

# WORDS OF HELP

## FROM THE SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

---

*Edited by*  
W. G. TURNER

---

Volume XXVII

---

London :  
C. A. Hammond, 3 and 4 London  
House Yard, Paternoster Row, E.C.4  
1938



## INDEX.

	PAGE
Advent Hope, The . . . . . (J. S. F. Cox)	221
Address at the Hague, An - - - (Trans. T. Howson)	230
An Opening Year, Thoughts on - - - (W. G. Turner)	1
"As Jesus passed by" - - - - - ( " )	94
Babel, On - - - - - (H. L. Birtles)	163
Brotherly Love and Love - - - - - (E. J. Thomas)	138
Broken Glimpses - - - - - (Anon.)	201
Brown Beetles and Green Spiders, On - - - (J. A. Coote)	226
Christian Doctrine, Some Considerations on (W. G. Turner)	51
Christian Pilot, A - - - - - (W. H. Nutter)	103
Church and Bible, The - - - - - (P.)	61
Church at Antioch, The - - - - - (E. Adams)	101
Church, Meditations on - - - - - (R.K.C.)	114
Candle among the Coals, The - - - - - (J. A. Coote)	136
Cipher, Striking off a - - - - - (Trans. T. Howson)	153
Crucible, The - - - - - (Anon.)	161
Church Difficulties, Some Early - - - (The Editor)	181, 203
Conference at Vevey, Notes of - - - - - (* * *)	215
Contrast, A - - - - - (C. W. Bowles)	49
Desires, On Granting of - - - - - (P. M. Smith)	8
Diary, Cheering Notes from an Invalid's (A. L. Scutt)	90, 111, 134
Divine Food - - - - - (Trans. T. Howson)	109
Educational Tendencies, Some Modern (G. S. Purnell)	113
Family Religion, On - - - - - (J. G. Bellett)	16
Fellowship, On the Epistle of - - - - - (Quartus)	25, 41
Fellowship with God, On - - - - - (Trans. T. Howson)	3
Fruit of the Spirit, The - - - - - ( " )	66
God as Faith's Object - - - - - (G. S. Purnell)	155
Grace and the Holy Brethren - - - - - (Quartus)	194
Grace, Guidance and Government (Jacob)	
(W. G. Turner)	81, 106, 121
" " " (Ruth) ( " )	164
Growth in Grace, Some Marks of - - - (E. Adams)	223
How to Use the World - - - - - ( " )	150
Hymns, On Singing - - - - - (* *)	228
I Cannot Forget - - - - - (Trans. T. Howson)	211
In Perplexity - - - - - (L. Forrer)	29

INDEX (*Continued*)

	PAGE
Letter, From a Missionary - - - (W. H. Sewell)	171
Open Meeting, On the - - - (The Editor)	141, 176
Open Meeting Difficulty, On the - (A Grateful Reader)	198
Opportunities, On the Use of - - - (W. G. Turner)	189
Personal and Private Communion, On - (E. B. Brooks)	179
Prayer, On - - - - - (Trans. L. Forrer)	207
Prodigal at the Great Supper - - - (J. G. Bellett)	67
Reverence, On - - - - - (A. F. Howe)	2
Sacrifice of Giving, On the - - - - - (*)	225
Silence, Stillness and Solitude, On - - - (E. Adams)	213
Single Eye, and the Evil Eye, The - (Trans. T. Howson)	132
Speech and Silence, On - - - - - ( " )	30
Spiritual Guidance, On - - - - - (*)	92
That Day - - - - - (S. G. Scales)	125
The Man with Measuring Reed - - - (Trans. T. Howson)	12
Thoughts—Good or Evil - - - - - (J. C. Burrows)	74
Thoughts on John iii., Some - - - - - (W. G. Turner)	21
Thoughts - - - - - (Trans. T. Howson)	100
Wireless, My - - - - - (A.C.)	34
What Peter Learnt at Joppa - - - - - (E. Adams)	128
Wind Blows Where it Wills, The - - - ( " )	86
Young Man Who Made Good, The - - - ( " )	46
Why Christians? - - - - - - - - -	234

## POETRY AND VERSE.

David—the Deliverer—Rejected - - - (H. Falkus)	32
David—the Shepherd - - - - - ( " )	7
Guiding Pillar, The - - - - - (Anon.)	45
On Christ and the Children - - - - - (Julia Gill)	209
Songs in Adversity - - - - - (H. Falkus)	76
Song from a Sick Bed - - - - - (Thos. Spurgeon)	162
To Him Who Loves Us - - - - - (Anon.)	188

## REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTICES.

By J. Foster Kell - - - - -	20, 35, 56, 77, 117, 157, 235
-----------------------------	-------------------------------

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS - - - - -	39, 60, 80, 200
-------------------------------------	-----------------



# WORDS OF HELP

from the  
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

---

## Thoughts on an Opening Year

- 1738 “The moment I awaked, ‘JESUS, Master’ was in my heart and in my mouth ; and I found all my strength lay in keeping my eye fixed upon Him, and my soul waiting on Him continually . . . ‘My song shall be always of the lovingkindness of the LORD : with my mouth will I ever be showing forth Thy truth from one generation to another.’”
- 1838 *January 1st.* “Through the good hand of our GOD upon me I have been brought to the beginning of another year. May He in mercy grant that it may be more spent in His service than any previous year ! May I through the indwelling of the HOLY SPIRIT, be more conformed to the image of His SON, than has been the case hitherto.”
- 1838 *January.* “As the beginning of the year seems to afford a good opportunity of attempting a new plan [for reading the Scriptures in regular order], I propose to take up some book or books connected together, and to make them the subject of distinct study. Thus for the Old Testament, from this evening I propose to take up the books of Samuel and Kings for historical reading, and the Psalms for devotional reading. In the New Testament, once more the Epistle to the Romans. Oh, for clearer light on that Epistle.”

This is how saints of GOD greeted the opening years one hundred and two hundred years ago. Doubtless there are many such thoughts now passing through the minds of

readers of these pages, standing again as we do at the opening of yet another year. What unspeakable comfort however is found in the fact that He Whose years fail not ; Who crowns the year with His goodness ; Who is the SAME will be with us through all the untrodden future. To all who sought Him in the centuries past His assurance uttered in the first century to the exile of Patmos has ever been repeated. "Fear not ; I am." For "JESUS CHRIST is the SAME, yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

1938 *January*. Forward, confidently, cheerfully, hopefully, knowing that "*As thy days so shall thy strength be.*"

Boundless wisdom, power divine,  
Love unspeakable are Thine :  
Praise by all to Thee be given,  
SON of GOD and Heir of heaven. Alleluia.

W.G.T.

---

## On Reverence

*(Written after a meeting in which occurred an incident caused by familiarity with the occasion.)*

**I**T is the custom, or rather the rule, with Moslems to this day to take off their shoes before prayer or entering a consecrated building. This sign of deep reverence was required from Moses at the burning bush (Exodus iii.), and from Joshua before the Captain of the LORD's host (Joshua v.). The places were holy, and, filled with fearful wonder, these two great leaders bowed their faces to the ground. *God was there*. No tabernacle or even altar may have been erected in those places—they were sanctified by the presence only of Him Who is Light, in Whom is no darkness at all. It was the same Glorious Presence that filled the Israelites with dread as they watched their High Priest go within the veil, into the holiest place (Lev. xvi. 17, cf. Luke i. 10). This privileged man might well have

been terrified as the words of the LORD to Moses came to his mind : "Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat which is upon the ark ; that he die not : for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat" (Lev. xvi. 2). *God was there.*

And Who is it has said to us : "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" ? It was the lowly JESUS, GOD manifest in flesh. It was CHRIST, Who is over all, GOD blessed for ever. His holy presence bows the souls of those who are gathered to His Name, who know Him by faith to be there. They remember, too, that GOD's holiness and truth (as well as love) were displayed in Him as never before when He suffered for us, and displayed as none other could. There is now no threat of death for those who carelessly enter His presence. We may approach without taking off our shoes. But *God forbid that this should make us negligent of what is due to Him.* When we are thus gathered together, drawn by Divine grace, if we have no feeling of awe, of godly fear, we are not only short of Christian truth, we fall below what Old Testament saints learned in their day. But we can do what they could not—we can learn by the HOLY GHOST Who is with us and in us how to behave ourselves in the house of GOD, and also what is the church of the LIVING GOD (1 Tim. iii. 15). *God is there.*

A.F.H.

---

## On Fellowship with God

"Seek ye Me" (Amos v. 4).

**W**E are always in danger of being misled when we make use of a truth which is beyond our experience. One is inclined to make use of certain expressions without understanding them or realising them in our walk and ways. It is important to remember that the Christian life is a divine *reality* and a power which has an influence on

all the feelings and inclinations of the soul and thus life proves that it exists.

One of such oft-repeated expressions which are so little understood is the word

#### FELLOWSHIP.

Fellowship with GOD is the great secret of power to the believer. It is, therefore, necessary that he should understand clearly what fellowship signifies, what it takes in, and that he should be very careful to keep himself from anything that is only an imitation of it.

Fellowship with GOD means that we enter in our thoughts into the thoughts of GOD. Since it is the fact that the thoughts of GOD find their centre in the LORD JESUS, the highest degree of fellowship for the soul is the entering into the thoughts of GOD concerning His SON (1 John i. 3). GOD has exalted the LORD JESUS CHRIST, His beloved SON, and if we are able, through the power of the HOLY SPIRIT, to honour and exalt CHRIST our thoughts are in blessed one-ness with the thoughts of GOD. This should ever be the desire of our hearts. We should bear in mind that "fellowship with GOD" is quite distinct from fellowship with the Christian *assembly* be it ever so deeply taught or ever so pure in walk.

The purpose of the writer is to point out the value of personal communion or fellowship with GOD, a fellowship which is independent even of *divine institutions* and the help these may give. We must look at fellowship as a separate, pure, independent and holy thing, as something to be sought above all that is of this earth. The highest degree of fellowship is to be found in

#### WORSHIP

a worship "in spirit and in truth."

In order that he might be able to offer to GOD an acceptable sacrifice of worship under the law, the priest had to give heed to many things.

1. He must spring from the seed of Aaron, thus being pure in his antecedents and person. The slightest physical defect sufficed to unfit him for his service (Lev. xxi. 21).

## 5

2. He must make use of a holy (Num. xvi. 37) censer for incense, the vessel being of pure gold (2 Chron. iv. 22).

3. He must fill the censer with pure incense.

4. He must, in order to burn the incense, use fire taken from the brazen altar.

Thus far the type.

Only those who are washed in the *blood of the Lamb* can draw near as holy priests to worship before GOD. Only in the consciousness of *full acceptance* can there be true worship of GOD. Without this consciousness there may be an abundance of true piety but this can never give rise to worship. In such a condition of heart the feelings of piety in the heart take the place of the blood of CHRIST, the LAMB without spot or blemish.

The censer must be of "fine gold." So also can the sweet odour of worship rise only from a purified heart and conscience before GOD.

Only pure incense could be burned, and so must CHRIST be the pure and only object of the heart.

Pure fire must be employed to burn the incense and the HOLY SPIRIT must in truth cause the flame of worship to burn in our hearts. Only when we, with purified heart and Spirit-filled mind, feed on CHRIST can we offer to GOD the sweet savour of acceptable worship, and only then are our thoughts in complete accord with the thoughts of GOD. This is fellowship, precious and blessed, indeed!

How we should wait on the leading of the HOLY SPIRIT, so that the worship should not be brought to nothing by the "strange fire" of fleshly and earthly thoughts. Hindrance comes not from things which are clearly ungodly but even

## DIVINE INSTITUTIONS

may be made to be such.

Anything which seems to oppose GOD and His Word is easily detected and judged by the conscience of the believer. There is the danger, however, of that which is bound up with that which GOD has given, but which man may have corrupted, or to which he gives a wrong place, and this is not so easily detected. Therefore there is great solemnity

in the exhortation: "Seek ye Me, and ye shall live." Bethel, Gilgal and Beersheba were, in the eyes of every true Israelite, holy places. But what came out of them?

Bethel, the house of GOD, became the house of an idol; Gilgal, the place of circumcision, of the passover, of the first parched corn, the centre from which Joshua always went forth in his victories, became, where there was not the SPIRIT and the principle for which the place stood, a mere empty conception which led the heart into a certain legality instead of into fellowship with GOD; Beersheba, the well of the oath, became the place where the deceit of Jacob and Rebecca overcame Esau with the help of the fleshly lusts of Isaac.

We see that these places became a snare for believing Israelites. By means of the institutions which GOD gave and which man corrupted, Satan's deceit was able to set the living GOD at a distance from their hearts. Such are the snares of the enemy. He brings in things which have the appearance of the truth and sets them between our hearts and the LORD. By the light of the Word alone are all things judged.

What are we to learn from this? Simply that fellowship with GOD and fellowship with divine institutions are absolutely distinct. How often we have much zeal in Christian things while our souls are empty and our hearts far from CHRIST. Often have we talked like the two on the way to Emmaus, of the things concerning the LORD, yet we did not know Himself when He drew near. The SPIRIT says:—

"SEEK YE ME,"

not the things which belong to CHRIST. Seek Him, His blessed Person, the divine reality of personal communion with the Risen One, without which all meetings must be dry and powerless, be the words ever so beautiful!

Let us turn away from what man brings in. That which is clothed with the highest divine authority, such as *the table of the Lord*, the *ministry of the word*, *fellowship with one another*, may become mere empty forms used for the satisfying of the flesh if we do not use them in the truth,

in the SPIRIT and Life. They are an outlet for the divine life when the soul in everything looks for and sees Him, the "LAMB as it had been slain," the "LORD of glory."

Let us seek to realise the thoughts of GOD. Let us strive to seek Him with prayer and supplication, be it in the breaking of bread, in the ministry of the word or in communion with one another! Let us be on our guard against thinking that taking pleasure in these things is rejoicing in fellowship with Him. Let us have no part with those who have the "form of godliness" and who deny "the power thereof."

*(From the German, Trans. T.H.)*

## David—The Shepherd

NO soft and tuneful chimes wakened those darkling hours  
When David o'er the folds of Bethlehem kept guard:  
The sheep, well nourished 'midst the mountain grass and  
flowers,  
Were with him nestling on the slopes sun-dried and hard.

The lonely silence of the night his harp's refrain  
Had broken through, and to his soul brought sweet relief,  
Turning the loss of home and friends to everlasting gain:  
'Twas GOD Who shared with him the desert's joys and  
grief.

But hark! A thun'drous growl sends terror through the  
flock—

A lion, king of beasts, has left its hidden lair!  
The echo from this slayer's den in yonder rock  
Awakes the stars to see the watching shepherd there.

Red flashing eyes, like fire, marked out the robber chief,  
As with a lightning bound he plucks away a lamb.  
The fearless, unarmed shepherd sprang—his prayer was  
brief,  
But GOD, Who saw the need, was nigh—the Great I Am.

Those bearded jaws like bands of steel release their hold  
 A shepherd lad of modest mien has won the fight :  
 The lamb, now free, has turned again to join the fold,  
 And rested—now the robber slain—till morning light.

When passing over battling saints in present days  
 The wondrous stars, still looking on, rejoice to hear—  
 “The LORD my STRENGTH, my JOY, my SONG” in swelling  
 praise,  
 “Thy ROD and STAFF they comfort me—for THOU ART  
 NEAR.”

H.F.

## On the Granting of Desires

FOR OUR YOUNGER READERS

SCRIPTURE tells of many people who were asked the question, in effect, as to what they most desired. Sometimes the question is asked by GOD Himself ; in one or two instances it is asked by a man.

Perhaps the most striking illustration of these questions is that in the story of King Solomon, recorded in 1 Kings iii. 3-15.

David, on his deathbed, had given Solomon many words of good counsel and advice, knowing that he was committing to his son a charge which would require more than mere natural wisdom to fully carry out in the way desired.

“Be thou strong, therefore, and show thyself a man,” he says, “And keep the charge of the LORD thy GOD, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself.”

Upon the accession of Solomon to the throne, we read “And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father,” showing that the young king endeavoured



to carry out his father's instructions, and that GOD was about to honour his faith. So we read on in the chapter that "In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night. And GOD said, Ask what I shall give thee."

A grand opportunity was here presented to Solomon. "Ask what I shall give thee." What would a king most desire? Honour, riches, power, a great kingdom, all these things must have passed in review before the mind of Solomon yet it was for none of these he made request. He knew he had a great trust in his charge for there was an important people to be governed in the fear of GOD. There would certainly be difficulties and problems to solve. How could he do this without wisdom and help from GOD?

Therefore, in humbleness before the LORD his GOD, and the GOD of his father David, Solomon poured out his thanksgiving for all the mercy and keeping power of GOD experienced by his people during David's lifetime, adding, "And now, O LORD my GOD, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father; and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in; give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad, for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"

There was King Solomon's great desire, to know wisdom, to have understanding, to know how to discern between good and evil. "And the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing."

His desire was granted, and very much more; for the LORD not only gave him a wise and understanding heart, but He added that which had not been asked, both riches and honour, so that there was no king like Solomon either before or after in the history of the nation.

So it is with our LORD at all times, for wherever there is the real desire for those things that are according to His will, "He is able to do exceedingly *above all that we ask or think*, according to the power that worketh in us." Eph. iii 20; and again it is written, "If ye shall ask anything in My Name, I will do it." (John xiv. 14.)

The young king's desire was fully granted and now we turn to the

#### DESIRE OF A BLIND MAN

recorded in the New Testament. A touching story indeed is that of the desire of a blind man, and how his earnest request was granted by the LORD JESUS.

This man was not only blind, he was also very poor, and sat as a beggar by the wayside day after day. He was dependent upon the charity of the passers-by for daily food, and such raiment as he could procure. His was a pitiful condition when the SON of GOD passed one day along that road.

There was a great commotion among the people because JESUS of Nazareth was passing by ; and this poor beggar heard the unusual noise. What was it all about ? What was happening ? He could, of course, see nothing, but could hear that something unusual was going on and asked what it meant. They told him that JESUS of Nazareth passeth by. Hearing this he cried out, "JESUS, thou SON of David, have mercy on me." The people tried to stop him from calling out, for what right had this blind beggar to try to attract the attention of the Prophet of Galilee ? But, nothing daunted, he cried the more loudly, "Thou son of David, have mercy on me."

The SAVIOUR heard his cry. Has He ever failed to hear the cry of any needy soul ? No, never. "Call ye upon Him while He is near," was the encouraging word of the Old Testament prophecy. "JESUS stood, and commanded him to be brought unto Him ; and when he was come near, He asked him, saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee ?"

The blind man now has his great opportunity. What will he ask of the SON of David ? He needed money, food, clothes, no doubt an innumerable list of the necessities of life. But what was his deepest desire ? He was *blind*, blind, with all that awful handicap in life meant. He could see none of the beauties of nature. He could not even see the One Who had so graciously asked that question. It was sight he needed, and needed it badly. Was this

One before Him able to restore it to him ? Was He able to do that which no man on earth had ever been able to do ? Was He indeed the SON of David Who should open the eyes of the blind ? Yes, he believed He was, and said, "LORD, that I may receive my sight."

"And JESUS said unto him, receive thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee" ; granting relief from blindness of both body and soul. "And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God."

These two instances have been given showing the granting of the desires of two men by God Himself. One, a great king, the other a blind, poverty-stricken man. Both asked for the one thing they needed most, and received their petitions at the hand of the same loving, tender, gracious LORD, for the JESUS of the New Testament is the JEHOVAH of the Old Testament, merciful and gracious to all who call upon Him in truth. "Thou wilt fulfil the desire of them that fear Thee."

#### A DESIRE FOR A HARD THING

is found in 2 Kings ii. 9, 10, where we are introduced to the prophets, Elijah and Elisha, when they were about to be parted. The former was to be translated by a whirlwind from the earth to the presence of his LORD, while the latter had still to carry on his work alone.

In the ordinary events of life, when two real friends are about to be separated, if perhaps only for a few years, or maybe months, there is often much to be said, many loving words exchanged, and sometimes a parting desire is made known, and if possible, granted. So with these prophets.

But Elijah, knowing the sad feelings that must be filling the heart of Elisha, felt urged to grant him some longed-for desire. So he said to him, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee." Had he foreseen what would be the reply, he might have hesitated. Some personal possession to keep as a memento of their friendship might well have been asked as a parting blessing from the great prophet, but Elisha's desire was "a double portion of thy spirit."

Elijah replied, "Thou has asked an hard thing." He realises his inability to grant such a request as of himself. Yet GOD graciously as always enabled him to cause the desire to be met. So we read that by keeping his eye on his ascending master, Elisha was to receive the very desire of his heart. "If you see me when I am taken it shall be so." The sons of the prophets later bear witness to the fact, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha."

This is still the principle of answered prayer, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." We need faith, simplicity, wisdom and right understanding of that which is according to His will, and for His honour and glory, so that we may ask and receive and our joy be full. Like Elisha, let us keep our eye on our Ascended Master, and then as in his case, so will it be in ours, "it shall be."

P.M.S.

---

## The Man with the Measuring Reed

Ezek. xlvii. 1-12

**A**S Ezekiel was led and instructed by the man with the reed in his hand, so shall we who are children of GOD be led into a deeper knowledge of our GOD and into rich blessing if we follow the leading of the HOLY SPIRIT, Whom the LORD JESUS has sent "to lead us into all truth." I do not doubt that the man with the reed is a type of the HOLY SPIRIT, Who will lead us step by step just as Ezekiel was.

First of all, Ezekiel was brought to the door of the house from under whose threshold there issued the water of life and of healing (v. 9) just like the river of Revelation xxii. 1. The river proceeded out of the throne of GOD and the the LAMB, and if we would learn how such a stream of life can flow from the throne of GOD, we must, like Ezekiel, let ourselves be brought to the *south side of the altar*. The south side reminds us of

## GRACE AND LOVE

and these can only be shown to the guilty sinner from a righteous GOD on the ground of what was done on the north side, on the side which tells us of the work of His righteous judgment. The priest must there (Lev. i. 11) kill the spotless offering and sprinkle the blood thereafter round about upon the altar. The LAMB without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. i. 19) must die under the righteous judgment of GOD to declare His righteousness that He might be "the justifier of him which believeth in JESUS" (Rom. iii. 26).

The waters "issued out from under the threshold of the house *eastward*," towards the sunrising. The man with the reed led the prophet along the river always "eastwards." Those who have drunk of the water of life are also thus led; the HOLY SPIRIT ever leads on into a deeper knowledge of GOD Who is "Light" and "Love." The prophet was led out of the way of the gate northward (v. 2) and so would we be reminded that light and love can be known and enjoyed only on the ground of the judgment which fell on our Substitute.

The man measured a thousand cubits eastward and brought the prophet through the waters, which reached to the ankles. A soul which has received life through the water of life, that is, the word of GOD, soon finds that the feet become soiled on the way. That very water which served to give life serves also to restore communion with the LORD by washing the feet on the way, as shown us in John xiii. When we find, and it will be with grief, that our feet are soiled, how sweet it is to *know* that the soiled feet do not cause the heart of the LORD to turn from us but, instead, give Him opportunity to show us

## HIS COMPASSION.

In His unfathomable love, He takes our feet in His holy hands in order to wash them because "*He loves His own unto the end*" and therefore in every circumstance of their lives. But does not the exercise of His love in this way

humble us deeply as we remember that our waywardness and sin cause the LORD to bow Himself in service in order to wash our feet? O blessed LORD, how glorious is Thy beauty in this humility! Thou alone art "lowly in heart."

Again a thousand cubits along the river is Ezekiel led until the waters are to the knees. The further we are led by the SPIRIT, the more do we realise the need of our being

#### DEPENDENT AND IN COMMUNION

with GOD, and thus we learn to find our sufficiency in Him. Alas, that we so often forget to bow the knee before GOD confessing our sin and selfwill, even though Heb. iv. 16 says "come boldly unto the throne of grace." Thus we leave our "first love," the freshness of love which is so precious to our LORD. How slow we are, both as individuals and as assemblies, to take this lowly, but blessed, place of simple dependence before GOD!

After a further thousand cubits, the prophet finds the water reaching to the loins. Rising from our knees, we go to stand before GOD in a world at enmity with GOD and those who are His. Our loins must be then "girt about with truth," that is, with the word of GOD (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17).

Again a thousand cubits, and the prophet is brought through to find that the waters were risen to become a river that could not be passed over. Led of the SPIRIT, the believer is ever brought into deeper knowledge of GOD until he is able to comprehend "what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge" (Eph. iii, 18, 19). As the river was too deep for Ezekiel, so is

#### THE LOVE OF CHRIST

beyond all knowledge, reaching from eternity to eternity, and going from east to west. Its depth can only be measured by the depths into which He went as on the cross He bore the righteous judgment of GOD. Our small hearts are not able to take in its wonderful fulness. They are like a basket in the sea, filled and surrounded with the mighty waters.

In verse 12 we read "by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed." Here we have the saint who is led of the HOLY SPIRIT. "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." From such a saint there goes out an

#### INFLUENCE OF BLESSING

and healing, as he goes through this wilderness (cf., John xv. 8 ; vii. 38).

How little of this is seen with us ! No doubt this is because we are so much occupied with the passing things of the present course of things or because we have grieved the HOLY SPIRIT and He must first be occupied in bringing us to confess our sins to the FATHER ere He can lead us into a deeper knowledge of the FATHER and the SON.

Verse 11 of our chapter reads : "The miry places and the marishes thereof shall not be healed ; they shall be given to salt." What a warning to us ! What of those who, although the fulness of the life-giving water is there, have so filled their hearts with the miry waters of this world that they have no desire for GOD and for His grace and love which He has revealed in CHRIST JESUS ? They were made partakers of the HOLY SPIRIT, had tasted the good word of GOD, but had never bowed in true repentance to drink of the water of life which flows out from the south side of the altar. Such are like Lot's wife who became a pillar of salt, as she was overtaken by the judgment of GOD. As we read in Heb. vi. 8, "whose end is to be burned."

How is it with you, dear reader ? How have you responded to the loving invitation of the LORD, "whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely" ? Do not let us, however, remain at the threshold but let us go on and on in the knowledge of this precious fulness, like the "water to swim in," so that our life shall be to the glory of His Name !"

*(From the German, Trans. T.H.)*

## Family Religion

(Genesis xl.)

**T**HIS is a history which will be found, I believe, to suggest much occasion for the searching of the heart. I desire grace to handle it wisely and to profit !

Shem, among the sons of Noah, was the sacred branch. Religion was connected with him rather than with his brothers, and from him came the separated people.

In the progress of a few generations, however, this religious family became corrupt ; for in less than three hundred years, and we know not how much earlier, we find them serving other gods. (Joshua xxiv. 2.)

This is a common history even to this day. Families as well as churches are seen in a sadly degenerate and corrupt condition, though once they were known for their zeal and service.

The SPIRIT of GOD, however, in the sovereignty of grace, visits a son of Terah who was removed eight generations from Shem. The call of the GOD of glory came to Abram and separated him from those corruptions, and from country and from kindred and from father's house, to fashion him as a new piece of workmanship for the LORD. (Acts vii. 2.)

Abram, it appears, made this call known to his family, and (as is often seen to this day among ourselves) this communication has a certain influence among them. Family religion springs from this. The power of the gospel is known at first by one member, and from thence it spreads. And the LORD would have it so. It is a bad symptom (as we may see presently) where this does not take place.

So here. Terah the father gets ready. Nahor, one of his sons, from the whole narrative, we may presume, was not much under this influence ; for he, his wife, and children, all abide where they were. But Abram and Abram's wife, and Lot, the son of Terah's deceased son Haran, set out on the divinely appointed journey, and Terah the father apparently takes the lead. (Chap. xi.)

But ere I go farther with the narrative, I would ask,



was *all* this entirely right on Abram's part? The call had been to *him*. On him the energy of the SPIRIT had come. Within the range of that energy or influence, the family, it is true, may be brought; but still, did it not belong to Abram to fill that place which this energy had manifestly assigned him? Was there not some conferring with flesh and blood on Abram's part, ere Terah could have been allowed to take the lead in this great movement under the SPIRIT of GOD? There may have been. And I rather judge that there was, and that this has to account for the delay at Haran and for the death of Terah there, and for the putting forth of a second energy from the LORD in calling Abram from Haran. (Chap. xi. 31—xii. 1.)

This is all admonitory to us. Family religion is beautiful; but family order or human claims, are not to assume the rights of the SPIRIT. Beautiful to see Cornelius, or any other in like circumstances, bringing his friends and kindred within that influence which was visiting his house; but if flesh and blood, or human relationship disturb the sovereign progress of the SPIRIT, we may expect a halt at Haran or at the half-way house again, and the need of a second call (in some sense a second) to set the soul in the path of GOD afresh.

We may mark and distinguish these things for profit and admonition. However, under this renewed energy of the SPIRIT, Abram renews his journey, and Sarah his wife and Lot his orphan nephew accompany him. It is a scene of family religion still. And in Lot we see one who was within the verge of the general or family influence. We read of no distinct call on him, or of any sacrifice from him. Not that he represents a mere professor, or one who attaches himself for some end to the people of God. No: he was a righteous man and had a living soul that could be and was vexed with the wickedness of the wicked. (2 Peter ii.) But his entrance into the household of faith expresses no energy. It was effected in a *family* way, as I have been observing—as a thousand cases in our own day. And good such things are. Happy when Sarah the wife, or Terah the father, or Lot the nephew, of these latter days,

will go along with our Abrams. This would not be, we know, without the drawing and teaching of the FATHER. And Lot was as surely an elect one as Abram. But the energy of the call of GOD is not manifested in him as in Abram—distinctions which we cannot fail to mark continually. It was a *personal* thing characteristically with Abram; it was a *family* thing characteristically with Lot. And according to all this, in the very first scene in which Lot was called to act in an independent way we see his weakness.

Abram gives him the choice of the land. And he makes a choice. Now it is not merely in his choosing the goodliest that our hearts condemn him, but in his making a choice at all. In every respect Abram had title to have the first choice, as we speak. He was the elder both in years and relationship. He was principal in all that action which had drawn them to this distant land, and Lot was but, as it were, attached to him. He was noble and generous in surrendering his right to his younger. But Lot was insensible to all this. And he undertakes to make the choice, and then (naturally in the course of such a beginning) he chooses on an entirely worldly principle. He takes the well-watered plain for his flocks and his herds, though that took himself near the defiled city. (Chap. xiii.)

This first trial of Lot is thus a painful witness against him. It argues the weakness in which faith or the kingdom of GOD had been brought forth in his soul. Abram's way was very different, for the voice of the GOD of glory had been powerfully heard by him, detaching him from that world to which Lot was still adhering. And all this has language in our ears.

It is soon discovered what a disappointing world Lot was choosing. The well-watered plain soon became a field of battle; and had it not been for Abram or Abram's GOD, Lot would have lost his liberty and all his possessions there.

But it is still more sad to have to tell it, that this first disappointment does not free his heart from its unholy attachment. He takes up Sodom a second time, till he is forced to remove by the hand of GOD Himself. If

when the watered plain became a field of slaughter, Lot refused to learn its character and to leave it, he shall learn by its becoming burning heaps in the day of the LORD.

Melancholy catastrophe! shameful end of an earthly-minded believer! What a voice for us all this has! Here was a saving so as by fire, a running out of a house in flames, an inglorious departure from the world! We may lay the admonition to heart, and watch against the first look toward the watered plains of Sodom. (Chap. xiv.-xix.)

In the whole of this, indeed, we get great lessons, whether of comfort or of warning. It tells us that family religion is a beautiful thing, and that true godliness may begin in that way as in Abram's house. But it admonishes us that each one in the scene should take good care to cultivate the power of godliness in a very personal way, lest our religion betray the weakness of a mere general or family influence, and in a little season leave not a trace behind it.

Under Abram family religion, as I was observing, did spread, but not under Lot; for his wife continued with the mind of Sodom in her, and is made a beacon-light to warn passengers on their way to this hour. His two daughters defile themselves and become the parents of two such corrupt seeds as are denied, under special prohibition (Deut. xxiii. 2), any place in GOD's house; and his sons-in-law, when he spoke to them of judgment, profanely thought that he was a trifler or a fool.

Here surely is serious matter for our souls to deal with! If our religion or profession of CHRIST have sprung up under the influence of a family atmosphere, we have warning here to watch and cultivate a deep and personal power of godliness, in holy fear and suspicion of the weakness of the root of such a plant.

But again, if our profession of CHRIST have not more or less, as in the case of Abram, spread an influence in the family, we have great reason to be humbled and to fear that it is so, because like Lot we have not in our own persons exhibited faith in its separating and victorious power.

Lessons of serious and holy importance on the subject of family religion are in that way read to us by this little history. It tells us, as I have said, that we ought to be the

means of spreading it ; but that if we ourselves are the subject of its influence, we should watch specially as those who have special reason to suspect their weakness. For it is equally said by the same perfect unerring SPIRIT, "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another ;" and again, "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD." Family religion is thus honoured by the LORD, but the thorough and the personal power of it is also assisted. The fathers to the children are to make known the truth (Isaiah xxxviii.), but each man must be born again, or he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Beautiful to see "unfeigned faith" dwelling in one generation after another of the same family, as in the grandmother Lois, the mother Eunice, and the child Timothy ; but it is beautiful also to read, in the third of those family generations, the tears and the affections which draw up the full persuasions that their religion is not imitative or educational, or the mere catching of a family influence, but the precious inwrought power of a kingdom which God Himself has set up in the soul.

"What we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us, we will not hide from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength, and His wonderful works that He hath done."

J.G.B.

---

## Book Notice

By J.F.K.

*THOMAS ROLPH, D.C.M.—a Tribute by a few Friends.*

(C. A. Hammond, 3 & 4 London House Yard,  
Paternoster Row, E.C.4. 6d.)

It is always refreshing and encouraging to read of anyone who has fought the good fight and kept the faith. Such an one was Thomas Rolph, and in this little memoir of 30 odd pages is traced in an enchanting style the life of a true soldier of CHRIST. We heartily commend this booklet.

## Some Thoughts on John iii.

**T**HIS familiar chapter with its background of the Baptist's preaching, baptizing and personal witness to the Coming One of Whom he was the Forerunner, always richly repays the attention of the Christian reader, however often it may have been meditated upon.

In structure and style it is somewhat unusual, narrative, exposition, and explanatory comment being mingled without clear distinction of speakers. Sometimes it is the LORD Himself Who speaks, then the Evangelist, and again the Baptist, but right throughout the chapter there is the stately march of divine truth as to man's universal need, God's universal provision, man's universal responsibility, and CHRIST's universal supremacy.

Written evidently by one living in the days when Gnosticism and Doceticism were subtly beginning to undermine Christian thought, the insistence on "belief" as against mere knowledge, and the reality of "the WORD made flesh," the "only-begotten SON," "the SON," "JESUS CHRIST come in flesh," characterise the writings of John in the gospel and epistles.

Our chapter opens with a characteristic feature by presenting the first of a series of intimate individual interviews given by our LORD in this gospel. "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in His Name, when they saw the miracles which He did. But JESUS did not commit Himself unto them because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man. But there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews." Here is given his class, his name and position. "*A man of the Pharisees,*" one of the class which had specially interviewed John the Baptist as to his credentials; "*named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews,*" and therefore an authorised teacher, and a member of the Sanhedrim, the supreme ecclesiastical and judicial tribunal of the nation.

*"The same came to JESUS by night and said unto Him,*

*Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God.*" But his greeting, "Rabbi," i.e., Teacher, does not go well with what follows, for "*we know*" is hardly the way to address "a teacher come from God" by one ostensibly seeking instruction.

"*We know*," however, is seen throughout this gospel to be the current, characteristic and proverbial formula of the Pharisees, the pre-eminently wise in Israel. (Cf. vii. 49; ix. 24, 29).

"*Thou art a teacher come from God.*" By this unintelligent and unworthy mode of address Nicodemus proves himself to be quite unaware of the real dignity of the One he addresses.

"*To come from God*" was a form of words which he must have known was exclusively dedicated in prophetic scripture to the One Who was to come—Messiah. The sole exception to this rule is its use once only when prophetically referring to the Forerunner of Messiah, he being the only other *coming one* concerning whom prophets had spoken.

Now since one *had* come and announced himself the forerunner of the CHRIST; if this second One "came from God," as Nicodemus affirmed, Who could He be but Messiah Himself? Moreover, Nicodemus confessed how the Messianic signs during the feast had deeply convinced him that this second One was a teacher "come from God," for, said he, "no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him."

No doubt like the other ready disciples at the end of chapter ii., he, having been awakened by the testimony of the Baptist, was deeply impressed by the signs recorded as happening at the recent Passover. He had, however, failed to realize man's natural incapacity even on the earthly side to enter into the Kingdom of God, which the Baptist had proclaimed as being at hand.

What a contrast, too, is seen by comparing the greeting of Nathaniel in chapter i. with that of Nicodemus in chapter iii.

"Rabbi, Thou art the SON of God, Thou art the King of Israel." "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher

come from God." One is the greeting of an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile, the other that of a man of position and some personal importance impressed by certain recent religious happenings, who has a long way to go and a lot to learn, ruler of the Jews though he is. So to his spiritually ignorant mind startling words are spoken. "Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a man be born again [anew] he cannot see the Kingdom of God." He has to learn that what is born of the flesh is flesh, and cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. That while nominally every Jew by natural descent was a child of the Kingdom, yet *actually* every such one needed a new birth to enjoy the fulfilment of God's promised blessing in the land. A son of Abraham, a daughter of Abraham, was only really true of such as shared the faith of father Abraham. In the cases in the gospel narrative where CHRIST addresses any in this way there is faith to receive Him and to obey His word; Zaccheus and the crooked woman are illustrations of this which readily occur to the mind. Throughout their national history this had always been true, for among the many Israelites by natural generation and descent, there had been both the godly and the wicked, the new birth making and marking the difference between such.

Nicodemus also has to learn that capacity to enter into the things of the SPIRIT must be created by the SPIRIT, and to his stammering inquiry the LORD replies, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Amazing that one so learned should be so ignorant of such vital truth!

As "a teacher of Israel"—the position taken by himself and recognized by others—Nicodemus should have known that the expected Kingdom on the earthly side was to be a Kingdom with a visible King; ushering in a new social order; to be confirmed by divine miracles and gifts of the SPIRIT accompanying that reign of righteousness, according to all the prophets had foretold.

The LORD then tells him of the general necessity of a

new birth, of regeneration for entrance into the Kingdom of God, giving it a *particular application* and declaring it a *universal rule* for everyone, Jew and Gentile alike.

By the reference to the Brazen Serpent, He says in effect, Life comes through My being lifted up to die; the love of God comes through the giving of the only begotten SON; the light of life through My coming into the world. The universal need of mankind, the universal provision made by the love of God to meet that need, and the universal responsibility of men to come to the light, believe the love and accept the provision, is then and thus taught by our LORD.

The "only begotten SON" in verse 16 is a title of affection, while "the SON" in verses 35, 36 is one of dignity and equality with the FATHER.

The Baptist's witness to the personal glory of the LORD JESUS, the supremacy of His person, and the perfection of His testimony, is followed by the Evangelist's summary in verses 35, 36 that all things for possession, disposal and administration are given to the SON; and that His Person is the touchstone alike of faith and human destiny.

The initial truths of the New Birth, and the crowning truths of Eternal Life, Eternal Light, and Eternal Love all meet here.

But as these truths are enunciated in the ears of a ruler of the Jews, how sublime, lucid, forceful they appear. Not "a teacher come from God" is the great need of mankind, but a SAVIOUR Who by His atoning sacrifice discloses the love of God for the world of mankind.

Not merely One Whose miracles show that God "was with Him," as Nicodemus admits, but the Only-begotten SON, the SON of His love Himself is here shedding the light, and speaking of life eternal for once perishing sinners through believing in Him. Here is indeed the river that maketh glad the city of God, a river of water of life. Poor sinners, hearing and believing the truth as to themselves and God set out in this chapter, stoop



down and drink and live; while the one who has been longest on the way and drunk deepest of the waters finds infinite spiritual refreshment again and again in the study and contemplation of this scripture. The Evangelist himself in another place speaks of that ETERNAL LIFE Which was manifested and contemplated by us until our joy was full.

W.G.T.

---

## On The Epistle of Fellowship

“YOUR fellowship in the gospel from the first until now” might well be used to describe the atmosphere into which the reader is introduced by the Epistle to the Philippians. Says Luther as he meditates upon it: “This nightingale among Epistles,” for the song issues from the Roman prison in which at that time the Apostle was incarcerated.

“This most characteristic and cheering of Paul’s epistles,” says William Kelly in his exposition of this Philippian letter. It is the least dogmatic of Paul’s epistles and yet presents the essential substance of Christian doctrine and practice. It gives the sources of real Christian activities, suggests the lines upon which they run, at the same time providing real food for thought, matter for devotional meditation, and inspiration for action. The life of CHRIST, and the life of the Christian *in* CHRIST are both portrayed graphically as in a word picture drawn by a master artist.

Joy is the keyword, just as joy is the dominant note of New Testament Christianity. Joy rising above all circumstances; joy persisting throughout all circumstances; joy independent of all circumstances is the keynote of the music of this epistle. Neither broken hopes, weary delays, bodily dangers nor anything else can stifle the note of joy in this sweet and fragrant epistle of fellowship.

Joy, says a modern Christian scholar, has an eternal quality, as distinguished from “pleasure”; joy is the triumph of life; joy is the result of acquisition or expect-

tation of cherished good. "Joy," to quote W.K. once more, "is the truest safeguard against the religious snares of the enemy."

When the same blessed Apostle in another epistle is led to describe the ascending scale of experience of those who believe in Him Who raised JESUS from the dead, he crowns the whole as he exultantly exclaims, Not only so but we also *joy* in GOD through our LORD JESUS CHRIST by Whom we have received the reconciliation. Yes, indeed, Christianity understood is a joyous thing, for our hearts are filled with peace and joy in believing.

Here in Philippians the joy is of a four-fold character.

- (1) The joy of fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.
- (2) The joy of witnessing spiritual growth and fruitfulness.
- (3) The joy of happy service to the LORD and to His own.
- (4) The joy independent of all circumstances which Paul and Silas knew in Philippi before there was any assembly there. The prisoners heard them singing praises at midnight, and only happy souls burst into song at such times under such circumstances.

No final analysis of such an epistle can ever be made, no more than of the music of the babbling brook or the soaring lark. But some suggestions are offered in the hope that they may be helpful to a firmer grasp, clearer understanding, and fuller enjoyment of the truth here. It is, of course, of especial interest to us that this epistle was sent to the first Christian assembly in Europe. About the year 52-3 A.D. the gospel came to Europe (Acts xvi.) on the well-known visit of Paul, Silas, Luke and Timothy to Philippi, resulting in the conversion of Lydia the seller of purple and her household, of the Philippian jailer and his household, and of probably a few others. At any rate two Christian households were set up in Europe. Then five years later, in the spring of 57-8 A.D., the Apostle re-visited them, finding increasing numbers and much happy fellowship,

and after a further period of five years, having received communications from them by Epaphroditus, he sends this very letter which it is our privilege to consider. The absence of the Apostle in prison on account of CHRIST's cause; and the consequent activity of the enemy Judaising, persecuting, seeking always to sow discord and dissension wherever possible among the saints of God; and the mutual affection of the Philippians and the Apostle constituted the circumstances in which this letter was written.

The character of the epistle is seen in its development, argument and sequence to be joyous, peaceful, hopeful and practical. There is an overflow of love and gratitude on the part of writer and recipients, and this is no mere passing emotional experience but of a more permanent nature, leaving deep impressions on the whole assembly. Polycarp and Ignatius a century later both mention the joyful, generous peaceful character of the Philippian church in their day.

The challenge of the epistle is to character developed by experience; to confidence deepened by experience; to conflict and endeavour inspired by experience; all of which we expect in such an epistle of Christian experience.

A brief summary or outline of its contents might take this form:

- Chapter i. Conflict on account of the enemy.
- „ ii. Courage because of example of CHRIST, and of God working in them to will and do of His own good pleasure.
- „ iii. Consummation of blessedness of being with CHRIST in the same glorious condition as Himself.
- „ iv. Comfort from experience of God's peace, presence and power.

Another suggestion as to the character and content of the epistle equally close to the apostle's writing may be given as an epistle of joy because of:

- Chapter i. God's perseverance *with* His Saints.  
 „ ii. God's presence *in* His Saints — subjectively.  
 „ iii. God's prize *for* His Saints—objectively.  
 „ iv. God's peace *among* and *around* his Saints —experimentally.

In the history of the Philippian assembly is illustrated the great maxim of Christianity, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female but all one in CHRIST JESUS." Lydia, the Jailer, Slave girl, Euodia, Syntyche, Epaphroditus, and Clement all are there. Three distinct classes, nationally, socially, religiously are represented by Asiatic, Greek, Roman; Commercial, Official, Common people; Jewish, Mystical Pagan, and Political Pagan, but the bond of fellowship which subsists merges all into "My dearly beloved and longed for," for whom "I thank my God upon my whole remembrance of you." Such is the Christianity of the Epistle to the Philippians, a fellowship which includes at least, and expresses, companionship, communion, comradeship, partnership, association and sociability. Would there were more of this visible in our better-instructed circles to-day! For we possess not only the epistle they had but the whole revealed mind of God in the Scripture now in our hands.

A century later Ignatius on his way to Rome to be martyred was kindly entertained and escorted on his journey by members of the assembly at Philippi.

Polycarp, too, a little later wrote them rejoicing that "the sturdy root of their faith, famous from the earliest days, still survives and bears fruit unto our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and that they will do well to study what the blessed and glorious Paul wrote them for their edification in the faith."

One more characteristic note is the five-fold mention of the Coming and Appearing of CHRIST, but with this we hope to deal in our next issue (D.V.).

QUARTUS

## In Perplexity

OUR brethren in Germany are passing through deep waters and it is difficult for us to place ourselves in their circumstances. So, instead of judging them harshly, it rather behoves us to continue to pray earnestly that their pathway may be made clear to them, according to God's word, and that those who have already associated their lot with what cannot be called otherwise than a State and human organisation, may have their eyes opened as to the danger they are in with regard to their Christian witness in this world.

GOD, in His grace, has entrusted us with much light, but, unless we are vigilant, we may be content to have the light without the life, in a practical sense, as Christians. Satan is very subtle, and, under the guise of submission to the powers that be, he would rob the Church of the sole authority of CHRIST (Eph. i. 22, 23).

Our position in CHRIST is perfect, but our walk depends on our abiding in Him, on the knowledge we have of Him, on our contemplation of His Blessed Person, and on our happy communion with Him. Paul's ardent desire was to know CHRIST, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. iii. 10), and if this desire be in us, we shall be extremely sensitive as to what touches His glory and corresponds to His will for us and in us.

Many dear Christians in Germany have chosen to suffer persecution, imprisonment, and loss of position, rather than give up their allegiance to the word of God and accept this new organisation which is contrary to Scripture, and will become more manifest as such, as time goes on.

Be thou faithful unto death, says the LORD to the persecuted saints in Smyrna. We ought to obey God rather than men. Our love and loyalty to our absent LORD and MASTER may be put to the test by our willingness to keep His word, cost what it may. "If a man love Me, he will keep My word, and My FATHER will love him." (John xiv. 23).

What is loss in this world when compared to that day,  
To the glory that then will from Heaven be revealed?

Oh, let us in His footsteps haste,  
Counting for Him all else but loss:  
For how will recompense His smile  
The sufferings of this little while!

If we bow to the will of God, there will come to us, even down here, a fullness of blessing surpassing every previous experience. God will never allow us to suffer loss, that He does not compensate in a spiritual way. God's dealings, harsh as they seem at times, lead to a deeper and more perfect communion with Himself. And if we have been faithful, held fast His Name and not denied the faith, with what intense delight shall we not meet the look of those eyes, the loving eyes of our SAVIOUR and LORD? Is it not worth while? L.F.

## On Speech and Silence

**A**N old proverb says that "Speech is silver, silence is golden." It would seem that all the peoples of the earth are of one mind as to the value of silence, for in every language there is a similar proverb to the one quoted. The Chinese say: "Silence is better than speech, for Heaven is silent, too." The Arabs: "So long as I am silent as to my secret, it is my prisoner; as soon as I tell it, I am its prisoner." Augustine, one of the early "fathers," had a notice on the wall of his dining-room: "Who of another speaketh ill, eats not here with my goodwill." More than one wise man has said: "I have seldom been sorry for holding my tongue, but often have I regretted that I have spoken." Nature would seem to have provided a double meaning of closing the mouth, in that we have not only lips but also a "fence of the teeth," yet it is so difficult to hold one's tongue! Man learns the art of speech in a year or two but the art of being silent is often never learnt.

The best way of practising the latter art, of course, is to avoid talking about our neighbours' faults and to avoid thoughtless talk or gossip.

We must not forget that, for a Christian, there is a time to speak, and that is when he can witness to the honour of his LORD. At such time it would be easy to let the opportunity slip, but silence then is only evil. There is a time to speak and a time to be silent. The saint who walks with God considers when he should speak and when he should be quiet. He desires to speak where it is to the honour of the LORD and is profitable and for blessing and remembers the exhortation: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how to answer every man" (Col. iv. 6).

Speech is the means by which we can exercise fellowship one with the other. The loss of speech entails a certain degree of loneliness. Zacharias the priest (Lk. i. 20) was dumb for nine months. Thus he was no longer a son of Aaron without blemish and could no longer come to the veil nor draw near to the altar (Lev. xxi. 16-23). It was evident that the hand of God was on him. Punishment overtook him while he was serving as a priest before the golden altar. He had not believed the message of the angel. This unbelief on the part of Zacharias to the word of God was a sad lapse on the part of a man "righteous before God" and "well stricken in years." The fine gold of his life "walking blameless" was concealed in its eventide by this doubt which entered. God's immediate sentence was: "Thou shalt be dumb—because thou believest not my words." As a result, Zacharias was no longer able to bring to the LORD the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and could not instruct the people in the law of Moses, for he could not speak.

Do we ask then, why there are to-day among the *holy* and *royal* priests so many who are dumb in the assembly where worship is offered? Is it not because there is a lack of simple faith among the worshippers? We have the word which speaks of boldness to enter into the holiest. If we do not draw near, however, in full assur-

ance of faith, we cannot offer a sacrifice acceptable to God. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6).

When faith is occupied in worship, it knows in the holiest of all the Person of CHRIST revealing all the riches of grace; faith takes to itself all the promised revelations (John xiv. 21-26) of which the world knows nothing. It forgets the miserable surroundings, the poor meeting-room. In the quietness of the holy place, in the presence of God, the tongue of the inner man is loosened and the voice of song is heard in the heart. The soul is moved in its inmost depths by the grace and glory of the Beloved and then there rise as a sweet savour from the altar those inward songs of praise in the heart which the HOLY SPIRIT calls forth.

Since we are all priests (1 Pet. ii. 4-10), the lack of faith in Zacharias is a lesson to us, who worship the FATHER in "spirit and in truth." If one does not lay hold in worship of the unseen things of God which are known to faith, this lack will produce dumbness. Where unbelief is in the heart, there cannot be praise to God in the mouth. May we remind ourselves always of this as we worship, for it is ever true that "without faith it is impossible to please God."

*(From the German, Trans. T.H.)*

## David—The Deliverer—Rejected

**N**O rousing martial music marked his dusty tread,  
No welcome shouts of joy on passing through the  
ranks.

His homely load—the father's gift of cheese and bread—  
Raised but misgivings from their hearts—no note of  
thanks.

Low murmurs of reproach, to growing anger rose:  
"Thy naughty heart and prying eyes have led thee here  
The fight to see; leaving thy sheep to ruthless foes."  
But as he talked with them, behold the foe drew near.



33

No bull of Bashan rivalled that unearthly roar  
Which rolled, anew, around the echoing vale that hour;  
“Give me a man to fight, your armies I abhor!”  
All shook with fear, who heard Goliath’s voice of power.

The LORD’s anointed, undismayed, with princely grace  
Pleaded his humble cause and spoke of the great might  
Of GOD above, Who once had strengthened him to face  
A lion and a bear one well-remembered night.

No kingly unproved armour stayed his willing feet;  
No shouting captains urged or beckoned him to fame;  
The giant alone called forth defiance and defeat;  
And cursed him by his gods, across the battle plain.

The shepherd warrior moves with lightness of a roe,  
Taking from out his shepherd’s bag one smooth, round  
stone,  
And, with a prayer, aims swiftly at his boasting foe,  
Who, vanquished—not by might—now falls without a  
groan.

Then, like a bursting stream, Saul’s men now storm  
the field,  
And, sweeping down the valley, soon, amazed, behold  
The headless mound of brass, a sword, a spear and  
shield,  
And soon the greater victories of that day are told.

The song, the dance with timbrels, flute and harp fade  
out,  
And leave a scene which brings sour envy in its train;  
Dark storms of hate roll up to drown the victor’s shout:  
Like hunted roe, the shepherd seeks the hills again.

Way in these lonely haunts a deeper, sweeter song  
Is born; this shepherd sees the everlasting doors  
Wide open to the LORD of hosts, mighty and strong.  
Who is the LORD of hosts, this King Whom heaven  
adores?

34

“The LORD of glory” seen in resurrection power!  
“Lift up your heads, ye gates” heaven’s countless hosts  
declare;

We, too, lift up our heads as we await the hour  
To see King David’s greater SON exalted there.

H.F.

---

## My Wireless

**A**N aged brother in the LORD, who describes himself as being blood-bought, bedridden, and crowned (Psalm ciii. 4), on being asked whether he possessed a wireless, wrote the following lines which have been sent on by a friend.

### MY WIRELESS

The oldest invented.  
As presented to H.M. The King at his coronation.  
Never gets out of order.  
It is indestructible.  
Free from tax.  
Discloses the way to untold riches.  
It is the cheapest.  
Dangerous to those who tamper with it.  
Can be carried in the pocket.  
Transmits from close by, or far off, without change.  
Speaks nothing but facts.  
Speaks loudly or softly with equal distinctness.  
Ability to talk to the Transmitter.  
Music is incomparable.  
Gives accurate news of past, present and future.  
Educational discourses of highest value.  
No encyclopedia can be compared to it.  
Many possess one but do not listen in to it.

*The Scriptures.*

A.C.

## On Some Book Reviews and Notices

By J.F.K.

*THE WAR AGAINST GOD*, by Sidney Dark and R. S. Essex (Hodder and Stoughton, St. Paul's House, London, E.C.4, 5/-).

**T**HIS book is very well written and the case exceptionally clearly set out; we fear, however, that more harm than good will be done by it in the long run.

It is an ominous fact that a well-known critic, who cheerfully admits to being an unbeliever, praised the book for its tolerance and fairness. This work, much discussed and widely advertised, will fall into many hands, and those weak in the faith, and waverers seeking after truth, will read it, and we tremble to think what havoc may be wrought amongst those already halting between two opinions.

We should much have preferred to have seen the authors bringing in some strong refutations of the statements so blasphemously made and quoted here of well-known writers, men held in high esteem by the wise of this world. Instead of which, the authors deliberately take up a passive and neutral attitude, and apologise in their foreword if their own opinions may have crept into the pages "*against their better nature.*" It needs a careful search to catch glimpses of the fact that they are not sometimes actually writing in sympathy with the War against God, although we know, of course, that this is not the case. We cannot at all agree with them when they write, "It seems to us idle folly to shudder at what may be the blasphemies of the unbeliever and to pass by on the other side with cotton-wool in one's ears." Surely it is infinitely better to heed the inspired warning—"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and *touch not* the unclean, and I will receive you, and will be a FATHER unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the LORD ALMIGHTY."

The book proves beyond doubt, and with detail that

the War against God (which has been waged since the world began, and perhaps before) has now attained an unprecedented ferocity. This hatred is making rapid headway throughout the world, and the greatest victories of the fight can, alas! be seen in those very countries that have in the past reaped the greatest blessings through the teaching of the Good News of the Grace of God. What Mr. Dark and Miss Essex have indirectly achieved is to prove and terribly illustrate the truth of God's Word. In the second Epistle to the Thessalonians we read of the one who *opposeth* and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, and who deceives in unrighteousness those that perish.

We think that the authors miss a great point in their book about the War against God. They go to a great deal of trouble to prove that man is rapidly giving up belief in God, but they write not a word about the modern unbelief in the Devil. Is not a great deal of the almost universal unbelief and godlessness due to the fact that man is asserting his so-called independence and his contemptuous denial of the terrible fact that he is (if not redeemed by the precious blood of CHRIST) a child of the devil, and led captive at his will?

We regret that we cannot recommend this book to young Christians. Those strong in the faith may possibly find it useful to have their eyes fully opened to the fierce attacks that Satan is making throughout the world against God and His CHRIST—but even this we doubt. The authors' well-meant intention was doubtless to present a strongly documented work for the use of those engaged in upholding and proclaiming the fundamentals of our most holy Christian Faith; in this they have certainly succeeded. But we must repeat that the great danger lies in the fact that the book is bound to fall into the hands of those who only need a slight encouragement to embrace infidelity, and the very object of the work will be tragically defeated.

*THROUGH FLOOD AND TEMPEST*, by C. E. Falkus  
(Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., 2/6).

We are pleased to see that the author of "Are you satisfied?" has so soon written another book. As was to be expected it makes charming and instructive reading. "Through Flood and Tempest" is written primarily for children, amongst whom we venture to predict it will a great favourite. But many older ones will enjoy its simple, refreshing teaching.

The author has a delightful style, and a natural gift for arresting attention. The precious Old Testament stories, without deviating a hairbreadth from the truth, are made more vivid by colourful description so appealing to young folks. The lessons to be learnt from them are thus given greater force, and should have a very practical influence on young and older readers in their daily walk.

Youthful entomologists will goodnaturedly smile at the author's well-meant illustration of the chrysalis and "the *beautiful* moth." Moths are *not* as a rule beautiful, but drab, ugly creatures, loving darkness rather than light. True, they are frequently attracted by the garish artificial lights of man and often burn their wings, but the beautiful sunlight is shunned by them, and they hide themselves in nooks and crannies. *Moths* often have evil habits (cf. Matt. vi. 19). After the sun has set, many delight in becoming helplessly inebriated by feasting upon the intoxicating juices of the ivy flower—and in this condition they fall an easy prey to their enemies.

No doubt the *butterfly* is meant—quite a different creature—which delights to sun itself in the brilliant rays of sunshine, and to display its beautiful colours among the bright flowers. But this is only by the way.

What we particularly like about the book is the happy way the author has of making the Old Testament characters appear as very real human beings. And as page after page runs on it is impossible to find a dry or dull paragraph.

It will make an admirable gift, and *we whole-heartedly recommend it*, adding our prayers that the LORD may graciously bless it to many. We look forward to seeing further works by the same author.

\* \* \* \*

*GOD'S PLAN TELEVISED* by George Banks (Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., 2/6). Reviewed by W.G.T.

This interesting, instructive and really helpful book deserves a better title, although its present one describes what the book sets out to do. The author's grasp of truth is firm, his exegesis sound, though somewhat strained here and there to fit into the framework of his scheme of thought. The illustrative diagrams are really good and thought-provoking; and the book is welcome in a day like the present for many reasons. The loyalty to GOD and His word, and the devotion to the Person of CHRIST on every page makes good, healthful reading for young and old, and itself commends the book.

Reading it through at one sitting (a tribute to its interesting quality), the impression received was of a first book by a young, enthusiastic author of devout and studious mind, who all unconsciously had woven part of his spiritual autobiography into his work. It is a good book and can be recommended to all who would know their place in GOD's plan. When he writes his next book the last chapter of the present one may possibly be re-written; it could profitably be done, and not quite so hurriedly. It is a pity so good a book on so great a theme should suffer even from minor blemishes, but, alas! proof readers are not infallible, and even authors sometimes fondly cherish a liking for capital letters, which disfigure rather than emphasise. Pages 30, 31, 84, 85, 86 groan under these.

On page 90 "a Blue-Print the Heavenly Architect-Builder is all the time working to" is about on the level of the title of the book, but not up to the standard of the rest.

On page 17, last line, a misprint reads page 11 instead of 15.

On page 34, lines 6, 7, the references are transposed. "Authority of darkness" should be Col. i. 13; and "god of this age" should be 2 Cor. iv. 4.

On page 65, last line, "circumcision" should read "presentation," as circumcision took place on *eighth* day. Also on page 73, line 2, same mistake occurs.

On page 80, line 8, last word should be "known."

On page 89, line 5, last word should read "full" not "fall."

These are only minor blemishes—and even the sun has spots.

\* \* \* \*

*THOUGHTS*, by L. C. Hocking (C. A. Hammond, 3 and 4 London House Yard, E.C.4, 1d. each, or 1/- per dozen copies post free). Reviewed by W.G.T.

Neither price nor the modest appearance of this 8 pp. pamphlet give any indication of its real value. Some fifty scripture references add to its usefulness, and it may be commended to our readers without reserve. *It deserves to be bought, as the publisher suggests, in dozens*, and to be read, re-read, distributed widely, while at the same time a copy is kept for private personal perusal. It can do nothing but good; and we hope a companion paper may soon appear by the same pen.

## To Correspondents

*R.D., Canada.* In answer to your first question as to 1 Cor. xiv. 34-36, this passage does not deal with the subject of a woman's competency, but rather of moral fitness. Great principles are involved, as a reference to chapter xi. 1-12 will show. That many sisters are truly gifted and competent to instruct, no sensible person questions; but the assembly is the LORD's, and He alone may say what is befitting the house of God. It is all a question of moral order, and of submission to the revealed will of the LORD. The fact that the HOLY SPIRIT seems peculiarly peremptory in His instructions as to this matter indicates the importance attaching to this subject. The whole matter is summed up by the demand whether the word of God set out from them or had been sent to them.

As to 1 John i. 7-10. Verse 7 is a summary of the general

estate of the believer. He has been brought out of nature's darkness into God's marvellous light, and whether walking well or ill, he walks in the light and cannot do otherwise. He may not walk *according* to the light into which the love of God has forever set him, but that is rather the subject of chapter ii. 1.

"Fellowship with one another" results from walking in the light where all God's children have been placed; and "the blood of JESUS CHRIST His SON cleanseth us from *all* sin."

Verses 6, 8, 9, all commence, "If we say," but that we say a thing does not make it true, hence these deal with three different ways in which merely professing believers may belie the Christianity they patronise verbally. Verse 9, like verse 7, indicates a living reality of profession just as walking in the light having fellowship with one another, with the cleansing blood the basis of it all. Here, on confession of our sins (of which, alas, undoubtedly there are many more committed by us daily than we recognise as such) God is faithful and just to Him Who bore them all, in forgiving us, and in cleansing us from all unrighteousness. It is a first principle and an *abiding one for the real believer, intended to govern his conduct from the beginning to the end of his course.*

Your third question, "Can any one be in heaven and not see their Lord?" with a reference to Heb. xii. 4. No, for "we shall see Him as He is," and "they shall see His face" sufficiently answers such a question, which, however, does not arise from Heb. xii. 14, "Holiness without which no man shall see the LORD."

This holiness is, as J.N.D. points out in a footnote in his New Trans., "the practical effect produced, not the quality, but the character in activity." Only holy people will enter heaven, "nothing that defileth." There is nothing in this, however, to alarm the true Christian believer, for all such CHRIST is of God made unto them holiness, 1 Cor. i. 30; and the will of God is that holiness in walk and ways should characterise all His children (1 Thess. iv. 3, 4, 7; 1 Tim. ii. 15; and 1 Peter i. 2, 15, 16).

Our part is to seek an ever-increasing conformity to His holy will by presenting ourselves to Him, and diligently seeking to know His mind by prayerful study of the Scriptures. This would be "following peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."

*A.H.P., London.* Matthew v. 48, does *not* teach sinless perfection; nor indeed is this taught anywhere in the Scripture of truth. Indeed, this verse has "no reference to the question of whether there is sin in our nature or not . . . What the Lord insists on is this: Our Father is the perfect pattern in His ways with His enemies now, and He calls upon us to be thorough in that same grace and love in which our Father deals."



## On the Epistle of Fellowship—2

**A**N Epistle which gives both the inward state and outward conduct characterising normal Christian experience naturally emphasises what is most likely to produce both. We are not surprised to find a large place given therefore to the Coming and Day of CHRIST in this letter to the Philippians.

There are five emphatic if brief references to this most practical incentive to Christian activity, endurance and personal holiness.

In chapter i. 6, the Day of CHRIST is presented as the goal of perfection; ch. i. 10, as the harvest time; in chapter ii. 16, as the day of recompense and rejoicing for the faithful servant; in chapter iii. 20 the coming SAVIOUR brings complete salvation, changing these bodies of our low estate into bodies of glory like His own; while chapter iv. 5 reminds us that He is both near at hand and nigh in His approach.

THE DAY OF CHRIST! What a thrilling phrase for all who love Him—HIS DAY. To the unbelieving sceptic who contemptuously says, "His day, He has had His day long ago, His day is done," the believer unhesitatingly replies, "His day has not yet dawned." The evening of His voluntary humiliation, true; the dark night of His dereliction on Calvary, yes; but the day of His displayed glory, the morning without clouds, not yet. As at the beginning of time, "the evening and the morning—one day," so most surely is it with THE DAY OF CHRIST.

Old Testament Scriptures are full of "the Day of the LORD," which as such always refers to the period, yet future, when open and awful judgments will be poured on ungodly men, and world systems of evil whether secular or pseudo-religious. It is a time of displayed Divine government and as such has no relation to believers, for before this period the whole church will have been taken up by the LORD JESUS to the Father's house, and so in no way comes under the Old Testament side of the Day of the LORD spoken by the prophets.

But the DAY OF CHRIST in our Epistle may be called the domestic side of the Day of the LORD, concerned wholly with what is personal and private to our LORD and those who are members of His body. This will clearly be seen as we consider the references already mentioned.

In the first instance (i. 6) the Day of CHRIST is *the goal of perfection* for each in whom GOD by the SPIRIT has begun the good work. Then shall be seen what, having been commenced by GOD, and continued by His grace constantly supplied, is now fully completed by His power. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of JESUS CHRIST." To this goal the faces of the pilgrim band turn as they journey on through the night of doubt and sorrow, tribulation and difficulty during all the time of their sojourning here below. What a day of infinite satisfaction for CHRIST that day, when He sees all those with Him in glory, all like Himself glorious and glorified, for whom He paid so great a price—"the travail of His soul." As we go steadily forward with our faces toward the dawn, what cheerfulness, what courage, what consistency this evokes, for the goal is sure, the end is in sight, and His Day will dawn to crown with perfection the work begun and carried on in all His saints to His own deep satisfaction.

In the second mention of THE DAY OF CHRIST (i. 10) it is clear that it is a time of harvest, filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by JESUS CHRIST, unto the glory and praise of God. What He has wrought *for* us and what He has wrought *in* us, as we have worked out our own salvation with fear and trembling will be manifested. The enrichment of the glory and praise of Him Who all our life long has worked in us to will and work of His own good pleasure will appear as a harvest in the day of CHRIST. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, *and shall be satisfied.*"

An exquisite glimpse of this Divine satisfaction is revealed in Jude 24, where "to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" is

part of what happens in THE DAY OF CHRIST. For Whose is this exceeding joy — “this exultation,” as the New Translation renders it? Whose, but His, Who has made it possible at such infinite cost to Himself.

The once lonely Sufferer of Calvary shall then with exceeding joy and exultation, surrounded and accompanied by myriads of His redeemed, greet the FATHER of glory with: “Behold, I and the children which GOD hath given Me.” (Heb. ii. 13).

Thirdly, THE DAY OF CHRIST, a great day indeed for Him, is also one of recompense and rejoicing for His faithful servants (ch. ii. 16) when they discover that they “*have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.*” During their earthly career it has seemed far otherwise again and again. but, when on His Day at the Judgment Seat He surveys the whole course and appraises the true values, what a moment for such as have been called, chosen and faithful. He has marked each step, weighed accurately the motive behind the deed, understood the meaning of the spoken word, and, with full knowledge of handicaps of every kind, judged the secret of each life, and on His day will lovingly and faithfully deal with each one of His servants. Some to their amazement will certainly hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy LORD.” Some of limited opportunities, probably unknown or unrecognised here, will wonder as they hear, “She hath done what she could, and she did it to Me.”

“Oh! how will recompense His smile  
The suffering of this little while.”

But, ah me! what of the great leaders, speakers and writers whose services seemed ever to afford them an entirely disproportionate share of the religious limelight and applause on earth—what surprise may be then to discover *His estimate of their activities*. With such opportunities and privileges what comparative uselessness may perhaps be unveiled when we stand at that Judgment Seat on His DAY and with CHRIST on high look over life's history. May the thought of this effec-

tively act on us in what yet remains before that great day dawns.

“Then LORD shall I fully know,  
Not till then, how much I owe.”

But before the DAY actually breaks the Morning Star will arise, and chapter iii. 20 is bright with expectation, for “we look for the SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

“SAVIOUR” is the most comprehensive title of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. He came from heaven to earth about our sins as a SAVIOUR come to seek and save that which was lost. He has gone from earth to heaven about our infirmities as a SAVIOUR and we are saved by His life, as He Himself said: Because I live ye shall live also; and now we on earth await Him as SAVIOUR who comes from heaven to complete our eternal salvation by transforming our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory. He is indeed our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST (2 Tim. i. 10). Our citizenship, our commonwealth, our conversation is in heaven, and, in short, just as the Philippians were a colony of Rome though sundered by distance from the Imperial capital so we are “a colony of heaven,” and we wait for the SAVIOUR Who comes from heaven to change these bodies of our low estate into suitable vehicles for eternal glory. (Cf. 1 Cor xv. 49.)

Again, in chapter iv. 5, the Coming of CHRIST is presented as being both near and nigh, “The LORD is at hand.” Whether in the sense of being *near* the tried, persecuted, then suffering saint exhorted to moderation, forbearance, gentleness and so as an appeal for careful conduct, cheerful continuance and Christian charity, or whether as specially comforting such by the thought of His speedy *return*, the word remains, The LORD is at hand, near in every circumstance, and soon to appear for full and final deliverance.

QUARTUS

## **“The Guiding Pillar”**

**(Exodus xiii. 21, 22).**

“This God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even for ever more.” Ps. xlviii. 14 [R.V.]

The Exodus was only the beginning  
Of countless tender mercies by the way;  
God went before His people He had chosen,  
With fire by night and with a cloud by day.

He took it not away, that cloudy pillar,  
Altho’ they oft provoked Him so to do,  
Ungrateful tho’ they were for all His kindness  
The “Pillar” led them all their journey through.

It must have looked so cool and so refreshing—  
That cloudy “Pillar” in the heat of day,  
And then at night its shadows no more needed.  
Became a fire to light them on their way.

Just what they needed! Wonderfully fitted  
To meet the varying wants of every hour;  
But oh! how little did they prize the token  
Of His unerring Wisdom, Love and Power.

God’s leadings often crossed their inclinations,  
The Pillar went too fast or went too slow,  
It stayed too long to suit their restless temper,  
Or when they wished to stay it bade them go.

It kept them so uncertain of the future!  
It wrote “If God permit” on every plan;  
It seemed to mock the wisdom of the wisest,  
And make a child of every full-grown man.

To bear such discipline aright they needed  
Far more humility than they possessed;  
More self-abandonment, and more devotion,  
A will surrendered, and a heart at rest.

And so they murmured—murmured very often;  
 Their sullen hearts rebelled against the light,  
 And had not God been strong and very patient,  
 They never would have found their way aright.

Now these things happened to them for ensamples;  
 We find them "written for our learning" here.  
 O Israel! Israel! how can I condemn thee?  
 Thy condemnation were my own, I fear.

Yet, O my Father, Thou wilt not forsake me,  
 Oh, do not answer any wilful prayer;  
 Subdue my rebel heart and make it willing  
 To hearken to Thy voice whilst tarrying here.

---

## The Young Man Who Made Good

(JOHN MARK)

**J**OHN MARK is one of the minor characters of the New Testament, and is of necessity obscured by the greater peaks, such as the Apostles, Paul, Peter and John. But what we are told about him has a message for us to-day.

His early home in Jerusalem seems to have been tolerably comfortable. It was a meeting-place for our LORD's disciples, and to it Peter repaired as soon as he had been liberated from prison (Acts xii. 12).

On their first missionary journey from Antioch, Paul and Barnabas took with them John Mark to be their attendant. And the younger man no doubt made himself useful in seeing to the travelling arrangements, accommodation, and so forth of the little party. But later in the journey he deserted his companions and returned home. Although he forfeited Paul's confidence for a time, we are glad to note that he was restored to the Apostle's confidence towards the close of his life; "bring him with thee," he writes to Timothy, "for he is profitable to me for the ministry."

The Church and the world are, under God, eternally indebted to John Mark for the second Gospel. Mark is

the Gospel of action. With its swift movement, its vivid touches, and its absence of teaching, it would make an especial appeal to the Roman mind, with its keen interest in the facts of life rather than in the unseen principles that lay behind them.

John Mark was not a great man. He was not cast in the heroic mould. He was not a genius. He was not a very forceful personality. He was not a leader, but could be useful as a help and companion.

In this he represents the average Christian in every age, who is only a one-talent or, sometimes, a two-talent individual. For the average believer to-day, as in every age, has only very mediocre abilities, and not much time or opportunity in which to exercise them.

Herein often lies a grave danger. There seems so little that we can do that we are tempted to do *nothing*. We realise that our contribution to the Kingdom of God must of necessity be a very small one, and that when we pass out of this scene it will be much like the melting of a single snowflake on the boundless ocean. We may even be tempted to feel resentful against Providence that has withheld from us what has been granted to others.

And so we must learn to submit, and use those gifts and opportunities that have been entrusted to us, remembering that in that day what will matter most of all will be the degree of our loyalty to CHRIST and His Word. For *"it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."*

It is well, too, to bear in mind that most of the work of the Church has always been done by one- and two-talented men and women, and that our limitations are not only Divinely appointed, but are intended to be means of usefulness by acting as hedges that prevent us from wandering away into fields of barren activity or adventure.

It is interesting and, in a way, helpful to call to mind that Mark's desertion was the occasion of a controversy between Paul and Barnabas, both gifted, devoted and godly men. When Paul determined to set out on his

second missionary journey, accompanied by Barnabas, the latter desired Mark to accompany them, as before. But Paul would not consent. Both men argued and pleaded, and each stuck to his own view. So that the upshot was that they agreed to separate. And we like to think that they separated with no ill-will in their hearts, but rather that it was a kind of business arrangement by which, on the principle that multiplication may issue from division, the Kingdom of God was extended in the world through a wider field being covered by the missionaries of the Cross.

And to-day, if, as sometimes happens, Christian workers cannot work with each other, may it not be advisable for a separation to take place rather than that strife and ill-feeling should be perpetuated? And, whatever may be our view of the dispute between Paul and Barnabas, we are glad that Barnabas acted as encourager of a younger man who was probably tempted to lose heart and perhaps give up Christian work. The ministry of encouragement is a blessed one, and one which was exercised by Barnabas on two or three occasions.

The desertion and restoration of John Mark brings to our minds the question of backsliding and its cure. Backsliding among even true children of God is far too common. Its chief causes are false teaching; the allurements of the world; and discouragement. And there are three main causes of discouragement: failure to overcome in the great fight; apparent want of success in Christian work; and trial. Hence the need that every Christian should pay earnest heed to the exhortation to keep himself in the love of God.

It is encouraging to remember that even if we fail to answer to God's best for us, He has a second best. God prefers life to machinery. In this machine-age we are unconsciously liable to think of God's dealings with man and man's relations with God in terms of machinery. The idea, for example, that God's will for the believer is like a pair of iron rails, and that if once the train of life is off the rails, it means irremediable



disaster is untrue, not only to the gist of Scripture teaching, but to the facts of life as we know them. And the story of John Mark is an illustration of this point.

It is true that the bird with the broken pinion may never soar so high again—a grievous fall may so damage a believer's faith, or character, or reputation, that he never afterwards reaches his former level of living—but, on the other hand, he *may* soar higher than before. Peter was a better, humbler man after his fall than before; and it is legitimate to believe the same of John Mark, the young man who made good. E.A.

## A Contrast

**W**HILE sitting around the LORD's table one morning a Psalm was read, that Psalm (xxiii.) of very tender memories. Later, another much-iterated passage from the New Testament was read — that passage of transcendent wonderment, Col. i. 12-19; and a few words added by way of link between the two, and more especially to bring one verse from each of the passages read into contrast.

The Psalm gives David's concentrated\* yet wide-embracing experience of JEHOVAH's ways towards him, and is equally the experience of every believer in our own day. Col. i. 15-19 is the sublime presentation of the Person of the CHRIST by GOD the FATHER, which for concentrated\* comprehensiveness is scarcely equalled in any other part of the Word:

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things and by Him all things subsist; and He is the Head of the Body the Church; who is the beginning, the firstborn

---

\* These words are used in the sense of increasing or maintaining strength, yet reducing volume.

from among the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased (the FATHER) that in Him should all fulness dwell."—Col. i. 15-19.

What is thus compressed in five verses is marvellous. What is comprised in them is beyond our conception, and, like the queen of Sheba, we shall not be able to appreciate half the fulness of the passage until we are actually in the presence of our LORD. Furthermore, we cannot now enjoy or use, more than we can assimilate.

The two verses which were brought into contrast were Psalm xxiii. 5 and Col. i. 19. In the former David acknowledges "my cup runneth over"—that he is only a weak earthly vessel, which cannot hold—owing to his being of the seed of Adam—all the blessings so freely given and offered by GOD in His goodness and mercy. In the contrasting verse—"in Him all fulness dwells," we get no running over, no lack of capacity of the vessel, the filling not below the brim, but the capacity of the cup or vessel equal to the measure of the supply, *full*—no more, no less.

The word "fulness" represents the sum of the qualities of DEITY. All that GOD is, is revealed in CHRIST; all the attributes and the very essence of the nature of GOD dwell in Him in bodily form (Col. ii. 9). It includes much more than finite minds can possibly grasp even of material things. *"All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made."*

John i. 3 tells us that all the many wonderful things which have already been revealed to us by the sciences, and the host of other functions of the universe as yet unrevealed to us, were all embodied in the "fulness" of Him that filleth all in all. The fact of gravitation, the properties of the square, the triangle, the circle; the waves made known by the discoveries of the telephone, radio, television, etc., etc., all express the wonders of creation and give us more understanding of the "fulness" of the Person of the CHRIST, "by Whom all things consist." Also, the fulness "enfolds every grace," every virtue, every merit. Does not this indwelling fulness then present to us the infinite perfection of our most

adorable LORD, the Foundation of our faith, and trust, and hope?

May the contemplation of this contrast—David's overflowing cup and our LORD's inherent fulness, increase our desire to worship, and constrain us to bring choicer first-fruits in fuller baskets as our offering. It is indeed meet that we should give thanks — adoring thanks—to Him Who hath made us to be participators in the inheritance of the saints in light. Let the merits of our LORD appear to each and fill the holy place when we are gathered to His Name to remember and adore.

C.W.B.

---

## Some Considerations of the Report on Christian Doctrine

THE published report of the result of fifteen years' labour by the *Commission on Christian Doctrine* appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York makes very sad reading for the Christian believer.

That they were not "writing for the general public," p. 13, does nothing at all to mitigate the gravity of what they have written on matters of vital importance to everyone. The immense demand for copies of the Report has necessitated a further issue to cope with this unexpected display of interest on the part of the general public.

While expressly disclaiming any official character for their findings, can an Archbishop, several Bishops, Deans, Canons and University Professors of Divinity be so modest as to imagine that the weight of their position could fail to attach itself, in the mind of the ordinary reader, to the result of fifteen years' deliberation by them upon matters of first-class importance?

With the domestic affairs of the Establishment as such, we have no concern here, except to note that unity, apparently, can only be secured (and that only by an illusory appearance of unanimity) at the obvious expense of revealed truth, if Anglo-Catholics, Evangelicals and

militant Modernists are to dwell together in religious amity.

Amidst the prevailing chaos of religious thought it is perhaps some gain to have in convenient and understandable form from such well-informed sources a statement of Doctrine in the Church of England.

It is absurd to say that the Report is not a "declaration" of church doctrine. The Commission was sufficiently representative and authoritative to give its findings emphasis, and undoubtedly widespread dismay has been created by it in the minds of simple pious souls, as accepted truths have been so ruthlessly, albeit subtly, undermined.

The inerrancy of Scripture, the Fall of Man, Miracles, Angels and Demons, The Virgin Birth of our LORD, His Resurrection and Ascension, the Second Advent, are some among the things once "surely believed" which now by the Report may be hesitatingly accepted, tolerated, ignored or rejected as it pleases the reader. Highly-placed ecclesiastical dignitaries are found busily undermining the foundations of what affords them place and name in the so-called Christian world of our time. "Incidentally, the Dean [of Lincoln] remarked [in Convocation] that, in his opinion, the most fundamental change in belief that had occurred in the past generation, or perhaps in the history of Christendom, was the abandonment of belief in the inerrancy of Holy Scripture," *vide* "Church Times."

The first part of the Report, pp. 1-98, deals with Doctrines of God and of Redemption, and reveals grave and serious differences in the Commission. Far more deplorable, however, is the *agreed attack* upon the inerrancy [freedom from error] of the written word of God to which we have just referred, but which calls for further consideration.

To piously pay lip-service to Holy Scripture in really beautiful language and then to add (p. 29) as follows:

"The tradition of the inerrancy of the Bible commonly held in the church . . . cannot be maintained in the light of the knowledge now at our disposal"

takes away all it gives, and undermines the authority which that written word possesses from God.

The authority of the church as the reason for accepting the Bible is then presumptuously alleged in unmistakable terms (pp. 31, 32), as the following extract shows:

“The fact that the church has accepted this particular body of literature as canonical Scriptures invests it as a whole with an authoritative character for all its members. Nevertheless, the use made of the Bible as an authoritative source of teaching should be controlled by the following considerations:

(1) The authority ascribed to the Bible must not be interpreted as pre-judging the conclusions of historical, critical and scientific investigation in any field, not excluding that of the Biblical documents themselves.

(2) Christian thinkers are not necessarily bound to the thought-forms employed by the Biblical writers.

Two other considerations not quite so drastic follow.

The late J. N. Darby wrote, years ago, words which may be pondered to-day: “One of the great efforts of the enemy in these days is against the written word of God. *Ecclesiastical office and orthodoxy is in its nature no barrier against this inroad.* In its most pretentious forms and highest claims it is injurious to true confidence in Scripture, because the authority of the church, not that of the word, lies at the root of these pretensions. Divinely-given authority is its first principle; not divine truth from God.

“If its true principle be scrutinised beneath conventional habits and fears, it will be found that the authority of the word is founded, according to this system, on the authority of the church—that is, the word has none properly divine in itself.” How apposite in view of the Report under consideration.

Great differences appear in this agreed Report as to Miracles, some doubting the probabilities of such occurring, others hesitating; doubts are expressed (p. 46) as to the existence of angels and demons, although, later on,

"the Cross is a victory over *the devil*"; (p. 69) informs us that, "In our view the doctrine of a universal tendency to evil in man is not bound up with the historical truth of any story of a Fall," so this must also go by the board. The Virgin Birth (p. 82) is regarded by some as inconclusively established by historical evidence. As to the Resurrection (p. 86) we learn that some inclined "to the belief that the connection made in the New Testament between the emptiness of a tomb and the appearances of the Risen LORD belongs rather to the sphere of religious symbolism than to that of historical fact"; and (p. 89) the narratives of the Ascension, or the allusions to it in the New Testament, are, we learn, to have its physical features interpreted symbolically since they are closely related to the conception of heaven as a place locally fixed beyond the sky.

His Grace, the chairman, appears to move somewhat uneasily amidst the illusory unanimity of the Commissioners, and on account of his position and also responsibility in the church disentangles himself from the chaos of thought as to the Virgin Birth and Bodily Resurrection of our LORD, avowing wholehearted belief in both. This is to the good, and will no doubt be eagerly fastened upon by the many pious souls found in the Establishment who wish to save their faces. But Modernists, of all the multitudinous shades of that chameleon phase of religious thought, will naturally welcome this Report, it being the fullest expression of religious liberalism issued under such distinguished auspices since the Reformation. To be assured that the Bible is not free from error, and has no hostile bearing on the doctrine of evolution, will rejoice the Modern man who does *not* "tremble at My word."

Part II. (pp. 99-201) so deals in places with beliefs and usages which flatly oppose the word of God, that flood-gates of error once widely open, then partially closed at the Reformation, are again re-opened even more widely.

Take, for example, the statements with reference to Confession to a priest, the Invocation of Saints, and Prayers for the Dead. The first clearly and fully is

recognised; the second is permissible but not altogether necessary; to the third no theological objection is made.

With regard to the Communion three possible but conflicting views are all tenable, with no condemnation, therefore, attaching to holders of any of these views. It *can* be considered as a sacrifice for the living and the dead by the catholic-minded members, or as decidedly *not* being this by the evangelical-minded members. Indeed, like a nose of wax, this most solemn and sacred institution and appointment of our LORD on the night of the Betrayal may be made to mean just what one *desires it to mean*.

Part III. (p. 203-220) on Eschatology, described as a "great subject," is chiefly surprising by the ease with which the Blessed Hope, which so strongly marks New Testament teaching, is eliminated or surrendered.

The Second Coming and Kingdom of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, so far as the Report goes, might scarcely ever have been heard of by the Commission. Whatever else they may be looking for, they show no indication of "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great GOD and SAVIOUR," of which New Testament Scripture is full. The Coming *for* His own, as taught in 1 Thess. iv., and the Manifestation in glory *with* His own (2 Thess. i. ii, and many other references), find no place in the Report of Christian Doctrine.

"As to the question whether, or in what sense, there will be a 'Last Judgment,' conceived as an *event*, supervening upon the conclusion of this world's history, the Commission is united in believing that it is impossible to pronounce." (p. 206).

On this showing in their *united* judgment it cannot be relied upon, and is no part of the Faith once for all delivered. "Marana tha"—"our LORD come," was the ecstatic cry of the early Christian believers; "Even so, come, LORD JESUS" the church responded to the "Surely I come quickly." But the Commission cannot say aught as to this, or the Appearing in glory, or the Final Judgment. What would the true Apostles have said to

this? What a relief to turn from the chaos of ecclesiastical deliberation to the word of God, to "God and the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified." May we increasingly read, mark, learn and inwardly digest it. What a responsibility to remember also that in the great house of Christian profession, Christendom, as it now is, there are vessels to honour, and there are vessels to dishonour. "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. ii. 21).

Also it is well to consider that to "buy the truth" at any price is a good bargain, but to sell it even for the fostering of ecclesiastical unity is a great betrayal. It is required in a man that he be found faithful, and the consideration of the Report on Christian Doctrine should greatly stimulate this desire in the hearts of all who value the word of God, cherish the Blessed Hope and love His Appearing.

W.G.T.

---

## On Some Book Reviews

By J.F.K.

*THE FEAST, THE FAMINE, AND THE FLAME*, by J. T. Mawson (published by Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Paternoster Buildings, London, E.C.4., price 1/-).

**T**HIS is another excellent book by that ready writer, Mr. Mawson, and we enjoyed every chapter of it. To say the least, it is very good value for the money.

The author sets out to present the glorious good news that God is able and willing to save us from ourselves, and to guarantee to each of us eternal happiness and joy unspeakable. Such is God's object and He has stopped at nothing in order to achieve His end. In astonishing love He has made it possible for each of us, although completely undeserving, to become co-heirs with His own



SON in eternal glory. Such a possibility was only achieved at terrible sacrifice and infinite cost, yet the gift is offered to an unlimited number of applicants absolutely free, with no other condition than a simple, speedy acceptance.

In spite of the simple, loving grace of God, the author tells us in his foreword how he was forced to come to the conclusion that God is as surely the UNKNOWN God to millions of men and women today as He was to the Athenian philosophers nineteen centuries ago. But there is no excuse for this ignorance and the truth has been fully revealed, not in science or philosophy, but in JESUS.

The book is based upon the parables in Luke's Gospel where the blessed LORD in gracious words reveals to us the heart of God, telling of His care for our needs, of His compassion, and of His long-suffering love.

We hardly think the choice of title a happy one; attraction appears to have been sacrificed to alliteration. The contents are, however, above criticism, and the attention of the reader will be held until the last page. This is no little achievement, as it is, of course, no new revelation concerning the wonderful love and light of God, but the old truths are here presented with an appealing freshness and wealth of illustration, that hard indeed must be the heart that refuses the pleadings of the HOLY SPIRIT. The first word of invitation, as Mr. Mawson stresses, is *not* "Go work in My vineyard," but "COME to My supper." The simplest and poorest can appreciate the welcome word COME. The invitation is to a feast, and unconditional. No "calling over the coals," but a gracious welcome of love and forgiveness. "He brought me into His banqueting house and His banner over me was love. I sat down under His shadow, with great delight and His fruit was sweet to my taste."

The chapters on the "Famine" are equally arresting, and we were struck by the thought that man's great desire today for independence and self-sufficiency is only leading him to a barren wilderness with the spectre of spiritual famine as his sole companion.

The ever beautiful story of God's way of free salvation is made clear throughout the book, but yet it would be a mistake to assume that Mr. Mawson writes only for the unsaved. There are many incidents recounted of the author's own experiences which make encouraging reading for all those who are working in the vineyard and who are willing to drop a word in season, which surely should be the state of each Christian reader.

May we be allowed one note of disappointment? The book is studded with many poetic quotations, some of them beautiful, but no references are given, so we are unable to satisfy our desire to seek more of these. Where, for example, does this gem come from?

Where is the world?  
I looked for it, 'tis gone—  
A globe of glass,  
Cracked, shivered, vanished,  
Scarcely gazed upon  
E'er a silent power dissolved the glittering mass.

The author closes on a very solemn note, and we are glad to see the faithful way in which he insists on the inevitability of eternal punishment—a truth now almost universally discarded by “modern” theologians. To disbelieve in the eternity of punishment is actually to dishonour the holy love of God and His CHRIST, however much the finite mind reasons to the contrary.

We gladly recommend *The Feast, The Famine and The Flame*, without any reservations to all, and heartily join in the author's prayers that God may graciously bless the book to very many.

*DARKNESS OVER TIBET*, by T. Illion (published by Rider & Co., 34, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4. Price 6/-).

**T**HIS is a readable book which will be enjoyed by those who like weird stories and are not too critical of the matter put before them. We, however, are not among these, and the book neither convinced us of its sincerity nor impressed us by its philosophy.

Mr. Illion has a pleasing style, and is one of the few who have penetrated into the secret regions of Tibet; his courage is unquestionable. He quite justifies the title of his book and recounts many exciting incidents showing the terrible sway the Evil One has over that unhappy country. We feel, however, that he is mistaken when he alleges that he has personally met the Prince of Darkness himself. The description fails to convince us, not by the exaggeration of the weirdness of the encounter—extraordinary as this is—but rather by the *lack* of power he ascribes to one who could only be vanquished by the Son of God Himself. Nor can we at all agree with Mr. Illion's recipes for combating the wiles of the Evil One. The author's armour consists of an iron will and a mental attitude of calling upon the CREATOR to assist in the attack.

Our blessed SAVIOUR was the only One down here who successfully and completely resisted the Devil; and He alone enables us to triumph through His victory. Alas! there is not *a single word* about Him in the whole book, and this fatal defect renders it impossible to commend it to our readers.

*THE ALTAR OF WORSHIP.* (The substance of an address at the Memorial Hall, London, by Mr. W. J. Hocking. C. A. Hammond, 3 & 4, London House Yard, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4. Price 2d.).

THE scriptures read were Lev. vi. 8-13; John iv. 23, 24; 1 Cor. xi. 23-26; and Hebrews xiii. 15, which all deal with worship.

This is a subject of paramount importance to *every* believer. The GOOD SHEPHERD seeks the lost sheep, and when found then the FATHER seeks worship of such as children. Mercy and grace all the way!

Every believer who rejoices in his salvation, knows with assurance that he has been for ever rescued from Satan. Judgment for them is passed, and they are born again as children of God. Alas! the enemy, however, still often succeeds in preventing their hearts from offering the worship acceptable to our FATHER.

The pamphlet stresses the point that worship is the highest occupation in which we can engage, and should be a stream ever flowing up to God. If we are occupied with our LORD JESUS CHRIST—a subject so dear to the heart of God—our worship will be spontaneous and continuous. It matters not how difficult our earthly circumstances may be. How wonderful to know that God our FATHER, surrounded by ever-praising heavenly hosts, should yet seek the worship of the feeblest of His children. This precious truth was first revealed to the poor sinful woman at Sychar's well by the Son of God Himself.

This pamphlet tells much of the love and grace of God our SAVIOUR and should be read and pondered. The solemn words "it is most holy" are remembered throughout, and we feel sure every believer will greatly profit by studying it.

We sincerely hope that this pamphlet will be widely circulated. It is indeed a word in season, which no one should neglect, except at his spiritual peril.

We heartily commend it to all our readers.

---

## To Correspondents

*T.L., Bromley, Kent.* "Is truth relative or static, or both?" Truth is static, if by this you mean unchanging, unchanged. Relativity applies to knowledge of truth, not to truth itself. The nature and extent of our knowledge is determined not merely by the qualities of the objects or subjects apprehended, but necessarily by the conditions of our cognitive powers. At best we apprehend little, but sufficient to teach us how little we do know. For divine truth we are absolutely shut up to what God has pleased to reveal in Holy Scripture, the self-disclosure of God and the revelation of man. The Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. xiii. says, "Now we know in part." Your reference to Newton and Einstein is entirely irrelevant if you mean truth and not merely knowledge, real or supposed. The field of discovery of the secrets of nature, etc., etc., lies open to the patient labour of all possessing sufficient mental tools and industry to work it. But divine truth must from its very nature be received and believed if its relation or relative value to oneself is ever to be known. If this does not answer your query, please write again.

## The Church and the Bible

**A**S regards the Church and the Bible, three questions present themselves for consideration, which, however they may be mutually connected, are perfectly different and distinct from each other. They are:—

- i. The settlement of the *Canon* of Scripture.
- ii. The *preservation* of the Holy Scriptures to the present day.
- iii. Whether, when God's Word is in one's possession, it can be efficacious to the souls of believers, apart from, and even in opposition to, the voice of the Church,\* as it is called.

i. As to the Canon. We need for the present consider only that of the New Testament, which, being established, fixes that of the Old Testament also, in its main divisions, and very nearly its several books.

The Canon then, ultimately and really, depends upon particular and specific human testimony and not on tradition. These two things are totally different from each other. Human testimony to be effective must be original; that is to say, must report the words or acts of the original speaker or actor, and must be proved to be so, by the evidence of witnesses who may be living or dead. If living, their evidence may be oral, as in the earliest days of Christianity; if dead their evidence will be historical; but in both cases it must be circumstantial and adequately supported. Historical evidence, when relating to an event long past, must be documental or inscribed, so as to give contemporaneous testimony (or as nearly so as possible) in a comparatively immutable and permanent form, written or printed statements not being liable to fluctuation and distortion, whereas verbal statements are extremely so, especially as the channel of communication gets longer or more diffuse. Tradition and effective human testimony then are totally different

---

\* Our brother, I think, means chiefly that portion of Christendom which is called Romanism, as appears from the latter part of his paper.—Ed.

things. The former is generally entirely unsupported, and always incapable of proof; the latter is specific, particular and personal (not the less so that we do not know who the persons were: many persons are, however, specified by name in the Scriptures). The former is vague, general, and opposed to other evidence; the latter, definite, circumstantial, and confirmatory. The one is a responsible and solemn asseveration before God and the world of personal and actual experience; the other a general and irresponsible negation of actual experience and the substitution for it of fable. The one, therefore, is imposition, the other truth. Tradition is indispensable, it seems, to the Church, evidence in a court of law. The Church would suspend divine truth upon the former; the world would determine what is true in human matters by means of the latter. In this the world's procedure is a moral one, the Church's an immoral one. Even popular faith differs from tradition, in exact proportion as there is evidence of its being grounded on fact. All certainty depends upon evidence, and evidence must be a personal thing. As regards the settlement of the Canon of Scripture, the Church is indebted to individuals (if indebted to man at all), and not individuals to the Church.

Now there were in existence certain writings, known upon particular and specific evidence to have been written by men used of God to do so. By far the greater proportion of these writings are addressed to persons (often to assemblies of persons) with whom the writer was acquainted. No great number of books were ever promiscuously, and as having equal claims, submitted to the judgment of men, but certain particular writings possessed peculiar and notorious claims, from the time they were received—claims which were never detached from them. The evidence for their genuineness (I allude here to the outward evidence, which itself is logically decisive; but there is likewise an inward evidence of the divine origin of Holy Scripture, which is no less, nay, even more, decisive to those who, through the grace of God, are acquainted with it)

was unofficial, but reliable human—*i.e.* personal—testimony, originated and maintained by divine Providence; and so clear and conclusive, that, with extremely few exceptions, to know that such writings existed was almost to know *which* they were, since the sacred writings created their own fame, as do all the works of God. (Psalm cxlv. 10). As to the few exceptions, the same principle was involved of letting God's Word speak for itself, *i.e.*, letting the claims of what really was God's Word be heard alone; whereas whatever difficulties there were, were produced by the folly and wickedness of men in regard to their own writings (the Apocrypha for instance—the apostolical constitutions, besides a swarm of evidently spurious gospels), which the Church encouraged and availed herself of, but which was permitted by God to a limited extent only, though quite far enough to manifest the unfaithfulness of the Church. The settling the Canon of Scripture was, on the part of the Church, simply an official and formal recognition of already established evidence, not the discovery, still less the creation, of evidence. The Holy Scriptures were written by inspiration, they were identified (so far as man had to do with it) by ordinary but adequate human testimony.

There was no extraordinary *virtue* then in publicly admitting the Holy Scriptures; but, a providential necessity for doing so existing, common honesty alone was required on the part of all concerned—such honesty as is daily required and witnessed in courts of law.

ii. As to the preservation of these writings, the Canon being a settled thing. I say preservation in preference to transmission, for the writings remain—generations change. *We owe the Church then nothing for that, for, in the first place, divine Providence again comes in to watch over the Holy Scriptures, and rendering their destruction as a whole, or inutility, simply impossible.* Witness the case of the Codex Sinaiticus, and the contrary action with respect to the Bible of different sections of the Church, such as Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Which of these contrary actions are we

to regard as *the* act of *the* Church? Again, as it was God who first gave the Church the Bible, so it was God who caused His Word to be owned as such, and who also *restored* it to His people, when the Church deprived them of it. Did the Church tell Wyckliffe or Tyndal to give the people the Word of God, or did they do so in spite of her opposition? Did the Pope commission Luther to preach the gospel, or was the Church against him? The fact is, individual faithfulness and energy, whether in parents or more public teachers, must never be confounded with *Church* action. So far, however, as the Church was concerned, she was undoubtedly responsible to God, not to destroy, corrupt, or withhold His Word, a responsibility she has not acquitted herself of over-well. The Bible, however, is the Church's charter, by which her title may be read by the world. She knows this too well not to take care of it, though, having it, she would make use of it to domineer. The Church would make her dictum more potent than facts, which happily are independent of her (such as the presence and power of the HOLY GHOST, who will set the light upon a candlestick, and reliable history); whereas so potent are these facts that we can not only dispense with the Church's dictum, but, whenever necessary, act in defiance of it with great and manifest blessing.

iii. As to the question whether, when God's Word is in one's possession, the sanction or authority of the Church, as to its being God's, is requisite ere it can be efficacious to one's soul. This question can be best answered by asking another. Has not God a right to speak directly, by means of His written Word, to every human soul? Is not CHRIST the "WORD" of God, *and that for every man*? Did He not say, "the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"? Yet how could it be a witness against a man, if it had never presented itself to his conscience in its true character? Is the immediate Lordship of CHRIST over my soul to be thrown back (*i.e.*, denied) to make room for the intervention of aught else? True, the magistracy, for instance, is an institution of divine appointment,



and in the things of Caesar we have to submit to it; but the Word of God comes to people equally with magistrates, enjoining the former to obey, whilst warning the latter that they are His servants. But blind or unlimited obedience is never enjoined; nor is unlimited power ever given to man. *The things that are Caesar's form the limit of Caesar's jurisdiction, whilst spiritual guides are to be followed only as they follow and obey the LORD.* "Not," says the Apostle Paul, "that we have dominion over your faith." "Endeavouring to commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of CHRIST." The authority of the written Word and of CHRIST are identical, the authority of each being absolutely that of God, and does not that word say, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God"? (Rom. xiv. 12.) Is it possible that the Word and authority of God will be more direct and personal then than now? No! it will indeed be impossible then to avoid it, but more direct or personal then than now it will not be, or judgment would be more plain and personal than grace; God's righteous hatred of sin than His love to the sinner. Judgment will exactly correspond and be commensurate with previous responsibility. The HOLY GHOST is here and presses that Word, whether in result it be for life, or for judgment and eternal death, upon the individual conscience. *Woe to those who would substitute the authority of the Church for that of CHRIST by the Word!* Such is a terrible act of usurpation—the final form in which the *woman* will rule (Rev. xvii.) according to her own will. That she is ruling is true, and has been for ages; and ever have there been witnesses to the truth that her rule and that of CHRIST are irreconcilable with each other. Not till her authority is repudiated therefore can believers say (more emphatically than the Samaritans, for the Samaritan woman told the truth), "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves and know that this is indeed the CHRIST, the SAVIOUR of the world." Not only then is the voice, or assumed authority, of the

Church out of the question, when God and His Word are before us; but the attempt to add her authority to that of God is virtually to deny what God has already done by His Word, in giving and sustaining eternal life by it, and that even in cases where the Church is opposing and opposed. "If any man *desires* to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." (St. John vii. 17.) P.

## On the Fruit of the Spirit

(Gal. v. 22)

THE fruit of the SPIRIT is . . . gentleness (in the German Bible, "friendliness").

A brother once was telling how a whole family began to come to the meetings. He said: "I was in the habit of passing a certain house where I often saw a little girl at the window. I looked up and smiled as I passed on. Next day the child was at the window again. I smiled and nodded and the child smiled back at me. When I passed again, three or four children were at the window. They were smiling and nodding towards me even before I came near. When I took off my hat and greeted them thus, they clapped their hands for very happiness. Next time the mother was standing beside them at the window, and when the children began to nod towards me I did not know what to do. Would I look away and pass by without greeting them? No, I thought, that would be unkind. So I raised my hat, although the lady was quite unknown to me, and bowed, and, lo! the lady bowed in return. Next Sunday she came with the eldest child to the meeting. She had never before been there and I do not know how she discovered where I preached. At any rate, she did not long come alone, but brought her husband with her."

What was it attracted the mother and the children? Why did she find out where this man was preaching? It is very simple. Christianity is not a doctrine merely, true Christianity is a life. The LORD says we have this

life in Him, and this life displays itself; a good tree brings forth good fruit. With a living Christian "fruit" is found, the "*fruit of the Spirit*." Part of this fruit is gentleness or kindness or friendliness (the word comprehends all these meanings). The brother, by his kindly manner, had preached to that family before they heard his voice. A true Christian life with the fruit of the SPIRIT is the best and most powerful sermon. The Christian's life must preach. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (St. Matt. v. 16.) A light of kindliness should always be found with us. The LORD will bring this about by His SPIRIT. May our prayer to the Lord be as Tersteegen has so sweetly said:

As gladly opes the flower to gaze  
 Upon the sun and feel his rays,  
 Give me to turn my heart to Thee,  
 Drink in Thy rays of love and know  
 Thy power in me here below.

(From the German. Trans. T.H.)

## The Prodigal at the Great Supper

(Luke xiv., xv.)

THESE two chapters give us samples of the two worlds—man's world in the first, and the Christian's world in the second.

The LORD JESUS is seen in chapter xiv. to be in man's world, and nothing is according to His mind there. The guests betray the pride of human nature, choosing the chief seat each one for himself, the host betrays the selfishness of the same nature, inviting those who can invite him again, his rich neighbours. The LORD gives a word to both host and guests. Nothing would do for Him, and we may be deeply thankful to find it so—for what would become of us if the heart of CHRIST had not been in perfect collision with all the principles and strivings of the heart of man! Pride surely could not suit Him who had emptied Himself of immeasured,

ineffable glory, and taken the form of a servant; self-seeking could not become Him Who had become poor that others, even His enemies, might be made rich.

Such was man's world to the LORD JESUS. But in chapter xv. He is found in his own world. There He is at the table again, at a feast again. But it is a feast He has prepared for Himself. He is at His own table here, and not at that of the Pharisees. And how has He furnished it, how has He provided it? His toil, His diligence, and His rich, abounding, forgiving, self-sacrificing grace has spread it. The lost sheep is brought home by His own personal toil; the piece of money has been regained by his own diligence; and the prodigal son has been richly and unstintedly welcomed, in spite of all that had happened; just as the home in heaven, CHRIST's world, has been made and furnished by CHRIST's own self-sacrificing toil and diligence.

This is another world surely. This is heaven and not earth. This is God and not man, and again I say, well for us, deeply, eternally well for us, that all this is so. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, said the LORD." (Isaiah lv. 8.)

There are, however, other things in these two chapters, beside this general contrast, which I would look at a little particularly. There are different notices of kindred moral truths which help us much when meditated on together, in the fuller discovery of the mind of the LORD. And, oh, how infinitely valuable the least portion of it, that light as it is, by which we walk through the darkness all around us!

As the LORD was sitting at table in the house of the Pharisee in chapter xiv., and after delivering His Word both to the host and guests, one at the table with Him exclaimed, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."

This was said, I doubt not, in admiration of the LORD. Some new, sudden, indefinite sense of His excellence seems to have visited the heart of this stranger. But I have long time listened to this word as expressing also a fear, that though the kingdom of God has a blessed

place, and would prove itself to be so to all those who might get entrance into it, yet it was no easy matter to do so. This was so, I believe, and surely this is the common thought of nature; and I have long judged that it was the secret of this man's heart at this time.

The LORD at once indites the parable of "the great supper," and by that He shows us (and more directly the man who had just spoken) that the difficulty does not lie with the LORD of that Kingdom, but is to be found in the heart of the sinner who is the bidden guest—for to the sinner, to man as reprobate and departed from God, the field, the oxen, or the wife, present interests and present enjoyments; the gratification of pride, and the like, are far more important than the kingdom with all its glories.

That kingdom was once sold for a mess of pottage; then for a herd of swine; then for thirty pieces of silver, and it is still sold every day for the oxen, the field, or the wife.

This was a full answer to the thought, as I have suggested, which was working in the stranger's mind, when he uttered those words. Surely it is upon nature, corrupt, ruined nature that we have to charge any coming short of the kingdom. The fatlings have been killed; the table is spread, the guests have been bidden; all is ready on God's part, and the door is thrown wide open; but man is indisposed. Here is the hindrance. It lies altogether in ourselves. The god of this world prevails in the heart by one thing or another (2 Cor. iv.). Our corruptions have no alliance with God's presence or God's glories, and if He compel not (as the parable goes on to tell us), man would never sit at His table; the feast in the kingdom would still be despised; and the blessed God would have to see that He had prepared its glories and joys for nothing.

And indeed, He still has to bear a condition of things not very unlike that. He still has to see His house and His kingdom occupied by a people who were naturally averse to Him and who had, by the working of His Spirit, been "made willing." What other host would

put up with such treatment? But GOD is GOD and not man. That tells the secret, and tells the wonder. The wretched, indisposedness of the heart of man has given occasion to divine love, that is to GOD Himself, to be displayed in sending forth the power of the SPIRIT to cure the indisposedness in man, in addition to His sending forth the SON to heal the conditions of man as under condemnation of righteousness. *Grace reigns in the whole scheme.* It has given the SON and the SPIRIT to us, for without both, nothing would be done. No merely bidden one would ever be in the kingdom. They must be brought in; they must be compelled to come, as we see in the further parts of this parable, in the case of the people in the streets and lanes and in the high-ways and hedges. The LORD of the feast must fill the seats with guests, as well as the table with luxuries.

Here, I ask, did you ever enquire what is the process by which those in the "lanes" or under the "hedges" are brought in, or compelled? This may be searched into profitably. Their wretchedness is contemplated in the description given of them. They are halt, and lame, and blind, and I may say they are also homeless, being found along the high roads or under the hedges. But still something more was needed to get them at the feast than their wretchedness, or even mere bidding. They must be brought, or compelled, by another, the servant of the Lord of the table. A simple bidding had already been tried with others, and it had failed. Now there must be compelling.

But how is this process conducted? A very good question to put to ourselves, and I judge that the LORD Himself gives us an answer to it, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, in the next chapter.

In the far country, this poor creature is seen in very great misery. He is as one found in the street or lane, or along the high road or under the hedge. But there he was in his misery, and there he purposed to be if he could by any means manage it. For he struggled with it, and would have supported himself in it by sharing their husks with the swine, or getting something

by begging from his neighbours. But at length, as we read, "he came to himself." This was something new—morally new. His misery had not wrought this. Such a change as this must date itself from a moral source, a spring of power that can search the soul. Just as in the parable of "the great supper," it was something beside the misery of lanes and highways that brought the guests to the feast. It was the compelling by the servant of the LORD of the feast that did that. And so here. The wretchedness left the Prodigal a struggler and a beggar, but the moment came, under some compelling, some action of hidden moral power, when he was brought to know himself, and to remember his father's house. This was the action of One Who serves in the great system of divine grace. It was the visitation, the quickening of the SPIRIT of GOD. It led the Prodigal, as it leads all the elect of GOD, to a right sense of himself, and to a discovery of GOD in His blessedness and goodness. This was what was done in his soul; this is what was done in the Samaritan woman at Sychar; this is what is still done in the souls of all GOD's fore-known people. It was enough in that dear Samaritan—(dear, I call her, because such a witness of divine grace and workmanship)—the drawing and teaching of the FATHER, or the hidden effectual power of the SPIRIT (the SPIRIT of CHRIST working in company with the word of CHRIST), exposed her to herself and then put her in possession of the revelation of JESUS—and all was done. She was from that moment in company with the LORD for eternity, a child of GOD, and an heir of glory. And so with the Prodigal, this beggar of the highway, this inmate of the city's squalid lane, on his coming to himself, on his finding out his real condition and true character, and remembering his father and his father's house, he set out on his journey, and we know the issue.

Then those two parables, as we get them in St. Luke xiv. and xv., are linked together. In the light of each we may read the other, and find fresh and enlarged instructions for our souls. And this may still further appear by another meditation upon them.

In that of chapter xiv., the parable of the great supper, we hear the LORD of the supper telling his servant (as He was sending him forth to compel guests to come in), that His house must be filled (verse 23). There is something very sweet to the heart in this. It intimates the character of the house and of the LORD of it very distinctly. We learn by these words that there was both blessedness and goodness there; the provisions of joy and a heart and desire to share them largely and freely abroad. They tell us that the feast was prepared by a generous as well as a wealthy LORD, who desired to make others happy.

The parable in chapter xv., that of the Prodigal Son, goes, however, still further in the discovering to us the character of the house and of the LORD of it. We have found that the LORD of the house is a FATHER of the returned, self-ruined, miserable prodigal, of the one who had been abroad in the highroads; and that he would be nothing less to him than that. We learn from it also that the house must be filled, not only for the sake of the guests themselves, but for the sake of the host and his household. In the one parable we see that the generous LORD of the feast would fain make others happy by getting them at it; in the other parable we see that the wonderful and blessed LORD of the feast would fain make Himself happy by getting them at it.

This exceedeth, but crowns all. We need look no further. The feast is spread; the guests have been forced in; and yet it is the joy of the LORD of the house to see them there. Though they have cost Him everything, both the riches that spread His table, and the toil and diligence of His servant that has brought in His guests, and the remembrance that the guests in the one parable had been beggars and vagabonds, with nothing in themselves to deck the feast, and that in the other, the guest had been a worthless, good-for-nothing reprobate, who had forfeited all title to be there, is in no wise and in no measure to affect the guests themselves tasting the feast.

The house was filled and the guests were happy;



though all their sins well known. The heart of the MASTER, and the heart of the servants were satisfied; and not a thought of the past is to touch the blessedness of the present, in either the beggars or the vagabonds, or the prodigals who sit at the table. Nay, in the stead of memory being a check, as naturally it would be, it is to be an exhilarator of the heart; and all this because God is God; because He is what He is as the aboundings of His nature, and in the counsels of His grace.

In the light of the two Scriptures found in these two neighbouring chapters, and reading them together, we get the two great discoveries, of ourselves and of God. Nothing can exceed the exposure that is made of the fallen human nature; and nothing can transcend the glorious display of the rich abounding goodness of the divine nature. Man is so morally estranged from all that is worthy, that the poorest passing vanity is enough to beguile his heart from the living God, and even wretchedness will have no power, of itself, to effect his return to God. He will indulge any pleasure, rather than enjoy the LORD; and struggle with any difficulty rather than seek Him. He must be forced to return to Him, mere bidding or invitation avails nothing.

Such is man discovered to be. The Prodigal Son, at the beginning, so to speak, had his piece of ground, and his yoke of oxen, and his wife, and as long as he had them he could do without the FATHER'S house and when he became the drudge of the lane, and the vagabond of the highway, he would struggle on still, if by any shift or management he could.

But God is also discovered in the light of these precious Scriptures. He is revealed to us as One in Whom we can find no straitness; cost, and care, and toil, and diligence are all spent on us. Long-suffering, forgiving grace of the highest order, in its overflowings is exercised towards us. The SON and the SPIRIT are both given, the table spread, the guests compelled and yet welcomed, made even to know that the joy of the house itself depends on their presence. Can anything exceed it? I ask, in the presence of these Scriptures, are we

straitened in God? Tell me, I ask in the presence of the Gospel, are we straitened in Him? Is the conscience of the sinner straitened there? What is it to be taught to know what God has done with its guilt and condemnation? Where are the sins of the sinner, that terrified him and kept him unpurged and in bondage? Has the Gospel for ever quieted all this dismay, and conducted the conscience into a wealthy place? Is the heart straitened? God has made Himself its dwelling place. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him." Could any place be a wealthier place for the heart than that? And as to the understanding; the mind of CHRIST in a saint, the renewed mind has "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" for its occupation and entertainment, its wonder and delight. J.C.B.

---

## On Thoughts—Good or Evil

**W**HAT a subject this is, for do not thoughts produce words, and words actions, so that it is thoughts, whether our own or those of others, which are continually affecting us and those around us? But where should we go but to Scripture to know what our thoughts should be and how to keep from evil ones? But as I write this I cannot but feel what a wonderful thing it is, and how great a proof of the love of God to man that He has vouchsafed to make known to us His thoughts: for is not the Bible the Word of God conveyed to us in human speech through men? We make known our thoughts to one another by speech, so our CREATOR has made known to us His thoughts by words. It must be evident to every thinking person that as God's creatures we are bound to heed the words of our CREATOR to whom we owe life and the power of thought itself. But what a mercy that we have not been left without those words which make known to us the mind of our God. We should have been otherwise in darkness as

to our GOD and CREATOR and our future and the future of the human race. But an all wise CREATOR provided for us.

What a difference there is between GOD's thoughts and man's! The first mention of man's thought in Scripture is in Gen. vi. 5, and there it is the "imagination of the thoughts of his heart only evil continually"! For those who deny the Fall of Man, what plainer proof is there of it? And the imagination of the thoughts is that which precedes thought in what is known as the sub-conscious mind, and how great the power of an all-seeing GOD who knows even that! Again, the LORD knoweth the thoughts of man that they are vanity. (Ps. xciv. 11.) To give an instance from the Old Testament. Naaman, the captain of the host of the King of Syria, doubtless a well-educated man for those times, said: "Behold, I thought he (i.e., Elisha) will come out to me, strike his hand over the place and stand and call on the Name of the LORD his GOD and recover the leper." But GOD's thought of cure was far different; bathing in a despised river and the recovery of the leper, showing how good it was and how effectual.

Now for an instance from the New Testament, of one presumably also an educated man, who "thought within himself" that he had many years to live to "eat and drink and be merry." But in one night all his hopes were cast down to the ground and his plans frustrated by death (St. Luke xii. 16-21). And not only so but in the revelation of the state of the departed which we have in St. Luke xvi. 19-31, it is evident that both the rich man and Lazarus had the power of thought—being conscious both of unhappiness for the former and blessing for the latter, irrespective of their differing degrees of intelligence as men. Then again, as "the preparations (or disposings) of the heart are of man," yet "the answer of the tongue is from the LORD" (Prov. xvi. 1). Well may we marvel at such divine knowledge. Who can read Psalm cxxxix., especially verse 2, without wonder at GOD's omniscience? Also who, if unbelieving, can read such a portion without fear, the fear of a guilty

conscience of judgment to come; even everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD? But how refreshing to turn from man's thoughts, his misunderstanding of God and natural darkness to the Scripture, the Word of God which is light and life to those who believe. If man proves from the Garden of Eden till now that his thoughts are quite contrary to God's, how necessary the new birth is, and that is why it is so plainly set forth for us; and how humiliating to man it is that it must be so. The believer, being born again, has right thoughts about God through His Word, for it is there our SAVIOUR is revealed to us, He Who is the living Word from Whom he gets eternal life, right thoughts and cleansing through His precious blood shed: so that (Heb. ix. 14) with a "conscience purged from dead works" he can read even Psalm cxxxix. without fear through the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the HOLY SPIRIT; experiencing, too, that power of God which is able to "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of CHRIST" (2 Cor. x. 5).

J.C.B.

---

## Songs in Adversity

**T**HE watchman paced the lonely streets with measured beat  
 As midnight chimes were sounding from the city spires,  
 Night's slumb'ring mantle ends a scene of strife and heat,  
 The "Light of Heav'n" has well-nigh quenched its pagan fires.

A city maiden plying with the python's flame  
 Comes, as by chance, upon some strangers in the way,  
 And yields her evil powers before the SAVIOUR's name,  
 Her master's gains now gone, wild tumult closed the day.

Chained, bruised and beaten in the deeper prison den  
 Lay Paul and Silas, victims of a baseless wrong;  
 Hard scourgings raised no thoughts of vengeance in these men,  
 Whose CHRIST-like prayers, from grace-filled hearts, rose up in  
 song.

Earth's thund'rous voice now quakes and drowns the midnight strains,

Hast'ning the wakened gaoler from his threat'ning gloom;  
Blest heavenly power unlocks the prisoners from their chains,  
And saves the trembling gaoler from his hopeless doom.

And still—this gospel follows on life's darkening storm,  
Clearer than rainbow shining from the trailing rain;  
It lights the "Rock of Ages," hope of men forlorn,  
Reveals *His* pierced hands, Who died and rose again.

H.F.

## Some Book Reviews

By J.F.K.

*JEREMIAH—The Tender-Hearted Prophet of the Nations.* By W. Kelly (with foreword by W. J. Hocking). Published by C. A. Hammond, 3 & 4, London House Yard, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4. 2/6.

**I**T seems somewhat remarkable that this pungent little book should have remained hidden for about half a century and only now brought to light. It has such a special message for today that we may well believe that the LORD has in grace permitted it to be published abroad at this juncture. The book is also remarkable from another aspect—it differs considerably from Mr. Kelly's usual style. There is nothing controversial or involved, nothing very intellectual or difficult, but a straightforward word of warning and encouragement to those living in the last phase of the Christian age. It is therefore a very timely message.

The helpful foreword draws our attention to an important fact, namely, that there is an analogy in the moral character between the last days of Judah and the last days of the Church, giving the book of Jeremiah great practical value at the present time.

The prophet had a special commission from JEHOVAH

to speak *to all nations*, but, alas! not for blessing but for chastening and punishment. He was a particularly tender-hearted man, and no doubt it was a great trial for him to pronounce these judgments. Nevertheless, the grace of God continually shines throughout his prophecy and we are constantly reminded that man's extremity is God's opportunity.

As to present-day Christendom, the author is very faithful. He says:—

“There is nothing more certain to bring destruction upon Christendom than the notion of an indefectible security.

“I do not mean security for the soul, for the believer. This assurance is quite right. We cannot too strongly hold the eternal life of the believer; but to apply to the state of Christendom the notion that it will go on indefectibly when God, on the contrary, has warned us in His word that Christendom will fall just like the Jewish state before it, is to be caught by the wiles of the wicked one. Such a notion is precisely the delusion which Satan brings about its total departure from God . . . It was precisely vain confidence in the past that supported the Jews. They assumed that such a thing as the conquest of Jerusalem could never be, and that whatever might be their faults God would never allow them to go completely down into the ditch. But this JEHOVAH did, and He allowed the Gentile to triumph thoroughly over them and over His own sanctuary. But then the very prophets that show the judgment that was coming proclaim the deliverance and restoration that will certainly follow in due time . . . There cannot be restoration of the Jews without the complete judgment of Christendom. And if the present witness becomes apostate, then God will judge it, and when the judgment has taken place He will restore His ancient people.”

What solemn warnings! Blind assumption, however tenaciously held, must not be confused with faith. Assumption is often found hand-in-hand with sloth and

indifference; true faith is always accompanied by works. There is, however, much to encourage in the book, as again and again we are reminded that our strength is in God and He remains ever faithful to His promises.

Many no doubt will with shame admit that they have neglected the reading of this inspired Prophet. Let us hasten to repair this omission, and Mr. Kelly's short synopsis will be of very great value in stimulating interest and helping to apply to ourselves its teaching with much practical profit. We feel sure those who read it will greatly benefit by it. We commend it heartily to all our readers.

\* \* \*

*THE MESSAGE OF THE CONSTELLATIONS.* By H. M. Bentley. (Thynne & Co. Ltd., 28/30, Whitefriars Street, Fleet Street, London, E.C. Price 2/6.)

WE approached this book with a somewhat biassed mind, but had not, however, read many pages before we rejoiced to see that the authoress is a true believer in the LORD JESUS CHRIST and accepts Him as her SAVIOUR. This fact sheds a welcome and reverent light upon her reasonings, and permits the reader to consider the somewhat startling ideas propounded.

Mrs. Bentley suggests that the story of Redemption, the sufferings of our LORD and His final victory were all written in the Zodiac signs before ever man was created. We know, of course, that the Heavens declare the glory of the LORD, but the writer suggests that God gave names to the constellations, revealing in the story of the heavens His divine purposes towards man. Her theory is that the Enemy has through the ages distorted these names and figures with the grotesque signs of the Zodiac as we know them. An interesting, almost fascinating, case for this is made out, claiming support by numerous quotations from Scripture, but the imagination plays a large part in her scheme of interpretation.

It is blessedly true that God in times past spoke *in divers manners* to the fathers, but in these last days He

has spoken *unto us* by His SON. It is always extremely interesting to discover, in bygone ages, pointers to the glorious fact that GOD sent His SON to be the SAVIOUR of the world. But we should surely guard against the snare of being occupied with the fascinating task of unravelling the mysteries of the sign-posts, and thereby missing the fully glory of the very One to whom we are directed. Nature, for example, abounds in beautiful illustrations of the Resurrection; and blessing may surely be derived from contemplating the wonderful works of GOD around us; but we are ever recalled to the knowledge that there can be no full joy and blessing apart from CHRIST Himself.

Nevertheless, we have no fear in recommending this book to those who will find the stars an interesting study, and have ourselves enjoyed reading it. The authoress is certainly to be congratulated on the lucid way that she has presented her case, as a very difficult subject is treated both with ingenuity and reverence.

---

## To Correspondents

*Anxious, Plymouth.* The Scriptures, applicable, surely, are Matt. v. 32; xix. 9; 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11, 27; and in an Assembly where the Lordship of CHRIST is truly owned, His word will be final on every matter that arises.

*A.H.P.* As you state that certain Scriptures are "grossly perverted and much misunderstood," it follows that you know the true bearing of these, and that they present no *personal difficulty* to yourself. On page 2 of the cover you will see we only offer what help we may be able to give to "*readers who have difficulties*," so must beg to be excused from giving "the real and true interpretation" desired. Our Publisher can supply many helpful tracts by the late Wm. Kelly on these, and many other disputed points of Christian doctrine with which we could not deal briefly in this column.

*S.H., Woolwich.* "Can a true believer be eternally lost?" No. Our LORD in John x. 27, 28, settles that definitely; but no one can be accounted a true believer who does not "hear My voice and follow Me" as the same Scripture teaches as being the marks of "My Sheep."



## Grace, Guidance, and Government

TO the real Bible student, any Old Testament character or set of circumstances recorded there, at once raises the fourfold question suggested by such New Testament scriptures as Rom. xv. 4, and 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. In the case of Jacob and the story of his long and very chequered career, for example, we inquire what “doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness” can be learned from these “things written aforetime for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope”?

- (1) What “*doctrine*,” i.e., teaching, substance of doctrine, does Jacob’s history specially emphasise?
- (2) What “*reproof*,” lit. conviction or assured belief springs from it?
- (3) What “*correction*,” i.e., setting right, does it apply to us?
- (4) What “*instruction in righteousness*”—information as to rightness—does it supply?

To these questions the student finds the following answers:

1. The true *doctrine* as to the *grace, guidance* and *government* of GOD in connection with His people is set out, and profusely illustrated by the life and experiences of Jacob.
2. The “*assured belief*” springs from this that the Unchanging One still deals on these principles with human lives, and so with ourselves.
3. The “*setting right*” or adjustment of our human thoughts is made by this revealed truth.
4. The *instruction in righteousness* as the end and aim of God’s dealings with all His people emerges clearly as the story of Jacob’s life is unrolled before our eyes in the inspired page of Scripture history.

To understand the beginning of the story one needs to listen to the end of it when the aged patriarch says, “Few

and evil have been the days of the years of my life.”  
 “GOD ALMIGHTY appeared unto me and blessed me.”  
 “GOD which fed me all my life long unto this day, the  
 Angel which redeemed me from all evil.”

A very human character indeed is this whose life story recorded by inspiration of God bristles with warnings and abounds in encouragements and lessons never more needed than at this time by ourselves.

The *importance of this history* may be inferred from the position it occupies in the Bible. Some 2,500 public references and over 300 private mentions give prominence to one whose story also occupies nearly half of the book of Genesis. Then the *permanence of the blessings* promised him is assured by the character of the Blessor, for “I am the LORD: I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed” (Mal. iii. 6); and the persistence of the “Jacob” characteristics in the character of mankind — in his descendants particularly — gives his character an added interest to the Bible student.

God’s dealings with Jacob may be summed up as *grace, guidance and government*; his personal history also serving to instruct us as to the operation of these things in any human life. By the time his story is finished Jacob “the supplanter” has become “Israel a prince with God”; and the one-time defaulter becomes not only the blessing of his personal descendants but also of the then world monarch, Pharaoh. He who has been the man of fears, plans and artifices to obtain temporal advantages has become a man of faith who dies in full assurance of the promised blessing and worthy to be reckoned with Abraham and Isaac, the heirs of the promise.

During the years in which this transformation of character is taking place there are five recorded significant occasions when God appears to Jacob, namely, in pure grace at Bethel (Gen. xxviii.); in guidance and government with a promise at Padan-aram (ch. xxxi.); again in grace and government producing self-knowledge and confession at Jabbok and Peniel (ch. xxxii.);

at Shechem again in guidance and government (ch. xxxv.); and then at Bethel in more grace, and with a yet further revelation of Himself as *El-Shaddai*, i.e., the All-sufficient One, the Name of God first used in connection with what led to changing the name of Abram into that of Abraham.

It is well at the outset to recognise that neither by birth nor by character was Jacob entitled to God's special blessing. As in our own case, all was grace, that is to say free unmerited favour on the part of God. Since man's extremity is proverbially God's opportunity, Jacob is at his wits' end when the grace of God brings him some knowledge of His goodness. Conscious of his sin and with the future dark and doubtful on account of this, he is seen in midst of danger as what his descendants confessed in after years when bringing their baskets of first-fruits as thankofferings in the promised land, "A Syrian ready to perish, was my father."

He is a wanderer, self-exiled from his father's house by his own wrongdoing; lonely; friendless; guilty of incredible meanness and deceit; has a bad conscience which makes him a prey to dread of just retribution; presenting no single attractive feature in his character; and just then it is that God chooses to reveal Himself as near to him in the day of his distress and as a Blessor. In his fitful slumber he dreams and sees presented to his gaze a ladder set up on earth reaching to heaven; true picture to opened eyes now of the One Mediator, and all the activities of grace connected with Him. (cf. St. John i. 47-51. 1 Tim. iii. 5, 6).

The story is one of the most exquisite pictures in the Old Testament of the grace of God. Surely there is nothing more wonderful in human experience than the grace of God shown to utterly unworthy men and Jacob is an illustration of this very thing.

It is also most blessedly true still that it is by the sovereign grace of God men are saved now. (Eph. ii. 8, Titus ii. 11-13).

In a dream a ladder (more strictly something stepped, suggested, too, possibly by the physical condition of the country in that part) is presented to Jacob's gaze, as his eyes closed in slumber, reaching from his very feet right up to the heavens. It appears as a busy highway thronged with God's messengers who are sent forth to be ministering spirits to those who shall be heirs of salvation. God stands above this heavenly ladder in all His gracious majesty while the angels ascend and descend in activities of service.

What, however, becomes clear and certain to the poor, forlorn wanderer is that a blessing, full, free and unconditional, is being assured to him, based upon nothing less than the purpose and promise of ALMIGHTY GOD. Being of God, it exactly suited Jacob's present need, for alone, he sees the angels of God near him (cf. Heb. i. 14); and, although friendless, God assures him with "*I am with thee*"; uncertain as to the future, the promise made is—"*I will keep thee*"; keenly feeling his exile and separation from his father's house, the word is spoken, "*I will bring thee again into this land*"; and, while he is at last experiencing the sad consequences of his own folly and mistakes (a time when the heart is always most ready to doubt God's grace) God says, "*I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*"

Faith, the decisive factor in his life, was now working, though but feebly, for in his vow to God Jacob slips a characteristic clause about food and raiment. It is so much easier apparently to trust God for eternal blessings rather than for temporal daily needs, our own hearts being witnesses in this matter.

Conscious now of God's goodness and grace to him, Jacob feels that something should be given in return, if only a tithe. But the great Giver was seeking Jacob not his gift. "My son, give Me *thy heart*."

Bethel certainly marks the beginning of Jacob's spiritual life; and on his deathbed he mentions what happened there as being the most important thing in

his very eventful life, it having been his first experience of God's grace. Later in the same chapter (xlvi. 3), comprehensively, concisely, and yet with great discrimination, he says: "God, before Whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God Which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel Which redeemed me from all evil," etc., and thus also testifies to the guidance and government of God, which always follow upon His grace.

The Apostle Paul also at the close of his life of strenuous devotedness recalls with grateful recollection the exceeding abundant grace of the LORD JESUS in the mercy shown him at his conversion. (1 Tim. i. 12-16).

While Jacob's forefathers, Abraham and Isaac, had their wanderings inside the land of promise, with Jacob himself it was quite the reverse. In this feature of his history Jacob typifies the Jewish people at the present time; away from their own land, they are scattered amongst the Gentiles, and officially set aside from being God's people. They are, however, as Jacob was, still the objects of God's providential care, and will be restored in a future day to enjoy the promises made to their forefathers.

Jacob, unlike his son Joseph, who is a type of CHRIST throughout his life, only typifies CHRIST in the circumstances of his marriage. Jacob loved Rachel, who we may say represents the Jews; but as it was Leah first, so now the Gentiles are being blessed, and not the Jews, exclusively (Rom. xi. 11, etc.). In his sojourn in Padan-aram, neither tent nor altar appears, and there is little enough to choose between the conduct of Jacob and Laban as men. Each endeavours to outwit the other in craftiness, and Bethel, with its promises and vows, quickly seems to be entirely forgotten by Jacob.

Before leaving this chapter on the grace of God shown in his life, we would remark that

- (1) Grace reveals the greatness, goodness and glory of God. It did so to Jacob and it does so to every child of God through faith in CHRIST JESUS.

- (2) Grace restores communion with God for man by unexpected ways wholly provided by God. "Of Him, and through Him and to Him are all things."
- (3) Grace adapts itself to the circumstances, needs and conditions of unworthy sinners like Jacob and ourselves.
- (4) Grace creates confidence and awakens spiritual response to God in such unlikely subjects as Jacob and ourselves, qualified neither by birth nor by character naturally for such amazing favour.
- (5) Grace educates us as to the greatness, goodness and glory of God in His purposes of blessing for Jacob and ourselves, too.

His descendants, when brought into the promised land of blessing, prefaced their thanksgivings and thankofferings with the reminder of what grace had wrought, for said they solemnly in the presence of God's appointed representative, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father."

"Of grace then let us sing,  
A wondrous glorious theme."

(*To be continued, D.V.*)

## What Peter Learnt at Joppa

THE tenth chapter of Acts gives an account of how God brought together two men, the one born and bred a Jew, but now an apostle of CHRIST; the other a Roman officer who acknowledged God and acted up to his light; and how the meeting was accompanied by great blessing to both.

In the first century there were three outstanding races in the civilised world, the Roman, the Greek and the Jew. The Roman was the man of rule and law. He had mastered the civilised world; and *the straight line* might symbolise the direct, practical, masterful mentality of the Roman.

The Greek was the man of thought and of language. He was the philosopher, the scientist, the artist, and the trader of the first century. He had a keen and supple intellect, and a beautiful and flexible language, which was a kind of *esperanto*, being commonly spoken and written by the ordinary man throughout the eastern half of the great Roman Empire; and the *curve* might be used as an illustration of Greek mentality.

The Jew was the man of revealed religion, and proud of his ancient race, and very proud of his ancient law; he combined religion with patriotism, and as a rule was far from being spiritual. He stood for the acknowledgment of the true God, and for conscience towards the ETERNAL. He was, however, contemptuous and hostile in his attitude towards non-Jews, by whom he was in turn intensely disliked for his exclusiveness, arrogance, and business acumen. His mentality might be symbolised by the *circle*.

While the messengers from Cornelius were on their way to Joppa, Peter went up on the housetop to pray. In chapter vi. of Acts, Peter, in addressing the Church at Jerusalem with regard to the appointment of the seven "deacons," says, "we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word, "that is, the apostles gave themselves to prayer as to a definite work. *For praying is working*. Sometimes prayer is easy and delightful; at other times it is a laborious if not painful effort. Circumstances differ, and we have no right to say that prayer is "of the flesh" if it means effort and toil.

Prayer builds the road along which the Divine blessing travels to us. Prayer releases the blessing held in suspense. Prayer causes the attitude of blessing to become an act of blessing. It may be going too far to say that God does nothing except in answer to prayer, but we all know from experience that "restraining prayer we cease to fight."

Here we are face to face with one of the phenomena of the Christian life. We know that we should pray

more; and yet, we find it so hard to put into practice what we know is right! It surely means that Satan does his utmost to hinder the people of God from praying; and is a witness to the truth of the hymn, "And Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees."

Well, Peter engaged in prayer; but, being quite human, he became very hungry. His body was in a tent of canvas to keep out the rays of the sun; but his soul was in a tent of flesh, and, apostle though he was, the demands of nature became claimant. Did he feel at all irritated as he waited for the meal that was being prepared? The suggestion is neither unreasonable nor irreverent. For Peter was a man of like passions as ourselves, and there were in him, as there are in each of us, qualities other than those portrayed in stained-glass windows.

Then Peter fell into a trance; and while in this state (and who would say that God cannot use such a state to-day?) he had a vision of the sheet let down from heaven and containing a variety of animals, reptiles and birds. He heard a voice bidding him satisfy his hunger. His tradition-determined objection, "I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean," is silenced by the rebuke, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common"; and the lesson which Peter was arriving at, as he pondered the meaning of the vision, he soon had opportunity to put into practice. For the messengers from Cornelius had by now arrived in Joppa, and were asking for Peter. Being Divinely assured that he should go with them, he set out for Cesarea, where he found Cornelius and his household eagerly awaiting him. The sequel we have recorded in the latter part of the chapter and is well known to our readers.

The fact is, that Peter needed to learn more fully the meaning of John iii. 16. His soul was still narrowed by Jewish nationalism, and he needed a special revelation to enlarge his heart and make him willing to take



the message of salvation to the non-Jews. He was later criticised by the tradition-minded leaders of the Church at Jerusalem, but when he replied by saying, in effect, "Look at the facts, brethren," his critics were silenced.

Peter's vision and the lesson it brought to him enlarged his spirit and gave him a greater and more accurate knowledge of God. It is significant that it is this practical, warm-hearted man who, in his second Epistle, emphasises the importance of the knowledge of the LORD. In the Christian life the vital, experimental knowledge of God is nothing if not practical. And it has ever been so, in every age of the world's history. That much-tried saint of long ago, Job, knew the LORD better after his ordeal; and with greater humility there came greater peace and serenity of soul. "They who know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee." The better we know the LORD, the better business shall we do with Him in prayer. It was Paul's ruling ambition that he might know CHRIST, and the power of His resurrection, and *he* is able to add, "and the fellowship of His sufferings."

To know the LORD, and to grow in such knowledge is a feast to the soul; and, such knowledge is always spiritual "power." "The joy of the LORD is your strength." But the joy of the LORD is the fruit of the knowledge of the LORD; so that we Christian believers can to-day say to each other: "The knowledge of the LORD is your strength." We grow by the knowledge of God. (Col. i. 10.)

Peter's contact with the seeking Cornelius was a blessed and fruitful one. The apostle was prepared by prayer for a revelation of the LORD's mind; he obeyed the heavenly vision; and was thus used to bring rich blessing to the God-fearing Roman. Should we not also expect that our daily contacts with God's people and maybe here and there with unconverted souls, will be blessed to bring fruit to other lives—and our own?

E.A.

## Cheering Notes from an Invalid's Diary

*The writer, a young lady, was suddenly cut off from a very active life, and for five years compelled to join the band of "shut-in" ones of whom the world takes no account.*

"THIS living, wonderful God our Father knows all about us, for 'the very hairs of your head are all numbered' (St. Luke xii. 7). He knows the difficulties of our lives, and He alone can help us come through them, and gain the lessons to be learnt from them, and so become fit for Him to use in His service."

\* \* \*

"Praise His Name, He not only *can* save all who turn to Him, all who have answered to His call, but *does* do so. No one will ever know here the full extent of God's watchful care and His guidance of those who trust Him fully as they go about their daily lives. So let us remember moment by moment that God is not One afar off in the heavens. It may seem at times that the wicked flourish and have the best of things here, while the chief occupation of the Christian seems to be that of just putting up with all the evils done to him by others—but this is only for a little while. We must have patience, praising and thanking God always for all things, loving and blessing others as our LORD told us to do in His Sermon on the Mount . . . so shall we live to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living."

\* \* \*

"Is it possible after years of ill-health, after months of pain—home, food, clothes supplied by the kindness of friends—to praise God all day; to thank Him for His goodness when one goes to bed, at night; to wake up happy in the night, or in the morning and praise Him for His goodness? *Yes, it is.*

Why? Because the one who honestly wants to do God's will above all things, who has repented of his

sins and confessed them, accepting God's full forgiveness through CHRIST, knows that 'all things work together for good to those that love God' (Rom. viii. 28). Not some things but 'all things,' not only the good things but everything—so one *can* praise and bless God at all times. Not that the Christian believes that God sent pain and all the unpleasant things of life—they came as the Bible says, through sin entering into the world. But He allows them and they can only work good for the real Christian.

"Maybe some of the suffering of various kinds comes into our lives that the works of God (cf. St. John ix.) may be seen in the removing of them. They will be removed at the right time, at the right moment, when we shall have learned the lessons they have come to teach us. Lessons maybe we have to learn of faith in God, patience, long-suffering, gentleness and of strength to bear, and of the power of God to sustain and also heal. Maybe it is in our case, too, that 'the works of God may be manifest in us.' If this is so, how we can rejoice, and be exceedingly glad in living only to do His will."

\* \* \*

"We praise Him and thank Him for giving us the patience and courage to bear our burden and to just hold on tight to a faith that God is causing all things to work together for the good of each one of us."

\* \* \*

"Life seems to be a big school. Before we are converted we live under the mastership of the Evil One, and yet life may often seem to be very pleasant, since he wants us to be content to remain under his rule.

"The day comes when one hears the Voice of God, and feels God drawing near, and maybe troubles have come; and the SPIRIT of God awakens one, causing him to turn to God, to repent of sins, confessing them and then start the new life under the new MASTER. Then the soul begins to learn all kinds of new lessons. Simple natures often grow very quickly, but others find things difficult. Often the greater the natural abilities and

powers before one's conversion the more difficult after because there may be so much to give up. Many find it easier to live a half-and-half Christian life, living for CHRIST in some ways yet conforming to the world in others.

"No one can live for God by their own efforts; it means a constant turning to Him again and again. Happy is the one who forms such a habit, for it *does* become a habit, and a most valuable one, helping us to do God's will. Often at the beginning, old habits of thinking, speaking and acting may prove too strong for us, and we fall again and again, only remembering to call on God afterwards instead of before we think, speak and act. But He is very gracious, and forgives as we confess our failure and grants us another opportunity.

"How careful we need to be when we begin to show some of 'the fruit of the SPIRIT,' for the Evil One still waits 'to catch us out' if possible, and spiritual pride is very subtle."

*(To be continued, D.V.)*

---

## On Spiritual Guidance

*(From a paper, bearing no name, issued in Dublin  
fifty years ago.)*

*"I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye. Be ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee" (Psalm xxxii. 8, 9).*

**U**NDER the blessedness of transgression forgiven, sin covered, and iniquity not imputed, comes in a new order of guidance—the guidance of the eye; even the eye of Him Who has justified freely by His grace, through the redemption which is in CHRIST JESUS.

When it pleased JEHOVAH to redeem Israel out of Egypt, He Himself became their *guide*. Israel needed guidance: and JEHOVAH went before them in a pillar of

a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. He thus went before them to search out a resting-place for them in the wilderness. This surely was blessed guidance—in the strict keeping with the character of redemption then manifested—a shadow of a far deeper reality—but it was not *intelligent guidance*. There was no communion of soul with JEHOVAH needed to apprehend this guidance: “The cloud of the LORD was *in the sight* of Israel throughout all their journeys.”

But now, the very end of redemption is to bring us into communion with the thoughts and ways of God; and such a guidance as that of Israel would not be suitable to our standing. “The servant knoweth not what his master doeth.” He goes and comes at his bidding, but he knows not the reason of either. Such a character of obedience would not suit those who know the blessedness of transgression forgiven, and are thereby admitted into the very thoughts and counsels of God. “We have the mind of CHRIST.” The obedience now suited to the believer is *intelligent obedience*, “understanding what the will of the LORD is,” “proving His good and perfect and acceptable will.”

How needed is communion with God to guide the conduct of a saint! And it is by neglect of this communion that we bring much discipline on ourselves. God will have His way with us. But we are as the horse or mule, which have no understanding: we do not understand the will of God, because we study not the guidance of His eye: we are led by circumstances, not by the SPIRIT. Wherever the SPIRIT of the LORD is, there is liberty. We walk in a large place, when we walk before the LORD. But how often do we turn, each one to his own way, and then God has His bit and bridle for us. This He is wont *to use for His enemies*: “Because thy rage against Me, and thy tumult, is come up into Mine ears, therefore will I put My hook in thy nose, and My bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way which thou camest.” Alas: how constantly do we as His saints, to our shame be it spoken,

need the bit and bridle to turn us back by the way we have come. Who is there that has not to confess, that *the right path*, which would have been readily found had heed been given to the guidance of the eye, has been reached after much painful and humbling discipline? Amidst the manifold proofs of present conscious weakness, this appears very prominent—the little confidence which saints have of spiritual guidance in their several paths. They walk not as those consciously led of the SPIRIT. Among many, indeed, such guidance is not acknowledged even as a principle; providential guidance (if so it may be called, for providential control over circumstances, or our own waywardness, can hardly be guidance) is alone regarded. But even where the principle of intelligent spiritual guidance is maintained as the privilege of the saint, how readily do we take hold of the providential ordering as our ground of action. Hence we tread uncertainly, or we follow the steps of others; but this is walking by sight and not by faith, and arises from the habit of using our blessedness only as a shelter, and not as that which introduces us into the presence of GOD. It is a beautiful description of the Thessalonians, that their “work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our LORD JESUS CHRIST” was “*in the sight of GOD and our FATHER.*”

---

### “As Jesus Passed By”

“**A**S JESUS passed by” a story of blessing became possible; a blessing unsought truly, yet a blessing received and resulting in the bold outspoken confession of the gracious Blesser. The grace of GOD in CHRIST is illustrated most vividly by the story in St. John ix.; by the manner in which our LORD bestowed the blessing of physical sight upon the man blind from birth.

The prologue consists of what CHRIST *saw*; what the disciples *saw*; and what others *saw* as they passed by. “And as JESUS passed by He saw a man”—*a man as he was*, for it is thus He always sees men. Not as they wish

to appear to others; not as they really think themselves to be; nor even as their neighbours see them, *but just exactly as they are*. "The LORD seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance; but the LORD looketh on the heart."

Not our reputation, but our real character is seen by Him, "for all things are naked and open in the sight of Him with Whom we have to do."

An old writer puts it: "We *are*, just what we *are in* God's *sight*; just that and nothing else at all."

Mercifully, as this story illustrates, in His grace:—

"He hath with a piteous eye  
Looked upon our misery."

For in seeing the man as he was, CHRIST saw a man as men were never meant to be—blind from birth. And as He looks upon mankind at large He sees us to be very far from what God intended man to be. Man made in God's image was a creature meant to know God, to glorify Him, and to enjoy Him for ever—but alas! man as he is, we as we are by nature are far from this. "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts find no rest till they find it in Thyself." This is not only the language virtually of Augustine in his "Confessions," but the deep experience of every awakened and exercised heart. For naturally man does not know God, being blinded by the god of this world "lest the light of the glorious gospel of CHRIST Who is the image of God should shine unto them." Man does not glorify Him but by every means seeks to glorify himself or to receive honour from other men; neither does man by nature find enjoyment in God, but on the contrary dreads His presence, as did our first parents in the Eden story because of disobedience and wilful transgression. Sin which thus entered into the world has marred man and separated him from God, so that man is not what God meant him to be, but alienated now from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him. As our LORD looked at this man, He not only saw him as he

was, and as he was meant to be; but the man as he might become, through the blessing which His "passing by" made possible. CHRIST always sees not merely the man that is, but the man that may be. His greeting of Peter when brought by Andrew is both typical and significant. "Thou art Simon the son of Jonas: thou shalt be called Cephas—a stone."

Not what Peter actually was, but what Peter would become; the man CHRIST could and would make of him.

So He looks on us; seeing us just as we really are in the sight of GOD; seeing us as we were never meant to be; and yet seeing us as, through His "passing by," we may yet become. *"For ye know the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor; that ye through His poverty might be rich."*

Another part of the prologue or foreword to the story is what the disciples saw as they passed by. They saw a man blind from his birth, true; but they only saw in him an interesting subject for religious discussion—the philosophy of the case—Why? How? Whose fault? "Master," say they, "who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

We are interested; we are curious to know why it happened; and now is surely a most opportune moment for discussing the matter. Their enquiry may well serve to remind disciples of CHRIST and others that philosophy even tintured by religion, while it may interest the mind and engage the attention in the problem of evil—its origin—why permitted—the cause—yet utterly fails to deal with the sad result—the actual need of the soul. Something more than religion and philosophy is needed here—the works of GOD must be made manifest by the SON of GOD the SENT ONE of the FATHER.

A further thing to note is what the other passers-by saw in the man blind from birth. They only saw an object of charity; a poor unfortunate victim of circumstances needing money or temporal help for his daily wants. This may remind us that philanthropy, while it



may and does alleviate the temporal wants of suffering humanity, does not in any way touch the primal need and cause of mankind's sad plight. Nothing but the passing by of JESUS with seeing eye, compassionate heart and healing power can do this.

The story itself falls naturally into four parts:

1. The passing by of our LORD which made the blessing possible.
2. The blessing itself springing from CHRIST's own compassion.
3. The blessing received through the obedience of faith.
4. The blessing leading to confession of CHRIST with all its consequences.

The first of these, the passing by of our LORD and the blessing thereby made possible for the man born blind, may well suggest to our minds that far more momentous "passing by" when He passed by angels for the express purpose of blessing the race of mankind blind from birth.

What a "passing by" was this! "For verily, He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham."

"He held the highest place above,  
Adored by all the sons of flame;  
Yet such His self-denying love—  
He laid aside His rank and came"

as "SON OF MAN" to seek and to save that which was lost. The DAYSPRING from on high, through the tender mercy of our GOD, visited mankind sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death; mankind by nature children of wrath, exposed to peril here and doom hereafter because of its dark and sinful state; mankind unable to extricate itself by any means of its own from the sad plight into which it had fallen. So into this scene of gloom came the LIGHT of the world, the LIFE of men: "for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten SON,

that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (St. John iii. 16.)

Hence our blessed SAVIOUR "passed by" angels, becoming MAN that He might die for sinful men, and bring redeemed men into everlasting union and communion with GOD on a basis of perfect and unquestioned righteousness.

The greatest of all blessings has been made possible for mankind, but only by the "passing by" of the LORD JESUS CHRIST to the Cross where by His own blood—His Atoning Death—He made complete atonement to GOD and found eternal redemption for all His people.

Secondly, the story in St. John ix. shows that the blessing bestowed sprung from CHRIST's unsought compassion for the man. *He* saw the need; *He* did what was necessary to meet it; *He* spoke the word creating faith to be healed—everything was of *Him*. So in the great matter of the soul's eternal welfare, "*Salvation is of the LORD.*" In purpose, plan, performance and proclamation—salvation is of the LORD.

In bringing sinners out of nature's darkness into GOD's marvellous light, everything is of GOD; and so in this story the SENT ONE of GOD it is Who sets the whole train of blessing in motion, bringing healing to the body and blessing to the soul of the man born blind.

So in the case of each true believer, when the eyes are opened to our need and to CHRIST's work meeting that need, they without any reserve, but with much grateful assurance exclaim:—

"Jesus paid it *all*:  
All to *Him* I owe;  
Sin had left the crimson stain,  
He washed it white as snow."

The blessing, too, was received through the obedience of faith, and this is ever the divine method by which souls are brought out of nature's darkness into GOD's marvellous light. The LORD made clay and touched the seat of the man's life-long disability; He also spoke the word which started the man on the way of blessing.

By what our LORD did on the Cross, and by what our LORD said, souls believing on Him receive remission of sins, eternal life, and enjoy peace with God.

*"Come unto Me and I will give you rest"* is His word. All who believe Him and come to Him receive the rest He promises. This is the obedience that brings blessing. The Pool of Siloam speaks of Him—the SENT ONE of GOD, for the FATHER sent the SON to be the SAVIOUR of the world. The application by faith of what He is to what I am in all my blindness and need—just as the blind man applied the water to his eyes in obedience to the word of CHRIST—is just what changes my condition from night to day spiritually.

"Go wash at His bidding, and light will arise,  
The Light of the world is Jesus."

Lastly, the story is of a blessing entailing confession of the Blessor, whatever the consequences, as the man soon discovered. That there was a real difference was clear to all who had known him earlier. The neighbours saw it and remarked upon it; he himself gladly confessed it. To any who questioned him among the friends and neighbours he gave a plain, unequivocal answer: "A man called JESUS opened my eyes. He said unto me, Go wash in the Pool of Siloam; and I went and washed and received my sight." There were some who hated the BLESSER, and hence opposed the testimony of the man born blind to the One Who had given him sight.

But this only became the occasion of an ever-growing sense of His greatness, with a steadily-increasing confession of the gracious power that had brought him out of the darkness and disability in which he had lived for so long.

So we find a bold and costly avowal of discipleship made as the man asks his inquisitors: Will ye also be His disciples? The implication is, "I am one myself."

Of course there was the price to pay for this open confession and challenge. They reviled him and cast

him out; so he finds himself sharing the lot of the SENT ONE of GOD Who came to His own and His own received Him not.

To know the full salvation of GOD there must be confession of CHRIST as LORD, and belief that GOD raised from the dead the One Who died for our sins on the Cross. (Rom. x. 10.)

But JESUS heard that they had cast him out, and sought him. When He had found him, He said to him, "Dost thou believe on the SON of GOD?"

A well-known Voice; he had heard it bidding him go the road to blessing when in his native blindness; but now the hitherto unseen Face of the One to Whom he owed it all was before his opened eyes. The story closes, as the story of every true believer *will* close; in CHRIST's blessed company face to face with Him Who loved us—a worshipping disciple. W.G.T.

---

## Thoughts

*(From the German. Trans. T.H.)*

**O**UR duties. Where there is a duty, there also must be a will; and where there is a will there is also a way. Your duty demands just as much as you can, not as much as you would like. Where there is a duty, there is also strength, for GOD strengthens the hands of the faithful. He who abides in the place of duty, abides in the place of blessing!

---

The most humble and the most humbled are the most richly blessed.

---

Lukewarmness and idleness make a prickly pillow, on which no one can find real rest.

---

The way in which the child of GOD is led remains much of a riddle to him; that which is divine cannot be fully understood. Faith waits for the day which will make clear many a night of the pilgrim pathway.

## The Church at Antioch

**A**NTIOCH in Syria was the third town in the great Roman Empire. It had a population of about half a million, consisting of various nationalities, including the haughty Roman, the clever Greek, the lazy Syrian, and the exclusive Jew. It was famous for its commerce, its wealth, its pleasure, its vice, and its wit. As it occupied a strategic position, where the Western world met the Eastern, the "Queen of the East" was a very suitable centre for early Christian missionary enterprise. Antioch was the cradle of the early Gentile Church.

The foundation of the Christian Church at Antioch was the indirect result of persecution in Judea. The disciples were scattered in various directions, and some made their way to Antioch. "And the hand of the LORD was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the LORD." Some of the streets of Antioch were celebrated for their magnificence; but we do not suppose that it was in any of these thoroughfares that the Christians had their meeting-place or places. It was probably in some humble quarter of the big city that our LORD's disciples assembled. In their midst, however, there was an atmosphere, a peace, a serenity, a purity, a benevolence, that contrasted vividly with the glare and restless bustle and quest for pleasure that marked the lives of the ordinary citizens of the town. So that when Barnabas arrived from Jerusalem he "saw the grace of God" and "was glad."

As the number of our LORD's disciples increased, the early Church lost much of its Jewish character, and a new name arose that distinguished the believers from the Jews as well as from the pagans. To the Jews our LORD's followers were known as Nazarenes or Galileans. Amongst themselves they went by the name of believers, disciples, brethren. So that the new name of "Christian" probably originated with the heathen. It was an insolent nickname given in jest by some witty citizen of Antioch. But the name remained, and the mortal put on immor-

tality; whatever may be the value then given to the name "Christian," for 1900 years it has stood for what is best in the world.

It is interesting to recall that other names which have distinguished godly persons were given by "outsiders," who thus vented their scorn on true piety. "Puritan" and "Methodist" are examples.

Five prophets and teachers are named as leading the Church at Antioch. They included one who was probably a black man, Barnabas, the ex-farmer of Cyprus, and Saul, who although mentioned last in Acts xiii. 1, became first in devotedness to the LORD, in missionary activity, in privilege, and in suffering.

"Is yours a strong Church?" a believer was asked. "Yes," was the reply. "Are you many in fellowship?" "No, we are rather few." "Are you then all wealthy?" "No, we are all poor." "What do you mean, then, by calling yours a strong Church?" "Well," was the reply, "we are all devoted to the LORD; we are all active in His service; *and we are all at peace with one another*, and such a Church is strong whether consisting of seventeen or seven hundred." For a while, at all events, the Church at Antioch was united and devoted and active in Gospel enterprise; and it became the starting-place of Paul's missionary journeys.

Let us now take a brief look at the real inwardness of this prosperous Church. They "ministered to the LORD." They realised that true Christian service is the service of CHRIST. They took their directions from Him, and at the same time *were in sympathy with each other's work*.

They "fasted." Their fasting was probably literal. Physical fasting might in some cases be useful even in these more northerly latitudes, for a clogged body induces a clogged mind and a lethargic spirit. The denial of things lawful but not useful for the highest purposes, however, is always an accompaniment of true Christian service; *real Christian work always costs*.

The Church at Antioch was a praying Church. The

inner life of the believers was in a good condition, so that when God sent out the message that they were to part with their two best men for the foreign field, they "caught" the message and at once obeyed it. How was the message delivered? Perhaps through the prophets in the Church; at any rate, the Church was united in its decision, acknowledged the call, and formally associated itself with the missionary work of Paul and Barnabas.

It is as we to-day share the "inwardness" of the Church at Antioch that we shall develop the graces and activities that marked that prosperous Christian community in the first century.

E.A.

## A Christian Pilot

**A** TRINITY HOUSE PILOT well known to many of our readers, who recently passed away, is the subject of this short notice. He felt that the first real impression as to spiritual things, and possibly his actual conversion to God, was at a time when engaged in fishing off the Cornish and Welsh coasts. It happened that a Deep Sea Missionary came on board and spoke to him about his soul and its eternal welfare. Finding him interested they afterwards went below, where the Missionary read the Scripture and prayed with him. The skipper was himself a true Christian, and welcomed the visits of the Missionaries from time to time, and his own influence on board was all for good. "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the LORD, and His wonders in the deep." (Psalm cvii. 23, 24.)

Before his conversion he was often fearful at the thought of the Coming of the LORD. This is to happen suddenly, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, so Scripture clearly affirms (1 Cor. xv. 52; 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17), and since it is only "those that are CHRIST's at His

coming" who will be taken up to be for ever with Him, our young fisher lad was afraid of being left behind.

So the first thing he always did on arriving in port was to look for the owner—his employer—who was a real Christian; and as soon as ever he caught a glimpse of him he felt relieved to know that the LORD had not yet come.

Now that he had himself accepted CHRIST the SAVIOUR as his own personal SAVIOUR by believing in Him, he no longer feared the time when He would come to claim all who are His own in the world.

The knowledge that his sins were all forgiven for the sake of Him Who died for them on the Cross, and that now he had peace with GOD through our LORD JESUS CHRIST filled him with joy in believing.

Some time afterward a Christian brother directed his attention to the Scripture in Heb. xiii. 13, "*Let us therefore go forth unto Him without [outside] the camp.*" This produced fresh exercise of heart, and eventually led him to take his place at the LORD's Table in remembering Him in His death (1 Cor. xi. 23-26), after the early Christian custom of which we read in Acts xx. 7. For a good number of years our friend faithfully testified to all around him on land and sea of his precious SAVIOUR, and after a steady, consistent, cheerful Christian course he was, as we say, somewhat prematurely called home. But he had finished his course, and kept the faith.

On the last LORD's day morning his wife sang a favourite hymn to him, and then enquired, "Shall I read to you?"

He then spoke as best he could, but at last had to write everything down, his voice failing completely.

"What is the time?" he asked.

"Half past nine, dear. Shall I read anything to you?"

"Not yet," he intimated.

An hour later he again wished to know the time, and was told "Half past ten."

"Not yet," he still wrote.



The third time on enquiring the hour, it happened to be just eleven o'clock.

"Yes, read now St. Luke, chapters xxii. and xxiii., and 1 Cor. xi. 23-26, please."

At the close of the reading of these passages of Scripture he raised his hands, saying, "Just to remember Thee, once more, only once more." Then after sending his love to all the Christians whom he had for so many years been associated with, they joined in singing:

"Glory, honour, praise and power  
Be unto the LAMB for ever.  
JESUS CHRIST is our Redeemer,  
Hallelujah, praise we the LORD."

On the previous Friday he wished Psalms cxxi., cxxx. to be read, exclaiming after, "My soul waiteth; yes, my soul waiteth for the LORD."

From a letter found since our beloved brother passed to his rest, we extract the following to close this article. It was from a Christian Pilot:

"You can never know how you comforted me that night on the bridge. They had been trampling on Him below, and then I came up to you on the bridge and heard you glorifying His NAME. It turned my despair into glory . . . You are the first man to whom I have really felt the wonderfulness of having a brother in CHRIST. I hope I shall walk in His footsteps and help others to believe in Him." W.H.N.

---

Every inward rejection of a truth ends sooner or later in an outward turning away from the truth.

---

The beginning of worry is the end of faith, and the beginning of real faith is the end of worry.

---

Only in the Sanctuary is there anything said about the abuse which the children of God have to suffer from their adversaries. (Isa. xxxvii. 14-20.)

## Grace, Guidance and Government—2

*(Continued from page 86)*

**W**ITH Jacob, as with so many others of the people of God, "the day of his distress" had been the day of his good resolutions; but in the days of his prosperity he had been so busily engaged in building up family and flocks that first things had been relegated to a secondary place in his life. And, while in the providence of God family and business concerns have their lawful place, yet the true order in the life that pleases God and becomes His children is that given by our LORD, "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*" (St. Matt. vi. 33.)

Should we neglect or refuse so to act, then a permanent principle of the Divine government at once comes into operation. This is given in both Old and New Testaments: "Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." (Amos iii. 1, 2.) "But when we are judged we are chastened of the LORD, that we should not be condemned with the world." (1 Cor. xi. 32.) "And if ye call on the FATHER, Who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." (1 St. Peter i. 17.) These last two texts are addressed to believers whether living in the city as at Corinth, or scattered in the provinces as those to whom the Apostle Peter sent his pastoral epistle.

The story of Jacob affords a very heart-searching, helpful and hopeful study of these governmental dealings of God with His saints. In the case of Jacob, he is chastened by the bitter experiences of Padan-aram. Here in a private, relative, and public way the correction of the LORD comes upon him. Had he heeded the first,

the second and third would not have befallen him. God never puts His people to shame, but alas! oftentimes they are put to shame in the family, and sometimes in the world openly because of neglect of the admonition of the LORD which they have *privately received*, maybe through conscience, or through an apparently chance word uttered in their hearing, or through the spectacle of another who has denied the LORD in open sin.

In the cases of Abraham (Gen. xii., xx.) and Isaac (Gen. xxvi.) we see that God never disowns before the world, nor ever forsakes, the one who has true faith, however severely such an one may have to suffer for his misdeeds through the government of God; and in the case of Jacob we see that Laban is obliged to admit that God had not forsaken Jacob during the time of his sojourn in Padan-aram. (Gen. xxx. 27.) "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man" (Prov. xxvii. 19), and every man may read lessons writ large in this patriarch's story during those eventful twenty years of planning and praying, of bargaining and scheming, spent by Jacob in the encampment of his unscrupulous relative.

Laban's cruel trick—cruel both for Jacob and Leah—led to unhappiness in the family life, revealed by the names given to Leah's and the maidservant's sons. Could there be a better example than Jacob's family history of the sad consequences of setting aside God's appointed order for the domestic happiness of mankind? None too are so cruelly deceived as Jacob was by Laban, and by his own sons, deceit evidently being a family weakness of the household of Bethuel the father of Laban and Rebekah.

The trick played by Jacob with regard to the flocks (xxx. 37-42), though not an actual breach of the terms of his bargain with Laban, was one utterly unworthy of a man who really believed in God. How sad indeed when the behaviour of a child of God is below that of an openly ungodly, worldly man!

From what he says in chapter xxxi. 36-42, Jacob

had evidently suffered much harsh and unfair treatment at Laban's hands; this might explain, but not excuse, his action in his attempts to outwit his unscrupulous relative in the way he did.

It is clearly shown in the story that he did not walk in the intimacy of communion with God to anything approaching the same extent as his father Isaac, or his grandfather Abraham. True to his name, he was "a supplanter and a deceiver," and carried this character more or less marked throughout his life almost to the end. It is well to note, however, that in spite of all his failings, he, from the awakening at Bethel, and indeed for some years earlier, had respect for the birth-right and the family blessing entailed thereby. The value he set upon them is shown by the very fact of his trying to obtain them even by false means. In this he shows a certain amount of spiritual intelligence, in contrast to his brother Esau. Jacob valued the birth-right and the blessing; Esau, in direct contrast, did not, and seems to have possessed no spiritual discernment whatever. His action recorded in chapter xxviii. 6-9 shows this, when, seeing that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father, he took another wife of the daughters of Ishmael, himself not in the line of the promised blessing. Jacob, in spite of all his shortcomings, was a man of faith; Esau most certainly was not. So we notice throughout Scripture God places Jacob alongside Abraham and Isaac in the oft-repeated formula, "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." After the death of Isaac, Jacob was the foremost man of God, being himself the heir to the promises made to his father.

Now such a man with so great a destiny evidently could not be left to the guidance and dictates of a heart, like our own, both foolish and deceitful. Hence at the end of some twenty years of virtual forgetfulness both of the grace of God and of the God of grace, Jacob is sharply re-awakened to a sense of his position and responsibilities. He had been called to be a pilgrim as his fathers were, and now the government of God recalls

him to the special position which grace had given him.

So in Gen. xxxii. there is a fresh appearance of God to Jacob; followed shortly after by the new name given and confirmed with the original promises enlarged. There follows at once on the part of Jacob and his family a spiritual reviving with drastic effects as to their gods, their persons, and their habits. Jacob and his whole family have to learn, what one of his descendants affirmed later by Divine inspiration, namely, "Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh Thine house, O LORD, for ever." (Psalm xciii. 5.) This is an abiding principle whatever the dispensation under which the child of God is found.

Here in Jacob's history, the clear guidance of God takes the field, although the governmental dealings are constantly illustrated in the happenings of the years of his pilgrimage yet to run their course.

*(To be continued, D.V.)*

## Divine Food

*"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."*  
—Jer. xv. 16.

**H**OW careful is the natural man to have sufficient and suitable food for the welfare of his body, but how careless is the believer, very often, as to the importance and necessity of having sufficient and suitable food for his redeemed soul. As the body suffers from under-nourishment, so does the soul. Food serves to nourish, maintain and strengthen the body and is also for enjoyment. It varies, too, according to the stage of life of the body. So it is with the food of the soul. We eat the Word (Jer. xv. 16) and are nourished thereby in order that the soul by encouragement and exhortation may receive strength or by *enjoyment of the Word* may grow in the knowledge of CHRIST. Food

which is suited to a child in CHRIST is not enough for a father in CHRIST; that which gives enjoyment to a believer in healthy condition would be too much for a weak, sick lamb. The one needs solid food, the other requires milk.

GOD has given in rich measure in His Word the food necessary for the believer. By the teaching of the HOLY SPIRIT we may follow the blessed pathway for which our GOD and FATHER has prepared spiritual food for the health and enjoyment of His beloved children.

We have said that food, in addition to being for nourishment and strength, is also eaten for enjoyment. It is noteworthy that the first thought of GOD with regard to food was concerned with enjoyment, quite apart from any question of maintaining life, strength or health. In Gen. ii. 15-17, there is given us a wonderful picture of this.

GOD had planted a garden and had made to grow in it every kind of tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. Do His words in Gen. ii. 17 show any thought of maintaining life? There was no danger to life, for sin had not come in with its wages—death. There could be no sickness or bodily weakness. It is written: "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.) Without sin there is no death. Thus we know that eating was for Adam and Eve not a means of sustaining life, for until sin entered they could not die. GOD gave them to eat, then, that they might grow continually in the enjoyment of all the blessings of GOD which He had put in the garden with all its bliss. Each precious fruit witnessed to what was in GOD's heart. Adam and Eve would find in each new fruit a fresh revelation of the love of GOD and of His desire to see them in the enjoyment of it.

How short-lived was this enjoyment of such blessing! The Fall took place, and our first parents were driven out of the garden. No longer was food exclusively for enjoyment. Nourishment must now be suited to the physical condition of fallen man.

When the Church is taken up into glory we shall,

as in the Garden of Eden, have food only for enjoyment, and this in perfect and blessed ways. The word will no longer, as now, be for comfort and encouragement in the midst of sin but will be only for our joy. In the present time, when sin and its attendant evils have their effect, God has given us in His great grace the food for the soul that is necessary for the present condition. As redeemed souls in the glory we shall feed with inexpressible joy and blessedness throughout eternity on CHRIST the LAMB, as it had been slain. Then we shall know the whole fullness of our blessed LORD and SAVIOUR, all the depths of His mighty love and of His over-abounding grace.

*(From the German. Trans., T.H.)*

## Cheering Notes from an Invalid's Diary

*(Continued)*

**I**F a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God?" (1 John iv. 20). . . . When a man has to endure evils of various kinds from his "brother," taking the word in its widest meaning to mean relations, neighbours, friends and enemies, he finds it exceedingly difficult sometimes to "love" them . . . . We can show our love to our "brother" in the first instance, in our prayers . . . desiring for each and every one, the same good that we desire for ourselves and for those that have been good to us. If we ask God to help, it becomes quite easy when we have tried to do it a number of times, for we show our love for God by our love for our brother. . . .

Our LORD told us several times we must love each other even as He loved us. We find it easy to love those who are loving and kind to us, so can anyone, as JESUS said. The test of loving God is to do His will in loving those who are unkind to us, who purposely, or otherwise, bring evil and suffering into our lives.

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for." The LORD JESUS said: "Have faith in God." "Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them." He did not say, "Ask for what you desire and when you have it, believe it." That would not be faith, any unbeliever can know he has a thing when he is holding it, or believe that a change has taken place when it already has.

No, JESUS CHRIST, our beloved SAVIOUR, demands faith of us, demands that we believe we already have what we have asked for, before it has appeared in manifestation, demands that we speak of things that are not, as though they were. . . .

We do need faith so very much, and if we pray, "LORD, increase our faith," He never fails to answer our prayers. We need faith to know our prayers are answered even as we pray, that is: real prayer. Real prayer is not a constant begging and praying for some unknown Power, to give us this, that or the other thing; to take away this or that; to change this or that. No, real prayer *is a constant turning to God*, praising and thanking Him for all His wonderful goodness and kindness, for all the blessings He has already given us. . . .

By all means let us make our requests known to God, as St. Paul says, with praise and thanksgiving, and there let the matter rest, knowing God knows all about it, and He will grant our requests in His own way, in His own time.

The best thing of all is to pray that God's will be done in every atom of our being, in every part of our lives, in everyone and everything connected with us, in any way, in everyone and in everything in this earth. . . .

The most wonderful thing that could come to any one of us would be for God's will to be done fully and perfectly in us, and in all our affairs. It is the finest and the best thing that we can pray to come to others.

*(To be continued, D.V.)*



## Some Modern Educational Tendencies

BY A SCHOOLMASTER.

THE civilisation and education of the world is one of the idols set up and worshipped by many calling themselves Christians; and it has become painful to read accounts of so-called missionary effort that resolves itself into a mere physical and social improvement with a view to uniting the world under the banner of a so-called Christianity.

Last year I attended a prize distribution where the chief speaker happened to be the Regius Professor of Divinity. He actually seemed to recommend the study of Nature in its plants and hedgerow growths in preference to any sort of theological study. I took the liberty to write him afterwards and point out how one expected something different from one occupying such a position as his. He replied in a semi-apologetic tone, but not going any further with his views as to what was best for study on Sundays. I pointed out some of my recent experiences educationally when attending a course of Cambridge University extension lectures.

The lecturer told the large audience in the hall of the Grammar School how he, with the other members of his family, attended a place of worship because the respectability of his parents seemed to make it necessary. Then after giving a graphic account of what he had to listen to continually there, declared that such things might possibly be true, but it was no business of his whether there was a God and an adversary called the Devil who was God's continual enemy.

Another lecturer took as his subject "Europe Today," treating it from various points of view. He kept the large audience spell-bound with interest as he outlined possible developments. But God was entirely left out. I ventured to point out where God and prophecy came in in connection with such a subject.

The lecturer's only reply was, "I admire your faith," implying further that he could see no solution of things as they are. Is this all that is to be expected from such as take the place of "teachers in Israel"?

Then the Journal of the Assistant Masters' Association in Secondary Schools published a series of letters on "The ecclesiastical infidelity of the present day as it affected the teaching profession." When I wrote a letter pointing out how the LORD Himself met Nicodemus and his learned attitude with "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God," and "Except a man be born of water and of the SPIRIT he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God," only to be met by Nicodemus' question, "How can these things be?" they used my letter to close the discussion.

It was the development of error that brought J.N.D. and W.K. out from the ranks of formal religion, and one hopes the present development may bring others out for the LORD's honour and glory, resulting in some sort of a revival under the leading of the HOLY SPIRIT, that is if the long-suffering mercy of God still delays the coming of our LORD.

What an appeal there is in the words of our LORD, "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 sup with him and he with Me"! G.S.P.

---

## Meditations on Caleb

THE first mention of Caleb occurs in Numbers xiii. 6. He is from the tribe of Judah, which means "Praise." He has a song of praise as redeemed from Egypt's bondage. Next, we see him coming forth from the dark background of the people's unbelief and murmurs, as the man of courage and energy of faith to go forward. "Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, *Let us go up at once*, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Numbers xiii. 30). This

is very beautiful, faith to press forward, upward, instantly, and to overcome.

Then in Numbers xiv. 9 we hear him saying, "Rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the Land: *for they are bread for us . . .* the LORD is with us." Here we have the language and viewpoint of faith which always puts God between the soul and the difficulties. Faith is obedient, fearless, dependent on God, confident, and looks at difficulties as only bread for the inner man, as only an occasion to prove and experience what God can do for us. Difficulties (the giants in the land in this case) only develop and draw out the man of faith. The low state of souls in our midst, the troubles etc., are all allowed of God to exercise us, cause us to take root downward in the presence of God (like the wind does the trees), and to draw us out for the LORD and cause real practical growth in the truth and CHRIST-likeness. The rebellion of the people only brought forth Caleb to stand all the more for the LORD.

Upon this follows the reward of faith and its blessing. "They shall not see the land . . . but my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him (the spirit of faith in contrast to the spirit of unbelief of the people and rebellion, an excellent spirit as in Daniel), and hath followed Me fully, him will I bring into the land." God gives Caleb the precious approbation of "My servant," "another spirit," and "Hath followed Me fully." It is stated six times in the word of God that Caleb "Wholly followed the LORD" (Here, Numbers xxxii. 12, Deut. i. 36 and Joshua xiv. 8, 9, 14). God never repeats anything without a purpose. The six-fold mention of the fact shows how much God appreciated it. May it be ours to *wholly follow the LORD*.

Caleb followed his MASTER, the LORD, wholeheartedly, which shows his heart was drawn out in affectionate devotion to God. This is the secret of wholly following the LORD; the heart must be wholly devoted and drawn out in affection to the MASTER.

Now in Joshua xiv. we see Caleb forty-five years later

in the same steadfastness of faith, courage, confidence, and energy of faith go forward and possess his inheritance. (Claiming the inheritance answers for us today the entering into and enjoying our inheritance and portion in CHRIST.) He wants a mountain with giants in it for his portion. The forty-five years' wilderness life of trials with his people in their unbelief has not weakened him any, nor discouraged him as a warrior (verse 11). He is ready for more conflict to drive out the enemy; he still wants to fight and climb the mountain of difficulty. This is beautiful. And so we are instructed in 1 Tim. i. 19, "War a good warfare," "Fight the good fight of faith" (chap. iii. 12) and "Endure hardness as a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST," entangle not with the affairs of this life, but please Him who has chosen him to be a soldier (2 Tim. ii. 3, 4).

But what is the mountain which he wishes to enjoy? It is Hebron, which means "Communion." He wants greater communion—high up away from the world of time and sense. "The name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba, meaning "City of four." Communion brings four together; it brings one into the company of the FATHER, the SON and the HOLY GHOST.

In Joshua xv. Caleb is seen driving out the giants from Hebron. They are sons of Anak ("Long-necked"—pride) and they all have the letter "i" in their names—self-importance. The meaning of their names (1) "My fine linen," (2) "Who is my brother?" (3) Abounding in furrows," shows us pride in its various forms (self-righteousness, pride of descent, pride of accomplishments) as the hindrance to communion, and which must be driven out. From here Caleb goes to Debir ((The oracle), formerly Kirjath-sepher ("The city of the book"), and offers his daughter Achsah to the one that takes it. The city of the book must be taken; the Bible must be possessed by us, its contents made our own, and we must recognise it as the oracle, the voice of God speaking to us out of it. Communion is thus connected with the Book and the voice of God, and out of this flows testimony, or confession of Him, for we see Othniel

("seasonable speaking of God") coming forward to take the city. He then receives Achsah as his wife, which in type, pictures the "adorning of the doctrine of God our SAVIOUR in all things" (Titus ii. 10), as the "Anklet," which her name means, adorns the person of the wearer. When the truths of the Book are really possessed and laid hold of in communion with God, they find a practical expression in our walk and ways which adorns the doctrine of God. And then follows Achsah's desire for the upper and nether springs to water the land. This answers to being filled with the SPIRIT which alone can keep our possessions in CHRIST fresh and precious to us.

Thus, putting all together, a beautiful picture is presented. A man of praise and faith comes forth, desiring to go upward, instantly to overcome and possess. He looks at obstacles from the viewpoint of faith with the spirit of obedience and confiding dependence. The reward of faith is given and commendation for wholly following his MASTER. In the steadfastness and energy of faith he comes forward forty-five years later to claim his inheritance. He desires greater communion, and continues as a warrior to drive out the giants. Hebron is given and the city of the book and the oracle is possessed, and there is the adorning of the doctrine in practical walk and ways, and all maintained in the freshness and power of the SPIRIT.

R.K.C.

---

## Book Notices

By J.F.K.

**T**HIS month we would call the attention of our readers to two books, each having a special and very timely interest in view of the Fourth Centenary of the English translation of the Bible now being celebrated.

The one, *Dr. Paterson Smyth's "HOW WE GOT OUR BIBLE"* (Sampson Low, Marston & Co. 1s.) gives an excellent historical account of the way the Holy Scriptures have been preserved and translated into our

language and placed within the reach of all. It is impossible not to discern in this the guiding and merciful hand of God throughout the ages; and our hearts must surely condemn us if we do not greatly value the exhaustless riches of the Scriptures—which can now be ours for a few pence. What perhaps most impressed us was the fact that there are so many sources from which a translation of the Bible may be checked and counter-checked. God has seen to it that the very possibility of vital error has been entirely eliminated. This is the more noteworthy if we remember how the Enemy has so repeatedly and consistently attacked the Holy Scriptures, and indeed at times succeeded in destroying most priceless manuscripts.

Dr. Paterson Smyth makes a good point in stating that all we have of past classical authors consists at the most of ten or twelve manuscripts, and these generally comparatively modern. But in the case of the Bible there is an enormous mass of evidence available for the purpose of Scripture revision and correction, running literally into thousands of manuscripts. The reason given for this is that the original writings (particularly, of course, the New Testament) were rapidly copied and distributed, and of these early copies translations were made and distributed again throughout wide areas. It is true the actual originals are lost, but hundreds of early translations in various languages remain, made from different copies of the originals. These have been, and indeed still are, of inestimable value for checking one against another. God in His infinite wisdom and grace has taken good care that a very accurate record of His Word should be preserved. It is indeed marvellous to find in the Bible, not only God's way of free salvation for fallen mankind, but also timely help and guidance in every spiritual, domestic or political trouble in which a believer may be involved. What is perhaps most marvellous of all, the Bible is a Guide Book that is always up to date.

In conjunction with the above mentioned interesting

and instructive little work, it will be found most profitable to carefully read Mr. Kelly's scholarly treatise "*GOD'S INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES*" (C. A. Hammond, 3 & 4, London House Yard, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4. 6s. nett.) The reader will quickly find that although it is an undoubted fact that there is no book in the world for which greater sums of money have been expended—(£100,000 was recently paid for the famous Sinaitic Manuscript)—yet money value is as absolutely nothing when we discover that the Bible is God's word, that through which all men may come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. The Arch-enemy, Satan, apparently knows this fact only too well, as having failed to destroy God's *written* condemnation of man and His own way to reconciliation, he now seeks to undermine its authority, and to cast doubts upon its authenticity. To quote Mr. Kelly:—

"There is no question agitated in Christendom of greater moment than the true character and claim of the Scriptures. Nor has their divine authority been more widely denied all over the world than in our own day; and this not merely by avowed sceptics, but by professing Christians of practically every denomination, and by many of their most distinguished representatives. But when the adversary comes in like a flood, the SPIRIT of the LORD does not fail to lift up a standard against him."

The author has succeeded in *God's Inspiration of the Scriptures* in proving positively that God Himself speaks throughout the pages to every conscience and heart, more particularly of Israel in the Old Testament, and of the Christian in the New. All Scripture, however, is food for the Christian. Again to quote the author, "Men may refuse to hear, or hear to despise; but this they do at their peril; for God is not mocked. Such unbelief has a deeper brand of evil, after men have professed the LORD's name, than when the written word was first committed to human responsibility. It is the spirit of apostasy diffused by the great enemy of God and man, before the apostasy itself is established as a

public fact, which is at hand . . . In the face of a preparation so dark and ominous, which Scripture announces as certain (2 Thess. ii. 3) there are children of God all over the earth, who acknowledge with grateful thanksgiving His faithfulness in turning the attacks of Satan and his dupes to their confirmation in the faith."

We have certainly read this book with very great interest, and we hope, with much profit. The author does not evade any question, but faces squarely all fair criticism. The arguments are, however, so convincing, and the Inspiration and Majesty of God's Word so well, yet humbly, vindicated here, that one cannot but feel that had this work been a treatise upon some ancient pagan classic, the scholastic world would have hailed it as a masterpiece and showered honours upon the author. But alas! the great ones of this world as a rule care not for the things of God, and so this book remains, comparatively speaking, unknown and neglected. But let it not be said that *we* do not appreciate such treasures. Each book of the Bible is commented upon in turn, and it is strikingly beautiful to see the writer trace the divine purpose of the HOLY SPIRIT in presenting so completed and perfect a word as the Holy Scripture which is able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS. We heartily commend this really valuable work, and would strongly recommend it be kept for careful and unhurried reading.

---

In the heat, the grape ripens but the thrown-out vine withers (1 St. Peter iv. 12-19).

---

Elijah prayed for death and yet he had no need to die and, in fact, did not die at all. We have need to thank God that He does not grant us many of our requests.

---

In every cup of sorrow which God gives to His child there is some honey, but often we do not taste it until we have drained the cup.



## Grace, Guidance and Government—3

(Continued from page 109)

**T**WENTY years have passed since Jacob took up his abode with Laban. Chapter xxxii. of Genesis opens with, "And Jacob went on his way"; to do this rightly needs guidance. Hence the second chapter in the history of the spiritual life of Jacob which deals markedly with God's gracious guidance begins here.

This guidance of God is of the nature of a perpetual miracle in the lives of His people because of the difficulties it encounters from their reluctance to use it. When we review our life pilgrimage hereafter we shall undoubtedly recognise that, as the Psalmist has it, "He led them forth by the right way," little as we may discern it now.

Jacob's own summary of it in his own case is a very satisfactory comment by an old pilgrim on the grace and guidance of God throughout his whole career. "GOD ALMIGHTY appeared unto me . . . and blessed me." "GOD which fed me all my life long unto this day." "The ANGEL which redeemed me from all evil" (Gen. xlviii. 3, 15, 16).

All who have known the grace of God earnestly desire guidance by God, and this therefore is available for all such. It is not only fully illustrated in the life of Jacob, but very clearly defined in the scripture of truth.

(1) Desired by all who truly know the grace of God, since "*it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*"

(2) Defined clearly in Holy Scripture so that we may know exactly how to obtain what is so essential in walking according to the grace we have received.

In the bewildering maze of human affairs; and also on account of the steady opposition of the great enemy of God and His people (the said enemy using men and things subtly or openly to turn us from the right path and mislead us); likewise from our own abysmal ignorance often as well as the incredible perversity of the human heart, faith's pilgrims definitely need divine guidance. Jacob's career for twenty years had been

one of human schemes and plannings, currents and cross-currents threatening the wreck of the good ship faith. From now onwards, however, the course steered is one more consistent with the blessing received and promised him. GOD's guidance is defined in Psalms xxxii. 8, 9; xlviii. 14; Isa. lviii. 11, to mention a few places only in Scripture. This guidance is certain, continuous, and always comes along one of two roads. This is the lesson of Psalm xxxii. 8; and of St. John viii. 12.

(1) There is the *high road of communion* along which our BLESSED LORD always walked in His guided life through this world. Keeping to the high road of communion with the FATHER He enjoyed certain, continuous guidance as to word, deed, time and place of service. GOD's guidance will always be sure along this road.

Abraham, the grandfather of Jacob, living in days of extreme difficulty so constantly kept to the high road of communion that GOD speaks of him as His friend. This reacted so powerfully in Abraham's life that at the time of the destruction of Sodom he was taken into the counsels of GOD and into a position to intercede for those going blindly to their doom. Lot never seems to have travelled this road, but, like Jacob, to have preferred a lower one.

(2) There is the *lower road of circumstances* along which many even of those who know the grace of GOD travel. Jacob, as we remark above, seems to have preferred to be guided by circumstances, how things shaped. GOD, because He is good, overruled again and again, but no credit belongs to Jacob for reaching his goal safely, and generally speaking he seems to have found very little comfort *en route*. Note the inspired irony—"WHEN Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, and beheld the countenance of Laban, THEN the LORD said to him, Return." WHEN!—THEN!

It is most certainly true that GOD came in just at this juncture, but it is equally true that Jacob was already preparing to take certain steps guided by the force of circumstances.

The people of God in all ages have had presented before them the two roads, the *high road of communion*, of spiritual elevation and vision, with its sure and happy guidance, and alternatively there stretches out the *lower road of circumstances*, with all its attendant vexations, anxieties and disadvantages. That God *will* guide is certain. He wills to guide His children by communion with His mind through the written word; but if refused or neglected we shall be guided, driven perforce by circumstances, often with much present discomfort and most certain future loss. This we should certainly ponder.

In Jacob's case the grace experienced in Gen. xxviii. was that which set him apart to God to be guided and governed henceforth until all the wonderful purposes of this grace are fulfilled. Then in his history we are shown that this grace neither bars from human affection nor from domestic cares. But the warning is given (in ch. xxx.) of the danger of becoming so engrossed in seeking worldly prosperity and comfort, whether in domestic or business affairs, that the first things in life inevitably slip into the second place, to the dishonour of God and our personal discomfort.

It was in a case like this that the very unpleasant set of circumstances allowed of God to awaken Jacob from spiritual lethargy occurred. At the same time these were used to reveal his character, and yet bring into evidence the real faith embedded in it.

So Gen. xxxii. gives us an account of the second great spiritual crisis in Jacob's career, and one which led to the changed name, and to the changed walk befitting one who had passed through such an experience. But, first, he has to come to an end of himself, so that when asked, "What is thy name?" he replies, "Jacob," with all its significance. He is still "Jacob the supplanter, Jacob the deceiver."

Also it is made quite clear that it was *not* by his wrestling but by his surrender, by his yielding, he had

power and prevailed with God. "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me."

The lesson thus learned by Jacob, and placed upon record for ourselves is that not by striving with God do we overcome, but by frankly owning our utter weakness and worthlessness as of ourselves in clinging to Him Whose purpose of grace it is both to bless us and to make us a blessing. The New Testament counterpart is surely found in Rom. vii. 18; 2 Cor. xii. 10; "in me in my flesh dwelleth no good thing"; "when I am weak, then am I strong." When we really come to this then we can prevail while gladly owning with ever-deepening meaning that:—

Nothing that's good have we,  
Nothing apart from Thee,  
JESUS our LORD.

Glancing back over Jacob's history, certain names of places so stand out in the record by their association with the crises of his career that they afford a kind of chart of his moral and spiritual progress.

BETHEL—where with some sense of the greatness and grace of God he had exclaimed, "This is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven."

MIZPAH—God's beacon or witness in the day of the Laban troubles.

MAHANAIM—God's host assuring him of divine protection as he went on his way.

PENIEL OR PENUEL—God's face, where he learned God's strength in his own utter weakness, and became "Israel, a Prince with God."

From this place he is seen happily in possession of what constituted the full and true equipment of a real pilgrim such as his fathers had been, namely, a tent and an altar with living faith in the LORD God of Israel, shown by the name he now gives to the altar (Gen. xxxiii. 19, 20). Grace, guidance and government have redeemed him from evil, and for the first time in his most chequered career Jacob seems rightly to stand in the true succession to his fathers, Abraham and Isaac.

W.G.T.

## “That Day”

(John 1. 39.)

**T**HERE are certain days which stand out from the others in the lives of us all, and “that day” was to be one of those in the case of Andrew and his companion. It was to be one they would never forget.

They were standing near to their leader, John the Baptist, as he gazed upon the LORD JESUS Who was passing by. Musing aloud, they heard John utter in a spirit of worshipful contemplation, “Behold the LAMB of God!” It was enough to mark “that day” out for them, and the first point to be noted is that they believed the testimony thus given to the SON of GOD, and believing the

### TESTIMONY TO CHRIST

which fell upon their ears, they received it. We live in different days, but the Gospel is still the word of power and testifies to the Person and Work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. “He that has received His testimony has set to his seal that God is true” (John iii. 33), and this leads now, as then, to the second thing to note as occurring on “that day,” namely, to following of CHRIST, or

### DISCIPLESHIP.

This, we repeat, is the outcome of receiving the testimony of GOD as to CHRIST. In the inspired narrative we read, “Then JESUS turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye?” This was one, and indeed the first, of several challenges to their hearts which our LORD made and still makes to disciples. “What seek ye?” Could we answer as they did, not seeking anything but to be with Him, “Master, where dwellest Thou?”

“Come and see” is the gracious invitation. “They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day.”

This following of Him, or real discipleship, is *the* test.

"If any man come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matt. xvi. 24). "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke xiv. 27). Discipleship of CHRIST is a costly matter, and the flesh shrinks from it. We settle down instead of following on, and then joy, communion and the fruitfulness produced by these are missing from our lives. A Laodicean day knows little of discipleship in its real character. Andrew and his companion, however, not only followed JESUS, but "abode with Him that day," and this makes our third note, namely,

#### COMMUNION.

A day's communion with the SON of GOD! Whether we adopt the view that in John's gospel Roman time or Jewish time is used (about which equally devout scholars differ), the outstanding fact remains that *for the rest of "that day they abode with Him."*

One of them we know was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, the other was—whom? We cannot say, but is it not significant that the writer of this gospel refers to himself on a quite different occasion, not by his own name but as "that other disciple" (ch. xx. 4) and often as "the disciple whom JESUS loved." Undoubtedly "that day" spent in company with our LORD stamped a character upon him whoever he may have been, and this veiled anonymity seems to wear very thin as we listen to the words of the Apostle John where he says, "We beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the FATHER, full of grace and truth" (ch. i. 14); and again, "The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the FATHER, and was manifested unto us" (1 John i. 2).

During "that day" what words they were to which they were privileged to listen! A far deeper answer to their question, "Where dwellest Thou?" than they could have anticipated. He Whom they had followed, Who had drawn out their affection and reverent interest, was the One Who dwelt in the bosom of the FATHER,

a place He never left, as well as in the humble lodging to which they accompanied him "that day." Here they learned something of the FATHER's heart as they listened to the voice of the FATHER's only SON.

"Thou wast the IMAGE in man's lowly guise  
Of the INVISIBLE to mortal eyes.  
SON of His bosom, come from heaven above!  
We see in Thee, Incarnate, GOD is love."

These two disciples of that earliest day longed to be with Him. To-day, by way of dreadful contrast, we find discipleship waning, communion unsought, and ONE standing without graciously proposing Himself in these touching and expressive terms, "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in, and sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. iii. 20).

Fellow believer, let us remember He desires that we should abide in Him, and wants our heart's affection. From this there is fruit well pleasing, for "Andrew first finds his own brother Simon," and bears witness to the truth himself enjoys, "We have found the CHRIST," and he brought him to JESUS. So our last note on the happenings and outcome of "that day" is

#### CONFESSION OF CHRIST.

Simon brought to the LORD as the result of Andrew's confession, and what rich fruit when a few years later three thousand souls confess the same ONE through his preaching. Would that our days were after the same sort as "that day" when the two disciples heard John speak and followed JESUS.

"That day," dispensationally, is a figure of this day of grace in which our lot is cast. Where there is true discipleship and real communion with CHRIST power to confess Him will always be manifest.

Is it not the real reason why there is so little power in our testimony, that this discipleship and communion are so little practised and enjoyed among us to-day? May the LORD mercifully awaken our hearts to this.

S.G.S.

## “The Wind Blows Where It Wills”

**A**LTHOUGH we live in a day of astonishing mechanical contrivances, the child of God can never lose sight of the infinitely vaster wonders with which the Creator has filled our “mysterious universe.” The beauties of nature are not modern, but the believer, at all events, will always take pleasure in the rainbow and “the wind on the heath.”

Our LORD took up the common things of nature and of every-day life, and made them the vehicles of spiritual truth. And He said to Nicodemus, “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.” Many thoughts are here suggested, including the universality, the mysteriousness and the variety of the operations of the HOLY SPIRIT, the “Executive of the GODHEAD.”

### THE WORLD-WIDE OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When the earth was to be prepared as man’s home, the process of reconstruction began when “the SPIRIT of God moved upon the face of the waters.” And ever since that special work was completed He has been continually acting in the world, sustaining and renewing His creation. *“In Him we live and move and have our being.”* The SPIRIT of the living God permanently pervades His universe, and He is “close to each one of us.”

The SPIRIT’s highest work is done through the highest truth which He has made known, the full revelation of God’s character and redemption in CHRIST. He is the Author of our new birth. He has taught us our sin and our need of the SAVIOUR, and led us into living touch with Him. As ADVOCATE and COMFORTER, He pleads our cause and strengthens us by His company. He is the Author of all victory over sin, of every christian grace, of all power for witness, of all fruitful service. Every child of God knows the HOLY SPIRIT in



some degree as his Regenerator and Empowerer, at conversion and throughout the Christian life, by His action upon his soul.

#### THE ELEMENT OF MYSTERY

There is the element of mystery in the movements of the wind; "you never know where it has come from or where it goes." Winds arise unexpectedly, and change as unexpectedly. The weather forecasts, in this country at least, are always open to doubt, and often prove incorrect.

The SPIRIT's work in the regeneration of the soul is mysterious. In all revivals there is the unknown factor. The explanation, "Christians have been much in prayer," is inadequate. There must of necessity be the mysterious and unknowable element when the ETERNAL SPIRIT acts upon finite and sinful human beings restricted by the limitations of this world.

#### THE SPIRIT CLEANSSES, REFRESHES AND ILLUMINATES THE SOUL

A storm at sea or on land is always awe-inspiring. The wind which at times is hardly strong enough to rustle the leaves of the aspen, at other times raises mountainous waves, uproots the stalwart oak, and even overthrows human habitations.

"Powerful as the wind," the SPIRIT came upon the prophets, who spoke the Divine messages as they were borne along or impelled by Him. It was the power of CHRIST, through His SPIRIT, that bent and broke the stubborn spirit of Saul of Tarsus, and converted the headstrong, overbearing persecutor into the most devoted servant of the Gospel and the pattern of submission to the LORD.

The wind is nature's breath, and is an instrument of health in driving away the smoke of towns and the unwholesome vapours of low-lying country places. We have all felt the better for a fresh breeze at the close of a sultry day.

It is the SPIRIT of purity and grace Who makes the

sinner hate his sin and long for holiness. The HEAVENLY WIND cleanses away the morbid doubts and fears, the selfishness and worldliness, that depress and defile the soul.

GOD's free and active SPIRIT revives, liberates and energises the spirit of man. He arouses us from our native slumber, and pours new life into the "inner man." He graciously revives the drooping heart, and replaces stagnation and slackness by swift movement and healthy enthusiasm.

And the wind removes the mists that veil the landscape, so that little by little, or it may be suddenly, the entire scene lies open to the view. The SPIRIT of truth reveals spiritual things to us. He is the Administrator and the only effectual Teacher of the things of CHRIST.

#### VARIETY OF THE SPIRIT'S ACTIVITIES

As is noticed by the writer of Ecclesiastes, a special feature of the wind is the variety of its activities. It may blow evenly or in gusts. It may be hot or cold, dry or damp. And in swiftness and strength it ranges from the soft zephyr to the raging hurricane.

As the gale bears along among the branches and leaves of the pine, the beech, the willow, each tree contributes its own quality of sound. The same air moves in the flute, the cornet and the horn, but different music is produced. The operations of the Divine Breath are as varied as the voices of the wind. The wonderful variety in the contents and styles of the Scriptures was the result of the same SPIRIT using men of different temperaments, training and position, and for different purposes.

And the SPIRIT is the Creator and Keeper not only of the Church's unity, but also of the amazing variety of its members. Although in each person regenerated by the SPIRIT the twofold essential of repentance towards GOD and faith in the LORD JESUS is always present, yet no two conversions are the same in all their associated circumstances. And how different is the blending of

moral and spiritual qualities, and how varied the ministries of God's children. Paul differs from Peter in temperament, gifts and modes of expression, and Peter from John, but one and the same SPIRIT dwells and works within all.

God is infinite in His resources, and we need not expect Him to employ the same methods in His dealings with different believers, or always with the same believer. He usually gives us the sort of experience we seek after, but we cannot demand a coveted type of experience, for He has given us a full CHRIST, and it is to CHRIST that the HOLY SPIRIT calls attention. Let us go on as the LORD leads us.

#### OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Certain winds blow continuously in the same direction, their constancy being a great help to traders before the days of steamships. In what has been said of the mysteriousness and variety of the SPIRIT's operations, we must not imagine there is anything capricious in them.

He is the SPIRIT of Truth, and will never bless false teaching. He is the SPIRIT of Holiness, and will never tolerate sin. He is the SPIRIT of Love, and is grieved by strife and enmity among His people. He is the SPIRIT of Revelation, and cannot be expected to use the word as a means of grace if we neglect it. *Power for service comes from Him, but His influences in the ministry of the Word may be quenched by self-sufficiency, jealousy of others, selfish aims and worldly ambitions.* He bears witness to CHRIST, but if our thoughts and desires are worldly the work of grace in our souls is retarded. It is as we yield to the LORD, and refuse sin and self-will that He will work in us a spirit that is humble, pure, free, firm and active.

An enlarged view of the HOLY SPIRIT's operations is solace and strength. And it promotes an open-heartedness towards all God's people, some of whom may have had experiences very unlike our own.

With hearts expanded and spirits refreshed by a free,

non-theological reminder of a familiar but vital subject, shall we resolve better to trust and obey our SAVIOUR God Who is constantly acting on our souls, and Who is *always immanent and always available*. E.A.

## The Single Eye and the Evil Eye

**T**HE light of the body is the eye; therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body is also full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness." (Luke xi. 34.)

The LORD contrasts the single eye and the evil eye and their consequences: the body full of light; the body full of darkness. In the figure of the single eye we see Goshen with light in the dwellings; in that of the evil eye Egypt with darkness in the whole land (Ex. x. 21-23).

The single eye is contrasted with the evil eye, not with a double eye. We read of those of double tongue (1 Tim. iii. 8) and of double heart (James i. 8), but never of those of double eye. The two eyes normally present one picture. The single eye, therefore, does not mean one organ of sight but two, both resting on the one object. The singleness is in that which is seen and not in the power to see it. The eye is single, not when it is turned to the manifold things of unrest in the world, but when it looks on CHRIST. The eye which is not looking at the LORD is evil and the whole body is darkness. Turned away from the light, the eye is not doing its duty and thereby becomes a cause of stumbling; it is not good, but rather harmful; indeed, it is evil.

CHRIST is the only object for the eye of the soul of the believer. "One thing I do," says Paul, a typical saint of God. "The light of the body is the eye"; and when CHRIST is the only object of our gaze He enlightens us and the "whole body is light," *having no part dark*.

This truth is of the greatest necessity and importance in the practical Christian life and yet is so simple that

it is for the little one in CHRIST as well as for the fathers in CHRIST, "who have known Him that is from the beginning." When my eye is single, and I have to choose between two or more ways, I shall not try whether this is evil and that harmless, but I shall ask: "Which is to the glory of the Name of the LORD JESUS and what is consistent with the will of GOD?"

I may be ever so unimportant and little, and my work ever so insignificant, yet I must in all things be subject to the LORD and seek His glory. He must be the desire of my heart. It is my duty, then, not to test that which is evil but to take up that which is good in that I occupy myself with CHRIST.

Let CHRIST be the only One Whom you seek to please; the will of GOD will then be clear to the single eye, all darkness will go and all doubts and all uncertainty will disappear.

When the eye is turned away from him, it is "evil" and the "body is full of darkness." There is no intermediate stage. We have either the clearness of noon-day or the darkness of midnight, "full of light" or "full of darkness." The LORD says: "Watch and pray!" not "Pray and watch!" Let us therefore watch and have the face towards the Beloved.

"Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee" (Prov. iv. 25).

*(From the German. Trans. T.H.)*

---

**H**AYDN was once asked why his sacred music was always so cheerful. His answer was: "I compose my music according to what is in my heart. It is full of joy when I think of GOD and therefore notes of joy seem to come from my pen. Surely it is right that I should serve GOD with a joyful spirit, for this cheerful heart is given me even by GOD Himself."

GOD wills that His children should be a happy people. Only happy Christians are a testimony for Him. May we always call to mind the word which says: "For the joy of the LORD is your strength" (Neh. viii. 10).

## Some Cheering Notes from the Diary of An Invalid

*(Continued from page 112)*

**L**IFE is very like a school; there are so many lessons to learn, some difficult, some easy.

Some people seem to be able to learn these lessons quite easily, while others have a rough time right from the start. The great Headmaster, however, knows the reason for everything, and watches the whole of the training.

As we grow, learning life's lessons sometimes with much sorrow and many tears, we often long for a few "holidays." Many folks, however, do not seem to get any such holidays except perhaps when they are literally asleep. Who has not at some time or other awakened from a peaceful sleep when in the midst of a life of difficult lessons and not wished one could have gone on sleeping longer?

\* \* \*

However difficult things may sometimes be from the point of health, money, friends, or indeed anything else, it isn't always wise to ask to have the troubles removed. Rather should we praise and thank God that He is doing His will in all these things either by appointing or permitting them for our good.

To grumble and complain but brings further trouble, but to pray, and pray, and pray, turning to God again and again, praising and thanking Him for His many mercies to one, surely brings a change inwardly and very often outwardly, too. Sometimes it makes the soul so strong by thus waiting on the LORD that in new strength the things cease to bother us. Or, having learned to trust God, the trouble may be entirely removed to our great relief. He has so many ways of helping those who really trust Him, want to serve Him, and to do His will.

God being real, alive, and very near to each of us, "for in Him we live and move and have our being," something is simply bound to happen for such as really do trust Him, and it will be something good that happens.

\* \* \*

Meeting our troubles and difficulties in the right way turns them into blessings.

\* \* \*

Having told God all about it, no matter what it may be, health, finance, loved ones, fears of any kind, we can praise Him and thank Him that He has promised always to care for us and to be with us. If we believe He will, He always will, "for He that promised is faithful."

\* \* \*

It is a very good plan, I find, to learn a Psalm, or a few verses of Scripture, for when troubles press closely, this helps us to stay our minds upon Him by repeating the verses over and over again. Aloud if alone; silently if in company of others.

\* \* \*

The one who shares what they have with others, somehow or other always has sufficient.

\* \* \*

He Who *has* helped us, *will* help us again and again, until all life's lessons are learnt and we enter into His perfect peace and rest above to praise Him for ever.

A.S.S.S.

## The Candle Among the Coals

WHAT a start for the day's duties—my turn to light the fire. I don't do it every day but only twice a week. That's the agreement. Since it was *my* turn, of course, the scuttle had disappeared; but eventually I located it, after a short walk scantily clothed in the chill morning air, in the coalhouse. The crispness of the air made the effort of filling it a pleasant one, and the task was nearly completed when I espied what appeared to be a piece of bent metal tubing, which, on closer inspection, proved to be a blackened, bent, misshapen piece of candle. "How strange," I thought, "I must be mistaken." But no, there it was, scarcely recognisable but complete with wick and all. What a queer place in which to find a candle, in the last cwt. of a ton of coals, and so unlike a candle—black, bent and coal-begrimed. The air was too chill and the moment too inopportune for idle dreaming, so I hurried back into the house, laid my treasure on the gas-cooker and began to lay the fire. To my surprise I found myself constantly reverting in thought to the candle. I wondered had the coal dust penetrated right to the middle? Would it burn better or worse for its experience? Would it burn at all? Could candles be improved—made better and cheaper by the addition of coal dust to candle wax? So impatient did I become that I left off lighting the fire and applied a match to the candle. Would it burn? Splutter! a dull glow, a tiny, hesitating flame, and then the usual clear, bright shining of a candle—undiminished, undimmed, and even brighter by contrast with the queer, black, misshapen light-bearer.

What a strange place for a candle—among the coals! Yet where might one not find one? And what a condition to be in—bent, twisted, dirty and scarcely recognisable, yet only needing the application of a match to produce a bright white flame. One wouldn't have looked for it there—it had got astray, and when discovered was not shining but lying idle and begrimed.



But once lit, what a difference! Still dirty, still marred, still bent, but now shining. I have it now, and it will always carry the marks of where it has been. It could not be restored entirely to its former shape and whiteness, *but it can shine*, it can be useful if only a match is applied.

How many human candles there must be hidden among the coals. Christians once clean and white and who once shone for CHRIST, but who have, alas! become so begrimed and twisted, so misshapen and bent as to be scarcely recognisable as Christians. Yet they are Christians, and can never be lost (John x. 28). They still possess the power to shine, though it may be they will never lose the marks of where they have been in the world.

Who knows but that the person who works with me or with you, the person who seems so deep in the world, who talks as the world talks, and does as the world does, may, after all, be one such candle that needs but a match from God's word to light it. Have we always our matches with us, and do we strike them, or leave them shut up in our pockets? Is it not a good plan never to be without them, and sometimes to investigate a little. What joy it would give to the LORD and to ourselves if we discovered and lit a candle among the coals! What a beautiful shining there would be! I am persuaded that there are more candles among the coals than we are aware of, and that the LORD is willing to use us to help them become shining lights again for Him.

J.A.C.

---

“The child-like faith, that asks not sight,  
 Waits not for wonder or for sign,  
 Believes, because it loves aright—  
 Shall see things greater, things divine.”

## Brotherly Love and Love

SCRIPTURE says, "Let brotherly love *continue*"; and indeed it is so sweet that the wonder is that we should ever let it drop. But we are such an unwise people, and the hardening influence of the world so much affects us, that even where there has been happy fellowship, coldness often creeps in. Sometimes brotherly affection will wither, just for want of a little expression, and our watchful enemy is only too glad to see it die down. Then, Christian, if you have love in your heart to your brother, do not hide it as a secret that must not be known. Refrain not from those small expressions of love, which will not only refresh thy brother's heart, but keep love from dying in thine own. One can imagine how Satan may chuckle when he manages to estrange Christians from one another. Where you see this estrangement, you see the work of Satan; but where Christians are loving one another, you see the work of God's Spirit, for "love is of God" (1 John iv. 7). Do you see a Christian walking in the power of love? Then you see one who is under divine teaching, for Paul says of the Thessalonians that they were "*taught* of God to love one another" (1 Thess. iv. 9). God is glorified and Satan defeated when love triumphs amongst Christians.

Scripture distinguishes between "love" and "brotherly love." They are expressed by distinct words in the original. Love is "*agape*," and brotherly love is one word, "*philadelphia*." "Philadelphia" is rather friendly love; and the Authorised Version has tried to convey this by the expression, "brotherly kindness" (2 Peter i. 7). But it is more than that. It includes kindness, but it is love; only, love in the form which it takes in the intercourse of brethren. Perhaps the best rendering is Mr. Kelly's, which is "brotherly affection."

Peter tells us to add to godliness, brotherly affection, and to brotherly affection, love (2 Peter i. 7). That is to say, dry godliness—if one may speak so—won't do; we must have with godliness the warmth of Christian

friendship, brotherly affection. How stiffly, hardly, with what grinding and creaking, the machine sometimes moves; perhaps won't move at all, when a few drops of oil make it all right and smooth: so is love amongst brethren. Love surmounts the difficulties of the day, conquers coldness and apathy, and goes forth winning the hearts of the saints in order to serve them. Surely it is not without significance, in a book so full of symbols as the Revelation, that "Philadelphia" is the name of perhaps the most admirable of the seven churches. But then brotherly affection will not suffice alone, or it may degenerate into mere human sentiment, so there must be godliness; and with godliness, brotherly affection: then again, with brotherly affection, love: that is, love in its highest, broadest, noblest sense; love to God, love in the truth, love to the brethren shewn in walking according to His commandments (2 John 1-6), love to poor fallen man. How perfect is Scripture!

Now love to the brethren is an evidence of divine life. First to ourselves, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John iii. 14); secondly to the world, "by this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John xiii. 35). Thus, then, love amongst Christians is a positive testimony for God in the world. Do you desire to bear testimony for CHRIST, to preach the gospel? Good! it is a good aspiration. But all are not gifted for this. Yet there is a testimony which everyone can display—even the humblest: he is greatest who shews it most, and the most splendid gift is naught without it. It is love! Love "in truth," manifested amongst believers, preaches CHRIST to the world.

E.J.T.

**A** WEAVER had been working fairly diligently at a piece of work and, after a few weeks, had it nearly finished. Just a few more times need the shuttle go to and fro and the work was done. It was Saturday afternoon and he decided to get the cloth ready, receive the money for it and have a jolly time on the Sunday afternoon, for he was a jovial lad at such a time. "Well, wife," he cried, "I'll be finished while you wait." "If God will," replied his thoughtful wife. "Oh!" said the weaver, "whether He will or not, I'll be ready just now." With these words he sent the shuttle flying on its way, but the throw was too strong and the shuttle landed below the loom. The man, annoyed at himself, jumped down from his seat, caught his foot on a board and broke his leg. The work was not finished for over six weeks after this.

\* \* \*

**I**N India, General Gordon wanted to engage a Moham-  
medan as a servant, but the man was unwilling to go into his service. On being pressed for a reason for his refusal, the man said: "Sir, you would make me a Christian." Gordon replied: "I shall never say a word to you about religion and will not trouble you in any way about it." The Indian persisted in his refusal and said: "I should become a Christian if I were to be in your company every day even although you were never to say a word to me. Your way of living preaches more than any sermon and I am not going to come under its influence. I do not want to become a Christian."

Christian personality is the best means of pointing others to CHRIST.

\* \* \*

"With bowed heads and open hearts may we offer ourselves. We can do no more, and we dare do no less."—*Bp. Westcott.*

\* \* \*

We need the *daily* renewal of faith, fidelity and self-denial.

## On the "Open Meeting"

(1 Cor. xii-xiv.)

BY THE EDITOR

ONE priceless privilege of the Church of God is the "OPEN MEETING" where an assembly consisting of few or many individuals is gathered on Scriptural ground in or to the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. There the HOLY SPIRIT, the real Vicar of Christ, is present to guide the human spirits of the worshippers in worship, praise, prayer and, or, ministry, as He in His divine wisdom knows to be acceptable to God and beneficial for His people.

Christendom, however, has generally ignored this great privilege, or abused it. If this assertion strikes the reader as being either untrue or uncharitable, will he calmly consider the conditions prevailing in the company of believers with whom he statedly assembles himself? Then let such an one compare the public spiritual exercises with what is written in the three chapters at the head of this paper. It will be surprising if sharp contrasts between modern church practice and divine order do not force themselves upon the attention of the devout and intelligent observer.

That this subject should be a matter of concern to every Christian is evident from the Epistle of which these chapters form a not inconsiderable part. For the Epistle is addressed to "the Church of God at Corinth . . . . *with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord*" (1 Cor. i. 2)). Yet strangely enough the vast bulk of Christian professors make no attempt to be found in circumstances where the principles of 1 Cor. xiv. could possibly be carried out.

Rome, with her gorgeous ceremonial; the Anglican body, with her stately, ordered services; the Free Churches (so-called), each with its individual and independent polity—none of these make pretensions to being companies of "purged worshippers" (Heb. x. 2) gathered to the Name of the LORD JESUS apart from

all worldly systems, ideas, and material adjuncts to worship. On the contrary, institutionalism, business administration and every kind of material help in art, music and ecclesiastical furniture, that human piety can devise and money purchase, are pressed into the service of religion to assist in accomplishing the worship and service of GOD in a seemly, reverent and satisfactory manner, according to their ideas.

Yet "GOD . . . dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands" (Acts xvii. 24, 25). Also the ancient word abides with its piercing enquiry, "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. xv. 22). Could words state the case more clearly to command the assent and consequent obedience of any willing child or servant of GOD?

What if amid the stately order of well-appointed and carefully arranged services, ostensibly in His honour, God beholds only the grossest disorder and spiritual disarrangement! Where, to-day in church, chapel, or undenominational mission, however well conducted, is to be found that godly order given to the Church of God in 1 Cor. xiv?

With the fullest recognition and appreciation of the genuine piety and Christian work found in many communicants and members of congregations otherwise assembled, what can one truthfully say but that they have a zeal for God but not according to the knowledge of His written word. Else why the glaring discrepancy between God's church order and their own?

Our concern, however, here is not so much with these vast humanly-devised ecclesiastical systems of Christian worship, whether they be hoary with antiquity or dewy with modernity, as with those companies of believers who profess to *be* gathered to the Name of the LORD JESUS in obedience to His word and in subjection to the SPIRIT of GOD. Here, surely, agreement as to the price-

less privilege of the "OPEN MEETING" may be expected; most certainly it will not be entirely ignored by such. At the meeting for the "Breaking of Bread (Acts xx. 7), the semblance of an "OPEN MEETING" is perforce maintained. But for other occasions of assembling themselves together, many, alas, appear to have quietly given it up entirely. Others confess to secret misgivings as to its practicability, and while not definitely giving it up, nor really admitting its impracticability, yet often arrange for an address at a fellowship meeting (so-called) as being on the whole likely to be more profitable for the edification of the assembled company. Three questions arise in this connection; first, *Is this kind of action right?* Secondly, *Why is it this is necessary?* And thirdly, *What can be done to remedy this?* The last of these rather answers the others, but it may help to consider them all.

1. Is it right to throw overboard what is presented to us in Scripture applying to the Church of God at Corinth and all that in every place call upon the Name of JESUS CHRIST our LORD, both theirs and ours?

Put thus baldly and bluntly the question answers itself—by a decided negative. No, no company of believers who therefore form part of the Church of God and locally are a witness to this, can ever afford to ignore or surrender one of the priceless privileges belonging to them.

2. Why is this necessary, or rather considered necessary, then? Why is it that some find the "OPEN MEETING" impracticable, and in their opinion unprofitable for the saints, and prefer an address by a brother to a meeting where the HOLY SPIRIT is present to lead in worship, praise and prayer, and supply living ministry suited to the actual present state of any and all gathered together?

To answer this requires plain speaking, moral courage and the fear of God. Briefly, emphatically, and yet humbly it must be owned that *ignorance, weakness, and, alas, wilfulness, are responsible for the breakdown*

of the "OPEN MEETING." Consider for one moment just what an "OPEN MEETING" is. Ideally it is a time and place where the door is closed on earth and "a door opened in heaven." A time and place where God and the LAMB fill the vision of the soul; and yet one in which the humble, contrite human spirit feels at home as a grateful, reverent worshipper. A time and place where the HOLY SPIRIT gives communion of the grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and of the love of God in such a fashion as leads to adoring worship and the tasting of joys which are ineffable. Then moments of spiritual insight and glimpses of the glory to be revealed are granted in the silences, or maybe are given in united outbursts of hymns of praise; while by Scriptures read or ministry exercised clearer vision is gained of the things freely given to us in CHRIST; and so by all these the saints are led to what is the highest possible occupation in heaven or upon earth, namely, the true worship of God.

To quietly sit before the LORD in the "OPEN MEETING" and muse upon the infinite perfections of God revealed in CHRIST by the SPIRIT's gracious promptings and assistance will always lead the heart to feel some measure of that awe and wonder which makes unfallen hosts (of far higher intelligence as creatures than ourselves) to unceasingly cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY Which wert, and art, and art to come. All Thy works praise Thee, O LORD, and Thy saints bless Thee"; while we in an even higher strain exclaim, "Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST Who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies, according as He hath chosen us in CHRIST JESUS before the world began." *It is ignorance of the possibilities* of the "OPEN MEETING" conducted according to God's order which lies at the root of its neglect and rejection by many, to their great present spiritual loss.

3. *Weakness* also plays its pitiful part in the breakdown of the "OPEN MEETING." The feeble few, or the



fickle many, from lack of due appreciation of the reality of the LORD's presence and of the SPIRIT's presence, are sorely tempted by the devil to look to man instead of the LORD. "If only we had some gifted men among us now, things would be different," they moan, as though forsooth the LORD Himself, the Giver of all gifts and gifted men, were not still among His little flock, according to His own gracious assurance given in Matt. xviii. 20. *"For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there I am in the midst of them."* But human weakness plays its sad part, and so instead of the saints being strong in faith, giving glory to God on account of His word, they become increasingly weak in feeling that the spiritual poverty is apparently, in their view, too much for the gracious Provider. Hence in looking to man they virtually cease to count upon the LORD. So the SPIRIT is straitened in them, and He can do no mighty work because of their unbelief. How arresting and startling in the gospel narrative is this word, *"And He could there do no mighty work . . . . and He marvelled at their unbelief."*

The same factors are at work to-day, playing spiritual havoc in many a truly-gathered assembly, the restricted power of the SPIRIT, and consequent weakness, alas, too surely witnessing to this. Is it irreverent to suggest that He still marvels *at our unbelief in His most gracious and emphatic assurance of His Presence in the midst?*

Worldly prosperity may also often be a cause of spiritual weakness; indeed, to be honest with ourselves we must admit it frequently is so; some who once burned with spiritual zeal and energy and were like live centres of blessing among the people of God and in the gospel work have got *on* in the world and *off* with the LORD. The pathetic and pitiful tragedy of Samson's career is, alas, too often repeated in our own day. "I am a Nazarite of God . . . . if I should be shaven then my strength would go from me, and I should be weak, and be like all mankind" (Judges xvi. 17. New Trans.). Some have been shaven by the razor of

prosperity and worldliness, hence their strength has gone, weakness set in, and they have become like other men. God help them, although they are unlikely to be interested enough to read this; and God in His mercy *keep us all*, for our hearts are "deceitful and desperately wicked."

Such men, of course, do not care for the "OPEN MEETING," and while they may linger awhile among those gathered to Christ's Name, much prefer a lively discourse by an eloquent speaker to distract their minds from deeper and more spiritual things. What a condition, however, for a Nazarite of God, a man once openly committed to the cause and interests of CHRIST! Whether, however, the weakness be caused by pious souls looking rather to the gifts and to gifted men than to the Giver of all such, or whether it is caused by worldliness creeping in and encroaching upon what was once intended to be wholly for the LORD, the bitter fact has to be faced that for such and kindred reasons the "OPEN MEETING" is either given up entirely, or at any rate considered to be impracticable.

4. *Wilfulness* plays its ugly part, too, in the breakdown or neglect of the "OPEN MEETING," and that in the very last place on earth where man's will should be in evidence. The Church of God is the place where the will of God *should be done on earth as it is in heaven*. The LORD alone is to be exalted, and God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints. Yet even here wilful men, possessors of gift, or of imaginary gifts, will blandly intrude where angels might well fear to tread.

Because there is liberty for all the brothers as led of the LORD to take audible part in offering the sacrifice of praise, and to minister according to the grace and ability given of God, wilfulness often mistakes this liberty for carnal licence, with disastrous results. The LORD Who is in the midst is dishonoured; discomfort to the saints of God and discord in the assembly follow; and, did the wilful one but recognise it, disgrace is

brought on himself in the judgment of such as are spiritual. No one of himself has the *right* to minister in the assembly, only the LORD the HEAD has "rights" there; and He has clearly made known His will as to any person acting therein. *"Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church. Let all things be done unto edifying. Let all things be done decently and in order."*

Edification, comeliness, order—these are the lines laid down by the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD for the "OPEN MEETING" according to the will of the LORD JESUS, for says the Apostle, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that *the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord*" (1 Cor. xiv. 37).

The wilfulness that persists in thrusting unsuitable ministry (so-called)—unsuitable as to character or time upon a long-suffering and sometimes an impatient company of saints inverts the true order of things. Those who presume to instruct others should surely possess sufficient intelligence in divine things to know that the LORD *is present attending to what is said*; that the assembly is the local habitation of GOD by the SPIRIT; that ministry, holy ministry, is living ministry in the power of an ungrieved SPIRIT Who knows the exact needs, condition and spiritual receptiveness of those assembled; and that in ministry he himself is presuming to stand in the fear of the LORD to feed the flock of GOD. Such consideration would weigh heavily on the spirit of all save the self-willed, self-sufficient, self-important, self-complacent, self-appointed minister whatever his natural ability or gift. Is it any wonder that the "OPEN MEETING" falls into disfavour when the assembly is treated to a re-hash of platitudes that have already done duty in the same way, at other places? The LORD is affronted in His own presence by one who claims by this action to be one of His own gifts!

Is it for the honour of the LORD, for the edification of His people, or for the gratification of a human spirit

that is not subject to itself and loves a prominence which it could not obtain in any other sphere of human activity? Did we not know our own evil hearts we might be tempted to enquire, Why should a man be so anxious to intrude his personality and air his ignorance, or vanity, or both, in such solemn circumstances?

The ancient story of Ahimaaz, found in the mirror of holy Scripture, may throw some light upon this subject, and help us to see ourselves in that light. Says Ahimaaz to Joab: "Come what may, let *me*, I pray thee, also run." And Joab said, "Why wilt thou run, my son, seeing there is no news suited [to thee]?" (2 Sam. xviii. 22,23 (J.N.D. Trans.))

"But, come what may, let *me* run," entreats Ahimaaz.

Yet when he arrives in the presence of the king he has no real message to give, no tidings for David so eagerly awaiting them.

"Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing thou hast no tidings ready? But howsoever, said he, Let *me* run."

These words very aptly describe the mentality of those wilful men who *must* speak at every opportunity in an "OPEN MEETING" whether they have any message or not suited to the occasion and condition of those assembled. The others sit by and judge, says the Apostle, *and most assuredly they do*. Requests, surprisingly, urgently, but wrongly made to the writer that some be plainly told that their ministry forced on the gatherings is unacceptable, and that their very presence at an "OPEN MEETING" produces anxiety, have led to the writing of this paper.

A glance at the trilogy of chapters referred to 1 Cor. xii.—xiv., may well serve to close this short article, and place the "OPEN MEETING" in its true setting. In 1 Cor. xii., the divine equipment for spiritual exercises of every kind in the assembly is given, and necessarily much prominence given to the HOLY SPIRIT, the Vicar of CHRIST and Administrator in His Church on earth.

Confession of the Lordship of JESUS; the formation of the body of CHRIST and its ability to function as such on earth; and the equipment for every variety of service by the believer to GOD and man are all set out in this chapter and shown to be all by the SPIRIT of GOD.

That GOD hath set the members, every one of them, in the body *as it hath pleased Him*; that GOD hath tempered the body together; and that GOD hath set some in the Church for special purposes runs throughout chapter xii. In chapter xiii., however, there is no mention of GOD, CHRIST or the HOLY SPIRIT, but all the characteristics of the new nature are seen in operation, for GOD is love, and *love* is the dynamic in service to GOD and man. The moral character of the LORD JESUS CHRIST shines throughout this chapter, so much so that if His Name were placed instead of "love" the beauty of the characteristic traits given would shine perfectly.

In chapter xii. the SPIRIT, in chapter xiii. the energy in which the believer serves GOD and man in the church and the world, and in chapter xiv. the expression by human response to the divine equipment is given.

In the last chapter (xiv.) no mention is made of the DIVINE SPIRIT to Whom such prominence is given in chapter xii., but here it is *the human spirit*—with which the praying, prophesying, singing and every spiritual exercise must be made—*that is prominent*.

Hence it is here we are emphatically exhorted that "*all things be done unto edifying*" to the building up of the body of CHRIST. No account is taken here of one seeking to build up a reputation as a teacher or speaker, this being beneath what is becoming. "*Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.*" "*Let all things be done decently (comelily) and in order.*" These are "*the commandments of the Lord*" and as such claim the loyal obedience of all who own His lordship over themselves. Let us not be among those who say, LORD, LORD, but do not the things He says. Let us not be among those who loudly declaim against believers in

the various ecclesiastical systems as ignoring godly order by their human arrangements for worship and service, while at the same time we transgress what is decent, comely, and becoming in those so ready to teach others.

One very subtle and insidious method of seeking escapism from our own responsibilities in any matter is the evasion of reality by the resort to generalization, such as "Ah! well, we all come short." The healthy way of dealing with the whole matter of the threatened breakdown of the "OPEN MEETING" is to reverently enquire of Him Who is both LORD and HEAD of the Church, "*Lord, is it I?*"

---

## How to Use the World

THE term "the world," as it occurs in the Bible, bears different meanings. It may mean this planet, or the Roman Empire, or the Gentiles in contrast to the Jews, or humanity in general (as in John iii. 16), or the unregenerate as opposed to God's people, or the world spirit. Again, it may refer to the sum total of things material, visible, temporal.

Most of these meanings, however, do not concern us here. We are certainly not to use, but rather to avoid, *the world spirit*, or *the spirit of the age*, the moral atmosphere in which the unregenerate live and move and have their being. The world spirit is the sum of the ideals, standards, points of view, ambitions of those who try to make life a success apart from God.

And there is the world system, the sum total of man's organised activities. We might call it "civilisation". There are the professions, the arts, the sciences, associations, governments. There is the world of politics, of business, of pleasure, of sport, of fashion, and so on. Although these things are permeated by the world spirit, we nevertheless have to avail ourselves of many of them, and are usually thankful to do so. We are bound to use the world's means of travel and communication,

the world's trade, the world's discoveries and inventions.

In 1 Cor. vii. 31 the term "world" would embrace all creation—the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms; the trees, the flowers, the lakes, the rivers, the mountains; in fact, everything that is evident to our physical senses, the sum total of what is material, visible, temporal. Natural interests are, of course, included; in fact, the term would take in all that is incidental to human existence on the earth, things neither good nor bad *in themselves*, but working either for our good or for our ill, for the spiritual growth or our spiritual decline, *according as we use them, rightly or wrongly*.

Natural interests we all must have. Most of us have to spend the greater part of our lives in earning the bread that perishes, or in attending to home duties; and if we are able to do without other natural interests, so much the better; we shall have all the more time to devote to the "one thing needful." Natural interests serve a purpose similar to that served by those fibrous substances that enter largely into the composition of food. These substances do not nourish the body, but are needful to distend the stomach, so as to enable the organs of assimilation and elimination to function properly. In this time-state very few, if any, are fitted to give exclusive attention to spiritual things. Livingstone was doctor and explorer, as well as missionary; Carey had his collections of Indian plants and insects; Spurgeon had his garden and took great interest in natural history. Wesley read poetry and philosophy and wrote on remedies for sickness; and even the apostle John is said to have relaxed his mind by amusing himself with a pet dove. *Relaxation is a necessity*. The bow that is always kept stretched to its limit soon loses its strength and elasticity.

The best purpose served by natural interests is that of sharpening our tools—our faculties of body and mind—that the workman is able to produce better work for his Master. We should choose our interests with this end in view, rather than merely to gratify our personal

tastes. Let us try to be positive; instead of plaintively saying, "What's the harm?" in this or that, we should ask, "What *good* is there in it?"

In applying a general Scripture principle to our individual circumstances, our judgment is exercised and our loyalty is tested. Each of us has to decide upon his own responsibility, and according to his own judgment and conscience. We draw the line at different places. Our standards of living vary; so do our emphases on doctrine and duty. *Luxury is a sin; but we interpret luxury differently; what may be luxury to one seems a necessity to another.* It is a mistake to economise on health and fitness; "do thyself no harm" is apostolic advice. At the same time, an earnest servant of the Gospel, in his devotion to his work, is almost bound at times to reduce his health through insufficient rest and relaxation.

*What is needed is a principle by which to guide our conduct.* Personal opinions, although they have some value, are often coloured by the adviser's disposition and environment, and may be warped by ignorance and prejudice. A principle is better than a fixed law. A law governs and may tyrannise and cramp; *a principle guides and liberates.* The New Testament does not lay down rigid rules of conduct. A principle makes for harmony; and to be led by principles marks maturity of character.

In arriving at the principle which we are seeking, we should pay attention to the following considerations: We are to serve GOD with as little distraction as possible—it was this distraction or encumbrance that was the weakening element in Martha's devoted service. We should remember the transitory nature of things material: the fashion of this world passes away. We are witnesses to an absent LORD. And we are servants of a Master to Whom *we must one day give account of our stewardship.*

The principle, then, at which we arrive can be put thus: Use the world so as to gain ultimately the most



profit for spirit, soul and body, both for yourself and others. The pleasure that is incidental to using the world in this way is right and proper, and may be helpful.

The two words "rest" and "use" aptly sum up the way in which we are to avoid worldliness on the one hand and unwise asceticism on the other,—not that Protestant Christians are very liable to asceticism of any sort! We are to *use* the innocent things of the world, things material, things visible, things temporal; we are to *rest* our affection on things above, things spiritual, things eternal, not on things on the earth. E.A.

---

## Striking Off a Cipher

**A** GENTLEMAN received a letter one day in the following terms:—

"Dear Sir,

"I was deeply interested in the report I read the other day about your home for orphan boys. It would give me great pleasure if a home for orphan girls could be established on similar principles, under your management. I am the widow of an evangelist and am able and would be willing to give you for the establishment of such a home the sum of 500,000 marks, if you could see your way to undertake the task."

I was not a little astonished, he says, when I read this and could not imagine how an evangelist could ever come into possession of such an amount of money. I looked again and again at the address given in the letter, and when I thought of going to see the lady I felt always a feeling of unwillingness, for the neighbourhood was not one in which one would usually find people of means. I was almost inclined to think that someone was trying to make fun of me, but I finally decided that there must at least be some misunderstanding. The founding of an orphanage for girls had been much upon my heart and I had made the matter a subject

of prayer, but it seemed too improbable—half a million marks at once, and this huge sum to come from the widow of an evangelist! I simply could not believe it.

A few days later, business took me into the district from which the letter had come, and I made up my mind to look up the writer.

The street was not too promising. The house seemed all right in a way, but I said to myself: A widow may live here, but not one who has 500,000 marks or who could hand over that amount.

I rang the bell and, as I read the name on the door, I was somewhat reassured when I saw that it was the same as that in the letter. The lady was at home. She came into the room, and I lost no time in coming to the point.

“If I am not mistaken, I have had a letter from you.”

“Yes, I wrote to you.”

“I have come to see you about the matter; but first of all I must thank you for your exceedingly kind offer of help in establishing a home for girls. Fifty-thousand marks will be very helpful.”

“Excuse me,” she broke in, “there must be some mistake. I had not thought of giving 50,000 marks; my intention was to offer 500,000 marks.”

“Madam, the error is mine entirely; you wrote plainly enough, but I could not believe it. Your house, the neighbourhood, everything made me think that I must have read the figures wrongly, and I decided to knock off a figure. Indeed, I was on the point of taking off a second cipher and saying 5,000 marks.”

This story illustrates the way in which we are in the habit of dealing with the promises of God. We strike out a cipher or two, and with one effort we reduce the value to a tenth or a hundredth part.

Every promise of God is like a blank cheque. We need only fill in the amount, sign our name to it and send it off to our God the FATHER. What will He do then? All sums according to His will, He will send to the glory of His Name and to meet our need. To

believe God and to trust Him means that we expect from Him great things and good. He has given many good and precious promises and He fulfils them all.

*(From the German. Trans T.H.)*

## “God as Faith’s Object”

*He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*  
—(Heb. xi. 6.)

**S**URELY one of the most interesting characters in the Bible is Enoch. There is not much said about him in the Divine record, but what is said contains in substance the whole purpose of inspired revelation. We are told that he was 65 years old when he begat Methuselah, and lived another 300 years, and begat sons and daughters (Gen. v. 21, 22). This shows us that he was a family man with all the responsibilities involved in being the father of a family, and “he walked with God” during all this time.

Then God responded to his godly walk and ways and took him away, so that all that could be said of him was that he was no longer present among his fellow-men, as the divinely inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews writes, “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him, for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God. (Heb. xi. 5.)

Here we learn that he bore a testimony that made his translation a manifest result of what God approved and the significant words are added that, “*Without faith it is impossible to please Him.*”

What a momentous question this raises! Why has God manifested Himself so that His fallen creatures can walk with Him? Surely He might have remained in His unseeable majesty as God, and left His creature man to suffer the consequences of his sin, and have banished him from His presence for ever; but instead of this He has set His love upon him and revealed a

way back into His favour, available from the beginning.

Now Enoch believed in His existence, "THAT HE IS" and had confidence in "the reward of diligently seeking Him," and made GOD Himself his life's object. What an appeal this has for your heart and mine! There is abundant evidence in the Scriptures that as soon as GOD sees the least desire in the heart towards Him, He is ready to meet that desire more than half-way. Our LORD, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, most emphatically teaches this truth (Luke xv. 20).

And how remarkably Moses shows this also. He had a truly wonderful beginning; an excellent opportunity to take a position in the world and make a name for himself; but the whole object of his heart comes out in the request made as soon as he had the opportunity: "*Show me Thy glory.*" God had to tell him that under the circumstances this was impossible, for no man could see His face and live, but He went as far as present circumstances would permit, allowing him to have a back view, so to say, of what his heart so desired.

He talked with him, too, as a man with his friend. But Moses is a solemn warning, as well as an example of faith, in that he shows how easy it is for us to presume on God's favour, and go beyond what His presence with us allows. What a loss he had to suffer on account of thoughtless words when "they provoked his spirit" and he forgot to sanctify the LORD in the presence of the congregation.

Now the LORD JESUS, GOD's only begotten SON, has been here in this world, and has taken your place and mine, and suffered in our stead; and are we not privileged to see all the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST? Do we realise this sufficiently?

GOD has revealed Himself in such a way that simple faith can take Him at His word and know His love; and then the believer cannot help bearing a testimony to his SAVIOUR, and in the present possession of eternal life to show our knowledge of "the only true God, and JESUS CHRIST Whom He has sent" (John xvii. 3).

Enoch also took his place as a prophet with a special warning for unbelief in a day of apostasy like the present (Jude 14). Not only is the LORD coming in judgment, but when He does He will have ten thousands of His saints with him, and His judgment will include words as well as deeds.

We, as believers, like Enoch, build up ourselves on our most holy faith, but can go further than he and pray in the HOLY GHOST, Whom the FATHER has sent in His SON'S Name, at His request. The exhortation, therefore, to be heeded by us as believers to-day is that we "keep ourselves in the love of GOD, looking for the mercy of our LORD JESUS CHRIST," in full view of the resurrection manifestation of the eternal life that is ours now by faith in JESUS CHRIST. May we heed it, and thus, like Enoch, walk with God in this day of increasing apostasy and indifference to divine things.

G.S.P.

---

## On Some Book Reviews

By J. F. K.

*FELLOWSHIP, WORSHIP, WORLDLINESS*, by W. J. Hocking (C. A. Hammond, 3 & 4 London House Yard, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4. Cloth 2/6, Paper 1/6).

**T**HIS little volume of addresses given by Mr. Hocking at the Memorial Hall, London, contains several which have already been reviewed by us. Beyond solemnly commending these addresses to all our readers, we find it difficult to comment further on them. They do not pretend to open up any new doctrine, for which we can be thankful as we remember the adage, "What is new is not true, and what is true is not new." But heart and conscience are definitely reached by the power of the HOLY SPIRIT, and this is the supreme object of any godly exhortation. It is well-nigh impossible to peruse these papers without the heart being bowed in humility and shame before the LORD, acknowledging

how very far short we come in practice from the truths He has so graciously revealed to us. Nevertheless, if our hearts condemn us, He is greater than our hearts, and yet knowing all our failure will lead us in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake. Happy indeed if we are doers of the Word and not hearers only.

We most sincerely hope that many will buy and prayerfully read this little volume, and seek grace so that practical walk may be in harmony with our knowledge.

The address on the Sin of Achan is an exceptionally solemn and powerful one. "Achan confessed too late. He stood publicly convicted before his brethren and he could then do no less than admit his guilt. Had he confessed before he would have been forgiven and cleansed, but his belated confession could not screen him from the judgment of the LORD. If he had judged himself in his tent, he would not have been judged in the Valley of Achor."

"Let us beware of hidden things of deceit and dishonesty in our lives . . . Sin concealed in the tent means blessing withheld in the camp . . . When Israel turned their backs at Ai, Achan was not expected to search the tents of his brethren for the cause; it was under his feet in his own tent, where he himself had put it. *Depend upon it, the cause of the blight upon the gatherings of believers at home and abroad is locked up in your heart and mine.* There can be no revival of assembly vitality and power until the secret sins of morality and spirituality are brought to the light and judged individually before the LORD. Let him who is guilty of the sin of worldliness, like Achan, confess it in his own tent and forsake it, lest he be publicly exposed and judged in the Valley of Achor." Surely these are solemn words to touch our consciences. We pray that this book may find its way into many homes and hearts, and very earnestly recommend it to all our readers.

*MY BIBLE AND HOW TO STUDY IT*, by F. T. Ellis (Marshall, Morgan & Scott Ltd., 6d.).

The young and those unacquainted with the Holy Scriptures will find this a helpful little book and well worth its very moderate price. But the Bible will never become *attractive* reading until the heart knows the preciousness of a personal SAVIOUR. Only then will the pages glow with the glory of the LORD and our hearts will with joy respond. It is, however, through reading God's Word that we first learn of the SAVIOUR, and this booklet will act as a useful guide.

*QUESTIONABLE AMUSEMENTS*, by Frederick P. Wood (Marshall, Morgan & Scott Ltd., price 6d.).

This little book should have a salutary effect upon those who are in danger of being attracted by the pleasures of sin for a season. It can therefore be recommended. The author makes out a good case and supplies much first-hand evidence showing that doubtful steps in the wrong direction often lead to disaster, and make shipwreck of many a promising life.

We should have been happier, however, if Mr. Wood had emphasised the fact that to a heart filled with CHRIST, His love and His glory, the feeble, transient attractions of this world lose their appeal. This little volume is good, and can be recommended as a gift to those starting in life.

A well-known poem, of which we give two verses, and which we remember made quite an impression a few years before the war among Christian circles, closes the book.

Nay, world! I turn away,  
 Though thou seem fair and good;  
 That friendly outstretched hand of thine  
 Is stained with JESUS' blood.  
 If in thy least device  
 I stoop to take a part,  
 All unaware thine influence steals  
 God's presence from my heart.

I miss my SAVIOUR's smile  
Whene'er I walk thy ways;  
Thy laughter drowns the SPIRIT's voice,  
And chokes the springs of praise.  
If e'er I turn aside  
To join thee for an hour,  
The face of CHRIST grows blurred and dim  
And prayer has lost its power!

---

## The Will of God in the Heart

**A** FAMOUS Polish king was once asked how it was that he was so successful and so esteemed among men. He answered that this was due to a custom he had. His father had been a true nobleman and he always kept his father's picture by him. Because his father's will and good-pleasure always came first to him, he was in the habit of taking the picture of his father and looking at it before he undertook any new responsibility as though to ask what he should do. He always said: "I shall never do anything that would dishonour my father."

Have we not here a poor picture of what the Christian should do? Let us carry about in our hearts the will of God and remember in all we do, to seek to carry out this will so that we shall honour and glorify God.



## The Crucible

THE crucible is the vessel in which the goldsmith places the noble metal on the fire. At the works in Klaustal among the Harz mountains, privileged visitors are shown how the silver in the crucible is placed on the fire and kept there until the last of the slag is just destroyed out of the metal and the "silver flash" appears. The silver flash is a bright flash which darts across the silver in the crucible. When it appears, the moment has come when the noble metal must be removed from the fire. Should it remain a moment longer, the metal would begin to burn. For this reason the smith to whom the metal belongs sits bent over the crucible so that he may see immediately the moment when the crucible must be removed from the heat.

So it is with God. He does not stand back when His child is in the furnace of affliction. He waits on the silver flash, on the bright reflection in which He sees His own image in the heart. Not a moment longer does He permit His child to remain in the affliction once the "flash" appears. The prophet saw Him thus: "And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver" (Mal. iii. 3).

In the epistle to the angel of the church in Smyrna we read:—"Ye shall have tribulation ten days." This was a definite, measured period of time; not a day more, but still, not a day less.

Therefore, dear fellow-pilgrim, going through your time of specially difficult sorrow and trial, remember always to trust God. He does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. "But though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies" (Lam. iii. 32, 33).

---

GOD washes the eyes of His children with tears occasionally, in order that they may be able to read properly His thoughts and ways and then tell them forth.

## A Song from a Sick Bed

### NEVER MIND

NEVER mind the why and wherefore,  
Never mind the how and when;  
For the thoughts of GOD are higher  
Than the thoughts and ways of men.

Never mind the peradventures,  
Never mind the "ifs" and "buts";  
JESUS holds the Key of David,  
When He opens, no man shuts.

Never mind the fear of favour,  
Never mind the "ayes" and "noes";  
He who sides with GOD and goodness,  
Far outnumbers all his foes.

Never mind the weights and measures,  
Never mind the have and had;  
CHRIST can banquet starving thousands,  
From the wallet of a lad.

Never mind the when and whether,  
Never mind the "thens" and "tills";  
Trust in GOD's unchanging mercy,  
Rest upon *His* "SHALLS" and "*Wills*."

THOMAS SPURGEON.

---

When GOD sends rain on my garden, He waters the whole neighbourhood, although the rain is for my benefit. This is how the saint sees all GOD's providence. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me."

---

He who, through fear of men, hides his inward convictions and his faith in the LORD JESUS, only proves how highly he thinks of himself and how little of the LORD.

## On Babel

WHEN God said, after the Flood, that the descendants of Noah should fill the earth, it was in order that man should have sufficient food to eat, and that the earth also should become fruitful.

God had made man in His image and likeness, so that through man God's name should be made known in the earth. Man was to be, so to speak, God's earthly representative.

In Babel we see how man's ideas were opposed to God's. Noah's descendants journeyed into Shinar, and dwelt there. Then they began to build a tower, the top of which should reach heaven. Their object was first to make *themselves* a name, that God might be deposed as the object of worship. Secondly, it was that they might not be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. This, had God allowed them to carry out their plans, would ultimately have meant the destruction of the human race; for it was only by spreading abroad that they would become fruitful and find sustenance.

God came down to see the city, and confounded their language. This was primarily in judgment, to bring man's pride low; but it also had the effect of scattering, and thus preserving, the human race.

Babel was the root of all the confederacies and systems of evil which have arisen from that time to the present day. Nimrod's kingdom began at Babel, as also that of Asshur.

At the present day men are seeking by their own means to reverse the judgment of God. They seek to do this by a *league of nations*, *international treaties*, and even vain attempts to restore a *universal language*.

The effect of this we already see at work. Instead of "seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night," they have their own plans for scientific food control, whereby half the world starves while the other half burns its excess harvest.

That is not all. We see in Psalm ii. that the rulers take counsel together against the LORD, and against His anointed. The object of all their confederacies is to reverse, if possible, God's judgment concerning them. They sought to do so at the Cross, and they will seek to do so at the end of the age; but God will confound them, as He did at Babel. This present spirit of confederacy, too, will be confounded. The LORD will come, and overtake them in their scheming.

What we need, therefore, as believers waiting for our LORD's return, is to keep close to the LORD, and to have God's mind concerning both the world and the Church, and their respective relationships with Him. Only thus can we keep separate from the influences of the Babel around us, not least that which is within the borders of that which is called by CHRIST's name, and thus be found well pleasing to our LORD when He returns.

The confederacies have already been judged by God. They are only waiting for the judgment to fall. How important, therefore, is it that we should not be associated with them. Separation, in its merely negative sense, is not sufficient to keep the soul: only occupation with CHRIST can do that. May we be given grace to be found waiting and watching for His return, separated from the evil, gathered unto CHRIST. H.L.B.

## Grace, Guidance, and Government

(RUTH)

THE beautiful story of the Book of Ruth has for a background the dark stormy period when the Judges ruled in the land of Israel. A wave of apostasy had spread over the country because "there was no King in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Hence days of disorder and lawlessness, both public and private, make up the picture of those bad old times. Under a professed Theocracy days of acute distress inevitably resulted, since the surest method of recall, for a people in such a con-

dition, is to restrict essential supplies until they are awakened to call upon the God Whose peculiar people they boast themselves to be.

How far-reaching the spirit of apostasy went is suggested by the story of the family of Elimelech with which the Book of Ruth opens. Days of declension indeed they must have been, when a man with a name meaning "My God is King" could turn his back upon the land of his inheritance as one of the people of God, and take his family down to reside in heathen Moab. An interesting point may be raised as to why Elimelech was so named. Is the piety of his father reflected in this name given to his son in times when such lawlessness abounded? For names were *not* given in those ancient days in the casual and fanciful way in which often they now are. Usually there was some reference to the parents' hopes, experiences, or at times, even to public events connected with the naming of a son. Instances of this abound in the Old Testament, as every student will readily recall. Taking the generally accepted meaning of those of Elimelech and his family, we have Elimelech, "My God is King"; Naomi, "My pleasantness or sweetness"; Mahlon, "Song"; and Chilion, "Perfection"; a very significantly-named family indeed to become one of backsliders.

The *historical* value of the Book of Ruth is found in the genealogy of David and of his Greater Son the LORD CHRIST Himself. The *typical* value may be briefly indicated in that Naomi in her widowhood, having lost God my King, may be typical of the Jewish people having neither king nor heir in these the days of their distress away from the land with which all their earthly blessing is so closely connected. Ruth herself, as one naturally destitute of all the promises, yet received in grace, becomes a type of the remnant of grace who will be blessed by their connection with the true Anti-typical Boaz when all Israel shall be saved. Boaz typifies CHRIST risen, Who will raise up the name of the dead and re-establish the heritage of Israel, like as the one-

time widowed Naomi is greeted as being again the mother of the heir, Ruth's child in reality, but Naomi's as to the comfort of her old age, and continuance of the line of blessing.

The *practical* value of the story emerges as we commence to apply incident after incident to our own lives, in daily experience. Striking lessons are suggested by tracing through the story the divine purpose for a single human life, and the divine leading for a willing human heart. Who would have thought that one so obviously a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel would have become ancestress of the great King David, and through him of that immeasurably Greater One in Whom all nations of the earth are to be blessed?

The lesson is that God has His purpose for every human life, even the most unlikely, and that, with the co-operation of a willing human heart, the divine purpose infallibly results in unimaginable blessing. Hence the story is one of grace, guidance and government in human affairs. There is a plain, practical, personal lesson outlined in this story of the days of long ago with a present application to every child of God.

#### A STORY OF GRACE

The good news that God "has visited His people," is the starting point for all that follows, since all begins with God. Whether in the work of Creation or Redemption, the dateless beginning runs "In the beginning God." So in Exodus iv. 31 we read God visited His people, this resulting in deliverance from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage. In Ruth i. 6, God visited His people in deliverance from the famine, by giving again fruitful seasons of earthly blessing; and again in S. Luke i. 67-79, we read God visited and redeemed His people . . . to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide

our feet in the way of peace." Always it is God; always it is *visited*, always it is *His people*, because through them the CHRIST was to come. It is this key which unlocks all the Old Testament Scriptures. The people of God, and the God of the people are always the subject wherever His grace, goodness and glory are concerned. The good news which reached her ears resulted in the good decision of Naomi to return to the land. The definite choice made by Ruth, to identify herself with the people of God, and to continue steadfastly therewith to the end, also was the effect produced by the good news which reached her in the far land of Moab. There came, as always, the parting of the ways, but also there lay ahead for her the adoption and the glory of which she had no conception when her decision for God, His people and the good land was made.

Goethe says: "We have nothing so lovely in the whole range of epic and idyllic poetry," as her story with its: "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me,, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

The scene changes, for the decision having been so definitely made for the God of the people and for the society of the people of God, things in the overruling providence of God begin to move quickly.

#### A STORY OF GUIDANCE

Ruth, a model of humility, courtesy, industry and gratitude, soon proceeds to avail herself of an Israelitish privilege (Lev. xix. 9, xxiii. 22; Deut. xxiv. 19) and becomes a gleaner in the fields of Boaz. Boaz is a good man, a pious man, a wise master, a keen observer, a kindly-disposed, sympathetic, benevolent man, and God's providence is seen in His ordering of small events so that "*her hap*" is to enter this man's fields. "The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear Him," "and in

the prosperity of His people," so that He constantly overrules secular matters to spiritual ends for the good of those who trust Him.

The fields of Bethlehem were not divided by hedges or walls as with ourselves, but as in Switzerland by a single furrow or by stones set here and there. Only the gardens and vineyards there were divided by walls or hedges. Hence the reading in her story that "*her hap*" or she happened "to light on a part of a field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech."

In what immediately follows Boaz's character may suggest our LORD in His grace to us, and Ruth's character may also suggest our situation in His grace. In the fields of Boaz she received such grace, kindness and encouragement that, overwhelmed by it all, she bows herself at his feet and exclaims: "Why have I found grace in thy sight, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me seeing I am a stranger?" She realized her position as not being that of one of the recognised Jewish maidens engaged to glean and gather after the reapers according to the custom of the time and place. And while her words and attitude at Boaz's feet showed deep and grateful appreciation of his kindness, what a beautiful character is displayed in his gracious, kindly recognition of this stranger-daughter of Moab.

Naomi, struck by the circumstances of Ruth's eventful day of gleaning, begins to plan for her future, but just as the grace and guidance of God had already been marked in her affairs, so now His government of men and things in the same connection was to be seen.

#### A STORY OF GOVERNMENT

Elimelech and his sons were dead, and the question in Naomi's mind was would any member of the family have enough right and proper feeling to save his name from extinction? The nearest relative was ominously silent and inactive. But, with the originality of love, Naomi devised a plan, not merely for the redemption



of her late husband's estate, but for the happy settlement of Ruth in a Judean home.

Ruth, herself quite ignorant of the customs of the country, follows her mother-in-law's instructions to the letter, and unusual as her conduct may appear to our Western ideas, according to the sentiment of the time and place, there was nothing immodest or unwomanly in their bold and usual line of action. Rightly understood, it was only a gentle and delicate way of appealing to a kinsman's chivalry; and Ruth did not appeal in vain, as the narrative in chapter iii. shows.

Her character as a virtuous woman was well-known in "the gate," i.e., the broad place where the news of the day was discussed, and all business transacted.

"Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day," is the advice of Naomi. In other words, let him do all the business of thy future comfort and position.

Boaz, the willing kinsman-redeemer, goes to the place where such matters were attended to, and accosts the unnamed, unwilling kinsman who is prepared *to take all the property for himself, but will not give his name to a Moabitess on any account*. He is the nearest kinsman, but has no power to redeem. "I cannot redeem it," says he, "lest I mar mine own inheritance." Here, truly, we may learn a lesson, *for self is our nearest kinsman*; and self in any of its many forms comes between us and fullest fellowship with the purpose of redeeming grace going out to the outsider.

Self-conceit, self-indulgence, self-complacency, and self-mortification even, all hinder true fellowship with the real Redeemer.

By the symbolism of the shoe, the right of possession, of treading upon the land as one's own is affirmed and confirmed and thrice witnessed to in the story. So, to the redeeming work of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and possession consequent thereupon, there are three

that bear witness, the SPIRIT, the water and the blood.

Once it was Ruth the Moabitess, but before the story ends she is a mother in Israel, and her position vindicates the grace, guidance and government of God in her whole affairs. So does the gentleness, grace and goodness of God in CHRIST deal with poor outsiders such as ourselves and serves to illustrate that grace which blesses those who were once "without God and without hope, without CHRIST, and strangers to the commonwealth of Israel," making them to be no more strangers and foreigners but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. That grace, indeed, which

"Has made us, once lost sinners,  
Thy body and Thy bride."

The marriage of Ruth to Boaz, the near kinsman and willing redeemer, having taken place, the story ends with the birth of Obed, and the joy of Naomi who once more becomes "*my pleasantness*" (cf. Zeph. iii. 14-18). She is now a type of widowed, desolate Israel receiving the child (Obed, whose name signifies "My Servant") as a "restorer of life, a nourisher of her old age" and a comforter, because herself comforted (cf. Rom. xi. 15-16).

For ourselves in the days of our pilgrimage here we may learn some helpful practical lessons from this beautiful story; for we as believers in the LORD JESUS CHRIST know His grace in having taken notice of us at all; of His unfailing care as our GOOD SHEPHERD Who keeps us day by day, and of Him as the LORD of the harvest Who takes us into His happy service and gives us work to do for Him. But chiefly it is as the Bridegroom of our hearts we may best know Him, with the purifying hope of one day being with Him and like Him, for "we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2).

Let us place our present care, and leave our future comfort in the hands of our blessed KINSMAN-REDEEMER Who has dealt so graciously with our past.

W.G.T.

## From a Missionary Letter

By WM. H. SEWELL

WE are told in Deut. viii. 2, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee—to humble thee and to prove thee"—and in this spirit let me try and tell you a little of the "goodness and mercy" that have followed me during the past four months of travelling. This has been evident even in the weather, for while moving about has been very much helped by uniformly fair weather, news from *Demerara* has told of heavy rain, almost continuously from the time I left.

Would you care to trace a course between the following islands, at each of which I stayed and was able to meet some of the LORD's people? You may think of passages in turn upon two Canadian, a French, an American, a Dutch and a German steamer, each of which seemed to be sent along just at the right time. I will try and keep this from sounding too much like "tourists' guide" by pointing out just the bright spots from a prayer-partnership point of view.

*Trinidad* was the first island called at, and, arriving on a Monday, I was able to attend three meetings in *Port of Spain* during the two days while we refuelled and handled cargo. These were a prayer-meeting, a Bible-reading and a children's meeting of about thirty-seven, held in the home of a retired policeman brother. This last proved a refreshing reminder of the usual Tuesday evenings back in *Demerara*, spent with the little folk under a house at New Town. At this, to me, new meeting just outside *Port of Spain*, there was a nice sprinkling of East Indians. I was all the more glad because none were met in any of the other islands.

Two months at *St. Vincent* included a good many serious meetings, more time spent in the mountains than ever before, but finished up, in answer to much prayer, with a fellowship meeting at *Barrouallie* enjoyed by brothers from every gathering in the island, in spite

of its being held on a working day in the height of their arrowroot and cotton crop time. But I expect that by this time you more readily associate with *Barrouallie* (though only a small village) a “live” LORD’S DAY School of over one hundred, and particularly a set of lads, many of whom having been in touch with their own Bible Class and with other meetings for the past nine years, are today outstanding examples of “*Boys will be . . . MEN.*” How thankful I was again to meet one or two who are already known in their village as young “men of God.”

One of these, named Horatio, who pulls an oar in a black-fish boat, has to “live” for his new Master amid a good deal of persecution from his fellow boatmen. But it remains the talk of the bayside that one of the few black-fish secured last season was “stuck” by our boy *in answer to prayer in the boat*, when for once he was allowed to try his hand with the harpoon.

There is another recent fishing story associated with *Barrouallie*. One day I heard a great shout and, going to the beach saw what appeared to be half the village rejoicing over a record catch of “jacks,” fish like herrings. That same evening we were holding an open-air meeting and Acts xiv. 15-17 was read for the sake of the words: “The Living God who made . . . the sea and all things that are therein . . . left not Himself without witness in that He did good and gave us . . . fruitful seasons.” The question was asked as to how many had heard God’s voice in the shout for the “fruitful” haul of fish that afternoon. But it was pointed out that we, in this day of grace, are far more responsible in that “God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son” (Heb. i. 2). It was noticeable that only a day or two after this meeting, a great shoal of “skipjacks”—much larger fish and weighing about 10 lbs.—came beating upon the shore one morning. They were so many and so heavy that, although more than one seine-net encircled them, they could not be drawn to land, but had to be thrown up one by one. There was literally fish by the ton,

at a time when it was very much needed, and after several boatloads were on their way up to the market in town, there were enough fish left so that nearly everybody was able to secure one or two. The old people said that they did not remember such a catch. But imagine the surprise of all when the same thing took place on the second morning, and the third, and a fourth, till the clothes-lines in every yard were filled with the salted fish hung out to "corn" in the sun. Then came a Sunday and no fish, but there was another open-air meeting at which it was suggested at the close that we should publicly give thanks to God for this lavish provision of good food. It seemed as if in recognition of this He sent the fish back in great numbers the following morning just once more before they went away. We were glad to fall back on some of these when more meals than were anticipated had to be found for brethren attending the Conference.

After this, *Barbados*, in spite of its thirteen gatherings, could only be spared three weeks, but during this time all were visited, including the little company consisting entirely of inmates of the leper asylum. On this occasion five brothers and two sisters out of about half as many again were well enough to meet in the Lazaretto Chapel, and with them some of their fellow lepers. One or two of these last seemed not long to have been so afflicted, but those who had been there longer were a sad sight; till it had to be remarked that it must be a secret that the "natural man" could not know, and nothing less than the grace of God, which could keep anyone not simply resigned but rejoicing in heart while the body was suffering such a state of living death.

From the simplicity and sincerity of this island (I still wonder if *Barbados* is not the most godly place left in the world now), I passed to the extreme contrast as seen in "Holy Week" at *St. Lucia*. Here, in spite of its being a British possession, most of the people speak a French "patois," and everything also is distinctly Continental, especially the Sunday. The only quiet day of the year is Good Friday, when even the church bells,

with scarcely an exception, are mute, till everybody seems awed by the uncanny silence. But at 8 a.m. on the Saturday, all begin to ring again, and this is the signal for a custom new to me, when the "faithful" plunge into the water either at the waterside or in their home baths. My room overlooked the wharf, and I was surprised to see the number of men who had assembled to take the "header" at the given signal. The Sunday was as usual the noisiest day of the week, when those who were not engaged in coaling a ship were playing football under my window. In the face of all this I was surprised not to see the raising of kites on the Easter Monday morning to commemorate the Resurrection, which is so popular and so seriously taken a custom among many in *Demerara*.

Need I tell you that we who meet at what the St. Lucians call (though in patois) the "church under the bread-fruit tree," found a more useful and happy way of spending both public holidays of that week-end; and a little fellowship tea, revived after many years on the Monday, will long be remembered.

Our aged brother Grimes still retains and lives in his little shoemaker's shop there. But nearly always when I have looked in, it has been to see an open Bible on the workbench, and often a young brother or so being helped therefrom so that they might the better have their "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Eph. vi. 15). Do you wonder, then, that the LORD has recently added two such to their local number?

Leaving here, the steamer touched several islands, both British and French, before *St. Kitts* was reached. At *Montserrat*, where once I had visited a church nearly shaken down by the earth tremors of that time, I now saw the same building nicely restored. But above the town itself, there is forming in the mountain side a strange gorge where everything around is burned by the hot sulphurous gases now escaping; and experts say that an eruption very nearly took place there a few months ago, in spite of there never having been any such occur-

rences previously recorded. Men there, at least, are faced in a very practical way with the fact, equally true of us all, "It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed" (Lam. iii. 22).

*St. Kitts* represented the turning-point from what had till then been a northerly course—and a good stage at which this rather lengthy letter should be brought to a close. But I owe it to the local brethren first to ask your prayers on behalf of their extreme numerical weakness. Yet, coming to their meetings, and evidently more than casually interested, are several promising lads who deserve to be remembered. Three of them often brought their widowed mother, who although totally blind, nevertheless cooks for them and washes and irons their clothes. On one occasion I watched her patch a badly torn pair of boy's knickers more neatly than many a person with perfect sight could have done.

One more lesson of the LORD's sufficiency as proved by the afflicted I learned from one who had spent forty-four years in a hospital bed there. She is sometimes in much pain, and her sight is now going, but her faith is bright and she is kept from any word but praise to the LORD JESUS, Who during these years has made Himself so intimately precious to her.

---

Your life is rich in grace in the measure in which you live for the LORD and for blessing in the world.

---

Of all the evils which attack us, pride is the greatest and it, of all our enemies, dies most slowly and after causing the greatest trouble. God hates pride more than all, because it gives to man the place which belongs to Him Who is in heaven blessed for evermore. Pride interrupts communion with God and brings chastisement with it, for "God resisteth the proud" (1 St. Peter v. 5).

## Further Thoughts on the Open Meeting

*H.E.R. writes:* "Thanks for your timely and helpful article in the August issue on the OPEN MEETING. May I suggest that a little further help regarding the following points would be valued?"

1. In 1 Cor. xiv., three gifts are specially mentioned as in exercise in the OPEN MEETING, viz., prophecy, the gift of tongues, and interpretation of tongues. Have we these gifts among us still?

2. If, as some assert, they are all absent to-day, have we still any authority for the OPEN MEETING?

3. It is generally taught that the gift of tongues, and that of interpretation, have passed away. But what of prophecy?

4. If you think there are prophets among the LORD's people now, what is their office, seeing we are not to expect new revelations from God now that the canon of Scripture is closed?

I believe that an article dealing with these points would be of general interest."

**I**T is always a great cheer to hear that an article is considered timely and helpful, and the more so when, as in the case of our correspondent, a fuller and clearer statement of truth is sought.

As he states, in 1 Cor. xiv., the gifts of prophecy, tongues and interpretation are specially mentioned as being in active exercise in the Corinthian assembly, though no mention of this occurs in epistles addressed to other assemblies. Doubtless they were in exercise (at any rate, "prophets" are mentioned at Antioch) in the early days of Christianity, when God was "*bearing witness by signs and divers miracles*" to the new dispensation then being inaugurated and established (St. Mark xvi. 17, 18; Heb. ii. 4). But the necessity for this advertisement of the new era ceased when the gospel had been widely preached (Col. i. 23), and indeed we find no instance of apostles or apostolic men using their miraculous endowments for any purpose except the confirmation of the gospel. Witness the Apostle Paul in his references to sick fellow-labourers, and his advice to Timothy to use means adapted to his often infirmities. No thought of ever diverting his undoubted possession



of "gifts of healing" from the one object for which they had been given him appears. So with "tongues and interpretations," they were for "a sign to unbelievers," and the "gift of prophecy" (not primarily or generally prediction) was of such a character that one coming into the assembly where it was in active exercise would be compelled to own the presence of God amongst them. Furthermore, it is evident that until the Scripture was completed by the inspired written ministry of the Apostles Peter, Paul, Jude and John, there were those gifted to reveal the mind of God to His people as need arose. This office ended when the Church built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets (New Testament prophets, of course) was established, and the continuing gifts of evangelist to call souls, and of shepherd and teacher to care for and instruct such as were added together, fill the picture until we all come "in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the SON of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST." Apostles, in the original sense and for the original purpose, have ceased, though men of apostolic fervour are found pioneering in the cause of CHRIST at home and abroad.

Prophets, in the original sense and for the original purpose, have ceased, though men are still gifted so to speak the word of the LORD in communion with His present mind, that souls are more aware of the Divine Voice than of the human speaker, and this answers to prophesying (1 Cor. xiv. 3). The Apostle in the chapters under consideration in the article on the OPEN MEETING (1 Cor. xii.-xiv.) lays stress upon "the best gifts" and "the more excellent way."

"Covet," says he, "to prophesy, for he that prophesieth speaketh to edification, exhortation and comfort," and "the more excellent way" to exercise this gift is shown to be *love*.

To sum up, in answer to the first question, the plain answer is, No, we have not the gifts of prophecy, tongues and interpretations, for what godly purpose

would they serve in a now outwardly hopelessly divided Christendom? If what is unthinkable did happen, what pride, conceit, high-mindedness would be fostered by the possession of these unique gifts in any single company of Christian professors!

(2) The authority we still have for the OPEN MEETING is in the Scriptures cited (1 Cor. xii.-xiv.) which presuppose the coming together as an assembly, owning the LORDSHIP of CHRIST and the unwithdrawn presence of His Administrator the HOLY SPIRIT to enable such to function acceptably in the sight of GOD for worship, praise, prayer, edification, exhortation and comfort. If one stands to minister in the OPEN MEETING and fails to lead those he addresses into the realisation that GOD is speaking by the SPIRIT through him, he is intruding himself, ignorantly or wilfully, where he has no right to be heard. Indeed, all true living HOLY GHOST ministry, whether in the OPEN MEETING, or at any time in stated address to the saints, will partake of the nature of prophesying according to 1 Cor. xiv. 3. He will speak in a way that will build up, stir up, and cheer up the people of GOD, these being the seasonable and indeed necessary things for all believers at all times. To edify, that is, build up; to exhort or encourage [New Trans.] that is, to stir up, to put new courage into; to enhearten the people of GOD; and to comfort, to give consolation [New Trans.] to them by the opening up and application of the written word in the energy of Christian love is to minister in the HOLY SPIRIT living, appropriate food to the flock of GOD. It is the travesty of all this that has led to the growing avoidance of the OPEN MEETING in many quarters.

One discrimination needs to be made between the OPEN MEETING and ministry generally, namely, the apostolic word, "*Yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.*" Edification was both the apostolic desire as also the divine rule *in the assembly of GOD*,

whether it be "the word of wisdom" given at the moment by the SPIRIT, or "the word of knowledge" carefully, patiently acquired by diligent study, but spoken also at the right time by the SPIRIT's direction and power.

Upon the individual ministry of a brother who believes himself called of the LORD to the holy ministry of the word, the saints generally have the option of attending or not, but in the OPEN MEETING proper they perforce *have to listen to what is proffered as ministry*, and herein lies the cause of much disquiet when Ahimaaz, or one of his modern counterparts, happens to be in evidence.

---

## A Letter to a Friend on Personal and Private Communion with God

By the late Dr. E. B. BROOKS

**I**N reply to your enquiries, I may say, that ever since I was brought to the LORD, which is more than fifty years ago, I have always been impressed with the value and importance of prayer; secret, and, as far as could be, continued prayer, that is, lengthened seasons of prayer. In my early Christian days I used to find opportunities for this, and those times were most enjoyable and helpful, and I am thankful to say that it is the same still, although I don't feel able to give the same length of time to it. In those early days secret prayer was a most delightful exercise, and I am sure I owe much, very much, to the habit of prayer then acquired. As the duties and responsibilities of life increased, of course, time could not be found for long seasons of prayer, but all through my Christian life I have felt unhappy and condemned if I neglected prayer, and more than that, I felt the serious loss and injury to my own spiritual welfare and happiness. I thank God, that now I have more quiet time, I try, but brokenly, to keep up this excellent habit. I used to rise early for

prayer, but that is now too much for my physical powers. Now I find the quiet of evening the most favourable time. I go into a quiet room, often in the dark, and sit down for a time endeavouring to realise the LORD's presence. I speak to the LORD and ask Him to let me find Him speaking with me. I use short, broken petitions, and, if I may so say, I find myself quietly and reverently talking with Him. After a time, I kneel down and pray more definitely and specifically, not only for myself but for all who are laid on my heart, *e.g.*, relatives, friends, saints, mentioning them by name, servants of the LORD, etc., etc. I recognise that persons are differently constituted in many ways, physically and mentally, and we do not all, and cannot all, act alike, but, for myself, I must say that spiritual declension inevitably results from the neglect of private prayer and secret communion with God.

I attach the greatest importance to what I used as a boy to hear my dear father speak of as "ejaculatory" prayer, and I could not live without it. But it will not act as a perfect substitute—for me, at least—for set times of prayer. When I was young, I used to read a good deal of the biography of godly men, such as Baxter, Doddridge, Howe, etc., and those were men of prayer; and I also read their books, *e.g.*, Baxter's "Saint's Rest." That was one of the first books I read, and I read it with intense interest. I owe more than I can say to that book, and thank God He ever led me to read it. The impressions then made will never be effaced.

---

He who has made it his object to be loved here below, instead of being occupied with what one owes to others, lives a life of unfruitfulness.

---

We need never be discouraged as long as we see such a motto inscribed on the door of our Father's treasury, "He giveth more grace." It has no limit, it is bottomless, and boundless.

## Some Early Church Difficulties

BY THE EDITOR.

### I.—THE BUSYBODY.

THE passion for managing other people's lives is common but unattractive. Even before the Church came into existence, there are instances of those who were to be assigned prominent places therein being rebuked by our LORD for this particular failing. So inherent in human nature is the love of minding other people's business that even Peter, James, and John succumbed to it on occasions. "MASTER," said John to our LORD, "we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name, and we forbad him because he followeth not us." This unseasonable zeal met with the prompt rebuke, "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us." "LORD wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them [some inhospitable Samaritan villagers] as Elias did?" demanded James and John one day. "But He turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." "LORD, and what shall this man do?" enquires Simon Peter at the lakeside. "JESUS said unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, *what is that to thee?* Follow thou Me." In other words, "*follow Me yourself, that is your great business.*"

In the early church, the busybodies in other men's matters were a matter of some concern to the Apostles Peter and Paul, judging by the stern references to such in their Epistles.

Twice at least St. Paul refers to them in uncomplimentary terms. In ~~2 Thess. iii. 2~~, he bluntly describes such as "busybodies" ["meddling in others' affairs"—J.N.D. note]; and to an apostolic delegate (1 Tim. v. 13) an even more graphic description of such and their activities is given. "Idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." The

New Translation J.N.D. renders it: "idle, going about to people's houses, and not only idle, but also gossipers and meddlers."

The activities of these undesirables in the early days of the church seem not to have been confined to one place or sex. Thessalonica was the place where the men would appear to have lain themselves open most to the Apostolic stricture; while Ephesus was where women are the ones to specially merit the rebuke.

The mind of God as to busybodies in the Church in ancient and modern times is not left in obscurity, those at Ephesus "being commanded and exhorted" by the Apostle "by our LORD JESUS CHRIST to work quietly, and eat their own bread," and failure to do so was to be publicly punished by social ostracism—"have no company with him that he may be ashamed." This also was the second time the Apostle had written them as to this, in his former letter exhorting them to "seek earnestly to be quiet and mind your own affairs." (1 Thess. iv. 11, New Trans.).

Being a busybody, and thus one who minds other people's business, one must perforce be neglecting one's own affairs, and yet these are those of which "every one of us must give an account to God." "Follow Me yourself" is the LORD's word, providing alike an occupation for a lifetime and a safeguard against being a busybody and "meddling in other men's matters," as St. Peter says in his first Epistle, chapter four, verse fifteen.

## 2.—THE MURMURERS.

No special gift or talent is required to qualify as a murmurer. Indeed, the amazingly prolific crop of grumblers that the flesh has produced among the professing people of God may well leave the beholder gasping. It is so *easy* to complain. "These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (Jude 16).

Oh! but, objects the reader, these are “ungodly sinners” as the previous verse would show you. Quite so; one has never, by the way, read of “godly sinners”; but these ungodly sinners seem to be found “feeding themselves without fear in your feasts of charity,” and “to have crept in among yourselves,” says Jude.

This in itself should be sufficient to give any murmurer and complainer among the saints pause, lest he himself be an “ungodly sinner” *in reality* though found in the company of “them that are sanctified by GOD the FATHER, and preserved in JESUS CHRIST and called” (verse 1).

Their spot, “murmurer and complainer,” is not the spot of His children: they are a perverse and crooked generation” (Cf. Deut. xxxii. 5). The mark of God’s children is *thanksgiving* “in every thing giving thanks”; “abounding in thanksgiving”; “giving thanks at all times for all things”; “giving thanks unto the FATHER.” It was the murmurers in the olden times who fell in the wilderness, not having the faith that believed the goodness of God to bring them into the land of blessing.

“Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Cor. x. 10, 11).

No sooner was Christianity launched upon the sea of time, to the accompaniment of signs and wonders, and divers gifts of the HOLY SPIRIT, with myriads even of the Jewish priests obedient to the Faith, than there arose murmurings of preferential treatment which threatened to sow dissension among the early Christian believers in Jerusalem. “And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied there arose a murmuring” (Acts vi. 1). It was a subtle move on the part of Satan, for natural feeling is soon stirred unless grace is active. Then, as parties of sympathisers with both sides are quickly formed, a united company can soon be hopelessly rent asunder. Happily in this early instance of

murmuring and complaining, this threatened danger was averted by apostolic wisdom under the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT. So the enemy's effort to disintegrate the early Christian community was frustrated and harmony maintained. Would God it were always so, which alas, through pride, awkwardness, stiff-neckedness and wilfulness, often it is not.

But the confirmed grumbler, the chronic murmurer, would do well to consider his (or her) ways lest they be found perilously like those described in the Epistle of Jude to which we have referred, and be not really the Christians they imagine themselves.

There is a very thought-provoking and heart-searchingly suggestive phrase in *The Epistle Dedicatory* prefixed to copies of the A.V. by King James' translators. We give it verbatim (even to the capital letter which therefore need not be taken here as having any denominational reference). "*Self conceited Brethren, who run their own ways, and give liking unto nothing, but what is framed by themselves, and hammered on their own anvil.*" Am I one? Are you?

The early church in Apostolic times, therefore, was not the only sufferer from murmurers and complainers, since King James' translators, in 1611 A.D., had certain of that ilk also to contend with. Is the species yet extinct? In any case, let us watch and pray that *we* may never be numbered among those who *hinder* the LORD's work, *obstruct* the LORD's servants, and *dishearten* the LORD's people by a murmuring, complaining spirit and manner. Let us search and try our ways, and turn back to Him Whose SPIRIT we have grieved, and Who has had to suffer our bad manners in the wilderness. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Ask yourself in His presence, "*When did I last complain of my brethren, or grumble at what did not please me in the assembly, and in the service of Thy people?*" He will show first what, up to now, hinders His work of grace in, and through you. Is it



not worth while, in view of the Judgment Seat of CHRIST at which we all must one day appear, that we should be really exercised as to this?

### 3.—CONTENTIOUS PREACHERS AND OTHERS.

The farmer's occupation is the most natural calling in the world; the preacher's, surely, the most unnatural. Had sin never marred creation, man, in a state of innocency, would have tilled the ground, dressing and keeping the beautiful garden of the LORD (Gen. ii. 15). With the intrusion of sin and the imminence of judgment the preacher appears on the scene "as a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter ii. 5).

With such themes as "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come," and also "the good news of the grace of God" to proclaim, one would scarcely have expected to hear in early church days of contentious preachers. Yet from his Roman prison the Apostle Paul writes to his Philippian friends that "some indeed preach CHRIST of contention, not sincerely; some even of envy and strife."

Why does any man *want* to preach? This is a question to which *every preacher* should certainly face up. The result, undoubtedly, would cause something very like a preaching revolution; but this does not seem likely to happen as it is not a pleasant business to investigate one's motives in the searching light of truth. Yet what a gain, what an unlocking of the flood-gates of blessing, would immediately result if the only persons who essayed to preach in public could truthfully affirm in the sight of God, "Necessity is laid upon; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel," "for the love of CHRIST constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (1 Cor. ix. 16; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15). That the man who felt like this in regard to preaching should have seen men preaching from envy, strife and contention must have been sad in the extreme.

To stand at the desk, or fill the pulpit, gives a man a position in the sight of others which might otherwise be difficult to attain. Self-importance and vanity may possibly play some part when one possesses what C. H. Spurgeon called the "fatal facility of speech"; and the flesh, even in a believer, loves prominence, *does it not?* Emulation of another's undoubted gift may create envy in a carnal believer, and prompt such an one to seek, find, or make occasion to proudly display himself in the same rôle; usually, and happily, this has no permanent success.

Sometimes, a more honest, but equally fruitless, motive is given as to why one wants to preach. Said such an one to the writer: "You see, I like to have to preach on Sundays because having to think so much about my sermon helps to keep me walking a bit more carefully in the week."

The only good thing about this remark, which struck the hearer, was that of "*having to think so much about my sermon,*" because it is painfully obvious that *all* preachers' are not troubled very much in this way, judging by what they say when preaching. To paraphrase a familiar Bible story, dribbling on from verse to verse in a desultory fashion until the time is up, *is not preaching*, however declamatory and loudly it be uttered at recurrent intervals, to the suffering, patient hearers.

Some modern preachers, with their genial platitudes, are for all the world like twittering little birds, unaware of the coming hurricane; while others so fasten on the sterner side of truth, that *the music of the silver bells of jubilee, the glorious gospel of the grace of God*, can scarcely be discerned amidst the rumbles of doom to come. To prayerfully and attentively study the actual words used by our LORD to call men to Himself, as given in the gospels, would reveal a great difference between Him and those of His would-be preachers who adopt either of the diverse styles above mentioned. But some men are too wise to learn, and while their foolish ignorance is patent to everyone save themselves, so

long as by inviting themselves, or creating invitations for themselves, to preach, they will be heard by the dwindling congregations which a sense of loyalty compels to attend the preaching places they visit.

Still, if a man must preach, because of the urge of necessity laid upon him, he will do so, but neither envy nor contention will have any part in his activity. "What will you do, my lad, if we refuse to let you preach in the Room?" was demanded of a young neophyte some years ago. "Preach outside, Sir," was the prompt reply, "for the LORD has said, *Go and preach the Gospel to every creature.*" "Right, my young brother, then you may certainly preach inside our Room." No envy, no strife, nor contention, here, but brotherly love, sense of responsibility to the only MASTER of the harvest, and sound, sanctified common sense. May those essential conditions to real preaching be multiplied among us. To go under a deep sense of individual responsibility to CHRIST, encompassed by the prayerful, loving interest of the brethren, using the natural endowment of common sense in the going, will unfailingly bring blessing from the God Who is not willing that any should perish, and Whose long suffering is salvation. Consecrated, not contentious, preachers are badly needed to-day. John the Baptist drew crowds in the wilderness; most of us find it difficult to draw a dozen in the midst of crowded districts!

(*To be continued, D.V.*)

---

Our hearts clinging closely to CHRIST, we shall sustain one another in the body of CHRIST. The love of CHRIST shall hold the whole together, CHRIST being everything, and we content to be nothing, helping one another, praying one for the other, I *ask* not the prayers of the saints, I reckon on them. The LORD keep us going on in simplicity, fulfilling as the hireling our day, till CHRIST shall come and then "shall every man have praise of God." Praise of God!

## To Him Who Loves Us

**O**NCE we sang for childhood's pleasure,  
    "O how He loves";  
Sang again in manly measure,  
    "O how He loves."  
Yet that sweet refrain awaited,  
Wants that after years created,  
Hearts that brought what lips repeated,  
    "O how He loves."

Sing, my soul, since thou hast known Him,  
    "O how He loves,"  
Victor, Saviour, Bridegroom, own Him,  
    "O how He loves."  
Sought and found a sinner bringing  
Shame and ruin, helpless clinging,  
Till His riches left thee singing,  
    "O how He loves."

All thy joys from JESUS borrow,  
    "O how He loves."  
Use His heart in all thy sorrow,  
    "O how He loves."  
He Who bore our condemnation,  
Is Himself our expectation,  
Boasting in His great salvation,  
    "O how He loves."

When the hopeless pressure seizes,  
    "O how He loves."  
Cast thy burden all on JESUS,  
    "O how He loves."  
Seek not for a sign or token,  
It is written, He has spoken,  
Never can His word be broken,  
    "O how He loves."

Flame of JAH and what can quench it,  
 "O how He loves,"  
 Chain divine and who can wrench it,  
 "O how He loves,"  
 Fettered on the arm that freed thee,  
 In its grasp to hold and lead thee,  
 Love that proved how it doth need thee,  
 "O how He loves."

God Himself this Kinsman gave us,  
 "O how He loves."  
 By His life of strength to save us,  
 "O how He loves."  
 What though friend or foe endeavour,  
 From this rock our faith to sever,  
 Trust ye in the LORD for ever.  
 "O how He loves."

## On the Use of Opportunities

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, America's one-time famous President, had upon the walls of his private office in the White House only two objects of adornment. One was a portrait of Abraham Lincoln, the other a framed manuscript of a poem in the handwriting of its author, Senator Ingalls, of Kansas. The subject of this poem was "Opportunity," and in fourteen brief lines it showed how in

"Hovel and mart and palace,  
 Soon or late,  
 Opportunity knocks unbidden  
 Once at every gate."

Keeping these two chosen objects always before him at his desk gives some insight into the very alert, forceful personality of Theodore Roosevelt, and may help to suggest some profitable reflections for ourselves. If we keep the thought of our great Deliverer continually

before us and "consider Him," and also the reminder that opportunities such as the present will not always be ours, it may stir us up to live as those who are indeed alive, alert, intelligent, and purposeful beings.

Life holds many opportunities, some we make, others we meet, many we miss, and yet shall have to give account for all one day. Three illustrations may be taken from the New Testament. Zaccheus, the Judean publican, was a man who made his opportunity; Levi, the Galilean publican, one who most unexpectedly met his; and the rich young Ruler who came to CHRIST, one who so tragically missed the golden opportunity thereby afforded him.

Zaccheus, hearing that JESUS of Nazareth was to pass that way, made an opportunity of seeing Him that day. In spite of spiritual and physical handicaps, being both "rich and little of stature," he yet seized his opportunity and was rewarded by our LORD in a most markedly gracious way. "They that seek Me shall find Me, when they seek for Me with all their heart," was a promise most truly fulfilled in the case of Zaccheus, the publican, who "sought to see JESUS Who He was," and heard those most wonderful words, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Here indeed was an instance of an opportunity made and abundantly rewarded.

In the case of the Galilean publican, Levi, afterwards to be known as Matthew, we have presented an illustration of an opportunity met and seized at once. "And after these things He went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He said unto him, Follow Me. And he left all, rose up, and followed Him." Here is a case of opportunity coming knocking at the gate and being immediately taken advantage of. "I am found of them that sought Me not," might well be used to illustrate the call of Levi, the publican, on that most memorable day in his history.

The rich young Ruler, of whom St. Matthew tells us in his gospel, was one who made an opportunity of meeting CHRIST and yet, alas, to his sorrow and loss, missed what it held for him. "He went away very sorrowful," having made the great refusal of discipleship to CHRIST.

As you read these words you, too, have an opportunity, and may meet and master it to your everlasting joy, or, alas, miss it to endless regret. For nothing looks out of a person's past life with a more unpitying face than lost opportunities.

As a poet puts it somewhere:

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,  
The saddest are these—  
*It might have been.*"

Turning again to the story of the call of Levi, the son of Alphaeus, the publican or tax-gatherer, there are several things of very special interest to claim our attention. They were memorable days just then in Capernaum; so much was happening through the presence of JESUS in the city, that Luke, in his gospel, writes as though the transformation of a rich, vulgar, grasping tax-gatherer into a disciple was a matter of everyday occurrence. It was indeed a day of opportunity. "Unknown abysses, into which the sun never shines, lie covered with commonplace in men and women, and are only revealed by the rarest opportunity," says an old writer. So it was that this unlikely character, when opportunity met him, "left all, rose up and followed Him."

Levi, the son of Alphaeus, was, as his name indicates, a Jew, yet as his profession shows, one who was regarded by his people as a traitor to his race. He was a man who had taken the wrong road in life and knew it. Love of gold, of gain, and low desires had ensnared him. He had plenty of friends, so St. Mark tells us; he had made money, so that without embarrassment on the very day of his conversion he could make a great feast

and invite many of his old companions to his house to share it. But his neighbours despised him; he had given up any pretension to religion, for we are told that as a class these renegade Jews neither kept the Sabbath nor attended the synagogue; and so avaricious were they that an honest one was a *rara avis*, so much so that Sabinus, at Rome, wrote of having seen an epitaph over a grave, *Here lies an honest publican*.

But Levi the son of Alpheus was a man uneasy at heart. Something in him revolted at his way of life; there were early memories of Scriptures learned and Sabbaths observed; buried feelings and longings for better things would force themselves into notice in hours of silence on sleepless nights. Then the hearing, as he was bound to do, of the words and works of JESUS of Nazareth, of how differently He treated outcasts from what the Pharisees and suchlike did, must all have helped to prepare him for that all-important moment when the shadow of CHRIST fell across the tax office and the call came to follow Him along the right road. Opportunity had indeed knocked at his gate, and everything depended upon the immediate response being made by him. CHRIST, the Friend of publicans and sinners, so unexpectedly called Levi the publican to follow Him, and Levi unhesitatingly seized the opportunity, and unreservedly obeyed the call of CHRIST. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God," and the good news is preached for the obedience of faith.

If you have hitherto been on the wrong road, the same Voice which called Levi the publican to follow Him on the right road calls to you by this very paper. "To-day if ye will hear His Voice harden not your heart." Levi was willing, and whatever the past had been, he grasped the opportunity then presented, and the whole current of his life became changed for time and eternity.

Having obeyed the call of CHRIST, Levi now seeks to make opportunities for others to hear that call. He is



not content to eat his portion alone. Everybody should know what a Friend of publicans and sinners CHRIST was, and for his part he would see that they had opportunity afforded them for so doing. So he made a great feast in his house. "And it came to pass, that, as JESUS sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also with JESUS and His disciples: for there were many, and they followed Him."

In CHRIST, Levi had found the key to the real joy of living and wished to make a feast to celebrate this in which the Friend of sinners should be the welcome Guest, and to which others might come to share the blessing. Is it a cause for wonder that Matthew, once Levi the publican, was the disciple chosen by the SPIRIT of GOD to recall and place upon permanent record our SAVIOUR'S most gracious invitation, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? Standing on the Galilean hillside, yet knowing the universal weariness of the human heart, and thinking of the unborn millions who would also be "born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," He uttered that so comprehensive word declaring Himself to be sufficient to satisfy every longing soul. What opportunities afforded for any needy soul; and also for satisfied souls to make Him known. To be able to sing truly—

"I came to JESUS as I was  
Weary and worn and sad;  
I found in Him a resting place  
And He has made me glad."

and then from common gratitude to be compelled to continue—

"I have such a wonderful SAVIOUR  
That everybody should know."

Yes, exclaims St. Paul, "Redeeming the time"—literally, buying up the opportunity—"for the days are evil."

Dr. Adam Clarke, the commentator, had a neighbour who was a very ripe scholar. Both had seen on the same evening a very rare book advertised. As soon as the neighbour had had his breakfast next morning, he hastened to the shop to purchase the volume.

"You are too late," replied the shopkeeper to his enquiry, "the book is sold."

"Too late," he exclaimed in surprise; "why, I came as soon as I had eaten my breakfast."

"Yes," responded the bookseller, "but Adam Clarke came along before breakfast."

Is there any need to point the moral? "Redeeming the time."  
W.G.T.

---

## Grace and the Holy Brethren

**B**RETHREN, as a term descriptive of believers in our LORD JESUS CHRIST, is used by the apostle Paul in his fourteen Epistles over one hundred times; and with the prefix "holy" on two occasions. It is noteworthy that he uses it solely of genuine believers, those who know the grace of God and are saved by it. Never in a general sense does he, or any other Scriptural writer, apply it to all men by nature.

"Holy brethren" occurs in the first Christian Epistle ever written, that to the Thessalonians, and also in the only Epistle written by the apostle of the Gentiles to believers of the circumcision (1 Thess. v. 27; Heb. iii. 1). These latter, having left the ancient and venerable Jewish brotherhood, and having become partakers of a heavenly calling, as distinguished from an earthly Jewish one, are now addressed by the writer as "holy brethren"; while to the former, an assembly mainly composed of Gentile believers, the true character of the brotherhood to which they had now been admitted by birth into the family of God is specially emphasised.

They had received and obeyed the gospel of the grace of God which had been preached to them, and had thereby become "holy brethren."

The term "brethren" in New Testament thought, of course, suggests nothing of a denominational or sectarian character; it describes an abiding relationship entered upon by every believer in CHRIST, irrespective of sex, age, nationality. "One is your MASTER, and all ye are brethren," says the LORD Himself to the disciples. This abiding relationship is entered upon as we noted only by birth; is quite unlike friendship, or any association of people, which may be formed or severed by circumstances, or at will. There is no doubt as to how this comes about, for St. John i. 12, 13; Gal. iii. 26, with kindred scriptures, clearly teach how one becomes a child in the family of God, and hence one of the "brethren," and "holy brethren" referred to here. It is all of grace, apart from human merit or effort, for "of His own will He begat us by the word of truth."

The term "holy brethren" which so specially and appropriately emphasises the nature and character of the new relationship one to another into which all true believers in the LORD JESUS are introduced should cause us to reflect deeply upon it. It is a holy brotherhood—the brotherhood (which another apostle bids us to love, 1 Peter ii. 17) founded upon their true sanctification, CHRIST Himself, "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.)

It is not mere human brotherhood based upon the possession of a common humanity *whatever our very great responsibilities in this connection may be*; nor is it a brotherhood of believers in CHRIST as known after the flesh and before the cross; but emphatically the holy brotherhood formed by, and based upon, the action of the Risen LORD when He breathed upon them His risen life. In this place of oneness in life with Him who is "the First-born among many brethren," every believer

has the everlasting encouragement that He, albeit our LORD and our GOD, is not ashamed to call them "brethren." He, Who in the days of His flesh took hold on the seed of Abraham and so shared human life, albeit in sinless perfection, has by the grace of GOD tasted death for everything, been raised again by the glory of the FATHER, and in resurrection power communicated His risen life to His own. For this cause He is not ashamed to call the many sons whom GOD is bringing to glory "brethren," saying, "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren" (Heb. ii. 12). The amazing condescension of the LORD JESUS CHRIST expressed by this enables us to realise that although in His own holy Person so infinitely above us, He yet has drawn unspeakably near, and remains evermore thus in His power and understanding sympathy to all those whom He so graciously deigns to own as "My brethren." While we marvel at His grace in so speaking, *yet reverence, which is the very spirit of perception*, would surely guard us from so speaking of Him.

The knowledge of this and the consideration of what it means for such as ourselves will surely prove an infallible antidote to that latent distrust, despondency and disappointment to which our evil hearts would constantly seek to make us a prey. The exhortation (so characteristic of Hebrews, which the writer himself describes as a word of exhortation, xiii. 22), forthwith proceeds: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, CHRIST JESUS."

They must constantly consider Him, CHRIST JESUS (the Apostle of our confession, who came from GOD, ch. i; the faithful High Priest of our confession, ch. ii) Who has gone in to heaven for us, and is even now crowned with glory and honour. The heavenly calling of the "holy brethren" is thus in direct contrast with the earthly calling of the Jewish brethren.

It is a *heavenly calling* because GOD the FATHER of all the "holy brethren" *is in heaven*; JESUS, the Great

High Priest, the First-born among the many brethren, *is in heaven*; the end of their calling is with the many sons brought to *heavenly glory*; and although as "holy brethren" they are still marching through the wilderness on the pilgrimage of faith, yet their present spirit, true character and real aims are all *heavenly*.

We need the constant consideration of Him, and of our actual relationship with Him, and with the brotherhood, to enable us to have grace to serve God acceptably while we run with patience the race set before us. But, blessed be His holy name, as we consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, our hearts cannot fail to exclaim:

O Lord, Thou art enough  
The mind and heart to fill;  
Thy life to calm the troubled soul,  
Thy love its fear dispel.

And He is not ashamed to call us brethren! "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, CHRIST JESUS; Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him."

So let us have grace that we may serve God acceptably, remembering that our great Priest, JESUS the SON of God, has passed through the heavens and that we may find grace to help in every time of need as we approach God by Him.

The Priest is in the Holy Place  
And answers from the Throne of grace.

QUARTUS.

---

"We dwell in the land of unwall'd villages ever liable to invasion. We can only count on Him Who is a wall of fire round about us, and glory in our midst. Oh, that we might realise it so, despite of circumstances."

## On the Open Meeting Difficulty

*To the Editor of WORDS OF HELP.*

It was with thankfulness that I read your paper on the OPEN MEETING, as the circulation of such a paper shows there is a fairly widespread exercise on the subject.

While agreeing *with all you say* may I venture to submit a further question for your prayerful consideration? Does not this loss of the OPEN MEETING give yet another evidence to the fact that we are not standing where our fathers stood? That we have not held fast to the Philadelphian position, but have lost much?

You speak of the SPIRIT being straitened at such meetings, but is it not because the SPIRIT is grieved among us, not merely on this or that occasion, but in a graver and more general sense?

It seems to me that these failures or breakdowns (OPEN MEETINGS, poverty in gospel work, dying assemblies) are all witnesses to this, and should lead to much exercise as to the cause. Our living LORD delights to bless His people (and your paper shows beautifully what a blessing an O.M. would be) and if He withholds this there must be some grave cause.

I gather that you—as several Brethren lately—would suggest *an increased spirit of worldliness*, but did not the MASTER, when warning His own, speak “unto His disciples first of all, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.” Luke xii. 1? Your experience is greater than mine, but would you say it is usually the more worldly-minded brothers who spoil these fellowship gatherings?

Is it not possible that a proud pharisaical spirit is still more abominable in the eyes of THE HOLY AND THE TRUE (cf. Prov. vi. 16, 17); and perhaps more grieving because more linked with His holy things—than even that which is of the earth, earthy? Surely we cannot doubt its presence since we hear it speak so often—to hastily condemn, loftily patronise, or entirely shun other Christians and talk of going with them (even in open-air gospel work or the funeral of a believer) as defiling or sinful.

The LORD spoke of treatment meted to believers, as given to Himself (Acts. ix. 5), were these a selected few, specially free from error? Dare we think HE is changed at all? Or does He still value all His own by whatever name they are known (C. of E., Wesleyan, Baptist, O.B.) as He did those who had so lately turned (often but partially as at Corinth) from the horrors of idolatry, or the perverted rites and traditions of Judaism? Where is the line of demarcation between the true children of GOD? If we speak of acceptance and justification, they share it equally, for it is only in Him Who is *their* SAVIOUR and LORD as well as ours! If we talk of their failures, GOD knows we have ours also—the higher one is placed, the farther his fall!

Was the height of the riches of GOD's grace bestowed upon us

to make us so proud (ecclesiastically) that we should look down on other companies in the Church of GOD, to mercilessly detect shortcomings and harshly condemn (what appears to us as) failures? or was it not rather that we might gain that deeper knowledge of CHRIST—*Christ-mindedness* and thus make us more sympathetic and compassionate, more earnest in intercession for them (how seldom one hears any in public), more full of brotherly love and helpfulness, in a word more like the One Who came into this world *not* to condemn, but to minister, to give and to save?

Surely these losses of ours have been the subject of many prayers, and would not the LORD (John xv. 7; 1 John iii. 22) lead us in this way to face the sad truth that though we may be rich in knowledge (which puffeth up) in the power to work with GOD (1 Saml. xiv. 45) we are indeed "poor" (Rev. iii. 17); for strength to save sinners from a perishing world, or rescue saints from a fallen church, or even to stand in the wondrous place in which His grace placed us is well nigh gone.

Have you thought that possibly the increase of worldliness is rather a result of this state, for is it not His presence that separates? (Exod. xxxiii. 16). Lifeless meetings leave a hunger that is apt to turn to the "swine's food—the husks," but if it is spiritual pride that He would thus chasten (Prov. xxix. 23) then such measures as these are exactly suited to work a cure (as well as reprove) for surely they should humble us—not only before Himself, but among our brethren, and make us realize that we are no better than they, in spite of great privileges and gifts of His grace. Apologising for so long a letter, and with sincere appreciation of your useful paper, Believe me,

A GRATEFUL READER.



"That believer makes a fatal mistake who *for any cause* neglects the prayerful study of the word of God."

## Answers to Correspondents

*C.S.B., Danbury.* The answer to your most interesting query as to Matthew xxvii. 53, is that however truly Man the Holy Sufferer on Calvary was, One Who became a Man, and died as Man, yet He was infinitely more than Man, being essentially the ETERNAL SON by Whom and for Whom all things exist. So when He expired nature was made to yield her testimony above and below. The uncanny darkness, the earthquake, the rending rocks, the shuddering, as we may well say, of creation at the LORD'S DEATH appeal to the believer's heart as being only what might be expected to take place at such a scene on such an occasion. A very choice saint of GOD thus expressed it :—

The rending rocks, the quaking earth  
Declared eternal Deity ;  
The stream of blood and bitter cry  
Proved love in its immensity.

The Divine answer to the triumphant cry, "It is finished," announcing as it did the complete accomplishment of the will of GOD, was this rending of the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom, the immediate quaking of the earth, the rending of the rocks, and the opening of the tombs, out of which *three days after*, following His resurrection, those who had been dead, *also arose* and appeared in the Holy City. J.N.D., says (Synopsis, vol. iii. p. 191, par. 2) "The resurrection of the dead, over whom the king of terrors had no more right, displayed the efficacy of the death of CHRIST for sinners, and the power of His resurrection . . . . . The grave gives up its prey ; He is LORD of the dead and of the living."

I understand that the convulsion of nature opened the graves but the resurrection of such as lay in them did not take place at the time but following His resurrection three days after. It probably was but a limited number and these well-known, in order to witness to what CHRIST by dying had wrought.

*J.C., Northants.* The answer to your query re age as to when a young man may speak in the Assembly, preach the gospel, etc., etc., is (1) Let no man despise thy youth because it is so evident that no love of prominence, self-sufficiency, emulation of another's gift nor any of that evil brood is prompting you ; but a sincere love for CHRIST and for His own conditioned in a real humility and sense of abiding personal unworthiness is what, characterises you in general conduct, character and manner of life. (2) There is no age limit at either end in the service of CHRIST. A single eye to His glory is a solvent of many difficulties.



## Broken Glimpses

*"And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He ceased to be seen of them" (Luke xxiv. 31).*

**H**OW aptly this describes what must have been the spiritual experience of most of us, or all, at one time or another. The momentary glimpse caught, so sweet, so brief, as to be almost a sorrow in memory, won as it would seem by effort, but which no effort was able to retain. What is the meaning of this, and what is its remedy? Is it normal for us, the necessity of a life of faith, or the failure of faith, and to be judged as such?

In the case of the two at Emmaus, what held their eyes? Was it divine power for their discipline, or human weakness, or what else?

It is plain they had failed in faith. The LORD's words were a rebuke; His difficulty in yielding to their desire a greater rebuke. These are things which those who know their LORD should have no difficulty in interpreting. The latter we may find again, or what resembles it, in a case which should be familiar to us in the earliest book of the Old Testament. Lot, in the gate of Sodom, found his angelic visitors slow to yield to an invitation which at Abraham's hands a greater than they had accepted without the smallest hesitation. Here the LORD Himself had stayed behind with Abraham.

Sodom could not receive Him save in judgment. Lot's dwelling there kept God out of his dwelling. Was it arbitrary dealing that we read in his case no such words as meet us in the case of the "friend of God"—no appearance of Jehovah to Him, no "I am the God of Lot"? As little was it arbitrary dealing when the messengers of judgment had to say, "Nay, but we will abide in the street all night."

And when his importunity had prevailed, and he had put such fare as he had before his guests, and they had sat down—was he accountable or not for the clamour of the men of Sodom at his doors which interrupted them? Did he not abhor the wickedness? Did he not

grieve for the interruption? Both, most undoubtedly. Yet Abraham had no men of Sodom to interrupt. Was that to his credit, certainly as it was his gain? Clearly it was the result of being where the men of Sodom had no place. Lot had chosen Sodom, and he must have the conditions attaching to his choice.

What does this tell in our ears? Does it tell nothing? The thoughts that throng in upon us as unbidden, if not as unclean guests, when we would so gladly have them away—at the Lord's Table, at the prayer-meeting—hindering communion. Have we any similar responsibility as to these? The effort necessary to obtain what we cannot hold, while other things throng in uncalled, when we do not want them: why are these things so? There is no accident, be assured, there is nothing arbitrary. How often would the Lord be absent from us when He might be present? No: we have lost authority to keep out what (so licensed) must keep Him out. We have given the key of the house to those who now hold it in defiance of us; we have resigned our authority and lost it. They control us, when we should be controlling them. We have shut Him out, who could control them by the necessity of His holiness.

With Lot there was not even a glimpse of the Lord possible, but it was the fruit of a place where association was in itself defilement. How many thus, by these associations, shut out the sunshine from their hearts, effectually? Is it not only a lesser degree of a similar cause when but a ray now and then struggles with the clouds that again banish it?

---

“I can never be independent of man until I learn how dependent I am upon God.”

\* \* \*

“Faith rests in God for the present, and waits on God for the future.”

\* \* \*

“Do not scold people out of error, but love them into truth.”

## On Some Early Church Difficulties

BY THE EDITOR.

(Continued from page 187)

### 4.—PARTY SPIRIT AND FAVOURITE TEACHERS.

THE Church of God at Corinth, disfigured as alas it was by moral excesses, misty speculations as to vital matters, divided opinions upon important subjects, and general carnality of tone, was rebuked *first of all for its party spirit and sectarianism*, shown by adherence to favourite teachers and leaders. The early church, however, certainly could not now claim a monopoly in this. "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cēphas; and I of CHRIST"—probably the last section was composed of some who held aloof from the extravagances of others and so claimed superior sanctity.

"Is CHRIST divided?" thunders His indignant ambassador; "Was Paul crucified for you?" he demands—"for I determined not to know anything among you save JESUS CHRIST and Him crucified"; "or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" he continues scathingly.

The intensity of language leaves no doubt either as to the Apostle's estimate of this unhappy favouritism, or of his deep feeling of hot indignation and resentment at the dishonour thereby done, however unintentionally, to the LORD.

How pernicious party spirit among believers is, stands clearly marked by his drastic treatment meted out to it here. For it prevents the mutual comfort of love. It also awakens unspiritual preferences and grieves the truly spiritually minded among the saints. It restrains the real testimony to CHRIST like a powerful brake, and treats minor matters as though they were of major importance. It blurs out of all recognition the distinctive badge of discipleship by which "all men shall know that ye are My disciples"; "love one to another." It yields a wretched crop of strife, dissension, partiality, heart-burning, and—alas, too late, often—of regrets.

"I am of Paul" cries the one who mistakes the liberty

wherewith CHRIST makes free for the license which enslaves through unwatchfulness. "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall," says the Apostle to all such.

"I am of Apollos," says he to whom enticing words of men's wisdom appeal, bedecking the Cross with rhetoric; not that Apollos did this, but "he was an eloquent man," and such can scarcely escape a following by such as love a good speaker, and an intellectual discourse.

"I am of Cephas," asserts the third, a man who clings to traditional religion and apostolical succession. Was not Cephas a real Apostle, one of the Twelve actually called and ordained by CHRIST Himself? Were Paul and Apollos—useful servants though they may be—ever among that favoured college of the Twelve chosen, called and sent by the LORD? To ask the question is to answer it; so "I am of Cephas."

"I am of CHRIST"—owning no other Name, as is most right and proper; but, alas, using it as a party name, a distinguishing and differentiating mark from others who at Corinth are in the Church of GOD, CHRIST's body.

Thus—The NAME which is the centre of unity, "for where two or three are gathered together in My Name there am I in the midst of them" is dragged down by party pretension to the level of mere human leaders—Paul, Apollos, Cephas, CHRIST—and, says the offender who dares thus to misuse THE NAME—by implication—"I am holier than thou" to his more carnally-minded co-religionists at Corinth.

It is so fatally easy, even in these days, to succumb to the party spirit. Paul, the champion of liberty, the man of intellect, logic, and argument; Apollos, the eloquent expounder and brilliant orator; Cephas, the man to whom CHRIST had undoubtedly entrusted the keys of the Kingdom; "are all yours—and ye are CHRIST's and Christ is God's."

"It is easier," wrote a highly-placed ecclesiastic, "to be a good churchman [a party man] than to be a good Christian."

"The price of liberty is ceaseless vigilance," said another, echoing the Apostle Peter. "Be sober, be vigilant." "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." "The grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST be with us all."

#### 5.—THE MONEY DIFFICULTY

Poverty was from the outset a marked feature of the Early Church, especially at Jerusalem. Hence the money difficulty soon presented itself, and was at first met by those having goods disposing of them, to distribute to every one as he had need. Later we find the Apostle Paul making collections for the poor saints at Jerusalem in the various assemblies formed through his missionary labours. At the Council in Jerusalem, "James, Cephas, and John . . . gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship . . . only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do" (Gal. ii. 9, 10). In his second epistle to the Corinthians, chapters viii. and ix. are almost wholly one long argument for Christian liberality based upon two most familiar texts, which, however, are usually taken quite out of their context to give emphasis to what is considered to be truth of greater importance (2 Cor. viii. 9; ix. 15).

Again, when writing to his delegate to the wealthy Ephesian assembly, he returns with great force to the money question, showing thereby what a real difficulty it was even in those early days of Christianity. It is believers who are to be reminded that "they that will [will to] be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts" and reminds them that some having coveted after money "*have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*" Is this not also patent to-day?

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, . . . *ready to distribute, willing to communicate.*"

These charges and utterances of the Apostle, the bondman of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, were only a continuation and exposition of his MASTER'S injunctions and warnings. Our LORD said much about the use of money. Indeed He spoke more about money than about almost any other single subject, and always in words of deep and solemn import. Most men are frightened at the thought of being poor, but what alarmed our LORD was the peril of the rich. "*How hardly shall a rich man enter the Kingdom of Heaven,*" he exclaims; and with great earnestness warns His own disciples against the deceitfulness of riches. "*Take heed, and beware of covetousness,*" says He; yet many even of His own now appear to think the love of money a rather trifling fault. Indeed, money-making is often regarded not as a fault but as a virtue, and the pathway of Christian testimony is, alas, strewn with the wreckage of *the wasted lives of poor rich brethren* who have forgotten, or never recognised that money is a stewardship, a means to an end. Wealthy people are often referred to as "people of means," but means implies an end; and it is well "to remember the words of the LORD JESUS, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35). *Do we really believe this?*

No man becomes covetous or money-loving all at once; it is a secret sin and therefore, all the more dangerous. Moreover, seldom does the covetous money-lover imagine himself or herself to be such. Mr. D. L. Moody, the American evangelist, said he had never once heard a man admit that he was covetous. But if the danger is non-existent among believers, why did our LORD so strongly emphasise the need to "*take heed and beware*" of it, and this to His disciples?

We need to enquire of our own hearts in His presence. What treasure have I laid up in heaven? How many grateful hearts will meet me there?

The Apostle of love in his epistles (1 John iii. 17; 3 John 5-8) is as emphatic as is his brother Apostle in all his epistles as to the *privilege, responsibility, and duty of ministering in temporal things after a godly sort to*

*the poor saints, and the LORD's servants.* These were pressing problems in the Early Church; and in spite of manifold corruptions which have now crept into the professing body of believers are equally pressing to-day, for *the LORD loveth a cheerful giver.*"

The truly spiritually-minded believer does not envy his wealthy brethren, nor advocate community of goods, but rather trembles at the dangers besetting them in their pilgrimage through Vanity Fair. With less in the bank, and more laid up in heaven, how much wealthier even the richest would be.

---

## On Prayer

PRAYER, whether silent or audible, is the expression of dependence on God. The believer should be guided in his requests, that is, pray by the HOLY SPIRIT, in subjection of heart but with holy confidence. The first allusion to prayer in Scripture appears to be in Gen. xx. 7, when God spoke to Abimelech, saying that Abraham would pray for him and his household, and we find, in verse 17, that Abraham did so.

Gen. xxiv. 63 mentions the fact that Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide; that is, to pray.

The first prayer we have on record is that of Abraham's servant, Eliezer (Gen. xxiv. 12 *et seq.*) It is remarkably simple and direct, and was immediately answered.

The prayers of Moses are chiefly intercessory (cf. Numb. xi. 2; xxi. 7, and Deut. ix. 20 for Aaron); the only exception is in Deut. iii. 25, 26, where the prayer is a personal one, which was not answered.

Hannah's prayer (1 Sam. i. 12) is remarkably precise. She did what we are exhorted to do in Phil. iv.; she went her way in the enjoyment of the peace of God. Her action corresponds more particularly with 1 John v. 14, 15, and she was not disappointed.

God designated Job to pray for his friends (ch. xlii. 8) and promised to accept his demand. Samuel's

prayer (1 Sam. xii. 16 *et seq.*) was also answered, and in a similar way, also Jabez's short and direct prayer in 1 Chron. iv. 10.

Jacob's prayers, in Gen. xxxii. 9-12, 24-29, are remarkably direct, and were both answered. We might quote many other examples in the history of David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, Ezra and Nehemiah, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah (2 Chron. xxxii. 20-22), Jeremiah, Jonah and Daniel.

A great deal is said about prayer in the New Testament, and there are numerous and striking examples which it would be very profitable to study in detail; above all, the LORD's prayers, from His baptism (Luke iii. 21) to the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi. 39, and Luke xxii. 44). In Luke's gospel alone, the LORD is mentioned fifteen times as in prayer, and seven times as recommending prayer to His disciples. We find further the prayers of Peter, in Acts ix. 40; Cornelius, Acts x. 2, 4, 31; Saul of Tarsus, Acts ix. 11, and xxviii. 8.

Prayer and worship are two distinct acts, although praise may partly participate in the character of prayer.

It is good to avoid formality, but it is important not to be careless as to our proper attitude in prayer. This attitude depends naturally on the circumstances of the moment. We may lift up our hearts to God in prayer, whilst walking in the street, or seated at the desk, or working in the field, or lying in bed; but in the secret of one's chamber, and wherever possible, it is right to pray on *our knees* (2 Chron. vi. 13; Dan. vi. 10; Luke xxii. 41; Acts vii. 60; ix. 40; xx. 36; xxi. 5).

In a meeting, it may be right for brothers to *stand*; Scripture approves of this attitude, as, for instance, in 1 Chron. xxiii. 30; Mark xi. 25. Eliezer stood in front of the well and prayed (Gen. xxiv. 13). Prayer, while seated, is only mentioned once in Scripture (2 Sam. vii. 18; 1 Chron. xvii. 16) and, rather, as an act of individual communion. But it does not seem that it should be the habitual attitude to be adopted by the individual



or the assembly. A man presenting a petition to a sovereign does not do it seated, but stands or kneels.

There are, of course, cases where on account of bodily infirmity, kneeling, or sometimes even standing, is not possible, especially when the prayers are long, which is, unfortunately, too often the case. All the prayers mentioned above were *short* and direct.

It is of essential importance that those who pray at a prayer meeting should speak so as to be heard distinctly. They should, therefore, whether kneeling or standing, turn towards the congregation, so that every one may be able to say Amen. Some may be hard of hearing, and we are exhorted to be helpers of one another in love. (Read also Eccles. v. 2; Matt. vi. 7, 8; Phil. iv. 6, 7; James v. 17, 18.)

*From the French. Trans. L.F.*

## On Christ and the Children

*"Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." St. Mark x. 14.).*

"THE MASTER has come over Jordan,"  
Said Hannah the mother one day ;  
"He is healing the people who throng Him,  
With a touch of the finger, they say.

"And now I shall carry the children,  
Little Rachel, and Samuel, and John,  
I shall carry the baby Esther,  
For the LORD to look upon."

The father looked at her kindly,  
But he shook his head and smiled ;  
"Now who but a doting mother  
Would think of a thing so wild ?

If the children were tortured by demons,  
Or dying of fever, 'twere well ;  
Or had they the taint of the leper,  
Like many in Israel."

“Nay do not hinder me, Nathan :  
 I feel such a burden of care,  
 If I carry it to the MASTER,  
 Perhaps I shall leave it there.

If He lay His hand on the children,  
 My heart will be lighter I know ;  
 For a blessing for ever and ever  
 Will follow them as they go.”

So over the hills of Judah,  
 Along by the vine-rows green,  
 With Esther asleep in her bosom,  
 And Rachel her brothers between,

’Mong the people who hung on His teaching,  
 Or waited His touch and His word,  
 Through the row of proud Pharisees listening,  
 She pressed to the feet of the LORD.

“Now why shouldst thou hinder the MASTER,”  
 Said Peter, “with children like these ?  
 Seest not how from morning till evening  
 He teacheth, and healeth disease ?”

Then CHRIST said, “Forbid not the children,  
 Permit them to come unto Me !”  
 And He took in His arms little Esther,  
 And Rachel He set on His knee.

And the heavy heart of the mother  
 Was lifted all earth-care above,  
 As He laid His hand on the brothers,  
 And blest them with tenderest love;

As He said of the babes in His bosom,  
 “Of such is the kingdom of Heaven”  
 And strength for all duty and trial  
 That hour to her spirit was given.

JULIA GILL.

## I Cannot Forget

**C**HILDREN of GOD, those who have taken the LORD JESUS as their SAVIOUR, sometimes meet with unhappy circumstances. Why, some will ask, if GOD loves His children could He not remove all difficulties and suffering from their path? No doubt He could do so but, "His thoughts are not our thoughts, His way not our ways" (see Isaiah lv. 8). Therefore, although quite often we do not understand the reason of our trials, we can always say: "He doeth all things well" (Mark vii. 37). The following story of a recent occurrence is an illustration.

A young and pious Christian woman had been ill for some years. She was attended by an unbelieving doctor to whom she loved to speak of her SAVIOUR. She told him what He had done in His infinite love for sinful creatures such as we. He gave His life, His blood was shed, the blood which cleanses from all sin. She made known to him what He offers to all who believe, a salvation fully accomplished for which there is nothing more to be done, since CHRIST has done it all. She showed also—not only by her words—all the joy she knew in Him, even in the midst of suffering, for JESUS stood ever by her, making her to taste all the sympathy of His heart. She then could tell all the power and joy she drew in reading the Bible, the book divine. The doctor, however, did not want to hear . . . "The Bible, all stories! if I had just five minutes I would prove it to you!" That was always his reply, taking good care not to offer "his proofs." Then off he would go. Such is man: he refuses what GOD freely offers him, the salvation of his immortal soul by faith in the LORD JESUS CHRIST the SAVIOUR.

GOD permitted complications in the illness. Why? some will say. The young woman's godliness and fidelity were badly recompensed. Let us repeat: "*His thoughts are not our thoughts.*" An operation was necessary. The doctor said there was but little hope. What was to be done? The precious resource of the children of GOD is to talk to Him, to ask Him, to commit all in confidence to

Him," "to rest" waiting on Him. (Ps. xxxvii. 7). This was what was done. The patient was brought into the operating theatre, perfectly calm, in possession of that peace which fills the heart when we have made known all to our GOD (Phil. iv. 6-7). Her doctor could not help saying to her: You come in here as you would into a place of happiness."

"Perhaps it will be that for me. In a few moments, if GOD so please, I shall doubtless pass through death. For all those who have believed in the NAME of the only-begotten SON of GOD 'Who was delivered for our transgressions and raised again for our justification' that is to pass into heaven, into the presence of JESUS."

At the time when the operation was about to be performed, the doctor saw that things were more serious than he had first thought. "Little hope," he had said then; "No hope" was his verdict now. He asked his patient if she wished to see any one, if she had any request to make. "No, I don't want to see any one. A request to make? Oh, yes, doctor, you never wanted to listen when I was telling you about JESUS. I ask of you to come to Him before it is too late. See Him on the cross, dying for you. Say, He is *my* SAVIOUR. That is all you need for to be saved. When the time comes for you to leave this earth, you will be able to go with joy as I am going; as happy as I am, perfectly happy."

No doubt GOD had permitted the illness of this Christian woman, in order that this doctor might hear such words in those solemn circumstances. Then He intervened in power as He alone can do. The operation was over, the patient saved. "What can one say?" repeated the doctor. Still very weak, but with a heart full of gratitude, the sick one gave the answer to this question, saying sweetly: "GLORY to GOD and to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, my SAVIOUR!" The doctor and his assistants uncovered their heads and added "Amen!" Since then, the doctor has visited his patient twice. It was to hear her speak of JESUS, to say to her: "I cannot forget what you said just before your operation. . . . I cannot forget."

May this story encourage any who are suffering. May these lines arrest any who may perhaps have refused to receive the message of grace so often heard. May you also "not be able to forget." May you come to JESUS, confessing your sins to Him, seeing Him on the cross where He died for you, accepting the salvation which again He offers you to-day.

(From the French. T.H.)

## On Silence, Stillness, Solitude

OURS is a noisy age—the age of machinery. Buses and trams roar their bulk along our streets; tube trains crash their way underground; road-drills split the air with their penetrating din as they stab and bite into the asphalt. The nerves of the harassed town-dweller everywhere cry out for the peace and quietness of the countryside.

GOD loves to speak *in the silence*. It was amid the awesome silence of the Arabian desert that Paul received many divine communications, as it was in the silence of the same desolate region that Moses, centuries earlier, had been prepared for his life work. It is precious to speak to the LORD; it is more precious still to be in the silence before Him, and hear Him speaking to us in the voice of gentle stillness, that still small voice.

We live in a speed-loving age, and the world makes heroes of those who break records on land, on sea, and in the air. Yet how much of the modern rush-movement is simply futile! People hurry to get somewhere, and want to leave as soon as they arrive! The world seems to be suffering badly from the "jumpiness" caused by excessive row and rush, accentuated alike by the effects of the Great War and the foreboding of another dreaded world-wide catastrophe.

But through and above all the clamour and strife of our noisy restless modern world the calm, clear word of the LORD still reaches down to us: "*Be still and know that I*

*am God.*" Mary sat still at the Master's feet, but her spirit was active. There is sound sense in the practice of scholars and spiritual leaders occasionally retiring into "retreats," there to have minds and spirits refreshed and re-charged with mental and spiritual energy. "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew (change) their strength."

We live in an overcrowded age and in an over-populated country, and it is difficult to get alone.

Yet solitude, stillness, and silence we must have if our inner life, that is, our truest life, is to be cultivated and flourish. The deepest convictions are usually born in the silence of solitude, for it is in meditation we give GOD the opportunity to speak to us. Usually it takes some time to get into that state of soul where spiritual things can take effect, and leave lasting impressions.

If we thus allow the silence, stillness and solitude in which we hear the voice of GOD to minister to us, we shall develop more of that serenity and joy in GOD which the man of maturing Christian character feels is the *summum bonum* of life. As Whittier sings :—

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,  
Till all our strivings cease ;  
Take from our hearts the strain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of Thy peace.

E.A.

---

"Sometimes a light surprises the Christian while he sings," says the poet. Experience proves that a light yet more often surprises us when we *pray*. Praying breath drives away the fogs of doubt and difficulty. The very attitude of prayer is submission to GOD, and a surrendered will gives wonderful clearness of spiritual vision. "The saint on his knees sees more than the philosopher on tiptoe." GOD often teaches us to solve our problems on our knees. Prayer helps us to work.

## Notes from a Conference at Vevey, Switzerland

(Eph. vi. 11-24.)

“PUT ye on the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” The whole armour of GOD is the figure of a state of soul which we have to realise. It includes several characters which are manifested in various ways. The apostle is making a comparison: as the soldier has to put on armour to go to war, so must the Christian possess a spiritual armour in order to encounter the adversary. It is not his *power* that is to be feared, for that was annulled at the Cross, but his *wiles*. The enemy ensnares us if we are not armed for warfare. Paul says: “I fear (for you)” (2 Cor. xi. 3) as he speaks of the guile of the enemy in approaching Eve, who was deceived because the word of GOD did not dwell richly in her heart. Satan did not get at her by saying: “I am your enemy, come to strive against GOD and to turn you from the path of obedience.” Had the heart of Eve been filled with the divine word and had she kept it as a precious thing, she would have discerned the wiles of the serpent. The armour is a state of soul characterised by vigilance, dependence and obedience towards GOD and His word, characteristics manifested perfectly in the lowly MAN who glorified GOD and won the victory. We shall also have the victory if we follow His steps, and shall be able to take possession of our heavenly blessings.

We wrestle not against mankind, (flesh and blood) as Israel did, but against spiritual wickedness in high places. The names given to these evil spirits are: “principalities, powers and dominions (or rulers),” verse 12, and show us how formidable are their wiles. The word “rulers” (*Kosmokratores*) contains, in the original, the thought that their power is “of this world.” There are fallen angels who are not yet cast out of heaven and whose evil activity is directed against GOD and men with the object of preventing men from listening to the voice of GOD, and

of opposing in every way the purposes of love which God has formed for His elect. Man put himself under the power of Satan by listening to his voice, but the LORD has delivered us from him by the work of His grace and of His SPIRIT in our souls. Henceforth we have to be on our guard at all times so as to be preserved from the wiles by which the enemy seeks to bring us again under his power and to hinder us from entering into possession of our spiritual blessings in the heavenly places. We are in evil *days* since man rejected the SON of God, but there are also particularly dangerous times during His absence, times which the apostle calls the "*evil day*." This is a time when, in a special way, the enemy uses his power to entice souls into error and rebellion against God. In view of Satan's redoubtable efforts, which are made in an unexpected manner, we require to put on the whole armour of GOD, in order to be able to withstand, and, having done all, to stand. When the evil day comes it is too late to put on the armour. Had Daniel waited on the trial in order to walk in dependence on God, he would have been taken unawares but, before the storm burst upon him, he had been walking with GOD. Three times a day he knelt before the window facing towards Jerusalem, bearing in mind the petition of Solomon at the dedication of the temple (1 Kings viii.). Not having waited until the trial in order to seek GOD's presence, he is filled with His power enabling him to face the attack of the enemy. He was thus able to do all, *and to stand*.

In the whole armour of GOD there are weapons of defence and of offence. Those of defence are the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes, the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation. The reins are the figure of the intimate affections of the inner man. "My reins also instruct me in the night seasons." (Ps. xvi. 7). That which is hidden from all eyes, the secret life of the inner man, must be under the control of the word so that it may instruct the soul and that the thoughts and affections of the new man may be formed by the truth, that is, by the revelation of the thoughts and mind of GOD.



The girdle is the emblem of service, walk and conflict. In the word there are numerous references to the Eastern custom of binding the clothing by a girdle so that there should be no hindrance to walk, work or conflict. (Luke xii. 35 ; Ex. xii. 11 ; Job xxxviii. 3). The reins (or loins) are girt about with truth when the word brings light to our souls and illuminates our way so that we should know and fulfil the will of GOD and should be maintained in the enjoyment of communion with Him. Thus it was with the Perfect MAN, Who always did the things that pleased the FATHER.

The "breastplate of righteousness" is a more external part of the armour which covers the first. The separate parts of the armour cannot be put on in any other order than that in which they are presented to us here, since they are dependent one on the other. If the inner man is formed by the word and his affections are preserved from turning from CHRIST, the walk becomes stable, righteous, and godly. The breastplate is the figure of practical righteousness in our lives, which protects us from the attacks of the enemy. Fruit of the fear of the LORD, it characterises our relationships with others. Speaking to the chief men of Israel who had made their brethren subservient, Nehemiah could say to them: "But so did not I, because of the fear of GOD." (Neh. v. 15). This fear dwelt in his heart because the word had authority over him. On the contrary, their lack of love, of respect, and of practical righteousness proved that they had not this fear and that the word had no place in their hearts. Paul says that his service was characterised by "the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left" (2 Cor. vi. 7) so that, from whatever side the enemy attacked him, he was defeated.

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (v. 15). The spiritual footwear which we have to take with us and which is a weapon of defence in our relations with the world, is *the gospel of peace*. We must take CHRIST with us, and be ready always to give an answer with meekness and fear, of the hope that is in us (1 Peter iii.

15). Thus we shall carry about with us an atmosphere of peace which will protect ourselves from the harmful influences which are active around us and which the enemy always seeks to make effective on us so that we may lose our peace of soul and our communion with the LORD. A Christian who rejoices in the LORD, carries with him the reflection of His love, and the odour of His moral glory. He manifests those virtues without trying to do so. It is his joy to communicate to others the happiness brought to him by the gospel which has also brought him peace through the knowledge of the work and Person of the LORD.

"Above all, taking the shield of faith" (v. 16). In the conflict which we have to sustain against the enemy, he uses "fiery darts" (or, poisoned darts), thoughts of unbelief, of murmuring, or of discouragement, when circumstances are adverse. Then he comes to suggest to us that GOD does not love us ; that it is useless to confide in Him or to turn to Him for He does not take our part. In such case, it is simple faith and confidence in His word which protects us, and quenches all the reasonings of the flesh which are so many fiery darts from the enemy. The assurance that nothing can separate us from the love of GOD which is in CHRIST JESUS keeps our hearts and our thoughts occupied with, and in dependence on, Him. A much tried brother once quoted the words of Job "though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job xiii. 15). Knowing that I am the object of His love, I must not cease to confide in Him but must take refuge in the bosom of Him Who smites me. Such is the girdle of faith.

"And take the helmet of salvation." Salvation is the full deliverance which GOD intends to give us by the manifestation of His power. It is the assurance of this deliverance which enables us to lift up our heads in view of the eternal glory which is before us. The soldier requires a helmet to protect him in the conflict. The helmet of salvation, the assurance that we shall surely reach the promised rest, keeps us from the darts of the enemy. The apostle knew this ineffable blessing when he stood before Agrippa and the numerous assembly which followed him.

In the joy of the love of GOD and of the blessed hope which was before him, he cries : "I would to GOD that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds (Acts xxvi. 29). It is the helmet of salvation which keeps away discouraging thoughts in the battle, and keeps us in peace in the midst of suffering which meets us in the path of faith. The weapons of *offence* are those which we have to take in our hand in the conflict against the enemy ; they are, the sword of the SPIRIT and prayer. The sword of the SPIRIT is the word of GOD, *which we can handle with power to destroy Satan's strongholds only when we have put on those parts of the armour which we have just been considering.* (Ps. cxix. 6).

Finally there comes prayer, the seventh weapon, which gives to all the others the necessary strength for use. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication" (v. 18). Paul gave saints an example of unceasing dependence ; the secret of his strength was constant prayer. In order that it should bear fruit, the word of GOD must be presented in dependence on the SPIRIT. If we do not realise this we cannot bring consolation to the afflicted, nor can we take the message of truth and of love to unconverted souls. We can study the word with human intelligence and then take up the weapons of man, eloquence and reason, but there will not be a single victory in such a path. The SPIRIT alone blesses the word and prepares a path in the hearts of the hearers, for it is the sword *of the SPIRIT*. Then a single verse, a single line of the Scriptures, reaching into the soul, carries there light and life.

The apostle desires the prayers of the saints, in order that utterance may be given him, that he may open his mouth boldly "to make known the mystery of the gospel." (v. 19). He does not say : "I am in prison, the LORD has set me aside ; I can no longer be occupied about you, nor can I preach the gospel to sinners, nor speak about the mystery of the Assembly." On the contrary, he feels that he has still a great deal of work to do for the LORD and wishes to go on with the service of the gospel. The

“mystery of the gospel” is the counsel of GOD with regard to CHRIST and the church, hidden from the ages and revealed now through the gospel which Paul preached. His activity for the LORD, in his confinement, was blessed for the salvation of souls, and is still being blessed for saints. The enemy who wanted to close his mouth was thus confounded, for it is in prison that he writes those precious letters which reveal to us the glorious purposes of GOD concerning CHRIST and the church. For CHRIST he was an ambassador in bonds in order to make known this purpose which destroys all difference between Jew and Gentile, and this had unleashed the persecution of the Jews against himself.

The apostle, in closing, speaks of his personal affairs. He had sent Tychicus “a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord” to the brethren in Ephesus. Each mention of this companion of the labours of Paul is accompanied by the mention of his great faithfulness (Col. iv. 8). The affairs of the Colossians were occupying him for they were in dangers of which the epistle tells us, and he was waiting for news of the assembly, hoping that they were walking faithfully and refusing the errors which the enemy was seeking to bring in amongst them.

While we await the accomplishment of our hope, the realisation of our heavenly calling and our entrance into glory, we have a precious resource in the grace of our GOD and FATHER and of our LORD JESUS CHRIST which brings peace and love to the brethren who are walking by faith. May we love our LORD JESUS in sincerity until we see Him face to face !

---

“Preach the WORD” : “Do the work of an EVANGELIST” : “Profitable to me for the MINISTRY” : “That by me the PREACHING might be fully known” : these are the closing utterances of Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles. The warrior dies, clad in the armour of GOD, and with the sword still in his right hand. He has fought a good fight ; he has finished his course ; he has kept the faith.

## The Advent Hope

THE aim of this article is to help those who are the LORD's in discerning the difference between the coming of the LORD *for* His saints (2 Thess. ii. 1), and the appearing in glory *with* them to bring to nought "the lawless one" (2 Thess. ii. 8, R.V.), when He will execute judgment upon all the ungodly (Jude 15). At the former act of His coming, He appears to those who wait for Him, and for their salvation, *i.e.*, of the body (Heb. ix. 28). At the latter, "every eye shall see Him . . . and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Rev. i. 7). His own at the latter act are privileged to look for the accomplishment of the promise, that "when CHRIST, Who is their life, shall appear (or be manifested), then shall they also appear (or be manifested) with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). In other words, when His manifestation in glory takes place, so will theirs with Him. We are gathered unto Him at His coming; we are manifested with Him in glory when He is manifested.

Thus a very clear distinction is made in scripture between the LORD's *coming* or presence, and His *appearing*, manifestation or revelation. This difference we must carefully observe; at the same time taking note of the interval which comes in between the two events.

According to the word of the LORD JESUS (John xiv. 1-3), He will come again to receive to Himself us whom He loves. The manner of His coming for us is set forth in 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52, and in 1 Thess. iv. 15-17. The expectation of that moment is fraught with no terror for those who have already heard His voice and live, and are waiting again to hear His voice from heaven. "For the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth" (John v. 25-29, first clause). The dead in CHRIST shall rise first; then we, the living that remain, shall be changed in a moment (this mortal shall have put on immortality), and altogether shall be caught up in clouds, to meet the LORD,

into the air; and thus shall we be for ever with Him (1 Thess. iv.; 1 Cor. xv.).

The LORD's desire, as expressed to His FATHER (John xvii. 22, 23), will then be accomplished; and they whom the FATHER hath given Him shall be with Him where He is (John xiv. 3). The LORD JESUS will Himself have come for them, but *not* for them as a thief in the night. Not *thus* will the Bridegroom come for His Bride. It will be as a thief that He will come to those who are of the night, and who, unaware of His approach, will then be saying "Peace and safety." His saints are not of the night, but are sons of day (1 Thess. v. 2-5). How appalling will the moment of this manifestation be for those then on the earth! Still more awful for those who are outwardly of the church, but do not watch or repent (Rev. iii. 3)! Compare Rev. xvi. 15. But His saints, when He appears, are then, not to be caught up, but to appear with Him in glory. How clearly thus, if they appear with Him, must they have been taken away from the world before His manifestation to the world arrives. They will be seen together in glory at the same time.

How long time will elapse between the rapture of the saints, and the LORD's return with them, does not seem revealed. In Revelation iv. the saints who will have been taken to heaven at CHRIST's coming are seen seated as kings upon thrones with crowns of gold on their heads. GOD's revealed judgments commence in Rev. vi. to fall upon the earth, which sees the heavenly saints no more until the moment when (in Rev. xix.) they come with the LORD out of heaven. Then He is manifested, and His saints are manifested with Him in glory.

If the LORD's coming *for* His saints, and His manifestation in glory *with* them, are not kept distinct in the mind, confusion must be the result. That scripture carefully distinguishes between them is certain; for different words are made use of, in the original Greek of the New Testament, according as either event is in question. The LORD's coming or presence (*parousia*) is the general word, used alone and unmodified for His

presence to gather His saints unto Himself for heaven, but also for the earth, especially when accompanied by such a title as SON of MAN—His judicial name (John v. 27). When His presence or coming for the world, or the quick, is specifically intended, we have the word *epiphaneia*, signifying appearing, or shining forth.

Thus in 1 Thess. iv. 15, and 2 Thess. ii. 1, we find the word *parousia*; but in 2 Thess. ii. 8, it is said that the LORD JESUS shall destroy the lawless one by the *epiphaneia* of His *parousia*, or the appearing of His coming. Substantially akin are His “revelation” (*apocalupsis*) and His “day” (*hemera*). So, too, is the verb for “manifestation” employed. Thus the same distinction is made in 1 John ii. 28, where the word translated *appear* is from the verb *phaneroo*, which means *I make manifest*. Hence the rendering: “that when (or if) he may be *manifested* (*phanerothe*), we may . . . not be ashamed from before him at his presence (*parousia*).” For the manifestation, or other like sense, is still His coming, but more also—its manifestation when fidelity or its lack will be apparent.

J.S.F.C.

---

## Some Marks of Growth in Grace

SAID R. Murray McChene, “For one look at self take ten looks at Christ.” A godly minister of the gospel, in commenting on these words, was careful to add, “But *take* the one look at self. ”Spiritual “stock-taking” is occasionally an excellent exercise. A few brief remarks therefore, on some of the things that indicate that we are growing in grace may prove of help, especially to those who are near the beginning of their Christian life.

We may grow in *gift* without growing in grace. Any gift we possess will naturally grow as we exercise it. Nor is growth in *knowledge* in itself an indication of growth in grace. A man may have the whole of the contents of the Bible at his fingers’ ends, and yet be still in his sins ; and a true believer may acquire much biblical and theological

knowledge without making any advance in practical holiness.

To grow in grace means simply to grow in practical holiness, to grow in conformity with the will of God. God has one object—to promote His own glory (this includes our blessing)—and His will for us is that we should have but one aim in life, in time and in eternity, and that is to promote His glory.

One mark of real growth in holiness is to have *purser motives*. At the beginning of our Christian life we are apt to do things from mixed motives. We may, for instance, take a class in the Sunday School because we like the work of teaching; because we are asked, and we do not wish to displease by a refusal one whom we esteem; because we think it well to imitate others who are engaged in teaching the young; because we do not know what to do with our Sunday afternoons; because we are uneasy and restless unless we are up and doing something. Several of these motives may be present in the same individual, and yet the motive of the glory of God may be stronger than any of them. As he grows in grace, however, the non-spiritual motives will tend to die down, and may even disappear altogether, so that *his one and only reason for engaging in service* is to bring honour to the name of Him Who has redeemed him.

Again, as we progress in holiness, we are governed less and less by emotion and impulse, and more and more by *principle*.

Increasing acquaintance with the truth of God and with human nature gives us true *broad-mindedness*, and helps us to receive *all* truth through whatever channel it may reach us, and to overcome that sectarianism of spirit which so often marks otherwise spiritually-minded believers.

*A wider and deeper love* to others is mentioned by Peter as the climax of Christian graces; it is the capstone of the pyramid of which faith is the base. To love all men and to be willing to sacrifice ourselves for all kinds of persons is indeed an attainment which we may well be ambitious to reach.



The Christian who is growing in grace will have *less relish for the world*. He will set his affection more and more upon things invisible, spiritual, eternal. The things of the world will fail to attract as they once did; their paltriness will be increasingly apparent; and he will take a growing interest in the things which really matter. His feelings in regard to these things may not become consciously stronger, but things of God and eternity, spiritual principles, will occupy his thoughts, mould his affections and shape his conduct. E.A.

---

## On the Sacrifice of Giving

**P**ERHAPS few things are less understood than the sacrifice of giving. Where the majority of us fail most conspicuously is in bringing our Christianity into touch with everyday life. When our belief affects our pockets it is real faith. A Christianity of pounds, shillings and pence is something that commends itself. We do not mean when it *consists* of that, but when it *circulates* it.

Few things are more distressing to us—and we believe our feeling is shared by others—than the kind of appeal so often heard at Conferences and tea meetings for, what is euphemistically called, “fellowship in the expenses.” The speaker generally seems to think it necessary to make some feeble joke, which raises a half titter; as though it were only through our risible faculties our pockets could be touched. The response is usually as feeble as the joke, and the laugh it created. Have we forgotten that *giving* is as much a sacrifice to God as prayer and praise? Would any of us think of cracking a joke about the latter, or presenting it in some ludicrous light? Every sober person would say, far be the thought. Then why should we not say the same with reference to the other sacrifice? Can we forget that Heb. xiii. 15-16 links them both together and places them on a

level? We believe the method we are complaining of is a mistake in tactics, apart from any higher consideration. If the collection is a matter which can be passed off with a few funny turns of expression, people think lightly of what they are doing; and they give accordingly. Never, perhaps, does the appeal need so much to be directed to the very highest in us, and placed on the very highest grounds, as when it is an appeal for money. If this were remembered, the results would, we believe, often be far greater than they are. How solemnly, appropriately and inspiringly King David spoke of all he had given in preparation for the building of the Temple! (1 Chron. xxix.). And, according to that a man hath, God values all gifts alike. Who can ever forget the manner in which our LORD once drew attention to a gift of two mites? *Let our giving be the most sacred and searching business of our lives. Not a mere question of inclination, but of principle.*

---

## On the Brown Beetle and the Green Grass Spider

(By A Schoolmaster on Holiday)

WE had a pleasant picnic by the river on a sunny day. The warm sunshine, the song of the birds in the woods at the back, the murmuring sound of the river, and the quick rustling noises in the undergrowth as its busy inhabitants went about their lawful occasions, darting hither and thither, all combined to make our outing very enjoyable.

Suddenly I became aware of a visitor—a brown beetle—who proceeded to leisurely wander towards me. Six legs, a head and a long body began with difficulty to negotiate the creases of my clothes. Then after some ups and downs it paused, and, to my surprise, with a somewhat jerky movement, unfolded a pair of gauzy wings and the hitherto laborious walker took a graceful

flight over the difficult patch and landed on the other side of it. Once more it began its slow progress up and down, patiently climbing over minor obstacles until my finger barred the way, when, after a pause as though for reflection, with the same elaborate jerky movement of tiny wing cases, it again took flight over the obstruction.

Here was a beetle capable of swift, easy, graceful flight, yet preferring to plod along until an obstacle barred his path. Is this not somewhat like ourselves often? Laboriously we plod on, up and down in our pathway, and seem almost content with the unnecessary labour involved until God puts obstacles in our way to make us use our wings, the wings of faith. But "they that wait upon the LORD shall change their strength; they shall mount up with wings." Yet are we not often content to stumble along when by the wings of faith we might soar above the difficulties?

By and by a second visitor appeared on that sunny afternoon, yet he was not really the visitor as he was a permanent resident in that grassy sward. He was at home—a green grass spider, and I watched him as he attended very earnestly to his own affairs. Between the blades of grass he appeared to be flying, but a quick eye in the brilliant sunlight could detect his silver line. He "takes hold with his hands," and speeds from blade to blade—a wonderful tight-rope walker at home on his line. As an experiment, I took him off his silver gossamer thread to see what he would do. First, he tries the first blade of grass he comes to, and mounts right up to the tip, and feels around in the air for his missing line. Not finding it he descends and tries the next blade of grass in the same way until at last he discovers his precious silver thread, when away he immediately sails in mid-air, quite content. It was most interesting to carefully watch the little creature swinging here and there between the slender blades of grass, and to note the rapid progress made by it along the slender thread when found.

Now may not we learn a good lesson even from the spider? In his difficulty he patiently sought for his line, and would not attempt the, to him, great journey without it. He sought until he found it, and having found it trusted to it absolutely and swung along fearlessly on its business.

GOD has started us on a journey, a real and often perilous journey, but He has also given us a line for our guidance and safety—His written word—the Holy Scriptures. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” “The entrance of Thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Psalm cxix. 105, 130). It may look slender and sometimes seem not easy to find, but it glistens with the glory of GOD. When we have a difficulty we must, like the spider, seek diligently and earnestly for the silver line, seeking and waiting until we find it. No going along in our own way, but ever seeking to follow on to know the LORD and His way by keeping to the line of His holy word. Like the green grass spider we must cling to it tenaciously, follow it closely, and trust it absolutely. Then we shall be, as it were, swinging along fearlessly, apparently flying in mid-air, but really kept by the power of GOD through faith nourished and increased by the silver line of His word.

J.A.C.

---

## On Singing Hymns

**W**HEN hymns are addressed to GOD, are they not the fruit produced by the SPIRIT in the soul which is in a good state and which is lifted up to Him? It knows His greatness, His power, His grace and His love, of which it is the object and in which it rejoices, giving expression to its joy in singing.

Is any merry? says James, let him sing. The joy of the world ends in heaviness (Prov. xiv. 13), but the joy of the believer is a fruit of the SPIRIT, along with love and peace (Gal. v. 22). It is the joy of CHRIST. He who

sings makes known that he is joyful; he is happy, he has no unrest, his confidence is in God, Who has delivered him from the bondage of Satan; how could he sing otherwise? The captives of Babylon in their affliction could not sing. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion . . . there they that carried us away required of us a song. . . . How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?" (Psalm cxxxvii. 1-4).

The believer's joy must be full, that is to say, perfect and also realised in the soul. "Our fellowship is with the FATHER and with His SON, JESUS CHRIST. And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full" (1 John i. 3, 4). "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John xv. 11). Pain and suffering cannot disturb it. We have a beautiful example of this joy in the apostle Paul chained and bruised in the prison at Philippi, where, in the middle of the night, he sings with Silas the praises of God. And the psalmist says "in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips. . . . in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice" (Psalm lxiii). Can our hearts not sing thus, under the wings of the ALMIGHTY, being filled, "satisfied as with marrow and fatness"?

Could the LORD have sung a hymn with His disciples after He had instituted His Supper, when He had Gethsemane before Him, if it had not been with the joy that was set before Him? "I have set the LORD always before Me; because He is at My right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore My heart is glad and My glory (or soul) rejoiceth" (Psalm xvi). These are prophetic words, realised by the LORD.

Let us sing in our hearts to God, as the word exhorts us (Col. iii. 16), and let our hearts overflow in singing hymns of praise and adoration! May they be lifted up for the time into heaven in anticipation of the moment when, before the Throne of God and the LAMB, they shall join in the new song surrounded by myriads upon myriads of angels saying with a loud voice: "Worthy

is the LAMB that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing." May they long for the moment when they shall have the inexpressible joy of hearing every creature which is in the heaven, and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea and all that are in them proclaiming the majesty of their SAVIOUR and exalting the LAMB, Who in His love has given His life for us. To Him it is *our* special privilege to sing, Thou art worthy for Thou hast redeemed us by Thy blood.

There are many precious hymns of praise and adoration, but do we rise to the heights which they express? We may well confess that often we do not. There are persons, even, who do not seem to realise what they *are* singing. We must not assume, however, that such should be silent, since we are told to be "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Col. iii. 16). Hymns thus become a means of teaching, and of admonishing one another. Let us be always exercised in this respect and think of the words of reproach which GOD addresses to His people: "Wherefore the LORD said, Forasmuch as this people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of men" (Isa. xxix. 13). When our mouths sing to God, may our hearts always sing with them! Such songs of the heart are pleasing to God.

*(From the French.)*

---

## An Address Given at The Hague

(Matt. xvii. 1-5; 24-27)

**W**HEN the disciples were privileged to see the LORD JESUS transfigured, they were allowed to see two men of God in communion with Him. It was all wonderful, and beyond anything they had ever known, for GOD would have them see the glory of the LORD

that they might honour Him. His majesty, which we find is shown also to Peter in the last part of our chapter, must also be seen along with His glory or we cannot appreciate fully the blessings which God gives us, nor can we understand aright His thoughts.

The disciples did not understand. They saw all with human eyes and considered with human minds, for only when their understanding was opened and the HOLY SPIRIT was given to reveal to them the things of CHRIST could they understand. You who are unconverted may say: "I can never see with anything but with human means, for I have nothing else. To you I say that this understanding and the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT are now given to every believer. Turn, then, in faith to the LORD JESUS and be saved and find the way open to you into the place where you may see and rejoice in His glory and majesty.

Peter, ever ready to speak, was so transported at the sight that he was ready to give a place of honour to Moses and Elias as well as to the LORD. Was he thinking of the tabernacle in the wilderness? At any rate, he was like all who see only with human eyes; he was ready to give to privileged human beings a place which belonged to the LORD alone. This is always the way with man. He ever, except when led of the HOLY SPIRIT, exalts man to be on equality with God.

Eve in the Garden knew what God had done in blessing Adam and herself, but when Satan suggested that she should be placed on equality with God, she did not consider it an unwelcome thought. God alone can preserve us from this snare, and we must be cast on Him that we may be kept.

Immediately Peter made his suggestion, however, the voice from the excellent glory speaks and afterwards the disciples see none but JESUS. Peter refers to this long afterwards. Sweet it was to him to recall the grace which spoke to them words which were afterwards made effective to their opened understanding by the power of the HOLY SPIRIT afterwards given to them. They were

ignorant and unresponsive, but GOD was gracious, and I think Peter must have looked back, with worship in his heart, to recall the grace which showed him the glory of the LORD and very shortly afterwards His majesty.

The LORD did not rebuke Peter's ignorance and blindness, but showed him that He was immeasurably above Moses and Elias, blessed as they were and honoured of God; he showed, if Peter had but had eyes to see, that He was the great CREATOR, the CONTROLLER of the universe, Who called the very fish of the sea to His service.

In the last verse of our chapter we find Peter quite ignorant of the dignity of his MASTER. He was ready to acknowledge that his LORD would pay tribute, apparently little knowing that He it was to Whom all tribute is due. While taking the lowly place, the LORD JESUS quietly furnishes Peter with evidence, which he would afterwards weigh, of His majesty. Ah! what would be the gratitude of Peter when the HOLY SPIRIT showed him the significance of the LORD's action in causing the fish to bring the money!

Thus we may see that since Peter did not see the glory and majesty of the LORD JESUS, he was also quite unable to appreciate what a blessed place was his, and how wonderful the grace of God. In this, of course, he is just like any one of us. Unless we are enabled by the power of the HOLY SPIRIT to see the glory and majesty of the SON of GOD, we cannot appreciate God's ways. Where we see man in a place of honour, we are sometimes almost ready to place him on a level with God; and where we give honour to men, or man's things, we are ready to assume that God will also give honour, too.

If you are an unbeliever, you must see yourself as indeed a sinner and the LORD JESUS as your Substitute on the cross of Calvary. When the disciples had seen Him thus, they began to be prepared to learn anew, to learn what they had never known before. Their risen SAVIOUR opened their understanding and sent the HOLY SPIRIT to lead them into all truth; to take of the things



of CHRIST and reveal them unto their hearts. So may it be with you. Not human knowledge, but faith brings us into the place where we may learn of GOD. Believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who hung upon the cross as the Sin-bearer and confess Him as your SAVIOUR; then shall you be enabled in the power of the SPIRIT to see Him as He reveals Himself,

Do you wonder at the patient grace of the LORD with the disciples? You may know it, too. There was no reproach for Peter when he came into the house after saying that his MASTER paid tribute, although he had had a vision of His glory so shortly before. Peter had done what we all do when guided by our own thoughts. He placed his MASTER on a level with the persons and the circumstances around him. He did that also when on another occasion he was walking on the water to his LORD. Looking away from his MASTER, he saw the waves and feared them. Whenever we look at circumstances we consider their effect to be a power to be reckoned with, and immediately make ourselves weaker than they, becoming subject to them more and more the longer we are occupied with them. May we remember this and be quick to call out in faith to the LORD. We are apt, when looking at circumstances, to forget what the poet says:

“Greater than our HELPER, need can never be.”

In the power of our own thoughts we can only see things from an earthly point of view and fail to see the plainest indications of the glory and majesty of our LORD. Then we are at the mercy of our circumstances until we cry: “LORD, save me!”

Happy they who know Him now as the One to Whom they can always turn in their need, and more blessed still when they know the glory and the majesty of His Person, for then they can worship GOD and enjoy the revelation of His thoughts in CHRIST.

*Trans. T.H.*

## Why Christians ?

THE title "Christian" as descriptive of believers in the LORD JESUS CHRIST was a term originally used to describe them from the outside, from the standpoint of the unbelieving world. It occurs three times only in the New Testament, in Acts xi. 26, xxvi. 28; 1 Peter iv. 16, *where turning to Christ, testifying for Christ, and triumphing for Christ* are respectively associated with the name "Christian." It was in the heathen city of Antioch, famous at that time alike for its learning and wickedness, that the pagan world looked upon the little but increasing company of believers, and jeeringly dubbed them "Christians."

Intended as a derisive nick-name, a term of reproach and ridicule, it yet became by the time of its last mention in Scripture, a true and honourable name and a title of glory, one not to be ashamed of, whatever suffering it entailed. Julian the apostate tried hard to substitute "Galilean," but this did not catch on; the Jews persisted in styling believers in the LORD JESUS "Nazarenes," but that in God's providence also failed to take with the heathen populace. The term "Christian," however, at once so descriptive and distinctive, caught the public fancy and held its place as a popular designation of the followers of CHRIST. It was a new term added to the vocabulary of the race, and one that has passed permanently into the language of mankind. Like Pilate's title on the Cross, JESUS of NAZARETH, the King of the Jews" in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, the name "Christian" with its Greek rendering of the Hebrew "MESSIAH"—CHRIST, and its Latin termination unwittingly but felicitously declared the universal range of the gospel message accepted by the people designated thereby. The pagans looked upon this new company bound by invisible yet inseparable bonds, and at a later date exclaimed, "See how these Christians love one another."

## Book Notices and Reviews

By J.F.K.

*"LIFE OF FAITH" Almanack, 1939. ("The Life of Faith" Office, Paternoster Buildings, London, E.C.4. Price, one penny.)*

It would be hard to find a more valuable pennyworth. There is a text from God's Word for every day of the year, and for each month a choice little sermon by well-known and honoured writers. It fits easily into a small pocket and could well be profitably carried about. There are all the usual features, Postal Regulations, etc., which make for practical usefulness. But it is the short addresses that make most appeal to us. All of them are so good and it would be difficult and unnecessary to draw comparisons.

The text for the month of June, for example, is "But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by CHRIST JESUS," upon which Mr. Sidlow Baxter makes the following beautiful observations:—

Here is the bank—MY GOD.

Here is the cheque—SHALL SUPPLY.

Here is the amount—ALL YOUR NEED.

Here is the capital—HIS RICHES.

Here is the signature—by CHRIST JESUS.

What then, he asks, remains for *us* to do? We only have to endorse the cheque by our own personal signature, and it will be paid in full.

There are eighteen more equally valuable pages full of precious gems, and we hope that this little booklet will have the immense circulation it deserves.

\* \* \*

*PROPHECY'S LIGHT ON TO-DAY, by Charles G. Trumbull, Litt.D. (Published by Oliphants Ltd., London. 3s. 6d. net.)*

This is an interesting and also a solemn book. The author marshals the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments which relate to the last days, and then seeks

to apply them to the state of the world at the present time.

We think that we may safely say that he conclusively proves his case, namely, that we are indeed on the threshold of the predicted coming judgments, and that the Coming of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST is imminent. Dr. Trumbull, who is an American, quotes very freely from the word of GOD, which is, of course, all to the good, but he also gives very copious extracts from the secular press, and we doubt whether his arguments are much strengthened thereby. In such an able exposition as this is of what the prophetic and inspired Word teaches, we should have thought it hardly necessary to sully its pages by quoting blasphemous boastings of German and Russian politicians.

There also appears to be a danger that an unconverted reader might gather from Chapter 20 ("The end of the Age") that if he were left behind when the LORD takes His own out of this scene (1 Thess. iv.) before the judgments fall, a chance to "live for CHRIST" would be his through "the great tribulation," and so ultimately he would be saved. This is not the teaching of Holy Scripture. All who have heard and deliberately refused the glorious gospel of salvation through faith in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, GOD'S SON, will unhappily belong to those who finally have shut themselves out thereby. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

Nevertheless, we can recommend this book with these reservations; for we repeat, the author brings the light of prophecy irresistibly to bear on the present day. We must, however, add that there are no new basic truths brought out. A century ago many honoured servants of GOD humbly and faithfully expounded these prophetic truths concerning the Coming of the LORD (in its two aspects); the revival of the Roman Empire; the return of the Jews in unbelief to Palestine; the rise of the Apostasy, etc.; and readers of our pages are no strangers to the general line of things taken by Dr. Trumbull in this volume.