthened Timothy comes to us fresh and clear. The Lord is risen indeed! and cheers us with a yet later word—"I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown," and again, "Surely I come quickly."

A. J. H.

## Caleb—the Man of Faith.—2.

(Joshua xiv.)

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**T**HERE is a third point which characterises this man of faith. Caleb *realises his hope*. He enters, at first as a visitor, into the land of Canaan; but it is there, not in the wilderness, that his career begins. When he enters upon the wilderness, his eyes are filled with the reality and beauty of the things which he has seen in Canaan, and which become, during 45 years, the object of his *hope*.

It is the same with the Psalmist. "O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary" (Ps. lxxiii. 1, 2). This man walked after the example of Caleb. He had seen God in the sanctuary; there it was that he took his starting-point, and from there he came down to the earth, full of the glorious reality of divine things which sustained his heart all along the pilgrimage during which his heart's desire was to reach them.

A fourth point is bound up with this. The wilderness has not only lost all attraction, but it appears to him as the place of drought and horror, when his soul is fed with the fat and marrow of the sanctuary. When that is so, heaven becomes for us the measure of the earth; and thus all the apparent value of things visible disappears entirely; they are henceforth but empty things for the soul, dried up and unsatisfying.

Let us now return, dear reader, to the *perseverance* which forms the prominent part of Caleb's character, which would not exist without the four points we have mentioned:—Attachment to Christ, the knowledge of the infinite value of His work, a hope which has been realised, and no links here below—all these enable us to persevere in the path of faith to the end. This

perseverance was bound up, in Caleb's life, with three positions which are inseparable the one from the other.

When it is a question of gaining knowledge beforehand of the good land which it is God's desire to give to His people, it was said of Caleb that he would persevere in following the Lord (Num. xiv. 24; Deut. i. 36; Jos. xiv. 8, 9). But he must still walk, during 40 years, in the wilderness, and he does it courageously; he perseveres, because he keeps in his heart the remembrance of the riches and treasures of Canaan.

The difficulties of the wilderness are nothing to him. He finds there the burning sun, the sand, fatigue and thirst, but he takes no account of them. Not for one single moment does he seek the things around him. His perseverance is fed by his hope; and the believer's hope has for its object, not only Canaan in a general way, that is, heaven—but *Christ*.

There was a very celebrated man concerning whom God could not say these things. Solomon failed where Caleb persevered. The wilderness had become a thing of value for this great king. A moment came when Solomon turned his back on God, having loved something in the wilderness. It is said of him in 1 Kings xi. 6, that he "followed not fully after the Lord." The world had attractions for him, and small as they were at the beginning, they were not slow to overcome him, and his kingdom was lost. It was otherwise with Caleb who won his inheritance by persevering in following the Lord.

But Caleb persevered in yet a third position—in taking up his possession in Canaan. He spent five years still in fighting, then made use of his arms to possess himself of his special portion, the mountain of which the Lord had spoken. He entered into full possession of his inheritance in spite of the formidable power of the enemy and the terror which the Anakims inspired.

But for Caleb, as for us, we combat an enemy who is already overcome—him who has the power of death;

yet he cannot terrify us. Death is ours. Caleb, I say, enters into full possession of his inheritance. His perseverance is crowned with success. He is the only one in Israel who seems to have dispossessed *all* his enemies.

What a lesson for us, beloved! Let us remember that the taking up possession was, for Caleb, what is ours as a *present* fact, and not only something to be enjoyed in the future. Have we persevered in the combat for the *present* enjoyment of our privileges? May God give us to persevere, as did Caleb, in these three things—in *hope*, in our *walk*, and in the *combat*.

At the end of our chapter we find two other characters which always accompany perseverance. Caleb said in verse 11, "As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in." In spite of his 85 years and the fatigue of the wilderness journey, *Caleb had not lost an atom of his strength*. How was that? It was because he had no confidence in himself. The lesson of Hebron had remained engraven on his heart. He said in verse 12, "*If so be* the Lord will be with me." Do you say, Did he then doubt the Lord? No, he doubted himself. He understood that if there was anything to hinder the Lord being with him it could only come from himself.

Let us remark the connection between these two things—the *realisation of strength is in proportion to having no confidence in oneself*.

It is thus that we go from strength to strength. Isaiah xl. 28-31 gives us the same truth in an admirable way. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall." See what the greatest strength of man comes to! But "the everlasting God, the Lord, . . . fainteth not neither is weary." Our confidence is in Him. And further, "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." And then he adds,

"But they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength," etc.

Such was the case with Caleb. He walked in the consciousness that his strength was in God, and that God's strength was his. May it be the same with us, and may we also rise to the conscious possession of heavenly things. May we thus *run* in the arena of the fight, *walk* patiently in the path which ends in glory, and not become *weary* in it.

H. R.

### Psalm lxxxix.

"For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him."

(ver. 7, 8).

**T**HUS ever on through life we find  
To trust, O Lord, is best,  
Who serve Thee with a quiet mind,  
Find, in Thy service, rest.

Their outward troubles may not cease,  
But this their joy shall be;  
Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace  
Whose mind is stayed on Thee.

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"Ye have been called to liberty," says the Apostle to the Galatians; "only use not your liberty as an occasion to the flesh"—which the flesh would readily do. God gave the law to convince of sin; the flesh would use it to work out righteousness. He acts in grace, that we may be above sin and outside its dominion: the flesh would use grace as an occasion to sin without restraint. The Christian, truly free from the yoke of sin, as well as from its condemnation . . . instead of serving his lusts, seeks to serve others, as free to do it in love.

## “Him that loveth us.”

**I**N all the various ways in which the Lord Jesus is presented to us in the opening of the book of Revelation, none appeals to the heart of the christian more powerfully than what we find in chapter i. 5, 6. He was indeed the faithful Witness amidst the prevailing unfaithfulness; He is the first-born from the dead, the One who rose again in the power of resurrection-life; and He will yet be manifested as the Prince of the kings of the earth, for all the rights and glory of the coming kingdom are His.

But in what special relationship does He stand to us, to His Church? He is the One who “loves us.” “Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it,” and this love is the source and origin of every blessing the Church possesses.

Let us ponder over it for a moment—He *loves us*. To the Church at Philadelphia Christ said that those who despised them here would be made to know that “I have loved thee.” Love will always do its very best for its object. It is not a question of duty, but love finds its delight in doing all it can in service for others.

Love—holy love like His—could not bear one thing which would be out of keeping with the holy nature of the One who loves; and therefore He has washed us from our sins, at no less a cost than “His own blood.” And He has made us a kingdom, priests to God and His Father. We belong to the kingdom of the Son of God’s love (Col. i. 13) and we have nearness and access as priests into the very presence of God.

How blessed to see, at the very opening of this book of Revelation—which is essentially a book of judgment—this little preface in which Jesus Christ is presented in His own personal and perfect love to His own. How could the Apostle John do other than respond in a suited doxology, “To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”?

We may take John here as a representative of the Church : but does the very mention of the name of Jesus touch a chord and awaken a response in our hearts as it did in his? And note here, it is "loves," as the better readings render it, not "loved" merely. Christ's love is a present reality ; indeed it has no beginning or end, it is eternal.

Do we remember it as we pass through this present evil world, as we go about our daily work, as we meet with the difficulties and trials of life—there is One who *loves us*? Whatever our lot may be ; pleasing or painful, dark or bright, as best may seem to Him, still there is One who loves us and is bent on doing the very best for us. If we entered into it better how much of the bitterness this would take out of many a cup of sorrow, and how overflowing would be the response of the heart, "To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" !

### Tribulation.—3.

**"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."**  
(Eph. ii. 10.)

**I**T is most interesting and edifying to notice that the word here translated "workmanship" is literally *poem*. So God has composed a piece of poetry as to His saints, which will glorify His name in them, both now and to the ages of the ages. The creation here spoken of is not being born into the world, but a living association with Christ in His resurrection from among the dead. The old creation has been judicially ended before God at the cross, and the new one began at the resurrection. "Our old man is crucified with Christ," and "we are dead with Him," and "quickened together with Him."

Now as God's children created in Christ Jesus, in this

new position ; Who can intelligently read the epistle to the Ephesians without seeing that in eternity past divine purposes and plans were formed regarding us, and that it was God's intention for our lives to correspond with them : even those good works, which were "before prepared" for our practice? Our daily experiences in the will of God for us are the counterpart of His purposes ; and He has formed a separate plan for each of us. It is unique. The practical working out of it is in His hands : for "All His saints are in Thy hand" (Deut. xxxiii. 3), and "My times are in Thy hand" (Psl. xxxi. 15). But it is of the first importance that each one should surrender his own will to God, and seek to know, as bearing the yoke of Christ, what the divine will for him is. We can find it out through the Scriptures under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by prayer and supplication.

Now there is a trait in the character of God, which has of late been much before the writer : and it is that of a Weaver. He has formed His plan or pattern for the work to be done ; and the loom must turn it out exactly *like* the plan. But often our pre-conceived ideas as to what is best for us do not coincide with God's thoughts ; and discipline has to be exercised. Thus tribulation comes in. Moreover "afflictions are our appointed lot" (1 Thess. iii. 3). The Lord did not say of Paul, "I will show him what great things he will accomplish in the gospel," but, "how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." Added to all the tribulation from without came also the necessary and humbling personal "thorn in the flesh." Yet in the midst of it God's grace and strength were equal to the trials for Paul, and are so for us. Therefore let us not hesitate to ask our "gracious and merciful" God to carry on the weaving, so that the material produced on the loom may be just like the pattern He has designed. To know that one's life was planned before we existed is no *new* thing. Three hundred years before King Josiah

was born his name was foretold (1 Kings xiii. 2); and about a hundred and seventy-five years before Cyrus sat on the throne of Persia and issued his decree to re-build the temple at Jerusalem, both his name and work were mentioned by Isaiah (chap. xlv. 28). The work performed by both kings was exactly like the divine plan. How true then it is, that,

Behind our life the Weaver stands,  
And works His wondrous will.  
Then leave it in His all-wise hands;  
And trust His perfect skill.  
Should mystery enshroud His plan,  
And our short sight be dim,  
Let us not try the whole to scan,  
But leave each thread with *Him*.

If, with a surrendered will, we thus own and act, we shall know more of "the peace of God" in the midst of affliction, and enjoy the rest which the weary heart finds by bearing the yoke of Christ and carrying our respective crosses. Another has said,

Thus ever on through life we find,  
To trust, O Lord, is best.  
Who serve Thee with a quiet mind,  
Find in Thy service rest.  
Their outward troubles may not cease;  
But this their joy shall be:  
"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace  
Whose mind is stayed on Thee."

But, alas! how often in the furnace of affliction we are naturally inclined to look on the dark side of things. And we are not alone in this failure. Witness the sorrowful experience of the outwardly perfect man Job, whose mind seemed to be possessed with the thought that God was dealing with him arbitrarily; and he wished to die. Probably he had formed his own life plans, and was trying to carry them out in the noontide of prosperous surroundings. Notice in chapter xxix. his vivid

description of his then past circumstances. "I shall die in my nest" (ver. 18), he had said ; but God allowed him to be turned out of it that he might know his own natural heart. And the lesson was well learnt when he said, "Behold, I am vile." From that time he began to look up, and to live, in figure, as a risen man." The Lord turned the captivity of Job," and he enjoyed communion in the sunshine of the divine presence. Jonah is another instance. The shadow of the gourd, and the worm that destroyed it, as also the heat of the sun with an east wind, were intended to exercise him as to God's ways in government. But there he sat outside Nineveh, thoroughly disappointed and dejected at the sparing of the repentant city, and "wished in himself to die," even after his preservation and prayer of faith and hope in the great fish's belly. But the divine patience and grace towards him were, as ever, very beautiful.

Yet another case, and one which is still more to the point before the writer. Who can read King Hezekiah's own record (Is. xxxviii.) of his sickness, and not learn something of what *man* thinks of God as a Weaver? Notice in verse 10 what he had said when in tribulation : "In the meridian of my days," etc. Exactly what is often thought and said when a dear one is taken away at such a time, and perhaps while engaged in training a young family, or working in the gospel. But God's ways are perfect, and His plans are well known to Himself. Moreover we forget what joy the Shepherd has when He sees His sheep safe at home, and their joy to be there. Then in verse 12 Hezekiah utters a word of great interest, "He will cut me off with pining sickness," should read, He will cut me off from the thrum or from the loom. Now as "the thrum" means "the ends of a weaver's threads," the king thought God was cutting him off from all that was left to him. But no : the weaving went on for fifteen years after that ; and the divine Weaver's plans were perfectly carried out.

Another has well said,

My life is but a weaving  
Between my Lord and me.  
I cannot choose the colours  
He worketh steadily.  
Full oft He weaveth sorrow;  
While I in foolish pride  
Forget He sees the upper,  
And I the under side.

Thanks be to God for His way of viewing things. Let us "therefore be imitators of God as children beloved."

Now what is the sequel to all the complex network of our circumstances, which are inseparably interwoven with the purposes of God regarding us? The answer is found in the words of one of the most tried of all God's saints: "When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job xxiii. 10), together with Jude 24. How applicable to each of us are the Lord's words to Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter." At present "we see through a dim window; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." Some day we shall thank God for all the weaving. When in the glory with Christ we calmly take, or are given, a retrospective view of this earthly life, we shall "bless the heart that planned, and bless the hand that guided" through a world of tribulation to the far-off land to "see the King in His beauty." Meanwhile may "He perfect that which concerneth us," and give us "endurance, that after we have done the will of God, we may receive the promise." But hark!

Not till the loom is silent,  
And the shuttles cease to fly,  
Shall God unroll the canvas,  
And explain the reason why.  
The dark threads are as needful  
In the Weaver's skilful hand  
As the threads of gold and silver  
In the pattern He has planned.

J.R. (Canada).

## ‘The Assembly of the Living God.’—5. The One Body.

“And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh thereof; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made (margin, builded) He a woman, and brought her unto the man.”  
(Gen. ii. 21-22.)

“For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.”  
(1 Cor. xii. 12.)

**M**UCH of God’s mind in Scripture is conveyed to us in figurative or symbolic language. Take, for example, Matt. xiii. The Lord sets forth in that chapter the whole dispensational course of the kingdom of heaven in its present phase; that is, during the time from His rejection till He establishes it in power on the earth. Hence in reply to His disciples’ question, “Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?” He said, “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto them it is not ‘given’” (ver. 10, 11).

If we take our place as disciples at His feet, we shall understand, in like manner, the revelations He has given concerning the Assembly as Christ’s body. But we must not confound the Assembly with the kingdom. The revelation of the truth as to the Assembly did not come out till afterwards, when “the mystery” relating to the church was made known to Paul (Eph. iii. 3).

The course of the kingdom at the present time, runs on concurrently with the Assembly as a called out company, but the calling out of the latter constitutes an era of its own, a kind of parenthesis in the ways of God with men. This parenthesis includes another revelation given to Paul—a revelation to which we do well to give earnest heed in these days—namely, the coming of the Lord Jesus *for* His saints. Much that is being taught concerning this aspect of His coming, is calculated to rob believers of their true hope, or rather of the present joy which should be theirs in anticipating it, and of its sanctifying power.

This "blessed hope," given by revelation to the Assembly (see 1 Thess. iv. 15 to end) embraces the era between Pentecost and the translation of the saints to be for ever with the Lord.

But our present subject is the Assembly as the one body, of ~~which~~ Christ is the risen and glorified Head. In Gen. i. 26, 27, we find ~~God~~ taking counsel concerning the creation of the man and the ~~woman~~, saying, "Let us make man . . . let them have dominion," etc. In chapter ii. the details are given; which, by the way, provide a divine confutation of the evolutionist theory.

It is with the latter that a "mystery" (or that which has a figurative meaning) is involved; not so much perhaps regarding the creation of the man, as that of the woman as the counterpart of the man. The details are instructive when the light of the New Testament is thrown upon them. First, man is created and then placed in a position of dignity as one to whom God gives precedence over the lower creation.

Man was created for glory. Thus, at first, he was alone in his position as man. But now, in the counsels of God concerning Christ and the Assembly, *He* takes precedence as universal Lord; only things in heaven come in here (Eph. i. 20, 21, 22). But, to refer back to Gen. ii. we have said that in the creation of the woman a "mystery" is involved. Is not this suggested in comparing verses 21-24, with Eph. v. 25-33? "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning," and when we consider the immensity of the subject of Christ and the Assembly, may we not suggest that this latter is His masterpiece?

But to turn to the details, "And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him" (ver. 20). Here we have Adam in his solitary dignity as God's vicegerent, set over this lower

creation. "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept : and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof : and the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh ; she shall be called, Woman (Isha) because she was taken out of Man (Ish)".

The above details furnish us with much food for meditation on the subject before us. First, God saw the need that man should have an associate with him in his glory. Secondly, God took in hand to work out this counsel unknown to man (we could not say this of Christ). He accomplished it in the exercise of His skill and power. Thirdly, the way he brought the woman into being suggests a mystery.

Here we will pause to explain what we mean. We find in Scripture that "sleeping" is sometimes symbolical of death, hence the deep sleep which God caused to fall upon Adam suggests the death of Christ. It is Christ who "loved the Assembly and gave Himself for it." In giving Himself He went into death, nothing else could compass her redemption (Eph. ii. 1-3). To Him she is the pearl of great price (Matt. xiii. 45, 46).

Satan said to God concerning Job, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life" (Job ii. 4). Christ gave His life, gave Himself, to the deep sleep of death to purchase His Assembly, His body and His bride. There is a mystic language contained in Psalm cxxxix. which is very applicable to our subject. We will cite the passage, "Thine eyes did see my substance (bones), yet being unperfect ; (as to development—not imperfect) and in Thy book all my members were written which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them" (ver. 16).

And verse 15 is still more expressive, "My substance (bone, the margin reads strength or body) was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously

wrought in the lower parts of the earth."\* Christ went into the lower parts of the earth (the grave) in order that, taking His position as man, according to the counsels of God, in His present exaltation in the heavenlies, He might be set forth as "Head over all things to the Assembly, which is His body, the fulness (completeness according to these counsels)† of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 22, 23). The work of the Holy Spirit in baptising the saints of the present era into the one body of which we have spoken, we must reserve for our next article D.V.

H.L.

\* We cite this Psalm simply as a figure of speech. The Psalmist, conscious of the perfect knowledge of God concerning himself, testifies to the wisdom and skill of the Creator in the formation of his body. We refer to the emphatic language used, as suggestive of a higher purpose relating to Christ.

† As the last Adam (see for type Gen. v. 1).

## Three "Last Words."

(Notes of an Address).

Deut. xxxiii. 1-5 ; 2 Sam. xxiii. 1-5 ; 2 Tim. ii. 1 : iv. 8.

**T**HE last messages of great men have always had special significance, and particularly is this so with the last words of the great men of God.

I. The thirty-third chapter of Deuteronomy opens with the last words of Moses, and the thirty-fourth chapter closes (in fact, the book closes), with a special description of Moses himself in the words, "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."

After the great "*song*" which occupies the whole of the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy, we read, "And this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. And he said, 'Jehovah came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints (or myriads of holy ones); from His right hand went a fiery law for

them : Yea, He loved the people ; all His saints are in Thy hand ; and they sat down at Thy feet ; everyone shall receive Thy words.' "

Other sound translations render the latter clauses in the present tense instead of the past. "Yea, He loveth the peoples, all His saints are in Thy hand, and they sit down at Thy feet : each receiveth of Thy words."

Who but the God of all grace would have written in such words of commendation about such a people? Read the song of Moses, and what God says about it "This song shall testify against them as a witness." He calls upon them to "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations, ask thy father and he will show thee, thy elders and they will tell thee ; when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people ; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance" (Deut. xxxii. 7-9).

But what can be said as to their response to all this? "*Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?*" "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." But we must draw the veil over the other side of the question. Moved to jealousy with their strange gods, Jehovah might for a time deliver them into the hands of the very nations with whom they formed their unholy alliances, but He will yet "make expiation for His land, and for His people" (ver. 43 revised version). The climax is found in the last words of Moses—"Yea, He (Jehovah) loveth the peoples." No other solution can be found, nor would we seek one. "Happy is that people that is in such a case ; yea happy is that people whose God is Jehovah" (Ps. cxliv. 15).

Who can read the scripture without thinking of Psalms cv. and cvi.? Psalm cv. with its striking category of what "*He*" (Jehovah) did, and Psalm cvi. with its painful contrast of what "*they*" (the people)

did? And there again we find the one and only solution to be, "*Nevertheless He saved them for His Name's sake,*" and "*Nevertheless He regarded their affliction when He heard their cry*" (Ps. cvi. 8, 44).

We may feel inclined to ask, When did they sit down at His feet? And when did they receive His words? But let us remember the gracious rebuke to the other great representative prophet—Elijah. "Yet, I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." Can any more blessed summary be found of the privileges of the saints of God—past, present or future—than this? They are in His hand—they sit down at His feet—each receiveth His words. May we His present-day saints be more in the enjoyment of these virtues. How all this reminds us of the word in John xiii. 1, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." He Himself was in the world then, and about to depart out of it to go unto the Father, and who but Himself would have said of these same disciples, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations"?

Might we not say again here—of them and those that have believed through their word, "They (and we) are in His hand, we sit down at His feet (and worship), we receive His words"?

2. It is of this same blessed Saviour, Jehovah-Jesus, that David prophetically speaks in his last words (2 Sam. xxiii. 1-5). David, too, sings a song, rehearsing the salvation of God "my Rock," and contrasting the ways of God with the ways of men. We note in passing how frequently in their last songs both these prophets speak of God as "*The Rock,*" and in the few last words of the anointed sweet psalmist of Israel, how evident it is that the Spirit of God is taking him into the yet future reign of the Messiah when he says, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And He shall be as the light of the morning when

the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds ; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain" (2 Sam. xxiii. 3-5).

No days of Solomon reached this blessed height. Many clouds dimmed the brightness of his morn, in Psalm lxxii, the One of whom Solomon was a prominent type filled the mind of the Spirit of God, and so the conclusion can well be ; "And blessed be His glorious name for ever ; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory : Amen, and Amen."

3. Another long step brings us to the aged apostle in the prison-house of Rome, filling up "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for His (Christ's) body's sake which is the church" (Col. i. 24). And what can he say to his dearly beloved son in the faith, Timothy, but, "Thou therefore my son, be strong in *the grace* that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy ii. 1). "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day ; and not to me only but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 8).

In calling attention to these last messages one is struck with the fact that one note dominates the minds of the great prophets and servants of God. It is what God is in Himself, and the triumphs of His grace "which doth much more abound," even where sin abounds. The thoughtful christian to-day looks around on the unmistakeable evidences of declension—most marked where grace has been best known—and where can the eye rest until it looks up to the same God, and the coming Saviour? Yes ! He loves His people, and His saints *are* in His hand, they sit down at His feet—happy privilege—and receive His words.

"He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me, and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" (John xiv. 21).

T.R.

## Questions and Answers.

*F.G.H. asks; referring to John xv. 2, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit," etc—Can a branch in Christ perish? Is not the chapter more a question of fruit-bearing, not so much salvation, which all have who believe on Him? In verse 6 it says, "If a MAN abide not in Me," etc. Is not the word "abide" the same thing as communion? Do we get a literal fulfilment of the words of our Lord in Ananias and Sapphira, who were cut off by death (Acts v.)?*

The figure of the vine should have been well known to those to whom the Lord was speaking. Israel was a vine brought out of Egypt (Isa. v. ; Ps. lxxx. 8). God had bestowed much culture on His vineyard, but it brought nothing but wild grapes. The vine is of no use unless it brings forth fruit, it cannot be used for timber, but is only fit for the fire (Ezek. xv.)

Those who surrounded the Lord at the time, His eleven disciples, were already clean through the word, which He spoke to them; they were true believers (John xiii. 10, 11). Judas, who had gone out to betray Him, though a nominal branch, had no life and no part in Christ, as also many who were convinced by His miracles, but the Lord did not commit Himself to them (John ii. 25). Where there is life and reality, the Father purges by His discipline in order that we may bring forth more fruit. Where there is only profession, the branch is cut off and cast into the fire.

The difficulty which often arises in people's minds as to this passage is, because they bring into it a thought which is not in it, namely, the union of the members with the glorified Head in heaven, as we have it in Ephesians, Colossians, etc. This union, of course,

never can be severed. But the vine and the branches is an *earthly* figure and does not bring in the thought of the union of the body with Christ the Head. "Abiding" brings before us the thought of *communion*, rather than of the *union* of which we have spoken; it includes dependence on the Lord, and therefore confidence in Him. Severed from Him we can do nothing.

To abide in Christ and to have His Word abiding in us is our privilege; thus our walk is directed aright, there is fruit-bearing and we will be led in prayer according to His will. But it is not wise, in this passage or in other similar ones, to try to explain away the solemn warnings of Scripture,—which are given for our good—especially seeing that we have so many passages which assure us of the security of the believers' place in Christ. As to Ananias and Sapphira—this was a case of a "sin unto death" and God gave a special mark of His displeasure at the beginning of the dispensation. No doubt their souls were saved, but this is another thing.

If any reader feels disposed to send a further reply to this question we shall be glad to insert it D.V. in our next issue.

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*W.J.B. What is the kingdom in mystery? I see from the Word that the church is not a mystery; it was so once, but now it is revealed.*

The kingdom in mystery would be in contrast with the kingdom in power. Christ, the true King, was rejected by the nation of Israel, so that instead of the kingdom being established in power, as it will in the millennial day, it has now taken a mysterious or hidden form. Hence it was given to the disciples to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to those who rejected Christ it was not given (Matt. xiii. 11). The kingdom of heaven is not the same thing as the church. The former has saved and unsaved people in it, and

means the sphere in which the authority of the King is owned, professedly at least. It is a Kingdom whose King is absent, unseen and rejected, and is therefore in a mysterious form, till the Lord, as King, appears in power. The church means a called-out company, and, properly speaking, includes only true believers—the church which *Christ* builds and which is destined for the glory (Matt. xvi. 18; Eph. v. 27).

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If we have learnt to love, we have learnt to know Jesus, such as He is for us; and He is wholly for us.

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Christ has formed the Assembly, but with this additional right over her heart that He has given Himself for her. But He is also the last Adam in glory; and He will present her to Himself, glorified, such as He has formed her for Himself.

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The Assembly needs to be nourished, as do our bodies; and Christ nourishes her. She is the object of His tender affections; He cherishes her. If the end is heaven, the Assembly is not left desolate here. She learns His love where her heart needs it. She will enjoy it fully when need has passed away for ever.

## “Preach the Word.”

**I**T is remarkable that this exhortation should occur in the last chapter of the Apostle Paul's last epistle, 2 Timothy. That epistle was written under the shadow of the decline in spiritual life and power which was already being manifested in the assembly of God, and when the coldness and apathy of many was so apparent.

But instead of giving way under the pressure of these discouragements, Timothy was exhorted not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, but to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, and to continue in the things which he had heard. And he was to “preach the word,” to hold up the standard of truth, which was all the more necessary since others were disposed to lower it, or to accommodate themselves to worldly motives and ways.

Coming to our own days—with what awful rapidity the apostasy is setting in in Christendom! Are we to fall under the baleful effect of the many evils and the spirit of callous indifference to the things of God which is so much on the increase? Well, if we are disposed to do so, let us take to heart the exhortation of the Apostle, “Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season,” present Christ to the world as the only Saviour for sinners and as the unfailing resource for saints.

Nothing can be more solemn than the charge given to Timothy; it was, “before God and the Lord Jesus,” to preach the word, no matter what the opposition or the difficulties might be. The spirit of cowardice is not that which should characterise the servant of God to-day. Rather should he labour on with renewed energy, endure hardness, and go forward with increasing diligence and earnestness, in proportion as the dark spirit of infidelity in the world, and even the apathy manifested amongst Christians, increases.

### Three Inheritances.

**I**T is interesting, as well as profitable, to notice how many things revealed in the Old Testament have their counterpart in the New. We may take the word "*inheritance*" as an illustration of this. In the Books of Moses and in Joshua it is used in three different ways. First, it is used of the land of Canaan, the land which God promised to Abraham and afterwards to Isaac and Jacob and into which, in fulfilment of His promise, He brought the children of Israel under the leadership of Joshua, who divided the land among the various tribes. In Deut. iv. 21, Moses speaks of it as "that good land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance." But the Levites were excepted: they had no inheritance among their brethren. It is in reference to them that we find the second use of the word, for it says that *the Lord Himself was their inheritance* (Deut. xviii. 2), or the sacrifice of the Lord God of Israel (Josh. xiii. 14), or the priesthood of the Lord (Josh. xviii. 7).

There is yet a third way in which the word is used. The Lord's people, redeemed by Him and therefore belonging to Him, are spoken of as His inheritance. This is so stated in Deut. iv. 20, "But the Lord hath taken you and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt to be unto Him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day." This one fact made them a separated people, as the Lord says of them through the mouth of Balaam (Num. xxiii. 9), "Lo, the people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations."

When we turn to the New Testament we find this word "*inheritance*" also used in three ways which, moreover, correspond to those in the Old Testament.

The Christian's promised land is the heavenly Canaan. This is spoken of by the Apostle Peter in his first Epistle as an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away; in contrast with the

earthly Canaan, the inheritance which the children of Israel through their disobedience corrupted, defiled and lost. And this inheritance, which is made sure to us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, is reserved for us in heaven, where no sin or defilement can ever come (1 Peter i. 3).

From Ephesians i. 10, we learn that in the dispensation of the fulness of times God will gather together in one all things in Christ, and that *we have obtained an inheritance in Him*. It is the purpose of God to head up all things, both heavenly and earthly, in Christ, and it is also His purpose in wondrous grace to associate us with Him. We are predestinated, or marked out beforehand, for this inheritance according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will.

We have to remember that our inheritance, whether in the Lord Himself or in heaven, is ours *by faith*. We wait for the redemption of the purchased possession, and in the meantime the Holy Spirit of promise with which we, believers, are sealed, is the earnest of our inheritance.

In the third place God has an inheritance in His heavenly people—the church, just as He had an inheritance in His earthly people, Israel. We learn this from the prayer of the Apostle in chapter i. of Ephesians: he prays to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, and asks Him to “give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding (or heart) being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of *His inheritance in the saints*.”

We may also notice how God connects His glory with the blessings which He gives His people. We are to be to the praise of the glory of His grace (Eph. i. 6) ; to the praise of His glory (verses 12, 14) ;

and when His inheritance in the saints is spoken of, it is the riches of the glory or the glory in abundance.

What wonderful grace on the part of God to make known these things to us and to give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we may understand them and enjoy them!

G.K.

### Tribulation—4.

**"For God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."**  
(2 Cor. iv. 6, 7.)

**W**HAT mercy! Yea, what grace! He whose light fills the heaven of heavens, Who at the first looked upon the dark waters of the earth He was about to prepare for man, saying, "Let there be light," and the darkness fled away before it: He is the one who has condescended to shine in your heart and mine.

Once we were not only *dark*, but "*darkness itself*." Thanks unto the Father, "who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. i. 12, 13). What for? Certainly not to keep the light shut up in the receptacle where He has put it, but in order that it may radiate from there for the good of others. It was God's intention that we should be as radiators to illuminate them. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid."

"This treasure"—what treasure? The knowledge of the glory of God as it now openly shines in the face of Jesus Christ is like a light to shine forth on the moral darkness of this world. And besides thus knowing that our sins are no longer on Him, and therefore no longer on us; in proportion as we intelligently comprehend what God has done, shall we by faith enjoy a foretaste of "the inheritance of the saints in light"; they are "with the Lord"; and shall see what He so

expressly wished in John xvii. 24. Blessed portion! But what contains "this treasure"? There is a mine of truth in the answer: "We have this treasure in earthenware vessels"; and the words bring God before us in the character of a Potter.

Beloved saints, as we pass through tribulation, what a resource we have in our Creator and Saviour-God! "O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our Potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand" (Is. lxiv. 8). He will not forsake the work of His own hand. But something is necessarily needed to let the light in such vessels shine forth. You can no more make a light to shine clearly through an opaque vase of clay than Gideon's 300 men could with the torches in their non-transparent pitchers. Such vessels had first to be *broken*; and so with ours. These bodies of failure must be humbled; and the greater the humiliation, the brighter the shining of the light. It was so with Paul: "When he was weak, then he was strong," and which of us comes anywhere near *his* "candle power"?

Then after speaking, in 2 Cor. iv., of the opaque vessels, he goes into some of the details (verses 8, 9) of the breaking of them: "Troubled on every side," etc. Tribulation everywhere! The word for "affliction," in verse 17, is derived from that rendered "troubled" in verse 8, and is the same rendered "tribulation" in other texts, notably Rev. vii. 14. (Read also of more troubles in 2 Cor. xi. 23-33.) Thus the Apostle's vessel was broken to pieces; but he always had before him "the dying of Jesus," which had the practical effect of reproducing in him some of the resplendency of "the life also of Jesus"; so that he could say, "To me to live is Christ."

If Jesus could "endure the cross, despising the shame," in view of "the joy that was set before Him," His faithful servant could estimate tribulation as "light" and "transient," in view of "a far more ex-

ceeding and eternal weight of glory," which it was working out for him, and others also. O that such a life of faith may be ours, shining with many "candle power" in the "excellency" of its divine source, according to the personal knowledge we have of Christ in glory! Let us be imitators of Paul, even as he was of Christ. Though his "outward man perished," and though "all in Asia had turned away from him," and his last days were spent in prison for his Master's sake and the gospel's, the light shone more than ever, through the Epistles which he wrote or dictated there, until his noble career closed in suffering martyrdom. But with the glory shining before him he triumphantly uttered those immortal words given us in 2 Tim. iv. 6-8; let the reader "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest" them. It is not probable we shall ever have to suffer so much as Paul did, but if "the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ" is to shine forth in our daily lives, these earthenware vessels that contain the treasure must be broken, "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

"Crushed by an adverse world of sin,  
Dull grief, and heavy care;  
Then glows the treasure found within,  
Celestial, bright and fair.

"From shaken flowers sweet odours fly,  
When tempest sweeps the dell;  
And the rich, purple, Tyrian dye  
Drops from a bruised shell.

"O God, how wondrous are Thy ways!  
The wisdom surely Thine,  
That from a broken vase of clay  
Some rays of glory shine."

Now there is to be another scene in which there will be no need to break the vessel in order to let its light shine forth. It is, however, no counterpart of what we have just had before us, but rather in glowing contrast with it. This other scene the Lord Jesus has

“shown to His servants” in “the Revelation which God gave to Him” (chapter xxi.). Let us by faith view it. The very persons who were once identified with fragile earthenware vessels are there seen as the bride of the Lamb. Heavenly in origin, the city, with its “street of pure gold, as it were transparent glass” (ver. 21), descends from above with nothing less than “the glory of God” (ver. 11); and the light it contains, as embodied in its Lamp (ver. 23), shines forth spontaneously. It becomes a radiator for the use of the saved nations who will spend their peaceful lives in its rays (ver. 24). The bright light of the City is as of “a stone most precious, as a crystal-like jasper stone” (ver. 11).

Now jasper is not in itself transparent, but here all its opacity is overcome by the transparency of the crystal. If that is a figure of what we shall be like in millennial glory, the jasper would seem to represent us, and the crystal Christ. “We shall be like Him,” and “be manifested with Him in glory,” bearing “the image of the heavenly.” The vessels containing such a brilliant light were once identified with earthenware; but He who saw the “treasure hid in a field,” and found the “pearl of great price,” gave His life-blood in order to obtain it. He saw value in earthen vessels and in due time He will come and change these fragile vessels, and re-mould them into the likeness of “His body of glory” to shine “as a crystal-like jasper stone.” O what grace! Words fail the writer to attempt adequately to speak of it; but the pen of inspiration has done so; and all “who are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (but no other) will shine there with Him.

Let every one who reads these pages be assured that he too can be there by identifying himself, through faith, with Jesus who identified Himself with us on the cross. What joyful satisfaction awaits all who are saved by His precious blood! But, notwithstanding this, His joy will be the greatest and deepest of all.

"I shall be satisfied;  
 But not while here below,  
 Where ev'ry cup of earthly bliss  
 Is wisely mixed with woe.  
 When this frail form shall be  
 For ever laid aside,  
 And in His likeness I awake,  
 I shall be satisfied.

"He shall be satisfied,  
 When all He died to win,  
 By lovingkindness drawn to Him,  
 Are safely gathered in.  
 When in the glory bright  
 He views His glorious bride,  
 Sees of the travail of His soul,  
 He shall be satisfied."

J.R. (Canada).

### "The Assembly of the Living God."—5.

"For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us ; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances ; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace ; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby." (Eph. ii. 14-16.)

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body : so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free ; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13).

**I**N further contemplation of this subject let us bear in mind that the first Scripture cited above, in its working, is anterior to the second. Both refer to the bringing into operation of the counsels of God concerning the "mystery" of Christ, the assembly which is His body. The basis for all this was laid at the cross, but the accomplishing thereof awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit.

We would here draw the reader's attention to an important crisis in the history of Israel as (professedly) the people of God. It took place on a great festive occasion, the keeping of the Jewish feast of Tabernacles. The Lord was there, but not as the honoured

host; He went up as it were in secret (John vii. 10). He was then on the way which ended in the Cross. Therefore He did not openly recognise this feast, for "His time was not yet come."

The feast of Tabernacles looked on to the time of millennial blessing, and before that could be, it was necessary that atonement should be made for sin by His death. What was signified by the Passover, namely, the Cross; and Pentecost also—the coming of the Holy Ghost—must first be fulfilled (see John vii. 37-39). The feast of Tabernacles was the last of the Jewish festivals of the year and the word of the prophet might be well applied to the state of the people in the Lord's day. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

As we have said, there must be a Pentecost before there could be the Tabernacles; hence the Lord turned this feast, in principle, into a Pentecost by the blessed proclamation, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." By the coming of the Spirit the flood-gates of grace were to be opened; the tide of God's love was to flow over a parched world; and this for the special purpose of gathering in myriads of souls destined to constitute what we have already spoken of, the one body (of which Christ is the glorified Head) formed by the baptism of the Spirit.

To refer again to Ephesians ii.; we have said that what is set forth in this passage was anterior, in its fulfilment, to what is stated by the Apostle in 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. We mean that in the latter we have a positive end arrived at in the development of God's counsels, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (verse 27); whereas, in the former, the *means* are set forth through which this was to be brought about.

If we go back to the Cross we see the basis of the

work, then we follow Christ to resurrection and to glory; and next we have the coming of the Holy Ghost. The result is that reconciliation has been effected between Jew and Gentile, who were at enmity before. The middle wall of partition, so carefully kept up hitherto, was now broken down, and there was made, of twain, one new man, so making peace.

This is the great triumph of the gospel, which now goes out to *all* and embraces the whole world. Well might the Apostle say to the Assembly in Ephesus, "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (chap. ii. 8). This divine grace to them, strangers as they once were to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, will, we are bold to say, fill the whole universe with wonder and worship in the coming ages when God displays the great masterpiece of His grace towards sinners (ver. 7).

Observe that the Apostle makes a distinction between "we" and "ye" in verses 2 and 3 of chapter ii., and then, in the summing up of verse 7, he uses the word "us." This makes clear the meaning of the expression "of twain"—"for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace."

We would also draw the reader's special attention to the expression here, "in one body"; for, with its glorified Head, the Assembly is set forth as the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. This constitutes what is called "one new man." In a note in our last paper, we drew attention to Genesis v., as setting forth this in type.

In conclusion we will refer once more to 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13; also verses 14-27. The Apostle's desire—if we rightly interpret it—was to press upon this assembly (and we may say all saints) the practical recognition and carrying out of the blessed truth that all believers are baptised into one body. But it is evident from what is stated in the previous part of the epistle, that their

moral state was not such as should mark those who were thus united to Christ.

There is, indeed, also much need for serious consideration on our part as we view the state of the people of God in our own day. What the Apostle dwells upon in the verses referred to may help us, in spite of the present confusion in the church of God, to have our consciences exercised about these things, considering how grace has made us, by the baptism of the Spirit, "members one of another" (Rom. xii. 5). It should also be remembered that this epistle was written, not only to the saints at Corinth, but to "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours," and it therefore embraces all Christians.

### Christianity and Christendom.

**W**HEN speaking to an educated and cultured Indian recently, I sought to prove to him that the Christian had a revelation from God, received direct, in and through His own Son, and I quoted Hebrews i. 2, "God hath in these last days spoken unto us in His Son," etc. I tried to show him how exactly the Old Testament Scriptures were fulfilled in the prophecies concerning Christ, as in Psalm xxii. and Isaiah liii.

He admitted that the proofs of Christianity were very clear, but his difficulty did not lie there. Then he proceeded to put the following proposition before me:—"You call me a heathen, yet I try to please God by being honest and truthful, and I lead a clean life. But I see those whom you call Christian, who are not honest or truthful and they live bad lives. Which would you choose?"

I replied, "Certainly you; but you are labouring under a fatal mistake. You do not know the difference between Christianity and Christendom. The Christian, in the true sense of that word, is one who has accepted

the Scriptures as the Word of God, acknowledged the righteousness of God in condemning the sinner, and has believed that when Christ, the Son of God, died on the Cross, He met the need of all who believe on Him as their Saviour. For the Gospel declares that Christ has made a full atonement, and that God pardons the believing sinner, cleansing him from all his sins and giving him the Holy Spirit as the power to overcome sin.

“On the other hand, Christendom is composed of those who never had this experience, but who have been brought up as nominal Christians, baptised as infants, confirmed, and so are called Christians. Such persons know nothing of what it means to be ‘born again,’ to be children of God by faith in Christ, and are not indwelt by the Holy Spirit.”

My Indian friend undoubtedly got new light on the subject of Christianity—real and professing—and he admitted it. But strange to say there lived in the same house with him a man who had the name of Christian and was brought up as such, but who made no secret of his unbelief in the Scriptures as the Word of God. I need not go further into this person’s views; but what was striking about them was, that he, too, pointed to the inconsistent lives of professing Christians.

This man had attended Sunday School in his youth, but I found that he was as ignorant as the Indian as to what conversion really meant. He, too, claimed—and I have no doubt justly—to be living a good life; I know him to be a good husband and a trustworthy man. Both he and the Indian are types of a very numerous class; but while the Indian remains attached to his hereditary religion, the other goes “nowhere.” Alas! there are thousands in England who do the same.

People such as this are largely the product of our dead churches. They are a discerning class, who know quite enough to see that those churches which have a lifeless profession—*religion* without Christ as a living

Saviour—are responsible for turning out professors who are not possessors of everlasting life and salvation. The marvel is how any who have the true light of the gospel in their souls can remain in communion with such.

But the lesson above all others which I learnt from my dealings with these two men was, how careful we who are saved by grace should be, seeing that so many do not read the Bible, but judge of Christianity by what they see in the lives of professing Christians. And *we* who have an open Bible in our hands!—are *we* not deeply responsible to live out in our everyday life the blessed truths God has given us in His word, so as to commend to those around us the Christ who has done so much for us?

E. H. W.

## The Coming and Day of the Lord.

**I**N order to understand and rightly divide the Word of truth we must clearly distinguish between the “Coming of the Lord,” as we have it in 1 Thess. iv. 15-18, and the “Day of the Lord” in chapter v. 2. The first refers to the Lord’s coming for His redeemed ones, as we have already seen; the second refers to that which will take place *after* they have been taken to be with Him in glory.

The “Day of the Lord” is always a day of judgment, and marked out, in the New Testament, not as a day of 24 hours, but as a *period*, commencing after His coming for His own, and embracing prophetic events up to the Lord’s appearing in glory. It is in contrast to “man’s day” (1 Cor. iv. 3), that is, the present period of time, when God is allowing man to have his own way, to a large extent at any rate.

This Day is, in the Old Testament, a day of wrath and judgment; whether on Israel or the nations. After having been announced by the prophets, it had a *partial* accomplishment in the past—an accomplishment

which is but a foreshadowing of prophetic judgments yet to come. It will be the time of "Jacob's trouble" to those who, nevertheless, will be delivered out of it in order to enjoy the blessings of the millennial kingdom. (See Acts ii. 20; xvii. 31; 1 Cor. iii. 13; vi. 2; 2 Cor. i. 14; 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Thess. ii. 2; Heb. x. 25, 27; Rev. vi. 17; xvi. 14. Also Isaiah xiii. 6, 9; Ezek. xxx. 3; Jer. xlvi. 10; Joel i. 15; ii. 1, 11, 31; Amos v. 18, 20; Obad. 15; Zeph. i. 7, 14; Mal. iii. 2; iv. 5).

The "Day of Christ," as well as another term, "that day" has an extended signification. It begins when, at the coming of the Lord, of which the "Morning Star" is the symbol, all the redeemed are translated into heavenly glory. The "Morning star" is, indeed, the dawn of that day (see 2 Peter i. 19). It goes on to the "judgment seat of Christ," that is, to the time of the giving of the rewards (2 Cor. v.). This day ends after the "marriage of the Lamb," by the public manifestation of the Lord with His saints. It is at His appearing and His Kingdom that the responsible path of the servant will be reviewed and each shall receive his reward, or suffer loss, as the case may be (1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. i. 12, 18; iv. 8).

The "Day of God," in 2 Peter iii. 12, is the day which will follow the dissolution of the heavens and the earth, and the judgment of the dead before the great white throne. This will be the "eternal day" of the new heavens and the new earth, where righteousness will dwell, the wicked having been cast into the lake of fire (Rev. xx.).

As to this, it has been said:—"So solemn a dissolution of all that the flesh rests upon should lead us so to walk as to be found of the Lord, when He comes to introduce that day, in peace and blameless; accounting that the apparent delay is only the Lord's grace, exercised for the salvation of souls."

## Questions and Answers.

*A correspondent in New Zealand, referring to Hebrews ii. 6-10, remarks that some find a difficulty as to these verses, in which Christ is said to have been made a little lower than the angels, etc.; also as to the words "made perfect through suffering." The question is asked, Was He not always perfect?*

**T**HE quotation is from Psalm viii. When rejected as Messiah—the character in which Psalm ii. presents Him—the Lord takes the wider title of Son of man, according to Psalm viii. The first five verses of this Psalm have been already fulfilled, but the remaining portion awaits the coming kingdom. In order to associate others with Himself in that kingdom, Christ must die (John xii. 24). And so, in death He has taken a place a little lower than the angels; and has been crowned with glory and honour. But we do not yet see all things subjected to Him, as will be the case in the millennial day.

As to the second part of the question—verse 10 of Heb. ii. tells us that it "became Him" (God), in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. God's glory and majesty must be vindicated with regard to sin, so Christ must *suffer* ere the "many sons" could be brought to glory. Needless to say, He was always perfect in Himself, but to be a perfect Saviour He must go through all that the claims of God required with regard to sin. And as the "Leader of our salvation" He has gone through all that was needed. But, whilst *we* "taste death" because of sin; *He* tasted death "by the grace of God" for our sins.

Let us just refer to those wonderful words of the Lord in John xiii., spoken when Judas had gone out to betray Him, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him,

God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." Here the Lord, relieved from the presence of Judas, surveys the whole extent of His work as that which brought infinite glory to God; so much so that God, in righteousness, responds to it at once and glorifies Him "straightway," i.e., without waiting for the glory of the coming kingdom. Thus, so far from His stoop to the death of the Cross in any way derogating from His glory, it was that in which the Son of man was glorified, and in which every requirement of God's holy nature was glorified also.

### Some Day.

**S**OME DAY!—and oh, 'twill not be long  
 E'er we shall join the blood-bought throng,  
 Then we shall see our Saviour's face,  
 And sing of His redeeming grace.

Some day!—beyond life's troubled sea,  
 On heaven's bright shore our rest shall be,  
 Earth's shadows past and all made plain;  
 Why sorrow came, why loss and pain.

Some day!—we'll hear that heavenly voice,  
 Which makes us even here rejoice,  
 And feel the touch of His own hand,  
 And see how wise the way He planned.

Some day!—responsive may we be  
 To love divine, so great, so free.  
 We long to meet Him in the air,  
 His glory, then, above, to share.

Some day!—in heaven's bright glory-land,  
 Led by His loving, gracious hand,  
 We'll drink those streams of endless joy,  
 'Midst scenes of bliss without alloy.

A. E. N.

## Religion Without Christ.

SOME articles on "My Religion" appeared recently in a London daily paper, written by well-known literary authors. These have attracted a good deal of public attention. Our only reason for referring to the matter is because they give us some idea of the religious beliefs (or perhaps we should say unbelief) of many of the men and women of the world to-day.

Without going into detail, it might be said of most of them that God—the "only true God"—is about as much "the unknown God" to them as to the idolatrous worshippers at Athens in the days of Paul. Some of them give a kind of benevolent tolerance to Christianity, but for the most part the question of the existence of God and of the soul and its destiny has not any vital importance, but is a question of as little real concern as the latest speculation put forward by philosophers or scientists.

As to the Bible being a revelation from God, they do not believe it. Apparently, if they read it at all, it is not to see what God has to say to them in it, nor is it to meet the need of an awakened conscience; but because some knowledge of it is necessary for their literary work; or for some similar reason.

But the rapid progress of the apostasy in Christendom is a very solemn and serious subject for us to contemplate, and it is well to remember the word of the Apostle Paul to Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; *continue* in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." It will never do to say, "I believe the Bible and hold sound doctrine, I am safe." The truth is, not one of us is safe unless kept by the grace of God and in humble dependence on Him.

John, the Apostle, was inspired of God to warn even the youngest—the babes in Christ—as well as other believers, against the "antichrists" of the "last hour"

and the "spirit of error" which was even then at work. Peter warns against the "scoffers" of the last days, those materialists who would say, "Where is the promise of His coming?"; everything is going on the same, and will, *ad infinitum*! Paul writes in his last epistle concerning evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived; and Jude warns as to the "mockers" of the last time, walking after their own ungodly lusts, pretending to particular holiness, but misled and misleading others.

Our safeguard is—to be kept in heart and soul near our Lord Jesus, in communion with Him and in separation from the world. And the more we are familiar with the good Shepherd's voice, the more we will be able to detect the voice of strangers, and to shun their evil doctrines and evil ways as we would poison.

It is by the Word of God that we can build up ourselves on our most holy faith, and, praying in the Holy Ghost, we can have the love of God shining down into our souls every day. So that the Christian's place is a very blessed one, even now at the close of the dispensation. That place is, to walk in humility and dependence on God, witnessing for Christ and the truth; deeply conscious of our need of daily strength from above. But, assured of ultimate victory, he can say, "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy . . . be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

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IN whatever aspect we view man, all is uncertain if man's mind be the measure of truth. Faith has certainty, because it bows to Him who cannot lie, and receives His word as truth itself.

## The Coming of the Lord.

**D**O you and I live in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ's coming *at any moment*? Is that the hope that sheds light upon everything? It is of immense practical comfort, as well as power. If it were always the present object of the heart, how would it be possible to be overcome by the trials and difficulties we have to pass through?

He may be coming to-night, or we might have years of trial or of persecution in the wilderness, but in the thought of His coming to fetch us, and His hand under us, can we not forget this body of humiliation and these trials until then? If I can calculate on His love all the way, I shall be able to meet every difficulty.

The love that makes Him come forth to fetch me will shine forth *then*, and I can count on its shining forth *to-day*. Does anyone say, "I know that Christ will come at last and fetch me, but He forgets me in my difficulties *now*." Any *not* walking with Him might say it. Could *we*?

The grand expression of His love is that He will come *Himself* to fetch us, to bring us to His Father's house. No other *to-morrow* is given us by the Spirit but Christ in heaven coming to take us up there.

G.V.W.

## Questions Answered by the Lord Jesus.

**D**URING the life of Christ on earth, varied as it was, there never was a question asked by man, expressed or implied, which He was not competent to answer. There were, however, at least four occasions on which He, as "the Wisdom of God," refused to reply to what the questioners had no right to ask, viz., in the temple, "By what authority doest Thou these things?"; next before the high priest, who asked Him before His false accusers, "Answerest Thou nothing?"; and also before Pilate and Herod respectively, but "He held His peace."

And more than that, there never was a divine requirement, whether of holiness, justice or righteousness, which the Lord Jesus was not equal to meet in every detail. He was indeed the One of whom it could be said, "God provided Himself a Lamb for a burnt offering," to "take away the sin of the world." That spotless Lamb is His fullest provision for guilty sinners, and for the faults and failures of His people. Jesus answered for all that believe; and His answer was commensurate with all that was required for the glory of God, so that no trait of the divine character was sacrificed; while our eternal salvation was secured. Praise the Lord!

Sin is a heinous thing before God, and its results must necessarily be eternal, if no remedy be found. Man has never been able, and never will be able, to supply that remedy. Our own righteousness—the best we can do—is "as filthy rags" (Is. lxiv. 6) to cover us in God's sight, for "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity" (Hab. i, 13). If He had not interposed in grace the entire race of mankind would have been lost for ever. But (praise His name!) God *has* undertaken for us in the Person of His Son. We were so vile that none could approach and stand in the presence of divine holiness; but Jesus answered for us, and vindicated that holiness by taking a position on the cross, in which "He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us" (2 Cor. v. 21), and consequently was forsaken of God during those dark three hours of unfathomable sufferings as our Substitute. Thus He drank the cup of wrath, and answered the requirements of the holiness of God.

But not only so, the justice of His law had to be maintained, for it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. iii. 10). Which of us could have stood at the bar of divine justice and

pleaded "Not guilty?" Jesus was the only one that ever perfectly fulfilled the law; but His perfect obedience in doing so is not that which is reckoned to us, but rather the merits of His atoning sufferings and death upon the tree. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," etc. (Gal. iii. 13). And on that cross "our old man," which had been under probation for 4,000 years, "was crucified with Him."

How completely Christ has thus answered for us before the thrice holy God! Moreover, all the demands of divine righteousness were met at the cross. It was a righteous thing with God to demand the death of the sinner; and if we, who have all sinned, had died in our sins, judgment would have followed, even "the second death." Eternal separation from God would have been our portion. But the death of "the Just One for the unjust ones" has fully settled our account with a righteous God.

The vicarious sufferings of Christ on the cross were sufficient to put away the sins of *all* believers, including those of Old Testament saints (Isa. xlv. 22; liii. 6). Also Romans iii. 25, 26, shows us God's righteousness in "passing by" the sins of those who had gone before, in view of the cross. So also we read in Hebrews, "their sins and iniquities I will remember no more" (chap. viii. 12; ix. 15). There is a remarkable prophecy in Jer. l. 20, where we are told that, in a future day, Israel's iniquity shall be sought for, and there shall be none, etc.

If we search the Old Testament we shall find that Israel's sins are recorded there in all their dark colours; but in the day of restoration "they shall not be found." The good works of *saints* of old are highly spoken of in the New Testament; but not their sins. Now why so remarkable a fact? Is it not because now, at the close of the ages, Christ has been manifested to "put away sin" by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. ix. 26)?

It is true there are many persons in the Old Testament whose sins *are* spoken of in the New, as in the case of those who "fell in the wilderness" (1 Cor. x; Heb. iii; iv. etc.); but the question whether any of these were real believers is not raised.\*

The fact that the sins of God's *children only* are not remembered is a very striking internal proof of the divine origin of the Bible. There is, however, one exception, viz., the sin of Adam and Eve. But there the wisdom of God is manifest; for it was necessary to state in the New Testament how sin came into the world, and then to bring into prominence its remedy. "Modernism," with all its professed discoveries, is hereby challenged to disprove what has just been stated about the Bible.

Now which of us, or of the Old Testament saints, ever received the unqualified approval of God the Father, like that which He gave Jesus, when "the heavens were opened unto Him," and a voice from Heaven said, "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I have found My delight?" Everyone but Him has failed. Moses, "the meekest of all men," in anger, *struck* the rock when he had been commanded to *speak*

\*As to the full forgiveness of sins, it has been said that, "Under the Old Testament, among the Jews, this full forgiveness was not known; they got a kind of absolution for each sin they committed; but they were shut out from entering into the holiest by the veil, which hung before the place where God revealed Himself. Thus in Heb. ix. it is written, "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing."

But we learn that, when the real work, of which all these things were the figures, was accomplished in the death of the Saviour, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom (Matt. xxvii. 51), and we are exhorted (Heb. x. 19), in virtue of the work of Christ and the remission of our sins . . . to draw near. That work, done once for all . . . is the ground on which we have eternal redemption and full forgiveness, so that God remembers our sins and iniquities no more . . . "

(J.N.D.)

to it; and thus he spoiled the type and was not allowed to bring Israel into the land of promise. David, who at one time was "a man after God's own heart," when he ought to have been leading his army against the enemies of the Lord, sent Joab instead, while he himself stayed at home, and fell into open sin. And the good king Josiah, too, though he brought about a marvellous reformation in the nation, and kept such a Passover as had no precedent "from the days of Samuel the prophet," yet "after all this" (2 Chron. xxxv. 20) followed his own will in going to war when he should have stayed at home, and was killed in the battle.

How sad! Yet in the New Testament there is not a word of it mentioned. But Jesus only ever answered all the desires, and perfectly did the will of God. In the Old Testament we see Him, in figure and in type, answering not only to all that was needed for our salvation, but also to all that was requisite for the glory of God. He could say to His Father at the close of His pathway here: "I have glorified Thee on the earth."

It is interesting to note that the altar of burnt offering was twice the height (3 cubits) of the ark ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  cubits) which had the mercy seat at the top; and the grate in the altar was *in the middle* of it (Ex. xxvii. 1, 4, 5), where the intense heat of the fire of judgment was. Thus Jesus was equal to all the heat of the fire of God's judgment of sin; and His own Person gave value to the sacrifice He made when "He offered up Himself without spot to God." The table of shewbread, which bore the twelve loaves, representing before God the unity of the twelve tribes, was the same height as the ark ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  cubits, Exod. xxv. 23). There, too, in figure, we see Jesus, equal to the carrying of all His people right through the wilderness (Is. xlv. 3; lxiii 9). See Him personally shedding tears over them, when on earth, as He beheld their beloved city, Jerusalem. He can, and does care for us His heavenly people just in the same

way now. Divisions lamentably affect the outward fellowship of saints, but cannot touch their unity as God sees them in Christ.

“ Here, O my soul, thy trust repose :  
 If Jesus is for ever mine,  
 Not death itself, that last of foes, .  
 Can break a union so divine.”

Finally, in the meat offering, the frankincense was wholly offered to Jehovah (Lev. ii. 2), and it typified the perfections of Jesus as presented to His Father day by day. But was there ever a time when His moral glory shone brighter in the eyes of God than when He saw Him wholly surrendering Himself to do His will, which involved the drinking for us of the cup of wrath on the cross?

Precious Jesus! having answered in His atoning death for all that was required for the glory of God and the salvation of man, He is worthy of every crown that decks His brow. “All the depths of His heart’s sorrow are told in answering glory now.” He ever was, is, and ever will be, the transcript of the mind of God. Let us all remember the word, “We all looking on the glory of the Lord,” so that we may be morally “changed into the same image.” And let the unsaved reader repent, and own Jesus as the Son of God, who died for him, and he will realise that Jesus answered for him. What will it be to see Him, and to be with Him for ever!

“Worthy, O Son of man, art Thou  
 Of every crown that decks Thy brow ;  
 Worthy art Thou to be adored  
 And owned as universal Lord ;  
 O, hasten that long-promised day,  
 When all shall own Thy rightful sway.”  
 J.R. (Canada).

## **"The Assembly of the Living God."—6.**

**"And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death" (Gen. xxiv. 67).**

**"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 25, 26, 27).**

**I**T is blessed for those who love the Lord Jesus to know that He now finds His consolation in the Assembly which is His body, after all the sorrow He experienced through the unbelief and rejection at the hands of His earthly people, Israel, whom He loved, and still loves, though the vail is upon their hearts. The Shekinah, that sign of His blessed presence in their midst, has now departed from its earthly temple to its heavenly home. Yet not because He divorced himself from them, but they from Him; for it was with a wounded spirit that He left His "Father's house" which they had so desecrated (John ii. 16) until that time when they shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. xxiii. 39).

We have been struck with Luke's account of what transpired at His last descent from the Mount of Olives into the beloved city, for there is something not only historic, but pathetic in the record of it. "And when He was come near He beheld the city and wept over it, saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but know they are hid from thine eyes." (Luke xix. 41-42).

It is another incident in which we find the Lord's heart giving vent to a sorrow which was seemingly quite out of harmony with the spirit of those around Him,—a lonesome sorrow, that none but He could enter into. It reminds us very much of Isaac weeping over the death of his mother, but is of a far deeper kind. His divorcement from the beloved city, and the people on whom His heart was set, was to Him a source of peculiar and poignant grief far deeper than would be found in a son at the death of the mother who bore him;

Yet there are kindred thoughts in the history of Isaac of old, and which answer to that of the beloved "Son of the Father" in His own deeper experiences.

We would here recall three incidents in the history of Abraham, the "friend of God" and Isaac's father, which find their counterpart (in figure) in what is unfolded concerning Christ and the Assembly. Three chapters in Genesis, namely, xxii., xxiii. and xxiv., bring before us these three, and they form distinct episodes in the closing up of the history of this man of faith, and in which Isaac plays a prominent part. We, who are also called into this friendship, this intercourse with God, in the person of the Son (John xv. 15) may now learn the deep thoughts which were engaging (we doubt not) the mind of the God of counsel, in the ordering of these events in the life of His servant and friend. Chapter xxii. sets before us in figure the great fundamental fact on which God's blessed counsels are developed and fulfilled, namely, the cross and the resurrection of Christ (see Heb. xi., 17, 18, 19).

We pause here to notice some of the particulars. First, the appeal of God to the father of the son. "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (ver. 2). Who but God, the giver of the son, could make such a claim? Who but a quiescent father, fully trusting the God who claimed the son for sacrifice, with all the deep emotions of a father's heart, could, in faith, respond to it? It is a kind of rehearsal, if we might use the word, of John iii. 16, and onward. Who, again, could measure the joy of the father's heart when he received back the beloved son to his bosom? "And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac" (chap. xxv. 5).

This is a true picture of how God, "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand" (John iii. 35). What a fund of wealth is here found, to the spiritual mind, in the unfolding of these secrets of God's

counsels ! Singularly appropriate, too, in all this ordeal, was the submission of Isaac to the father's will. No resistance to the binding, the laying upon the wood, the fire near, to the stretching out of the hand to take the knife, but all is in beautiful harmony, and yet how far short it falls of the Lord Jesus, the great anti-type ! In Isaac's case there was no Gethsemane, no "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee ; take away this cup from me." (Mark xiv. 36). No "sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke xxii. 44) ; no action such as this :—"Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth" (John xviii. 4), and many other details which we must leave the reader to discover and to meditate over for himself.

Consequent upon this act of obedience of Abraham, God confirms and enlarges the promises to him and his seed (compare verses 16, 17 ; chap. xv. 5). Let us take special note of ver. 18, for we may say that it stands alone in the group of promises. "And in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." Whatever may be the extension of this promise through the Lord Jesus, the seed of Abraham, to the nations of a *future* dispensation, the Spirit draws attention to it as a confirmation of the blessings that are ours, through grace, in *the present era* (compare Gal. iii. 14, 15, 16 ; Eph. iii. 6). Following the above account, Genesis, chap. xxii. concludes with the genealogy of the one who turned out to be Isaac's bride and of whose kindred he was.

In Genesis xxiii. we have the death and burial of Sarah, the mother of the son ; a kind of parenthesis, portending the breaking off, for the time being, of Christ's link with the people from whom, according to the flesh, He sprang, and to whom the covenants of promise belong (John ii. 4). Chapter xxiv. forms a link with Chapter xxii. and contains, in its detail, the call and intermediate gracing of the bride ready for the gaze of the bridegroom. Their eyes meet at the close

of the chapter (verses 63, 64) and the rapturous moment of their union is reached. "So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." If our readers will view the events here recorded as foreshadowing the blessed work presented in our citation from Eph. v. 25, 26, 27, they will discover the wonderful wisdom, love, and triumph of God's grace; the working out of His counsel concerning Christ, as well as the operations of Christ's love to the assembly as mentioned at the beginning, and the character of which but few of us really understand. In our next, D.V., we shall take up the Assembly's hope and destiny.

H.L.

## Sonship and Service.

"Let my son go, that he may serve me" (Ex. iv. 23).

**G**OD, the "Parent of good," could not be served by slaves. It would be utterly incompatible with His character and the name by which He was henceforth to be known by Israel. Overworked brick-makers, goaded to their utmost efforts by overseers' whips, might gratify the spleen of a Pharaoh who was verily a type of Satan, prince of this world. But a service of fear from debased slaves was impossible in connection with the Lord, who is "very pitiful and of tender mercy."

Moses had been for the last forty years in God's training school at the back of the desert. He is now sent back to Egypt with the short, sharp, incisive message to its great king: "Let my son go that he may serve me." Moses was at first unwilling to undertake this most honourable service, pleading that he was not eloquent. But it was not eloquence that God wanted. Eloquence would have dulled the keen edge of this curt unmistakable demand from which he was to make the tyrannical monarch. And yet, in the message itself, despite its brevity, was a wealth of eloquence beyond the flow of words; for was it not the blessed insistence of parental love and care divine? If

we turn to Hosea xi. 1, we get to the springhead and see the reason of Jehovah's intervention. There we read, "When Israel was a child then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt." Flash the light of this verse upon the curt, yet comprehensive claim, and it stands out fully revealed as a great, a gracious, and a glorious demand.

A new relationship was to begin; for God would bring the children of Israel out from Egypt and establish them in the "good" and "pleasant" land He had chosen for them. They were to be His own peculiar people, separate from other nations, to whom He would be known by a name significant of the relationship. This name bearing "the impress of eternity," is at the same time associated with His purposes concerning Israel, and brings the guarantee of what He is to the fulfilment of the promises made to the fathers.

The message was delivered, but only raised a spirit of fierce opposition in Pharaoh. He would not let the children of Israel go, and in defiance increased their burdens. They complain that they are treated worse than ever; and even Moses speaks to God reproachfully. But God shows the reality of the relationship indicated in His name, Jehovah, by setting out His purpose more fully to deliver His people from Egyptian bondage. Pharaoh, too, great as he may be in his own eyes, must learn that any opposition to it will be swept aside as chaff before the wind. Jehovah will accomplish His purpose in His own wondrous way. He will not only redeem Israel by the blood of the passover lamb, but render self-ruinous the attempt to hinder his emancipation. He will make the waters of the Red Sea stand up like a wall on either side for Israel to pass over, then fall upon Pharaoh's hosts to overwhelm them in utter destruction.

The deliverance was complete and final—wives, children, cattle, spoil—all were saved. A song of triumph by 600,000 voices rises from the other side of the Red Sea, the women answering in exultant chorus.

The called and redeemed people address their song to Jehovah, ascribing all the glory to Him.

Do we thus exult in our great Redeemer?

But Israel's experiences shadow forth "better things."

"Christ, our passover, sacrificed for us" so completely met the question of our sins and evil nature; so glorified God that one blessed result is our association with Him in His resurrection life and relationship with His Father and God. It was as a people that Jehovah could speak of Israel as "My Son." But Christ, *the* Son, having declared the Father's name, it is "to as many as receive Him" that is given "the right to become the children of God, to them that believe in His name." Such "have not received a spirit of bondage again to fear; but have received the spirit of adoption (sonship) whereby they cry, Abba, Father." The repentant prodigal thought to say, "make me as one of thy hired servants," but he never said it. The thought could not subsist in the presence of the Father who ran to meet him and covered him with kisses. Rather does the exclamation arise from enraptured hearts. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God."

After the deliverance Moses sang: "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation." What confidence as to future entrance into Canaan and guidance by the way! Redeemed Israel had to cross the wilderness, but they were led "like a flock by Moses and Aaron" guided by the pillar of cloud and fire.

Christians are delivered from the "power of darkness" and are "made free from the law of sin and death." As sons they are "led by the Spirit of God," "serve the living and true God and wait for His Son from heaven."

Of surpassing interest is the application in Matthew ii. to Christ Himself of the verse in Hosea. He, then, is the true Son called out of Egypt; just as in another figure, He was the true Vine taking the place of failing Israel. And what a contrast to Israel's history we see in the Son's mission. Israel began to murmur after the first journey from the Red Sea. His whole course was one of murmuring, idolatry, and rebellion, culminating in the rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah, with the cry, "We have no king but Cæsar." The entire pathway of the true Son called out of Egypt was one of dependence, obedience and devotedness.

How fittingly is the prophetic invitation to "behold my servant whom I have chosen; my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased," recalled in Matthew xii. on its blessed fulfilment! And how privileged are we thus to contemplate the perfect service of the Son as a voluntary Servant beloved of the Father! In a day of unfaithfulness and independence may it stir the hearts of all who, in wondrous grace, have been set in the liberty of sons and are sanctified to the obedience of Christ, the Beloved Son. May it lead to more of that devotedness which delights in the Father's will whatever sacrifice it may entail.

The many sons are being brought to glory; great is their responsibility and privilege as to their service. Heb. xii. 28; Rev. i. 1; John xii. 26. A. J. H.

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INFIDELS never give you one certain truth. The Word of God gives you many certain truths. It makes you doubt of nothing. It has no need; for it possesses the truth, and gives what is positive. This is an immense difference; it stamps both morally. When infidel minds speak of a love of truth, they never, that I can see, go farther than Pilate: What is truth? It is never a holding fast truth they have got, but a casting doubt on what others believe; and, professing to search for it, always to be ready to receive it, I suppose, because they have never got it. J. N. D.

# I Come Quickly.

Tune S.S. 179 (C.C. 260).

He has said "I'm coming quickly"—  
 And we long to see our Lord;  
 From His Father's throne descending,  
 By His own, alone adored:  
 And as myriads gather round Him,  
 Called to meet Him in the air,  
 To the Father's house He'll bring them,  
 His blest home above to share.

Yet how long He too has waited!  
 For that blissful day to come,  
 To possess His blood-bought people  
 And to share with them His home;  
 In that cloudless land of glory,  
 We shall there behold Him shine,  
 As we ever learn the fulness  
 Of His grace and love divine.

With what songs of praise ascending  
 We shall fill those courts above,  
 As we then behold His glory  
 In a scene where all is love;  
 O what joy to see Him honoured!  
 As all heaven shall acclaim  
 That the Crucified is worthy  
 Of the crown, the throne, the Name.

Let us sing then, "Come, Lord Jesus,"  
 We have learnt to know Thy grace;  
 And Thy bride is waiting, watching,  
 Still to see her Bridegroom's face.  
 Then when clothed in robes so spotless—  
 All the gift of perfect love—  
 We shall praise—and praise for ever!  
 In the glory-land above.

And how loud will be the echoes,  
 As each voice takes up the strain;  
 And the chorus swells still louder  
 To the Coming One, to reign.  
 Then with angel voices blending  
 And creation joining in,  
 Far and wide the praise ascending  
 To the Saviour, Lord, and King.

\* \* \*

## Revival.

**M**AY we not well take up the words of the Prophet Habakkuk and say, "O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy"?

All sincere Christians who enter into the mind of the Lord concerning His interests here must desire this revival; first, in order that Christ may be glorified and that souls may be gathered out of this dark and evil world as trophies of His grace and witnesses of His saving power, and that the number of His elect may be completed and His coming hastened.

Secondly, that sinners may be saved from the wrath to come—that awful eternity of banishment from God, which will be the portion of the Christ-rejecter.

But a revival of the blessed work of the gospel going out to sinners as well as spiritual blessing to believers, must commence from within. It must begin with the people of God, and for this a right state of heart and soul is needed. Moreover, it must be begun and carried on in a spirit of prayer, and there must be real energy and devotedness in service.

Let us, then, turn afresh to our gracious God and plead for these blessings. If, indeed, the love of Christ burned brightly in our souls as it ought to do, we should be constrained to make that love known to others. It is true that there is very much indifference around and a godless spirit of infidelity, but God is above all these things, and "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."

We may well turn to the encouraging word of the Lord to Philadelphia, "I have set before thee an open door," and if He opens the door none can shut it. Will each reader of this magazine spend a little time each day in prayer that God will revive His work; first in the hearts of His people and then in the going out of blessing to sinners around? Eternity alone can tell what the results might be, if a spirit of earnest believing prayer and effort were found increasingly amongst God's beloved people in this our day.

## The Assembly of the Living God.—7.

### Its Hope and Destiny.

**"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened : that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. i. 18).**

**"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Chap. iii. 20—21).**

**T**HERE is no limit to what is infinite. But when He who is infinite gives a revelation He gives it in a form that may be comprehended by those to whom it is given, so that they may be able to enter into His great and infinite thoughts. We do well to bear in mind that the apostle who wrote this epistle to the Ephesians had received instructions while in the third heavens (2 Cor. xii. 2). It was there that he saw "visions" and obtained "revelations" including possibly those concerning Christ and the assembly, also the infinite counsel that God had in view to unfold and develop in this great mystery as the central object of all His thoughts. No language was capable fully to convey what he saw and heard, but his pen, guided by the Spirit of God, has given us what we will call a temperate survey in order that we may know, for present joy and worship, the wonderful part we possess even now by faith, in these counsels in which is bound up our hope and our destiny.

Now the centre of all revelation is Christ (see Luke xxiv. 25-27). He took manhood, as the Son of the Father's bosom, in order that in and by Him might be worked out the purpose of the Godhead which was hidden from the dispensations of the past. This brings us to what is termed *the dispensation* of the fulness of times : "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth ; even in Him ; in whom also we have obtained an

inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." (Eph. i. 10, 11.) In all these counsels concerning Christ and the assembly we notice an important feature, viz., that *God's will is paramount*. Three times it is mentioned in this chapter alone: "The good pleasure of His will"; "the mystery of His will" and "the counsel of His own will" (vv. 5, 9, 11). All this incomparably precious display of blessing is God's crowning act and is associated with the "hope of His calling," in which all the redeemed have their destined part. The Lord Jesus, addressing His Father concerning His own, says in John xvii. 22: "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." Thus they receive the glory of Him in whom everything in heaven and on earth is to be headed up. What a hope! What a portion!

Further, God has His own portion in the realization of these counsels, "that ye may know what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Concerning even God's earthly people Moses said, "For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance" (Deut. xxxii. 9), how much greater will be His delight and glory in the consummation of His counsels concerning Christ and the assembly when a wondering, worshipping universe becomes the sphere of its display! (Rev. xxi. to end). The result being seen in the kingdom and universal dominion of our Lord Jesus Christ as Son of man set over the works of God's hand (Heb. ii. 7); and the redeemed, translated to heaven, associated with Him in its administration (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3). How the very thought of this should disengage our hearts from this world and set us above its corrupt and entammelling influences!

It will be noticed that the first scripture cited above is from Paul's first prayer in the Ephesian epistle. In it he refers to God as "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the *Father of Glory*." In the amazing display of glory

that awaits the fulfilment of these counsels, God will be known in this character (see also Matt. xiii. 43). Our second citation is culled from the apostle's prayer in chap. iii., in which a very different note is to be observed. God is there addressed as "the *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The riches of His glory are also brought into view but more especially in what we would call a moral relationship. In the *first* the power of God is seen in raising Christ from the dead and seating Him far above all principality, and power; and, in purpose, seating the saints also in the heavenlies (chap. ii. 6-7)—all to be consummated in unprecedented display in glory. What we find in the *second* prayer is the result of His power working *in* us now, producing what answers to God's moral nature and to His title as *Father*, in which Christ is set forth supremely in His own relationship as *Son*.

Space will not admit of our noticing this prayer in detail, but we would draw special attention to the end desired by the apostle, "That ye might be filled with (unto) all the fulness of God" (ver. 19). In this—God's own fulness—the redeemed find their own special portion and all revealed and subsisting in God, once manifested in flesh (Col. ii. 9-10). It is what God is as light and love. Again, it has pleased God to constitute the assembly the dwelling place of His glory in eternity, for this is how we understand the last verse in this remarkable petition.

A few closing references only remain. In Revelation xix. 6-7, John saw in vision that which is yet future, when Christ will present the assembly to Himself, a glorious assembly, in the unspotted, unwrinkled garb, in which it is said of her, "His wife hath made herself ready." This is the fruit of His loving service towards her during her chequered history in the world—"the washing of water by the word."

The One who brought Eve to Adam now presents the assembly to Himself. We take it that this gives another proof, among many, of His Deity. In Rev. xxi. 9-27, the angel gives John the description of the bride, the Lamb's wife, exhibited in glory in the form of a city. The particulars of the city suggest that its constitution is that of an administrative assembly in association with her heavenly bridegroom (Chap. iii. 21; also ii. 26, 27). We cannot here go into these particulars, but the various details seem to convey the thought that her function is that of reflecting heaven's glory and equity in the dispensing of His judgments: the city in its formation being a perfect cube (ver. 16), the centre of all being God and the Lamb.

Then, afterwards, the bride is finally seen in her perennial magnificence as God's tabernacle, dwelling in the midst of men in the new earth. Nothing short of this would seem to be the teaching of Revelation xxi. 2-3, and Ephesians iii. 21, which we have already noticed. Thus have we God's eternal rest established—God finding, in the triumphs of His wisdom and grace, and in the fulfilment of His eternal counsels, His delights with the sons of men.

H.L.

## “Who will show us any good?”

### A Word to Seekers.

**N**O thoughtful person is satisfied with the moral or the religious state of things at the present time: and no wonder that, as it was in the days of David, “there be many that say, ‘Who will show us any good?’ ” (Ps. iv. 6).

Speaking generally, “the Church” as an organised thing, is distracted with the conflicts between Anglo-Catholicism and Modernism, and, having “forsaken the guide of her youth”—the word of God—is unable to

set her own house in order. Then to whom shall we go?

We suggest that light and leading may be found from a very old source—the advice of a wise man of some three thousand years ago, “Acquaint now thyself with Him (God) and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee” (Job xxii. 21). Eliphaz may not have understood what lesson God sought to teach Job in those very early days, but unquestionably he touches the right note in this word of advice to his deeply troubled friend, and we also must take that advice to-day if we are going to get right ourselves, or help to set others right. We must begin at home, and before we can lend a hand to put the world right, it is well to consider first how we stand ourselves. Lack of space compels us to confine ourselves here to the personal side of this question.

There is an old saying, not so well known as it deserves to be, “Wouldst thou go forth to bless, fix well the centre first, then draw the circle round.” How fitting then is the advice of the ancient wise man quoted above. “Acquaint now *thyself* with God, thereby good shall come unto thee.”

It is vain to say, as so many do, “Why does God allow this?” and “Why does not God put down that?” There is one, and perhaps it is the chief explanation of God’s non-interference with the prevailing disorders of the world—one which is but little understood—and that is, “He is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” It is the day of grace. But if God forbears with evil it does not mean that He is indifferent to sin, but it emphasises His patience towards man. He waits to be gracious, and the burden of His message to the world at large is, “Will you *accept* Christ?”

A young man once came running to the Lord Jesus and kneeling, asked the very question which exists in

every human heart or conscience, even if unexpressed, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Evidently in earnest, and an upright lovable fellow of the highest moral character, he went away unblessed, unsaved. And why? Because he was on the wrong track. The answer he received, showed the evident motive of his question: he thought it possible to *earn* eternal life, and was not by any means prepared to *receive it as a free gift* from God. This "good thing," and "to be at peace," can only come to us as the free gift of God. "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23, R.V.). Christ and Christ alone can meet the needs of both the conscience and heart,—His *blood* to make atonement for our guilt, and His *person* to satisfy our hearts. Thus only can "good" come to us.

The world has been on trial in three ways. First, man was left to himself, without law or restraint in any way; and he filled the earth with violence and corruption. For this it was swept away with a flood. Secondly, God gave man a religion—the only one He ever did, and in which He made every provision for approaching to Himself, and promised every blessing on the ground of obedience. That not only failed, but "proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin, as it is written, there is none righteous, no not one, there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. iii. 9-11). "Last of all He sent His son also" and Him they crucified. But, thank God, there is another side to this and it is simply and blessedly told out in the well-known words, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

This religion that God gave to the Israelites through Moses, is spoken of in the Bible under the general term

"The Law." The simple summary of that law is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength, and they neighbour as thyself." And the great question raised was whether man could earn righteousness and life, on the principle of obedience to this law of God. This issue has been fully tested in the Jewish people, who as a nation were given an exceptional place before God. They were put to school under Moses for 1,500 years, but turned out wholly incorrigible scholars. God, however, has not done with the Jew yet, His purposes stand for ever and fail not, whatever man may think. But that is not our present subject.

It is vain and foolish to think that we (Gentiles) can do better under this test than Israel did, yet a great number of professing Christians are wholly misled on this point, thinking that man is still under trial and that he can obtain righteousness and life by the law. What saith the scripture? "If righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. ii. 21). "What the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19).

Is my reader asking, Who will show us any good? Is he honestly seeking peace with God? Then let me beg him to look simply and prayerfully at the early chapters of the epistle to the Romans, for it is there demonstrated beyond all question that the only way of peace is to accept in faith the gift of God in Christ who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification.

There is no mystery about this way of peace and blessing, nor is there a single need of the soul that grace cannot and does not satisfy. No good thing will God withhold from them who trust Him. Does my reader seek wisdom? Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Do you seek righteousness, or thirst for holiness? Christ is made unto all who

believe "wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption." Salvation for time and eternity, for the past, the present and the future, is embraced in the one great immeasurable gift of Christ; and the marvel is that God waits on, year after year, century after century, sending forth to the world preachers of "the unsearchable riches of Christ," while the interest in the truth, and the seekers after Him seem to grow less.

But this is not to go on for ever. Be not deceived, dear reader, the day of grace is fast drawing to a close, and "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Pet. iv. 17).

T.R.

### Brief Remarks on New Birth.

**T**HE truth of new birth, of which our Lord spoke to Nicodemus, is more important and far-reaching than many suppose. It entirely overturns the whole of the ritualistic and sacramental systems, which propose to fit man for heaven by the ordinances and rituals of the Church. But man being a sinner, ruined and lost, born in sin and shapen in iniquity, as Scripture declares, cannot by any process, religious or otherwise, work himself into a state of fitness for a holy God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, be it ever so amiable or religious, and cannot be anything else. Unless a man is born again he cannot "see" or "enter" the kingdom of God.

It is striking the way in which the Lord meets Nicodemus in John iii. He does not discuss with him whether He were a teacher come from God or not, but He goes direct to the point, "*Ye must be born again.*" New birth was an absolute necessity, and this is true both for the kingdom of Messiah on earth, for which the Jews were looking, and also for the heavenly blessings brought in later. Indeed, it is true for all times.

“Born again” involves, not any mere improvement of man as he stands, but that which is radically and essentially new. The word “again,” as it stands in the A.V., interprets the meaning of the original in this place better than “from above,” which it might also mean. The reason is, because the object in view is to show that the life and nature which we get at new birth, though it be “from above,” is also something distinctly new, not any improvement or change of the old.

“Born of water and of the Spirit”—the “water” is commonly understood in Christendom to mean baptism; but it cannot be this because christian baptism had not then been instituted, and baptism is a sign of *death*—“baptised into His death”—whereas new birth is the communication of life. Baptism is *outward*; the baptised person may be a true child of God or may not, or it may be an infant: new birth, on the other hand, is *inward* and real; it is a work of God in the soul—in the heart and conscience.

Water, then, is a figure of the word of God and is often so used in Scripture (1 Peter i. 23; James i. 18; John xv. 2; Eph. v. 26., etc.).

Moreover, Nicodemus ought to have understood these things—but, we may add, of baptism he could, of course, know nothing whatever. The Psalms and Prophets had spoken about God’s purging Israel by the application of water (figuratively) in a future day. We read in Ezekiel xxxvi. 25-27, “And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols . . .” and in Psalm li. 7-10, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow” (see also Isaiah i. 16; Jer. iv. 14, etc.).

As we have said, new birth was needed for the earthly kingdom as well as for the heavenly, so that Nicodemus should have known about these things. But what was it that stood in the way? It was want of faith. Twice the Lord here uses the word “believe”—“If ye believe

not . . . how shall ye believe?" New birth is the sovereign action of God by the word applied by the Holy Spirit, just as the wind bloweth where it listeth; but it is not a kind of mechanical thing—the implanting of a new nature without anything further being needed. No; there must be *faith*, or else the word (the water) will be inoperative.\*

Turning now to John i. 12, 13, we read, "He came to His own (things) and His own (people) received Him not." But if Israel would not have their own Messiah, the outflow of divine grace was in no way restricted. To those who did receive Him (by faith, of course) He gave the right to take the place of children of God. Blessed relationship, involving, not merely a position, but a birth-tie!

And how could this be brought about? Not by descent from Abraham, of which they boasted—that was of no avail—but by being *born of God*. So that the true children are not those born after the flesh, or of the flesh by human will, but *of God—of the Spirit*. The source and origin of their nature and life is from God.

Let us follow out this truth a little in the 1st epistle of John. In chapter ii. 29, everyone who practises righteousness is born (or begotten) of God; in iii. 9, he does not practise sin, because His seed abides in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God; in iv. 7, he loves God and knows God; in v. 1, everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, etc.; in v. 4, he gets the victory over the world and such an one believes that Jesus is the Son of God; in v. 18, he

\* New birth, faith, and eternal life all go together, though they are not the same thing. The one who believes is "born of God"; and faith and eternal life are both the "gift of God" (1 John v. 1; Eph. ii. 8; Rom. vi. 23). It is remarkable that, though we do not find the word "faith" in John's gospel, we find the word "believe" (which, in Greek, is the verb answering to the substantive "faith") nearly 100 times.

“does not sin” (compare chap. iii. 9) but keeps himself and that wicked one toucheth him not.

Space forbids our entering in detail into the precious truths here presented, but they show what characterises one who is born of God, and what distinguishes the life, nature, and relationships which are consequent upon new birth. These are formed after the character of God Himself—and He is both light and love. Peter says we are “made partakers of the divine nature”—a nature which answers, morally, to God’s holy nature.

One might well ask, in view of these things, What other life could the believer receive at new birth but eternal life, and what is meant by being “born of God” and “His seed remaining in us”? Surely this involves the distinct communication of the divine life and nature of which Scripture speaks. Indeed, to question that eternal life is communicated to us at new birth seems so opposed to Scripture that one can only say, as Paul did to the Galatians of old, “This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you.”

We have already referred to 1 Peter i. 23, born again by the living and abiding word of God; and the outcome of this new nature was shown in fervent love to one another—a very practical fruit indeed! This passage makes it quite plain that what God uses to effectuate this great change called new birth is the word of God.

Now Peter was writing to Jews here, but in Acts xv. —alluding to Gentiles—he speaks of “purifying their hearts by faith”; and, referring to them also, Paul says in Ephesians ii. 8, that they are saved “by grace through faith.” Bringing Jew and Gentile in on one common platform of grace in Romans x., he tells us that the “word of faith” which we preach—the confession of Jesus as Lord and believing with the heart that God raised Him from the dead—brings salvation.

We take up these Scriptures as showing the importance of *faith* in connection with every work of God in the soul, new birth included (see also Gal. iii. 26).

Let us conclude with a brief reference to James i. 18. Peter, at the opening of his epistle, had spoken of God's abundant mercy in having begotten us again unto a living hope, based, not on His promises to Israel, but on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead. James says that God, according to His own will, has begotten us with the word of truth that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures; the word producing in us a walk in conformity with itself.

Truly, indeed, every good thing comes from God Himself, from the Father of lights, who is unchanging in His purposes of grace towards us and in the fulfilment of them. It is here also the word—the "word of truth"—which is the instrument that God uses to bring about the new birth. "A kind of first fruits of His creatures" is a remarkable expression. We believe it alludes to the new creation, which is developed more fully elsewhere, and to which the believer already belongs. It will be displayed in all its blessed fulness in that coming day when God shall make all things new.

F.G.B.

## The Lord's Coming and Appearing.

THE Coming of the Lord is a subject so important in itself and so much before Christians at the present time, that we desire to draw attention to some distinctions in the way it is presented in Scripture which are often overlooked. As everyone who is instructed in the subject knows, there are two parts or acts in the Lord's coming: first His coming *for* His saints to take them to the Father's house; afterwards His coming forth *with* them in judgment on the world. These two are separated by a certain interval of time.

But our purpose now is, to bring before the reader some of the *words* which Scripture uses in connection with the subject, trusting this may be helpful in studying it.

(1) "Coming" (*Parousia*), means "Presence." This word signifies both the *fact* that a person, absent hitherto, is present, and the *act* by which this presence has taken place. It corresponds to the English "He is here" and conveys a person's *coming*, though literally it simply affirms the fact of his being present. (See 1 Cor. xv. 23; 1 Thess. ii. 19; iii. 13; iv. 15; v. 23; 2 Thess. ii. 1, 8; James v. 7, 8; 2 Peter iii. 4.)

(2) "Revelation" (*Apokalupsis*). The "Revelation" of the Lord refers to Him as an Object which had been hidden, up to then, but now revealed. This revelation will be the joy of those who believe, but will turn to the confusion of those who have rejected Him. (See 1 Cor. i. 7; 1 Peter i. 7, 13; iv. 13; v. 1; also Luke xvii. 30; Rom. ii. 5; 1 Cor. iii. 13; 2 Thess. i. 7; ii. 3, 6, 8; Rev. i. 1.)

(3) "Appearing" (*Epiphania*). This is the fact that His Person, invisible up to then, has at length been seen or rendered visible. Such was the first appearing of Christ, coming in grace as man into this world. Such will be His second appearing in judgment and in glory, when "every eye shall see Him." (1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. i. 10; iv. 1, 8; Titus ii. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 8.)

(4) "Manifestation" (*Phanerosis*). This word signifies the bringing to light, publicly, of Him who is now hidden in God. It will be the same with the manifestation of His own. (See 1 Peter v. 4; 1 John i. 2; ii. 28; iii. 2; Col. iii. 4.)

We may remark that when the subject of the Lord's coming *for* us—the rapture of the saints to meet Him in the air—is treated of, it is always a question of pure *grace* and the *privileges* which are ours as His redeemed ones. It is indeed the full expression of His love for His Church. But when Christ's *appearing* is spoken of, it is connected with our *responsibility* here, for our path will be reviewed at the judgment seat of Christ, which takes place before He appears

in glory. Hence in the epistles of Timothy and Titus, which give us the responsibility of the individual servant in the house of God on earth, it is His appearing which is mentioned, not the rapture of the saints at His coming.

It is also to be noticed that in 2 Thess. ii. 8, we have the words "Appearing" and "Coming" brought together to describe the fact that the Lord will, at the "appearing of His coming" (i.e., the second act of it) bring to naught the lawless one, the Antichrist; as we read, "Whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and shall annul by the appearing of His coming" (2 Thess. ii. 8, new trans.).

The spirit of lawlessness is advancing rapidly in every country to-day, making it extremely difficult for the Governments to keep the lawless element in control. After the Church has been taken to meet the Lord in the air this spirit, together with the atheism that generally goes with it, will increase under the darkening power of Satan. Then all the elements which compose it will be centred in "*the lawless one,*" the Antichrist. And no power of rulers will be able to stop the apostasy and lawlessness which is now on the increase, till it is brought to a final end in judgment by the Lord Himself. (For details of this see Rev. xix. 11-21.)

## John in Patmos.

**T**O John in Patmos it was granted to behold the Son of man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, thus he had the brightest vision of glory that his eyes ever beheld, save, perhaps, what he saw in its *moral* perfection as he followed Him on earth whose disciple he was.

The Lord and the Lord's Day were both his portion in that lonely island; and, though an exile in such isolation, his heart could beat in unison with the whole

company of the redeemed everywhere. He had also the presence and comfort of the Spirit, communications from the Lord Jesus through His angel, and the words of consolation "Fear not." He was privileged, too, to be the one used to communicate what he saw to the seven assemblies in Asia.

Truly the heathen emperor little thought how his cruel command by which John was banished to Patmos, was to be used of God in the working out of His own purposes. For the fact that he was in such a place of isolation, separated from all that might distract, contributed towards his being a suited vessel to convey such solemn communications respecting the judgment of the church and of the world as we find in this book.

Who can read the first chapter of Revelation without being struck with the solemn majesty of the scene there unfolded? Moreover, it is only in the calm of the sanctuary of God's presence that *we* also can judge of things as they really are in His sight. It is there, apart from the influences and motives that govern the world—and even, perhaps, Christians also—that we can be in the current of God's mind about all that is transpiring around us.

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Mark the humblest gathering of saints, or an individual Christian. If there is not energy of positive testimony which acts on others, there is decline. God in grace cannot be inert in testimony in a world of sin. It would be a contradiction in the very terms.

J. N. D.