

# WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE  
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

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*Edited by*  
W. G. TURNER

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VOLUME XXIX

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# WORDS OF HELP

## from the SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

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### For the New Year

By THE EDITOR

“**A** MID the turmoil of life we have the eternal securities of which the LIVING GOD is the source, CHRIST the centre, and simple faith the power of realization.” With these words, one of our readers, a lady who has been for many years severely handicapped by physical disablement, recently concluded a very cheering letter.

We pass them on to all our friends for consideration and comfort at the opening of another year. Let us think on these things. In the midst of all the eruptive and disruptive forces that make for insecurity “the ETERNAL GOD is thy refuge; and underneath are the EVERLASTING ARMS.” “Amid the turmoil of life,” the harassing labour of life, the disturbances of life, the believing soul holds on its way having eternal securities and present access to them by the simple faith which believes that GOD means just what He says. He speaks by Him Who is the WORD, Whose voice is heard through the written word.

“None can pluck them out of My Father’s hand” says the GOOD SHEPHERD of those who are the sheep of His pasture. “I give unto them eternal life.” “My peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

There is the turmoil *without*, but with the peace of GOD, the LIVING GOD, keeping the heart and mind, there may well be quietness *within*.

“Simple faith,” wrote the good sister, “is the power of realization,” and the thought of her life-long disability, her straitened circumstances, and advancing age illuminated the phrase. It recalled Faber’s lines :—

If our love were but more simple,  
 We should take Him at His word ;  
 And our lives would be all sunshine  
 In the beauty of the LORD.

“Amid the turmoil of life we have the eternal securities of which the LIVING GOD is the source, CHRIST the centre, and simple faith the power of realization.” May we increasingly possess our possessions to the glory of God and the comfort of our own souls as we “occupy till He comes” for Whom we wait.

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## Some Experiences in Christian Work

### (1) *Tackling Will Crooks' Three Hundred*

“WILL you come over and speak to our men in Poplar Casual Ward one Sunday evening?” enquired a young East End Mission worker of the writer.

“I can promise you a good congregation,” he continued, “a lot of old week-end regulars, some three hundred of them, who come in every Saturday night during the winter months,” adding with a smile, “we call them Will Crooks' Three Hundred.”

Upon the Sunday evening arranged the writer was met by the Leader of the Mission Band at the entrance to the Casual Ward, and soon introduced by him to the Three Hundred. Some of these were undoubtedly down and out ; the majority however looked neither down nor out, but of the true tramp genus, who having heard of the kindheartedness of the then Mayor of Poplar, Mr. Will Crooks, lost no opportunity of exploiting his good nature. That week-end the whole three hundred appeared to be in residence.

The service was held in a large oblong room, but so inconveniently seated, that the speaker never had more than half the congregation in his line of vision at any time. This was somewhat of a handicap, as was also the chair upon which he was poised precariously in the centre of

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the room. The atmosphere of barely restrained boisterous hilarity likewise, was not conducive to a gospel service. The opening hymn was sung, shouted or roared with great gusto, each man apparently making as much noise as possible; and then followed a prayer and another hymn by the Mission Leader. During the singing of this the writer noticed a curious thing, as he espied a little old man, bent and withered, very busily engaged in pushing his way through the crowded rows of seats holding a half sheet of newspaper all bunched up like a small bundle. This he appeared to be offering to each man in turn, and they all smiled or nodded to him as they touched this queer paper parcel. The hymn, too, by constant repetition of verses, was somehow made to last out until the old man had been all round the room.

As the speaker announced his subject and the text, he was greeted with a more or less measure of rowdy applause. Then suddenly *it* happened. As though by a pre-concerted signal three hundred right hands were raised to three hundred noses, and three hundred sneezes broke upon the air to the accompaniment of roars of laughter.

Somewhat disconcerted by this the speaker quietly waited until the uproar ceased, and then remarked, "Now, gentlemen, it's my turn." This he afterwards learned, was his salvation, as it seems all fresh speakers were subjected to an ordeal of this kind or one similar in order to test his temper. If he said nothing or took it in good part the men voted him "a sport" or as some of them expressed it "a decent sort of bloke," and would then listen to him for as long as he liked to talk. If, on the other hand, he reprimanded them or lost his temper with them they would stamp their feet, sing songs and refuse him a hearing.

On this occasion after this incident they settled down, and for the next half hour that boisterous crowd listened like lambs to the old old story, told as simply as one knew how, of the love of GOD in sending His SON the LORD JESUS CHRIST into the world to be our SAVIOUR.

Only the Day of CHRIST will declare what the results were, but it was an unique experience in Christian work for the writer, and quite good discipline for a young preacher.

At the close, the rough congregation swarmed round the speaker endeavouring to get a handshake ; and several seemingly impressed by the message, urged him to come again. But this was the first and only occasion upon which I met Will Crooks' Three Hundred. W.G.T.

(Next month (D.V.) "*Down Ratcliff Highway.*")

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## Some Awkward Personal Possessions

BY QUARTUS

### I.—*My Character*

**W**HEN the Gadarene demoniac was asked by our LORD, "What is thy name?" his prompt reply was, "My name is Legion for we are many."

It is something analogous to this which makes the question of my true character so puzzling. The chameleon, famous for changing its colour, is nothing to the inconstancy that seems often to characterise my actions ; my name is Legion—one person in the congregation but another in the counting-house. "A kirk saint and a hame Deil" is a Scots proverb describing the inconsistency of church members. One man at home but another at business. Herod, respecting the Baptist as a just and holy man, hearing him gladly, and being so moved by the sermon on occasion to do many things, yet on another occasion so overcome by passion, pride, and love of reputation as a man of his word, that he orders the execution of the preacher at the mere whim of an evil companion. "Verily, man at his best estate is altogether vanity." But I am not Herod, yet I possess both a reputation and a character, and alas ! am often tempted to consider my reputation more than my character. My reputation is what other people think of me ; their estimation of me ; my character in public opinion ; what my brethren think of me : my character is what I really am, what GOD, Who sees not as man sees, knows me to be.



Herod's true character was tersely summed up and expressed by our LORD's reference to him as "*That fox.*" He, Who knew what was in man, unmasked the cruel, cunning, crafty character of the one who "for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him" was willing to sacrifice "a just man and an holy" to the vindictive spite of a wicked woman.

When the Apostle Paul wrote, "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out," the context shows he was referring to material possessions or worldly goods, but character is not a material possession, and happens to be just the one thing we do take with us when we depart hence. An Anglican Divine of a by-gone age used frequently to say to his congregation, "Remember, we are just what we are in GOD's sight, nothing more, nothing less."

How may one know his real character? The answer is, by what characterises him. Character is made up of characteristics.

It has been said :

You sow a Thought—you reap an Action.

You sow an Action—you reap a Habit.

You sow a Habit—you reap a Destiny.

That is to say that character is acquired and may become an awkward personal possession of which it is impossible to rid oneself here or hereafter. So in *the eternal state* the word runs : "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still : and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still : and he that is righteous let him be righteous still : and he that is holy let him be holy still." (Rev. xxii. 11.)

It is so easy, alas, to deceive oneself, for "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," but no one else. Said a professor of sinless perfection, "I've not sinned for months now."

"Well," retorted the other, "is that so? but I should like to hear your wife's opinion before I accept such a statement."

The Christian ambition is strikingly set out by the Apostle Paul in 2 Cor. v. 9 : "Wherefore we are ambitious, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him.

(R.V.). If, therefore, this is my aim, and the judgment seat of CHRIST is kept in view as the place of manifestation of it, my character may be safely left to shape itself since "as he thinketh in his heart so is he."

(Next month (D.V.) "*My Fears.*")

## On Discipline

PERHAPS some child of GOD passing under discipline will say : O GOD, the trials which fall upon me seem to be beyond my strength ! Contrary events come, one after another, to destroy completely all my well-established plans. Grievs arise in my life which make my heart sink in the depths of suffering. The rain of affliction falls on my soul in these evil days. Well, you are all wrong ! It is not a rain of evil which falls on you. It is a flood of blessings. For, if you want to believe the word of your FATHER, under the pelting rain there grow up spiritual flowers of a perfume and beauty such as you had never known without storm or discipline. Doubtless you feel the rain which falls upon you, but do you see the flowers ? You are suffering under the trials, but God sees the sweet flower of faith germinating in your life under the influence of the various trials. You recoil before the suffering, but GOD sees born in your soul that tender compassion for those who suffer. You see the disappointments which cause you to suffer, but GOD sees that sweet submission to His divine and perfect will gain ground in you. Your heart is cast down under cruel griefs, but God sees the depth and the growth in His grace which this sorrow has wrought in you. In reality, these are not afflictions which assail you, they are showers of tenderness, love, compassion, patience and a manifestation of a thousand other fruits of the Spirit which bring into your life a spiritual enrichment which could not have been brought about by all the great prosperity or ease which the world could ever give.

You will say : What an unproductive branch I must be when GOD must prune me like this ! Have you never read what kind of branches GOD purges ? Hear the word : *Every branch which beareth fruit, He purgeth it.*

(John xv. 7). Such is not a barren branch. The work of purging is not a proof that the branch is of no use, but rather the proof that it is bearing fruit because He purges only those branches which bear fruit. He takes away the others.

GOD does not expect that we will take pleasure in discipline, but that we shall endure it on account of what it will produce *later*. (Heb. xii. 11.)

Sometimes we reproach ourselves for not taking pleasure in affliction. We ought to be like Paul whom, we read, rejoiced in tribulation. Do you think that Paul rejoiced in the tribulation? Assuredly not. When he was scourged with iron nails, or with long leather lashes, do you think he had pleasure in it? Paul also knew the perils among false brethren (2 Cor. ii. 26) and have you not had the same experience? You had a dear friend on whom you leaned and in whom you confided what was in your heart, and you have been deceived, so that you have been filled with grief. Is this for you a matter of joy? Assuredly not. No more was it so for Paul or for any other man. What does he say? "We glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh . . . patience, etc. (Rom v. 3). He does not rejoice in tribulation itself, but amidst tribulations he rejoices in the fruits they will produce. In the same way, GOD our FATHER does not expect that we shall rejoice in the discipline itself. He is not displeased when we weep and sigh and pray. He says expressly that chastisement is a subject of sorrow and He asks us only to endure it, not for itself, but for the glorious results which follow.

*(From the French. Trans. J.S.)*

*(To be continued.)*

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"Therefore thank Him for thy helplessness, beloved,  
And if thou needs must long,  
Let it be but for the rest of utter weakness  
In the Arms for ever strong."

J. TAULER, 1361.

## On the Vision of Faith

**T**HE apostle Paul writing to the saints at Corinth (see 2 Cor. v. 7) says "we walk by faith not by sight." He who knew "fightings without and fears within" here lays down the rule of living. If "in times past we walked according to the course of this world . . . fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind," now our happy privilege is to experience a far superior manner of life, namely, that of an unwavering confidence in the purposes of God. Here is a message none the less for the saints to-day than for those nineteen hundred years ago—"we walk by faith not by appearance." This gives the real meaning of the verse. Because the weather forecast is discouraging, the farmer must not worry about his crops. Because John Smith's profession of conversion has proved to be shallow, this should not shake my confidence in the faithfulness of God. Because my neighbour appears to be wealthy, this is no reason why I should bemoan my poverty. We would do well to ask ourselves in the presence of the LORD "Do we look on things after the outward appearance?" (See 2 Cor. x. 7.)

Many followers of the LORD may have to answer "Yes." One will have to confess, "Yes, LORD, I saw the newspaper this morning and how dejected the news made me. I felt sure there would be no war until Thy return and now events have proved me wrong." Another will have to answer, "Yes, LORD, I saw the reports of the Free Church Council and the Modern Churchmen's Union meetings, and was overcome with depression at the tacit denial of the authority of Thy Word. I longed to see Thee flash forth and execute Thy judgments on such incipient infidelity." Far, far be it from us not to make these matters drive us to the LORD, only let us not be so despondent and overcome that we lose sight of His ultimate victory.

"We see not *yet* all things put under Him" (Heb. ii. 8)—on the contrary, a world of insubordination to God. We *look* at what appear to be the results of all the Gospel preaching and cry, "LORD, are there few that be saved?" We *look* at divisions among the people of God and exclaim,

"What a sad testimony ! Have Thy purposes failed ?" We *look* for evidences of the supremacy of GOD and, so often, seem to look in vain. All this is "walking by sight."

The meaning of the verb "see" in verse eight is "the impression which our eyes passively receive from objects around us." "But," continues the argument in verse nine, "we see JESUS *crowned with glory and honour.*" That Head which the world would still scar with its cruel thorns of disregard and hatred, we, by faith, see "crowned with glory." If, in this life, the sight of faith lifts our despondent hearts above the indifference and infidelity, and triumph displaces trembling and singing, sighing, what, what, if words can tell, will it mean in that Day to come to gaze with unclouded vision (see 1 Cor. xiii. 12) on our risen, ascended, glorified LORD ?—for "He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet." GOD hath declared that "at the name of JESUS every knee should bow"—all enemies subdued and every knee bowing ! This, "we see not *yet*," but faith grasps the "Word of GOD which liveth and abideth" and revels in its revelations as accomplished facts.

If His shame was great, great also will be the manifestation of His glory. If He resisted not, so then not one will resist Him. If it was mockingly said, "Hail, King of the Jews," so then He will be owned as "King of Kings and LORD of lords." If He was trodden under foot, so He will "put all enemies under His feet." If He submitted to death, so "death the last enemy shall be itself destroyed."

Let these words echo in our hearts—"The things which are seen are temporal : the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv. 18.) If we would live triumphant lives, we must remember that the source of our triumph is in CHRIST. (See 2 Cor. ii. 14.) "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto JESUS." (Heb. xii. 1, 2.)

LORD, we can see by faith in Thee,  
A prospect bright, unfailing ;  
Where GOD shall shine in light divine,  
In glory never fading.

A home above of peace and love,  
 Close to Thy holy person ;  
 Thy saints shall there see glory fair,  
 And shine as Thy reflection.

No more as here, 'mid snares to fear  
 A thought or wish unholy ;  
 No more to pain the LAMB once slain,  
 But live to love Thee wholly.

No more to view Thy chosen few,  
 In selfish strife divided,  
 But drink in peace the living grace,  
 That gave them hearts united.

LORD, haste that day of cloudless ray,  
 That prospect bright, unfailing,  
 Where GOD shall shine in light divine,  
 In glory never fading.

D.C.F.

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## The Book of Ezra

*Notes of Bible Readings at Jumet, Belgium.*

**F**IVE books of Scripture give us to know something of the state of God's people when they returned after 70 years' captivity in Babylon. These books are those of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. These five books form a whole. They are filled with instructions for us who, in some respects, are in similar circumstances. We have the same privileges and are exposed to the same dangers since we returned from the modern Babylon. We have the privilege of having found our way to the place where the LORD has placed His NAME and of working to gather together the living stones which are part of the house of GOD ; we are also concerned, however, with enemies who are crafty and powerful and with numerous dangers attending us.

## II

In their main characteristics, these five books each deal with one particular subject :

In *Ezra* the people go up from Babylon and set up *the altar* on its base.

*Nehemiah* deals principally with the rebuilding of *the wall*.

*Haggai* comes to speak to the *conscience* of the people who have taken things easy and have neglected the rebuilding of the house of *God*.

*Zechariah*, who prophesied nearly two months after Haggai, comes to encourage them in the work which they had begun as the result of the latter's exhortations.

*Malachi* lets us know of the miserable condition into which the returned remnant had fallen. Only a little faithful remnant still thought of JEHOVAH, the LORD ; and those that loved the LORD talked with one another. This remnant, precious to the heart of the LORD, we again find at the beginning of the Gospel of Luke.

The books of Kings and of Chronicles shew us the ruin of the royal house ; a ruin which has characterised for the most part all that has been committed to man. Certainly, David's descendants did not maintain the testimony of the LORD, nor yet His covenant, and they have not been seated on the throne of David for ever ; the Chaldeans have come and have taken the city where the LORD had placed His NAME, they have destroyed the sanctuary and have taken the people into captivity to Babylon amongst the nations in whose midst they found no rest. Streams of water flowed from the eyes of the prophet who depicts for us in the Lamentations the ruin of the daughter of his people.

Seventy years elapsed, during which the sanctuary lay waste and in ruins. During this time, the remnant by the waters of Babylon wept and mourned. They hanged their harps on the willows in the midst of her. "How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land ?" Alas ! they were made to feel bitterly the consequences of the disobedience of the kings and of the people. GOD is just in all His ways ; but He is also full of compassion. At the end of these 70 years He awakens the heart of Cyrus, the king of whom He had spoken more than a

century before by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah (xliv. 27 ; xlv. 1). He made a proclamation throughout his kingdom and published it also in writing, saying : "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD GOD of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth ; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people ? His God be with him and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD GOD of Israel (He is the GOD) which is in Jerusalem."

With this proclamation the book of Ezra begins. Its importance is such that GOD mentions it twice in His word, in Ezra and in 2 Chron. xxxv. 22, 23. The GOD Who turns the hearts of kings as the water-brooks thus awakened the heart of Cyrus so that as early as the first year of his reign he made this proclamation and in this way fulfilled the word of GOD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah the prophet in chap. xxv. 11, 12 of his book. The first chapter of the book of the prophet Daniel tells us that (in v. 21) Daniel was at the court of Babylon until the first year of Cyrus. It is clear that Cyrus is conscious that he had received a mission from the LORD and that GOD is using him to deliver the captives of Israel ; indeed, he causes all their groanings to cease. (Isa. xxi. 2). The capture of Babylon by the Medes and the Elamites (the Persians) was the signal for this deliverance.

What took place with Israel then, has taken place again to-day with the people of GOD. For centuries the saints have been captives in that Babylon which shall fall under judgment of GOD (Rev. xviii.). During the last century, grace was given to a few faithful ones to abandon all that man has organised and set up in Christendom, and to come in all simplicity into the place where the LORD has placed His NAME, so that they might render praise to Him in the one place where they find themselves in His presence.

In the fifth verse of our first chapter we see how necessary it was that GOD should awaken the hearts of those who returned, and in the same manner as He had awakened the heart of the King. All is due to divine mercy. GOD gave not only the grace to go up again to Jerusalem, but



He also heaped them up with riches and put it into the heart of the king to give them all the vessels of the sanctuary which Nebuchadnezzar had carried off to Babylon. Thus they had possession of all the treasures of the holy place. In the same way, a century and more ago, GOD brought to light all the precious truths which made up the riches of the disciples at the beginning. GOD has given to us again all the treasures of the sanctuary ; grace beyond measure !

All the vessels of the sanctuary were put into the hands of Zerubbabel, prince of Judah, the royal tribe, and were brought up to Jerusalem when those who returned from captivity were sent up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

Chapter 2 gives us the names and number of those who thus returned from Babylon. The LORD also knows the names and number of those who have separated themselves from the abominations in Christendom in order to be in the place where He has placed His name. First to be named are eleven chiefs who returned to Jerusalem, then come the names of "the people," the "priests," the "Levites," the "singers," the "children of the porters," the "Nethinims" or lower servants and, lastly, the "children of Solomon's servants." At the close are mentioned a certain number of those who had returned but "they could not shew their father's house and their seed, whether they were of Israel." Were they part of the people of GOD ? He alone could tell but, until there stood up the high priest, they could not eat of the holy things. We may remark that those who are mentioned in verses 3 to 20 are given according to the names of their fathers ; from verse 21 to verse 35, according to the names of their towns or cities : this is less certain and less definite than genealogy. The first could value their rights as sons, the others as being of such and such city in Israel.

It is interesting to see the different classes of people who returned from the captivity. We again find the same classes in the assembly now with the various forms of service to which they are attached.

There is the great mass of the people which has no evident particular service but which has its place in the assembly. Then we have the priests, who were few in number in Israel, whilst now all are priests, wonderful privilege !

The Levites who were to assist the priests also made known the law to the people. (Neh. viii. 7.) The singers sang the praises of the Lord. It is equally remarkable to see the place which song occupies in the assembly and the number of brothers whose only service seems to be that of giving out hymns. The sons of the porters took care that nothing inconsistent with the holiness of the LORD should make its way into the holy place to profane it. The Nethinims were lower servants. A great number of brothers have services which appear to be of little importance but which are infinitely precious to the heart of GOD because all which is done in love to His SON is of great value to Him. Certain brothers raise the hymns ; others Break the Bread ; others again see to the affairs concerning the room, etc. ; while some house the visiting brethren and do many other services which cannot be forgotten by the LORD. In the last place, the servants of Solomon are mentioned. GOD takes knowledge, not only of the number of those who were returned from the captivity, but also of all that belongs to them, since all is consecrated to His service : their servants, their horses, their mules, their camels and their asses. Now, as then, all things can be used in His service.

It is precious to notice that in this remnant which returns to Jerusalem there is devotion to the house of GOD ; this the LORD never forgets. He remembers their voluntary gifts *according to their ability to give*. He would not ask more ; and this makes us think of what one woman who loved the LORD did for Him : "She hath done what she could" (Mark xiv. 8). These gifts amounted to 61,000 drams of gold, 5,000 pounds of silver and 100 priests' garments. In these times of weakness in which we are found, happy are we when we can discern amongst the saints similar devotion towards the things of GOD. At last all Israel are found in their cities. The little remnant which had returned into the land represented the nation in its entirety ; it is the expression of it in the land which the LORD had given as the heritage to His people.

Chapter 3. The seventh month was the month of the feast of trumpets. This feast was a figure of the restoration of Israel in the last days. In this month the people

gathered together *as one man*, thus realising the unity of the people of GOD in the place which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel to put His NAME there. Jeshua, the high priest, and his brethren, and Zerubbabel, the ruling prince of the house of David, with his brethren, set the altar *upon its bases*. Even although all was in ruins at Jerusalem and the temple was laid waste nothing kept them back from finding again the foundations of the altar of the GOD of Israel ; it was there alone that they could offer the burnt offerings prescribed in the law of Moses, the man of GOD. It was there that they must come to worship. This is of great importance in connection with the things which concern us in the present day, for these things are written for our instruction on whom the ends of the world are come. We cannot content ourselves with a "very nearly." It is a question of knowing if we are come to worship in the same place where they did so at the first. The ruin in which the house of GOD is found, and the disorder which characterises Christendom now, cannot in any way be an excuse to justify a sect which is not in harmony with that which was at the beginning and with the instructions which are given us in the Scriptures. As a result of the setting up of the altar, there was fear upon them because of the people of those countries. Is not the world the bitter enemy of CHRIST, and *of every testimony which is faithfully rendered to Him* ? What can this world, this enemy, do, however, against them when the GOD, Whom they thus came to worship, dwelt in the very place where they gathered themselves together ? Was it not He Who was their mighty protector ?

The altar being set up again, they offer the morning and evening sacrifices which thus spoke unceasingly of the excellence of the sacrifice of CHRIST before GOD ; a sacrifice made by fire of a sweet smell to the LORD, which is the highest note of worship. They celebrated also the feast of tabernacles, thus anticipating the final blessing which shall be the lot of the people of GOD. They kept the feast according to that which was written. The word was the only rule of conduct for the people who were restored in their land.

Worship was therefore established but the house of

GOD had not yet been built again ; it was still only a ruin. What toil would be required in order to put the stones of the holy place each in position again ! What a picture of the house of GOD to-day ! In spite of the ruin which surrounded them, and of the feebleness in which they found themselves, the people set themselves to the work ; great tasks were to be accomplished. Each one put himself into the work, realising one-ness *in the labour* as also *in worship*. (vv. 1 and 9.) When the foundations of the temple are in position, the priests and the Levites praise the LORD together by course : "for the LORD is good, for His mercy endureth for ever." All the people shouted with a great shout. The shouts of some were shouts of joy, of others, shouts of sorrow, for they wept. All was according to their thoughts of GOD. There was indeed much to cause rejoicing at the sight of the goodness of the LORD to His people ; but could one not also shed bitter tears when thinking of the state of ruin in which the house of GOD was found ? A profound lesson for those who love the assembly to-day.

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

## To Correspondents

*A.H.P., Shepherd's Bush.* There is no contradiction apparent or real as you suggest between Heb. xi. 39, 40 and xii. 22, 23. "Perfect" in both cases refers to being perfected in the likeness of CHRIST when our LORD comes. Then both the Old Testament saints, and Christians who now form "the assembly of the first-borns" will go to meet Him on high. The perfection of the latter, that is of all Christian believers, will be seen as the Bride, the LAMB'S wife ; but the Old Testament believers will equally manifest their perfection as being heavenly saints, the friends of the Bridegroom. They form no part of the Christian church ; indeed how could they, having lived, believed, and died before the church began on the Day of Pentecost ? But their perfection as part of the heavenly company is clearly taught in Scripture. "At present the spirits of just men are perfect, and in the heavenly Jerusalem. It seems that in the future Kingdom they shall stand in a special relation to the earthly Jerusalem and Israel ; that they shall be more immediately connected with the earthly inheritance which was promised them of old. The twelve Apostles also, though they belong to the Pentecostal Church, we are told, shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."—*Saphir*.

## On Discipline

(Continued from page 7.)

**W**HEN you are tempted to lose courage, to faint under weakness, through suffering, the message which God gives us is not "be strong and of good courage," because He knows that your strength and courage have well nigh left you. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. xlv. 10), are His sweet words. That is all that God asks of you, His beloved child, when you lose courage in the fire of affliction. Do not try to escape from it: "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him" (Ps. xxxvii. 7). Just rest quietly, and know that He is God, and that *He will sustain you and bring you through the difficulty.*

There is another exhortation which we need in the time of trial, and this is: *Do not allow a question as to the love and the wisdom of God.*

God may permit a terrible blow. The soul feeling crushed nigh to death can hardly avoid an astonished protest. The blow seems to you to be so clearly a mistake. This it cannot be, for nothing happens to His children save by His permission or appointment, and you are to God most precious. One day you may shine as a brilliant in the crown of the KING, but now you are in His hand. He does not allow a single stroke to affect your trembling soul, which is not sent or allowed by His wisdom and love, and which, received rightly, produces an abundance of blessing and spiritual enrichment hitherto unknown and unsuspected by you.

Remember that GOD is your FATHER. One day a well-meaning but stupidly tactless visitor to a school of deaf mutes wrote the following dreadful question on the blackboard: Why has GOD given me the ability to speak and to hear, while He has made you all deaf mutes? The children remained like those thunderstruck before this cruel and awful question. This "Why?" After a short while one little girl got up. Her lips were trembling, her eyes were filled with tears. She went right up to the blackboard and, taking the chalk firmly

in her hand, she wrote those precious words: "Even so FATHER: for so it seemed good in Thy sight." What an answer! She had touched on a solid rock of unalterable truth, one on which the most advanced as well as the youngest believer can rest without fear, the truth that God is your FATHER. Is this really what you are thinking? Do you believe it fully and in all reality? If so, your faith, like the dove in the flood, will not wander about any more in tiring agitation, but it will find itself in the shelter of eternal rest and peace. Your FATHER! *That takes in everything.* If He is your FATHER, how can He be negligent or forgetful of you? Consider the heart of your own father and mother and notice the power, the tenderness and the scope of their love for you; then say to yourself: The love of my FATHER infinitely surpasses even all that! Your FATHER! In face of the assurance of this, doubts will disappear like the foam on the waves on the rocks at the sea coast. Then your soul shall find rest in a confidence without fear. Bring forth thus your firm assurance in the face of the subtle and treacherous "why" of the devil, and the enemy will retreat like a deceiver unmasked, baffled and defeated.

In spite of our tears, God will continue with patience to form His own in order that they should be partakers of His holiness. He does not spare, but He seeks to lead His children into obedience; and He sets them thus on the way to that glory which is the goal to every believer, though the way of necessity be often steep. The end of all discipline is to exercise the children of God and to draw them to Himself, as is said in Psalm xxvii. 8: "When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart (the heart of the tried psalmist) said unto Thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek." "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thy heart: wait, I say, on the LORD" (v. 14).

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

## Some Awkward Personal Possessions

BY QUARTUS

### 2.—*My Fears*

**M**Y fears are awkward personal possessions indeed, for they always put in an appearance when I am least fit to entertain them. Most of them are groundless, few if any of them ever really happen, and none of them need be a source of anxiety. Yet there they are, a kind of bugbear, always threatening inward serenity, so what must I do with them?

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee," sang the Psalmist in ancient times, and the same determination holds good for these modern days, with all their multiplication of causes for fear. "The LORD is good; a stronghold in the time of trouble; *and He knoweth them that trust in Him.*"

As a small child I used to fear "*it*"; but just what "*it*" was I never quite knew, and have not discovered yet. If, however, to my enquiry, "Will *it* hurt?" when going to bed at night, my matter-of-fact eldest sister replied, "No, of course not," I could comfortably settle down.

Years after, when thinking over the 35th Psalm, the verse, "*Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation,*" seemed to throw a new light upon the subject of "*My Fears.*" The Psalmist has no real doubt that the LORD is his salvation; indeed, he had bravely boasted of this earlier in Psalm xxvii; but his craving, in the mood of depression and apprehension which had fallen upon him, was to have said to him what he already knew. "*Say unto my soul I am thy salvation.*" The sound of the voice, like the pressure of the hand, speaks volumes in hours of fear and anxiety, especially when it is the voice of God.

One healthful fear, always present, is, not that the LORD will fail me—His love in times past forbids this—but that I, being what I am, may through unwatchfulness bring dishonour upon His Name. I would therefore work out my own salvation "with fear and trembling," for it is God that worketh in me to work and

will of His own good pleasure. "Happy is the man that feareth always," says the Scripture, and this is a comfort to such as myself, whatever those of more robust spiritual constitution may think.

The fear of God, from which dread has been cast out by His perfect love, is the only fear that liberates from all other fears. To love Him with awe and reverence, to fear to grieve His Holy Spirit, aware alike of His majesty and of His mercy, this is the fear of the LORD that keeps the soul from evil. "In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence."

## Some Experiences in Christian Work

### 2.—*"Down Ratcliff Highway"*

RATCLIFF HIGHWAY is referred to by Charles Booth in his *LIFE AND LABOUR IN LONDON* as "the notorious street in London in Ratcliff lying open to the West and North to any tide of poverty, crime, or vice that London may silt into it."

This is what Booth reported of his visit to these parts, and is photographic of the scene as the present writer also found it:—Out of the river where they had been bathing, rushed a crowd of naked urchins. In the court, women, loud-voiced and foul-tongued, flung oaths at some dirty, squalid children playing near. Another woman, strong and handsome, stupid with drink, sat outside her house, and from within could be heard the continuous wailing of a child.

With youthful zeal possibly outrunning discretion, a bundle of tracts, probably all couched in language too technical and theological to be easily grasped, and a prayer to God for guidance and help, the writer sallied forth to assault this devil's fortress.

Sitting at the doorway of one of those bad old houses, where, in the bad old days, sailors were often taken to be drugged by drink, and robbed of all their belongings on being paid off after a voyage, a group of women were taking the evening air.



The offer of a tract to one of these provoked a refusal accompanied by a terrible flood of filthy abuse. She was, exactly as Booth described those he met on his visit, rough, bold-eyed, and hard-faced, and apparently the worse for drink.

One of the others on the adjoining doorstep broke in with a rebuke: "Shut, up, Kate; don't say that to him, poor child; he don't know what it means; quiet, girl, do."

Then, stretching out her hand, she continued: "Yes, my dear, give me one. I'll take one of them little bills of yourn; they would do me no harm; you means well, son."

It was all accompanied by a kind of thick, husky, ingratiating tone and a smile, evidently intended for encouragement, but as one went on one wondered whether some early memories of happier days had been awakened, whether some buried feelings lying deep in the heart had been touched.

Both the opposition and the encouragement were incentives to continue, and it *was* an experience in Christian work. Without presuming to disparage any form of Christian service, yet it is conceivable that in the Day of CHRIST more solid results may be found from the obscure and in some quarters despised work of tract distribution than from eloquent sermons, impassioned evangelistic addresses, and those sides of service which thrust the servant—unwillingly, eh?—into the limelight.

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good" (Eccles. xi. 6). "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass" (Isa. xxxii. 20).

Steady plodding, yoked with lively zeal under the blessing of God, brings the desired result.

A brother took me to a hall which had been specially secured for services to seafarers, and before the indoor meeting began we were to hold a service outside to invite them in. The speakers at this cosmopolitan meeting were a German, a Swede, a Belgian, and the writer.

It was interesting to notice the faces of the groups of listless sailormen lighten up when a speaker began in their own mother tongue.

When the brief open-air meeting was over, and an invitation given in several languages to a bright gospel service in the hall, the response was surprising, as quite a number followed us in.

As mine was the English-speaking one, I did not know where the others went, except that there were rooms on the second floor also available.

My crowd was a very good-humoured one, and by inviting them to choose their hymns we got on all right. One man especially impressed me, and the hopeful feeling, that all young evangelists entertain, that a hearer has been won for CHRIST began to take possession of me.

The meeting broke up with hearty handshakes all round, and just as the men had dispersed, the good brother who ran the place came round to the four speakers enquiring genially, "How did you get on? Have a good time? Did they listen all right? Ah!—wonder what the results will be?"

When my turn came for this friendly interrogation, he asked, "Did you let them choose their own hymns?"

"Yes," I hazarded, somewhat doubtfully, not quite knowing if it was the custom to do so.

"Good idea, good idea; keeps their interest."

Then, with a suspicious twinkle in his eye, "By the way, that fellow who sat right up by the desk, on your right?"

"He seemed very impressed," I said, "and certainly paid great attention."

"Yes, decent chap, you think? Did he by any chance choose any of the hymns?" he queried.

"Well, yes," I replied, "as a matter of fact he chose two, and very good ones, too."

"Ah! 'Jesu, Lover of my soul?' 'Jesus the very thought of Thee'?"

"Yes," I replied, "but you must have been in, or at the door."

"My dear fellow, I neither came in, looked in, nor

even heard one of the hymns your men sang," he replied with a smile.

"Then how on earth did you make such a good guess?"

"Ah!" with a wry smile, "I happen to know some of these fellows, and specially that nice man whom you feel sure was so much impressed. Whenever a speaker gives an opportunity he chooses his two favourite hymns. He has just been doing six months' hard for nearly killing his wife, beating her with a poker. He came out of gaol this morning. Of course, we may hope and pray that it is as you think."

Another experience, and helpful in disciplining the character and zeal of a servant of the LORD.

W.G.T.

(Next month (D.V.) "*How the Messenger started.*")

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## The Book of Ezra

*Notes of Bible Readings at Jumet, Belgium (continued).*

CHAPTER IV. Those who are faithful necessarily meet with the opposition and the hatred of enemies; so those who had come up from the captivity were not long in having this experience. Their enemies were all the more dangerous in that they pretended to serve the God of Israel and to have done so for a long time. The first means they use is to suggest *an association in the work of God*. Those who had given themselves to the work of building understood the danger of such a suggestion, and promptly repelled it. They themselves could carry out the work of restoration of the house of JEHOVAH. The Enemy does not admit defeat, but uses another method—fear; and, alas, succeeds! The people forget the commandment of the king, the faithfulness of JEHOVAH and His power, and lose courage and give up the work, which is thus interrupted for a number of years. The Enemy is never so satisfied as when he has ruined the work of GOD. Not content with having stopped the work, those men who are his instruments write a letter full of wicked accusa-

tions and insinuations against the builders. The king replies with an order to stop the work, and not build again without his authorisation. Not having built while they had the edict of Cyrus on their side, the people are now hindered from building during the reign of Artaxerxes. It was the direct consequence of their lack of courage when God had given them opportunity. If *we* are not faithful when the LORD would use us, the opportunity of doing the work will be taken from us. This state of affairs lasted until the second year of Darius, king of Persia, a period of 15 years.

Chapters v. and vi. In spite of all this, God still watched over His house and over the remnant which had come up from Babylon; His prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, were sent to speak to them in the name of the God of Israel. The chiefs arise and begin again to build the house of God, and that at a time when they had no longer any support from the king. In chapter iv. they ceased for *fear of their enemies*, but in chapter v. they begin to work *for fear of Jehovah*. Their enemies soon seek to put a stop to this work for God. These are different people from those of chapter iv.; different names, and different methods appear, but both the one and the other are animated by the same spirit of hatred against the builders. The old, the real enemy has divers tools and chooses and uses them as he will. These later ones have a less redoubtable air than the former ones; there is a certain formality in their methods; they seem even to take an interest in the work of the house of God. Like the earlier opponents, they write to the king and their letter appears full of goodwill towards the Jews, but it has a sting in its tail: if the old edict of Cyrus is not to be found, then they will know well how to take advantage of this, and take action against the builders. They want to know if it is true that Cyrus gave the order to build this house and say: "Let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter." In acting thus they do not compromise themselves with the king of whose feelings towards the remnant they have no knowledge. But God watches over the faithful;

they have heard the voice of JEHOVAH and have set themselves to the work. Now, JEHOVAH inclines the heart of the king in their favour, and permits that the roll containing the edict of Cyrus should be sought where no one would have expected to find it. It is worthy of remark that it is the intervention of the enemies themselves which gives occasion to make search concerning this edict of Cyrus and the order to rebuild the house. God thus makes these things to work together in favour of those who, in His fear, have set themselves to the restoration of His house.

On receiving the order of Darius, the enemies, for fear of compromising themselves in the eyes of the king, take prompt action according to the order given them. The elders of the Jews builded and prospered. "*They builded and finished*" according to the commandment, first, of the God of Israel, secondly, of Cyrus, and thirdly, of Darius, and the house was finished in the twelfth month.

From verse 16 we have *the dedication of the house*, but upon a very different scale from that in the reign of Solomon. There was joy and obedience to the Word of JEHOVAH. Things were set in order according to what had been commanded at the beginning, but (v. 18) in place of a sacrifice of the twenty-two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep offered by Solomon, here it is only by hundreds that the victims are offered. In addition to this sacrifice, the children of the captivity offered a sin offering according to the number of the tribes of Israel, thus acknowledging *the unity of the people in guilt*. The two tribes present were thus recognised as equally guilty with the ten which were lost among the nations.

After these things, the people celebrated the passover at the appointed time, the fourteenth day of the first month. This passover is characterised by the complete purification of those who took part in it. The priests and the Levites were purified *as one man*: there was unity in their purification. We have here the sixth passover which is brought before us in the Scriptures:

the first was in Egypt, at the time the people were delivered (Ex. xii.), the second in the wilderness (Num. xi.), the third in the plains of Jericho (Josh. v.), the fourth under Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxx.), the fifth under Josiah (2 Chron. xxxv.), and the sixth here, the seventh and last (Matt. xxvi.), is celebrated by the LORD and His disciples, the passover which has been replaced by the LORD'S SUPPER. Here we have a people returned from the captivity in much feebleness and in servitude to the nations, but acting in conformity with the Scriptures. They keep the Word and separated themselves from evil in all its forms in order to celebrate the last recorded passover before the coming of the LORD. Let us also, who are given to recall the death of the LAMB of GOD, take a place of holy separation from all evil in view of the return of our LORD and SAVIOUR. With the passover, they kept the feast of unleavened bread for seven days. They celebrated it with a joy which came from JEHOVAH. It is remarkable that this joy was not in connection with the passover, but with the feast of unleavened bread. For us the latter answers to a complete absence of evil during the whole time of our walk on earth; an absolute separation from all which is incompatible with the holiness of God with Whom we are brought into relationship in virtue of the death of CHRIST.

Chapter vii. Another subject begins here. Ezra went up from Babylon and, with him, a certain number of the men of the people. It is like a new Exodus. The first thing which characterises Ezra is his well-authenticated descent from Aaron, through the faithful Zadok, and the zealous Phinehas. *He was a priest of pure race.* He had a great knowledge of the law of Moses, which JEHOVAH, the God of Israel, had given, a fact which was recognised even by King Artaxerxes (v. 12). So to say, it was his letter of commendation to the people of God. He had prepared his heart, first, to *seek* the law of the LORD, secondly, to *do* it, thirdly, to *teach* it to the people of God. It is the same to-day: when a believer knows the Holy Scriptures *and puts them into practice*, the

fact is patent even to the outside world. The protection of the king was upon him, and he gives him a letter. This is the fourth letter we find mentioned in the book of Ezra:

- (1) Chapter iv. 6: A letter from the enemies desiring that the work be stopped.
- (2) Chapter iv. 17: The reply to the above, ordering the work to cease.
- (3) Chapter v. 6: A letter of the enemy asking if it be true that a commandment was given to build the house.
- (4) Chapter vii. 11: A voluntary letter from the king, which he gave to Ezra, and which contained orders concerning the house.

God inclined the heart of the king so that all who were disposed to go up to Jerusalem might do so without hindrance. Ezra himself was sent by the king and his seven counsellors. These persons also gave him the necessary things for the worship of God at Jerusalem, His dwelling place. All should be done according to the will of God; a great contrast to what obtained among the people of Israel during the days of the Judges, when every man did what was right in his own eyes, without troubling himself as to the will of God.

Order is also given to deliver the vessels before the God of Jerusalem (v. 16). The king, therefore, recognises that He dwelt there. We may remark in passing the various names given to God in the verses: in v. 14, He is *the God of Ezra*; v. 15, *the God of Israel*; vv. 16 and 19, *the God Who is in Jerusalem*; v. 23, *the God of heaven*. Whatsoever is commanded by *the God of the heavens must be done diligently*, that is, exactly. The king here shows a fear of the wrath of this God against the king and his sons; very different from that which we have in chapter iv. 22, where another Artaxerxes fears the damage caused to the hurt of the kings, and in consequence gives an order to cause the work to cease in connection with the building of the city of God. In verse 24 we read that no toll, tribute or custom could be imposed on all the ministers of the house of God; this

reminds us of what we have in 1 Sam. xvii. 25, where the house of the father of him who would overcome Goliath should be made free in Israel. Finally, Ezra was to set up judges, such as know the laws of his God. In all questions of administration it is the Word which gives the law, and is the only rule to be followed to-day, as in all times. All disobedience to the Word could only bring judgment on the guilty (v. 26).

In the last two verses of chapter vii. Ezra blesses JEHOVAH, Who had put it into the heart of the king to beautify the house of JEHOVAH and had extended His mercy to him before the king and his great ones. Finally, he is strengthened because the hand of JEHOVAH is upon him. In this chapter we have frequent mention of "the hand of JEHOVAH"; His hand is not shortened.

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

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## "God, All in All"

*(This paper possesses special interest now as being from the pen of one of Christ's faithful witnessing people in Germany.)*

**M**ANY have asked as to the meaning of the expression "that God may be all in all," and many false and misleading thoughts have been expressed with regard to it.

In order to understand the expression properly we must consider the context. The apostle is speaking in 1 Cor. xv. 24ff, about the "end," when CHRIST "shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the FATHER; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power," i.e., when *time* shall have ended and the *eternal* state begun.

CHRIST, as Man, is "the nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom" (Luke xix. 12). At the present moment He is still there and "we see not yet all things put under Him" (Heb. ii. 8), but when



GOD shall again bring the Firstborn into the world, He shall have not only the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession, but He shall have dominion over all the works of GOD's hands (cf. Ps. ii. 8 with Ps. viii. 5-7). He shall reign as MAN in truth and righteousness over the kingdom given Him by casting down and annulling all rule, authority and power that shall resist Him. With the destruction of death, the last enemy, the overthrow of all opponents will be completed. ALL will then be at His feet. The only Perfect and Worthy One will then *deliver up* the kingdom to GOD the FATHER. He "receives" the kingdom, "rules over" it for a thousand years in dependence on GOD and "delivers up" the kingdom in the same perfection in which He received it. All who ever had rule before were unfaithful and imperfect, and not one ever delivered up again what he had received. In this, as in all other things, CHRIST is the only perfect One.

"And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the SON also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that GOD may be All in all." The Manhood which He once assumed, He shall never lay aside again. "JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. xiii. 8). All authority, however, given to Him *as Man* will cease, and the SON Himself shall be subject, so that He shall in this sense cease to "reign," though He will never cease to be "MAN" or "SON." The passage shows us that all authority "delivered" to Him will cease. When the hand of GOD will create a place which is suited to Himself, the new heavens and the new earth, when He shall say: "Behold I make all things new," and, "It is done," and then shall rest in His love from all His work, then shall GOD *alone*, in His Nature and in all the perfection of His Being, be seen and shall form the rest of mankind and of the whole new creation from eternity to eternity.

"GOD shall be All in all." It does not say, the FATHER, but GOD, that is, FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT, will be "All in all," instead of the kingdom of MAN in

the CHRIST exalted and called LORD. First of all, MAN in the person of CHRIST will reign over all creation, and then GOD shall be ALL in all where righteousness no longer requires to reign but is at home; where it shall  *dwell*  in never-ending blessing and peace.

The "Millennium" (the thousand-year kingdom) is the object of the counsels of GOD and of prophecy. It is the period of time which the apostle Paul in Eph. i. 10 calls "the dispensation of the fulness of times." During that period GOD will gather all things under one HEAD in CHRIST, and all will be committed to the SECOND MAN and be ruled by Him in perfection.

The eternal state, the new heavens and the new earth,  *is not an object of prophecy* . It is never revealed in the Old Testament. Nevertheless it is the result of what GOD is in Himself: LIGHT and LOVE. In the millennium we see the fulfilment of the counsels of GOD and His intentions with regard to the glorifying of CHRIST and the blessing of man. In the eternal state everything will testify to the unbounded perfection of the expression: "GOD ALL in all." In the millennium there will still be evil, and therefore occasion for righteousness to "reign." The sinner, i.e., man who will trespass the divine commandments in a definite, public way, will be cursed and also punished with death and "every morning" the lawless shall be blotted out of the land and all who do evil shall be rooted out of the city of JEHOVAH (Isa. lxxv. 20; Ps. ci. 8). This condition of things is therefore not perfect. In the new creation the eternal state, all will be unconditionally good, with sin, and not only its consequences, done away for ever, and therefore in the new heavens and the new earth righteousness will "dwell" (2 Pet. iii. 13).

The fullest and most comprehensive statement about the eternal and unconditionally perfect state which shall follow the millennium is found in Rev. xxi. 1-5. There all differences and definitions of time are gone; we have entered into eternity. Heaven and earth have fled away from before the face of Him Who sits upon the throne (Rev. xx. 11), and the day has gone past of which

Peter says: "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. iii. 10). "The great white throne" has been set up, and "the dead, small and great" have appeared before it, and from the lips of the Judge their final and irrevocable doom will have been pronounced. Kept until then by the power of God, they are raised up again from the dead in order to receive, after the end of "*the times*," their "*eternal*" doom.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. xxi. 1). Psalm cii. 26 is then fulfilled. The old heavens and the old earth are gone, or, more correctly, changed; all has become new. As in the millennium, so will there also be in the eternal state a difference between the heavenly and the earthly saints. The Bride shall find her joy in being with the Bridegroom, while the friends of the Bridegroom, if we may so call them, shall rejoice in His immediate presence (cf. John iii. 29). Blessing, however, will rest on an eternally secure foundation. The Bride comes down from God into the new-created earth in order to take up her abode here "as the tabernacle of God with men."

"And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The last words, taken in connection with verses 9 and 10 of the chapter (Rev. xxi.), show us clearly what is to be understood under the figure of this holy city. It is the Bride, the LAMB'S wife, ever adorned with her wedding garments (Rev. xix. 7-9), the bride who, after the millennium is over, *enters the eternal state in the same freshness and beauty of her bridal affections with which she was seen at the marriage of the Lamb*. God will then live *with* men, and not *over* them as in the millennium (cf. Rev. vii. 15; Ezekiel xxxvii. 27), in His tabernacle, the church or assembly. "The day of God" has dawned (2 Pet. iii. 12).

In this new creation there is no longer any room for a chosen earthly people (Israel), nor for nations or peoples of earth; the old things are passed away. There

is but *one* people, the men of the new earth, *God's people*; and in the midst of this people a tabernacle, a temple, in which God dwells *with* His people. A further noteworthy feature of the completely "new" state is the absence of sea. "There shall be no more sea" is an indication that all that separates, and is unstable, is done away for ever and that there is a complete re-ordering of things in regard to man's bodily condition and being. While the sea *to-day* is indispensable for the life of man and the maintenance of the whole creation, it will no longer be necessary *then* because the God Who dwells in the midst of His new creation will constitute its life, its rest, its joy, its all. "God ALL in all"—even the LAMB is not mentioned. God speaks, God adorns, God dwells in His tabernacle, with His people, God wipes away all tears, God makes all things new, everything comes from God.

"And He will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. xxi. 4).

What pen can depict the glory of this condition, what human spirit imagine it! Sin with all its dreadful consequences is for ever removed, taken away through the blood of the LAMB! God will put on all the stamp of His unending perfection. Everything that could remind us of the world, its ways, its changing scenes, its sin and sorrow, will be banished from this place of unchanging joy and unalterable peace. "God—ALL in all."  
(*Trans. T.H.*)

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Our most exalted songs hardly reach to the footstool of His throne and, even in perfection, we shall fill eternity with His praise without ever being able to give praises equal to His worth.

## On Being Joyful, Peaceful, Hopeful

BY THE EDITOR

“**N**OW the GOD of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the HOLY GHOST.” (Rom. xv. 13.)

If it is true that “hope springs eternal in the human breast,” and therefore miracles of patience and perseverance are wrought in human experience, it is even more so in Christian life and experience. Was ever so hopeful a Christian soul as the Apostle Paul? His inspired letters, whether written to churches or individuals, simply overflow with the abounding hope with which his believing soul was filled by the HOLY SPIRIT. Spite of overwhelming difficulties, disappointments, and discouraging experiences which seemed to crowd upon him as he resolutely pursued his course, the GOD of hope so filled him with all joy and peace in believing that at the very end of his journey he triumphantly asserted: “Nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” Not ashamed of what? Of the suffering, of the cowardly desertion of all those in Asia who owed so much to his tireless labours, but were now ashamed of the circumstances into which fidelity to CHRIST and His cause had brought him. The reproach of CHRIST lay heavily upon this valiant soldier of JESUS CHRIST and they apparently wished to avoid any connection with it.

But joy and peace in believing kept the Apostle overflowing with hope by the power of the HOLY SPIRIT so he could affirm,—Nevertheless I am not ashamed.

In his Roman letter, a dozen times over he refers to “hope” as characteristically Christian. “Hope of the glory of GOD”; “hope that maketh not ashamed”; “rejoicing in hope.” Then when drawing the epistle to a close, citing from the Old Testament certain glowing prophecies of joy to Israel, mercy to the Gentile peoples, praises from both, and CHRIST as both the Object of hope and expectation of all blessing on the basis of His Atoning work and appointed Rulership, he writes: Now may the

GOD of "that" hope, "the" hope fill you with all joy and peace in your believing, so that ye may overflow in that hope, in the HOLY SPIRIT's power. This is what Miss Havergal so sweetly expressed :

Oh, the joy to see Thee reigning,  
Thee, my own beloved LORD !  
Every tongue Thy NAME confessing,  
Worship, honour, glory, blessing,  
Brought to Thee with one accord ;  
Thee, my MASTER, and my FRIEND  
Vindicated and enthroned,  
Unto earth's remotest end  
Glorified, adored and owned !

That day of glory will dawn ; CHRIST will return and be glorified in His saints, and marvelled at in all them that believe. So we rejoice in hope of the glory of GOD.

In ordinary experience, to hope is to cherish a desire of good with expectation of its possible attainment. Always however a haze of uncertainty hangs around it. We hope, and expect, but cannot be quite sure until it is realised. People are semi-humorously warned "not to count your chickens until they are hatched" because of this very element of uncertainty entering into everything connected with human hopes. But the "hope" with which the Apostle prays the GOD of hope to fill His believing people is free of this defect. It is a certainty though yet unrealised, for GOD is not the GOD of a hope that makes ashamed by its frustration or unfulfilment. On the contrary the SPIRIT of GOD leads the believing soul at once to bank upon the fulfilment of the promise in spite of present appearances.

We readily recognise the effect of hope in human affairs. The hope of a rise in wages puts a new face on things for the young lad or girl in their place of business. A new interest is created and a new impetus given to the humdrum task by the hope of increased reward. The hope of gaining a better position, a higher post, is an unfailing incentive to an ambitious youth. The hope of complete recovery from a long tedious period of ill-health puts new life into the patient and makes endurance not so difficult.

So on the Christian course, as the road winds uphill all the way, and obstacles are encountered on the right hand and the left, and the strain and stress begin to tell somewhat upon the spirit, then the hope of the glory of GOD which is nourished by endurance and experience because the love of GOD is shed abroad in the heart by the HOLY SPIRIT, glows brightly. Encouraged by the things that were written aforetime for our instruction we then cherish more than ever the hope implanted in us by GOD Himself. Thus rejoicing in hope, patient in endurance, and persevering in prayer, the pilgrim steadily pursues his way with a lighter heart and a firmer step.

“The eternal glory gleams afar  
To nerve my faint endeavour ;  
So now to watch, to work to war,  
And then to rest for ever.”

Yet in that endless rest, His servants shall serve Him : and they shall see His face ; and His Name shall be in their foreheads : . . . and they shall reign for ever. Perfect service, perfect vision, perfect likeness and perfect triumph. For the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their FATHER.

“Now may the GOD of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the HOLY SPIRIT.” Rejoicing in hope of the glory of GOD. Thus we travel on, joyful, peaceful, hopeful by the power of the HOLY SPIRIT.

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## An Evening Meditation

(Psalm iv.)

BY QUARTUS

**I**T is evening. It is getting near the time to go to bed. The quietness of the hour lends itself to meditation. The Psalmist reflects upon past deliverances. He meditates upon present needs and dangers. He thinks of the petty spite that has fallen to his lots in recent times. Selah ! He is thinking, thinking, thinking, for he has much food for thought these days. And first he thinks of GOD Who alone can vindicate his cause. As he thinks of

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"the GOD of his righteousness," memory quickly comes to his aid. "When I was in distress ; in sore, sad and desperate straits." How many the deliverances, how great the mercies ! "Thou has enlarged me," set me at liberty, "delivered me from all my fears."

Continue Thy loving kindness unto me, have mercy upon me and hear my prayer. So he thinks of GOD, His help in times past, and makes his prayer to Him "Whose mercy endureth for ever." That is verse one of this Psalm of David delivered by him afterwards to the Chief Musician on Neginoth.

2. Then he thinks of men, the sons of men, the leaders in this revolt against his authority, in rebellion against their rightful king. The hollowness and falsity of it all. Dishonouring their lawful sovereign ; turning his GOD-appointed honour into shame ; loving an empty thing, a mere imitation of royalty, and seeking the falsehood of the usurper's pretended power. Absalom, Ahithophel, leaders of the people, princes and priests, all drawn away from the king whom GOD had appointed and anointed. "O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame ? How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing, lying ?" cries the dishonoured king of GOD's choice.

3. "But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for Himself : the LORD will hear when I call unto Him." So he thinks this time of himself, and of the grace of GOD shown him. "He chose David also His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds : He brought him to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance." "I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David My servant ; with My holy oil have I anointed him."

So in this evening time, this hour of meditation, he thinks of GOD's sovereign favour. He thinks of the covenant of blessing made to him by GOD." "Although my house be not so with God ; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." He thinks of GOD's favour shown as a prayer-hearing God. Nearly all the Davidic psalms are prayers mingled with praise until in the most magnificent perhaps of them all he exclaims, The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.



4. Still thinking, still meditating upon GOD and man, and his own relations to both, the mood changes. "Stand in awe, and sin not." Tremble and fear. Speak in your heart. Let the voice of conscience be heard in the quiet hour. Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah !

Self-judgment the medicine of the soul is needed. *Conscience has no comfort for the wrong-doer.* The sons of men need this in their vanity and falsity rebelling against their king. The son of Jesse also needs it. We need it. I need it. "Blessed is the man that feareth alway"; he who stands in awe as he remembers his faults and folly in the presence of Him Whose "eyes are as a flame of fire."

5. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness. Self-judgment leads to the offering of the sacrifices of GOD, penitence and contrition. "The sacrifices of GOD are a broken spirit: a contrite heart, O GOD, Thou wilt not despise."

So he thinks, and ponders, upon the vital fact that in the approach to GOD *reality is of first importance.* Penitence, contrition, godly sorrow, amendment, and restitution mingle together, in offering the sacrifices of righteousness to the GOD "Who loveth righteousness."

"Put your trust in the LORD," for the first definite act of confidence, and the habit of confidence formed as these acts are repeated in life lead to the enjoyment and tranquillity of those whose minds are kept in perfect peace because they trust in Him.

6. Still thinking, thinking quietly as nature wraps her mantle over the landscape stretching around the door of his encampment that night, he reflects upon the voices that perhaps during the day, or even now may be heard borne upon the evening air. The voice of the pessimist looking around the horizon on a level with his own eyes for help "Who will show us any good?" "There be many that say, who will show us any good?" Many asking, Will good ever come? Who can procure it for us? The thousands of armed men massed against David and his little company. All the influential people against him. Is success even humanly possible? These are some of the suggestions that come as the voices are heard asking Who will show us any good?

To the question of the pessimist, the answer of the godly man comes as he appeals to the GOD of his righteousness. "LORD, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us." It is a prayer of faith and love born of the upward look. The LORD liveth. The sunshine of His approval dispels the gloomy forebodings and horrid shapes that unbelief would beget. The inner life is flooded with the light of His countenance.

7. Memory calls upon Experience to sing her song of what the LORD has done. One grateful acknowledgment is uttered of a joy independent of passing circumstances. The reckless gaiety and hollow mirth of the ungodly, and even the glad innocent enjoyment of GOD's good earthly gifts are not to be compared with the gladness which Thou hast put in my heart.

8. "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep : for Thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety." Like a tired child, without a care or a fear, with the pressure and the protection of his father's strong arms around him the Psalmist quietly rests in the knowledge of the care and interest and power of his GOD. An assurance of peaceful security without wakefulness caused by anxiety, or bitter thoughts of those sons of men who seek to turn his glory into shame, is his as he prepares for bed that night.

## Some Experiences in Christian Work

### 3.—*How The Messenger Started*

WE are told in the Book of Judges of certain "who came to the help of the LORD" and among these were "*they that handle the pen of the writer.*" That He, Who could quite easily dispense with our help, should deign to accept and honour it with His blessing, is another proof of what a gracious MASTER we are permitted to serve. To *live* the gospel is the part of Christian testimony open to, and binding upon, *all* who have received it. To *preach* the gospel is the imperative call upon *many* who have received it and who feel that : "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." The world does not *want*, but very sorely *needs*, SPIRIT-filled preachers of the gospel of the grace

of GOD ; men who feel necessity laid upon them to do so. Men, who not only fill the allotted time at the usual hour of service, but who carry the burden of the unsaved always, and so must preach—the love of CHRIST constraining them. To *write* the gospel extends the boundary of those to whom the message will come, but this too is a gift which makes the possessor responsible to the MASTER for its use. By life, by lip, by pen to be able to make CHRIST known in this Christless world is a privilege reserved for those who themselves have tasted that the LORD is gracious. Sometimes the possession of this gift of writing the gospel is quite unsuspected, but all who could, should endeavour to serve the LORD in this additional way.

How the *MESSENGER* started is what the writer has been asked to state. It began like most people and things do begin, in a very small way. Now however that millions have been issued and readers of *WORDS OF HELP* distribute it widely in English-speaking countries, our Publisher suggested that some account of it should be given by way of interest and encouragement to these.

It was born on a sick bed in December, 1921, when the writer lay, day after day, feeling that probably his day of service for the LORD must be nearing its close. The quiet review of the past seemed to furnish nothing but regret at so little attempted and still less achieved for the One Who had done so much for him. Motives for busy activities in Christian work were challenged in the light of the Day of account.

A great longing to do one real piece of work that GOD would own in blessing to others took possession of him. Something akin to Samson's prayer to be strengthened this once was his desire. Then, casting about in his mind for a true and suitable incident around which the great story of GOD's redeeming grace could be woven, the story of *THE FRIENDLESS MAN* claimed attention.

With earnest prayer, and much labour the *MESSENGER* was born, and doubtful as to its probable reception the Publisher only ventured to issue a thousand or two. Only the one issue was contemplated, but the writer felt that GOD had answered his prayer for one more opportunity of service before the night came when no man can work.

The *MESSENGER* however was so warmly welcomed that the Publisher asked for more, and so the *MESSENGER SERIES* began nineteen years ago. It was quickly adopted by various Christian workers and localised.

One Anglican clergyman who had his Bishop coming in connection with a special Mission circulated three to four thousand in his parish with a picture of the church on the cover. He gave as his reason: "This is just the thing I wanted; the gospel plainly, yet interestingly stated." Other Church of England clergy also circulated them by thousands.

A Roman Catholic family in England regularly sends a copy to the old people in Ireland who are devout Roman Catholics, but who look for it month by month saying it is easy to understand what it means.

Letters from New Zealand have told of the regular arrival of the *MESSENGER*, and the memories of the old country and gospel services attended at Greenwich in days long gone by.

A country brother, an indefatigable visitor, was greatly cheered in an outlying district in Bedfordshire, when, on one occasion being a day or two later than usual, he was told: "We look for these little papers, Sir, each month; when we have done with them, we always post them off to a friend."

This experience of Christian work shows how much our ever-gracious LORD can make out of so little. To Him be all the praise and thanks. W.G.T.

(*Next month (D.V.) "District Visiting."*)

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## The Book of Ezra

*Notes on Bible Readings at Jumet, Belgium (concluded).*

**CHAPTER VIII.** This chapter begins by giving us the names of those who went up with Ezra. They were reckoned by genealogy and were *males*. There was among them spiritual strength, none of that feebleness which is mentioned in 2 Tim. iii. 6 under the title of contempt "*silly women*." Among the names we see those

of the last sons of Adonikam. A number of the sons of Adonikam had already gone up with Zerubbabel (ch. ii. 3) and the last are here with Ezra. The family is thus complete. May it be so with all who have members of their families in the assembly.

From verse 15 we learn that there was no undue haste in their going up : it was necessary, before setting out, to take all the consequences into consideration and to weigh everything in the light of Scripture. Unhappily for David, he did not do this when he thought of bringing up the ark. (2 Sam. vi. 6.) Alas ! What consequences followed such an act !

In verse 15, Ezra discovered that there were absolutely none of the Levites among the people who were about to go up with him out of Babylon. The Levites are servants; they are absolutely necessary for the service of the house of GOD. What was to be done ? Ezra sent messengers to them in order that they might come up with him. We also have need of servants in the assembly, especially for pastoral service. There are few who devote themselves to this work for which they require self-denial, love and devotedness. A large number of saints who have the necessary qualities given them by the LORD are scattered among the various denominations of Christendom with the result that in many cases they are absolutely prevented from exercising their service by the organisations in which they find themselves ; a large number are even ignorant of such service and incapable of it. Nevertheless, they are gifts of the LORD to His church, but they are gifts which we must call unproductive. We may well pray GOD that He should deliver them, and lead them to the place where they could freely carry out the service which is theirs to do. In the end, before setting out, Ezra asks of GOD *a right way* for them, for their little ones and for all their substance. We are going to the house of GOD ; the family, and all that is under our hands, belongs to the LORD and we are but administrators. The LORD alone can lead us through all circumstances.

In the task of going up to Jerusalem it was necessary to count on GOD alone ; it is He Who is able to protect us from

the attacks of enemies and from dangers upon the way. It is a shame to the saints of GOD when they lean upon the arm of flesh : the hand of GOD is more than sufficient for faith. If we have spoken of the power of GOD, we ought to show by our manner of behaviour that we have confidence in it. This is part of our testimony.

GOD protects them in body and in all that they have, for they were taking with them the precious vessels of the house of GOD. They had the care of them, but only the power of GOD could preserve them from the numerous enemies who would have desired nothing better than to rob them of the riches which were in their hands. In this connection we may also recall the beautiful passage in Isaiah lii. 11 : "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing . . . ye that bear the vessels of the LORD. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight : for the LORD will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your *fereward*." What a wonderful escort they had ! It was better than all the cavalry of the king. In fasting and in humility they besought GOD that He would *shew* them the way and *guard* them in the way. Off they go, and the hand of GOD, is with them to deliver them from the enemies and from such as lay in wait by the way.

When they reached Jerusalem, they could account by weight and number for all the precious things which had been committed to them. When we arrive at the end of our journey, shall we not also be able to give account of all the precious things which are in our hands, and which have been confided to us by the faithful witnesses who have gone before us in the path of testimony ?

After this, the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt offerings to the GOD of Israel : "twelve bullocks for all Israel." They set forth the unity of the people of GOD in its blessedness by means of the sacrifice which they offered. We can also, in a similar manner, in the midst of the outward ruin of the church, sing with adoring hearts :

"How sweet to Thee the fact Thy church is one,  
LORD JESUS, for Thine eye to look upon !"

Besides burnt offerings, they offered "ninety-six rams, seventy and seven lambs and twelve he-goats for a sin offering; all this was a burnt offering unto the LORD." Even the sin offering came before GOD as a sacrifice by fire of a sweet smell to GOD. When we shall come to the FATHER'S house, all shall rise up before GOD as a sacrifice of a sweet smell, even the sacrifice for sin which will never cease to be before the eyes of the Holy GOD; and there shall remain only the value of the precious sacrifice of CHRIST, and that for all eternity.

Ezra and his companions delivered the king's commissions to the king's lieutenants, and to the governors *on this side the river*, and they furthered the people and the house of GOD. Further, in this book, we find mention of countries which were on this side the river, that is to say, which were to the west of the river Euphrates. This river was the eastern limit of the land of promise. (Josh. i. 4.)

Only in the glorious reign of a Solomon, had the people possessed the whole of their heritage. Here, in the midst of the greatest ruin, a little remnant come out of Babylon again embraces the whole extent of this heritage and for them the boundary of this heritage is the Euphrates. Faith often takes in divine blessings in their fullness in a time of ruin more than when all is prospering in the midst of the people of GOD.

CHAPTER IX. The return to the house of GOD in a time of ruin, however, does not mean nothing but joy. In chapter iii. we find joy and tears. Ezra was soon, alas! to shed tears himself. All who are faithful have the same experiences at all times. The coming of these faithful men to Jerusalem gave occasion for the bringing out of the evil which was, unhappily, in the midst of the people of GOD. It is often the same to-day; those who have newly come in from outside have generally more fear of evil than those who are older. The character of the evil was *association with the world, a real danger to-day*.

What is to be done in the presence of evil? In the first place, it is necessary to humble oneself individually before GOD, before doing anything else without even requiring that others should do it with us. This is something we lack to this day when we have to exercise discipline

in the assembly. If we do not do this discipline is fruitless. Ezra began by humbling himself ; he sat down overwhelmed; then were assembled unto him all that trembled at the words of the GOD of Israel. He remained there until the evening sacrifice. It was at this hour, five centuries later, that CHRIST died on the cross, when the great SACRIFICE was completed. Without *this* sacrifice all would have been for ever lost, and there would have been no hope for the people then, nor for ourselves to-day. At the time of the evening sacrifice, Ezra arose and made his confession, a confession which goes right back to the times of the fathers.

CHAPTER X. As Ezra prayed and made his confession, there assembled to him a very great congregation of men, women and *children*. His example brings others to humble themselves. Then (vv. 7 and 8) a proclamation is sent *to all* the children of the captivity that they should gather themselves together to Jerusalem in three days. Those who did not do this should be separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away. When discipline has to be exercised, precious instruction will be found in this. We should all be united in the exercise of discipline. One cannot be neutral to an act touching the glory of the LORD.

In verse 2, Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, of the sons of Elam, begins to speak and acknowledges the sin of the people, but he declares also that there is *hope* and that by separating from the evil which is in the midst of the people. This is the more remarkable since his own father is among the guilty ones. (chap x. 26.) He does not take counsel with flesh and blood, and, like the sons of Levi (Deut. xxxiii. 9), he says to his father and his mother : "I have not seen him." It is not for him to act on this occasion, but he says to Ezra : "The matter belongeth unto thee : we also will be with thee : be of good courage and do it." Ezra arises, therefore, and makes the people swear to act according to this word. While waiting until the people should purify themselves, he continues to mourn. So long as the evil ~~removes~~ <sup>remains</sup> unremoved from our midst, we have to continue in mourning ; "he did eat no bread nor drink water : for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away."



In verse 9 we see that external circumstances come in to complicate the matter and make the work of discipline the more difficult. Here it is the rain which complicates matters. All the congregation trembled because of this matter, and for the great rain. In verse 10 Ezra addresses the guilty ones now, and no longer says : "We have sinned," but, "*Ye* have transgressed and *ye* have taken strange wives." At such a moment he acts so as to make the evil weigh on the consciences of the guilty ones and cause them to purify themselves ; but it is a great task and is not the work of one day. In the case before us it took two whole months to put the affair in order. At times, alas ! it takes years before an assembly is completely rid of an evil which comes in, because the evil is attended by developments which spread far and wide.

Often there are those who *oppose* and *stand up against the discipline* (v. 15). Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah stood up against this (N. Trans.), and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them. Happily the opposers were not numerous in this case. Perhaps this Meshullam is the same as the one in verse 29 ; we could therefore understand his opposition.

In the forefront of those who had taken strange wives we find sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, the great high priest ; those who were at the head of the people took the lead in the transgression. They gave their hands that they would put away their wives and offered a ram for their trespass. After them we have a long list of the guilty ones. Some among them had children. Much distress must follow. None can break GOD's laws with impunity !  
(*From the French of Alf. G.*)

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Rev. iii. 12. I do not write my name on a book which I may wish to get rid of. On the other hand, if I write my name on it, I thereby declare that it is in my possession, that it is mine and that I want it to stay in my possession. If I write another person's name on it, it is because I am going to give it to that person.

## The Old Covenant and the New

“DOES the church belong to the New Covenant” (Testament)? and, “In how much was Paul a minister of the New Covenant? (Luke xxii. 20 ; 2 Cor. iii. 6), are questions sometimes asked. It is perhaps worth while to give these questions a little consideration.

The “old” or “first” covenant was based on legal obligations. When Moses had read the book of the covenant in the audience of the people with the solemn words of JEHOVAH : “If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto Me,” the people answered : “All that the LORD hath said we will do.” Then Moses took the blood of the animal which was sacrificed to seal the covenant, and sprinkled it on the people, and said : “Behold the blood of the covenant which the LORD hath made with you *concerning all these words*” (Ex. xix. 5-8 ; xxiv. 7, 8 ; cf. Heb. ix. 18ff.).

This covenant was based, therefore, *on man's obedience*. “If ye shall,” said GOD. From the very first this resulted in imperfection, indeed, in utter hopelessness. On such a basis there could not be a peaceful way of bringing man into relationship with GOD, of making a lasting connection between the HOLY ONE and the sinful, fallen creature. The blood of dedication might indeed flow, but it was only the blood of bulls and of goats which could never take away sin. Death indeed came in, but not that of a Holy Man, of a perfect Redeemer, who could take upon Himself the guilt of the guilty and take him with Him into an entirely new and heavenly place when the work had been finished. The blood of the old covenant only sealed the responsibility of man, “*to keep all the words of God and to obey.*”

The blessings of the old covenant, therefore, depended on man's obedience, its groundwork was the blood of bulls and of goats offered by a *living* mediator. On the other hand, the new covenant rests on the *death of the Mediator Himself*, and on *His obedience* unto death, even the death of the cross ; its unshakable, eternally secure foundation is the *blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God*. The old covenant *promised* blessing, if man would keep the

commandments of God ; the new covenant *brings* blessing and blessing which in no way depends on conditions attached to man, but exclusively on the sovereignty of God and the counsels of His grace from which it flows.

The old covenant of mount Sinai was made with the people of Israel. It is easy to assume that the new covenant will be made with *us* who are Christians. It is not so, however, for the new covenant is also in connection with the people of Israel but will be made with them only at the end of days. *The new covenant is therefore not yet consummated.* This fact is often overlooked although Scripture in both Old and New Testaments speaks in a way that cannot be misunderstood. "Behold the days come, saith the LORD, *that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah* : not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt ; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, said the LORD : but this shall be the covenant that I will make *with the house of Israel*" ; etc. (Jer. xxxi. 31-33). This passage is quoted in Heb. viii. 8-10 : "Behold the days come, saith the LORD, *when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah . . . . this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel* after those days." (See also ch. x. 16.)

The new covenant *will be made* on the ground of free grace : "for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. xxxi. 34). It is thus distinctly one-sided, i.e. one of the two parties undertakes *all* obligations, the other undertakes not one, but only *receives*. Therefore we cannot speak of the covenant as being drawn up between parties who had made an agreement, for the covenant will be accomplished towards both the houses of Israel and *set up by God*. All is grace and must be grace if the covenant is to stand : "grace which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through JESUS CHRIST our LORD." (Rom v. 21.)

I repeat, therefore : The new covenant is not yet consummated. Its *ground is prepared*, its basis and its seal are the Death of CHRIST. We already enjoy its blessings

to-day, while its effects for Israel are not yet to be seen. The day of its accomplishment is yet future. The old covenant sets *typically* before us all that forms the basis of the new covenant but, as we have seen, man was not in a position to keep to it. *Trans T.H.*

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

## To Correspondents

*A. S., Bristol.* The sad case of a believer standing drinking in a public house in his own village and then pleading a good conscience, only shows how awfully easy it is to be self-deceived. Conscience needs adjusting by Scripture, and anything that tends to bring discredit on testimony to CHRIST is wrong—however one tries to excuse it. The text you quote Matt. xxiv. 49 has its application, especially as the “smiting of his fellow servants” nowadays can be done quite as effectively by the tongue as by the hand. The following verses describe what happens to such.

*S.E., Hull.* “Is it wrong for a Christian to smoke?” By asking this question you have answered it for *yourself* at any rate. “Take heed to thyself”—and pray for those whom you think are not acting as you feel they should.

*A.H.P., Shepherd's Bush.* The question “Where art thou?” was obviously not asked by GOD for His information, but that fallen Adam might realize where *he* was. Tract enclosed by you is a Pentecostal effusion, therefore very earnest, but going somewhat beyond Scripture.

## THOUGHT

The Thessalonians had received two things by means of the Word, the service of a living and true God and the attitude of waiting for the Lord Jesus. He is a *true* God, not hiding from man his state nor the character of God Himself. With Him we enter into the communion of life. All of them were entirely uninformed as to the details of the coming of the Lord, but these Thessalonians waited for the Lord from heaven and that was enough to transform their lives. These two things, the service of God and waiting for the Lord, bring forth wonderful fruits in practical life, (1 Thess. i. 3), they were realities for the Thessalonians. This was the first love. The world knew about these things, not because the Thessalonians *spoke* about them, but because they *did* them.

## Good and Pleasant

BY THE EDITOR.

**S**OME things are good but not pleasant. Others are pleasant to the eye and to the palate but are not good for us. When, however, the blissful combination of goodness and pleasantness is achieved and presented for our enjoyment then like the Psalmist we exclaim : "Behold ! how good and how pleasant." (Psl. cxxxiii. i.) Unity amongst brethren is the theme, and extension of blessing the result.

The bald statement of the fact, good and pleasant as it is, must be illustrated, and striking figures of speech requisitioned to enhance its meaning and significance. "It is like the precious ointment" . . . it is "as the dew of Hermon" . . . . it is "there the LORD commanded the blessing."

Thus with two striking figures, the first from the sanctuary at the solemn moment when the perfumed oil used at the consecration of the high priest spread itself over the garments and diffused its fragrance, so it is said does brotherly concord, "brethren dwelling together in unity" extend an ever-widening gracious influence.

The second figure is from the temple of Nature where every whit also speaks of God's glory. "As the dew of Hermon . . . the mountains of Zion." In the usage of Old Testament imagery this second figure is suggestive of both freshness "as the dew," and strength "as the mountains." Also it is a well-known fact that the dews of Hermon were exceptionally abundant.

Whatever the undoubted application and fulfilment of this tiny but invaluable pearl of a Psalm to Israel repentant and returning to everlasting joy and gladness as a nation, its practical teaching to-day is that where brethren are dwelling together in unity there the sweet perfume of divine favour and the abundant dew of refreshing grace will manifest itself in a blessing commanded by the LORD.

May our GOD graciously prosper all that makes for visible godly unity among all that call upon the Name of the LORD out of a pure heart.

## The Sisters

BY QUARTUS.

**Q**UARTUS as his name suggests (cf. Rom. xvi. 23) is a brother, but one not unappreciative of the value of the prayers, patience and labours of the Sisters.

It is a commonplace to speak of the "brethren," and, of course, in the fullest sense the "brethren" as a term descriptive of the children of GOD includes the "sisters." "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female : for ye are all one in CHRIST JESUS." (Gal. iii. 28.)

Yet the "Sisters" in spite of their more subordinate position in the church, often equal and frequently excel the "brothers" in devotion, devotedness and zeal for the things of the LORD. This never seems to get the recognition it deserves, being taken for granted by brothers in general.

One remarked to the writer a short while ago when the subject was referred to : "Ah, you see women are naturally more religiously inclined, more spiritually minded than men."

Whether they are naturally so or not is beside the point, the fact being that Christian women compare very favourably with their brethren in this respect.

In the New Testament this is clearly marked both in the Gospels and in the Epistles. In the gospel by St. Luke what illuminating references are made to women disciples of our LORD in the days of His flesh.

In chapter viii. 2, we are introduced to "certain women which had been healed" by Him. In verse 3, to women which ministered unto Him of their substance ; in chapter xxiii. 49, 55, "women that followed him" ; that mourned Him at the Cross ; that were messengers of His resurrection, chapter xxiv. 10.

All the Evangelists refer to the loving loyalty and devotion to our LORD on the part of these women disciples. Comparing St. Matthew xxvii. 56 ; xxviii. ; St. Mark xv. 40 ; St. John xx. we note the mention by name of some of

these Mary Magdalene, Mary, mother of James and Joses, Salome, Joanna, Susannah, *and many others*, to say nothing of the blessed Mother of the LORD whom all generations shall call blessed, and Mary of Bethany also.

What a picture of devotion and devotedness these holy women present, all remembered by their discipleship to Him Who is Lord and Master of us all. Each in her measure and degree of opportunity brought love's offering of a humble, lowly, loving service. They differed in character, circumstances and temperament. Joanna the wife of Herod's steward and Martha of Bethany were doubtless as unlike as Mary Magdalene and the wife of Zebedee, but loving loyalty to the One Whom they had followed gave a unity of expression, and remains an inspiration for our Sisters to-day. "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women" sang David, eulogising his departed friend Jonathan, but the love of "the women which followed Him" was women's love in the highest. Well might a Victorian poet say of Mary Magdalene when comparing her with the Apostolic band :—

"Not *she* with traitorous kiss her Master stung,  
Not *she* denied Him with unfaithful tongue,  
*She*, when Apostles fled, could dangers brave,  
Last at His Cross, and earliest at His grave."

Space prevents more than a passing reference to a "Sister" in Acts ix. 37, but this stands out clearly for the encouragement and imitation of our "Sisters" that she was "a disciple," "full of good works," and "alms deeds," whose untimely decease caused a deep sense of loss, so beneficent had her life been. When she is restored to life it becomes an occasion of great blessing, so widely spread had been her Christian influence.

The Apostle Paul, whom insubordinately-minded women have audaciously blamed because of his enunciation of rules for women in the assembly, was one who valued the "Sisters" in their place and work above many, probably all. In that wonderful chapter full of Christian love, kindest regards, and loving remembrances (Rom. xvi.)

'Phœbe our sister' has first mention, she is a servant of the Church at Cenchrea; Priscilla a matron; Mary of whom we know nothing but her name, yet regarded by the Apostle as a real labourer for the LORD; Tryphena and Tryphosa, "both almost certainly" says Dr. Moule "female slaves"; Persis a "beloved woman" who toiled hard in the LORD; the mother of Rufus indicated, but unnamed; Julia, and the sister of brother Nereus. If to these we add Lydia, the first European convert of the Apostle, and Euodia and Syntyche of the same Philippian assembly, we can form some idea of the devotion to CHRIST and devotedness to His service and His servants of the "Sisters" in those days of long ago.

*(To be continued D.V.)*

## Deliverance

*(Read Romans vii. 24.)*

WHEN a soul rests in the simplicity of faith on the finished work of Him Who glorified GOD by His death and is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, that soul has *complete* forgiveness of sins and has eternal life. The Christian, since the SPIRIT of GOD dwells in him, is no longer "in the flesh," but "in the SPIRIT" (Rom. viii. 9). He is in a new position before GOD, he is no longer in Adam, but in CHRIST, and "there is now no condemnation" for those who are "in CHRIST." "If any man be in CHRIST there is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17).

But, though we are no longer in the flesh, the old nature, the flesh, is still in us, and is beyond improvement. This is a lesson which every believer has to learn. Many learn this when they are converted, but most learn it afterwards. People usually think that GOD expects an improvement or a sanctification of the flesh. Flesh, however, is and will ever be *incapable of improvement*. Therefore GOD gives us a *new* nature, a *new* life and also a *new* object for this life.

Deliverance can be wrought only by death, not literal death, of course, but by our *death with Christ*. Scripture



speaks not only of the death of CHRIST *for* us but also of our death *with* Him as a result of which we also shall live with Him. (Rom. vi. 8.) The former is set forth typically in the Red Sea, the latter in the Jordan. Scripture says we are "dead to sin" and "our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. vi. 2, 6.) All the power and authority of sin is broken, annulled. We come under a new LORD and MASTER, and are no longer the slaves of sin to obey the lusts of the body. "He that is dead is freed from sin." In the eyes of GOD and in the judgment of faith he is for ever done with sin. His Substitute, with Whom he is identified in death, has been "made sin" on the cross and so "died unto sin once," but in that he liveth, he liveth unto GOD. (v. 10.)

This truth, like every other one of course, has its practical consequences for believers. Immediately after it is written: "Likewise *reckon* ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD." The power of sin over us is broken, and we must never again allow it to reign in our mortal bodies, nor yield our members to it as instruments of unrighteousness. Where shall we find the energy for this, since there is no power in ourselves? "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but *under grace*" (vv. 12-14).

We are dead, however, not only to sin but also to *the law*. The apostle treats of this in Rom vii. 1-6. The law was given for men in the flesh. The believer, however, is taken out of this state and he is no longer "in the flesh." He can say: "When we *were* in the flesh . . ." and "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held." After he has become dead to the law by the body of CHRIST, he belongs to Another, to Him who is raised from the dead, that he should bring forth fruit *to* GOD. It is also said that we are crucified unto the world and dead to its elements. Thus the apostle Paul would boast only in the cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, by Whom the world was crucified unto him and he unto the world; (Gal. vi. 14), and he writes to the Colossians:

“Wherefore if ye be dead with CHRIST from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?” “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with CHRIST in GOD.” (Col. ii. 20 ; iii. 3). The believer is not only delivered from the dominion of sin and the slavery of the law, but also from the world and all its ordinances which religious men would lay upon him. To him, they are simply the “rudiments of this world.”

What deliverance ! Who could have brought it about but He, the great Victor over sin, death, the world and Satan ! CHRIST has brought us into liberty, *not liberty to the flesh for lawlessness and licence*, but the blessed liberty of the new man in order to bring forth fruit to Him Who has created him in true righteousness and holiness. Let us, therefore, stand fast in *this* liberty and not be brought again under any yoke of bondage. We are shewn how seriously we must go to work by the word which says : “Mortify therefore your members which are upon earth,” that is, pronounce sentence of death on all that is of the flesh. “Put off all these ; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth . . . seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds.” (Col. iii. 5-10.)

The apostle says, as a freedman of the LORD : “I am crucified with CHRIST : nevertheless I live, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the SON of GOD, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Gal. ii. 20.) This new life requires a new object, Who is the SON of GOD, Who loved me and gave Himself for me, and what in heaven or earth can draw out the heart more than such an Object ?

In addition to this new life and its new object, the Christian possesses new *power*. It is not enough to know that I am dead with CHRIST and am so made free from all in which I was held, nor that I have something new and everlasting in place of the old which was impure and temporal, I need a spiritual power to make me able to enjoy this new Object. If I find in CHRIST the One Who has taken hold of my heart’s affections and Who sustains my

faith and shapes and forms my life and character to suit *Himself*, it is the HOLY SPIRIT Who lives in me, Who is the new power which ever turns my gaze to the LORD, arouses the motions of the new life giving them strength and direction, and meets the spiritual needs of the new man.

In Romans viii. we hear of this new power. Why is there no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS? The apostle says: "For the law of the SPIRIT of life in CHRIST JESUS hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (v. 2.) The HOLY SPIRIT is the SPIRIT of life and of liberty—under law there was a spirit of bondage—and He dwells in the believer. He works in the new nature and, "led" by Him, we are able to mortify the deeds of the body and "in newness of life" to serve GOD in piety and fear. "The fruit of the SPIRIT is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." (Gal. v. 22.)

The SPIRIT, Whom we have received, is also a "SPIRIT of Sonship" Who puts into the mouth and heart of the believer (a "son" of GOD) the cry: "ABBA, FATHER." GOD would have us walk in the consciousness of this relationship at all times.

This, then, is "deliverance," a well-known, but not always well-understood, word among us. It is a wonderful and blessed fact and is not merely a setting free from all that held us in the fear of bondage but is joined up with the truth of a new life, a new nature, a new Object and a new power. All these and much more are ours in the wondrous place into which GOD in limitless grace has brought us.

Shall we not keep our high calling before our minds and seek to realise it in our walk and ways?

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Paul walked in the light of judgment and in the power of love (2 Cor. v. 10-14). Too often our worship presents only the *work* by which we have been redeemed and made perfect before God, or even, on a lower plane, it speaks of us as the objects of the work instead of making much of *the person* who accomplished it.

## Some Experiences in Christian Work

### 4.—*District Visiting.*

**D**ISTRICT Visiting has been well described as being “door-step” work. It is spiritual spade work, and some stories, taken at random as to dates may interest and awaken prayerful sympathy, and encourage others to undertake this branch of Christian work.

Unemployment, age and infirmity, sickness and bereavement, make the visiting a somewhat strenuous business. To move, as one has done, from the bedside of a chronic invalid, to the next house where a man is lying dead and try to console the bereaved family, then off over the way to sign pension papers for one who could neither read nor write, living all alone in advanced years ; then to call on a sick man and be told, “He is not bad enough for you to see him yet ; perhaps he may get better ; but *if* he gets worse, I’ll send for you in time” ; and then to visit one in his last hour, who had lived a notoriously bad life, and to be prevented from saying one word about CHRIST by his own wife and mother because they don’t want him disturbed—all this burdens the spirit with a sense of one’s own utter helplessness, and of the tremendous need.

A paralysed woman, unable to use her hands in any way, appeals to the visitor as to why the LORD has allowed it to happen to her : and one soon feels how different this branch of work is from mere preaching and teaching.

“Who is sufficient for these things ?” is the cry of the district visitor whenever he or she visits the district properly.

But wonderful openings for testimony to the grace of GOD and to the love and compassion of the blessed SAVIOUR *are* afforded, and much encouragement invariably follows from this side of the LORD’s work.

Many a story of earlier days spent under happier auspices has been volunteered when once the master-key of sympathy has unlocked the hidden reserve of some lonely or misunderstood heart.

An urgent request to visit a dying man in the local hospital was sent by his wife who said she could not bear that he should die without religion.

On reaching the hospital ward, the nurse remarked : "Just in time, sir, he is very low."

I passed inside the screen drawn around his bed and there found him lying with closed eyes and apparently almost gone. The laboured breathing and other signs showed the end to be very near. The natural instinct of every believing child of God led me to lift my heart to God in a swift prayer for help and guidance. It seemed a hopeless case, for the man was very old, and apparently unconscious. Then into my mind came the thought of saying the twenty-third Psalm. I bent over and whispered it slowly and distinctly in his ear ; but no sign of having even heard it appeared ; until, on beginning the fourth verse, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil," although his eyes still remained closed, his lips seemed to be trying to form the words with me, and so continued until the end of the psalm. Then came a hoarse whisper : "My mother taught me that." He rallied a little for a while, and I gathered that he truly trusted in CHRIST as his SAVIOUR, and had even been in fellowship, but drink had been the cause of his backsliding. He appeared truly penitent and desired to return to the LORD, which I am thankful to believe he really did. All visiting, however, is not of this character, nor ends so satisfactorily. Having said and done all one can, there is, oftentimes, the haunting sense that it is of no avail. For some who appeared to be true penitents on what they feared was their deathbed, upon recovering flung all their profession to the winds.

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On one occasion when visiting a man whom the doctor had given up, his wife who was somewhat impatiently watching for the end at the other side of the bed, suddenly exclaimed : "I ain't used to this sort of thing. He's dying fast, ain't he ? Well, will you be so kind as to arrange about the coffin and bury him proper, sir ?"

The poor man, suffering from cancer in his throat, could hear quite well, but couldn't speak; imagine his feelings as his heartless spouse so briskly made his funeral arrangements. He did not die that night, but lived for several months longer. The smell of that awful room; the drink-laden air; the bluebottle flies, and worse, the gasping, choking patient, and the heartless, maudlin wife, recalls the awful feeling of nausea on that stifling summer night with window fast closed, and a big fire burning in the grate. While reading, praying and watching there, one perspired almost as in a Turkish bath. In earlier days the man had been associated with a well-known brother in aggressive Christian work, but drink and bad companions had dragged him down into the very gutter. He professed repentance and faith in CHRIST before he passed away—it appeared to be genuine, but that only the Day of CHRIST will show.

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It is not only close contact with depressing sights and scenes that makes District Visiting sometimes a little exhausting, but the ever-recurring question put by anxious parents and friends: "Why does the ALMIGHTY allow it?" Moreover, vague pious platitudes and misty generalities are of no earthly use when hearts are broken by bereavement and minds perplexed by bewildering misfortunes. One confesses to having sat dumb at times, and to having reproached oneself for long after for utter inability to enter into the troubles intelligently, and, so, sympathetically. The servant of the LORD learns grimly what may so often be spoken glibly: "I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing—an unprofitable servant at best."

One also enjoys, or endures, the unthinking criticism of one's Christian brethren who take occasion to remark: "You don't appear to have much to do just now, and plenty of time to do it in, visiting your friends here and there." They just *do not know, nor understand*, but One does. So do not be downhearted in this obscure Christian work even if motives are misjudged and actions misunderstood. The writer has enjoyed, or had to swallow,

a full share of this *tonic mixture* but through God's grace still survives.

One danger to one's own spiritual sensitiveness from being much engaged in this kind of work must be noted. Even under the happiest auspices in visiting, to read, say the 23rd Psalm, or, and, the 14th chapter of St. John by special request some four or five times by sick beds in one afternoon, and to have engaged in prayer the same number of times, perforce using almost the same words on each occasion may tend to its becoming a perfunctory recital of sacred words. This repetition, however, is frequently the case, and cannot well be avoided. Hence need of much prayer.

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With a few more actual cases of District Visiting this already overlong paper must close. They are a very mixed but truly characteristic batch of visits paid by the writer.

A young man who had been visited for weeks, on almost the last visit said he had saved a little money, and as he was dying, wished me to help him make his will. The tenement in which he lived was about as poor as one had ever been in, yet the people were not living in poverty, but his request certainly surprised me.

In the same street an elderly woman noticing that her visitor was rather "chesty" owing to a recent cold, insisted upon his sampling her home-made cough mixture, *which he did*, before she would listen to anything.

A lonely old man with a grudge against some of his nearest relatives always insisted upon explaining it in great detail first, after which he would give his attention to the message one sought to deliver.

A young woman who had for several years made the Christian profession and lived a consistent life gives a sadder touch to the picture of District Visiting. Having absented herself for some time from the meetings at the Hall where she was in fellowship, the writer called at her house. "I am going to give it all up," she remarked, "I've got to look after my future, and shall never do any good for myself by staying there."

By "there" she meant the Hall where once she had made a confession of CHRIST as her SAVIOUR; by "good for myself" she meant "get married." Her snare was a godless young man who later turned out to be a very bad lot. But she was determined to take her future into her own hands, and upon reminding her that it is always safer to trust our future to GOD Who does care for His children and will do the very best for all who truly confide in Him, she simply replied: "I'm going to look after my own future." The sequel is solemn and significant, but literally true. She married this worthless man; had a few years of hopeless drudgery; a period of hardship through unemployment, and a lingering illness at the end.

Visiting her during this period, gleams of better things once again appeared to cross her mind, and then came the end. Standing in that comfortless room with her stricken parents dumb with sorrow, and the worthless husband for whom she had surrendered what matters most, her words came back with poignancy and sadness, "I've got to look after my own future," and one felt how incapable any of us really are as to this.

That she was taken home to be "with the LORD" when she was "absent from the body" the writer had no reason to doubt. During her illness signs of real restoration of soul were manifest, but what misery would have been avoided, what real happiness would have been enjoyed, had she been wise enough to have trusted her future to the One Who could indeed have looked after it—and would have done so. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct Thy paths. Lean not unto thine own understanding."

\* \* \* \* \*

One more story of a brighter character may be permitted. A tiny child in an isolation hospital, down with scarlet fever, and a distracted mother begging the writer to visit her, forms the basis of this story.

"They won't allow us in to see her," she pleaded, "and she is too small to write to us, and she can't read if



we wrote to her. Will you just go and see her, please, so we can know how she is getting on?"

The mother, who was in such obvious distress, the child being her first and little more than a baby, had herself been one of our Sunday School children, and naturally one could not refuse her request.

It was a journey of twelve miles, but with a nicely-dressed doll from one of our sisters and a box of chocolates begged from another, the writer went to see little Joan.

She was very pleased, and, when leaving, one promised to come again and left to the accompaniment of waving hands from all the little patients in the ward. The sequel was the pathetically amusing part; for a Bank Holiday intervening, the parents spent the day in going to the hospital and walking round the walls, speculating as to which part of it their little girl was in. Arriving at last once more at the entrance they enquired the latest news of the child, and were told she was making progress. The mother broke down completely at leaving, and just then the medical superintendent came through the gates. He sympathetically enquired as to the cause of her grief, and after a moment turned to the porter instructing him to telephone the sister that little Joan had a visitor and might be brought out on the balcony for a few moments.

He then told the mother to go up the drive and wait at the bottom of the steps leading to the balcony, saying she might just wave to her little girl. Mother arrived first, and after a few moments the door opened and a nurse brought the little one to the balcony. She had told her that a visitor had come to see her. As the child's eyes fell upon the figure of her mother standing, her little face clouded for a second and she exclaimed, "Oh! Mummy, you?—I thought it was Mr. Turner."

The mother subsequently told me that her feelings could better be understood than described, although of course, delighted to see her child looking so well.

\* \* \* \* \*

*(Some of the incidents here related are taken from my book 'Straightsmouth Stories'.)*

W. G. T.

## The Old Covenant and the New

(Continued from page 48.)

THE old covenant has been broken for ever by Israel's guilt, and the new one, promised of GOD, is the only hope for the earthly people of GOD, as also for the dwellers of the earth in the day to come.

Meanwhile other counsels of GOD are being fulfilled. When our LORD as the MESSIAH celebrated the Passover for the last time with the little remnant of Israel, He broke off all connection with this earth. *Thenceforth* He would not drink of the fruit of the vine; but turned the eyes of His disciples to better days when they would share His pleasure and drink *new* with Him the wine of joy, and not they only, but also *many* others with them. Without seeking to define these others, the words of the LORD indicate that, *besides* Israel, many shall share in the wonderful results and fruits of His Death. This Death has made a complete breach with the past; but the foundations of the new covenant were laid by it, and it brought to Israel, and to the nations, an unconditional forgiveness of sins.

At the end of days, when GOD in view of "the gifts and calling of God which are without repentance" will turn again to Israel and will bring about the fulfilment of the glorious promises of Jer. xxxi. the peoples of the earth will enjoy the blessings of the new covenant with Israel. The whole earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD. At present, GOD is fulfilling other counsels, He is calling another people which does not stand *in relationship* with CHRIST as the King of Israel but with Him as the glorified SON of Man at His right hand. By His SPIRIT He is gathering out a bride for His Beloved, "the wife of the LAMB." *Heavenly* things and relationships are revealed. The wonderful "mystery of CHRIST," hidden from the ages, unfolds itself. Out of *every* nation of earth, Jew and Gentile, the activity of the SPIRIT is now forming one *body*, the church (assembly), which shall be united with its Head, the glorified CHRIST, above.

This body, the church, is *not* that to which the new covenant belongs. This cannot belong to it, for it stands in totally different relationship to GOD and to CHRIST from that of Israel and the believers of the last days. The individual members of this body are *children* of GOD, who by the SPIRIT cry : "ABBA, FATHER !" They are made fellows with CHRIST, "the Firstborn of many brethren," are the heavenly people of GOD, and enter into the sanctuary on high. They stand on the *ground* of the new covenant, for "the blood of the new covenant" was shed for them, but they do not stand in covenant-relationship with GOD ; blessings of an entirely different and higher sort are theirs. The MEDIATOR of the new covenant, as the RISEN ONE, is now gone into the Sanctuary on high, and the heavenly things themselves whose patterns were seen in the old covenant are now made known to believers. The veil is rent and we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of JESUS, by a new and living way. There we are now already blessed in and with CHRIST and there our portion lies. When the new covenant is actually brought about, the High Priest, Who is now hidden for Israel, will return out of the Sanctuary and will lead His people *down here* into the blessings of the new covenant.

After what has been said it will not be difficult to understand the words of the LORD in connection with the cup at the LAST SUPPER : "This is My blood of the new testament (covenant), which is shed for many" (Matt. xxvi. 28 ; Mark xiv. 24), or as in Luke xxii. 20, "This cup is the new testament in My blood which is shed for you." A better liberty and salvation on an immeasurably better foundation should from that time be the lot of the disciples, than that which the legal covenant with its conditions could ever offer.

In closing, we would now refer to the second question : In how much was Paul a minister of the new covenant ? (2 Cor. iii. 6). The answer has been given in what we have already considered. Paul and his fellow labourers did not stand on the old ground of "the letter, which kills," but on that of "the Spirit which maketh alive." That which the old, legal system could never bring to perfection,

was now made known in the gospel of grace to all men. The dead and death-producing letter had given place to the SPIRIT, i.e. the *true* thoughts of GOD, which lay hidden in the outward forms of the old covenant. In place of the service of "condemnation" the service of "righteousness" had come in. Although the new covenant in a literal sense will be first set up for the two houses of Israel, *its spiritual principles are already set before us to-day in Christianity*, and the Apostle Paul made these principles known.

It is also worthy of note that the word "new covenant" is without the article in the original language, so that the phrase can be translated: "Who has also made us competent as new-covenant ministers," i.e. Who has bestowed on us competency as ministers in this new covenant order of things, in the spiritual sense.

*Trans. T.H.*

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"The call of the Church is apart from the world, to do service in the light and strength of the HOLY GHOST, and to maintain in special spiritual grace, testimony to a 'rejected and heavenly JESUS.'

All within and around us is contrary to this.

Such a call can be upheld, such a dispensation maintained, only in the direct grace of the SPIRIT, ministered to elect vessels and filling them with the freshness and apprehension of the truth. No ordered service or course of fleshly ordinances can at all answer this end; no transmitted office can at all fill out and discharge its duties; no such authority is owned by it.

In man, there is ever a tendency to the mere ways of nature and to the course of the world, and in order to sustain a thing spiritual and living like the Church, the natural way, yea, necessary way (save that GOD is sovereign), is by a fresh putting forth of light and power to revive it again and again, that there may be still a testimony to the power of GOD and to the ways and services of a living house, so that the coal may not be quenched."

J. G. BELLETT

## A Wedding Address

(at Plymouth)

WE are assisting to-day at the setting-up of a Christian home. The very word "home" is a characteristically English one, around which all earth's sweetest thoughts cluster. A house is a place where one may store furniture, and yet never even approximate to a real home. But home is a place to which the heart instinctively turns when absent from it; a place where one is understood; a place where mutual love reigns, where mutual considerateness is the rule, and where mutual comfort is experienced. The highest character of hospitality to friends is usually prefaced by the invitation to *make yourself thoroughly at home*. Is it not so?

But a Christian home has a specially happy character. It may, and should always, be a place of heaven on earth for at least two people. It rests with our friends who are to-day desirous of linking their young lives under God's blessing to see that they make it so.

A Christian home, in its best sense, is a fresh piece of territory fenced off, and kept for CHRIST, in a world which still rejects Him as SAVIOUR and LORD. Within this sweetly sacred human enclosure, His word is law, His Name is revered, and His love is treasured, by the home makers.

The associations of such a home are threefold, happiness, harmony and helpfulness being all found within its walls. The happiness is based upon mutual love, for "men ought to love their wives," says the HOLY SPIRIT through the Apostle Paul (Ephes. v. 25), "even as CHRIST loved the Church, "and as their own bodies" (v. 28); and "so love his wife even as himself" (v. 33); "giving honour unto the wife." (1 Peter iii. 7.) A loveless Christian home is a tragedy, being a dishonour to the Name of Him Whose first sign of His glory was given at a marriage, and also a disgrace to those who have made it such. Even under the sterner rule of the law and prophets, "*the wife*

*of thy youth . . . thy companion and the wife of thy covenant* is referred to more than once, giving a glimpse of God's thought of the marriage tie. (Mal. ii. 14, 15.) Happiness based upon mutual love, and harmony based upon mutual thoughtfulness necessarily go together. "Dwell with them according to knowledge . . . and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered," says the Apostle Peter, who was himself a married man, speaking by inspiration and experience. Mutual thoughtfulness allied to mutual love leads to bearing and forbearing, since neither of the parties is perfect, whatever each may think of the other on this great day in their lives.

Mutual duties recognised will, however, go far to make for the helpfulness which completes the trio with harmony and happiness. *His* duties at business in the world of men with all their harassing irritations, and *her* duties in the home with the monotony of what may easily become the routine of daily drudgery, so far from detracting from the enjoyment of a Christian home may really enhance it. He returns home and slams the door behind him on entering, not in anger but rather in sheer relief at being home again where he is loved, understood and considered. If only wives sometimes realised this mood, things might be even happier than they are. She has had a lonely, somewhat humdrum existence during his absence, but he is home now, and how nice it is to be together again. This joy increases when in God's providence little strangers arrive to become permanent residents. Home, then, may become even a reflection of the Home above.

Now for the last word: our LORD's first sign of His glory was given at a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and since "JESUS CHRIST is the SAME yesterday, to-day and forever," He still turns the water of earthly joy into the wine of heavenly bliss by His welcomed presence in the home. Instituted by God in paradise; irradiated by CHRIST's presence and blessing at Cana of Galilee; marriage is by the HOLY SPIRIT in Holy Scripture also invested with a sacredness most solemn and tender, being

used as a symbol of the relations subsisting between God and Israel—CHRIST and His Church.

May the blessing of GOD, FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT rest upon those who have to-day linked their lives under His gracious care, since GOD will never withdraw His guiding hand, nor His protecting presence from His people whatever the circumstances through which He calls them to pass.

W.G.T.

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## Some Gems from Paul's Autobiography

WE know Paul better than any other character mentioned in the Divine Library. In addition to certain external advantages, including the possession of the Roman citizenship, there was in Paul a wonderful combination of contrasted natural qualities. He was both man of thought and man of action. He united a warm heart with a cool brain. He combined splendid courage with remarkable adaptability.

Into this exceptionally gifted human vessel the LORD poured exceptional grace. He was called in an exceptional way to do an exceptional work. He was first in privilege, and first in suffering.

So that we are quite prepared to realise that what to Paul was experience, to us is often largely an ideal. It is necessary to bear this in mind as we take a brief glance at some gems in the apostle's biography.

*"To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* (Phil. i. 21.)

Paul meant that CHRIST was the source, the power, the inspiration of his life. His one aim in life was to serve Him, to advance His cause, and to promote His glory. He had no thought for anything else.

When we think of ourselves we perceive the gap that separates Paul's experience from our own. Yet the difference is not in kind, but in degree. Can any of us say that our consecration is quite complete? Are there not

often reaches in the life where the LORD's will is not done as it should be? Do not natural interests take up too much of our time, and thought, and money?

Again, the apostle could say truthfully that for him to die was gain. For not only was he intensely spiritually-minded, but his life was a daily martyrdom, and at the time of dictating these words he was a prisoner in Rome.

We, on our side, naturally and spontaneously regard death as a foe to be staved off as long as possible. For death to the Christian means loss as well as gain. Death means the end of all the natural joys that are bound up with normal existence in the time-state; it means passing out of the material world into the spiritual world to live in conditions of existence that we cannot now properly understand. Death means, too, the end of all opportunities for serving the LORD and for growing in grace *in this scene*; it is the end of the Christian's probation: nothing more can be done to influence the verdict of the judgment seat which he awaits.

On the other hand, death means gain. It means release from the sin, temptation, infirmities and limitations of the time-state; and it means a closer fellowship with the LORD and with things spiritual than is possible down here.

*"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content."* (Phil. iv. 11.)

One of the prominent features of the Epistle to the Philippians is that of Christian experience. Apostle though he was, Paul was a learner in the school of CHRIST throughout his life. He had learnt to prove the LORD's grace as being sufficient for any situation. And we, too, are learners in the Divine school. Our Instructor never makes a mistake, and never will turn us out of His school, however slow has been our progress in the things of God. On our side, we learn by observing—with the eye not of the critic but rather of the learner—by meditating; by suffering; by loving; and by doing. And the grand objective of all our instruction is that we may learn CHRIST.

There is a false contentment, of which we need to beware. Is there not a real danger of being satisfied, in



a bad sense, with the knowledge of our perfect standing in CHRIST; of a self-satisfied complacency because we “know the word,” and are “strong on doctrine”? In the Epistle of progress we are urged to “go on,” and Peter’s last word is an exhortation to grow in grace, and the exhortation is not confined to those who are young in years or grace.

But there is a true contentment, the serenity of spirit that accompanies real godliness. It belongs to those who have learnt to appreciate the wealth of blessing that resides in CHRIST for them, and who have been Divinely taught to appropriate that wealth day by day to meet their varied needs.

*“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” (2 Tim. iv. 7.)*

Paul was a “bonnie fighter” in the best sense of the phrase. His militant spirit was refreshed by combat with false teaching, evil principles, and the forces of darkness. As a spiritual athlete, he had run the race, and had run to such good purpose that he was certain that the crown of victory awaited him, for he had kept the faith delivered to him to conserve and to propagate.

And we, too, should seek to be both conservative and progressive. We are to keep on the lines, but *we are to keep moving along those lines*. Upon the firm foundation the edifice is to be built, storey upon storey, until it is complete. If one leg of a pair of compasses is kept firmly fixed in the paper, the other leg can be stretched to the utmost reach, and a perfect circle will be described. We are to be firm at the centre, and free or flexible at the circumference.

Our desire is that we may know more of the spirit of that giant-souled genius who was possessed to such an extraordinary degree with the SPIRIT of CHRIST.

E.A.

## A Blue Ribbon or a Blue Lace

By E. SIBTHORPE

(*Numbers xv: 37 to end*)

(An Object Lesson at a Women's Meeting illustrated  
by a long blue ribbon and a blue lace)

**T**HE Children of Israel were commanded by Moses to put a ribbon of blue at the bottom of their garments so that when they looked down they could always see it. This was to remind them that they were holy unto the LORD, for it spoke of what they had to be for God.

He had been so good to them as a people, hearing their cry when they were in bondage in Egypt, delivering them from their enemies, and caring for them all the way along. He wanted them to look at this ribbon of blue and remember that they were to be a holy people in their walk and ways. "That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God." If you know anything of the Children of Israel, you will know how they failed in this.

Now let us think about ourselves. There is the law of God: it is holy, just and good. Have we kept it? Do we not know that we have broken it again, and again, and again? Sometimes we may wish to be different. Have not you ever thought about God and wanted to be different? Wanted to make a change in your life? Has not the thought of the LORD's Return sometimes pulled you up to think, "My life is not right"? You tried to be different—tried hard, perhaps, but failed. I certainly have, many times.

But, alas! So many temptations come to people. Drink, dishonesty, lying, to name but a few. What homes are ruined through drink! What a curse it is! Is the ribbon of blue any real good to a drunkard? You say to a drunkard, "You must give up the drink." Quite good advice! for strong drink is an absolute curse. But giving up strong drink never saved anyone yet, while it is, of course, very wise to give up such drinking.

Then there is dishonesty—a dishonest person is a very

unpleasant neighbour. But realising you are dishonest and trying to give up being so will not save you.

Take a person who is given to telling untruths. They may look at the ribbon of blue and say "God hates lies," and may resolve to try to tell the truth in future, but this reformation will not save them, for "God requireth that which is past."

Some people spend hours talking about their neighbours' failures—what a curse these people can be, but while it is all to the good if they give up running down other people, this will not save them.

My friends, we all know our own sins; we know our besetting sins and it is quite right to do our utmost to overcome them. But if we overcome them all, that will never save us.

This ribbon of blue tells me God requires me to be holy, yet however hard I try I have found out I can only fail. Have you?

"No reformation will suffice,  
'Tis life poor sinners need."

There was only One Who ever came up to the standard, but that was God's Son the Lord from heaven. He *was* holy. He never displeased God, but kept all the commandments perfectly. In Him was no evil heart, but each of us has an evil heart. We by nature are not fit for God, and are quite unable to make ourselves fit for God. So I take this blue ribbon and fold it up and put it away.

Is anything else for us, since "we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God"? Is there any hope for us? Let us think now of the blue lace or laces used in connection with the high priest and the people.

#### THE LACE OF BLUE

When the high priest went into the presence of God, he wore garments of glory and beauty. There was a breastplate and an ephod, which was a full garment fastened on the two shoulders. (Ex. xxiv. 4.) It was made of gold, which speaks of divine righteousness: blue, the heavenly colour, and scarlet, which speaks of

earthly glory, and lastly, the fine-twined linen, which speaks of practical righteousness. The ephod itself speaks to us of the LORD JESUS. How He was tried in the fire at the cross, and how the righteousness of God was displayed and vindicated there. There was no sin in Him. He was the holy, heavenly One, and the blue speaks to us of that. Then the purple—the kingly colour, shown in His majesty, as when He said, “No man taketh My life from Me; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” None else could say that. Or when in answer to Pilate’s wondering exclamation, “Art Thou a King, then?” JESUS answered, “Thou sayest that I am a King,” meaning quite definitely, ‘I am what thou sayest.’ Scarlet speaks, too, of earthly glory of the time when He reigns gloriously here, for He will reign over this poor earth—poor no longer then; and lastly, fine-twined linen speaks of His practical righteousness, “Who did no sin neither was guile found in His mouth.”

On the breast of the high priest was the breastplate of judgment. It was set in precious stones, and on these stones were engraved the names of the Children of Israel. On the shoulders of the priest were two onyx stones in which also were engraved the names of the Children of Israel. The shoulder is the place of strength—it is where the Shepherd in the parable put the lost sheep when He had found it. The breastplate speaks of the fact that it was placed over the breast—the place of the affections, and here is God’s wonderful grace. Their names are on the breastplate, and the breastplate *is tied on to the ephod with the lace of blue*. The lace of blue was used to tie the breastplate securely to the ephod. So when the priest went in he was to wear the breastplate of judgment engraved on which were the names of the Children of Israel, yet securely tied to the ephod with the lace of blue. In his hand was the basin of the blood of the sacrifice which had been made. How precious that of which it speaks to a poor sinner like me. “*Not by the blood of bulls and of goats but by His own blood*”; “*redeemed by the precious blood of CHRIST*.”

The blue ribbon speaks of my responsibility to God; the blue lace fastens me on to CHRIST. “If any man be

in CHRIST, he is a new creature, old things are passed away and all things are become new." It is no longer a question of what I am for God, but it is now "What CHRIST is for me." It is not doing the best I can for God. I do not mean that we should not try to overcome our faults, but this gives no title to heaven. The question is, "Is your name written in heaven? Are you tied on, as it were, with *the lace of blue* to all that CHRIST is? Are you accepted in the Beloved?" "We have such an High Priest who is passed into the heavens."

He Who on earth for thirty and three years never once did sin, yet at the cross offered Himself without spot to God. And in those hours of darkness God laid the sins of all that believe on JESUS the spotless Sacrifice. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." But on the third day He rose without them, and lives in the presence of God for us to-day.

It is a wonderful thing to know that there is a Man in the glory that has me and every other real believer on His heart. It is not a question of whether I hold on. It is "Is He holding on to me?"

"He lives to God, He lives for me  
 A great High Priest for ever;  
 In highest heaven enthroned is He  
 Able to help and feel for me:  
 His power can fail me never.  
 Gone back to God,  
 Gone back for me,  
 His Home is mine forever:  
 The meaning of His work I see,  
 That I might, like Him, with Him be  
 In glory bright eternally,  
 To praise His name forever."

There was a man in Redruth when I was quite young who was brought to God through believing the gospel, and who came into the fellowship of God's people there. He was attacked with that terrible disease—cancer. It was in his throat; and towards the end of his life made speaking a very great difficulty. I shall never forget visiting him with my father.

A neighbour had just then been in to see him, and had asked the question, "John, have you got hold of Him?" With difficulty came the dying man's reply, "Yes, but 'tis very slight." "Oh, John," she said, "don't let go now, whatever you do; everything depends on your holding on now." He tried to speak, and after a time came these words, "The hold I have got on Him is so slight that I may leave go at any minute, *but if you only knew the grip He's got on me you'd know how safe I be.*"

He had his great High Priest holding him. Do you feel that same grip holding you? If you are unsaved, the LORD JESUS is here as you are thinking of this, and He says, "Come unto Me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Will you answer in the words of a hymn?

"I hear the words of love,  
I rest upon the blood,  
I see the mighty sacrifice  
*And I have peace with God.*"

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## Paul

### AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST

**I**N the remarkable revelation of the SAVIOUR to the apostle and in the appeal to him on the way to Damascus, there are two facts which lie at the root of his ministry and which exercised a profound influence on the character of his teachings and of his writings.

"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" By these few words the LORD reveals to the one whom He was going to make an apostle, that the assembly is united to Himself in such a way that it was one body with Him and also that, in persecuting the assembly, Saul was persecuting Himself; this great and precious truth had been hidden from the ages, and the epistles of the apostle bring out its value to the LORD and to His own. It tells us not only of the intimate union with the LORD of each one of those whom He has made His own by His death and whom He loves, but also of His love which brings

them together through the HOLY SPIRIT to make one whole, His Bride whom He *cherishes*.

There is another very important fact in the appeal and in the mission of the apostle Paul.

If he has revealed and developed the mystery of the assembly which had been specially committed to him, and which had been discovered to him in the words of the LORD's appeal to him, he has also had the duty, above all, of making known the Name of JESUS, the CHRIST, the SON of GOD to "the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

After speaking to him the words given above, the LORD adds: "It shall be told thee what thou must do." What must it have been to Saul, the late persecutor, to wait in anguish after these words? No doubt it was overwhelming to him who had thought to serve GOD in such remarkable zeal, to discover that he was the chief of sinners. What does he do? He prays; nothing is told us of his prayers, his supplications, or of the tears which he no doubt shed. For three days he remains without eating or drinking and having no light, without or within, to illuminate his blindness. The LORD makes him wait in an attitude of prayer and fasting, until He sends to him Ananias to whom He makes known what He will do with the one who, until then, had been a persecutor of the saints:

"He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

*To make known the Name of CHRIST* to the ends of the earth was the mission given to the apostle. The Name which he had blasphemed was to be spread abroad and exalted throughout the whole world by him. To speak of Him, of His love, His humility, His grace, His glory would be his portion throughout his life. Scarcely had he recovered his sight and been baptised, than he "preached JESUS in the synagogues, saying that He is the SON of GOD." "From Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum," he says, "I have fully preached the gospel of CHRIST." (Rom. xv. 19.) "Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel."

Unceasingly he carried on his labour of love in journey-

ings and in prison. Beaten, persecuted, stoned, he was never ashamed of the gospel of CHRIST, and no human power, nor the trickery of the enemy could stop him. Let us thank God for the faithfulness and the power with which the great apostle carried out his mission, which has gone out to the whole world, across the centuries, until our day. He was the bondman, the servant, the apostle, and the ambassador of CHRIST completely arrayed and filled by Him.

Reading his epistles, one is struck by the fact that, from beginning to end, the name of Christ is continually repeated so as to find its way into our hearts. He associates it with all that is past, present and future, in relation to the counsels of God and the life of the believer.

He makes to shine forth the glory of the person of CHRIST in His humiliation, in His exaltation, in all the perfections of the perfect Man, in Whom God found His delight, the example of love, of faith and of humility.

He turns our hearts and our thoughts to JESUS in order to bring us down to Him in His humility and to lift us up to Him in His glory. He desires that CHRIST *should dwell in our hearts by faith*, that we should be rooted in love in order to know the love of CHRIST which passes all understanding. He sees us clothed with CHRIST, in CHRIST and CHRIST in us. He would have us look on Him with unveiled face. He removes every veil which could hide or obscure Him from our eyes, to the end that we should be transformed from glory into glory in His image. He has set Him forth, as he says to the Galatians, crucified among you, He presents Him risen now and in glory seated in the heavenly places at the right hand of God, awaiting the moment when He will be able to take up His own to have them for ever with Himself. The apostle sees Him there in all His beauty, crowned with glory and honour, and he directs our gaze to Him in order that we also should see him there. He bids us look up unto JESUS the Author and Finisher of faith. By the "Breaking of Bread," he reawakens in us the remembrance of His death, and the hope of His coming again.

How the writings of the apostle draw us out to CHRIST



so as to attach our hearts to the Person of JESUS our SAVIOUR, our LORD, Who loved us unto death and Who is our peace, our joy and our hope!

The apostle fully preached the gospel of CHRIST, the gospel of *grace*, the gospel of the *glory* of CHRIST, which takes in not only our salvation by the blood of the cross, but the revelation of all the Person of the SAVIOUR, the SON of GOD come down from heaven to accomplish the work of redemption, to glorify the FATHER and to satisfy His justice and His love; the Image of the invisible God, the fullness of God, the Heir of all things, the outshining of the glory of God and the expression of His substance.

The apostle leads us to contemplate the greatness, the majesty of Him Who is the only Object of his heart and Whom he had *fully* preached; the "unspeakable Gift" of God.

M.K.

## Can a Soldier be a Christian?

A DRIVER in the R.A.S.C. writes from "somewhere in England":—

"Having seen the article entitled 'Can a Soldier be a Christian?' in your little book 'The Despatch Rider,' may I take this opportunity of answering your question? Yes, certainly he can. To serve the LORD JESUS in the Army you only need faith in His saving and keeping power, when He will supply the needed grace, which is perfected through His death and resurrection.

"Surely the fourth verse of the 23rd Psalm is a perfect promise of protection to the soldier who has not the courage to confess His name. 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me.'"

\* \* \*

A Lance-Corporal in the D.C.L.I. writes:—

"Being a child of God, I am interested in this question, 'Can a Soldier be a Christian?' Speaking from experience, my answer is YES, but I might add that one must rest himself entirely in the Lord Jesus' hands, otherwise he can do nothing. There is no getting away from real

Christianity, no matter what circumstances you may be in, whether Army, Navy or Air Force.

"I have been in the Army now for ten months, but thank God He has been with me for ten months also, otherwise I should never be able to carry on.

"I first started by owning my SAVIOUR as GOD of all, and by doing this I just let the fellows know where I stood. I might say it's not a very easy job, right the whole way through, but thanks be to God, He has gone every step before, thus enabling me to follow on. The chaps used to laugh and say all sorts of things to upset me, but I came to realise that they were only trying my faith, so I carried on in my own sweet way, and now instead of laughing, they come to me as one who can help them out of their troubles . . .

"As time goes on you find that the SAVIOUR is more precious to you than ever He was, simply because you have laid yourself in His hands. This brings to my mind a little chorus which goes like this:—

JESUS never fails:  
JESUS never fails:  
Heaven and earth may pass away,  
But JESUS never fails!' "

\* \* \*

A Private in the B.E.F. writes:—

"Thank you for the leaflet with the question, 'Can a Soldier be a Christian?' My answer is YES. When I first joined the Army I was a Christian, and by the help of God I am still. I have explained to ever so many fellows the way of the cross and what it means to be a Christian. It is not easy to confess His Name, but God gives me the courage. I can never do enough for Him after all He has done for me."

\* \* \*

A sailor in the R.N.R. writes:—

"My LORD is ever near to guide me in the paths of righteousness. I have so much to thank Him for in these dark days, especially to know JESUS is mine, our Blessed REDEEMER, that One Who went down into death for us and has borne all God's wrath.

"I read your magazine with the question, 'Can a Soldier

be a Christian?' Well, we have God's promise that 'He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.' And also that word in Isaiah, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.' One cannot walk in his own strength in the Navy. It is not bravado that is wanted to be a Christian, but faith and trust in God's SON, the LORD JESUS CHRIST."

*Extracted from "The Despatch Rider."*

## Gleanings

A NATIVE of the Fiji Islands had become a Christian and had assumed the name Zephania. One day he was speaking about his LORD to a heathen relative and the latter became so annoyed that he picked up a near-by earthenware vessel and struck Zephania over the head with it. He struck him so hard that the vessel was smashed. Very much upset and yet silent, Zephania went home. He saw hanging on the wall the club he had once handled as a master alone can, and at once the old man rose in him so that he was in danger of going off to avenge himself. Just at that moment, his eye caught his New Testament, and, opening it, he read "*Happy are ye when men shall persecute you for righteousness' sake*" and "*Love your enemies.*" This was the thing for him to do and so he took a new earthenware pot to the man who had done him wrong, and the latter was so overcome that he gave in return a valuable piece of fish bone and then allowed portions to be read to him from the wonderful Book which contained such teaching.

Christianity is power. Has this power made you able to act as the Islander did?

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## LOVE OF THE WORLD

There is no true happiness, even for those who are Christians only in name, where place is given to the love of the world or to the "I" (1 John ii. 15, 16). We cannot enjoy true happiness or real peace if we have

not finished with the love of the world and have not learnt that it is our business to live for the One Who died for us and rose again. If our minds and thoughts are turned towards the world, we are following the inclinations and desires of the old nature and we do not need to wonder that we meet with disappointments. And what must be our feelings, when we find our life drawing to a close and, looking back, we have to admit that this world, with Satan as its prince and god, has been that which our heart has secretly loved so much; that very world which hated and rejected Him to Whom we owe all things that have any value: eternal life and eternal bliss! How grievous must be the last hours of a Christian on earth if he has to say to himself: "I have loved myself instead of my LORD! I have not done that which God gave me to do! I have sought my own advantage instead of His honour! Like Lot, who vexed his righteous soul with the lawless works of men in whose midst he chose to be found, I have spoilt this life and have set little value on the life that is to come!"

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In considering the shortcomings of an individual Christian it is only fair to take account of the fact that he may be suffering from peculiar disadvantages. It is possible, indeed, for him to overcome them through the all-sufficient power of CHRIST, but, even so, it is right to bear in mind the handicaps in his life. For example, what kind of man was the Christian's father? It may be that he has inherited a grumbling disposition, or a mean nature, from one or other of his parents. He may have been brought up badly and has not yet overcome the prejudicial effects of an undisciplined childhood. Further, we must ask ourselves how much worse this particular Christian might have been if he had never become a believer. A cantankerous Christian, but for the grace of CHRIST, might have been a revolutionary, at war with society. A mean Christian might, apart from regeneration, have been a miser, perhaps even a swindler.

## On Worship

(Ps. l. 23; Heb. xiii. 16)

**T**O bow in adoring worship, praising God for His excellent greatness and thanking Him for His wonderful goodness, gives both the Creator and the creature their right places. It is a holy privilege to be engaged thus in "*offering the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips, confessing Christ's holy name*" before Him Who alone knows perfectly the dignity of His person and the value of His atoning work. Presenting ourselves before the Holy One Who inhabiteth eternity, giving thanks unto Him as our FATHER, making all our boast in His beloved SON, our blessed LORD and REDEEMER, our hearts are filled with joy and praise indeed.

But how does He, Who is high above our highest thought, and holy beyond our utmost conception, view our offering of praise and worship? *Can it really matter to Him?* To this question the assuring answer is given in both these Old and New Testament scriptures. How gracious, yet how wonderful, that what we have been doing can so matter to the KING ETERNAL, INVISIBLE, the only God, that He is both glorified and pleased by our worship! How this throws into relief the importance of worship, and makes us see that ministry, however much needed by ourselves, is not at all to be compared with giving unto the LORD the glory due unto His name!

But joined with these assurances we read, "*And to him that ordereth his conversation (his manner of life) aright will I shew the salvation of God*"; and, "*But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*" Here is the perfect balance, a heart poured out in praise and worship for His greatness and goodness, and a life expressing in practical ways the lessons learned of this goodness to us. Spiritual exercises before God must never be permitted to degenerate into pious emotion, but on the contrary to generate practical piety. The words of our lips need

to be backed by the deeds of our lives, the communication of our substance, to give cheerfully as the apostle says, for "*GOD loveth a cheerful giver*" (2 Cor. ix. 7). He is good and doeth good; He is the great Giver of all good; and those who are the children of such a FATHER are expected to exhibit the family traits of character. The twin sacrifices of praise *and* good works are what glorify God and please Him well. W.G.T.

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## It Shall Be Well

"**A**ND she said, It shall be well. Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward: slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee." (2 Kings, iv. 23, 24.)

It shall be well. According to what human eyes could see, all seemed to go very badly for this poor woman. Her only son, her well-beloved, was dead and before he died all human resource had failed. Everything seemed to go badly, for what could life be to her without the child which she had so much desired, which GOD had given her, and which He was going to take from her again?

So long as she had him on her knees, she had been able to hope to see him recover, but now all seemed to be over. The lad was dead and no human power had been able to bring him back to life again. Now that there was no longer any possibility of help on the part of man, now that all had gone so badly, faith shows this woman a way, the only one in which all would go well because it was that which, though passing through the valley of the shadow of death, led up to Mount Carmel. "It shall be well," the Shunammite was able to say to her husband, because she knew that on this Mount Carmel and there only there was a man of GOD able to give her back her child, able to change her tears into joy.

Her faith was not disappointed. The child was given back to the woman who fell at the feet of him who

said: "Take up thy son," and bowed herself to the ground.

Are we not tempted to say now: "It shall go badly"? War has been declared, the powers of evil seem to be unleashed in the world, and all is ruin, misery and death. Our friends, brethren, children and selves are, or may be, affected by the storm. Homes are broken up, sorrows, tears, from which none of us can say he will be spared. Everything on which man leans is tottering. It shall be a terrible time; no, it shall be well.

It shall be well on the path which leads upward. Let us lift our eyes to the hills from whence comes our aid, to the hill on whose summit we see the One Who is GOD and MAN, the LORD JESUS, Who sympathises with us. In all our afflictions, He has been afflicted, from on high He reaches down the hand to take us up and deliver us from the great waters; He hears our cry and saves, and is able to help us and keep us from all evil, and to keep our souls.

May that word: "It shall be well," be continually on our lips, and be a reality to our hearts. Let us not be as those who have no hope, but, even if we have to endure a great conflict of suffering, if our most precious earthly goods are taken from us, let us take it joyfully, knowing in ourselves that we have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. *It is by our attitude in the hour of trial that we show our faith*, and glorify our MASTER before the eyes of those around.

"He Who goes before us is big enough for us not to lose sight of Him," wrote a soldier to his loved ones during the last war. The LORD grant to us that we keep our eyes fixed on Himself, and we shall be able to say in faith: "It shall be well."

"Slack not thy riding for me," the Shunammite had said to her young man. May no one keep us back. He will respond to our faith because He loves us, and we shall be able, like the woman, to cast ourselves at His feet, prostrating ourselves to the earth in worship.

M.J.K.

## Two Precious Resources

(By a French Brother)

**T**HE circumstances through which the world is passing to-day, cause us to feel that we ought to share the following reflections suggested by reading the *fifth Psalm*. There we find mention of two great resources which are at the disposal of faith at all times, and which no power and no tribulation can take from us.

We have often remarked that the first verse or verses of a Psalm give us the theme of that Psalm. This fact is particularly evident in the Psalm before us. "Give ear to my words, O JEHOVAH. Consider *my meditation*. Harken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God; for unto Thee will I *pray*." The psalmist *prays* and *meditates*. These are two great privileges which have been the portion of the saints down the centuries. In prayer, we address ourselves directly to our God; in meditating on His word we are taught by Him with regard to every matter. A pious Israelite addressed himself to JEHOVAH, Who changes not, Who makes promises and fulfils them without fail. We address ourselves to the FATHER Who loves us; and with what love! He has given us His word and we can meditate on it; thus we learn and know the deep things of God and we are instructed with regard to all things. May we be amongst those who meditate on this word day and night. We have need of diligence in this. In the morning the psalmist made his voice heard, in the morning he directed his prayer to God. The word "direct" is significant. The psalmist arranges, spreads out, so to say, his needs before the God Whose faithfulness he knows. When all that concerns us is laid before Him, He hears. We pray quite easily when we are in difficulties, but we find it hard to wait, for to do so requires complete confidence, a will laid entirely to one side, a heart which can place itself unreservedly in the hands of the LORD to Whom we have confided our cause. When this is the case and while waiting on His deliverance, we can rejoice in perfect peace knowing that He Who cares for us will



lead all things to a good end for us, and that He will come in with power at the moment determined in His wisdom.

In Psalm cxix. we find two verses which show us the diligence of our perfect Example, of the SAVIOUR Himself in this service of prayer and of meditation: "I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in Thy word. Mine eyes prevent the night watches that I might meditate in Thy word." (vv. 147, 148.) The dependent Servant arose early in the morning, long before it was day and went into a desert place to pray there. (Mark i. 35.) May we do the same. Then, free from all care and rejoicing in the peace of God Himself, we shall be able to meditate as the psalmist did.

In verses 4 to 6, he meditates on what he sees around him; thus he has the thoughts of God Himself with regard to the evil world in which he found himself. May we also have a righteous thought about the things which we look upon and esteem them as God Himself does. What do we see everywhere? Wickedness! God has no pleasure in it, and evil shall never enter where He is, into His dwelling place, which is also our home. In a little while we shall enter the heavenly places of abode, where our SAVIOUR has gone to prepare a place for us. That is what He wishes us to see. Has He not said: "FATHER, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am"? Soon we shall be in our heavenly dwelling-place, soon have done with evil in all its forms. Happy hope, precious consolation for our hearts! Our God is going soon to put an end to all folly, iniquity, violence, lying and murder. All these things are an abomination to Him.

In verse 7, the psalmist continues his meditation, but the subject of his meditation is now a different one. Turning his eyes away from the things which are around him, he thinks of what is his portion: "*As for me*, in the multitude of Thy mercy, I will come into Thy house." David knew the abundance of the mercy of JEHOVAH and he rejoiced at the thought of entering into His sanctuary. We know the love of a FATHER and we

know that in a little while the LORD is going to introduce us into the sanctuary. There all is holiness, all is peace, all is love; it is the place of the eternal delights of the FATHER and the SON. David was happy at the thought of worshipping *toward* the temple; the entrance into the holy places had not yet been made known; but we know the "new and living way" which has been made for us through the veil. It is a blessed way through a rent veil. Our pen cannot depict what is seen on this way. How can we speak of what took place on Mount Calvary at the time of the death of the only Just One? Let us who know the way stand still and meditate!

These things are ours for eternity, yet at the present moment we enjoy them only by faith, until the day when faith shall give place to sight, and our hope to realisation. We are still in an enemy world, where there is nothing but perversion and rebellion against God, and we cannot lean on any human support. In God alone can we confide, and it is to Him that we have to address our prayer. *He will shew us His way every day.* He will lead us as He led His people at another time through the wilderness great and terrible. We can say to Him, "lead me, keep me," and all who trust in Him will never be confounded; they shall rejoice and shall sing for joy. He Himself is our great Shield, for our protection. What enemy can harm us, when He is our protection? Let us meditate on these things, for we have come to serious days, possibly the last ones of the day of grace. We see already the signs which are precursors of judgments which shall fall on a world which has violated the holy laws of God, has put to death His SON, and has despised Him through two thousand years of grace. Let us consider this world in its true light and meditate on the warnings which God gives us by means of present events. May the glorious hope, which is ours by grace, have all its reality in our hearts and separate us from such a world. May we be able to realise our position as strangers and foreigners down here. May our hearts be drawn out to Him until we meet Him. We are going to see Him! What ought to be the behaviour of those who have such a hope?

A.G.

## The Angels

**M**AN is not the only intelligent creature from the hand of God. Scripture tells us of an innumerable multitude of beings who people the heavens and also have their work on earth. These are the *angels* of whom Scripture speaks so frequently.

The word "angel" means "messenger." This name is given them because God often made use of them to take messages from Himself to man. What are they? They are *spirits*; "Are they not all ministering spirits?" (Heb. i. 14.) "Ministering" signifies that they carry out certain duties from God. For this purpose they are given intelligence, wisdom and strength. The psalmist addresses them, saying: "Bless the LORD, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments." (Ps. ciii. 20.) They are called "holy angels" by the LORD Himself (Luke ix. 26), Who also says that they cannot die. (Luke xx. 36.)

Being spirits, they are invisible to our eyes, although they surround us and are occupied about us. When God employs them to carry a message to men, they appear as having a body. An angel was sent thus to Cornelius, and when he was telling of the visit of the heavenly messenger, he said: "A man stood before me in bright clothing." (Acts x. 30.) In the story of the resurrection of the LORD, we see that two angels (John xx. 12) in the likeness of men in shining garments (Luke xxiv. 4) came to tell Mary Magdalene and other women that the LORD was risen. We find many other examples in the Scriptures. Angels could also appear in flames of fire, whether to protect servants of the LORD, as in the case of Elisha (2 Kings vi. 17; see also ii. 11; cf. Ps. lxviii. 17), or to execute judgment: "When the LORD JESUS shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God." (2 Thess. i. 7, 8.)

Scripture teaches that the angels are included among the things created by the LORD JESUS, Who is thus above the greatest and most powerful of them. "For by Him

were all things created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers." (Col. i. 16.) They were created before the earth had been established to be the home of man, for JEHOVAH says to Job: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth . . . when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job xxxviii. 4, 7.) They looked upon, and wondered at, God's works. How beautiful and wonderful is all that God reveals to us! The spirit of man and all his genius could not create such a scene as heaven peopled by immortal creatures rejoicing in the wonderful works of God. This verse teaches us also that the angels are "sons of God." (cf. Job i. 6.) They are such because God has created them. It is as Creator that God is called "FATHER of *all*." (Eph. iv. 6.) When we believe in the LORD JESUS, however, we become children and sons of God, as born of God by His SPIRIT. (Jn. i. 12, 13.; Gal. iv. 6, 7.) It is a blessing which brings us much nearer to God than even the angels are.

Like man, the angels have also been subjected to the test of obedience. Not all of them have withstood it, some have sinned (2 Peter ii. 4; Jude 6), of whom we shall speak later. Those who have remained obedient are called "*elect angels*." (1 Tim. v. 21.)

The number of the angels cannot be reckoned. John, taken up to heaven, sees them around the throne proclaiming the praises of the LAMB that was slain—the LORD JESUS Who suffered and died to save us; "their number," says he, "was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. (Rev. v. 11.) Daniel saw, in a vision, the Ancient of Days, the ETERNAL GOD, Whose throne was like a fiery flame with wheels as burning fire; it was a throne of judgment and thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him." (Dan. vii. 9-10.) "Ye are come," says the apostle, "to an innumerable company of angels." (Heb. xii. 22.) We cannot see with these eyes this vast assembly of invisible beings, but the day is coming when we shall see them, when we ourselves shall

be in heaven, with the LORD, surrounded by this holy multitude whose different orders and services we shall know. It is called the "host of heaven," as we read in Luke ii. 13 and in 1 Kings xxii. 19; 2 Chron. xviii. 18 and Neh. ix. 6. Sometimes, also, the array of stars which shine in the heavens is called "the host of heaven." (Deut. iv. 19; 2 Kings xvii. 16.)

Several passages tell us of the angels as being of various orders; thrones, dominions, principalities and powers (Col. i. 16; Eph. iii. 10), having, no doubt, various services and different degrees of power and honour. In Isaiah we see the *seraphim* who celebrate the holiness of the LORD OF HOSTS (Isa. vi. 2, 3), and in several passages we read of *cherubim* who execute God's judgments. Having driven out man, who had sinned, from the Garden of Eden, JEHOVAH set cherubim to guard the way of the tree of life so that man could not come near. (Gen. iii. 24.) Two angels are named in Scripture. One is Michael, who is called the archangel or chief of angels. (Jude 9.) The wonderful meaning of his name is: "Who is like God." He is presented to us as the defender of the Jewish people. In Daniel he is called "one of the chief princes" and fights against the king of Persia in favour of the Jews (Dan. x. 13, 21; xii. 1), and in the Revelation we see him at the head of his angels fighting in heaven against Satan and his angels. (Rev. xii. 7.) The other angel whose name is told us is called Gabriel, which means "man of God." He it is whom GOD sends to Zacharias to tell him of the birth of his son John, who was to be the forerunner of the LORD, and to Mary to tell her that she was to be the Mother of the SAVIOUR. (Luke i. 19, 26.) He was also sent to Daniel to reveal to him that, at the end of a certain time, the MESSIAH, the CHRIST, should appear (Dan. ix. 21, 25), and to cause him to know the end of a wicked and persecuting king who would arise in the latter days. (Dan. viii. 16, 24, 25.) In these different cases the angel Gabriel *was a bearer of good news*.

The abode of the angels is the heavens. There they stand before GOD; they worship and adore Him and stand in readiness to obey His commandments. But, as

we have seen, they do not stay constantly in heaven. GOD sends them to the earth whose formation they beheld with joy, where they are occupied in various ways in connection with man, that creature who is in such a special way the object of the thoughts of GOD. We see them often in the Old Testament carrying messages or occupied in various duties. They come to Abraham, then go to save Lot from the destruction of Sodom; and who does not know about the wonderful vision of Jacob as he fled from his father's house? Angels ascend and descend the ladder set up between earth and heaven while the LORD stood above it. This shows Jacob that GOD was looking after him and that he was not alone on his long journey. Angels were dealing with him. We see them meeting him when he comes back to Canaan as though to salute him on his return. (Gen. xxviii. 12-17; xxxii. 1, 2.) An angel comes to strengthen Elijah when, cast down, he asks JEHOVAH to take away his life. (1 Kings xix. 4-8). Angels carry him to heaven and numerous angels, invisible to all but the prophet himself, surround Elisha for his protection (2 Kings ii. 11; vi. 17.) As we have seen, an angel is sent to Daniel and angels speak to the prophet Zechariah and reveal to him the mysteries of GOD.

The New Testament also teaches us many interesting things about angels and their service, especially with regard to the LORD JESUS. We have already noticed the two visits of the angel Gabriel to Zacharias and to Mary. An angel appeared several times to Joseph in a dream to tell him what to do with regard to the little Child JESUS. Then, what a wonderful scene we seen in the fields of Bethlehem. An angel of the LORD comes to announce to the shepherds the birth of the SAVIOUR, and immediately there was with him a multitude of the heavenly host praising GOD, Who had sent, with His SON, peace and blessing on earth. When GOD sends His SON into the world, He says: "And let all the angels of GOD worship Him." (Heb. i. 6.) The SON of GOD has come down from heaven and has become a Man, veiling thus His glory, but He is no less the Object of the worship and service of the angels. Indeed, they serve Him in the

wilderness where He is tempted (Mark i. 13); and when He is in an agony in Gethsemane, an angel from heaven comes to strengthen Him. (Luke xxii. 43.) Is it not at once mysterious and touching to see JESUS sustained by an angel in His suffering? It was because He was truly a Man and, as such, He could be burdened by heaviness of soul and have need of succour. But He suffers voluntarily. He could have demanded of His FATHER twelve legions of angels to defend Him against the enemies who came to take Him, but He remained in submission to God, Who, in His word, had said that He should suffer. (Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.)

When the SAVIOUR rose again and left the tomb, an angel came to roll away the stone to reveal that the sepulchre was empty and told the women to go and tell the disciples that the LORD was risen from the dead. (Matt. xxviii. 2-7.) Then two angels appear to Mary Magdalene as she wept for her LORD; and when He ascended up to heaven in a cloud and disappeared from the sight of His disciples, two angels stood by them and told them of His coming again. He has told us that He will come in the glory of His FATHER with the holy angels. (Mark viii. 38.) He will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance. (2 Thess. i. 7, 8.)

The angels who served the LORD on earth and have borne witness to His resurrection, the angels who will be with Him when He comes again in His glory, have been and still are ministering to the saints. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14.) An angel was sent to Cornelius, the Roman centurion, to tell him to send for Peter, who should tell him words by which he should be saved (Acts x. 3; xi. 13, 14); an angel delivered Peter from the prison where Herod had cast him with the intention of putting him to death. (Acts xii. 7-10, and also v. 19-23.) An angel of God spoke to Paul on the storm-tossed ship, saying that for his sake none would lose their lives on the ship.

How great an interest the angels take, too, in the accomplishing of the purposes of God towards man.

They desire to look into the things which the prophets announced concerning the sufferings of CHRIST and the glories which would follow. (1 Pet. i. 11, 12.) They would know something of the depths of the love of GOD to sinful man. They sang for joy when the foundations of the earth as the habitation of man were laid; and they rejoiced with the GOOD SHEPHERD when He found His lost sheep. (Luke xv. 10.) The angels are also interested in what happens in the Assembly of GOD on earth; Christians in the Assembly should always present to them a spectacle of order. (1 Cor. xi. 10.) In heaven they learn to know and they look upon the manifold wisdom of GOD in His purposes and designs with regard to the Assembly. (Eph. iii. 10.) Finally, we see an angel introduce John to the heavenly things and show them to him, while others announce and execute the judgments of GOD on guilty man. (Rev.)

We see what an important part the angels play in the universe and with regard to man. These intelligent beings, invisible to us, fill heaven and also surround us as servants of GOD doing His will. Is this any reason why we should address ourselves to them and offer them a sort of homage? Certainly not. Far from giving us such authority, the word of GOD says: "*Let no man beguile you . . . doing his own will . . . in the worship of angels.*" (Col. ii. 18.) In the Revelation, John falls to the earth at the feet of the angel who was showing him the things of heaven; but the angel says to him: "*See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the words of this book: worship GOD.*" (Rev. xxii. 8, 9.) Like the saints, they, too, are servants of GOD.

Among the angels there is one whom the Old Testament often mentions and who is called the Angel of the LORD. It is JEHOVAH Himself Who comes in this form to speak to men. In Genesis xviii. it is said that *the LORD* appeared to Abraham, and then that *three men* stood by him. (vv. 1, 2.) One of the three was JEHOVAH Himself, Who remained with Abraham while the *two angels* (chap xix. 1) went on their way towards Sodom. When Abraham is on the mountain to sacrifice his son



Isaac, *the Angel of the LORD* stays his hand and calls to him from heaven: "By Myself I have sworn, saith *the LORD* . . . that in blessing I will bless thee." (Gen. xxii. 15, 16.) Here the *Angel of the LORD* is JEHOVAH Himself. We find the same thing in Exodus iii. The *Angel of the LORD* appears to Moses in the burning bush which was not consumed, but it is JEHOVAH Who calls Moses and says to him: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," and then JEHOVAH says: "I have seen the affliction of My people" and calls Himself by His Name "I AM." In the sixth chapter of Judges, the Angel of the LORD appears to Gideon, but we then read "JEHOVAH looked upon Him" and "JEHOVAH said unto him." (cf. vv. 12, 14, 16.) The story of the birth of Samson teaches us the same thing. (Judges xiii.) The Angel of the LORD, Who appeared to Manoah and his wife, said: "Why askest thou after My Name, seeing it is Secret (or, it is Wonderful)?" Then Manoah, seized with fear, cries: "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." Gideon also feared that he would die because he had seen God. JEHOVAH reassures him, saying: "Peace unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die." (Judges vi. 22, 23.) Thus God Himself showed Himself to men, veiling His glory, which they could not see without dying, and coming to speak to them.

Yet the word of God teaches us another, and no less wonderful, thing. It is that the Angel of the LORD, JEHOVAH Himself, is none other than the SON of GOD, JESUS, Whose name means JEHOVAH the SAVIOUR. This we conclude from the comparison of several passages. When Manoah asked the Angel of the LORD "What is thy name?" the Angel replied: "Why askest thou after My Name, seeing it is Wonderful?" (or Marvellous.) (Judges xiii. 17, 18.) When announcing the birth of the SON Who should ascend the throne of David and establish a reign of peace which should never end, Isaiah gives us His titles, of which the first is "Wonderful" (or Marvellous). (Isa. ix. 6, 7.) If we compare this with verses 37 to 41 of John's 12th chapter, we see that the LORD, JEHOVAH OF HOSTS, Whose holiness and glory the

seraphim declare, is the same JESUS Whom the Jews rejected, for it is said: "These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory and spake of Him."

We know, then, Who this mysterious Personage was, Who appeared to Abraham, Who wrestled with Jacob (cf. Gen. xxxii. 24-30; Hosea xii. 4-6), Who talked with Moses in the bush, with Gideon and with Manoah. It was The ETERNAL ONE, JEHOVAH, He Who came to earth and became the humble Jesus of Nazareth, Who "came unto His own" and "His own received Him not." (John i. 11.) "But to as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His Name." (v. 12.) *What immeasurable grace!*

A.L.

## "The Times That Went Over Him"

(1 Chron. xxix. 30)

BY QUARTUS

REVIEWING "the times that went over him," David very gratefully celebrates the good, gracious, guiding hand of his God throughout all his very eventful life. In boyhood, youth, manhood, and "now also when I am old and grey-headed" the kindly providence and over-ruling care of God had surrounded him on every side. "Let my mouth be filled with Thy praise and with Thy honour all the day" is his heartfelt exclamation and desire to Him Whom he calls, "The God of my life," and, in other places, "The God of my mercy."

Those early years filled with difficulties and youthful hopes; those colourful years of mid-life, with their movement, storms and strain; these later years of domestic and kingdom sorrows and anxieties—all these formed part of "the times that went over him" during which, as he says, "the LORD sustained me," for "His mercy endureth for ever."

The silver thread of the Divine purpose in the times that pass over ourselves may be seen reflected in the

life-story of the Psalmist. He had learned much of the faithfulness and fear of the LORD by the lessons of his varying circumstances, in all of which he could say: "This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles."

We, too, may discern in the mirror of Holy Scripture what, in the reflection of our own troubled life is apt to escape us, namely, God's controlling, guiding, overruling hand in the daily concerns of His children.

Thanks be to God, our God and FATHER, "the times that pass over us" only serve to enhance His tireless, timeless yet ever timely love and mercy. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered, fear ye not," are the words of our BLESSED LORD, Who said, "As My FATHER hath taught Me, I speak these things." *Let my mouth be filled with Thy praise, and with Thy honour all the day.*

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## Thoughts

God finds in His love a motive for saving us, and we find in CHRIST's love a motive for a holy walk.

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The power of eternal love comes down beneath us in order to raise us up to God. It remains beneath us and will encompass us throughout eternity. We have our dwelling in God. To dwell in God is to have unbroken communion with Him—for us this is to be in the FATHER's house in unbroken enjoyment of the love of CHRIST, Who has done all things for us.

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*Flesh* puts circumstances between us and God; *Faith* puts God between the circumstances and the heart.

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The heart is so deceitful that we can imagine that we are doing the work of God when we are really doing something which pleases ourselves.

- As soldiers, we are called to combat; as priests, we have the privilege of offering worship; as Levites, we are responsible to serve; and our service is to bear with us, across a dry desert, the anti-type of the tabernacle which was a figure of CHRIST. This is the clear line of our service. It is to this that we are called—it is for this that we are set apart.

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Faith brings God into the scene with the result that it knows absolutely nothing of difficulties.

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Faith is the empty hand held out to CHRIST that He might fill it.

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Attire which aims at adorning the old man, hides CHRIST.

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## Book Review

*High Peaks in Redemption*, by F. J. Huegal (Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 2/6).

THIS is a good book, and one which in these days of incipient infidelity in many professedly Christian circles, and of general indifference to vital religion in the outside world, it is refreshing to read.

The writer of this very readable book sets out to exalt the Person and work of our blessed LORD. In seven chapters the foundations of the faith are dealt with in a clear and forceful manner. All is shown to centre in the Person of CHRIST, Who is the REDEEMER, as with the writer we seek to scale the High Peaks of Redemption.

One qualification we must make, namely, the use of certain expressions, which to us rather spoil what, apart from these unintentional, free, almost irreverent slips, is a book all would do well to read.

The book is light to hold, easy to read, and, as usual with books issued by these Publishers, well produced at a low price.

H.E.R.

## To Ask Help of the Lord

(2 Chron. xx. 4.)

(*An Address on Day of National Prayer given in The Village Hall, St. Nicholas-at-Wade, Kent, by THE EDITOR.*)

**H**ISTORY repeats itself on this historic occasion, as we recall that three thousand years ago another king called his people to gather themselves together "to ask help of the LORD." The circumstances too, bore a striking resemblance to those in which we find ourselves to-day. Huge armies, secret preparations, and sudden unexpected attacks marked the occasion then, as they do now. In the midst of the abounding difficulties and dangers of their day they very wisely gathered themselves together "*to ask help of the LORD.*" He "*that heareth prayer*" answered, and the enemy collapsed through internal troubles.

Again twenty-two years ago when the position in France was very grave indeed, King George V., with that vision so characteristic of him, called the British nation to its knees on a day of prayer. That invitation met with a wide response, and soon the German advance was stayed, and in a few weeks the war was at an end.

To-day, the King's message as to a Day of National Prayer may be recalled. "At this fateful hour we turn, as our fathers before us have turned in all times of trial to GOD MOST HIGH. Here in the old country I have asked that Sunday next should be observed as a Day of National Prayer. . . . Let us with one heart and soul humbly but confidently commit our cause to GOD and ask His aid that we may valiantly defend the right as it is given us to see it . . . and with GOD's help we shall not fail."

We, to-day, therefore "*ask help of the LORD*" remembering that ancient word reproduced in the personal column of a leading paper during the past week: "The LORD is good, *a strong hold in the day of trouble*; and He knoweth them that put their trust in Him." (Nahum. i. 7.)

What do *we* know of the LORD Whose help we ask to-day? It is to Holy Scripture we turn for the answer.

Here we learn that, among many other things, GOD is  
 (1.) *The Hearer of Prayer*—"O Thou that hearest prayer." Ps. lxxv. 2.

(2.) *The Everlasting GOD, the LORD, the CREATOR.* Isa. xl. 28.

(3.) *The Last Resource sought by mankind*—"In their affliction they will seek Me early [earnestly]." Hosea v. 15.

(4.) *The Promiser of Deliverance.* Ps. l. 14, 15.

To be the Hearer of Prayer implies that we do not now speak into space, but to One Who bows down His ear to listen to our cry for help with ability and readiness to respond to it. More willing to help than we to ask His help.

For He is the Everlasting GOD Who is above all the confusion, tumult and perplexity of man, the LORD, the CREATOR of the ends of the earth. Never weary, never fainting, ever willing to give strength, courage and power to such as wait upon Him. Never can we tax His power, tire His strength, nor baffle His wisdom by the many and varied demands upon them made by our prayers. "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think."

Yet He is the Last Resource of His creatures. To all and any do we turn naturally before coming to the end of our tether when at last we humbly ask help of the LORD. But this, alas ! only serves to prove how alienated we are from GOD by nature, and how much we need to be reconciled to Him, before we "seek first the Kingdom of GOD and His righteousness." Thanks be to Him, the means of this reconciliation have been found, and GOD is preaching peace by JESUS CHRIST to all who will accept so great salvation. "In their affliction they will seek Me early." GOD is also the Promiser of deliverance. In Ps. l. 14, 15, the conditions upon which these promises may be fulfilled are : Thanksgiving, Penitence and Prayer. "Offer unto GOD thanksgiving ; and pay thy vows unto the MOST HIGH : and call upon Me in the day of trouble ; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

How much cause we have for thanksgiving, the land in

which we live, the liberty we enjoy, the love that surrounds our lives, the light of reason, and above all the unspeakable gift of GOD sending His own SON to be our Saviour from sin and its dread penalty and power.

How much cause for penitence too, as we recall our forgetfulness of GOD as a nation and individuals; our neglect of His holy word and holy day as a nation, and individually; our secret sins and open evils—all these call for repentance and true penitence.

How much cause also there is for prayer, for calling upon GOD, for asking help of the LORD in this present grave juncture of our national life.

He Who is the Promiser of deliverance, to Whom the prayers of the penitent and of the upright are a delight has said, "I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

"LORD, when we bend before Thy Throne,  
And our confessions pour,  
Teach us to feel the sins we own,  
And hate what we deplore."

What more suitable words could we close with than those of the Psalmist (Ps. cvii. 43) "Whoso is wise and will observe these things even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the LORD?" Let us give thanks, let us humble ourselves in true penitence, let us pray and seek help of the LORD, and then let us count upon GOD to fulfil His own gracious promise of deliverance, as individuals and as a nation.



2 Tim. iii. 1-5; Heb. x. 25.—What days, what day?

"The phrase 'the last days' plainly covers the closing days of the Christian economy, however long GOD might be pleased to protract them; the time generally which precedes the Coming of the LORD, when an end will be put to the present ways of GOD, and the Kingdom will come in displayed power and glory. 'The day' (Heb. x. 25) when our fidelity or the lack of it will be manifested."

W.K.

## “Faint Not”

(*Luke xviii. 1 ; 2 Cor iv. 1 ; Heb xii. 5.*)

THE exhortation is needed, for we are all liable to lose heart. The Christian race is a long and difficult one, and we never get beyond the reach of temptation, in some form. Backsliding is often the result of disappointment and discouragement. Savonarola, the great Florentine preacher, chose as his motto “Hold on ; hold fast ; hold out,” one equally suitable for ourselves now.

There are so many causes of depression, including constitutional weakness and pessimism ; bodily ill-health ; monotony of occupation and surroundings ; the dark side of the Christian revelation ; and the assaults of Satan. Three subjects in connexion with which we are all liable to faint, may well engage our thoughts, namely, Prayer, Affliction, and Christian Work.

(1) *Fainting in prayer.* In Luke xviii., our LORD exhorts us to unceasing persistence in prayer by drawing a contrast between the selfish and unrighteous judge and our loving heavenly FATHER : if that bad man will, for his own interests, respond to the appeal of the widow, surely a good GOD will be far more ready to listen to the cry of His own children.

Every Christian at some time or other has asked, “Why are not my prayers answered ?” The basic reason why prayer is not answered is that it is not within the Divine will. Why, we do not always know. But we can see that GOD cannot grant a request that is not for our *good* : or not for our good *now*, or that will work *ill* to someone else. The second great reason for unanswered prayer is that the conditions are not met on our side. Do we ask in faith, and for the glory of GOD ? Do we *abide* in CHRIST and so are able to plead the authority of His Name ?

It is also helpful to consider the following points : We may fail to see that prayer has been answered because means have been used to answer it. Again, in answer to believing prayer GOD sometimes changes things *in us who pray*, and for this reason too we may not perceive that prayer has been answered. Further, GOD may meet the real *need* rather than answer the actual *petition*, for do we



always correctly interpret our deepest needs? It is a blessed experience to pass from an attitude of asking to one of taking; when the petition merges into the conviction that GOD hears and that the request will certainly be answered. The importance of *not fainting*, not giving up, but *continuing in prayer*, needs to be continually affirmed and indeed emphasised.

(2) *Fainting in affliction.* Trouble is one great cause of loss of faith and of backsliding. Hence Hebrews xii. urges us not to faint under affliction. The mind is often perplexed, and the heart wounded by the pressure of the trial, but let us see to it that our faith is not injured. Let us insist that GOD *knows*, and loves, and cares, in spite of things that would make us doubt Him. "I will be with him in trouble" is still a promise written for faith to rest upon. He is the Preserver of all men *especially of the believer*, and we are in His school. Life has a spiritual purpose. We should try to learn to *use the things that hurt*, as well as *bear them patiently*. By contemplating GOD's love and receiving the spiritual and natural good things that come to us as gifts of His love, and by communing with Him constantly, we shall be keeping ourselves in the love of GOD. Being exercised by the present "chastening" we shall find it will yield "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Then shall we be able to say with the Psalmist: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn Thy statutes." (Ps. cxix. 71.)

(3) *Fainting in Christian work.* Every Christian worker knows the meaning of discouragement, or at all events of disappointment. There seems so little fruit, we sometimes feel.

It is well at such times to pause and ask ourselves what is our real motive for doing Christian work. Is Christian service with us first of all the service of CHRIST? Is our objective to be *useful* to those to whom we minister? And are we in the will of GOD? For it is possible for self-will to operate even in such a good thing as Christian service, and spell disaster.

It is encouraging however to remember that while some are reapers, many are sowers. What will matter most of all at the Great Tribunal will be, not whether we have been

what is now reckoned successful, but whether we have been *faithful* to the LORD and His word. "It is required . . . . that a man be found faithful." (1 Cor. iv. 2.)

Every believer has been sent into the world for a definite purpose; and the Sender is our LORD JESUS CHRIST. If this thought grips our spirits, we shall enjoy peace, confidence and hope, and in some measure these will mark all our life and service.

In view of these things "*let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.*" (Gal. vi. 9.)

E.A.

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## The Lord in the Midst of His People

(Matt. xviii. 19, 20)

FOR our instruction, let us consider with what deep reverence the saints of the old economy came into the presence of GOD. Let us meditate seriously, and with prayer on this passage from the Word.

"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of GOD, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before GOD: for GOD is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." (Eccles. v. 1-2.) Other passages shew us also how great is the holiness of GOD in His temple: Ps. lxxv. 4; Ezek. viii. 6; Hab. ii. 20, etc., as do the ordinances of the law of Moses as to respecting and maintaining the holiness of the presence of GOD in the sanctuary.

Beloved, we are by grace in a much higher place before God than the Old Testament saints, and shall we come behind them in acknowledging and recognising that which is in keeping with the Presence of GOD in His house, and the solemn Presence of the LORD in the midst of two or three gathered in His holy and glorious Name? Let us study with care all that the New Testament teaches us about the holiness of the Presence of the LORD *in the Assembly*; about the attitude which ought to be ours in the meeting; and also about all that should be kept at a

distance from this holy place and rejected completely as unworthy of the holy Presence of the LORD. Oh, that we were able every time we meet or separate to give ourselves with full hearts to the Lord and with love to our brethren.

How do we realise the solemn Presence of the Lord when we are gathered together, be it for worship or in any other meeting? In what state of soul do we come to take our place in the divine presence of GOD Himself? Do we think of it beforehand? He searches the heart and tries the reins and knows every part of our life, *both public and private*. (Ps. cxxxix.)

Then, when we are gathered together, if we allow ourselves to be distracted by outside thoughts or perhaps by something that attracts our attention, do we realise the presence of the LORD? Or do we realise that He is in our midst when we act with haste, whether to give out a hymn or do anything else? Let us not forget that the HOLY SPIRIT can direct our thoughts only if we are truly occupied with the actual presence of the LORD. Ah! if we were always to have the consciousness that the SAVIOUR is there, we should never be precipitate nor should we be upset when certain brothers who are usually active are absent. The LORD is faithful and shall He not give that which He judges to be suitable? If the brothers present *are truly dependent and obedient*, the HOLY SPIRIT will be able to use them for the blessing of the assembly, whether in prayer, in praise or in the reading of the Word. Let us not forget that the LORD is in the midst of the assembly; this is just the point in which we fail, we forget that the Lord is actually present.

Then, again, dear brothers, is the presence of the LORD a place for long perorations, or even for expressions or *anecdotes which are likely to provoke a smile of amusement* from the hearers? Let there be solemnity and gravity in the presence of the LORD, Who sees all and hears every word, for nothing escapes the eye of Him Who takes notice of our attitude in His presence. How wonderful and solemn it is, before GOD, for the saints to be gathered together whether for worship or for any other purpose, even when the brothers only meet to consider the interests of the assembly. Are they not there under the eye of the

LORD to discuss in the spirit of brotherly affection and of peace, and ought they not to avoid every hard or wounding word which can cause only grief in the heart ?

E.H.

## Beholding and Following

By R.K.C.

(*John* i. 35-42)

**I**N *John* i. 29 we see John the Baptist looking upon JESUS and exclaiming, "Behold the Lamb of GOD which taketh away the sin of the world." He is especially calling attention to the Work of CHRIST as the sin-bearer. It is the first glimpse that the sin-burdened and troubled soul gets of CHRIST. He is seen as that blessed Lamb of sacrifice, that has been offered up for his sins and has satisfied all the righteous claims of GOD regarding sin. The trembling sinner then sees, that by virtue of that finished work of CHRIST, his sins are for ever put away, if he believes in CHRIST as his divinely provided substitute. He then has rest of conscience and peace of heart. We have here, then, in this exclamation of John's, CHRIST for our sins and conscience.

But there is more in this glorious Person for us. Accordingly, we find John the next day again beholding and exclaiming. But now his words are just "Behold the Lamb of GOD!" He is entirely enrapt and thrilled with His blessed Person. Attention is not drawn now to His work, but to His peerless, immaculate Person; the workman is always greater than his work, and worthy of the greatest attention. Here we have then, CHRIST for our heart's affections, CHRIST for our Object and our Resource. Another has said, "The work of CHRIST is the only true resting-place for the conscience, the Person of CHRIST is the only true object for the heart, and the Word of GOD is the only true guide for the path." We have had the Work of CHRIST and the Person of CHRIST brought before us in this portion, later we shall see a path marked out for us by the Word of CHRIST.

In John's two exclamations we see true Christian growth

and progress. He passes on from the work that satisfies GOD and the believer's conscience as to the sin question, to heart occupation with CHRIST's Person, who performed this efficacious work. So it should be with every Christian. We should not just be satisfied to know that our sins are put away, but earnestly desire to know more and more of the Person that has put them away and saved us.

John looks upon JESUS as He walks, and as he beholds Him his heart is filled with ecstasy and overflowing. Out of the fulness of his heart, he exclaims, "Behold the Lamb of GOD !" It is no mere formal testimony, but the fervent outpouring of a heart all aglow with the SAVIOUR. This is the proper and normal attitude of a Christian—"Beholding the Lamb of GOD." If we would desire to grow up "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST," we must continue to behold Him. If we would represent Him down here, we must behold Him, in order to reflect His virtues and excellencies. And what healthful occupation, soul-invigorating, satisfying, joy-producing, is this beholding the Lamb of GOD ! It will be our delightful occupation throughout eternity.

As T. Haweis so sweetly sings :—

Behold the LAMB : 'Tis He Who bore  
My burden on the tree,  
And paid in blood the dreadful score,  
The ransom due for me.

I look to Him till sight endear  
The SAVIOUR to my heart ;  
To Him I look Who calms my fear,  
Nor from Himself depart.

I look until His precious love  
My every thought control,  
Its vast constraining influence prove  
O'er body, spirit, soul.

To Him I look, while still I run,  
My never-failing FRIEND :  
Finish He will the work begun  
And grace in glory end.

Two of John's disciples, hearing his exclamation, are attracted to the LORD JESUS and follow Him. A blessed result indeed, this effect produced upon others by the joyous overflow that comes from an individual beholding the Lamb of God. This is true ministry. Enjoying the LORD in our own souls, leads us to speak a few words of testimony for Him; the LORD is honoured thereby and may use it to cause some to follow Him. This is the only true ministry for CHRIST. It must spring from our own heart's enjoyment of Himself.

He questions them to further draw them out after Himself. "What seek ye?" How beautiful is the answer they give! "Master, where dwellest Thou?" It is as much as to say, "We just want THEE. Our hearts are so attracted after Thee, that we want to dwell with Thee." Oh, beloved, what depths of earnest desire and proper soul attitude do these words breathe. Is this the language of our hearts? What are we seeking? What are we thirsting after? Is it Himself? These are salutary questions for our hearts, and it is the LORD Himself who asks them of us. Can we honestly answer Him in the words of these two disciples? Would to God we could truly say with the Psalmist, "My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. . . . My soul followeth hard after Thee." (Psa. lxiii. 1, 8.) And again, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. (Psa. xlii. 1.)

They would dwell with Him. Their hearts long to be with Him, not spasmodically, but continually. It is when we dwell with anyone, that we learn to know them. Thus their deep desire is to know Him better.

To their question, "Where dwellest Thou?" He answers "Come and see." So to-day, He speaks the same words to any soul that presses out after Him, desiring greater soul satisfaction and deeper communion. He says, as it were, "Come and see" for yourself. I can satisfy the deepest need: taste the complacent rest, the soothing sympathy and sweet communion that My heart can give you. "Taste and see that the LORD is good." (Psa. xxxiv. 8.) Soul, what is thy response to His

loving invitation? Are you set into motion by it as were these two disciples? "They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day." It mattered not to them how simple the place was, for it was Himself they wanted—"They abode with Him." What a portion and what delight! Shut out from a noisy, wicked, self-seeking world, and shut in with Him in sweet fellowship—with Him, the eternal, all-glorious SON of GOD, manifest in flesh. Beloved, do you know somewhat of this?

In the LORD'S words, "Come and see," we have the Word of GOD for their pathway. His own lips mark out a path for them pleasing to Himself. And that path is following Him. As has been stated, "The Word of GOD is the only true guide for the path." May we ever be found in the path of His Word.

In this scene of the two disciples attracted to the LORD JESUS, following Him and gathered around Himself, we get a dispensational picture of what GOD is doing during this present age of grace. He is calling out of the world souls attracted to His SON, and gathering them around Him to dwell with Him for ever.

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## The Judgment Seat and the Believer

**M**ANY children of GOD have difficulty in understanding that they must appear before the judgment seat of GOD or of CHRIST. They think that it is not in keeping with grace and that it is contradictory to the word that he that believes the record of the FATHER concerning the SON has eternal life and shall not come into judgment. In the first place let it be noted that Scripture, when referring to believers, does not say that they will be *judged*, but that they will be manifested, or that they shall give account, and that afterwards such a manifestation is necessary. They have not understood this passage: "*Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is so are we in this world.*" If they had known the perfection of this love, they should have had no fear of the judgment seat; because "There is no

fear in love ; but perfect love casteth out fear.” (1 John iv. 17-19.)

In all Scripture we find the word judgment seat, in this sense, only twice : in Romans xiv. 10 and 2. Cor. v. 10. The first passage reads : “For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of GOD,” in order that each one shall give account of himself to GOD (v. 12) ; and the second passage reads : “For we must all appear [be manifested, N.T.] before the judgment seat of CHRIST ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” The latter passage mentions the necessity of this appearance before the judgment seat. All mankind shall come, or rather will require to come, before this judgment seat whether to be judged or to be manifested. Every one who shall come before it in his sins, it need not be said, will not be able to face such a terrible and eternal judgment ; such a one is already judged, because he has not believed on the Name of the SON of GOD. (John iii. 18.) He whose perfection is in CHRIST, Who was made sin for him on the cross and there bore his judgment, and who is in this world as He is, as the apostle John puts it, may have boldness as to this time when he will be manifested. For him, judgment is passed ; the Divine Substitute has suffered in his place. How could CHRIST judge those whose righteousness He is, and who are like Him ?

Is it not remarkable that Scripture avoids the word ‘judgment’ when it speaks of believers ? The believer is looked at in the Word either from the point of view of his position or of his walk. On the one hand, he is already before GOD in the perfection of the work of CHRIST ; he is complete in Him ; CHRIST is his life, his peace, his righteousness, his all ; “as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly,” and soon, with regard to their bodies, they will be made like unto the SON of GOD. On the other hand, the Christian, seen from the point of view of his practical state, is still in a body of infirmity, where sin dwells and works, and he uses with greater or less faithfulness the spiritual gifts and powers which are given him. Where it is a *question of position*, there is no difference whatever, we are all justified, and sanctified, all men in



CHRIST, partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and, transformed into His image, we shall soon be with Him in the FATHER'S house ; but where it is a *question of walk*, there are many and great differences; each shall give account of himself and each shall receive the reward of his own work, according to what he has done in the body, whether good or bad. Our position depends on what CHRIST is and has done for us ; our walk on the measure in which the HOLY SPIRIT was able to produce in us the image of CHRIST, and to develop in us the activity of the new nature. Thus, on the one side all is grace, and all is founded on the work of CHRIST, and, on the other, each shall receive according to what he shall have done in the body, one more, the other less.

We have said already that the judgment seat is necessary. The hour must come when all that is hidden shall come to the light of day, all that is secret shall be revealed, and when the most secret thoughts of the heart shall be manifested (Luke viii. 17 ; Rom. ii. 16 ; 1. Cor. iv. 5 ; cf. Ecc. xii. 14) ; the hour in which the righteousness of GOD shall be exercised whether in the judgment of the unbelieving or in the salvation of the believing ; where the one class, convinced of all their ungodlinesses, shall be obliged to recognise the righteousness of the sentence of GOD, and the other, brought into the full light of the holiness of GOD, shall henceforth enjoy, without let or hindrance, the communion of the FATHER and of the SON, this communion which had already been so precious to them down here, though often disturbed. Who is the true and faithful Christian who does not wish with all his heart that all which has disturbed the enjoyment of this blessed communion should be confessed and judged without any mental reservation before GOD ?

GOD be praised ! we shall then have no more of the self in this nature in which we have sinned. If we have understood that we are no longer in the flesh, but in CHRIST, there is no longer any secrecy or hidden thing between us and GOD, if all is open and bare before Him, then we shall be able to think with assurance of this manifestation before the judgment seat in light : we shall even desire it because it will bring us into the perfect enjoyment of communion

with God. That which we have been able to enjoy here only with imperfection and many disturbances, will be our happy portion for eternity. We can therefore say: if a believer cannot think quietly of the judgment seat, he lacks true spiritual feeling or there is something not right between his soul and GOD. If one is given a magnificent garment, it is not necessary to be ashamed to speak of the rags which once were worn. "He that doeth evil hateth the light . . . he that doeth truth cometh to the light." (John iii. 20, 21.) What a contrast! While the one fears the manifestation of his works, the other seeks this manifestation.

May GOD give to both writer and reader of these lines to walk in the glorious light of His face! What happiness and blessing shall be ours from now on and what gain for eternity!

Having made these general observations, let us consider some points of detail. The difference between the two expressions, the judgment seat of GOD and the judgment seat of CHRIST, is not great since CHRIST is truly GOD; however, there is no inaccuracy in Scripture, nothing without importance. We see, therefore, that, in Romans 14, the subject is the conduct of men towards one another, the feeble despised by the strong, the strong judged by the weak. To a certain extent it is a judgment of the individual, "every one of us shall render account of himself to GOD." In 2 Cor. v. it is more a question of the general manner of good and bad deeds; the thought that we are under the eye of the judge should urge us all to good works.

It clearly follows from the passage in 2 Cor. that our actions are made manifest; but they are so intimately bound up with our lives that it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate them. It is for this reason that it is also said that the LORD "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts. (1 Cor. iv. 5). So it will not, therefore, be only all that we have done from the beginning of our lives which will be laid before our eyes, but also the reasons which caused us to do the things. The objects which we have had, perhaps unconsciously, before us will be laid bare as never before. Now, this will not be to condemn us, but to shew

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us all the wonder and grandeur of the grace which is exercised on our behalf both before and after our conversion. For those who were elect in the counsels of God from before the foundation of the world and have been called and justified, the manifestation of their life in all its details and also of the grace and the mercy of GOD on their behalf will have a powerful effect. We shall be able to look, in a light which the imperfections of our earthly walk had dimmed for us, on the incomprehensible ways of GOD in grace towards us, and the manner in which He has led us, kept us, restored and pardoned us.

Let us repeat that the appearing before the judgment seat, though terrible for the unbeliever, will not have for the believer a character of judgment but of manifestation. We shall not appear there as men "in the flesh" but as dead in CHRIST. In a light which leaves nothing out of sight, we shall see where and how we have acted in the flesh down here. We shall see how many blessings we lost through unfaithfulness. This solemn thought ought to encourage us to-day to be full of zeal to be acceptable to the LORD for, as we have already said, it will help us to understand all the ways and the wisdom in the faithfulness grace and mercy of GOD towards us. The ways of GOD,, serious and holy, to lead and teach us, often seem to us strange and incomprehensible, but will then be no longer strange to us. We shall look upon them with wonder and our hearts will be filled with a feeling of deep reverence and worship.

Let us not lose sight, however, of the serious side of our subject. The terrors with which the judgment seat can fill the heart of the unbeliever ought to make us desire to "persuade men" to be reconciled to GOD, and, on the other hand, the thought of the judgment seat has somewhat particularly solemn for the believer. We have already alluded to this. When we shall look back on all our past life, we shall see on the one hand the grace of GOD in a beauty which is absolutely new to us, and on the other all our shortcomings, all the hours and all the days which we have lost beyond recall. The knowledge in all its details of the immutable grace of GOD shall fill us with thoughts of grace and we shall see the corruption of our flesh in all its

depth and how our life should have shown more of the "good" had we been more sober and more vigilant.

One need hardly say that, before the judgment seat, in the measure in which we shall see the hatefulness of sin and the corruption of flesh in the sight of a holy God, we shall understand the value of the work and the blood of CHRIST.

Each one of us shall go over his whole history there. He shall see how often he sinned in giving way to temptation, and how he has been kept ; how his foot has slipped, and how grace has lifted him up ; how the hand of God has preserved him from sin and shame.

We could speak of many things in connection with the judgment seat. For example, we have already mentioned the serious and interesting matter of the reward which is given to each according to his faithfulness and his work. What will it be, when we hear the words : "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things," and when we see with what care the love of the LORD has taken notice of even the least thing in which we have shown our love for Him or for His own. With what joy each overcomer shall receive the "white stone" on which is written a new name which no man knows save he that receives it, and shall look on the crown which adorns the head of his brother. The thought of the judgment seat is very solemn, but is also very precious for those who serve the LORD : evangelists, pastors and teachers. All, in their measure, are workers together with GOD in His house. One plants, another waters, but each shall receive the reward according to his own work. As a wise master-builder, the apostle Paul had laid the foundation of the house "which is JESUS CHRIST" and each must take heed how he builds thereupon. The work of each will be manifested, perhaps beforehand, but in any case in the day which shall be revealed in fire. If any man's work abide, he shall receive a reward ; if it be destroyed by the fire, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved. (1 Cor. iii. 6-15.)

*Trans. T.H.*

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

## “After All This”

*2 Chron. xxxv. 20.*

**T**HESE words mark an epoch in the inspired record of the life of Josiah, king of Judah. They indicate the close of a career of brilliant usefulness, and the commencement of a course of self-will leading to defeat, disaster and death. To the saints of God the whole story is full of solemn warning, and furnishes food for reflection. “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom. xv. 4). “All these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition... wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. x. 11, 12).

Like a sign-post on the highway of Josiah's life-story there stand these three ominous words, “After all this.” They point backward to many distinctly marked evidences of early piety with all their wealth of promise. Josiah began well, for at the age of fifteen he began to seek after the God of David his father, and when only nineteen years old was so zealous for the honour of Jehovah that he commences a national revival by purging Judah of the high places, images and idolatrous emblems which by their defiling presence dishonoured the true God, and disfigured the place He had chosen.

Josiah's zeal increases as the years pass, and produces four most important results. The temple is cleansed; there is a re-discovery of forgotten truth and prophecy; a voluntary, personal self-dedication takes place; and the greatest passover kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet is solemnly celebrated. Truly a marvellous record for a young man to achieve; and more happy still is the gracious moral effect upon his own heart; Josiah's humility and tenderheartedness receiving special mention by God. Add to this his splendid character given in 2 Kings xxiii. 25, and we have afforded us a pen portrait, up to a given period of his life, of a pious, zealous, humble-minded, tenderhearted servant of God. Then, like the note of a tocsin, sounds these three terse

words of ominous import, "*After all this,*" with an abrupt introduction to a collapse, pathetic indeed, and full of warning for ourselves now. Between Josiah's great Passover and the record of his decline thirteen years elapsed. These are the long quiet years when principles are tested. No great work, no excitement, but simply holding fast to known truth and position.

Individually the condition of many a young believer morally resembles that of king Josiah. The first flush of youthful piety is very gracious; the earnest, zealous willingness to serve the LORD is very delightful to behold; the ardent devotion to His blessed Person is very beautiful; the holy emotions of sacred seasons at His table are peculiarly sweet; but after all this—*what?* Shall we adopt the easy path of least resistance, and by dalliance with the world, the flesh and Satan prepare for deterioration, or, as we read the inspired history of Josiah's life, hearken to the striking note of warning and alarm sounded in those words—"after all this"?

For these words appear to signify that the years of quietness had in his case bred deterioration, the parent of declension and self-will. "After all this" we hear of Josiah's *meddling with God*, and of his being sorely wounded in affairs which neither concerned his person nor his position. What an ending for one who had such a splendid record of piety and service behind him! Yet, as we ponder, we are afresh reminded that "the best of men are but men at the best," apart from the grace of God. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

His motives were probably good. He may have thought that his knowledge and position warranted interference on his part; but the inspired history records three facts which, may we not say, are of singular significance for saints and servants of the LORD to-day. First, it is quite evident that *he acted independently*; then that *he refused advice*, not hearkening to the word of God; and, lastly, *he disguised himself*, acting unlike himself, appearing other than he really was.

"After all this!" Warned, wilful and wounded, Josiah is now cut off from all further usefulness in his prime

at the early age of thirty-nine years! The more noteworthy is this, in that length of days was a mark of divine favour to a godly Israelite. How entirely unlike the true SERVANT of JEHOVAH, who—we say it with reverence—not only began well, but eaten up by the zeal of GOD's house, continued in holy dependence, confidence and communion throughout His life here, and in those last hours upon the cross gained more glory to God than man and Satan together had robbed Him of. May God keep us in His love and fear that we may “finish our course with joy.”

W.G.T.

## The Journey of Life

**I**N travelling one is often made to realise that what looks like a great, and perhaps unsurmountable, difficulty in the distance is not half as bad as anticipated when actually faced. Great hills and mountains fill the heart with dismay and perplexity when looked at from the distance by the eye, whose pathway lies over them. But the nearer one comes to them, the smaller they become, and as they are ascended step by step, the anticipated difficulty vanishes and new and enjoyable views and heights are gained.

The analogy of this experience to the experiences of the Christian in his journey through life is very apparent. What child of God has not been alarmed and in consternation as he looked off at some anticipated difficulty, which seemed like an insurmountable mountain? And who has not experienced that, when the seeming difficulty was arrived at, it was not anything like what we saw it to be in the distance, and oftentimes the visioned mountain of trouble melted away as it was approached? Perhaps this is one of the most common experiences in the pathway of life.

But what is the remedy for such unnecessary anxiety? Our blessed LORD saw how mankind was troubled thus and exhorted His disciples to a life of trust in their heavenly FATHER and confidence in His loving care. “Take no thought for your life; your heavenly FATHER knoweth that ye have need of all these things”

(Matt. vi. 25, 32), are His words of comfort. And then, as the summary lesson, He pressed upon them to live day by day and not to live in the fear of the unknown, anticipated morrow. "Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (v. 34).

This, dear fellow pilgrim, is the real cure for fretting over the visioned difficulties of the future. Learn to live in the present, walking moment by moment with the LORD, and not borrowing troubles from the future, most of which never happen. It is as one has well said, "When the morrow comes, the evil may not be there, and if it comes, God will be there." Let us confide more in His loving care, then, remembering that *worry is not faith*.

"All our ways are known to the LORD.

Every turn in the way is noticed by Him,  
Yesterday's trial He knew; to-day's difficulty  
Is under His eye, and to-morrow's care  
Is seen by Him and He says:—

*'Let not your heart be troubled.'*"

And if the worst does come, He has promised, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and God is able to make *all* grace abound toward you; that we *always* having *all* sufficiency in *all* things may abound to *every* good work" (2 Cor. xii. 9; ix. 8). It is all grace, for all times, giving all sufficiency, for all emergencies, for all work. Remember also that He promises, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deut. xxxiii. 25). R.K.C.

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## The Sisters

BY QUARTUS

(Continued from page 52)

**L**ET us consider the characters of three women in the New Testament and their modern counterparts. For example, a single woman, a married woman, and a woman that is a widow, will cover all the states of life of the Sisters who are the subject of this concluding paper.



1. Mary of Nazareth—the Virgin to whom the angel Gabriel was sent from God with a special message, the response to which revealed her true character (St. Luke i. 26, 27).
2. Prisca or Priscilla, the wife of Aquila the Jew of Pontus lately come from Italy (Acts xviii. 2).
3. The anonymous Widow, who earned our LORD's special approval on that day when He sat over against the Treasury (St. Mark xii. 42).

The Apostle Paul in his inspired letter to the Church of God at Corinth and to all that in every place call upon the Name of JESUS CHRIST our LORD (thus embracing all Christians everywhere) says: "The unmarried woman careth for the things of the LORD, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit" (1 Cor. vii. 34). This was characteristic of the Mother of the LORD when living a single life in Nazareth. "*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,*" so when the Angel of the Annunciation came with his message of God's purpose for her life, so august, so startling, the meek yet whole-hearted response was: "*Behold the handmaid of the LORD; be it unto me according to thy word*" (St. Luke i. 38). This young unmarried woman cared for the things of the LORD, and found life's fulfilment in being "*the handmaid of the LORD.*"

"Every Christian," says an old writer, "will feel that the Mother of the LORD ought to receive the deepest honour and reverence. She was highly favoured, and could not have been selected out of the myriads of the human race to be the Mother of the SAVIOUR without the possession of conspicuous gifts and graces. Yet, as though with definite purpose, she is left in the depths of her almost unbroken seclusion and reserve." The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price, characterised the humble-hearted maiden of Nazareth. "Personally," says J. N. Darby, "she had found favour, so that she was not to fear: but God had sovereignly bestowed on her this grace, this immense favour, of being the Mother of the LORD. In this she was the object of God's sovereign favour."

William Kelly also writes: "The angel bids her not to fear, for she has found favour with GOD. She is the chosen channel of the wondrous purposes which should yet fill the world as well as her own people with blessing—the appointed Mother, she is to be of One in Whom GOD was about to solve all the difficulties that sin had brought into the world by a righteous triumph of it—nay, to make it possible for GOD to bless those who believed, sinners though they had been, and to make them righteously triumph through and with Himself."

Mary herself is marked as "she that believed"; as the willing "handmaid of the LORD"; as the singer of that Magnificat the echoes of which circle the world wherever the profession of Christianity is found. The character of the song is Jewish both as to the joy and acknowledgment of the mercy, for she was a Jewish maiden. But the character of the singer, as a "believer," "the handmaid of the LORD," and an exultant singer of His praises, "rejoicing in GOD my SAVIOUR," is one which all the SISTERS may both admire and seek to emulate.

The writer was privileged when a lad to meet such an one. She was not a "SISTER" in the technical ecclesiastical (or geographical) sense; she was not even a very well instructed believer, but she knew herself to be a "handmaid of the LORD." Without ever knowing it, or even suspecting the possibility of such a thing, she exercised a wide, deep, and lasting influence for good over the writer's life. May not then the motto for single SISTERS be that of the maiden of Nazareth, the blessed Virgin Mary: Behold the handmaid of the LORD; be it unto me according to Thy word.

## (2) PRISCA OR PRISCILLA—THE MARRIED SISTER

To have been privileged to meet Priscilla in real life is to have been greatly favoured. David's eulogy over Saul and Jonathan that they were "*lovely and pleasant in their lives*" might more accurately and aptly be applied to the Priscillas of to-day. For Priscilla is a cheerful helper in the things of the LORD, albeit she is a married woman. Broadminded, intelligent, frank, but never hurtful in her criticism, she is often very out-

spoken. Always loyal to Aquila as a good Christian wife should be, yet the youthful Apollos and the more mature Paul alike find her a valuable asset in their service for the LORD. How much the servants of CHRIST owe to Christian women who tactfully, sympathetically, intelligently aid them, the onlookers never imagine.

Had not Priscilla and Aquila taken to Apollos, or, as it reads, "took him unto them" and expounded the way of God more perfectly, what a loss it had been! The order of the names is significant for our SISTERS, *Priscilla* and Aquila, suggesting that she was the better instructed of the two, more apt to be a helper, possibly more hospitable than her husband, as often is the case.

That she was a friendly sort of person, Dr. Fairbairn deduces from the fact that she seems to be generally known by the name of Priscilla, which he, an authority on the subject, says is the diminutive of Prisca, which was her proper name. "Priscilla," he says, "was a name of more endearment and familiar intercourse. And as she is commonly named first, it is natural to suppose that she was, if not actually the first convert of the two (for that can only be matter of conjecture), at least the most active and devoted believer." What their fellowship in service meant to the great Apostle himself can be seen in that he sends one of his tenderest salutations to them. "Greet *Priscilla* and Aquila, my helpers in CHRIST JESUS: who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is their house."

When true Christian fellowship and real Christian friendship blend, the experience is as near perfection as is likely to be reached during our earthly pilgrimage. Prisca, the married Sister, known more familiarly by the friendly name of Priscilla, whose real Christian fellowship and warm human friendship cheered the eloquent Apollos and the great Apostle, may well serve as a model to all married Sisters. That *some* do resemble her is, of course, pretty obvious, and the presence in an assembly of one such is an immense help to such as seek to serve the LORD in their midst. "We speak what we do know."

But Priscilla must not expect to be appreciated by Sisters generally. Her friendliness will be apt to be construed into *over*-friendliness; her outspokenness regarded as forwardness; yet all who benefit by her gracious, genial ministrations will "thank God and take courage." In the Day of CHRIST both "the handmaids of the LORD" and the Priscillas will, to their deep amazement, learn how much He has appreciated them in their differing spheres of service.

### (3) THE ANONYMOUS WIDOW

One day, says St. Mark: "JESUS sat over against the Treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the Treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And He called unto Him His disciples, and saith unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the Treasury."

What would she have thought if she had been told Who had watched her that day and what He said about her and her gift, and that we in this far-off land would be reading it over again and again! Our LORD had and still has a special care and interest for the widow. The widow of Nain drew out His Compassion; the importunate widow was His own illustration of the necessity for importunity in prayer; and the Anonymous Widow with her two mites called forth His hearty commendation and furnished a text for the instruction of His disciples.

Says Dr. Alexander Whyte: "As our LORD sat over against the thirteen chests in the temple that day, it was not the money so much as the mind of the contributors that He watched and weighed." It is the same to-day, and many of the SISTERS who are widows indeed may by their apparently insignificant offerings and services be gaining the approval of Him Who, "though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty may be made rich."

"Now she that is a widow indeed and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day." What the church and the servants of

the LORD owe to these supplications and prayers, and the gifts that spring from such genuine piety only that Day will declare when life's accounts are balanced in the Presence of the LORD Himself.

Many a good cause in the interests of CHRIST would languish; many a true servant of GOD would be greatly handicapped in His service, were it not for the genuine piety and prayers of the SISTERS who serve the LORD like Anna the aged widow, like her whose name we do not know but whose generous gifts in His sight so won His approval on that day when—as now—He sat over against the Treasury and “beheld how the people cast money into it.”

Our SISTERS in youth and maidenhood, or in mid-life and married, or aged and widowed, all have their part to play in furthering the interests of Him Whose they are and Whom they serve.

When Paul in his pre-Christian days as a Pharisee of the Pharisees daily repeated such words as these, “O GOD, I thank Thee that I am neither Gentile, nor slave, nor *woman*,” he had no idea that days would come when the recollection of the help of SISTERS would lead him to give thanks for “those *women* which laboured with me in the gospel,” for Phœbe, Priscilla, Mary, Julia, and many another.

When the gospel came to Europe it was a *woman's* heart opened which was the prelude to the wonderful victories for CHRIST in the West. So the SISTERS, whether as “handmaids of the LORD”; Priscillas in the assembly amongst the servants of the LORD; or anonymous givers to the service of the LORD—all have a part to play and a place to fill which none can fill so well as themselves. How much indeed depends upon their piety, prayers and gifts only their LORD can say. And did He not say: For whosoever shall do the will of My FATHER which is in heaven, the same is My brother, *and sister*, and mother. So we end our paper, having been privileged to meet and know the modern counterparts of each of these New Testament SISTERS, “a handmaid of the LORD,” “Priscilla,” and “the Widow,” to our profit and help in His service to Whom we all belong.

## The Rock of Ages

*“Confide ye in Jehovah for ever; for in Jah, Jehovah is the Rock of Ages.”—Isa. xxvi. 4 (New Trans.).*

**T**HE Israelites sang with joy after they were delivered from the bondage of Egypt and had gone on dry land through the Red Sea. We also, as they, have praised the SAVIOUR GOD Who has redeemed us. Yet the GOD Who heard the song of praise from Israel three days afterwards heard their murmuring because they had sought water to drink in the desert and had found only bitter water which could not appease their thirst. Has GOD not also heard our murmurings when we have sought refreshing in the world which could not satisfy our thirst but increased it?

In His grace, GOD was not content merely to make sweet the waters of Marah. He did more, for He gave Israel a Rock, an abundant source of water, which followed them for forty years, that is, during the whole of their journey through the desert (1 Cor. x. 4). Like the Israelites, we have a Rock, which is called the “Rock of Ages” and which is for us a source of living water springing up into eternal life. It was necessary that the rock be smitten with the rod of the judgment of GOD, the rod which had smitten the river so that it became blood. “For the transgression of my people He was smitten” (Isa. liii. 8).

There are “waters of quietness” beside which He leads us (Ps. xxiii. 2), “the waters of Shiloah that go softly” (Isa. viii. 6), waters which are always at hand for us as they were for Israel in the wilderness.

How can we explain, then, the murmuring of the people, when the congregation, almost at the end of their course, strove with Moses because there was no water for them? (Numbers xx.). The rock was still there and had been smitten, but it no longer gave water. Have we a thirst in the wilderness in spite of the presence of Him Who is with us, Who will never leave us nor forsake us? Alas, have we never murmured about thirst and “forsaken the Fountain of living waters, and hewed us out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water”?

(Jer. ii. 13). Happy are they who have never done this. Why do we complain about thirst like the Israelites, and why does the rock not give water? "Ye have not because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (Jas. iv. 2, 3). God gives Moses the means of getting water. "Speak ye unto the rock." How easy it is! It is ready to give abundance of refreshing waters, speak to it. It is ready to bless, ask for its blessing. The fountain is there, at hand, ready. It was smitten once, that is enough. He has offered one sacrifice for sins. (Heb. x. 12). Moses did not understand this. He wanted to begin again with that which had been accomplished and perfectly accomplished once for all; he wanted to use the rod, a rod of judgment, whose work was done and which was now no more than dead wood; he wanted to use its power to the rock to give drink to the people. What a lesson for us! The death of the LORD, accomplished once for all, is sufficient. Is not CHRIST entered into the glory, the great High Priest interceding for His own, ever a Source of renewed blessing? Has He not accomplished a perfect sacrifice, and is He not able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him? (Heb. vii. 25), and to give them abundantly all that they need?

What grace on His part! "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful" (2 Tim. ii. 13). The people should not suffer for the unbelief of His servant, and so water flows abundantly from the rock and quenches their thirst. Moses and Aaron alone should suffer for their own unbelief.

What ought they to have done? What have we to do in order to quench the thirst of our brethren and to open for them the fountains of blessing and refreshment? Speak to the Rock, get into communion again with Him, present before God *the* rod, not ours, but that of the great High Priest, the rod which "budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds" (Num. xvii. 8), the power of eternal life which arose out of death at the Cross. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by

the blood of JESUS, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; . . . let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. x. 19-22). In so doing we shall never thirst.

M.J.K.

## The Judgment Seat and the Believer

*(continued from page 112)*

**P**AUL united in himself the persons of a wise architect and of a tireless evangelist, a good pastor and a faithful teacher. We know now, constrained by the love of CHRIST, he devoted himself entirely to the service of the saints. This is why he could think with such heartfelt joy of the judgment seat where each shall see the result of his work. In several passages (2 Cor. i. 14; Phil ii. 16; iv. 1) he says that the saints shall be his glory in the day of JESUS CHRIST, and he writes to the Thessalonians: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our LORD JESUS CHRIST at His coming?" (1 Thess. ii. 19.)

The apostle John also speaks of his children in the faith, of "confidence" at the coming of the LORD, and of the "full reward" which he hopes to receive. (1 Jn. ii. 28; 2 Jn. 8.)

Truly the recompense of these faithful servants will be great. We shall see and rejoice in it. It we are not, like the apostles, chosen instruments of the LORD, the divine principles always remain the same and those who keep the Word of the LORD in times of small things and do not deny His Name shall not lose their reward. It is to such that it is said in the epistle to Philadelphia: "Hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown." (Rev. iii. 11.)

As we think of these things we must ask ourselves: Why do we not use our time more faithfully, the hours which fly past and do not return? Why do we not set aside self, as knowing that we are dead with CHRIST? Shall we not all be able to think more about the judgment seat and let the



thought have more effect on our spirit and walk so that the blessed results of which the apostle speaks may be produced in us : "We persuade men ; but we are made manifest unto GOD ; and I trust are also made manifest in your consciences."

The LORD says : "Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to give unto every one according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12). He who knows the significance of the judgment seat and who walks in the Light can answer to this solemn word : "Amen, come, LORD JESUS !" *Trans. T.H.*

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## The Red Heifer

(*Numbers xix.*)

THE RED HEIFER teaches the children of Israel on the surface of it that the work of the day of atonement had not so completely dealt with all sin that they might treat daily defilements as immaterial. It is impossible to exaggerate the value of the shedding of CHRIST's blood for our sins. It does give no more conscience of sins. We are justified by His blood; yea more, with CHRIST we have died to sin; and we are alive to GOD in Him. But though this is all quite true (and was then set forth imperfectly as far as figure could, when we look at an Israelite), such grace is the strongest motive why we cannot tamper with what is defiled. The very fact that we are cleansed perfectly before GOD *is a loud call to us not to endure a blot before men.* It was to guard His people from soils by the way that GOD gave here a provision so remarkable. "A red heifer" was to be brought "without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke," a striking picture of CHRIST, but of CHRIST in a way not often spoken of in Scripture. The requirement supposes not only the absence of such blemishes as was indispensable in every sacrifice; but here expressly also it must have never known the yoke, that is, the pressure of sin. How this speaks of the Antitype! CHRIST was always perfectly acceptable unto GOD. "And ye shall give her to Eleazar

the priest that he may bring her forth without the camp, and one shall slay her before his face."

The blood was taken and put seven times before the tabernacle. It was quite right that the connection should be kept up with the great truth of the blood that makes atonement, and that vindicates God wherever the thought of sin occurs. But its special use points to another feature. The sprinkling of the blood is the continual witness of the truth of sacrifice; but the characteristic want follows. "And one shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn. And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer." Then we find the ashes of the heifer laid up in a clean place. "And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation; it is a purification for sin." In what sense? Simply and solely with a view to communion, *i.e.* of restoring it when broken. It is not at all a question of establishing relationships (that was already done), but on the ground of the subsisting relation the Israelite must allow nothing by the way which would sully the holiness that suits the sanctuary of JEHOVAH. This was the point.

Such is the true standard as set forth in this type. It is not merely the law of JEHOVAH condemning this or that. This shadow of good things demanded separation from anything inconsistent with the sanctuary. The form which this ordinance took was in respect of travelling through the wilderness, where they were exposed constantly to the contact of death. It is death that is here brought in as defiling in various shapes and degrees. Supposing one touched the dead body of a man, he shall be unclean seven days. What was to be done? "He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean." It was not permitted to purify one's self on the first day. Am I wrong in think-

ing *à priori* we might have thought this haste much the best course? Why not at once? It was ordered not for the first but the third day. When there is defilement on the spirit, when anything succeeds in interrupting communion with God, *it is of deep moral importance that we should thoroughly realise our offence.*

This seems the meaning of its being done on the third day. *It was to be no mere sudden feeling that one had sinned, and there was an end of the matter.* The Israelite was obliged to remain till the third day under a sense of his sin. This was a painful position. He had to reckon up the days, and remain till the third, when he has the water of separation first sprinkled on him. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses" (the well-known provision in every case) "every word shall be established." Thus we see he who had come in contact with death must remain an adequate time to show the deliberate sense of it, and must take the place of one that was defiled before God. A hasty expression of sorrow *does not prove genuine repentance for sin.* We see something like this with children. There is many a one who has a child ready enough to ask for forgiveness, or even own its fault; but the child that feels it most is not always quick. A child who is far slower to own it may have, and commonly has, a deeper sense of what confession means. However, I am not now speaking of the natural character; but I say that it is right and becoming (and this I believe to be the general meaning of the LORD's ordinance here) that he who is defiled (that is, has his communion with God interrupted) should take that place seriously. Of course, in Christianity it is not a question of days, but of that which corresponds to the meaning; which is that there should be time enough to prove a real sense of the evil of one's defilement as dishonouring God and His sanctuary, and not the haste which really evinces an absence of right feeling. He who duly purified himself on the third day was in effect purified on the seventh day.

Thus, first of all, he has a sense of his sin in the presence of this grace that provides against it; then, he has at last the precious realisation of grace in the

presence of sin. The two sprinklings are one the converse of the other. They set forth how sin had brought shame on grace, and how grace had triumphed over sin. This seems the meaning, and more particularly for the following reason. The ashes of the heifer express the effect of the consuming judgment of GOD on the LORD JESUS because of sin. It is not simply blood showing that I am guilty, and that GOD gives a sacrifice to put it away. The ashes attest the judicial dealing of GOD in the consumption, as it were, of that blessed offering which came under all the holy sentence of GOD through our sins. The water (or SPIRIT by the word) gives us to realise CHRIST's having suffered for that which we, alas! are apt to feel so little, if not to trifle with it.

There is another thing to notice in passing. The water of purification was not merely wanted when one touched a dead body, but in different modes and measures. That might be called a great case, but the institution shows that GOD takes notice of the least thing. So should we—at least in ourselves. "This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent; all that comes into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean. And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days." "The bone of a man" might be a much lesser object, but whatever defiles comes into notice, and is provided for in CHRIST our LORD. Thus GOD would habituate us to the nicest discernment and *the most thorough self-judgment*. It is not only grave matters that defile, but little occasions, as men would say, which come between us and communion with our GOD and FATHER. At the same time He provides the unchanging remedy of grace for every defilement. W.K.

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Abide where GOD has stationed thee,  
 Let faithfulness and hope endure,  
 And if a cross thy lot should be,  
 Shun not the fires that make thee pure!  
 If small and humble be thy sphere,  
 This is the place—GOD wants thee here.

## Hearing the Rod

BY THE EDITOR

*"Hear ye the rod, and Who hath appointed it."*  
—Micah vi. 9.

**T**O expect the whole country to sit in sackcloth and ashes is to expect the impossible in view of Christendom's haughty spirit; but one might reasonably expect the number of those who do so to be greater, and to increase. It is seriously and long overdue to God." So wrote a veritable man of God recently in view of the present tragic situation in Europe, and the menace to this country; and this witness is true.

Seven centuries before CHRIST came, Micah the Morasthite (whose very name in its fullest and original sense *Micaiah* is a challenge, *Who is like the LORD?*) bade his countrymen: "Hear ye the rod, and Who hath appointed it," as then being long overdue to God.

To the student of the times in which this prophet lived and exercised his ministry, much that is happening now presents striking similarities, and the reaction of his countrymen to the scourge of war presents also a parallel to our own.

The almost entire dislocation of society, and breaking of all the most sacred human bands which bind men together, which has been proceeding in Europe these many months, likewise found their counterpart in Micah's times. A sense of inherent sufficiency comparable to that in the Maginot line, and the great dykes and waterways of the Low Countries, was joined in his day to a kind of unconcern as to the need of foreign alliances, which since the defection of France has now perforce crept over ourselves. Treachery abounded; rumour was a secret weapon, as chapter vii. 5, 6, shows; and all relationships were put out of joint as a selfish recklessness made strides throughout the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

It was to such people, in such days of visitation, that Micah exclaimed: "The LORD's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see Thy Name: hear ye the rod, and Who hath appointed it."

"All which can be thought of," says Pusey, "of fear, terror, motives to repentance, awe, hope, trust, is in that word *Who*. It is God; hopes and fears may be infinite." But it is God Who rules in the kingdoms of men.

Here the longsuffering of God with the warning of His chastisement is compressed and expressed in this great word: "Hear ye the rod, and Who hath appointed it." For the same prophet is also empowered to proclaim the truth that God "*delighteth in mercy*" to nations, as well as to the individual. But the method of receiving His mercy in both cases is confession of sin and real repentance. "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity? . . . He retaineth not His anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy" (Micah vii. 18).

God's intervention in English history right down to the miracle of the Dunkirk evacuation is remarkable, but not to be traded upon as though forsooth He were the God of Great Britain only and therefore *bound to intervene to our advantage* in every time of national emergency. We must "*Hear the rod*" of His correction and consider "*Who hath appointed it.*"

He is a great God and "greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him" (Psl. lxxxix. 7). There *is* such a thing, though often completely overlooked now by many, as "the terror of the LORD." There *are* motives that should move us to a hearty repentance as we remember "all my ways are before Thee" (Psl. cxix. 168).

There *are* public forgetfulnesses of God to which we have grown so accustomed that they do not startle us. It was, says Daniel, "Whilst I was speaking, and praying, and confessing *my sin and the sin of my people Israel*, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God," that he received a divine assurance of having been heard of God.

May not we, who profess our awe, and hope, and trust in the living God, challenge our own souls as to how often, and for how long, He has seen and heard us confessing *our* sins and the sins of *our people*? Yet they *are* many, and greatly aggravated by our indifference to them, which in itself is a grave sin to be repented of.

"But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared" (Psl. cxxx. 4), and this should encourage us as we pray for the nation, and for ourselves, in these great days of trial through which we are passing.

There is a solemn reminder in Psl. ix. 17, where it is affirmed: "The wicked shall be turned into hell and *all the nations that forget God*." The word "hell" is not here distinctively the place of torment, but "Sheol" or (as J.N.D. note on Psl. vi. 5) "Hades," one vaguely expressing the place or state of the soul separated from the body in the case of an individual; and nationally, a place of forgetfulness where all boasted history, achievements, earthly pomp and glory are clean forgotten. The nation that forgets God inevitably sinks down into forgetfulness. It is the nemesis of retributive justice.

While we as Christians recognise and rejoice in the fact that we are a "colony of heaven on earth," yet *being on earth* it is ours to pray for the peace and the good of the land in which we live, as also for "Kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable [tranquil and quiet] life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of GOD our SAVIOUR; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 2-4). The R.V. makes the latter portion somewhat clearer: This is good and acceptable in the sight of GOD our SAVIOUR Who *willeth* that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth. Not divine compulsion, but God's gracious activity towards all men is here stressed, and that same gracious concern is expected from His children to be shown about others—hence to pray, and give thanks, supplicate and intercede for all men. The LORD mercifully help us as individual believers, and men as a nation, to "*Hear the rod and Who hath appointed it.*"

"We leave it to Himself  
To choose and to command;  
With wonder filled, we soon shall see  
How wise, how strong His Hand."

## Songs on Dark Days

**W**HILST waiting for a train one cold foggy morning, the sweet notes of a bird singing in a near-by but invisible tree arrested the attention. The little songster was indeed out of sight but its song must have cheered all who heard it that dull morning.

Like Solomon in Canticles ii. 12, we are apt to associate the sweet singing of the birds with springtime or bright sunny days. "The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come." But that little bird was singing merrily away in the fog on a cheerless day. Surely there is a lesson we may ourselves learn from this.

We find it fairly easy to sing when all is going well with us, but can we, or rather do we, sing when the path is clouded over by actual or threatened troubles?

That some of God's people were able to do this is taught in Scripture, where such an one as Elihu could speak to the greatly tried and afflicted Job of "GOD my MAKER Who giveth *songs in the night*." Or again the sweet Psalmist of Israel may be heard singing his songs in many a dark night of his history. "I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall be continually in my mouth . . . O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His Name together" (Psalm xxxiv. 1, 3).

The story, too, of Paul and Silas when thrown into the inner cell of the prison at Philippi tells of songs of praise rising from a dark and gloomy dungeon. With feet made fast in the stocks; stiff and sore from the brutal treatment received; amidst discomfort to an unthinkable degree, yet at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God. Like the little bird out of sight in the tree on that foggy morning, so these two holy singers were out of the sight of the others, but "the prisoners heard them." What wonder must have filled their minds, such singing, in such circumstances, at such an hour. One glorious result of *these "songs in the night"* was seen in the conversion of the Jailer and his household, all of whom believed on the LORD JESUS CHRIST and were saved.

Paul and Silas may well have remembered the words



of the Psalmist: "In the night His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life."

May we think, too, of the dark night of our LORD's betrayal of which the Evangelist says: "And it was night." A deeper darkness than mere natural nightfall had been gathering in that Upper Room where our LORD had just been keeping the Passover with His disciples before He suffered. After Supper, the Passover Supper, they sang a hymn. They always did, it being part of the ritual observance. But the circumstances of that singing as with them He sang of "the Stone which the builders rejected" knowing what it meant for Himself; of "the day which the LORD had made," knowing that beyond the shame and suffering of the morrow, stretched the Day of Resurrection, the Day, too, of glory when Himself straightway glorified would sit down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. "For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame." So with the darkness gathering around, and ever deepening, until it settled like an awful pall on Calvary, He could first sing the Paschal song, then comfort His own, and with the great prayer *for all that ever would believe on Him*, could go forward to accomplish the whole will of God on the Cross.

May these thoughts of this singing in the darkness suggested by the bird on that cold, dull day, help us to sing His praise not only when the way is bright and pleasing but even when it is darkened. We, too, have a joy set before us of being with, and like, Him for ever where there is no darkness but all is light, love and joy.

A.L.M.

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OBSERVE what direction your thoughts and feelings most readily take when you are alone, and you will then form a tolerably correct opinion of your real self.—*Bengel*.

MEDITATION is the mother of devotion, but the daughter of retirement.—*Suckling*.

WE feed upon what we read, but digest only what we meditate upon.—*Bengel*.

## The Brothers

BY QUARTUS

**P**AUL the Aged was led by the HOLY SPIRIT to put upon record much instruction for the BROTHERS. Pithy, pungent, pregnant sentences abound in his epistles specially applicable to us, for QUARTUS, as his name implies, gladly reckons himself "*a brother*" (Rom. xvi. 23).

Remembering the respect for age inculcated under the law: "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God" (Lev. xix. 32), we give them the place of honour by considering first what is written specially concerning them. For wisdom, experience, standing, and influence the elder brethren, the aged men surely should normally take all precedence of those younger in years.

Hence the Apostle instructs Timothy that in his contact with such, deference is to be paid to them. "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father," he says, or as a more literal version renders it: "Reprimand not an elder, but exhort him as a father."

Doubtless some of the elderly brothers at Ephesus caused the young apostolic delegate many very anxious moments, and needed exhorting to do their duty; and of being intreated to remember how the younger ones in the assembly were at times perplexed, if not actually stumbled, by their conduct. *They* were old enough to know better, and should recollect what effect their example might have on others. But Timothy is enjoined not to speak harshly to an older man, *an injunction which some younger brothers have probably never noticed*. These elder men were not official elders; had this been so the word would apply even more strongly. They were simply elderly brothers whose age gave them warrant to be treated with respect, regard, and consideration. They may have needed reproof, but because they were brothers, and aged ones at that, were entitled to all Christian courtesy from those younger in years.

Writing to his delegate in Crete the Apostle, in the things which befit healthful, or sound, Christian teach-

ing, says: "That aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience." The lack of any of these virtues in an elderly brother *is felt by all but himself* to be deplorably inconsistent; but assuming now the active exercise of the first five qualities enumerated by the Apostle, how would it strike our elder brothers to read "Aged men be . . . *sound in patience*." Age is sometimes apt to feel impatient; and, has it never been known even to develop in the brothers into irascibility and irritability? "*Aged men sound in patience*"! What a triumph of grace in some cases this would manifest. Yet our Apostle could pray for the Colossians saints that they "might be strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all *patience*."

Upon this charge to Titus regarding the aged men being healthful, sound in patience, WILLIAM KELLY has a real gem of exposition which all but the aged men, and *some of them doubtless, read with spiritual relish*. Here it is:—

"There is another final want of which the Apostle speaks: that the aged men be healthful—in their patience (or endurance), as well as in faith and love. Evil abounds; but evil, where one abides in faith and love, will not seldom give the opportunity of being above it. It may cause suffering; but in this there is fellowship with the MASTER; and patience well becomes the aged saint. It was a primary sign even for an apostle; as few things seem more sad where it is lacking, particularly among elder men" (Expos. Titus, pp. 57, 58).

Old RICHARD BAXTER has some sound advice for the older brothers: "Another fatal hindrance to a heavenly walk and conversation is our too frequent disputes about lesser truths. A disputatious spirit is a sure sign of an unsanctified spirit. They are usually men least acquainted with the heavenly life who are the most violent disputers about the circumstantialia of religion. Yea, though you were sure that your opinions were true, yet when the chiefest of your zeal is turned to these things, the life of grace soon decays within. Let every sure truth even, have but its true proportion, and I am confident that the hundredth part of our time and contention would

not be spent as it is spent." So far Master RICHARD BAXTER, and is he not right?

"I am not free to come to wrangle on ecclesiastical irregularities. We have argued against these things for many years and are as far from the desired goal as ever. Only the LORD can break us down and lead us to see where we are wrong. Humbly confessing our failure before Him, and that together, will work for us the desired change." So wrote a sober, grave, discreet, right-minded elder brother, an example of "that moderation in spirit and conduct which bespeaks circumspectness and sense of the presence of God," to again quote W. Kelly. And the writer of this paragraph above given is very strict as *to evil in doctrine, practice, and associations*, but happily free from that disputatious spirit which Richard Baxter deplored.

#### THE YOUNGER BROTHER

To young Timothy, excellent model for all young brothers, comes the personal charges, first to be strong [strengthened] in the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS; then to "study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth; and, finally to "flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call upon the LORD out of a pure heart."

His youthful soul is directed at once to the source of all spiritual strength and continuous strengthening — "the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS." Then he is to present *himself* to God, studying, giving diligence to be approved as a workman that needed not to be ashamed. Conduct, character and conversation all befitting one in whose lips was the law of truth because "the whole counsel of God was constantly the subject of his meditation." Finally, he is to "flee youthful lusts and follow after righteousness, faith, love and peace with them that call on the LORD out of a pure heart."

Youthful lusts here, are not the same as another Apostle warns all the saints against. In 1 Peter ii. 11, the word is: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from *fleshly* lusts, which war against

the soul." These are gluttony, drunkenness, impurity and sloth, to which all, or any, may be tempted if the body is over-indulged and pampered. But *youthful* lusts are anything but sensual, such things as personal ambition, impetuosity, self-confidence, undue levity, self-assertion and the like. These are what often spoil the younger brothers, and retard their progress in divine things, and their usefulness in real service to the LORD. It is a good thing to remember that no amount of talent, gift or ability; no amount of loyalty to truth even; no amount of humility, strange as it seems, can make up in the younger brother for the wisdom, and the experience, and the standing, and the influence of the older men who have for many years been quietly following on to know the LORD. A spirit of pride, haughtiness, arrogance and self-sufficiency, may, like gluttony, drunkenness, impurity and sloth, enter where there is unwatchfulness and lack of constant prayer. To be planted in the house of the LORD, and flourish in the courts of our God, and to still bring forth fruit in old age, is all of grace; yet, as the Apostle Peter exhorts: "Brethren, give *diligence* to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

To what things is he referring? Hark back to verse 5, in this first chapter of his second Epistle, where he writes: "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." Faith, courage, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, brotherly love are all conditioned by divine love, and these to be not only in you, but to increase so that they make you neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The LORD enable us "brothers," whether elder or younger, to *labour* that we may be always well pleasing to Him.

"Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." But visions of the future must lead to diligence in the present. It was by faith and

patience the elders obtained promises, and faith, patience and spiritual energy are called for to-day if the visions of the young men are to be anything except visionary. And visionary young men are apt to be of little practical use.

"Your old men shall dream dreams." What kind of dreams does the text suggest? Not dreams of "the good old days" which never *were* so good as some imagine, for "distance lends enchantment in *time* as well as space," but dreams of what may yet be accomplished if by God's grace we wake up to make them real. Oh! for a reviving amongst brothers young and old, that shall demonstrate that if the days are evil, which undoubtedly they are, yet "*the path of the just* is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

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## True Prayer

**I**T has been well said that "prayer is the expression of the Christian's dependence upon God. It is human weakness clinging to almighty strength." It might also be said that prayer is the manifestation of full consciousness as to our own helplessness and the realisation of power and grace and love in Another to come and help us. True prayer is the expression of felt need, either as to one's self or others, and earnest beseeching of God, the all-powerful One, to intervene on our behalf. This is beautifully seen in the words of David in Psa. cix. 21, 22: "Do Thou for me, O God the LORD, for Thy name's sake: because Thy mercy is good, deliver Thou me. For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me." True prayer is the bringing of petitions and praise to God, and *not the reciting of a lot of truth to Him Who knows it all far better than we do.*

True prayer comes therefore from the heart and is not a mere saying of words which may have been learnt by the intellect and are only said as a form. Many may go through a form of prayer daily with their lips, but

if the words said do not come from the heart, it is not true prayer at all and rises no higher than the ceiling.

A careful examination of many prayers recorded in Scripture will reveal that they begin with an "Oh!" which comes from the innermost depths of the soul. You cannot say "Oh" with your lips merely; the deeper recesses of one's being are involved in the saying of this word of earnest entreaty. It is the "Oh" of soul agony or deep concern, as the following prayers will show.

Abraham, yearning for the souls in Sodom, said unto the LORD, "Oh, let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak," etc. (Gen. xviii. 30, 32, also chap. xvii. 18). "Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh, that Thou wouldst bless me indeed," etc. (1 Chron. iv. 10). In that wonderful prayer of our LORD in John xvii. an "O" is found twice. "O FATHER, glorify Thou Me," etc. (v. 5) and "O Righteous FATHER, the world hath not known Thee" (v. 25). And three times in the Garden the LORD prayed, "O My FATHER." More could be added, but this shows what earnestness characterises true prayer. God delights to have us come in childlike confidence and dependence and tell Him everything. True prayer is the beseeching of God for His mind and wisdom as to all our affairs and His interests down here. It is waiting upon Him for guidance and quietly learning His mind in His presence. True prayer is not bringing our self-made plans to Him and asking his approval and help to carry them out. No, this, which is often done, is only the activity of self-will and not the quiet waiting upon God in true prayer to learn His plans for us.

For true prayer, then, the soul must be quiet before the LORD and all the restless strivings of the fleshly heart at an end. Then the LORD's still, small, but certain and distinct, voice can be heard in answer to our requests for guidance and needs. In Ezek. i. 25, it was when the living creatures had stood and let down their wings of activity that a voice from the firmament was heard. So it must be with us if we would hear God's voice to us. Often we are in too much of a hurry to wait in God's presence for His answer. Our wings have not been fully let down. And so we find that while we

are still praying the heart is thinking of the work that is before us to do and which we are anxious to rush off to. Thus it is then that our heart is not really in our prayer and we are only "saying prayers."

Then, too, our lack of faith and confidence in God to do for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" often keeps us from true, believing prayer. So that instead of carrying our burdens to the LORD in prayer, we worry and carry the burdens and forget to pray. And when we do take our burdens to the LORD, instead of *leaving* them there, and getting His wonderful peace that passeth all understanding to fill our hearts, *we carry them along back with us and have no peace*. If we come to God with our burdens in true, believing prayer, we will, like Hannah of old, exchange our burden and grief for a happy countenance and go our way in peace and joy (1 Sam. i. 15-18).

May God give us all to walk more in dependence upon the LORD, and in earnest, believing, true, quiet prayer and communion in the HOLY GHOST. R.K.C.

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## Seeing the Glory of God

**T**HE Christian's threefold joyful ambition is to know God; to rule the kingdom of his own life in keeping with the will of God; and to accomplish spiritual service for others. His highest privilege is to know the LORD. Regeneration means a revelation from the Divine SPIRIT to the human spirit, which is awakened out of its sleep of death and endowed with a new quality of life, and a new power of perception.

"I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory," was the intense longing of Moses. And our LORD's desire, as expressed in His high-priestly prayer, was that those who belonged to Him should see His glory. The glory of God in His character, His Word, His works; it is His "Self-expression."

We discern God's power and intelligence in nature: "The heavens declare the glory of God." It is well to cultivate openness of soul towards God's great picture-book of nature; the things that are seen are representa-



tions of the things not seen, as our LORD constantly pointed out.

But the *Word* of GOD satisfies, as the *works* of GOD never can do; for in the Word we have the inspired record of what GOD told men about Himself. "A glory gilds the sacred page," the glory of the self-revelation of its Author. Every regenerate person sees the glory of GOD in the Bible because he knows its Author.

It is, however, chiefly in CHRIST, the living Word, that we see the glory of GOD. Through CHRIST we know GOD as FATHER, and of Him John wrote, "We beheld His glory . . . full of grace and truth." To the believer the Name of JESUS is a song in one word, a strain of heavenly music. Consider His moral glories as revealed in the Gospels. In Him truth is mellowed by grace, and grace is strengthened by truth. In Him we see *a perfect blending of majesty and meekness, dignity and humility, holiness and compassion, righteousness and love*. "O the love of CHRIST," said one, "we cannot understand it now, but what a beautiful study it will be for eternity." In the ages to come we shall enjoy the boundless wealth of the lovingkindness of GOD in CHRIST. But here and now, as we grow in grace, we are learning more and more of its everlasting strength.

The Cross is the supreme achievement of the Captain of our salvation.

"Truth, wisdom, justice, power and love  
In all their glory shone,  
When JESUS left the courts above,  
And died to save His own."

The Cross tells us how much GOD cares for *righteousness*, and what He thinks of sin; and the Cross is the supreme act of GOD's self-giving *love*; it tells how much He loved His world and how much He suffers for it. The Cross solves the stupendous problem, "How can a just GOD forgive sin?" Let us always make the Cross central in our thinking; it is the foundation of all our hopes.

We see the glory of GOD in our own redemption. When Barnabas saw "the grace of GOD" in the disciples at Antioch, he rejoiced. The Church is GOD's supreme

achievement, His masterpiece. Each individual Christian is a fresh thought from God to the Church, and a living illustration of His power and love. All progress and victory in the Christian life exhibits the glory of God; it is the result of the impact of the grace of God upon human personalities. It is a great joy for us to see God at work in the life.

When Israel was being pursued by Pharaoh, and when destruction seemed inevitable, God, through Moses, commanded His people to "stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD." We to-day behold His glory as He changes the things that oppose, and works deliverance for those who trust and obey.

According to John xi. 40, it is those who *believe* that see the glory of God. For faith is the "evidence of things not seen." And the LORD reveals Himself especially to the *obedient*. Faith is a condition of His working in and through us. God is active where faith is strong.

May it be our ambition to grow continually in and by the knowledge of God and of His will, and to see His glory with ever-increasing clearness. E.A.

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## True Friendship

**T**HE closest vision of a man is not always the most helpful vision; nay, you are sure to find some blemish, some flaw, some stain, some evil, and often quite unexpectedly, in that very trait that had attracted you to your friend; he is not so true, not so pure, not so noble. And when you become sure of that, your own growth into truth, purity and nobleness, so far as his influence is concerned, ceases. *It is just here that one may show the most beautiful of all the graces of friendship—generosity, forgiveness, carefulness, charity.* In every true friendship there must be much of "*the charity that covereth,*" concealing where it cannot help the human frailty and imperfection.—*Dr. Wayland Hoyt.*

## A Prison Song

*(Madam Guyon spent ten years of her life in prison, from 1695 to 1705. Here is a song she wrote in prison.)*

“A LITTLE bird am I  
Shut from the fields of air;  
And in my cage I sit and sing  
To Him Who placed me there;  
Well pleased a prisoner to be  
Because, my God, it pleaseth Thee.

Nought have I else to do;  
I sing the whole day long;  
And He Whom most I love to please,  
Doth listen to my song;  
He caught and bound my wandering wing,  
But still He bends to hear me sing.

Thou hast an ear to hear;  
A heart to love and bless;  
And though my notes were ere so rude,  
Thou wouldst not hear the less;  
Because Thou knowest, as they fall,  
That same, sweet Love, inspires them all.

My cage confines me round;  
Abroad I cannot fly;  
But though my wing is closely bound,  
My heart's at liberty.  
My prison walls cannot control  
The flight, the freedom of the soul.

Oh, it is good to soar  
These bolts and bars above,  
To Him Whose purpose I adore,  
Whose providence I love;  
And in Thy mighty will to find  
The joy, the freedom of the mind.”

## A Gleaning

**W**E have a wonderful advertisement of a physician from the Spirit of Truth—“*Who healeth all thy diseases.*” Can He heal hearts wounded with guilt and care? Wounded with rebellious murmuring at His dispensation, coveting what He has withheld, delighting in broken cisterns as though they were the fountains of living waters? Can He heal the bruises of our falls, the dislocations of our backslidings, wounds corrupt through foolishness? It is written, “*Who healeth all thy diseases.*”

Then let us come in the simplicity of sickness, in the helplessness of want. He wants to apply all the virtues of heaven’s dispensary *to our case*, whatever it be; He is master of that disease; we have all His promise, all His skill, all His power, all His Love; His skill is infinite, His compassion boundless. He gives us all His attention as if there were none else to think of on earth. He requires but one thing, to take all He has prescribed, *bitter* as well as *sweet*.

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## Book Notice

*Living Water*, by R. E. Baeyertz, Auckland, N.Z. This book by a New Zealand writer claims to *reveal* important truths in a logical, commonsense, lucid and convincing way that will satisfy the keen Bible student.

Water BAPTISM whether “infant” or “adult” is held up to derision as a meaningless superstition, ridiculed as “an idolatrous practice abhorrent to God” (author’s own words) while the LORD’S SUPPER is again and again affirmed to be just an ordinary meal, the Apostle Paul’s action on the ship being cited as evidence, when he “broke bread” with the crew.

The writer claims that his book is based upon what flashed into his mind at the impressionable age of 18, and we can well believe it. But why views so under-developed should be so over-exposed to present such a caricature of the teaching of Scripture must remain a mystery. We strongly repudiate almost every word as being clean contrary to the general tenor of Holy Scripture.

## The Joy of God's Salvation

*(Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation—Ps. li. 12).*

THE joy of GOD's salvation is a joy that may be known, may be lost, and may be restored. Of this, in each particular, the penitent Psalmist is an illustration. He had forgotten his longings for righteousness, had flung away the joys of communion with GOD, had darkened his inner life, ended his prosperity, and made the enemies of the LORD blaspheme. "All the fences and their whole array," which GOD's mercies and his own experiences had reared as a kind of moral and spiritual safeguard for his life "one cunning sin sweeps quite away."

Now at long last he pours out confession of sin, entreaty for forgiveness, and desire for restoration of that joy of GOD's salvation which he had forfeited by his grievous wickedness. The white light not only of an accusing conscience, but even more intense of GOD's holy law, has been focussed upon the foul dark spot which for a year spite of increasing uneasiness he has sought to keep covered. His companion Psalm (xxxii.), described something of the obstinate dumbness, constant torture of mind and body, and the dread of GOD filling his dry and dusty heart while he "kept silence" and his "bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long." It had been a year of spiritual and physical unhappiness; the bread had been sweet for a moment, but, as the lawful son of David and Bathsheba wrote years after: "Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel." (Prov. xx. 17.)

Dr. Maclaren says: "Nobody buys a little passing pleasure in evil at so dear a rate, or keeps it for so short a time, as a good man. He cannot make himself as others. Old habits quickly reassert their force, conscience soon lifts again its solemn voice; and while worse men are enjoying the strong flavoured meats on sin's table, the servant of GOD, who has been seduced to prefer them for a moment to the 'light bread' from heaven, tastes them already bitter in his mouth."

This the now conscience-stricken and thoroughly convicted penitent feels, and exclaims: "Against Thee,

Thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight." This too, at the moment when the enormity of his wrong against his unsuspecting neighbour had been borne in upon his soul as never before. He now sees his wrongdoing to be a complex evil, a transgression of GOD's known law and will; and iniquity—a crooked perversity of dealing—with his neighbours; and a sin like leprosy defiling himself. He prays that his *transgression* may be blotted out; that he may be washed thoroughly from his *iniquity*; that he may be cleansed from his *sin*. "Of the three words used for pardon, namely, *blot out*, *wash* and *cleanse*," says Dr. W. T. Davison, "the first is used of the wiping away of debt, the second of the washing of clothes from deeply ingrained filth by kneading, and the third of declaring clean from leprosy." So he desires that his transgression may be blotted out, cancelled, wiped out, as a debt is blotted out; that the filthiness of flesh and spirit may be completely removed from him; that like the defiled lepers when ritually cleansed by the priest were pronounced clean officially, and as once more fit to mix with healthy persons, so it might be in his case now.

Then "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation" becomes for David as always for every true penitent the cry of the heart. To have known the joy of communion with GOD and to have forfeited it fills the contrite soul with self-disgust and self-judgment. Too deeply moved for many words, he exclaims: "I have sinned against the LORD"—in the language in which they were uttered but two words only. The sob of the penitent, the cry of a broken and a contrite spirit, and so not despised by GOD. How swift and sufficient the Divine response, "The LORD hath put away thy sin"; and from the sullen sadness of the year of keeping silence to the real though shaded peace which once more led him into the calm joy of GOD's salvation.

For the Christian believer the joy of God's salvation goes far beyond what the Psalmist could possibly have known. The salvation of GOD depends upon the work of CHRIST completed upon the Cross, and the testimony which GOD has given to it by the resurrection and glorification of the SON of MAN Who humbled Himself to become such,

in order to be GOD's salvation unto the ends of the earth. The *joy of salvation* depends upon communion with GOD. "Our fellowship is with the FATHER, and with His SON JESUS CHRIST. And these things we write unto you that your joy may be full" (1 John i. 3, 4). Joy is different from pleasure in that it possesses a permanent quality of real happiness which increases by enjoyment. Pleasure, even the purest, exhausts and is itself soon exhausted, lacking as it does the peculiar quality of joy. To joy in GOD through our LORD JESUS CHRIST by Whom we have received the reconciliation to Him is the highest reach of Christian experience here and hereafter. But alas! this joy may be lost, although the salvation, thank GOD, of every true believer on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, is eternally secure. He Himself says, "I give unto them [My sheep] eternal life; and they shall never perish." (S. John x. 28.)

Among the readers of this paper may be some who have never known what is meant by the joy of GOD's salvation, because they do not know the SAVIOUR as their own SAVIOUR. To such the clear call is: "Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace" (Job xxii. 21), and the assurance for such is "Believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST and thou shalt be saved." No salvation, no joy. The discord within; the uncertainty as to the future; the nightmare of the Judgment Day when all hidden things will be brought to light; the burden on the conscience of things done which ought not to have been done; and of those many other things which should have been done; all these preclude any thought of joy apart from the knowledge of GOD's salvation. But all this may be faced up to, forgiven for the sake of Him Who died for the ungodly, and forgotten, or at anyrate never brought up against us any more, through acquainting oneself with GOD, and so being at peace through our LORD JESUS CHRIST. "For there is none other Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.)

The joy of forgiveness, of justification, of peace with GOD through our LORD JESUS CHRIST, is part of the joy of GOD's salvation known by all who in true repentance and faith acquaint now themselves with Him and so find peace.

To those who *have* known the joy of GOD's salvation and yet have lost it, an equally definite message is sent. "*Return unto Me for I have redeemed thee. I will heal their backsliding I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away.*" Or again, "Take with you words and return to the LORD, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." For the backslider in heart is filled with the fruit of his doings, and joy departs as the SPIRIT of GOD is grieved. While David himself is a striking example of this, is it however quite an unknown thing to hear it said, and alas! sometimes even to feel what the hymn writer says :

Where is the blessedness I knew  
When first I saw the LORD ?  
Where is the soul-refreshing view  
Of JESUS and His word ?

Back we must go to where we left the highroad of communion with God, of ready response to His word, of prompt obedience to His will. "*Return unto Me,*" so will the lost joy be found once more. CHRIST for the erring saint is the sole refuge and sure remedy. "Acquaint now thyself with *Him.*" "*Return unto Me for I have redeemed thee.*"

To that happy band of pilgrims who *have* known, and *still enjoy* the joy of GOD's salvation the message is "*Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say unto you rejoice.*" He is the spring of perennial joy ; He it is Who puts joy and gladness into our hearts beyond what the highest material blessedness can supply ; He it is in Whom we can truly rejoice.

Rejoice in Him, again, again,  
The SPIRIT strikes the chord ;  
And faith takes up the happy strain  
Our joy is in the LORD.

The joy of GOD's salvation is at least the joy of sins forgiven for CHRIST's sake Who Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree ; it is also the joy of knowing Himself to be our living justification before GOD ; it is further, the joy of an overcoming life in CHRIST Who strengthens us ; and yet more the joy of yielding oneself entirely to CHRIST our



rightful LORD and OWNER. To this must be added the joy of an increasing experience of all this blessedness belonging to the believer here and now.

Life, rest, and peace, the flowers of deathless bloom,  
The SAVIOUR gives us—not beyond the tomb—  
But here and now : on earth some glimpse is given  
Of joys which wait us through the gates of heaven."

The joy of GOD'S salvation comes through knowing Him Who is "GOD'S salvation unto the ends of the earth," the LORD JESUS CHRIST as SAVIOUR, REDEEMER, LORD and MASTER, until the joyful spirit of the adoring believer intelligently and wholeheartedly exclaims :—

Not my own, but saved by JESUS,  
Who redeemed me by His blood :  
Gladly I accept the message,  
I belong to CHRIST the LORD.

Not my own, oh ! not my own,  
SAVIOUR, I belong to Thee ;  
All I have, and all I hope for,  
Thine for all eternity.

Well may one who has never known this joy crave it ; well may one who has known and tasted that the LORD is gracious, but has slipped back or turned aside, pray, Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation ; and yet even more will the one most happy in the joy of GOD'S salvation desire still further to know "the love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge."

W.G.T.

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## On Meddling with God

BY QUARTUS.

(2 Chron. xxxv. 21.)

**W**HATEVER his motive, which no one can rightly judge, Josiah made a first-class mistake when he *meddled with God* in the matter of Pharaoh-Necho on the latter's way to join battle with Carchemish the Assyrian

king. That GOD had other servants beside himself, and engaged in other tasks than those allotted to himself, does not appear to have occurred to Josiah. Did he perchance presume too much on his own past faithfulness, and the success that had attended his labours in GOD's service, and forget that he was at best only a servant? In any case, the kindly remonstrance of the Egyptian monarch was disregarded and with fatal result. "Forbear thee from *meddling with GOD*;" or as the New Trans. renders it "*Keep aloof from GOD Who is with me.*" And we are expressly told that this warning came "*from the mouth of GOD.*" Then disguising himself, the better to secure the protection which he might be doubtful of obtaining from GOD Whose governmental purposes he had set himself all unwittingly to oppose, he persists in *meddling with GOD's servant*, therefore with GOD.

One of the enigmas of life is why a good, faithful man with a splendid record for fidelity should succumb to a spirit of meddlesomeness, and at last find himself discredited by those who had both admired and been influenced by his earlier faithfulness. Yet good men still persist in making bad mistakes, changing from being helps to being hindrances; and so far as in them lies, albeit (let us charitably hope) unconsciously, thwarting GOD's purposes in the lives of others of His servants. "Follow thou Me" is the command, invitation and privilege addressed to all who would be the true servants of the LORD.

Yet who cannot fear lest like Peter we fail in this important duty through an innate spirit of meddlesomeness which lurks in every hiding-place of our human hearts?

As another has pithily said: "How truly *human* was Peter. CHRIST rivets Peter's mind on his *own* responsibility, saying in effect: 'After all, it is none of your business, Peter, what My other servants do. Your responsibility is to follow Me.' Yet how often this tendency crops up in our own Christian experience! We avoid searching our own hearts by the simple expedient of questioning the work of some one else. We dodge our own responsibility, by criticizing the accomplishments of others. I wonder how often the LORD, if He were on earth to-day would stop *us*

in the midst of our conscious meddling into other people's affairs with these same words? Rather than seeking to delve into the affairs of others, let us examine ourselves, and search our own hearts that GOD may not call us to account."

There was more than firmness, there was a touch of severity, in our LORD's reply to Peter: "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me."

In that reply the LORD rebuked the spirit of meddlingness which in some of us is innate. In the Early Church it often showed itself. The Apostolic injunction to the bright happy Thessalonians, "Study to be quiet and to do your own business"; and the rebuke to "disorderly busy bodies"; and his reference to certain Ephesian women (in 1 Timothy v. 13) show that this meddling spirit infected even happy Christian communities in those early days. Peter, himself remembering this word of the LORD writes, a quarter of a century later, "But let none of you suffer as a busybody in other men's matters."

It may seem a small fault, and even a plea of godly care and interest in the welfare of our brethren may sometimes serve as an opiate to our consciences, but the hard fact remains that a meddling spirit seriously affects spiritual health, and may blind us to "the beam that is in our own eye," the defect patent to all but ourselves.

One great danger besetting a *meddling spirit* is a *ensorious temper*, which even advancing years does not cure; and which is absolutely hostile to any true following of our LORD. We all need to be on our guard, watching and praying lest we enter into a temptation the plausibility of which blinds us to its danger.

There are six things the LORD hates—but the seventh ranks as equally an abomination to Him. "*He that soweth discord among brethren.*" Apart, above and beyond the desolation this hateful sin has caused in families, what havoc it has wrought in the church of GOD. What a number of heart-burnings it has caused amongst the saints. What a disastrous stumbling-block it has proved to the outside world. How thoroughly GOD detests it—"an *abomination unto Him.*" Yet the indulgence of a meddling spirit, leads inevitably to a censorious temper,

which of necessity sows discord among brethren. *Meddling with God*, which meant in Josiah's case *meddling with God's servant*, is a dangerous business inviting the severe, sharp reprimand, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own Master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." (Rom. xiv. 4.) This should surely be pondered lest we be found "*meddling with God*."

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## Some Thoughts on Psalms i. and cxix.

"**I**N the first Psalm, we have simply the godly remnant on the earth characterised by individual faithfulness."\* It is the first of the "blessed" Psalms, and in it brings before us the blessedness of CHRIST, Who when here on earth was pre-eminently *the* godly man.

As we look back on the holy record of His life, in whatever character we view Him, whether *walking* amongst the ungodly, *standing* or *sitting*, His delight is ever found in the law of JEHOVAH, and by day and night He is found meditating in it. It is truly hidden within His Heart and for the first time in man's history GOD could look down on One Who was obedient, sinless and dependent.

He was indeed like a tree planted by the rivers of water; and we can adoringly look back on the evidences of His seasonal fruit for GOD. This never failed, it was ever full, and GOD had continually before Him the frankincense of the Meat Offering. (Lev. ii.)

His trials, with all their variableness, whether hidden, secret or open (however fierce they were) only served to bring out in increasing fulness the evidence of His blessed perfection.

With Him there was no withering of the leaf or decay, whatsoever He did prospered, so that at the end of the journey He could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do."

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\* J.N.D., *Synopsis*, vol. ii., p. 68.

In Psalm cxix. we again see Him—the One Who has marked out the path for us in which to follow Him—the undefiled One, walking in JEHOVAH'S law, keeping His testimonies, seeking Him with the whole heart. The light shone brightly on His path and testimony from start to finish ; there never had been, and never could be, such depths and completeness of trial ; and as we consider Him, we see the flower and the fruit ever present in all its lovely perfection. The Galatian epistle gives us a sort of nosegay, or may we say, to change the figure, a sample basket of this divine fruit so precious to God.

Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Kindness, Goodness, Fidelity, Meekness, Self-control, are all fully and perfectly manifested. We can indeed say :

“No subject so glorious as He,  
No theme so affecting to us.”

As those who belong to Him and have been brought nigh to GOD through Him, we can ever thank our GOD and FATHER for giving us to share in His appreciation of CHRIST ; and it is for us to respond to the Apostle John's exhortation “He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself so to walk even as He walked.” (1 John ii. 6.) John had heard our LORD'S talk to His disciples as recorded in the 15th chapter of his Gospel, and now uses the same metaphor as he looks on us as branches abiding in the Vine—grafted in so that the sap of the Vine abides in the branch.

Flower and fruit are thereby expected. Apart from CHRIST we cannot do anything acceptable to GOD, but abiding in Him we shall “walk even as He walked.”

May our eyes be so set on CHRIST that, abiding in Him, GOD may indeed receive His fruit, much fruit, and fruit that shall remain, as our LORD said.

J.J.A.

## Upon One Stone are Seven Eyes

(*Zechariah iii. 9*)

**I**N considering this important subject it may be well, at the outset, to deal with the particular numeral given, which is found here as elsewhere in scripture to signify perfection. And as in symbolic language "the eyes" or "eyes" signify intelligence, and further, in the passage under consideration, "seven" and "eyes" are brought together, it is obvious that the correct interpretation of these two symbols here conjoined is, that they thus are expressive of the perfection of intelligence.

This boundless range of a vision, so penetrative and clear-sighted that no object can possibly be hidden from it, had been pointedly referred to by earlier inspired writers, and ascribed to Him "that sitteth in the heavens." To give an instance we quote from Psalm xxxiii. (R. V.) :—

"The LORD looketh from heaven ;  
He beholdeth all the sons of men ;  
From the place of His habitation He looketh forth  
Upon all the inhabitants of the earth ;  
He that fashioneth the hearts of them all ;  
That considereth all their works . . .  
Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear  
Him,  
Upon them that hope in His mercy ;  
To deliver their soul from death,  
And to keep them alive in famine."

In another (Psalm xi.) we read :—

"The Lord is in His holy temple,  
The LORD, His throne is in heaven ;  
His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of  
men."

JEHOVAH saw that the wickedness of man was great before the flood, but Noah found grace in His eyes.

What more desirable truth could Moses possibly have uttered with reference to Israel's promised land than this :—  
"The eyes of the LORD are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" (Deut. xi. 12)? The personal responsibility of each individual inhabitant in a land thus highly privileged was correspondingly grave and great. He was to hearken to th-

voice of the LORD GOD, to do His commandments, and "to do that which is right in the eyes of the LORD thy God" (Deut. xiii. 18).

As having, each in his day, acquitted himself well in the carrying out of his personal responsibility, honourable mention is made of David (1 Kings xv. 5), of Asa (1 Kings xv. 11), and of Jehoshaphat (1 Kings xxii. 43). Each therefore might take comfort from the express promise given to such in Psalm ci. 6, even when experiencing searchings of heart because of personal failures, which each had occasion to mourn over with humbled spirit. Absolute perfection is only to be seen in the LORD's "Servant." He alone could abide the being tested by this high standard of excellence, and say, "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and My God shall be My strength."

To Him did the SPIRIT of GOD draw the attention of Joshua and his fellows. What though but a remnant had returned as yet, and the great bulk of the nation of Israel was still in foreign lands ; this fact could not to faith make Him less "glorious." More than this, the conscious weakness of that feeble remnant "in a day of small things" only made it the more incumbent upon them to accept Him as their strength. Well might their memories revive painful recollections of past dark days, wherein their guilty fathers had been again and again admonished that, in consequence of their shameless wickedness, Jehovah's eye would not spare them, nor would He have pity upon them ; because their tongue and their doings had been against the LORD, "to provoke the eyes of His glory" (Isa. iii. 8). But giving place to slavish fear did not become these living representatives of the same nation, whose safe return to the land had made themselves examples of mercy glorying against judgment. He, Jehovah's servant, was interested on their behalf, and His grace would be sufficient to meet their present and future need.

That STONE with seven eyes should be their abiding confidence. All the past was fully known to Him : yet had these personally been restored by grace into His favour. Their feeble condition at the moment then present could not escape His notice. Their realised weakness He would

make an occasion of proving the all-sufficiency of the might of His power. As to the future, He understood them better than they did themselves ; He would not fail them ; and in their own and the nation's interests would take upon Himself responsibilities which none save Himself could possibly fulfil.

When one reads the significant words addressed to Israel by Isaiah ("And when ye spread forth your hands ; I will hide Mine eyes from you : yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear," Isa. i.15), one can enter in some measure into the feelings of Hezekiah upon receiving Sennacherib's letter of impious threatenings. Then in the anguish of his spirit he cried, "Incline Thine ear, O LORD, and hear ; open Thine eyes, O LORD and see ; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living GOD." Henceforth Joshua and his fellows should have the comfort of knowing that before them was the STONE with seven eyes.

At a moment when he had least expected this, Nathaniel suddenly recognised Him in JESUS, on His saying, "Before that Phillip called thee,

WHEN THOU WAST UNDER THE FIG TREE, I  
SAW THEE."

The surprised Israelite could not but instantly exclaim, "Rabbi, Thou art the SON of GOD ; Thou art the king of Israel."

The woman of Samaria discerned first "a Jew," next "a prophet," and ultimately "the CHRIST" in Him; for He had brought up before her notice all her past actions, and, while arousing her conscience, attracted her heart and satisfied her longing soul.

Others in the synagogue at Capernaum may never before have had the faintest suspicion that amongst them was a man possessed of an unclean spirit, until his inability to endure the presence of JESUS was made manifest by his crying out in real alarm. Nor did those who brought the woman taken in adultery ever in all their past lives experience such searchings of heart as when He made each one's sins manifest to himself. Herod's deep craftiness, as also their's who raised the question about the paying of tribute, He openly exposed, and thoroughly



disconcerted the hypocritical and self-righteous by answering, not simply their designing questions, but also their own heart's most secret thoughts.

Not one of her "many sins," committed by the woman that stood behind Him weeping in Simon's house, had escaped His notice. Of them He bore witness before all, yet gave her the assurance that all were forgiven, and that those affections for Him that flowed out from her broken and contrite spirit were already met by her SAVIOUR'S incomparable love for this repentant sinner.

The thrice repeated "Lovest thou Me?" searched poor Peter's heart and conscience. "LORD, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee," was his reply, at that moment discerning to his unspeakable relief that before him stood the "STONE with seven eyes." And we, beloved brethren, have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of JESUS," yea, to "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith"; although we do well ever to bear in mind that, concerning ourselves and others, "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do."

John beheld, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, standing "a LAMB as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes." Here we have the perfection of power allied with the perfection of intelligence. He has absolute authority over emperors, kings, and all nations.

Those ministers of His that do His pleasure go every one of them straight forward, giving place to none as they perform His sovereign will. The earth's mighty ones can place no obstruction in their path.

His "eyes" run to and fro through the whole earth, beholding the evil and the good. Nothing can by any possibility escape His notice, whether it be done in the far east, or the extreme west; at either of the poles, or at the equator. He that has, again and again, shewn "Himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward Him," *is He that controls the destinies of the nations, and of the whole earth.*

When He shall break each seal in heaven, the corresponding effects will be experienced on this earth.

## On Idolatry

THE Word of God teaches that idolatry is not merely an error of the brain, but rather a corruption of the heart and will. According to Romans i., the idolater is without excuse. He does not choose to retain the true God in his thoughts, and so is given over to a reprobate mind with all the debasing practices that ensue. In its *extreme* form idolatry is a man saying to evil, "Be thou my good"; and to sin, "Be thou my god."

The tendency to idolatry is exhibited again and again in the history of Israel. The golden calf and the brazen serpent both were offered divine honours. After the Captivity, the Jewish people never more fell into the sin of idolatry.

But what of the Christian era? As the distance from the days of the Apostles increased, and the Bible became less and less read, a priest caste began to increase in power; heathen customs were also absorbed; dogma after dogma was added to the faith; corruption of all kinds abounded, until the culmination was reached in the darkness of the Middle Ages when true Christianity was well nigh suffocated under Romanism. Then a horrible mixture of truth with error and fraud of man's traditions, and superstitions, and idolatries, was presented as Christianity!

It is quite futile for the ritualist to contend that each of the details of the ceremonial in which he glories has a meaning—"the outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace." There resides, alas, in the unregenerate heart a fatal *tendency to transfer its devotion from the unseen and spiritual reality to the visible seen symbol*. It is this that accounts for the virtually Divine honours given to the crucifix, to relics of the saints, and so forth.

We live in a day of political "ideologies"; and "statolatry" is virtually the religion of millions of people in Europe. The totalitarian State, whether Communist, Nazi, or Fascist, claims the devotion of the whole man, and will only tolerate religion if *it* is subservient to the State. It maintains itself by suppression on the one hand, and propaganda on the other, and its inevitable accompaniment is military domination. We have seen of late years in

Europe a revival of the age-long conflict between the Christian Church and the pagan state-idol described in the symbols of the Book of Revelation.

In the Word, *covetousness* is also called idolatry. There is a secondary form of idolatry that keeps multitudes from obeying the Gospel. The rich young ruler in the Gospels put his money before the LORD and before the welfare of his soul. And to-day multitudes give the supreme place in their hearts to some thing (or person) and so are, in a secondary but real sense, idolaters. For an idol is what keeps GOD out of the life, what is loved more than GOD. It may be money, sport, yes, even the dance. It may be science, or art, or literature, or politics, or some ideal of personal living or of political or social reconstruction. But the Kingdom of GOD is not sought, the Gospel is not obeyed, and the soul remains in its sins.

Even true Christians may be hindered by "*covetousness, which is idolatry.*" The heart may be so engrossed with some form of ecclesiastical organisation, or system of theology, or ritual that GOD is not given the place He should have, and His will is in some degree missed. Any form of worldliness, whether in business, pleasure, dress, and so forth, diminishes spiritual vigour and usefulness. The spiritual mind looks at the things which are not seen, and the heart goes after *them*; whereas the worldly mind looks at the things that are seen, things temporal and material, and the heart goes after these things in hot pursuit, to the inevitable detriment of the spiritual life. We are to *use* (lawful) things of the world; we are to *rest* in the things spiritual and eternal.

A Christian young woman became infatuated with a man who made a profession of being a believer but who evidently was not one. She swept aside all warnings from Christian friends by the argument: "we are made for each other." They left England, were married in Chicago, and moved to the State of Iowa. Her married life was never happy, and very soon after the marriage her husband left her and was never more heard of. Her child was born hopelessly blind and crippled. She herself fell ill of a painful sickness. We have to be most careful when we speak of the LORD's dealings in discipline with *others*, but

was there some connection between this Christian woman's act of wilful disobedience and the troubles that followed? It is not for us to dogmatise, but to take warning.

There is always gain when we *destroy* an idol. Archbishop Trench tells how that Mahmoud, the Mahometan conqueror of India, came to a temple in front of which stood a large idol. The priests begged him to spare the idol, and offered him a huge sum of money as ransom. He replied that he would rather be known as a destroyer of idols than as a seller of them. And, lifting his mace, he dealt the image a blow. His example was followed by his bodyguard, until, as blow upon blow descended, the idol, being hollow, burst open, and discharged a veritable stream of precious stones whose value far exceeded that of the ransom which the cunning priests had offered.

Idol-breaking has its compensations—always spiritual, and sometimes natural compensations too. Says the Apostle of love: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

E.A.

## To Correspondents

*A. B., London*: The application of 1 Timothy ii. 11, to a meeting wherever held, to which "a general invitation had been given" as you say in your query, is plain. Also the asking questions, or expressing thoughts upon the subject under consideration, at such a meeting is clearly an evasion of the rule laid down by Apostolic authority with such precision and breadth, not only here but in 1 Cor. xiv.

The offender should be spoken to privately, with charity and meekness, for "in many things we all offend." But the practice is undoubtedly contrary to Scripture, and consequently not permissible.

*E.R., Liverpool*: "Does 'fallen from grace' in Gal. v. 4, mean gone into sin?" The answer is plain from the context. As Christians we are saved by faith of CHRIST, not by deeds of law, moral or ceremonial. To seek by a Jewish rite to make salvation more secure, is to abandon grace (by which ye are saved), to lose CHRIST, and to become debtor to do the whole law. Such would "fall from grace" down to works of law, by which "no man is justified in the sight of God."

## The Guest of Zaccheus the Publican

(*St. Luke xix. 1-10.*)

“**G**ONE to be the guest with a man that is a sinner” ! So spake the self-righteous people of Jericho with an amazement bordering upon pious horror. And it was true ; and, worse still, He had gone without any proper invitation. What could it mean ? Had the modern proverb of “birds of a feather flocking together” been current in the days of our LORD this would have expressed very pointedly the interpretation men often put upon some of His most gracious acts.

Zaccheus himself, was well nigh beside himself with amazement and delight ; for not for many years had any one who wished to stand well with respectable and religious folks in Jericho so much as crossed the threshold of his house.

A rich man, a public man, possibly the best known and best hated man in the city, and one branded by his fellow citizens as a man to be universally avoided—a tax gatherer in the service of the oppressors of the people. So loathed, so hated, so abhorred of all decent people were the publicans, that even in the pages of the New Testament they are linked with open and notorious sinners. “Publicans and sinners” ; “publicans and harlots” ; “a heathen man and a publican” ;—we continually come on such language in the pages of the Evangelists. And John the Baptist put his finger right on the sore place of a publican’s life when he bade them, “Exact no more than that which is appointed you.” To be dishonest, oppressive and extortionate so characterised the fraternity of tax-gatherers in those days that Sabinus at Rome mentions the exception, as being so unusual that an epitaph was written over the grave of one which ran, “Here lies an *honest* publican.”

On this eventful day when our LORD went to be the guest of Zaccheus the publican, that little man, excited by the healing of Bartimeus the blind beggar, and what he had undoubtedly heard of the other great doings in the neighbourhood, made up his mind by some means or other to see “JESUS Who He was,” so the inspired Evangelist in-

forms us. JOHN CALVIN in his commentary on the story says, "Curiosity and simplicity are a sort of preparation for faith. Nay, it was not without a certain inspiration from heaven that Zaccheus climbed up into that sycamore tree. There was a certain seed of true piety in his heart when he so ran before the press, and so climbed up into that sycamore tree."

It was curiosity, simplicity *and something more* that led Zaccheus to struggle against the many obstructions in the way, to cast away conceit of dignity, and expose himself to the ridicule of many who would rejoice to overwhelm him with it.

His astonishment at being called by name by the GOOD SHEPHERD to come from his hiding-place and receive Him as his guest can better be imagined than described.

Our LORD had previously stated in His teaching that it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of GOD. His hearers had at once exclaimed, "Who then can be saved?"

For was it not written in the Wisdom Books "Money is a defence"; "money answereth all things." (Eccles. vii. 12; x. 19)?

Zaccheus was a rich man, however he had come by his wealth; and our LORD now demonstrated by His gracious action what He had replied to His somewhat perplexed questioners, that the things which are impossible with men are possible with GOD. He was about to show that even a rich man could be saved, though it was the poor who had the gospel preached to them. "To-day I must abide at thy house," were the words that fell upon the ears of Zaccheus completely overcoming him; and as he and his Guest walked to the house, the whole thing seemed quite unintelligible to the murmuring crowd. They all murmured, saying, That He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner."

Our LORD gives the explanation of this by saying, "The SON of MAN is come to seek and to save that which was lost." To do this He must be found where such foregather; so to the house of Zaccheus He goes and pronounces that, "This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he [Zaccheus] is also a son of Abraham."

To the trembling little tax-gatherer, overwhelmed by the totally unexpected honour done him, these words came like heaven's sweetest music. Yes, he *was* "a son of Abraham," spite of his false position and sinfulness; he believed the word spoken, and so his sonship consisted not in being Abraham's seed by natural descent, but in sharing the faith of father Abraham, the father of the faithful, the first man of whom it is specifically recorded in Scripture that "he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness." (Gen. xv. 6.)

This going to be guest with a man that is a sinner is one of the clearest illustrations of the way by which CHRIST wins the souls of men. To know and believe the love of GOD is to be at once a saved and happy soul. GOD's way is that of a persuasive and winsome love. The wooing note is always sounded even when, as sometimes, blended with a warning note. "He received Him joyfully," says the Evangelist in recounting the story of that eventful day in the life of Zaccheus. From that moment the past was dead, and like a new man living in a new world, lovelit and love-mastered from end to end, Zaccheus rejoiced in the transforming friendship of the One Who had come to be "guest with a man that was a sinner."

Maybe that same personal and real love is appealing to the reader of these lines, "Make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." Receive Him joyfully, saying in your deepest heart,

"Enter, enter, Heavenly Guest,  
Welcome, welcome to my breast.  
I have long withstood Thy knocking,  
For my heart was full of sin;  
But Thy love has overcome me:  
Blessed SAVIOUR, enter in!"

There will be much to learn as to the dying, yet undying love of the One Who by His atoning Sacrifice for sin made it possible for Him to be the SAVIOUR, LORD and FRIEND of "a man that is a sinner." There will be vistas of blissful experience opened up to the obedient disciple keeping His word, for He has promised: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My FATHER will love him, and

We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."  
And one who knew something of this experience sang,

"O! dwell with me ; let no distracting thought  
Intrude to hide from me that heavenly light :  
Be Thou my strength !"

"Gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner" ; and then the murmurings of those that said this, were simply offset, eclipsed, drowned by the "joy in heaven" of which that Heavenly Guest had spoken earlier.

There will dawn the great glad day when He Who went to be guest with many a man that was a sinner, will call *His guests* around the heavenly board in the FATHER'S house on high.

"Some from earth, from glory some,  
Severed only—'till He come."

W.G.T.

## The Guest of Simon the Pharisee

(*St. Luke vii. 36-50*)

THE LORD graciously accepted the invitation to dine at the house of Simon the self-righteous Pharisee. Little as Simon either knew or cared, a greater than Solomon was present in his house among the invited company, albeit in the dress of a humble stranger. Though a guest, He was denied the common courtesy and usual social civilities of the East. No water to wash His feet, no kiss of greeting to welcome Him, no fragrant oil to anoint His head. Why did Simon the Pharisee invite Him ?

Another guest, also unwelcomed but *uninvited*, also came to that guest chamber in Simon's house that day, and stood behind the unwelcomed but *invited* Guest. She is a sinner, by common consent, and realises it now as never before. As she stood behind Him weeping, how she must have felt the burden of her sins, in the presence of Him Who is Infinite Light, is shown by the grief she displayed. But He, Who is also Infinite Love, was present to meet her in grace and set her troubled heart at rest, and speak the word of GOD'S own peace before the visit to Simon the Pharisee was ended that day.



Any who make light of sin can little know their need of a SAVIOUR, or the depths to which He had to go in order to redeem men from its power and penalty. This woman, Simon's unwelcomed and uninvited guest that day, felt something of the deep reality of this as she broke her heart at His feet, standing behind Him weeping.

He came to heal the broken-hearted (St. Luke iv. 18) and this day was about to carry out this part of His mission even in Simon the Pharisee's house. A broken and contrite heart is at the feet of the SAVIOUR, and never is one such turned away by Him Who came to seek and to save that which was lost (St. Luke xix. 10).

As she washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head the chilling presence of cold impenitent hearts around did not restrain her. But deep as was the need and the grief of this sin-stricken woman, deeper still was the fountain of compassion that flowed out in saving grace to her.

She kisses His feet in gratitude and love and anoints them with the sweet ointment from the alabaster box she had with her.

Let us pause and ask ourselves a question. Have we experienced the joy that was hers? The joy of coming to His feet as He has bidden us come; of knowing in our own hearts something of what this woman felt in hers?

At first perhaps there was the yearning for some satisfaction which we were conscious we lacked in our life. Then the discovery of our inability to satisfy this desire however much we tried, and the laying aside of further effort to do so because it seemed so useless. A deeper sense of need followed by the conviction that the LORD alone could meet it. This was followed maybe, by the shining in of a Light which revealed how great the darkness was, and awakened conscience to the total unfitness for His holy presence on account of the condition caused by sin.

It is at this stage that Divine Love in all its fulness is brought home to the soul as in the case of Simon's uninvited guest, the "woman that was a sinner." Then the soul learns that the redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS completely meets the need, and sets it down in perfect rest in His presence.

To return, what of Simon the Pharisee, the host ? What are his thoughts of his two guests, both He Who came by invitation to his house, and she who came uninvited because of her deep sense of need of the SAVIOUR. He speaks within himself in no uncertain tones, and thus discloses what manner of man Simon the Pharisee truly is. Says he, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him : for she is a sinner." Cynical unbelief and contempt prove Simon's folly. Simon didn't stay to think that he himself might be "a sinner" ; neither did he consider that "this Man" might be more than a prophet, nor indeed conceive that his humble Guest that day was EMMANUEL, GOD with us. It was lowly grace and meekness that led such a ONE to enter Simon the Pharisee's house at all. But He was there to find just what He had come from heaven to seek and save—a poor sinner needing a SAVIOUR.

But Simon must be taught a lesson that day, so the touching little parable of the two bankrupt debtors is related to him by the LORD. In this story of frank and full forgiveness the loving heart of a gracious GOD is revealed.

We also when we realise that GOD freely and frankly forgives the debt we could ourselves never pay are compelled to exclaim :

Oh ! what a debt we owe  
To Him Who shed His blood,  
And cleansed our souls, and gave us power  
To stand before His GOD.

How great the mystery of love that could bring the LORD JESUS down from the eternal glory to the unfathomable depths of Calvary's shame and suffering ! "But where sin abounded grace did much more abound." (Romans v. 20.)

So with this forgiven woman who was a sinner. If Simon the self-righteous Pharisee had no eyes and heart to value his Guest that day, and despised the One Who walked this scene in such lowly grace, GOD would see that honour was paid to His blessed Person. "This woman," a sinner at His feet, has found One upon Whom she may properly lavish her heart's love and gratitude. "She hath

not ceased to kiss My feet . . . she hath anointed My feet with ointment."

There are moments when words simply fail us, and this seems to be just one of these. It is the outward expression by her of a heart too full for words. Indeed throughout the whole story the woman says nothing at all. She is one of wisdom's children who leaves her cause wholly in CHRIST's hands. He defends her, He forgives her, He sends her away in peace.

To Simon the Pharisee and his other guests, "they that sat at meat with him," the LORD shows His purpose of grace as He with authority pronounces "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven," and then speaking directly to her says, "Thy sins are forgiven."

Unbelief murmurs, and questions: "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" because it knows not the only One on earth Who has this power. But faith takes Him at His word, and receives the pardon given, and is cheered by words of deepest comfort and truest consolation from His lips: "Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace."

If we have learned in any measure the value of these precious words in our own souls how we should keep ever before us what He has saved us from, and what He has saved us to. Let us constantly challenge our hearts as to our response to His infinite grace and kindness to us. He counts upon this from us, as He did from her. "She loved much," says the LORD because she has been forgiven much.

How needful to us the exhortation given to the Ephesian church: "Thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works." (Rev. ii. 4, 5.)

Shall we go on to know Him, growing in grace and in the knowledge of our LORD and SAVIOUR, or, are we falling short of what He said of her that day in Simon the Pharisee's house, "SHE LOVED MUCH"?

G.P.

## Christian Servants and Christian Masters

**“EXHORT** servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things ; not answering again (not contradictory—footnote N. Trans.); not purloining (not robbing their masters—N. Trans.), but showing all good fidelity ; that they may adorn the doctrine of GOD our SAVIOUR in all things” (Titus ii. 9, 10).

“Obedience, subjection and faithfulness are the requisites of a good servant, which the Apostle exhorts to here. These were found in perfection in CHRIST the perfect SERVANT. The Christian servant is to beautify, by his conduct and service, the doctrine of GOD which he professes. By a faithful walk and diligent service, he will give practical, visible expression to the doctrine or teachings of his SAVIOUR. This is more easily understood and speaks louder than the greatest preaching. Thus a faithful servant may witness as effectively for his SAVIOUR, in his lowly sphere, as the most eloquent preacher.

“Let as many bondmen as are under yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of GOD and the teaching be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise (them) because they are brethren ; but let them the rather serve them with subjection, because they are faithful and beloved, who profit by the good and ready service (rendered)” (1 Tim. vi. 1, 2, N. Trans.).

Servants, who have unbelieving masters, are to honour them and not to think themselves superior to them, so that God's name and doctrine are not wickedly spoken of by their unsaved masters. While those who have believing masters are not to adopt a familiar air of equality with them and honour them less. They are rather to serve them with subjection and honour them the more as faithful and beloved brethren. Our place in the Church of GOD is not to be confounded with our places in the world and our walks of life. *In the Church of God, all are brethren, members one of another, while in the world there are different stations of life which must be kept in all propriety.*

## MASTERS

“Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal (fair—N. Trans.) ; knowing that ye also have a MASTER in heaven” (Col. iv. 1). The Christian master and mistress should ever bear in mind that they also have a MASTER in heaven to whom they are responsible for their service as masters, and that they should act towards their servants as their heavenly MASTER acts towards them. The sense of His Lordship must ever be before the conscience and the heart daily realising His goodness and grace and gentleness. Our heavenly MASTER is not a hard and austere man and neither should the Christian master be thus characterised. He should reflect the character of his heavenly MASTER, who is light and love, and deal with his servants in righteousness and kindness, giving them what is just and fair. Heavenly light will then be as a “candlestick which giveth light to all in the house.”

R.K.C.

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## God's Word and Prayer

**G**OD'S *Word and prayer*—these are the chief factors on our part in regard to the path of faith in this world. Without them the believer would be like the steersman of a rudderless ship, without sail or compass on a trackless waste.

Before we begin, let us consider : *What is the Word of God ?*

Every attempt to answer this question must of itself bear the stamp of human weakness and insufficiency.

The *written* Word—it is of this we speak—is the revelation given us by the ALL-MIGHTY GOD concerning Himself and His ways. Not only would He instruct the children of men about creation and about His governmental ways with this earth and its inhabitants but it has pleased Him to reveal what *He is in Himself*, so that we may be able to know Him, rejoice in Him and glorify Him and as believers should understand His greatness, wisdom and love, so that on the path of life with all its difficulties and dangers we

should be preserved by means of divine grace, wisdom and faithfulness. Beginning with the creation of the universe and of man by the *Living Word* (the LORD JESUS CHRIST), it takes us through the whole story of man, created in the image of GOD but now fallen, until the eternal state when GOD shall "make all things new" and Himself be "All in all." It acquaints us with GOD's counsels for time and eternity; with the state of man in sin and with GOD's wonderful plan of salvation to deal with this state through CHRIST. GOD's thoughts and ways are made known to us both with regard to His earthly people Israel and their King, and to the heavenly bride of His SON, the assembly (or Church) and the body of CHRIST in connection with its Head.

Perfection characterises the Word of GOD as a whole as in all its parts. Although men have been used as instruments to write it, they could never have composed it, nor have foreseen the need for each separate part. *One SPIRIT*, the SPIRIT of GOD, gave it as a whole and inspired it in every part from Genesis to Revelation. The more the believer searches into it, the more his spiritual understanding grows, the more deeply and strongly he is impressed with the harmony and perfection of the whole, and the truth and perfection of each part.

What a privilege it is to have such a revelation from GOD! One scarcely need say that it cannot be grasped by the natural understanding. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the SPIRIT of GOD: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) As the SPIRIT has given "the deep things of GOD," so is it by His teaching alone that these communications can be understood. Thank God, the SPIRIT is given to each child of GOD, even the simplest, and dwells and works in each one.

A deep and genuine love for the Word of GOD should characterise each believer. Our growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and SAVIOUR depends in the fullest degree on this. We are shown in a remarkable way in the 119th Psalm how closely the Word is bound up with the whole development of the spiritual life of a believer.

A few of the expressions of the Psalmist would put to shame even us who to-day have the *whole* revelation of God. Are there not many of us who come far behind this Old Testament believer who had only the first part of the revelation yet gave to the Word of the Lord such a high place in his heart? "I will delight myself in Thy statutes: I will not forget Thy Word"; "Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors"; "I will delight myself in Thy commandments which I have loved," he says (vv. 16, 24, 47). Increasing in the force of his language, he says: "O how I love Thy law! it is my meditation all the day! . . . Therefore I love Thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold" (vv. 97, 127). Job also testifies: "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (ch. xxiii. 12). From these times until the present the same characteristics have been found in every serious, spiritually-minded believer: love for the Word of God and, with it, devotion to the LORD.

1. *The Word is the means of the new birth.* James says: "Of His own will, begat He us with the Word of truth." (Ch. i. 18.) In 1 Pet. i. 23 we read: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.*" The LORD JESUS teaches us also in this connection, when He says in John iii. 5: "Except a man be born of water and of the SPIRIT, he cannot enter into the kingdom of GOD."

2. *The Word is the proper food for the new nature.* "As newborn babes," says Peter, "desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the LORD is gracious" (1 Pet. ii. 2, 3.) We read also in Deut. viii. 3; "He fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not . . . that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live." (cf. Matt. iv. 4.) The Word, therefore, is the suited food for the new life. It serves to supply and strengthen us as we go through the wilderness where we await the coming of our blessed LORD or the moment when we shall "depart to be with CHRIST." The Scriptures, both in the Old and New Testaments, testify of CHRIST, and He is our food. He is both "the Manna" and "the

Corn of the land." To gather our "manna" for daily needs, we must read the Gospels and the Epistles in which we find Him set before us as come in flesh, the *lowly One*, "Who made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant . . . humbled Himself and became obedient unto death." If we would feed upon Him as the "Corn of the land," we must turn to those Scriptures which set Him before our souls as the *glorified Christ*. (cf. Col. iii. ; Phil. iii., etc.). The Scriptures are the green pastures where the GOOD SHEPHERD makes His flock to lie down, and the still waters beside which He leads them.

3. *The Word is our only Guide.* "Thy Word is a light to my feet, and a lamp to my path" says the Psalmist (Ps. cxix. 105). When Joshua was about to lead the people into the land, the LORD exhorts him : "Be strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses My servant commanded thee : turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper wheresoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth ; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein : for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success" (Josh. i. 7, 8). As in the Old Testament, so in the New, are we taught again and again that the Word of GOD is our guide. It is the measure, the only line for our walk down here. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness : that the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). When Paul was parting from the Ephesian elders at Miletus he said : "I commend you to GOD and the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." (Acts xx. 32 ; see also 2 Thess. iii. 14 ; 2 Peter i. 15 ; 1 John ii. 27 ; Jude 3.)

4. *The Word of God is our weapon of defence and of attack* against Satan in all his approaches and temptations. It is therefore also called *the sword of the Spirit*. (Eph. vi. 17.) As such it was used by our blessed LORD when



He was tempted of the devil in the wilderness. Every attack with which Satan came upon Him—and he tempted Him in *all* ways—was repulsed with the words: “It is written.” From the very first moment until the last, the sword of the SPIRIT was in His hand. As Man He did not express His own thoughts, but spoke that which He had heard of the FATHER. He took His stand entirely on the unshakable ground of the Word of GOD. In this way it was made impossible for Satan to gain so much as a foot-breadth at any time. Even in the wilderness he had to withdraw defeated and put to shame. It is no different to-day. Satan is just as powerless as he was then if only we meet him in the same way as the LORD did. He can make nothing of a child of GOD who is in dependence on, and in subjection to, the Word. May all of us, old or young, keep this fact in mind!

5. The Word of GOD is *the only plumbline for doctrine and conduct*. We ought to test all in its clear light. “Despise not prophesyings” wrote the apostle to the Thessalonians, “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” (1 Thess. v. 21.) Now that the Word of GOD is “filled full” (Col. i. 25), the exhortation applies to us, as it is given again and again in the epistles to the Seven Churches: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the SPIRIT saith to the churches.” The state of the various churches and their behaviour was measured by the infallible measure of the Word of the SPIRIT of GOD. The apostle Paul also exhorts the Philippians to do what they had learned, received, heard and seen in himself. He exhorts the Thessalonians also: “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye had been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.”

6. The Word is the means of our *practical sanctification*. When the LORD JESUS in prayer commits His own to the FATHER, He says: “Sanctify them through the truth; Thy Word is truth.” Only by applying the Word to ourselves, to what we do and allow, to our activities and inactivities, can we be protected from evil and made more and more separate from it. “The Word of GOD is living and operative, and sharper than any two-edged sword.” It judges the thoughts and intents of the heart. It is the

all-seeing eye of GOD, before Whom all things are open and bare. (Heb. iv.) The LORD Himself, our great Advocate, is occupied again and again in washing our feet by bringing His Word before us by His SPIRIT. Since *He* so acts in His rich grace, *we* ought not to forget that *we* are responsible to apply the Word to ourselves in unceasing and upright self-judgment before GOD. We could save ourselves from painful chastisements if we were faithful in this respect. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." (1 Cor. xi. 31.)

The Psalmist asks: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" and immediately gives the answer: "By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word." (Ps. cxix. 9.) In another place David says: "By the Word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." (Ps. xvii. 4.) Only by means of serious testing of ourselves by the Word can we come to know the good and acceptable, and perfect will of GOD. (Rom. xii. 2.) In this way alone can we be separated from what is opposed to the HOLY SPIRIT and brought into communion with Himself, and as we do so we make progress in practical sanctification, the perfection of which we see in the glorified CHRIST at the right hand of GOD.

7. The LORD values *obedience to His Word*. He has said: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My FATHER will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." (John xiv. 23.) What a wonderful blessing depends on our keeping His words! In the next chapter the LORD says: "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept my FATHER'S commandments, and abide in His love" (v. 10). He expects that we shall not only value the communications He has made to us, but that our hearts shall find delight in *every* word which comes from His mouth. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," He says. (John xiv. 15.) In order to encourage us to continue in faith He says to us at the end of the book of Revelation: "Behold I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book!" (Rev. xxii. 7).

In closing we would make a few practical observations. It is most necessary to become familiar with the Scriptures.

Otherwise we cannot repel the attacks of men nor the temptations of the enemy, as the LORD JESUS did, for we would not be able to use the sword of the SPIRIT in the right way. There is greater danger than ever in these days from "divers and strange doctrines" if we do not rest on the immovable rock of truth. One of the first duties, therefore, of the believer is "to search the Scriptures," so as to become acquainted with the thoughts of GOD. "My son, if thou . . . incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding, yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver and searchest for her as for hid treasures ; then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of GOD. For the LORD giveth wisdom : out of His mouth cometh wisdom and understanding." (Prov. ii. 1-6). This is the spirit with which we should search, studying the Scriptures systematically. So shall we be "thoroughly furnished unto every good work" (2 Tim. iii. 17). I do not say : Read no other book ! I do emphasise, however, that you should make the Bible your constant companion, and confine yourself to such books as are helpful to the better understanding of the Scriptures. Remember that you live *in* time, not *for* time but for eternity.

Always *meditate* on what you read. "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting" (Prov. xii. 27). He finds pleasure in the hunt, but is too lazy to prepare what he has caught even for his own enjoyment. So is it with many who read the Word. They like to read and to increase their knowledge but, since they go no further, they lose the blessing for themselves. Only when we *meditate* in the presence of GOD is there revealed to us the delights, the beauty and the power of the Word.

Finally, always remember that proper understanding of the Word depends on our being subject to the SPIRIT of GOD. (1 Cor. ii. 11.)

## Marah and Elim

By C. H. SPURGEON.

**A**FTER I had fallen down at Mentone, and was grievously ill, a brother in CHRIST called upon me, and said, "My dear friend, you have now come to Marah." I replied, "Yes, and the waters are bitter." He then said, "But Marah is better than Elim, for in Elim the Israelites only drank of the water and ate of the fruit of the palm trees, and that was soon over ; but at Marah we read that God 'made for them a statute and an ordinance,' and that was never over. That statute and ordinance stood fast, and will stand fast for Israel as long as they are a nation. There is much more benefit to be reaped from Marah than from Elim." I thanked my friend for that good word. I had found it true aforetime ; I have found it true since then ; and you and I, if we are indeed the people of GOD, will find it true to the end, that Marah, *though it be bitter, is also better* ; and albeit that we do not like it, yet in the end there shall be no bitterness in it, but an unutterable sweetness which shall be ours through time and eternity.

We have a long record about Marah, have we not ? How many verses have we about Elim ? Only one. Does Marah deserve to be talked about four times as much as Elim ? Perhaps it does ; perhaps there is four times as much fruit to be obtained from the bitter waters of Marah than from the twelve springs of water, and threescore and ten palm trees at Elim. Who knows ? This I know, however, that we are very apt to talk more about our bitters than about our sweets ; and that is a serious fault. It were well if we had fewer murmuring words for our sorrows, and more songs of thanksgiving for our blessings. Yet Holy Writ seems here to speak after the manner of men, and to let us have the four verses for the trial, and the one verse for the delight.

## The Abiding Mercy

BY THE EDITOR

“**T**HOU crownest the year with Thy goodness” was one deep note in a Psalm and Song of David, which still finds an echo in the believer’s heart as the days of the years of his pilgrimage pass. At the end of this year of grace, in spite of the changes we have witnessed, the unexpected difficulties we have encountered, and the surprises which have seemed to spring upon us, we still look up and make mention of the lovingkindness of the LORD. For “*the goodness of God endureth continually*,” the same Psalmist reminds us on another occasion.

There in Psalm lii. 1, the “goodness” is something richer, fuller and deeper than in Psalm lxv. 11. There it is “good things,” here it is “mercy” (W.K.); “lovingkindness” (J.N.D.); kindness (Young). The conjunction of both in *The Shepherd Psalm* (xxiii.) is the summing up of the whole matter for all who can truly say, “The LORD is *my* Shepherd.” There, it is remarked, they “follow me all the days of my life,” year in and year out.

In Psalm lii. which, as the title indicates, is a “Psalm of instruction,” the ills of this world swarm and buzz around him like wasps, but the Psalmist discovers that the mercy, lovingkindness, goodness of GOD abideth, or as W. Kelly renders it, “*is all the day*.” The years of our pilgrimage are made up of months, these in turn of weeks and days, and “the mercy, the lovingkindness of GOD is *all the day*.” Is it not also recorded for our comfort by the SPIRIT, as from one believer to another, “The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me.” As though this were thought too general a statement, however blessedly true to experience, there is a word which covers even the moments which make up the days. “I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every *moment*: lest any hurt it, I will keep it day and night” (Isa. xxvii. 3).

Lest we be tempted to discount this as applying to ourselves in our moments, days and nights, because of its primary application to Israel in a coming day, let us

remember the Apostolic assurance to Christian believers. "For whatever promises of GOD there are, in Him is the yea, and in Him the amen, for glory to GOD by us." (J.N.D. Trans.) 2 Cor. i. 20. This warrants the believer to gather honey from the rock, for in CHRIST the SON of GOD, argues the Apostle, all the promises of GOD are *affirmed* and *confirmed* to the glory of GOD by us.

So moment by moment, day by day, the goodness of GOD abideth continually, and "the year" is crowned with His goodness.

Envy, slander, deceit, malice, bitter words and lying tongues in those days, as in these, made assaults upon the believing man, but his reaction to it all is seen in confidence in his GOD. "But as for me, I am like a green olive-tree in the house of GOD: I will confide in the lovingkindness of GOD for ever and ever."

"And stayed by joy divine,  
As hireling fills his day,  
Through scenes of strife and desert life  
*We tread in peace our way.*"

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## The Unchanging Lover

**T**HAT "GOD is love," though not explicitly stated until the New Testament was written, was always implicit in His ways even in Old Testament times; and the basis of all His dealings whether with Israel or the church is found in the indestructible reality of the love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS our LORD.

Election springs, we are taught by the apostle in Romans x., from fore-knowledge, and determines predestination, but:

"The FATHER's boundless love we sing  
The source from whence our blessings spring."

Hence, the reference to Jacob and Esau, loved and hated, immediately following the declaration of love in Mal. i. 2, 3 is inserted not so much to illustrate the fact of GOD's real sovereignty, as His ways of dealing with the respective families. Edom had reproduced the profanity of Esau in an undisciplined, unspiritual people

who were marked by an insensibility even to the ordinary sanctities of life.

Israel, on the contrary, spite of many defects, grave faults and gross failures, showed themselves still to be the sons of Jacob by their possession of that knowledge of God's Name and purpose, with more or less frequent desires for communion with Him, which had characterised their father Jacob in spite of his personal waywardnesses. They, the sons of Jacob, definitely knew and regarded JEHOVAH as their God, and professed allegiance to Him. It is therefore to them, a people who knew the truth, that a call for obedience to the known will of God is made by the prophet.

They lived in a day of small things; to them a very disenchanted age indeed, robbed of all the glories of former times. They were a discontented people who had known better days; and, save for a devout remnant in their midst, had long lost all real desire for God, His house, or the coming of the King.

But the dimness of fast receding memories of brighter times, of past blessings, of well-nigh forgotten spiritual revivals, was again to be graciously countered by an assurance and reminder of the real basis, at all times, of blessing for the people of God, His present, unchanging, unfathomable and everlasting love for them.

His will had been clearly revealed as to worship, fellowship, service, social relationships and the true and proper hope of Israel. The returned captives had earlier shown great moral energy and spiritual insight in carrying out the known will of God. No miracles to strengthen their faith had been granted, but nevertheless they had definitely refused Samaritan alliances as became a people conscious of their national Nazariteship. Character and conduct had not been formed by prevailing customs and conventions. The word of God had been their law of life and rule of conduct.

But now a state of spiritual inertia prevailed. Worship was a weariness; fellowship a farce; service and social relationships a scandal; the hope of MESSIAH's advent a mirage. With insolent incredulity they scornfully or

wearily inquire seven times over: "Wherein [In what or How] hast Thou loved us . . . or we wearied Thee?" A spirit of scorning, a spirit that contemned and repudiated God's claims and entreaties had taken possession of the Jewish house vacated by the earlier spirit of idolatry and seemed sevenfold more wicked than its previous tenant.

May not Christendom at the present hour well dread the insurgence of such a spirit in the midst of the abounding ritualism and rationalisation by which organised religion is so largely characterised? Whether churchmen, nonconformists, or those who, renouncing sectional ground, understand better what God wills for His church today, is it not all too patent to an unprejudiced observer that His word is largely slighted or forgotten as to worship, fellowship, service, social responsibilities and the proper hope of the Christian believer?

Yet the ancient message comes with even fuller force to "him that hath an ear," I *have* loved you, I *do* love, I *will* love you, saith the LORD. The apostle Paul considered it a full, sufficient explanation of his ardent devotedness, amazing activity and abounding joy, to say: The love of Christ constraineth us. Is it the same with us?

Oh, for more of that constraining influence to be manifest in believers individually and corporately—in ourselves, to wit!

No change of mind our Saviour knows,  
A true and constant Friend;  
Where once the LORD His love bestows,  
He loves unto the end.

W.G.T.

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Soon the night cometh when no man can work. Therefore let us watch and be sober, especially in prayer and constant intercession. We live in serious times and do well to take the whole panoply of God that we "may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand." Eph. vi. 13.

H. RUCK.



## To-day and To-morrow in the Light of Yesterday

**M**ANY questions occupy the thoughtful mind in these days of crisis. How comes it about that there is so much distress of nations? What will be the outcome of conflicts in the West, Middle East and Far East? What are the prospects for civilisation? These and such-like problems present themselves, and where can the solution of them be found?

For those who know the Living God, answers to every question are to be found in His written word; and a brief survey of the life and times of Enoch puts us right on the track of some of these present queries.

A careful reading of the Book of Genesis would suggest that similar questions probably filled men's thoughts at times in the days when Enoch was but a very young man, as youth went in those days. There was, however, then, no Bible, no written word of God, to consult for an answer. But they were not altogether without witness, for Adam himself lived well on into the days of Enoch, while Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mehaleel and Jared also were his contemporaries, at any rate, for some centuries. Enoch, therefore, would learn, at first hand, the story of the Garden of Eden, of the Fall, of the promise of a divine DELIVERER for the race; while the men of the five succeeding generations would each be able to bear witness of the development of the age, and of the existence side by side of the families of faith and unbelief.

Then what of the world of his day, his environment as he grew up? Agriculture, Architecture, Music and Metal Working, all suggestive of what is to-day called civilisation, certainly played their part (Gen. iv. 2, 7, 21, 22). But there was something gravely wrong about that age, as with this one, for, side by side with the early growth of the arts and sciences, corruption, violence, and unbridled sin abounded. "When they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools" (Rom. i. 21, 22). Moreover govern-

ment not having then been entrusted to men, there was no punishment, publicly, of evildoers. "And the wickedness of man was great in the earth . . . the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Gen. vi. 5, 11). These were the times and this the environment of Enoch in youth and manhood.

#### AN EPOCH-MARKING EVENT

The birth of his first-born seems from Gen. v. 22, to have marked an epoch in Enoch's life analagous to that of conversion as we speak to-day. A change took place at this time: and Enoch, quickened by the SPIRIT of God, made the truths he had so often heard from the lips of his godly ancestors his own. Abel's approach to God by sacrifice, "he being dead yet spake" to Enoch a truth of which he now laid hold by faith; and this same faith enabled him to grasp the promise of the coming DELIVERER Who would be his SAVIOUR. He thus came to God, "believing that He is, and is a Rewarder of those that diligently seek Him."

God's word teaches us that a truly converted man is a changed man, and that his faith should be shown by his works. He has started out on a path of obedience, and is given power to walk in it, and so will no longer drift along as before following the desires of the old fallen nature. He will walk with God, and this is what Enoch did. No doubt he had to experience the opposition and hatred of an evil, unbelieving age, but he was a bold and intrepid confessor, and declared the things he had apprehended by his faith.

It is proverbial that a straw shows which way the wind blows, and the little things we do and say, indicate to others far more than we think, just how real the things of God are to us. This time it was the name of the child: Methusaleh, meaning "*At his death it shall be.*" What did this name mean? In the presence of God, in the secret of His presence, Enoch had heard the answer to the riddle of the age in which he lived. Some men probably planned reconstruction and reform, but Enoch had learned that only One Person could put things right in this world; and that judgment would first fall

upon the world of the ungodly. That Methusaleh's was the longest life on record in a fallen race, shews God's delight in mercy; nine hundred and sixty-nine years and the flood of judgment would come upon the ungodly world.

#### HIS WALK WITH GOD

His conversion and his faith were shown by his walk; and it must be so with us also if there is reality. Nearly seven centuries earlier Adam had heard the voice of the LORD GOD "walking in the Garden." But Adam could not then walk with GOD, for communion had been lost by sin; now on the contrary we find one who has faith in GOD and who walks with GOD. He is in the living enjoyment of communion with GOD. This is what our LORD always desires for His people. The walk of the believer is dependent upon his communion. "Communion," "Fellowship," or "Partnership," indicate that there is an enjoyment of certain things in common. Here we touch the root cause of the poor and sad testimony borne by so many professing Christians. "*Behold I stand at the door and knock.*" We now live like Enoch did at the end of an age in world history, and as supper is normally the last meal of the day, so the word is, "*If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with Me.*" Turn now to Hebrews xi., and notice how it worked out in Enoch's case. "He had this testimony that he pleased God." The same path is open to us, and there is also the longing desire of our LORD, as expressed in the verse from Rev. iii. 20, quoted above.

#### ENOCH'S TESTIMONY AND TRANSLATION

It is the epistle of Jude, an epistle essentially for the last days, which tells us of Enoch's prophecy. "Behold the LORD cometh with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment." Enoch preached in his day the coming of the LORD. The SPIRIT of CHRIST Who was in him looked right on to the hour when the LORD JESUS will come to reign. The Second Coming of the rightful Heir of all things the LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST was what he spoke about, not of human reconstruction, nor social reformation. With that "Coming One" would

be ten thousands of His redeemed ones. *Here is the solution, and the only one, for this troubled world.* But before that Coming there is to be "a secret rapture," those who are to come *with* the King, are to be first caught up, to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17). Of this rapture Enoch did *not* speak.

In the light of New Testament revelation his translation without dying lets us into the secret. "He was not, for GOD took him." "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because GOD had translated him." After Enoch's translation things rapidly grew worse in the old world till the predicted judgment fell. What is *our* hope. Is it not the personal coming "into the air" of our LORD and SAVIOUR to call His bride away. "Behold I come quickly. Even so, come, LORD JESUS, Amen." "Blessed are those servants, whom the LORD, when He cometh, shall find watching."

S.G.S.

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## "A Time to be Born"

**T**HE PREACHER, who "gave his heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven," calls his practical researches "*This sore travail that God has given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith.*"

He observes that there is a season for everything, and a time for every purpose under the heaven; he begins with "*a time to be born*" and it is very interesting to notice what he says in this connection.

He links with "*a time to be born*" a time to die, and he praises the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive in view of the oppressions, the tears of reproach, and the lack of a comforter for them in the then existing state of affairs generally.

Then he goes still further, and declares that he which hath not yet been born is better than both those already dead, and those which are yet alive, because he has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

Returning to the "*time to be born,*" the PREACHER

points out that one is born naked, and one dies naked, and is unable to take away anything of one's labour; and this raises the question of what profit it is to a man to have laboured all his days. God's answer to this question is only to be found in what a man's heart rejoices in. Does he find his joy merely in his own labours or in God and what God does?

"Whatsoever God does, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it." The fact that God does it is a motive for men to fear Him.

However long a man lives and whatever he does, if his soul is not filled with good, and if he has no prospects beyond the time to die, an untimely birth is better than this. The lot of an abortive is better than a godless life of two thousand years whatever may have been done during such a life.

The PREACHER concludes the very practical results of his researches into knowledge with emphasising that the fear of God linked with obedience to His revealed will is the whole of man.

These things were written aforetime for our learning, and we are in the privileged position of having available for our hearts things which prophets and wise men have sought diligently to discover.

The most important birth that has ever been or ever will be was "when JESUS was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king," and specially miraculous movements took place not only to accomplish that birth but to celebrate it; and it is a turning-point in this world's history.

The consequent life of the LORD JESUS CHRIST in this world is a very practical object lesson on what God intended man to be in fearing Him and being obedient to His revealed will, even unto a death of shame and ignominy on the cross prepared for a malefactor.

Then the death of the LORD JESUS CHRIST has a significance that gives an answer to all that the prophets and wise men sought diligently to find out, and we who believe know something of what His time to die means for us. While feeling very thankful for His birth, and His exemplary life, we have learned to give thanks above

all things for His death, which we know was for us, that God might be glorified in our salvation.

Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, who took the place of the teacher of Israel and who could not rise above thoughts of nature's "time to be born" could only say "How can these things be?" when the LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself unfolded to him the necessity of "a time to be born" again.

What an unfolding there is in the third chapter of John's gospel of what to be born again means, and Nicodemus ought to have known these things from the "words of truth" that he had undertaken to teach the people; but he showed himself to be a blind leader of the blind, and the LIGHT Itself was invisible to him.

What a solemn thing it is to read that the LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself said of one man that "it had been good for him if he had not been born," and that man still went on with his betrayal of the SON of MAN, even after being warned of the woe that it would mean to him.

There is a time coming when the nation of Israel will be born again; and the Apostle Paul speaks of himself as an abortive in connection with this. His active opposition to the LORD JESUS CHRIST and His saints was carried on ignorantly and in unbelief, and the LORD had mercy on him and gave him the opportunity under the direct leading and guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT to be the means of bringing "the time to be born" again, to many, not only before his time to die but long afterwards, through the inspired words of truth that he was privileged to write, and we to read.

What a blessed thing it is for us who are "born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever," to think that as long as we are alive and remain, we may not have to face the inevitable time to die at all, for the LORD Himself may come at any moment and we shall join the dead in CHRIST, who are raised first, and go to be "for ever with the LORD" without the preliminary of death. We think of the LORD Himself and all that He really means to us, and we say with inspired authority, "EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."

G.S.P.

## God's Word and Prayer

*(Continued from page 175)*

**P**RAYER is a *necessity* for every child of God. Poor, weak, impotent and helpless in ourselves, our prayer is the expression of our dependence on Him to Whom we turn. Our need drives us into the presence of God; and having access to God as children on the ground of our place in CHRIST, we "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. iv. 16).

The LORD Himself teaches His disciples ("and all who believe on Him through their word") as to the manner in which they should pray to the FATHER after He had gone. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name . . . if ye shall ask anything in My Name" (John xiv. 13, 14). The name of CHRIST is thus our warranty in drawing near to the FATHER. In Him we have the right to draw near, and He has said: "I say not unto you, that I will pray the FATHER for you, for the FATHER Himself loveth you." What confidence this gives us! Were we to think of ourselves, of our unworthiness and our shortcomings in all things, we should never dare to come near to God. Our eye, however, is directed to CHRIST. In His Name, that is, in all that He is for God and for us, we can dare to approach to God and can understand that in so doing we are pleasing to God, and that it gives joy to Him as FATHER when we bring all to lay before Him, and pour out our hearts in confidence before Him.

To pray in the name of CHRIST is more than a right. It is nothing less than appearing before God in all the worth and the power of this Name. When I present a cheque at the bank, I do so as seeking to be credited with the value of the cheque in the name of the person who gave it. This is also what I do when I go on the ground of the promise of CHRIST in His Name to God and lay before Him in the value of that Name what is in my heart. God will then meet all my need since it is His heart's joy to glorify His Son. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name": the promise is unambiguous and unlimited. How is this possible? Simply on the ground

of the fact that nothing can really be asked in the Name of CHRIST which is not in accordance with His will and therefore according to the will of God. How could we really use His Name for making any request which was not put into our heart by the HOLY SPIRIT? This thought makes our request in His Name to be both a solemn and serious matter.

In the following chapter we receive further instruction on this point. "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you." (John xv. 1). In another place we read: "And this is the confidence we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us" (1 John. v. 14). "*According to His will*" excludes all that does not have this character. Both passages bring before us a very important point of view with regard to prayer. The assurance of the fulfilment of our request is conditional. "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you." means, in other words, when you are conscious of your constant need of dependence on Me and continue in communion with Me, so that you and your thoughts are formed by My SPIRIT, the necessary result will be that you will give expression to My thoughts and My wishes.

The "what ye will" is therefore "what is according to His (God's) will." The power of our prayer and the certainty of its being heard depend, therefore, on our spiritual condition. That is a principle we cannot evade. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God, and whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John. iii. 21, 22). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James v. 16).

What food this gives for thought! If we are spiritually negligent, we lose the joy of communion with God and our prayers become cold and lifeless. In repeating known truths and empty words there is deterioration and loss of power, until all is but a dead form. Prayer is made to satisfy conscience, but no request is made from the prayers do not have an answer.

*(To be continued)*