

CHRISTIAN TRUTH VOLUME 9

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A collection of articles and writings by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan from Christian Truth Volume 9, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

108 Chapters

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Christian Truth Volume 9

Things We Know in 1 John

Chapter 2 Verses

Fathers have known Him (Christ). 13, 14

Little children have known the Father. 13

We know it is the last time. 18

Ye know all things. 20

Ye know the truth. 21

Chapter 3 Verses

We know we shall be like Him. 2

Ye know He was manifested to take away our sins. 5

We know we have passed from death unto life. 14

We know we are of the truth. 19

We know He abideth in us. 24

Chapter 4 Verses

Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us. 13

We have known the love God bath to us. 16

Chapter 5 Verses

We know that we love the children of God. 2

Ye may know that ye have eternal life. 13

We know that we have the petitions that we desired 15

We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not. 18

We know we are of God. 19

We know that the Son of God is come. 20

We know Him that is true. 20

We are in Him that is true. 20

70th Week and the Middle East: the Editor's Column

The very tense and dangerous Middle Eastern situation has for some time threatened the peace of the world. The status-quo of the Arab states and Israel has been strained almost to the breaking point through the implacable hostility of the Arabs to the Jews' possession of much of their originally-God-given country. Border clashes between the Israelis and their neighbors are frequent and bloody.

The Western world is keenly aware of the seriousness of the situation, for it could inflame the whole Moslem world against the West; valuable and immense oil reserves are also at stake. They have therefore sought to curtail the outbreaks by seeing that neither side was equipped for a real war by limiting the armaments supplied to both Israel and the Arabs. Now, a new element of trouble has been injected into the already precarious balance - Russia (who only a few months ago was loudly professing a desire for world peace) has entered the trouble and is hastening the day of open hostilities by supplying arms to Egypt. She also is offering them to other Arab nations.

Russia has a large stock of obsolescent and obsolete tanks, planes, and munitions because of her ever-increasing supply of armaments of more modern type. These she can use to foment trouble by supplying them to any probable trouble spot, and they now pose a most serious threat to the Jews in Palestine, and not too indirectly for the Western nations.

More and more the eyes of the world are going to be focused on that strip of land on the Eastern Mediterranean which God has called "the glory of all lands" (Eze. 20:6), and on which His eyes rest continually (Deut. 11:12). In the end, it is to be the focal point of world tension and conflict, and thither God intends to bring all nations. He has said, "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people and for My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted My land." Joel 3:2. And, "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle." Zech. 14:2. The potsherd may strive with the potsherd of the earth (Isa. 45:9), but God is going to appear for His earthly people's deliverance and blessing after first purging them in the fires of the great tribulation and the all-searching judgment of the Son of man at His appearing.

Israel's present situation between hostile enemies on her north and east, and on her south, is nothing new for that unhappy people and land. Nor need we go to secular history for the accounts of her many adversities at the hands of enemies so located. Dan. 11, verses 5 to 35, describes in some detail the wars and intrigues of enemies to her north and to her south. Israel's land lay between the warring factions and was often the battlefield. Jerusalem and her environs always fell to whichever army was victorious. When these verses were written, their fulfillment was yet future, but all in them has been fulfilled to the letter. The minute details of a number of kings on both sides, some of their wives, relatives, and even their assassins, are so remarkable that the infidel has tried to dodge this voice to his conscience by saying that Daniel must have lived at some later date and written history, not prophecy. But the Lord called Daniel "the prophet," and the inclusion of the prophecy of Daniel in the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Bible settles the

matter, for this translation was completed before many of these events were fulfilled.

During the days when Israel was especially ill-treated by a "king of the north," an enemy of this king suddenly appeared on the scene. The northern king was Antiochus Epiphanes of history. After successful forays to the south, he was intercepted in Egypt by a strong fleet from the rising power of the Roman Republic. The Roman consul ordered him to leave his prey in Egypt and return. Faced, as he was, with superior forces, he departed toward his own land. In verses 29 and 30 of this interesting chapter (Dan. 11), God foretold the intervention of a Western power against this antagonist of Israel:

"At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return." "Chittim," or Kittim, is an ancient name for Cyprus which lay to the west, and it was from that direction that the forces which opposed "the king of the north" came.

Today we find Israel again in their land, and, as of old, Egypt to the south is an enemy, and the Moslem neighbors both east and north are hostile. Further, Israel is looking for and seeking protection from the West. Her leaders say that only a firm commitment from the Western powers guaranteeing that her borders will not be violated will secure her against the growing power and enmity of her neighbors. That this present situation should exist in latter times has been foretold in Scripture. In Numb. 24:24 we read:

"And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also [the owner of the ships] shall perish forever."

There is yet to be a re-enactment of a Western power being a scourge to a Middle Eastern power. Asshur was the son of Shem, and Shem was called, "the father of all the children of Eber." Thus they were Shemites, and their descendents today are Mohammedans. It is likely that these very elements will come against the Jews in their land, and that Balaam's prophecy will be fulfilled by the Western powers dispatching forces to suppress the Mohammedan aggression and deliver Israel. If this is to be a future development, it may well be at the very door.

Balaam's prophecy goes on to predict the final overthrow of the Western powers - the owners of the ships - which come against the Middle East, so that it has all the character of a prophecy of the end of this period - the destruction of the armies of the revived Roman Empire by the Lord Himself when He comes back as the warrior king (Rev. 19:11-16).

There is, however, another prophecy of Scripture which may be directly connected with the afflicting of Asshur and Eber by the Western powers. In the last verse of Dan. 9, we are told that the Western beast is to make a covenant to protect the Jews in their land for a period of seven years.

While we cannot definitely know what things may come in before the last prophetic events are fulfilled, yet it begins to look seriously as though these events are in the making. If the Arabs, or Moslem world, should war against Israel in their land, then the future head of the Roman Empire may emerge and strike suddenly and strongly against Israel's aggressors and make the prophetic league for the seven years - seven years that are to have their fulfillment after the Christians are taken to be with Christ at His coming. Well may we lift up our eyes. His coming may be much

nearer than we anticipate; yes, even at the very door.

After the Middle East is forced to permit Israel to dwell safely by reason of Israel's pact with the revived Roman Empire for those tragic seven years of trouble - the latter half of them being called "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7), or the "great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21) - there will be other attacks against the Jews in their land. These will come from the confederated Moslems north and east of Palestine, and from Egypt to the south. Dan. 11:36 to the end of the chapter deals with events that are still future. They will take place during this previously-mentioned seven-year period.

"The king" of Dan. 11:36 is the antichrist of Jerusalem. He is the Jew who will come in his own name (John 5:43) and be their leader. He will work hand in hand with the head of the revived Roman Empire - "the god of forces," "a strange god." But as the Roman Empire reels under the successive strokes of judgment from God (foretold in Revelation) during the last part of the seven years, Egypt ("the king of the south") will be emboldened to strike against the antichrist and the Jews (v. 40). Then the Jews' last terrible scourge will fall on them. "The king of the north shall come against him [the antichrist] like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over." v. 40.

This same flood of destruction which will come from the north against the Jews under the antichrist in Jerusalem is also described by another prophet: "Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement [their contract with the Roman Empire for protection against the Moslem hordes]; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." Isa. 28:14, 15. The Jews will then believe themselves to be fully safe by reason of their contract with the wicked and diabolic head of the revived Roman Empire. They will take refuge under him - the personification of wickedness - with no thought of trust in God.

But God has foretold what the end of this leaning on a wicked support will be: "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, ... Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand." vv. 16-18. Men's agreements come to nothing when they run counter to the will of God. All the power of the beast - such power that the world will say, "Who is able to make war with him?" - will be impotent to save an apostate Israel under the antichrist from the devastating judgment of the Moslem hordes from the north.

God has thus described their incursion: "When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning it shall pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report." vv. 18, 19.

The Jews have gone and are going back to their land in unbelief. They have not gone there as to "the holy land," but as to their national home. They have gone back to accept the antichrist, and be in league with Satan - with death and hell-and the apostate head of Christendom - the beast of the Western world. It is strange that some Christians should lend themselves to the work of sending

Jews back there, for they are going back for the worse and not the better. They are going back to the scourge of the Moslem world, then the protection of the Western beast, and finally to the last, great, overflowing of the Moslems just before the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ to tread "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19:15).

The beast and his armies (Rev. 19:19-21), the fierce king of the north and his armies (Isa. 30:30-33; Dan. 8:23-25) will meet their doom in Israel's land when the Lord appears for their deliverance. But two-thirds of all the Jews in Palestine are going to be cut off and die during the dreadful time of "Jacob's trouble" (Zech. 13:8, 9). Then after their Messiah reigns and Israel is dwelling safely in the land, Russia and her satellites will come down into Palestine and meet their complete overthrow. (See Eze. 38 and 39.)

There will be a small remnant of the Jews with faith in their coming Messiah who will not accept the antichrist. These will suffer from foes within and without, but at the appointed signal they will flee Jerusalem for a secret hideaway according to the Lord's own words in Matt. 24:15-22.

Christians, the coming of the Lord for His own is IMMINENT.

Apostolic Succession: the Editor's Column

A letter from one of our readers prompts us to take up the subject of what is known as "apostolic succession." A careful examination of all the scriptures that could possibly bear on it will show that God never intended that there should be the perpetuation of a line of apostles.

In Eph. 4 we read that the ascended Christ "gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." vv. 11, 12. But in the second chapter it says that the Church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." v. 20. The apostles and New Testament prophets laid the foundation; the evangelists, pastors and teachers continue the work until the Church is all gathered home to be with Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." 1 Cor. 3:10. Now it is self-evident that a foundation of a building is laid only once. Foundation stones are not used for the superstructure.

Of those who laid the foundation, Paul occupied a special place, for to him was given by special revelation the whole truth of the Church. His epistles not only give the foundation truths, but they also give instructions for the ordering of the Church on earth in all ages (alas, sadly neglected in this day).

Before the New Testament scriptures were completed, prophets were used to communicate the mind of God, as we read: "And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed [strengthened] them." Acts 15:32. Luke and Mark were never called apostles, but the former wrote the Gospel that bears his name and The Acts; the latter wrote another of the four gospels. Apostles and prophets were definitely used of the Lord for the establishment of the Church, but then they ceased. The Apostle John was the last of the apostles to be taken home, and with his divinely inspired book of Revelation the Word of God was complete. Nothing has been or can be added to it or taken from it (Rev. 22:18, 19).

The Apostle Paul, who was used of the Lord to give instructions to the Church, did not once refer to a successor to himself or to other apostles as such. When he was nearing the end of his course, he sent from Miletus to Ephesus to have the elders come to meet him. There he gave them a farewell address and if there could be any place where Paul would have mentioned a successor it should have been there. He said: "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.... Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God.... For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Acts 20:25-30.

Paul as an apostle had appointed elders to look after the flock; they were not apostles, and, in view of his departure, he told them what would come in after he left the scene. Some of them would speak perverse things to draw disciples after them. Perhaps these pretended to be his successors, for the Lord later addresses the Church at Ephesus commending them for trying some who said they were apostles, but were not (Rev. 2:2).

In view of Paul's decease, what was the resource of the Church? Acts 20:32 gives the answer: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up." Nothing but "God, and the word of His grace" would be needed by the Church. God and His Word would be sufficient for every exigency of the path. They could pray to God and count on His succor and help, and His Word would give every needed instruction. The Church was not committed to any man or group of men, however faithful they might be. Nothing and no one was to come between the Church of God and God Himself, and He was to be known through His Word.

In Paul's last epistle, 2 Timothy, he gives specific instructions for conduct in the last days of Christendom. Evil would come in like a flood, and it would be so hard to distinguish between mere professors and real Christians that it would come down to only the Lord's really knowing who were His (chap. 2: 19). Would there then be some new revelation, some new dogma or creed instituted to keep the saints? No. They were to continue in the things Timothy learned from Paul, and rely on the unerring and unchangeable "holy scriptures," which were divinely given, and would be all-sufficient "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect [complete], thoroughly furnished unto all good works." What place is there for a successor to the Apostle Paul? None whatever.

In view of the assumption of some to be Peter's successors, it would be well to examine Peter's last letter to the Church. Here we should find a mention of his successors, if it was ever to be found. In the Second Epistle of Peter he says: "Shortly I must put off this my tabernacle [his body], even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me." Chap. 1:14.

He was here looking forward to his martyrdom which he knew was not far distant. This, then, was the place to speak of committing the saints to his successor, if there were to be such. He said: "Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty." vv. 15, 16. Nothing new was to be given them, but simply what he had already taught them. This they were to keep in memory.

In the second chapter, Peter describes the moral corruption that would come in at the end, into the very place of profession; then he says, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior." Chap. 3:1, 2. The resource of the faithful would be a constant remembrance of what was given at the beginning by Peter and the other apostles, as well as what was written by the "holy prophets."

One has only to read the rest of this last chapter of his last writing to see how incongruous the thought of a successor is with the whole tenor of this inspired writing. It looks forward through all of

the Church age to the "day of the Lord," even through it, on to its end, and the beginning of "the day of God" - the eternal state. He makes references to Paul's apostolic writings as an integral part of the "Scriptures" which were for their edification, and closes with: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen." v. 18.

The Apostle John was another prominent one of the twelve apostles. He also wrote about the last days, and the coming of the antichrist. What was his manner of preparing the saints for evil days? He brought before them the manifestation of the true life in the Person of the Son of God on earth. They were cast back upon that which "was from the beginning" - even the revelation of that life on earth, and of the Father and the Son, or true Christianity as known from the beginning of it. Nothing was to supplant or improve it. They had all they needed then and ever. If there were false teachers, bringing false doctrine, the saints had the Holy Spirit dwelling in them as the anointing to teach them the difference between truth and error. The Holy Spirit would guide the lambs and sheep so they would only recognize the voice of the true Shepherd and not be misled by wolves in sheep's clothing.

In John's second epistle, when warning a sister against receiving false teachers into her home, he said, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." v. 9. This would be better translated, "He that goes forward and abides not in the doctrine"; that is, to leave the very foundation and add anything to it under the specious plea of progress is not to abide in the doctrine of Christ. It is a fatal delusion.

If the first chapter of The Acts be alleged as the proof of the apostolic succession, it should be understood that Christianity proper did not begin until the second chapter where the Holy Spirit came down and baptized believers into one body. In the first chapter, the disciples were in a transitional period which was largely Jewish in character. They acted upon Old Testament scriptures in appointing Matthias to take the place of the apostate Judas; and this was done according to an Old Testament provision for casting lots to decide a matter (Josh. 7:14-18; 1 Sam. 14:40-42; Pro. 16:33). This is foreign to the New Testament teaching of the Church, where the Lord's guidance by the Spirit according to the Scriptures is sought.

In the foundation of the Church there were more than twelve apostles; Ephesians says merely "some apostles," and numbers are not connected with the Church. The number twelve had a special connection with Israel. Paul, Barnabas, James the Lord's brother, who were not of the twelve, are mentioned in the New Testament as apostles.

It was needful, however, that the gap left in the twelve by the defection of Judas should be filled, for in the coming age the twelve apostles are to sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28), so Matthias was chosen for that place. In the millennial display of the Church in heavenly glory, the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel are to be written on the twelve gates of the celestial city. The gates are emblematic of the place of judgment, and the twelve apostles will administer judgment from the gates of the heavenly city to Israel on earth. See Rev. 21:1-14.

Thus we see that the procedure followed in Acts 1 is no warrant whatever for a human arrangement of setting up successors to Peter or any other apostle. May we adhere fully and only

to the written Word of God, and give no ear to the traditions of men.

At the Grave

Why did the Lord groan the second time at the grave of Lazarus? The people had first said, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" John 11:37. Then He groaned again. This groan reminds me of Jacob's deep sympathy with Joseph in Gen. 48:19. He felt for Joseph's grief in having Ephraim preferred, but God's purpose demanded it, and Jacob must go on with it.

We see saints in sorrow, and we cannot but feel for them, though we know that the sorrow must take its course, because God has a purpose in it, and an issue in blessing at the end of it. So Jesus here; He could surely as easily have hindered death as have given life, but there was a great display of glory to be

made at the grave of Lazarus, and great blessing to be brought to the family of Lazarus through that death; and therefore all must go on, though Jesus will groan at the sight of the rough road over which the purpose of God is carrying the saints.

Babylon

Babylon, I believe - the mystic Babylon of the Revelation - may be brought to boast in a crucified Christ, and be Babylon still. For what is it as delineated by the Spirit? Is it not a thing worldly in character, as well as abominable and idolatrous in doctrine and practice? Rev. 18 gives us a sight of Babylon in its worldliness, as chapter 17 more in its idolatries. Babylon of old, as in the land of Chaldea, was full of idols, and guilty of the blood or of the sorrows of the righteous. But it also had this mark: it displayed greatness in the world in the time of Jerusalem's depression. So with the mystic Babylon. She has her abominations in the midst of her, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus stains her; but still more fully is she disclosed as great and splendid and joyous in the earth during the age of Christ's rejection. She is important in the world in that day when the judgment of God is preparing for the world; she can glorify herself and live deliciously in a defiled place.

It is not that she outwardly ignores the cross of Christ. She is not heathen. She may publish Christ crucified, but she refuses to know Christ rejected. She does not continue with Him in His temptations, nor consider the poor and needy Jesus (Luke 22; Psalm 40). The kings of the earth and the merchants of the earth are her friends, and the inhabitants of the earth are her subjects.

Is not, then, the rejection of Christ the thing she practically scorns? Surely it is. And again, I say, the prevailing thought of the Spirit about her is this - she is that which is exalted in the world while God's Witness is depressed, and in defiance of that depression, for she knows of it. Babylon of old well knew of the desolation of Jerusalem; Christendom externally knows and publishes the cross of Jesus.

Babylon of old was very bold in her defiance of the grief of Zion. She made the captives of Zion contribute to her greatness and her enjoyments. Nebuchadnezzar had done this with the captive youths, and Belshazzar, with the captive vessels.

This was Babylon, and in spirit this is Christendom. Christendom is the thing which glorifies herself and lives deliciously in the earth, trading in all that is desirable and costly in the world's esteem, in the very face of the sorrow and rejection of that which is God's. Christendom practically forgets Christ is rejected on the earth.

The Medo-Persian power is another creature. He removes Babylon but exalts himself (Dan. 6). And this is the action of "the beast" and his ten kings. The woman, mystically Babylon, is removed by the ten kings; but then they give their power to the beast who exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, as Darius the Mede did.

This is the closing, crowning feature in the picture of the world's apostasy. But we have not reached it yet. Our conflict is with Babylon and not with the Mede - with that which lives deliciously and in honor during the age of Jerusalem's ruins (that is, of the rejection of Christ).

Before He Answered the King

The second chapter of Nehemiah shows us Nehemiah occupied with the duties of his office as the king's cupbearer. He "took up the wine, and gave it unto the king"; but his heart was occupied with other things, burdened as it was with the unutterable sorrow of his people's condition, and it was intolerable to the king that his cupbearer should wear a sorrowful face at such a time. It destroyed his own pleasure. And Nehemiah confesses that he "had not been beforetime sad in his presence." The king therefore was angry, and said, "Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? This is nothing else but sorrow of heart." "Then," says Nehemiah, "I was very sore afraid." v. 2. And well he might have been; for in such a mood, like a true Oriental despot, Artaxerxes might have ordered him forth to instant execution. But if afraid, God preserved to him his presence of mind, and led him, out of the abundance of his heart, to tell simply and truly the cause of his sorrow. He said to the king, "Let the king live forever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchers, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" v. 3. The king was not unacquainted with the subject of his cupbearer's sorrow, for it was he who had permitted Ezra to go up to build the temple, and had himself given gold and silver to aid his object. God used Nehemiah's simple words to interest the king once more in the condition of Jerusalem. And he said, "For what dost thou make request?" Surely most would have hastened to answer the king, assuredly concluding that he would be certain, since he had deigned to put the question, to grant the desired favor. Not so Nehemiah (and this brings out a special trait of his character), for he says, "So I prayed to the God of heaven," and afterward he presented his petition. Not that we are to conclude that he kept the king waiting. By no means. But the point to be observed is, that before he answered his master he cast himself upon his God - he prayed to the God of heaven. He thus acknowledges his dependence for wisdom to say the right thing, and reveals the special characteristic which another has termed "a heart that habitually turned to God." We might well seek the same grace, for surely it is blessed at all times to be so walking in dependence on God, that when in the presence of difficulties, perplexities, and dangers, we naturally (if we may use the word) look to the Lord for the needed wisdom, direction, and succor. When this is the case, the presence of God will be more real to us than the presence of men.

The Beginning of the Creation of God: a Reader Inquires

Question: "What does 'the beginning of the creation of God' (Rev. 3:14) mean? Jehovah's Witnesses use it to prove that Christ was a created being. Is there a better translation of this?"

Answer: The above translation of Rev. 3:14, as quoted from the King James translation, is good, and true to the original text. It is really a statement of transcendent beauty when seen in its proper connection and meaning. It is found in the Lord's address to the church in Laodicea - that church which depicts the last stage of Christendom - which had given up the Church's heavenly calling and had assumed a great place on earth. By their own estimation they were "rich, and increased with goods," and had "need of nothing," albeit Christ was standing outside. They were the very antithesis of Him whom they were to represent down here. Therefore the Lord presents Himself as the "Amen, the faithful and true witness." He was everything that the Church should have been, but was not.

"All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen." 2 Cor. 1:20. Every promise was affirmed in Him, and will be confirmed in Him. Everything is made good in Christ. In contrast with an unfaithful and untrue Christian profession as the light-bearer in this dark world, He only is "the faithful and true witness." Then comes the statement that He is "the beginning of the creation of God." Adam was the beginning of the first creation of men on earth, but, alas, all failed in him, and the first man came to his end at the cross, and has been set aside. "The second man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:47), and when He came forth in resurrection He was "the beginning of the creation of God." As the risen Man He is the head of the Church which is His body, and He is the head of a new race. Therefore it is beautiful to see that when man had failed in everything committed to him in responsibility, all is made good in the second Man, as "the beginning of the creation of God."

We do not hesitate to call any teaching that uses this verse to indicate that the Lord Jesus was a created being, a "doctrine of demons." It is wresting the Scriptures to their own destruction. He, blessed be His name, is the Lord from heaven, the creator and sustainer of all things; but He became a man, and in His death all of the first creation, of which Adam was the head, came to an end. He came forth in resurrection as the firstborn from the dead (the place of pre-eminence), and is "the beginning of the creation of God."

We would add a word of caution here against having anything to do with the "damnable heresies" of the Jehovah's Witnesses, either in receiving their literature, or in listening to the propagators of blasphemies against the Person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God has addressed an epistle to a sister, in which He enjoins her not to allow such teachers to enter her house: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine," (the doctrine of the Father and the Son) "receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 1:10, 11

The Bible in Two Parts: Old and New Testaments

The Old and New Testaments are perfectly harmonious! and there is not a line or word of one that contradicts the other. But they are very far from being or saying the same things. God takes particular pains to mark the difference; in fact, He writes each in a different tongue - the one, Hebrew, having its groundwork in the family of Abraham after the flesh-the other, Greek, used when God was sending the gospel to the Gentiles as such. Thus the Greek was just as much a representative of Gentile objects, as the Hebrew found its fitting object in Israel. But, for all that, God shows His mind in both. Only the distinctive feature of the Old Testament is His government, while the distinctive feature of the New Testament is His grace. Government and grace are totally distinct. Government is always a dealing with man, whereas grace is the revelation of what God is and does. Consequently, the one invariably supposes judgment, and the other is the full display of mercy and goodness; and both find their meeting point in Christ. As He is the King, He consequently is the head of the government. As He is the Son of God, full of grace and truth, He consequently is the one channel for all the blessing peculiar to the New Testament. His glory, now that the mighty work of redemption is done, accounts for all our characteristic privileges.

The Blessings of His Presence

"Be of good courage; it is I; be not afraid. And He went up to them into the ship, and the wind ceased." Mark 6:50, 51.

"When they had come out of the ship they recognized Him immediately, and ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about on couches those that were ill, where they heard He was.... And as many as touched Him were healed." Mark 6:54-56.

This is a little picture of what will be the consequence of the Lord's return to the earth. When the Lord and His disciples rejoin the shore that He has left, when He comes back again, whatever there is of human woe, wretchedness, weakness, sickness, in this world, all will flee before the presence and touch of the Son of God. He will then and thus manifest His goodness.

Accordingly, what we have here is the consummation and triumph of all ministry in His own ministry. The disciples are shown in their weakness meanwhile, but encouraged by the prospect of His return in power and glory, when all shall be made good that the Lord has ever promised, and that He had led His people to expect in this world. It is a good thing for our souls to realize that while our Lord is away we are not to be discouraged by difficulties - not cast down if the wind is contrary and ourselves toiling in vain, yet not in vain. It is He who has sent us across that troubled sea; it is He who meanwhile intercedes for us, and as surely will He come to us; and when He does return, all that is lacking He will supply, all that hinders will be removed, and then will the universe duly, fully exult in its Lord, our Lord and Master, when He shall be exalted from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. This may cheer us in any little service that is before us now. It is instruction for the service of the Lord, beginning with His own rejection in shame, and ending with His glorious return, when all sickness and misery disappear before His presence.

Christ for My Sins and Christ for My Cares: Part 1

It is a wonderful thing to think of the reality of the intimacy with which the Lord carried on intercourse with people in this world - His ways and manners with them -and who He is. In truth it changes all our thoughts of God.

He has visited men before the day of judgment, and we find Him giving, and not judging - dealing with them in quite another way. He who is to be the Judge had to come beforehand to be the Savior; came in grace, seeking worshipers; came to visit the hearts of men where they were (naughty hearts); came to such, not to judge at all, but to deal with our souls about the very sins for which He would have had to judge us. If I see Him there I find He has dealt with my sins already in a totally different way. It confirms the judgment, of course -puts the seal of God's testimony on it in the strongest way. But at the same time it gives me to know and understand that the whole thing has been decided in a totally opposite manner. Instead of coming to claim the debt, He comes to pay it; both ways prove the debt was there, but the dealing is totally different.

He comes and deals with sinners in exactly the opposite way to claiming the debt, and deals effectually; that is the gospel. "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." It is a Savior we have to tell of, and I could not speak thus if He were not a Savior who has wrought an effectual salvation. Then comes exercise of heart and the discovery of what we are by His Word, to bring us to repentance; but it tells us we are saved. "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." It was at all cost to Himself that He could say it; but He did not recall it, or deceive this woman of Samaria. Can we go in peace? We go with the consciousness that we go on the Lord's own warrant in perfect peace, and with nothing to fear as to the consequences of sin, if He has said, "Go in peace."

Therefore He sends out the word to the children of Israel, "preaching peace by Jesus Christ." And "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Beloved friends, have you got peace? Have you got what He announced and sent out to be preached? It is no good telling me you cannot have peace. There it is. Was it to be preached and not believed? God would have us happy with Himself, and therefore sends the testimony of peace. It is no light thing, for He has made peace through the blood of His cross; and being justified by faith, we have peace with God. It is a real thing, an effectual thing, a divine thing, founded on what has been perfectly done. If I believe, I come into this to enjoy it. It is that God has visited us to bring us peace. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." "In Me... peace." Hence God gives Himself, over and over again, the name, "God of peace." It is the name of predilection which He gives Himself. He never calls Himself the God of joy - joy may change, but peace is eternally settled.

We see how He dealt with this woman. It was through grace. "Salvation is of the Jews." They had the law, the temple, everything that belonged to God, like the elder brother of Luke 15. But the Jews cast Him out, and He must needs go through Samaria. This was the beginning of His

ministry. The Pharisees were jealous of Him, so He goes out and leaves this place of salvation according to promise. It is the terrible condition of the world, that the Son of God has been in it and they cast Him out. He came there and has been rejected; hence the testimony is, that the whole world lieth in the wicked one. The world not only sinned, but rejected Him who came into it when man had sinned - the world that had grown up since God cast man out of Eden. If I call myself a Christian, I profess that the world has cast out and crucified the Son of God. Still the grace goes on. God took that as the means and occasion to bring it out. That is what is so glorious in the cross, that that which was the perfect expression of man's enmity, was the perfect expression of God's love. There was the meeting place between man's hatred against God and God's sovereign love to man. In John 4 He was not yet there, but was walking in the grace and spirit of it.

Here, rejected out of Judea, He must needs go through Samaria, and we get the blessed truth that God is above all sin, because Samaria was most hateful. He can exercise His love in the scene of the thing He abhors. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He gave His blessed Son, one with Himself, down to death, to drinking the cup of wrath for those who were nothing but sinners. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

Now, mark another thing we have here. We find Him thoroughly a man, coming down to this world, "Who... made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." O that hearts could get hold of this! I speak now of the way that He came - of His death I will speak again - that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor. It is brought out in the circumstances of this history.

Wearied with His journey, He comes to the well and sits down where He can find a seat. Do our hearts really believe that this was the Lord? Why was He in a condition to be weary? Why there? It was perfect love. He comes down to take this place. He passes through the world - the Holy One that could not be contaminated to bring sinners the love they needed.

This was expressed in the most lovely way in the case of the leper in Luke 5, "Who... besought Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." The leper was sure of the power, but did not know the love that was there. He carries the love right up to the leper, "and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean." If a man touched a leper, he was unclean and put out of the camp. But He could not be defiled. This is a picture of the way the Lord was here. Holiness, undefiled and undefilable, carries to sinners the love they need.

"Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well," and the disciples go away to find meat. Oh! to think of the Lord Himself, whom none of the princes of this world knew, but who was the Lord of glory, sitting weary on the well, thirsty and dependent upon this world for a drink of water - the world that was made by Him, and knew Him not! "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink." He was dependent on this woman for water. In this very fact she finds out that there was something remarkable in the Man. It was extraordinary that a Jew should speak to her, a woman of Samaria, and her mind is attracted by it.

Let me say a word as to this woman, so full of blessed interest for us, as drawing out into exercise the heart of the Lord. She was a poor, vile creature - alone there. Hers was an isolated heart; she had isolated herself by sin. She finds One more lonely than herself, and that One was the blessed

Lord! She could go to the men of the city, but He was totally alone and had not one to go to, though Himself the most affable and accessible of men.

There were no circumstances in which He was ever found where power, love, goodness, and truth were not readily in exercise. There was no weariness if a poor desolate sinner came. When the disciples returned, they said, "Hath any man brought Him aught to eat?" No matter what company He was in, He was always accessible to their hearts; but there was no sympathy for Him. No love and goodness met Him in going through this world; His heart was utterly a stranger in it; yet He had all sympathy for others. When He had to answer for Himself before the chief priests who were hunting Him to death, the moment the cock crew, His eye was upon Peter-never wearied. No circumstances He was in could ever touch the spring of grace and goodness that was in Him.

But mark what comfort for us! Here was the Judge of quick and dead-not as judge, of course, but the Person who is to be Judge, meeting with the poor sinner in grace, sitting with the very person that deserved to be judged. In that sense, in the communion of grace, He is sitting with us. It is just what is going on through the gospel. "We are ambassadors therefore for Christ, God as it were beseeching by us." 2 Cor. 5:20; J.N.D. Trans.

Well, He is sitting on the well asking drink. She says,

"How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" Mark the answer of the Lord. It has two distinct points in it. "If thou knewest the gift of God." It is the ground He takes with you: "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The next thing is, "And who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink." That is, if you knew-not who I am, but- who it is that has come down so low as to ask a drink of water; if your eye were opened to see God giving eternal life-come to require nothing (and who would not get it if He did)-you would be in perfect confidence before Him.

He once came looking for fruit and found wild grapes. Under the law He sought for fruit and His servants were killed. He said, I have yet one Son, but when they saw the Son they said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him." The effect was no fruit but hatred to Him and His Father. Now He does not come (I do not say producing fruit - He does - but) looking for it. He has come to sow (not looking for fruit), dealing with the sinner personally in the gospel; and where there is grace, and the sense of need, there will be the fruit of the Spirit, and He will look for it.

Human nature judges God, but God's nature comes out entirely superior to that. He gives. Thus we get these two blessed principles: that God is giving, and that the Lord has come down to such poverty as to be dependent upon a creature for a drink of water -come to put Himself down under the wants of those who had nothing but wants, so as to meet them. She is attracted; there is power in His word; and He begins speaking of spiritual things to her.

Christ for My Sins and Christ for My Cares: Part 2

"The woman saith unto Him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." John 4:15. This is a remarkable expression of confidence in His word. But mark the state of her heart, entirely occupied with her water pot and her wants. Do you know anybody like that? - people who own the Word of God to be the Word of God - who own its authority, but are in heart completely occupied with the things of life. As a natural person she received not the things of the Spirit of God. Her mind was awakened to respect for His word, so that she could believe what He said, but she could not grasp spiritual things; they had not the smallest entrance into her heart, so full was it of temporal things.

What was to be done? He had been pouring out words of grace; all had flown over her head-passed over a heart absorbed with the things of the world. He takes the other side, not the gift of God, but the state of man - "Go, call thy husband, and come hither."

The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Quite true. She tells the truth to hide the truth - as is often done in this poor world. The conscience is reached now, and there is where the Word enters always. It is quite right that it should attract the heart, but the conscience must be reached. "Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly." It is all out now; her conscience is brought into the presence of God. Everything must be out in the light that has come into this world. It is wonderful how quick memory even becomes under this action of the light. Sins are recalled which have long been forgotten. Light has come in; she has understanding now; before, she had not understood a word; she was completely buried in her cares.

Verse 19. "The woman saith unto Him, Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet." The Word of God had reached her conscience, and wherever it does it has authority, and it is the only way. When I find a book that tells me all that ever I did, I know what it is. It does not require to be proved by man. No book in the world has authority till it reaches the conscience. Then it is its own witness to the folly of attacks made upon it, and proves the folly of unbelief. It is the Word of God itself - its own witness. I do not take a candle to see if the sun shines. But do you not see that it shines? Then you are blind. The only thing that brings authority with it is the Word of God coming into the conscience - "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

God is love - His blessed Son, a poor Man speaking to the woman, but He is also light come in. These always go together. You never find when the gospel is received, that it does not get in as light to the conscience. There is no fruit without it. Where it gets in, it will be light, exposing all that is there; and if it does not, there is no root. The point where intelligence is brought into the heart of this poor woman, is where her conscience is reached. How would you like Him to tell you everything? Does He not know every wicked thing I have done? It should come up in judgment, but my comfort is that it was all out before Him when He was dealing with me in grace. Now I can bear it that the eye of God searches everything through His Word. In dealing with the soul, love has brought the light here. Love attracted Peter (Luke 5). Why does he not run away? Why go up

to Him and say, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." He was drawn by the love and grace, and convicted by the light that love had brought in. Light that manifests to myself what I am in the sight of God, brings me there, so that I am in the light as He is. There must be truth in the inward parts, but did that hinder the Lord's saying, "If thou knewest the gift of God"? Now instead of trying to make things straight with God, I have found Him, knowing everything I have done, in perfect grace. There is then no hiding sin. All is brought into the light by God.

Mark another thing. God is bringing in something new. Was He going to trust the heart of this poor woman? No. He was going to get her to trust His heart. People say, May not my heart deceive me? To be sure it may. Will His deceive me? The grace of God brings salvation to us-brings us everything we need. So He brought strength at the pool of Bethesda - "Take up thy bed and walk." He is not requiring anything from us, but brings the thing we need - brings Himself. And there is nothing we need like Him. He brings us to repentance - to the conviction of what we are, as here. But He comes saying, "If thou knewest the gift of God." God has something to give-eternal life through Jesus Christ. But I shrink from coming to God. Quite right, to a certain extent. But who is it that I am with, that is bringing in this light? The very Man that asked for a drink of water. "If thou knewest... who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink" - a poor Man with nothing but words of grace- you would have trusted Him. "Thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." Do you think I could trust God in the day of judgment? But can I trust the poor Man sitting on the side of the well? It is when my eyes are upon the Person and work of the Lord, that I find I have been talking with the Lord Himself, and He had not a word against me, and yet knew all that ever I did. My heart has the blessed consciousness that it has met God.

There are the poor infidels beating out their brains to find out about God, but I have met Him. He had nothing but kind and gracious words, though He knew all my sins. His whole ways and words and works are perfect love to me, and the love of one come to seek me as a sinner. The Father seeketh worshipers. You have not to go to this mountain or that. He sent the Savior seeking. How many does He find? Does He find hearts here that would pass by the Lord Jesus - that have read hundreds of passages in which His grace was manifested, and gone away untouched, unmoved, though God was spending His heart on them?

See how even the heart of the Lord rejoices over this one poor sinner (v. 32), "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Do you believe that of Christ? He had come to open her eyes, and that was the Lord's meat. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." It is lovely to see the Lord's heart in that way. Just see how it opened out to all the rest. "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields: for they are white already to harvest." He has actually been rejected out of Judea, but the case of this woman has so comforted Him now, it opens out His heart to say, The fields are white to harvest.

Then we have to go on to see that sins having been perfectly manifested, the love and cross of the Lord Jesus comes in, because sins never could be allowed. Nothing remains but the love that comes for the sinner. The heart was won; the conscience was reached. But what about these things that she had done? The very Lord who was speaking to her, goes under them and puts them away. We do need something else than that which reaches the conscience; we need that which purges it. Though our sins were as scarlet, they are made white as snow, and we are bound

to believe it, for "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." He has charged Himself with them. I was convicted, and then humbled about them. But before the day of judgment comes, Christ came, and on the cross was bearing the sins He would have had to judge. The cross was God's dealing with Him about them. When He comes in judgment, I say, That is the Man who put away my sins. Before the time comes for judgment, the Person who is to be the Judge has come Himself to bear the judgment. The question is not then whether I deserve condemnation - "There is none righteous, no, not one"-but what has God wrought? Can I dare to doubt it?

If I am out in the light before God, there is no place where I see sins so terrible as in the cross. But if they are not all perfectly put away forever, they never can be, for Christ cannot die again. See Heb. 10 He will rise up for judgment, but He is sitting down now because all is completely done; if not (I mean as to the work, not as to your feelings), it never can be. That being so, therefore, when the soul is exercised. I look at the cross and say, He has borne my sins. I hate them the more. That is right; it is the work of the Spirit in us; but I speak of the work done for us. Do not speak of the past, present, and future sins; it is a foolish confusion of the time when my heart laid hold of it, and of the work that put them away. As to future sins, I ought never to think of sinning again. As to past sins, how many were past when Christ died? The work was done when they were all future. It is confounding the work done, with the effect in me. He is • raised in glory; is there then any question whether I am to be glorified?

There is another thing as to the cross. It all passed between God and Christ alone - of which the outward darkness was the sign - according to the exigencies and righteousness of God, where it must be according to the absolute perfection of those who wrought it. Men had nothing to do with it; all we had to do with it was our sins, and, we may add, the hatred that killed Christ. It was a divine work about my sins.

Now as to the effect of it. We saw the poor woman absolutely absorbed with her water pot; but the moment her conscience was thoroughly reached, she went off to testify to the others - If you only get Christ, He will tell you all things. She leaves her water pot. The Holy Ghost has not recorded it for nothing. The thing that absorbed her is gone. The word and power of Jesus, that gave her conviction of sin, also substituted Christ for the things that had power over her heart. Christ for my righteousness instead of my sins; Christ as the object for my heart instead of my cares.

I add a word for the comfort of any soul that is convicted of sin, but has not peace. Supposing a person has received the word of Christ, but cannot say he has got Him, but says, if only I could find Christ! find so much sin in me. I would give anything to have Christ. What put that desire into the heart? You have got Him as a great Prophet; His word has reached the heart, you are convicted of sin, but do not know if you have Christ as Savior. He has spoken to you about eternal life, and you have received a word that has made Christ precious to you and your conscience bad. Then you have got Christ. His word has had the authority of the Word of God in your con.: science. If that be so, the Christ that has visited you is' the

Christ that has borne your sins. The Christ who thus speaks to us to bring these thoughts to our hearts, is the One that through grace has borne our judgment before the day of judgment comes.

Now, how is it with you? Has your heart given up its water pot for Christ? I do not mean that there will be no conflict. But has your heart so heard His word that it has penetrated into your

conscience? Do you think you are going with your sins into heaven? How many sins had Eve committed when God turned her out of Eden? One! You have committed more. Do you expect to get into heaven with your sins or without them? Are they all put away? How can you rest a moment until you know it? What madness and folly!

The One who deals with our conscience is the One who came where we are, and is now beseeching us to be reconciled to God. It will be a terrible thing in the day of judgment to have had the heart closed against the voice of the Charmer. Has He not charmed wisely? Were ever words like His? - words of grace, unutterable grace, with which He has sought to win us. It is a blessed truth that before the day of judgment comes, the Judge has come Himself to deliver. Of course you will have to be judged then, if you do not accept the deliverance now!

Christian Obedience

Christianity substitutes obedience to a person for that of obedience to a law. In legal obedience a person fulfills a contract which he has undertaken. Christian obedience is like that of a slave to his master whom he loves. He does what he tells him without a will of his own.

If I bid my child to do three things and he only does two of them which he likes to do and takes his own way in the third, insubjection of will is as much evinced by his disobeying in one point as if he had in all.

Christ's obedience was perfect and is our pattern. He was put through every trial to see if there was in Him an unwillingness to obey-that is sin-and it could not be found. In the Garden of Gethsemane He chose rather to have God's face hidden than fail to obey. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. There is nothing so humble or so unselfish as obedience. It supposes that we have no will of our own.

Christian Position, Service, and Worship

The memories of Bethany cannot fail to touch a chord in the heart of everyone who loves the Lord Jesus. We naturally find pleasure in lingering over any spot that was dear to one we love - how much more when that One is the Lord Jesus Christ, the One to whom we owe everything. We love to think of anything associated with His blessed name; but what makes Bethany particularly interesting is that He seemed to find in the society of that little company a resting place in His toilsome path. How sweet to think that He who "endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself," such hatred and antagonism from man, had one little spot where He could find those who, although they knew but little, were truly attached to Himself.

The result of such intercourse is seen in the confidence of love which that message of Martha and Mary reveals: "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." They knew He loved their brother as well as they, and it is not their love but His love that is uppermost in their minds. It is to this spot that Jesus turns on His last journey to Jerusalem. "There they made Him a supper." There is no formal invitation, as with Simon the Pharisee; none was needed, for there was the ease, and as we have said, the confidence of known love. What a supper it was! Who was there? The Son of God- "God... manifest in flesh." Who were around Him? A company of poor sinners, attracted by perfect grace, and for whom He-the Son of man -was soon to lay down His life.

There is significance in the way the Bethany family is introduced. Jesus came to Bethany, "where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead." "Martha served," and Mary took "a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair." In this we have an illustration of Christian position, service, and worship.

Lazarus had been dead, but now alive from the dead, he is seated in company with Jesus. So with the believer. He is alive from the dead, and that in the power of an endless life. We cannot be too clear as to this. Weakness and a troubled conscience is the result of imperfectly apprehending it. If we look to ourselves, we find failure to the very end; if we look to God's side, we find nothing but perfection. Christ is our life. The Father "hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." Col. 1:12, 13. "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Eph. 2:6. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. And all things are of God." 2 Cor. 5:17, 18.

Such is the character of our standing. We shall not be more meet for heaven when we get there than we are now, nor will our heaven be more secure. The title is perfect. True, if I look at myself, I see nothing of all this; but I am not called upon to look at myself, but to judge myself. That is what God has done with nature-"condemned sin in the flesh"-and I am to reckon myself dead to sin and alive unto God. True self-judgment, however, we must remember, proceeds from being in the presence of the Lord. The light exposes self in its true colors, and puts an end to all thought of improvement. We get the principle in Job's case: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear;

but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself." But the same light that exposes self, manifests the unalterable grace in which we stand; and the desires of the new nature being strengthened, we get power to keep the old in check. We leave it behind in all its badness, and, going on in the power of the new nature, its energies are displayed. That is the principle of overcoming, as we read in Gal. 5:16--"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

A word as to Martha. It is the Lord's presence that calls forth her service. She does not lose the opportunity of ministering to Him. In this we learn a lesson. We ought not to seek to get through this world as comfortably as possible because our consciences are set at rest. It is not in keeping with the activities of divine love to feast on our own blessings in the midst of a groaning creation. Where these are in proper exercise, the saint is a channel of blessing to all around. "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." John 7:38. O how our selfish hearts are exposed when we think of the pathway of the Lord Jesus on earth, or even of the unceasing care and bowels of compassion that animated such a one as Paul. But it is important to note that Martha's service is connected with the Lord. It must ever be so, where there is true service. We are always apt to imitate others, or work for the sake of a place or a name. But this will never do. The Lord has work for each of us -for each his own work-and the test of its being rightly done is whether it has been done as for Him. Of course, in order to know what the Lord has for me to do, and to have Him as the object in doing it, there must be the broken will and the single eye.

Mary figures prominently in this scene. The appropriateness of her action is apparent from verse 7 - "Against the day of My burying hath she kept this." Jesus was soon to leave them. "Me ye have not always." In view of this approaching death Mary esteems nothing too costly to spend, and pours out the precious ointment which she had kept for this purpose, as the answer of a loving heart to the love of His. It is the spirit of worship. In the eyes of man it was waste, and occasioned grumbling. But who can estimate its value in the sight of God? Man valued the Son of God at thirty pieces of silver. To faith He is the most glorious object that mortal eyes could behold. Set down with purged consciences in the presence of God, within the holiest, our eyes behold that worthy One who, by His shameful cross, has brought us there. What else can we do but worship, and what is more delightful than the sweet odor of a heart doing homage to that glorious One in whom all fullness dwells, and in whom the Father finds infinite delight?

A practical word on the thought with which we started. It is sweet to think that there was one spot on earth where Jesus could meet loving hearts. But have you ever thought that He seeks the same still? We sometimes sing,

"Who find in Abba's favor Our spirit's present home."

And this is blessedly true. But there is another side-"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 14:23.

May it be ours to have His love so filling our hearts, and every word of His so attended to, that He may find a dwelling place in us and with us here! C.

You may check your answers with those given on page 184.

To which king of the two tribes - Judah and Benjamin - did God speak by "Necho king of Egypt"?

Which judge of Israel was strengthened by hearing a Midianite tell a dream?

3. What was the name of a Syrian military leader who heard God's message to him through a little girl?

Consider Him

Read Heb. 3:1-6; 12:1-3

"Jesus, Thou art enough

The mind and heart to fill."

I have sometimes thought it might be said that man's superiority over other creatures is in mind and heart. The angels excel in strength. It is never said that they are made in the image of God. Man's heart is very large. There is but One who can fill man's heart. When the Lord is before us, we have One who can and does fill the heart and mind. The above two scriptures bring Him before us in two different ways, perhaps three. He is brought before us in many ways in Scripture. Sometimes in His eternal glory; then again in His manhood; then back to glory. His glory is great, and His glories are many. Joseph's father loved him, and made him a coat of many colors; apply this in type to the Lord Jesus. He has personal glories, and glories that have been given Him.

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." How much there is in these few words! "Consider" (the word "consider" is found again in chapter 12) "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (J.N.D. Trans.). His apostleship was on earth; His high priesthood is in heaven. Let us consider these two things. What is our confession? It is that God is known, is revealed, is no longer concealed, no longer in darkness. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." In 1 John 4 we get "God is love" twice, but in the first chapter it is "God is light." The next thing is, where God is; that is, "in the light." Then as to our confession, it is walking "in the light." He told the prophets of old a great deal about Himself, but when He is revealed, it is alone in the Person of His Son (John 1:18).

In the first chapter of Hebrews where we have the Lord as the Apostle of our confession, it begins, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, bath in these last days spoken unto us" in the Person of "His Son." Now, see what it says, once our attention has been called to that Person. "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Such is our confession, of which the Lord is the Apostle. What a subject for consideration!

The High Priest brings Him before us in heaven, as the One who is qualified to sustain us in the circumstances of faith - as the One who lives within the veil, and is touched with the feelings of our infirmities.

His advocacy (1 John 2:1) is another thing; it is the grace which restores our souls if we wander and sin. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." There, it is the Lord as restorer of our souls. He brings the soul back into communion of the relationship into which we have been brought.

His high priestly service is another thing. It is His sustaining us in the midst of difficulties; and we are exhorted to consider Him in this capacity. In chapter 5 the priesthood is the position to which He has been called, and there He sustains us. How precious that makes the Lord to us - He who has felt what we feel, has entered into all that we pass through. Do we know what it is to consider the Lord in that way? It is a wonderfully sustaining truth in sorrow to know Him thus, who lives in sympathizing love for us.

Another thing is the position He occupies in the house of God. God has a house on the earth. "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God." God's dwelling place on earth is in the midst of His people. The place that the Lord Jesus occupies in the house is not as a servant in the house, but He is a Son over it. Moses was a servant in it, and was faithful to Him who called him. The Lord Jesus is a Son over the house, and "faithful to Him that appointed Him." We get Him in Revelation, chapters 1-3, as Son over the house in addresses to the churches. "I have not found thy works perfect before God," etc. Here it is the Lord maintaining what is becoming to the house of God.

In Heb. 12 we find the Lord, not as Apostle, not as High Priest, but as what? "The beginner and completer of faith." He began and completed that path in all perfection. How far is it our habit to consider the Lord in the path of faith?

In these three ways we are called upon to consider Him; as Apostle, as High Priest, and beginner and completer of faith, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." This is very precious. He was sustained in that path of 'faith. What sustained Him? That which was at the end- "who for the joy," etc. What can sustain us in the path of faith fraught with difficulties from beginning to end? One way to be overcome is to get occupied with the difficulties. We need to look at Him. So "consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest," etc. If we get occupied with the circumstances, we faint in our minds; we need an object before us.

Paul said, "If by any means I might obtain," etc. The object was before him. In going up a steep hill, if the mind gets occupied with something else, one is soon there. Keep the eye on an object, and the heart is sustained.

If we go back to the first chapter, we find Him at the hand and of the Majesty on high. This is another viewpoint.

With these few thoughts before us, let us consider Him: the Apostle, High Priest, and the One who endured, lest we be weary and faint in our minds. Long or short, the way is difficult. What enables us to surmount is to consider that One who has gone before and has reached the goal.

The Conversion of Saul

When Saul of Tarsus was on his way to Damascus, as we learn from Acts 9, he was arrested by a light from heaven shining round about him above the brightness of the sun. The astonished, persecuting Saul fell to the ground. He had now come to the end of himself, not only as to the sins of the flesh, but as to the righteousness of the flesh with all its advantages, natural and acquired, from birth to that day and hour. This is the true preparation of heart for the right apprehension of a glorified Christ - our heavenly Object. When we are down, when we see we are nothing, and we are no longer looking for holy feelings within, or a change for the better to make us worthy of divine favor, when with our faces on the

ground we are obedient to the heavenly vision, the light of the glory shines into our souls. "He heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Here we have the proper object of the Christian, and that which should form and govern every Christian's character. Saul learns from Christ Himself in the glory that He was Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified, and that Christians are a part of Himself - one with Himself in the glory. "Why persecutest thou Me?... I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Who would look to their own righteousness or religiousness, who had caught a glimpse of Christ glorified?

David and His Friends

"What solemn changes in all within and around does sin work; what new relationships to places and persons it forces us to take!

This is sorrowfully experienced by David. Nathan, the prophet, had in earlier days been sent to David with words of approval and encouragement, and all was in honor between them. But when David had sinned, the same Nathan is sent to him with words of terrible rebuke and conviction (2 Sam. 7 and 12).

So again, in other days David listens to the reproaches of a profane one of the house of Saul, but he could answer such reproaches with holy boldness. But after his sin, he is scorned and insulted again by the profane of the house of Saul, but the spirit of holy boldness has departed from him. He cannot reply to Shimei as he had replied to Michal (2 Sam. 6 and 16).

Another illustration of this is seen in David's connection with the house of Machir of Lo-debar. In the day of his integrity David sends to Machir for Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, who had been long and graciously entertained there. With noble heart David then brings the son of his bosom friend home to him to Jerusalem, and makes him to eat continually at his own table. But afterward, in the time when his sin had found him out, Machir supplies David with the commonest necessities. (2 Sam. 9 and 17.)

What bitter changes for the heart were all these! The more vain and proud the nature is, the more would the this be felt; in some cases the trial would be all but intolerable. It would be then "the sorrow of the world" which "worketh death." With David, however, it was otherwise. It became "godly sorrow" that "worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." David did not feel the sorrow as the "sorrow of the world," sinking under it, as in the sight of men. But he bowed his head under the punishment of sin as in the fear of God, and then as "godly sorrow," nothing less than "salvation" was the end of it.

How beautiful, how precious with God when in circumstances like this the "sorrow of the world" is prevailed over in the soul by "godly sorrow," when all this is taken up in reference to the Lord, and not to man. That is the difference. But how difficult!

Moral mischief, however, not only worked all this change in David's own relationships to the scene around him, but it tested others also. This is exhibited in the history. There are three distinguished personages who stand this testing and have their grace and virtues variously but sweetly exercised: Shobi the Ammonite, Machir of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim. Shobi was the younger brother of Hanun the king of the Ammonites, who had treated David's courtesy at the time of the death of his father with such slight and insult. And, I doubt not, that on this occasion Shobi had deprecated his elder brother's way, and been attracted by the grace and nobleness of David, so that in the subsequent day of David's guilt and degradation, Shobi has a right mind still, though in changed circumstances. He joins other worthy ones in comforting the poor exiled king of Israel. (See 2 Sam. 10 and 17.)

Machir was the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, a man, we may presume, of note and station in the half tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan. In earlier days he had received into his house the lame child of that worthy son of Israel, Jonathan the son of King Saul, and had been a comfort to him in the day of the national trouble when the house of Saul and Jonathan was sinking. And so when David is sinking, and he is suffering the grievous visitation of his terrible iniquity, the same right mind appears again in this true man of God, and he likewise joins in confronting David. David was as in prison, and he visits him. (See 2 Sam. 9 and 17.)

Barzillai was a great man, a man of note and substance in the land of Gilead, beyond the Jordan. But he never appears in the history till David is distressed; and he is willing to disappear as soon as that distress is over. He was the friend in need. But though unknown before, his mind had been that of a man of God, in secret, like many in every day of Israel's or the Church's history; for he takes the path of the Spirit in a moment when nature in even some of its refined and moral judgments would have gone astray. He treats David's sorrow as a sacred thing, and adds not to the grief of him whom God in holy gracious discipline is wounding. He heartily joins Machir and Shobi in sending to David in his hunger and thirst and nakedness. (See 2 Sam. 17 and 19.)

We may say in review of all this, What a chapter in 2 Samuel is chapter 11! How the whole book morally turns on that, the complexion of David's history thus awfully changing with his conduct!

In Days of Ruin

There is great instruction in the conduct of Zerubbabel related in Ezra 3. The son and heir of David takes his place with a remnant returning from captivity. He is content to labor in Jerusalem without a throne, without a crown. In building the altar of the Lord and the house of God, he simply served God in his own generation. Heir of the place that Solomon had formerly occupied in the days of prosperity and glory, he speaks neither of his birth nor of his own rights; yet is he faithful in all the path of separation, grief, and struggles he is obliged to pass through. May the Lord render us more and more peaceful and confiding in Himself in these days of trial. "When I am weak, then am I strong," is a lesson Paul had to learn by a very humbling process.

The Dead Alive, and the Lost Found

This chapter, from the 4th verse, gives us our Lord's reply to the charge brought against Him by the Pharisees and scribes - "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" - which becomes the occasion of His setting forth the depths of divine grace.

In this threefold parable, observe that it is only on one sheep, one piece of silver, one son, that there is such joy in heaven. If a whole city were moved to repentance, we can well understand how such an extensive work might be connected with rejoicing; but here it is one sinful, lost sinner over whom there is such gladness. This is a marvelous thought. Each too was lost - a lost sheep, a lost piece of silver, a lost son. So Scripture testifies that God now looks upon man as lost. Hence we read that "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." There is all the difference between having wandered a little out of the way and being lost, between being an occasional offender toward God and being dead in sins - utterly unclean, irremediably bad - lost. Men and women, however refined or educated, never of themselves find their way back to God. No, they are lost! therefore in the riches of divine mercy Jesus came to seek and to save the LOST!

In this parable, we see the outgoing of the loving heart of the Good Shepherd, the gracious actings of the Holy Spirit, and the marvelous love of the Father toward the lost. In the simplest, and yet the most telling way, the blessed Lord thus proclaims the love of God -Father, Son, and Holy Ghost - to sinners.

He first tells out the shepherd's love in seeking and saving one lost sheep. "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, Both not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?"

Notice Christ's joy in saving, and that He keeps to the end those whom He finds. "When he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing." How safe then is the sinner who takes refuge in Christ, and gives Him all the glory of saving him! None can pluck out of His hand. "He layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing." It does not say that the angels rejoice, though they may; but what we have here is the deep joy of Christ in finding a lost sheep. When He saved the wicked Samaritan woman, He could say, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." How precious this is! And further, "When he cometh home." Christ will never let the sinner go that touches the hem of His garment, until he is landed securely in the glory; He will carry him safe home. And then what endless joy! All the intelligences of heaven will rejoice with Him when we reach home.

The second part of the parable is about a lost piece of silver. We have here a woman taking a lighted candle, and sweeping the house diligently. Her heart is set on finding the lost piece. She may see a thousand other objects, but the moment the light shines upon the lost piece, it is found; and then, oh what joy!

The third part of this parable opens out to us the heart of God the Father toward a poor, lost, guilty sinner. It blessedly illustrates the exceeding riches of divine grace. The self-willed man, following

the desires of the flesh and of the mind, wandered far away; he was glad of the gifts, but cared nothing for the giver. To gratify his own lusts was the absorbing object. He went farther and farther from the father. This is where man's will and desires always lead him. He went "into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living." It is a true picture of man - every man. He gladly receives God's gifts, but how does he use them? Is it not to please himself? It may be the pleasures of the world, the religiousness or irreligiousness of the world; but gratifying himself is the object, and not God. Nothing can be worse. It is man doing his own will, not God's. It is man pleasing himself, and not caring to please God.

The prodigal went on step by step until he "spent all," and "began to be in want." His resources were limited, and came to an end. All his means of self-pleasing were exhausted. What could he do then? What does man always do when in distress, but turn to his fellow man? He first of all made man his refuge, not his father. Man will do anything rather than turn to God. And what did he find? He found that citizens of this world have self for their object. To feed swine was the only use men could make of him for their own profit. And there this once wealthy, jovial, pleasure-seeking wanderer into the far country found himself, in poverty, in hunger, and filth. He found all resources gone, and an aching void occupying his soul. He looked at men around, and no heart throbbed with pity and compassion - "no man gave unto him." The "husks" of this world were all the resources at his command; and poverty and want were painfully pinching him. At last he discovers that he is perishing. What a striking picture of man who is without God, and who has no hope. In helplessness and despondency he is forced to the conclusion - "I perish with hunger!"

What a solemn conclusion, "I perish." And, dear friends, if some of you were to die tonight, or the Lord Jesus should come, do you not know that you would forever be banished from God's happy presence? A thousand ages might roll on, and still there would be the blackness of darkness forever. Do you say, I am not a great sinner? I reply, What can be worse, what sinner can be blacker, than living all your days seeking happiness apart from God and Christ - using the very blessings with which God in His providence has blessed you, to lead your heart and energies farther and farther from Him? What can be worse than this?

The prodigal's thought was to escape from perishing. "I perish with hunger." His need led him to think of the father. We are told that he "came to himself," and what then? He thought of the father's home, and that the servants there were far better off than he. "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare." His mind, resting on the father's home, and love, and resources, not only showed him more and more his own poverty and wretchedness, but so attracted his heart that he exclaimed, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

The whole question now was, how the father would meet this sinful one in his ruin and degradation. Does he receive such? Ah, that is the question. And are we not taught that the need and misery of this ungodly one served to draw forth the rich mercy which was deep down in the father's heart? And so God loves sinners, though He hates sin. He delights in mercy. His whole heart pours forth its richest, warmest love to the utterly unclean and helpless. For we are told that when he did actually arise to come to his father, while he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and (without one upbraiding word) fell on his neck, and kissed him. Can

anything exceed the depth and perfection of such love? God so loves. It needs an unworthy object on which to manifest itself. It indeed passes knowledge. We think of it, taste and enjoy it, and adore and worship, but we lack capacity to measure its divine and infinite depths.

The father saw him in his filth, had compassion on him in his ruined state, kissed him in his rags; and when under the sense of his guilty, perishing condition, the son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," it only brought out yet more of the deep resources of grace that were in the father's heart. It strikingly tells us that it is worthy of God to love, to save and bless lost and ruined sinners. "The father said unto his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." The father did not point to his rags and say, I must have them mended; no, God can use nothing of the flesh with its affections and lusts. God's way is not to mend up the flesh, but to give a new nature and bring the sinner into a new standing and position before Him. He could not use any part of the old, filthy, worn-out, tattered garment, but he adorned him with the best robe. The richest blessings that God has to give are lovingly bestowed upon repentant sinners. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. "Put a ring on his hand" in token of the everlasting love and relationship subsisting between the father and the repentant one on whose face he had printed the kiss of reconciliation. Put also "shoes on his feet," and thus fit him for the path of service which he may have to tread; and then, that he may feel happy and at home in his father's presence, it is further said, "Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry." Let us eat - the father and the son - for "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." "Let us eat, and be merry." What a wondrous place of blessing! Can anything exceed it? The lost one brought back into the Father's presence, fitted for it by the Father Himself, and there called to share the Father's thoughts and joy in the infinite worth and finished work of the slain Lamb.

"He saw us ruined in the fall, And loved us notwithstanding all;

He saved us from our lost estate;

His loving-kindness, O how great!"

Thus, through divine mercy, the believer in Jesus is redeemed to God, made nigh, and has liberty now to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. He has peace with God, rest in God, joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost makes this known to our hearts. What a wondrous salvation - "made... meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." What rest and joy this gives us! How it puts us at once on the ground of thanksgiving and worship, especially when we enter into the Father's delight to have us near Himself, and in the enjoyment of His own love. "Let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." It is added, "And they began to be merry." Yes, it was only the beginning of the joy, for ages upon ages may roll on, and this wondrous joy will be in no degree lessened. In God's presence there is fullness of joy, and at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Dead With Christ

The death of Christ has annulled my existence before God in the flesh. Suppose there is a man who is a thief, and he is put into prison to be punished, and he dies in prison-what is to be done with him? The life that sinned is no longer there to be punished; the man must be buried and be put out of sight. So, speaking of Christ as taking, in grace, the sinner's place, it is said, "In that He died, He died unto sin once." There is an end of the whole thing. And now, the very principle I get, the thought of being dead and alive again, is this perfect law of liberty in which the flesh has no kind of title in any shape or way. You are not alive in the world; you are dead with Christ. How then can you go on as if you were still alive in the world?

The Divine Man

We are led to look at our Lord Jesus, and through a succession of conditions we see in Him man presented to God with infinite, though varied, delight and satisfaction. I have long since traced Him in the following way as man in all perfection:

Born. The material, so to speak, moral and physical, is presented in Jesus as the born one. He was a taintless sheaf of the human harvest. In Him, man was perfect as man (Luke 1:35).

Circumcised. Jesus in this respect was under the law and He kept it, of course, to all perfection. Man in Him was thus perfect as under law (Luke 2:21).

Baptized. In this character Jesus is seen bowing to the authority of God, owning Him in His dispensations, and man in Him is perfect in all righteousness, as well as under law (Luke 3:21).

Anointed. As anointed, Jesus was sent forth to service and testimony. In this respect man is seen in Him perfect as a servant (Luke 3:22).

Devoted. Jesus surrendered Himself to God, left Himself in His hand to do to His utmost will and pleasure. In Him man was therefore perfect as a sacrifice (Luke 22:19, 20).

Risen. This begins a series of new conditions in which man is found. This is the first stage of the new estate. John 12:24 intimates a new course in man, as here said. The corn of wheat, having fallen into the ground and died, is now capacitated to be fruitful. Man in the risen Jesus is in indefeasible life.

Glorified. The risen Man, or man in indefeasible life, wears a heavenly image. The new man has a new, or glorious, body.

Reigning. The risen and glorified Man receives in due season authority to execute judgment. Dominion is His. The lost dominion of man is regained, only in a better and fuller way.

Scripture leads us through this series of contemplations on the Son of man. And though I speak here of the Man, as elsewhere I did of the divine glory, yet I divide not the Person. Throughout all, it is "God manifest in the flesh" we have before us.

We need to walk softly over such ground, and not to multiply words. On so high a theme, precious to the loving, worshiping heart, we may remember what is written, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin." Pro. 10:19.

Earthly Joy

All Scripture shows us that perfect, earthly joy cannot be had here, or in the circumstances and history of the world, in their present state, nor till the earth is made the scene of righteousness; and such it is not to be till the Lord has rided it of all that offends, and all that does iniquity. The sword of judgment must go before the throne of glory. The earth must be cleared of its corruptions ere it can be a garden of holy, divine delights again.

The gospel is not producing a happy world, or spreading out a garden of Eden. It proposes no such thing but to take out of the world a people, a heavenly people, for Christ. But the presence of the Lord will make a happy world by-and-by, when that presence can righteously return to it.

Egypt — Suez Canal — Middle East: the Editor's Column

The Egyptian seizure of the Suez Canal, with the resultant confusion in the capitals of the world, points up very significantly the deterioration of Western influence in the Middle East, the growing menace to the little nation of Israel, a coming conflict over Palestine, and the fast approaching time of the end. For many years the Balkan nations were considered the tinderbox of Europe, but now the Middle East appears to be the tinderbox of the world. All eyes are focused there. It is the crossroads of the world in international shipping; it holds 66% or more of the world's known oil reserves; it is the meeting place of Eastern and Western culture; it is the cradle of the three great religions of the world - Christianity, Judaism, and Mohammedanism; and now with the emergence of Russia in that sphere, a fourth great concept - atheism - will vie for a place.

Since the close of World War 1, the Western world has dominated the Middle East, directed its policies, trained and managed its armies, and developed its resources; but today that is largely over. Egypt has cast off the British yoke, and now acts defiantly. France and England have given up their protectorates, and now have to accept insults from some whom they once governed.

Russia in the days of the czars sought every opportunity to gain control in the Middle East, but for many years now has discreetly abstained from any great activity in the region, although without doubt her aims have been the same. Now she sees an opportunity to exploit troubles there to the discomfiture of the West. She has always liked to fish in troubled waters, so now she has supplied Egypt with armaments and much other assistance, and is actively supporting her nationalization of the Canal.

In the midst of all the Suez talks, Israel's place in this picture is obscured. That little nation is right in the middle of it. Its very existence is threatened by the build-up of Arab military strength, for it is no secret that Arab hostility to Israel continues and increases. The border incidents in which Arab marauders and infiltrators murder Israeli citizens and destroy property continue unabated in spite of Jordanian and Egyptian signed pledges of cease-fire agreements. Every passing incident in which the Arabs successfully defy the West increases their intransigence, and hostile intentions toward Israel. In their minds Israel and the West are closely identified, which to a large extent is true. The tiny nation of Israel is predominantly Western in culture, methods, and general thinking, plus their ties of nature with relatives in Western countries. Thus the West shares in any Arab ill feeling toward Israel, and vice versa.

The Western statesmen are at their wits' end, for on the one hand they must consider the strong political power of the Jews in their own countries and not act in a way to alienate the Jewish vote, while, on the other hand, they must try to avoid alienating the Arabs in their international dealings; for they can ill afford to lose their financial stakes in the Middle East, or to endanger their source of Middle-Eastern oil. Russia does not have to consider how Russian Jews feel, nor what the nation of Israel does; therefore it is to her interest to support the Arabs, and drive a further wedge between them and the West. All this is bringing the day closer when the Arabs will rise up to war against Israel. Mohammedanism has often engaged in jihads, or holy wars, which arouse the

Moslem multitudes to frenzied zeal in a cause which God is supposed to be espousing. This is already being talked and urged by agitators in Arab nations. Their rabble-rousing efforts combine a nationalistic appeal with religious fervor.

And while Western statesmen and politicians look on the troubled Middle East, hoping against hope that some formula can be evolved that will keep the status quo, God also is watching affairs, for there is the land that He gave to Abraham and to his seed after him, and the land where His beloved Son lived and walked and suffered, the land to which He will return in power and glory for the destruction of all hostile powers, and the blessing of the millennial earth. He has foretold much of what is going to happen there, and because He has spoken it will come to pass.

Shall we ask, Who are these Arabs? Through the centuries there has been a mingling of the peoples of that area, but basically they are the descendants of Abraham and Isaac through Ishmael and Esau. How strange that they should have such open enmity toward their brethren! And yet it was so from the beginning. Did not Ishmael mock at the time of Abraham's feast at the weaning of Isaac? Were not he and his Egyptian mother cast out of Abraham's house at that time? (See Gen. 21.) And before Ishmael was born God said, "He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him." Gen. 16:12. Is not the wild man now preparing to display his characteristics?

And what of Esau? He was the elder twin brother of Jacob; he sold his birthright to the grasping Jacob, and when he lost the blessing too, he determined to kill Jacob, but as time elapsed, peace was made between them. In the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, God refers to the unrelenting hatred of the descendants of Esau (or Edom) to the children of Israel.

Two other peoples, descendants of Abraham's nephew Lot, are also included in the present enemies of Israel - the children of Moab and Ammon (Gen. 19:37,38). Their hostility to Israel in bygone days can also be traced in the Scriptures. At present, the capital city of the nation of Jordan is Amman, and in Old Testament times it was called "Rabbah of the children of Ammon" (2 Sam. 12:26). It was there that Uriah the Hittite was slain by "the sword of the children of Ammon." v. 9.

In Psalm 83, where the future alignment of the neighboring enemies of Israel is given prophetically, we find the descendants of all four, among others, mentioned as saying, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance." v. 4. Steps leading up to this confederacy have been in the making for some time, and every fresh incident of trouble between the West and the Middle East propels the forces forward which will unite in their attempts to eliminate Israel. Nothing short of it will satisfy the jihad agitators.

In all likelihood, it will be such a war for the extermination of Israel (together with other international events) that will force the foil/lotion of the revived Roman Empire whose armies will rescue the Jews and give them back their land, including Jerusalem and its shrines, under their protection in a solemn compact for a period of seven years. For "he," the head of the revived Roman Empire, "shall confirm" a covenant with the mass of the Jews who will be placed back in Palestine for a period of "one week"; or, a period composed of seven years. It is decreed and it will come to pass. (For the study of this amazing prophecy in Dan. 9, secure from Bible Truth Publishers either Wm. Kelly's or E. Dennett's book on Daniel.)

But let us not forget that this period of the grace of God and the gathering out of a people on earth for heaven is a parenthesis in that prophecy, and it will be concluded by the Lord's taking the Christians out of the world before the league is made between the Jews and the Western beast. With everything being readied for the Arab world to rise up against the Jews, and for the West to come to their rescue and to make a league with them for seven years, how VERY near His coming for us MUST BE. May we lift up our eyes with a bright and steady anticipation that He may come TODAY. One of these days will be the last one for the Church of God on earth. May we be found "watching and waiting," with our hearts transfixed by the glories of the coming One.

■ In view of the national election this month in the United States (which as never before is of world-wide import) it is well that Christians should weigh well the bearings of their heavenly citizenship - "For our conversation [or, citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Phil. 3:20. We belong to another world and are but strangers and pilgrims here. We are only passing through this scene as intelligent beholders of what happens, for God has treated us as friends and told us where all the politics of this world are to end. As the world once rejected the Son of God and cried with one voice, Give us Barabbas, so in the end they will rally to a man who will exalt himself and claim the honors of deity. As far as men were able, they cast God out of the world, and are hastening on to the day when they will exalt a man in the place of God.

Our God and Father is providentially governing behind the scenes, and the man whom He chooses will be elected. This may or may not be for good according to men's thoughts, but it will further His purposes, and the ultimate of His purposes is that the Man of His choice - "the man Christ Jesus" - shall reign in righteousness.

He who "removeth kings, and setteth up kings" (Dan. 2:21), and sometimes sets up "the basest of men" (Dan. 4:17), also controls the destinies of democracies, allowing the winds of public opinion to blow one way or another, to the end that what He has determined shall be done.

Our acquaintance beforehand with the final result of the world's politics, our being fully persuaded that our Father's will is being done now, and the conscious knowledge of our portion in a better sphere, should keep us tranquil and composed no matter what happens in this or any other country. We who have been informed of "things not seen as yet" should not only be submissive to the will of God in such matters, but really have no will of our own whatever, no more than an angel would have who was sent from heaven into the world on a certain mission. But Christians are constantly in danger of forgetting that they are not of this world, even as He is not of it.

When the Lord Jesus was here, politics were bad, but He did not lift a finger or utter a word to change them; when the Apostle Paul labored here, they were still worse, but not once did he express a wish to change things, or give instructions to Christians to help do so, or even to pray for it. In the days of the ruthless and capricious tyrant Nero, Paul wrote of the emperor's agents that they were the ministers of God for good (Rom. 13:4). We are exhorted to "fear God, and honor the king," to "obey magistrates" and the "powers that be," while we pass through this world. And while doing so we can sing:

"We are but strangers here,

Heaven is our home."

Elath — Eziongeber — Map: the Editor's Column

There is a small town within the boundaries of the nation of Israel which has an ancient connection with the children of Israel, and today it is of growing moment in the strife between Israel and her Arab neighbors. It was called Elath, or Eloth, in the Scriptures, and is known as Elath today.

It is situated at the northernmost end of the Red Sea's Gulf of Aqaba, and is at the southernmost tip of the present boundaries of Israel. As it is south of the land of Canaan proper, its first connection with the Israelites was on their memorable journey from Egypt to Canaan. Very likely they touched this point three times in their wilderness journeyings. It is mentioned in Deut. 2:8 in connection with an adjoining place called Eziongeber, or Eziongeber.

It became a part of Israel's territory in the days of Solomon, and his copper mines have been found near by. He built "a navy of ships in Eziongeber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea." From this port he sent his navy to Tarshish, or Tarshish, to bring back "gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks." (1 Kings 9:26 Chron. 9:21.)

The Tarshish to which his ships went has not been identified, but evidently it was in the East, perhaps India, and this Red Sea port was the only place from which he could send a navy east, for there was no Suez Canal in those days, nor did mariners then round the Cape of Good Hope to go from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The Tarshish to which Jonah attempted to sail was west and not east; it has been thought to refer to a Spanish city named Tartessus. Sailing from Joppa on the Mediterranean as Jonah did, he would have had to sail west.

The next mention of this port city of Eziongeber which adjoined Elath was when the godly King Jehoshaphat made an unholy alliance with Ahaziah, a wicked king of Israel. They engaged in an enterprise to build a navy there to sail into the East to Tarshish as Solomon had done. But the prophet Eliezer, the son of Dodavah, "prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish." (2 Chron. 20:35-37.)

After that, Elath was taken from Judah, probably by the Syrians, but in the days of Azariah (also called Uzziah) it was rebuilt and restored to Judah (2 Kings 14:21, 22). In the days of Azariah's grandson, Ahaz, it was recaptured by the Syrians (2 Kings 16:6). Then it disappeared from the scriptural records. That was about 759 B.C.

From that date we come down more than 2700 years to 1948. In that year the fledgling state of Israel was at war with her Arab neighbors. The outcome was a victory for Israel, and her forces pushed their way south through the Negeb desert to the head of the Gulf of Aqaba and seized an 11-mile coast line. They thus recovered Elath which at the time was only a name with a few ruins.

Since 1948 the Israelis have been busy in that section.

They have reopened the copper mines of Solomon and planned to build smelters; they have rebuilt a port at Elath, and now have about completed a railroad from the north to connect the port

of Elath with the centers of the nation.

It is Israel's avowed purpose to use the port of Elath for the shipment of copper and other products to the East, and also for the handling of oil. This is where the difficulty comes in: the passageway of the Gulf of Aqaba is very narrow at certain points, and Egypt is entrenched on one side and has fortified some small islands to prevent the passage of ships to and from the port. The Egyptians are in control of the Suez Canal and have closed it to all shipping destined for Israel. It has even been reported recently that the Egyptians fired on and seized a Norwegian vessel in the Mediterranean bound for Israel's port of Jaffa, passing near the Gaza strip.

To all intents and purposes Egypt is in a state of war with Israel and is determined to keep any Israeli shipping from reaching the Indian Ocean through the Gulf of Aqaba. The dynamic David

Ben Gurion of Israel is just as determined to break the Egyptian blockade of the gulf, and has said, "We will assure freedom of passage to the Indian Ocean if necessary with the help of Israel's navy, air force and army." With the railroad to Elath due to be completed this spring the hour of decision is at hand. War between Israel and her Arab opponents is a distinct possibility.

Russia's espousing of the Arab cause by supplying the latest implements of war to them, including submarines, has brought the dreaded time much closer. The Western Powers have been trying to keep the status quo in the Middle East, by limiting arms to both Israel and the Arabs, but Russia is trying to force the West to take a stand. Either way the West decides will put them in an embarrassing position. They cannot disclaim Israel which is so distinctly tied to the West by cultural and economic bonds, and to enrage the Arabs will cost the West those valuable oil deposits of the rich Middle East fields. Russia stands to win at the expense of the West either way.

We know, however, that these things are all working out God's purposes and that the world's statesmen are not the makers of their own destinies.

It will be a sad time for Israel if war does break out now, for they are outnumbered about 11 to 1 by Egypt alone. A confederation of Moslem peoples could overrun Palestine, especially when armed with Russian modern equipment.

It is as we have pointed out before in other issues-Israel is, as of old, facing determined enemies both north and south of Palestine (see January Editor's Column). Eventually the West is going to have to take a bold stand and align itself with Israel. Ships shall come from the West (Chittim of Numb. 24:24) and afflict Asshur and Eber. This will bring to pass the league between the future head of the Western coalition-the revived Roman Empire-and the mass of the Jews to give them Palestine and Jerusalem under his protection. The temple will be rebuilt and the worship of God set up, only to have it stopped and replaced by the worship of the beast of the Roman Empire after 31/2 years. (See Dan. 9:27 and Rev. 13.) Then will begin those last 31/4 years of the Great Tribulation, or "time of Jacob's trouble," which will close by the coming of the Son of man with the armies of heaven to execute His righteous vengeance on His enemies - "He must reign."

But before either the first or second periods of 31/2 years each, the Lord will come to call His blood-bought Church to be with Him in the glory. How near that moment of our emancipation and greatest joy is! Surely, when we see the things taking shape for the events that are to be enacted after we are gone, the time of our change is AT HAND. "He which testifieth these things saith,

Surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20.

Emmaus

There is a question that presses on me: How far are we morally in the condition of the truth of Matt. 18:20? "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." The solemn question is, Am I in such a condition? - not simply going to a meeting and having intercourse with "His own." There is more still - a deeper, more important thing yet. Am I really gathered to the Person of the Lord Jesus? so that as I leave the meeting I may be like the disciples in John, who said, "We have seen the Lord." If we are occupied with the detail of what this and that one has done, we are incapable of knowing His mind. He will have the moral state and walk to be that of truth. He cannot allow the condition of saints to be different from His doctrine. What is the truth He is calling us back to? Himself - around His Person.

In Luke 9, the two men in glory were with the Lord. They were talking of His decease and were happy. It is not merely coming to the breaking of bread, but a living state of connection with Christ, like Moses and Elias, that must characterize us. Now in Luke 24, there is not a word of anyone seeing Christ; but there were two souls leaving Jerusalem, and these two were sad, although they too were talking of His decease. Something drew them away from Jerusalem, although with sorrow, and the Lord comes and talks to them. "Why are ye sad?" He says. There never had been a more wonderful day for the earth than this; for He who had been crucified and buried, had risen, and although angels were adoring at the resurrection, yet the souls of these two were sad. We learn from this the state often of our own souls. Why was there this slowness of heart? Their reply is given in verse 21. It was what the natural man looked for - a kingdom on earth. They say, in substance, "The One whom we looked for is crucified, is dead, and we have no hope."

It is when the soul is out of communion that we seek temporal deliverances. How does the Lord deal with them? As far as these two go away from Jerusalem, He goes with them. What grace! There was no communion nor intelligence with them, but He goes with them to the end and then shows them that He has no business at Emmaus. He reveals Himself. Depend upon it, if we are looking for some outside temporal removal of difficulties, we have gotten outside of our right place.

Was it the Spirit that was leading these two toward Emmaus? No, for the Spirit had been leading others to gather together in Jerusalem. The two had gone to Emmaus, little as they thought of it, to know Himself, and so when He had revealed Himself to them, they feel that they, like Him, have no place there. So they return to Jerusalem in spite of the distance and their fatigue, and find the disciples gathered together! Was it a matter of indifference to Him whether or not these two were going to Emmaus? Was He careful only of the number gathered in the little room? Oh, no; not till these two were brought back to Jerusalem to those who were already gathered there, does He reveal Himself among them. How precious to know the Lord is just like this!

The End of the Lord

When difficulties and trials arise, the tendency of our hearts is constantly to be more occupied with deliverance from the difficulty than with the end and purpose of the Lord in allowing it; and, unless the soul is exercised before Him, an issue is often sought and accepted which is neither His help nor His salvation.

Hence it is good for us, whether individually or collectively, to ponder well the Lord's way with us which surely leads to the Lord's end. Of Israel it was said that they were "a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known My ways." Thus the state of heart before God becomes important, so that the soul may be disciplined and His end may be reached by it. Nothing occurs but His hand is in it. Stormy wind and rain do but fulfill His word; "He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for His land, or for mercy." Job 37:13. It is thus we learn most precious lessons - precious because we get beyond the trial to the loving-kindness of the Lord, and our feet can then stand in an even place. We are in the sanctuary of God, and everything falls into its proper place with us there.

Never was there a moment when the saint who desires the Lord's glory more needed to be there, in the quietness of spirit which results from the sense of everything being under God's eye. Could anything be more trying to the Psalmist (Psalm 73) than to see evil apparently prospering while those whose desires were right and were seeking to walk in integrity had waters of a full cup wrung out to them? It was in the sanctuary he learned that, while his heart had been grieved, he had been, and was, the object of God's care and solicitude - that he would be held by His hand and guided by His counsel. Surely we may say, "Blessed are all they that wait for Him." Isa. 30:18.

Now there is something equally trying which tests the state of our hearts before Him. It has pleased God in His grace to awaken, in the midst of the surrounding form of godliness, some of His saints to the desire of holding fast the word of the Lord, and of not denying His name. But, alas! even here, while desires may be sincere, how often is the heart lacking in subjection; and consequently the end of those desires is sought, if one may speak for others, in our own way. The claim to be fearing Him who is the Holy and the True is put forth by saints who take different paths. When this is so, can we say that the claim does not result from sincere desire to be true to Him? But while this is admitted, shall we not find that the soul is not chastened? and thus the moral state necessary for the desire to be accomplished in us is not reached.

The exhortation of the Apostle, to the Philippians, that they would fill up his joy by being of one accord, of one mind, evidently sprang from the tendency in each to seek to serve according to the bent of the mind of each. Euodias and Syntyche liked to have their own way in laboring in the gospel. The mind which was in Christ Jesus, humbling Himself as a man, and becoming obedient even unto death, alone would enable them to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together [as co-athletes] for the faith of the gospel." Encouragement is not found in carrying our own point but in Christ. There is comfort of love there. It is fellowship of the Spirit, and not unity of opinion; and bowels and compassions take the place of our own way in the poor world of sorrow.

When the soul is disciplined, and self-will rebuked in us, then the mind of Christ becomes dominant. He could say, "My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." John 5:30.

When evil prevails among the saints of God, it is a great thing to remember that the Lord is good and doeth good (Psalm 119:68). This should lead our hearts to Himself, and then we shall not fret ourselves because of evil doers, nor be overcome of evil; but we shall learn to rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. He bears long and, moreover, His end has to be reached, and not ours. Besides, in reaching His own end, He knows how to order everything so as to produce, in the one that waits for Him, exercises of heart and utterances of voice which otherwise would not have been called forth. Affections and desires are thus wrought in us which are according to Himself; we learn to silence self, and even words and thoughts are ordered before Him. This is brought before us in Psalm 5: "Give ear to my words, O LORD." It is not a general petition, but words become weighed before Him. Thoughts too. The musings of the soul are in His presence-"Consider my meditation." There is no room for self-will to seek to gain its end from the Lord when the utterance is, as in Psalm 19:14, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight."

Further, the Psalmist continues (5:2), "Hearken [or attend] unto the voice of my cry,... for unto Thee will I pray." Let it be noted that these early psalms, as do others, contemplate the godly in the midst of the pressure of evil around, and turning to the Lord on account of it, and this not as a last resource, but as the first thought - "My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I order unto Thee, and will watch." Psalm 5:3, 4; see R.V. The thought here is not so much the fact of directing the prayer to the Lord, but the ordered watchful state of soul which claims His ear and attention. Evil may be all around, and there is the consciousness that He has no pleasure in wickedness; but the soul is not occupied with evil, but with the Lord, and thus holy fear is produced - "In Thy fear will I worship toward the temple of Thy holiness." Psalm 5:7; see J.N.D. Trans. This does not produce indifference to evil, but rather the suited conduct with regard to it. "Lead me, O LORD, in Thy righteousness because of mine enemies [margin, those which observe me]; make Thy way straight before my face." Psalm 5:8. "Teach me Thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies [those which observe me]." Psalm 27:11.

It is good thus to have self-will broken up, and the soul ordered before God and men. A lowly walk results, and the feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, while adoring worship flows forth.

"I bow me to Thy will, O God,

And all Thy ways adore."

This tunes the heart and brings the spirit into harmony with the wisdom as well as love of God. The doxologies of the saints vary in their character according to the subject which fills the soul. In Eph. 3, the infinity into which the saints are introduced, and the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, lead the Apostle into the expression of what the Church is as the vessel formed by the power which worketh in us for glory to God by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end. In Rom. 11:33, after the Spirit has reviewed the whole scope of the relations between men (Jew or Gentile) and God, and the aboundings of sin are shown to have brought forth the superaboundings

of grace, the Apostle's utterance of glory takes another character, and celebrates "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out."

Sin broke up the rest of God in the first creation, but opened up the way for Him to form a new scene of blessing, where that rest shall never be disturbed. And if He, in patient grace and long-suffering with evil, has, without wearying, moved on toward that rest in His own path of wisdom and knowledge, and that rest remains for us, shall we not welcome any exercise which throws the soul into harmony with that path, and teaches us His way? All was ruin with Israel when Moses prayed, "Show me now Thy way." Exod. 33:13. He had really acted for God in the camp - the result of holy jealousy in the sense that Jehovah's presence was incompatible with that of a golden calf. "What agreement bath the temple of God with idols?" I say not here how far his actings, prompted as they thus were, were the taking of his own way to vindicate what was dear to him - the name of Jehovah - but the pressure on his spirit of the state of the people, and the taste in his own soul of being known of God and of being the object of His favor, led him to say, "Show me now Thy way." Had not Jehovah a path in the midst of Israel's ruin? Surely He had; and as Moses pleads, he gets the consciousness that there is a glory all His own, and yet connected with Jehovah's dealings with a sinful people, which he earnestly desires to see. That was impossible. None but One - a lowly Man of sorrows indeed, but in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead - knew that glory and could meet it.

As we gaze on the cross, we learn adoringly that Godhead glory was in the One who suffered there. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." John 13:31. The Son of man indeed, but for God to be glorified in Him there must have been the infinite and eternal springs of Godhead fullness. "My servant Moses," honored as he was, must be hid in the cleft of the rock as Jehovah's glory passed by. Covered with His hand, he may see the back parts; that is, the Lord must first pass by. To meet Him face to face would be to take the place of an equal. When He passed by, the blessedness of His path was seen. His glory, in which He abides, alone is supreme. We now see the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John 1:18. And yet the glory of His Person remains unknown. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father." Matt. 11:27. Well may we ponder the grace accorded to Moses as, put into the cleft of the rock by the

Lord Himself, he saw the back parts and heard the name of Jehovah proclaimed - a name which told what He was with respect to the evil which had come in. "He made known His ways unto Moses," and Moses worships and intercedes for the people. He is with God about the people, and learns the value of His name in a fuller way than had been taught him at the bush (Exod. 3:14, 15). That name he publishes in the prophetic song which records the lowest depths into which the people would fall (Dent. 32). But besides this his own condition is transformed and he acquires the impress of the communion he had enjoyed. "He was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights." In his actings he had been with the people, and he had acted with holy jealousy surely, but with regard to their evil. Now he is with the Lord, and all is in harmony with that place. When he comes down he reflects, unconsciously to himself, the light which shone upon him there.

Two things are thus brought before us. First, without being indifferent to evil, we learn to walk with the Lord in the midst of it, and to know His

way. The end of the Lord is then quietly waited for.

"His every act pure blessing is,

His path unsullied light." Second, the soul is chastened and learns to behave itself as a weaned child. There is no seeking to carry out our own will, however sincerely we may believe ourselves to be right. The eyes are not lofty, nor the heart haughty; but communion with His mind who could say at a time when evil was specially felt, "I thank Thee, Father," will cause us to bear the impress of having been with Him, by our taking His yoke and being meek and lowly in heart. The end of the Lord will be more precious to us than the end which the fretfulness of our own spirits would desire.

May the Lord rekindle in each beloved saint fresh desires to lodge in the goodness of the Lord, and to have His secret with us. T.H.R.

You may check your answers with those given on page 296.

How does the Word of God describe the brevity of human life in

Jas. 4:14,

Psalm 90:9,

Psalm 39:5,

Isa. 40:5, 6-8. Job 7:6?

The Life Magazine Epic of Man

Some of our readers have requested us to review a series of articles entitled, "The Epic of Man," published in LIFE magazine. Copies have been furnished to us for this purpose. If it were not for the fact that some of our dear young people may be forced to take notice of this series in school or college we would not have defiled ourselves with it. (It is written, "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." Rom. 16:19.) In the hope that we may be able to point out to them the dangers inherent in this type of article lest their feet be entangled in the morass of infidelity, we ventured into the unpleasant task. Now we shall speak of Part 1, "Man Inherits the Earth."

There is really nothing new in it except the very clever way in which it is gotten up. The artists have worked masterfully to give fiction and fantasy the appearance of reality. They strive to present as scientific fact that which is not so, and thus entrap the unwary. This increases our concern for our children and young people, many of whom are inclined to believe whatever they see in print. They have not yet learned to mistrust the world, and these articles with their elaborate pictures are apt to make a lasting impression on their plastic minds.

Briefly stated, "Man Inherits the Earth" is the old hypothesis of evolution retold in dramatic style. It is man, ignorant of the Scriptures and the power of God, trying to account for the earth and man's presence on it in such a manner as to preclude God. In substance, it is a flat denial of the Holy Scriptures - it is infidelity in academic garb. Science as such (not all scientific men, for some have been truehearted believers) knows not God. Science knows nothing and can know nothing of the power that originated, it ignores the First Cause, and shirks ordinarily even the final causes which might summon heed to a first cause.

The daring article says that man "is haunted by the disquieting recognition of his unmistakable kinship with the lower orders of vertebrates, mammals and primates with which he shares the crowded habitats of earth." Perhaps the authors and editors speak for themselves, but we wonder if they would not find it much more disquieting to believe that a holy and all-wise God created them and that to Him they must give account of their thoughts, words, and deeds. The true Christian knows that he is not related to any lower orders, but that man was God's crowning creation for this scene, and that while man has fallen and degraded himself, yet the second Man, the Lord from heaven, is going to clear this world by judgment (then where shall the ungodly and scoffers appear?) and reign to God's glory. Man is not a highly developed ape or any other evolutionary product; he was created in the image and likeness of God. The Scriptures speak of man, and Immanuel - the first man who fell, and the second Man who will right everything.

Perhaps the article tells the abject truth when it says, that "Philosophers and theologians... accept the fact of man's relationship to animals and his physical evolution from them, finding no point of conflict with the religious concepts of divinity and immortality. 'Today,' observed the famous Baptist minister, the Revelation Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, 'the general idea of evolution is taken for granted as gravitation is.' " Of philosophers we have not much to say; the philosophy of the world

has undergone continual change and revision, and much of it died before its inventors did. Some of it would not be printable. Philosophy knows not God, and many of its devotees are of the class who say, "There is no God." We can dismiss this class with pity and the plaintive wish: "O that they were wise, that they understood this." Deut. 32:29.

But apostasy that reaches into the pulpit and shamelessly seeks to overthrow the Word of God can only be classed with the kiss of Judas. Men who have made their livelihood as "ministers of the gospel" dare to undermine the very faith that they profess to uphold. This is not confined to one man; their number is legion. Well did the Lord say to a ministerial class who in His day rejected Him and His word, "Woe unto you" for "ye shall receive the greater damnation." Matt. 23:14. Titles and degrees will not shield one from the wrath to come, for there is no respect of persons with God (Rom. 2:11). These men profess to have greater light than the masses, and they shall be judged by their profession. "That servant, which knew his lord's will,... neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." Luke 12:47.

The seeking to bolster the evolutionary doctrine by giving imposing lists of doctors of one kind and another as its endorsers will avail nothing against the plain Word of God. It is simply man's word against God's. Well may we say with the Apostle, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" Rom. 9:20. People may have God's Word with its perfect assurance about things past, present, and future, or have man's theories of evolution with his conjectures of the past, "disquieting" thoughts in the present, and nothing but dismal forebodings about the future. We cannot have God's Word and evolution; they are not compatible.

Furthermore, you cannot have the Bible minus the book of Genesis, and thus escape the grand foundation of God's creatorial work and the consequent responsibility of man, because the statements of Genesis are reiterated over and over, or are tacitly acknowledged, in one book after another of both the Old and the New Testaments. Cut off Genesis and you must necessarily reject the Old Testament in toto. Then how about the New Testament? The same rule applies to it. In Luke's Gospel the genealogy is traced back to Adam as the first man; in Matt. 19:4 the Lord Jesus reminds the Pharisees that "He which made them at the beginning made them male and female"; the Apostle Paul in Rom. 5:12 says, "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.... Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses"; and in 1 Cor. 15:45, "The first man Adam was made a living soul"; and again in 1 Tim. 2:13, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." We could go on multiplying scriptures, but sufficient have been quoted to prove that the whole Word of God stands or falls together, You simply cannot have the evolution of man in any degree or manner and keep the Word of God. All attempts to reconcile the two are utterly futile and demonstrate that they are but the offspring of the wicked heart of unbelief.

The apologists who meekly try to explain that Scripture is not to be taken literally when "science falsely so-called" opposes it, and that it is only a record of something that was generally believed in the day in which it was written, are scarcely better than the avowed infidels who attack it frontally. We say it with emphasis, The Bible is the inspired Word of God and is entirely worthy of Him who gave it. To impute any error to it on the ground that its writings were influenced by the fallacies of other days is truly reprehensible. Those who follow such reasoning must of necessity state that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and His called apostles, knowingly perpetuated

false notions, or else were ignorant of that whereof they spoke. What will God do to one who thus insults His beloved Son and His own Word? "Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar." Rom. 3:4.

Remember too that the Word of God does not need the defense of men. To attempt to defend it is more folly than to seek to defend a lion among lambs. It has stood for generations in spite of all the assaults of men lacking in faith. Another has said that "it is an anvil which has worn out many a hammer." It needs no light from men any more than the sun requires the light of a candle. To speak of science being needed to confirm it is crass folly. The Word of God is truth, and if science agrees with it, then so much the better for science; otherwise, science is unqualifiedly wrong.

The Bible is not a scientific textbook; it is the book given by God to tell man his origin, his fall, his ruined state, the judgment to come, of the Lord Jesus who came into this world to save sinners, and of the only way of escape from judgment, which is through faith in Him and His atoning death on the cross of Calvary. Nevertheless, whenever the Bible crosses any scientific path, it is truth, and nothing less, on the points it touches. It is "impossible for God to lie." Heb. 6:18.

"Man Inherits the Earth" speaks of various and sundry "prehistoric humans." Their list does not include the "Piltdown Man" which was usually included a few years ago, and which many anthropologists believed a genuine find, but he has been proved to be a hoax. (See tract, "The Piltdown Man," obtainable from the publishers.) It is interesting to follow some of the amazing claims made regarding the finds of these "prehistoric men." The magazine article refers to the "Neanderthal Man" as "the best known and most ubiquitous of prehistoric humans," yet Henry M. Morris, Ph. D., Head of Civil Engineering, Southwestern Louisiana Institute, Lafayette, Louisiana, says, "The original Neanderthal Man consisted of a skull-cap, which was attested by various experts to be that of an ape-man, a negro, an idiot, a modern Cossack, an early German, and several other things." All the anthropologist needs is a few fragments of bones scattered over a wide area, plus a fertile brain and vivid imagination, and he can construct his man. But "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." 1 Cor. 3:19. "Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt." Job 11:12.

One of the "prehistoric" subhuman creatures that science has "discovered," and which "Man Inherits the Earth" refers to, is Pithecanthropus. Let us refer to Dr. Henry M. Morris again. He says: "The most notorious of all is the famous Pithecanthropus Erectus, found in Java in 1891 and 1892. This find consisted of a part of a skull-cap, a fragment of a left thigh-bone, and three molar teeth. These parts were not found together but within a range of some fifty feet. They were not found at the same time but within the space of a year apart. They were found in an old river bed, far below high water mark, mingled with much debris and many bones of extinct animals. The skull-cap was pronounced by most paleontologists who examined it to be distinctly that of a large ape or gibbon. The teeth and thighbone were uncertain; some said ape, some said human, some said ape-man. In recent years, the Dutch scientist who discovered it, Dr. Dubois, has reversed his former opinion as to the missing link character of his find and now believes it to be the remains of some form of gibbon. Yet this is universally acclaimed by evolutionists as one of the outstanding proofs of man's evolution, if not the outstanding proof." Is it not apparent to any open-minded person that the hypothesis of evolution is built on a foundation of quicksand? The true believer in the Lord Jesus and in the sure Word of God is not credulous enough to believe these vain imaginings which grow in the fertile soil of an evil heart of unbelief.

On one page of the reviewed article we read: "Man has not only ceased to evolve in any major way, he has persisted in his ancient form.... Modern man remains a member of one single, durable, flourishing species." We are glad to see the article admitted that man is not evolving today, but what else could they do on this point? They would be asked for evidence of evolution's being at work and they could not produce it; but when they talk in hundreds of thousands, and even millions, of years, they can say what they like, for they know that none of us were there to disprove their sayings. But they overlook the reckoning they will have to give to Him who was there.

If the unfounded and unproved theory of evolution is to be forthwith rejected, is the staunch Christian left to the alternative of believing something that will not stand scrutiny in the light of true scientific facts? No, not by any means. We can stand on "Thy word is true from the beginning." Psalm 119:160. There is no conflict between the Word of God and any fact known or unknown to science; but when it comes to explaining the origin of life and species, science should stop and confess ignorance, for that is beyond its domain. The Bible proclaims the truth from God. In a remarkable manner the Scriptures steer clear of all error and are thoroughly consistent with all established scientific facts, although they do not leave their own spiritual ground to occupy the reader with physics. They are not given to teach science and are independent of philosophy for their intelligence, but they are only rightly understood through the Holy Spirit, who also communicated them. "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. 2:14.

Gen. 1 needs to be better understood by Christians. In verse 1 it is plainly and unequivocally stated that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This He did by divine fiat, and we, who believe that He brought it into being from things which do not appear, understand "that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Heb. 11:3). When this was, we are not told; suffice it to say, "In the beginning." There was a beginning of this creation.

The second verse of Gen. 1 states a fact relating to a condition in which it was found at the time that God began to prepare it for the habitation of man: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." He did not create it in this condition. Isa. 45 tells us that "He created it not in vain," and that word is the same in the original text as the void of Gen. 1:2. Scripture lets us know that God did not create it a void with waters covering it. How long this condition lasted we do not know, nor would it have any bearing on our relationship with God if we did. But between the first verse of Gen. 1 and the beginning of the second verse, the geologists can put all the conjectured and known time of the geological ages.

The Scriptures do not teach that there were not certain geological ages, and leave a place into which to put them, although they are not the object before the Spirit of God who would occupy us with the fact of God's creatorial work in the universe, and in man, so as to show man his responsible relationship to his Creator. There are certain facts which point to great changes in earth and sea, and these repeatedly varied. There have been conditions on this earth with which nothing can now compare. There were great differences in climate, and various stages had their respective flora and fauna - that too exactly suited to the then conditions. There were whole groups of organisms on this earth prior to man's being put on it, which evidently came to an end,

while others, quite distinct, succeeded them and were extinguished in turn. Great upheavals rent the earth, and gigantic changes took place, compared with which the changes since man was placed on earth have been small indeed.

Why God allowed the various phases of the earth, we are not told; but will anyone dare to say that God could not and did not create the various forms of animal and vegetable life which are today found fossilized and imbedded in the rocks? And could He not have created some animals and vegetation which were the same or closely resembled those of the preceding condition of the earth? Surely He could! And what if some lower rocks show a lower order of life than a higher strata, does that thereby prove evolution? Certainly not. God gave each the form of life suited to the condition in which the earth was.

But absolutely nowhere is there evidence that man was here on earth in the preceding ages, all the claims and counterclaims of scientists notwithstanding. Gen. 1 goes on to describe the preparing of the chaotic earth for man's residence. This was accomplished in six days of 24 hours each. The chaos described in verse 2 was evidently the last condition of the pre-Adamic earth.

God, doubtless, had man in view in the past ages, such as the carboniferous era when the vast coal beds were laid down so that man would have the fuel so necessary for warmth for himself, and other uses. Then think of the storehouse of minerals and chemicals which the earth is, and these too placed within the reach of man. Instead of having the thoughts of blind unbelief and atheism, let us praise God and say, "O Lord how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all. The earth is full of Thy riches." Psalm 104:24.

But again we affirm that man was not here in the past ages which can be placed between the first and second verses of Gen. 1 The earth was then readied for man, and he was created to rule it - alas, he sinned and brought in misery, ruin, and death, but God rose above all his sin and gave His beloved Son to take the sinner's place and suffer in his stead, that everyone who believes in Him might have a new form of life, eternal life, in His Son.

"For man, O miracle of grace,

For man the Savior bled."

We must leave part of our review for another issue, but trust that what we have written will strengthen faith and encourage the saints of God to peruse their Bibles more. Scripture abides while science changes and corrects itself from generation to generation.

The Life Magazine Epic of Man

In our March and April issues we considered some articles previously published in LIFE magazine under the general title: "The Epic of Man." We called attention to the infidelity which they contained, and their utter disregard for the unerring Word of God. Now we are in receipt of a communication from a Canadian reader which we shall quote:

"Enjoyed the editor's column in March. What do you think of the National Geographic Magazine? Is it not also full of infidelity? See their March, 1956 issue, page 363, and the December, 1955 number, page 787. Is it right for a believer to keep it?"

This interrogation cannot be answered with a simple yes, or no. First, we would say that we did not single out LIFE magazine as being the sole propagator of infidelity. We reviewed the LIFE articles because we were requested to do so, and they were sent to us for that purpose. We felt that as they were apt to be given a special place in schools and colleges because of their seemingly scientific approach, we should bring the light of the Word of God to focus on them for the benefit of our dear young people. We have since learned that middle-aged people in some offices have been required to read the LIFE series. (Our new readers may still procure the back numbers of Christian Truth for March and April by writing to the publishers.)

Since receiving the word from our Canadian friend, we have somewhat cursorily gone over the National Geographic Magazine articles which he named, and found in them much of the same thing we criticized in LIFE, although they are not as sensational. One article goes into considerable detail about the vast geological ages of the past; these there doubtless were before man was placed on the earth. The earth during its varying ages had forms of life created by God which were suited to its several states; the flora and fauna of each was succeeded by others according to the wisdom and power of God. It is the foolish conjecture that all evolved gradually, that is at variance with the Word of God. There is plenty of room in the Book of God for all the ages and even for real or imagined immense lengths of time involved. Place them between the first verse of the Bible, which tells of its original creation, and the second verse, which describes its chaotic state prior to its being readied for man's occupancy, and all is in order. The two articles referred to in the National Geographic Magazine are filled with the prevalent form of unbelief concerning man's origin.

While we do not believe much of what this magazine states about the length of the past ages, this matter is of little consequence; but when it treats man as an evolved being, and places him in the great unknown periods before God created man in His image and after His likeness, we utterly reject their deductions and conclusions.

There have been infidels down through the centuries that scoffed at the Word of God, but it has stood as an impregnable fortress for every true believer. However, today the same infidelity is clothed in academic garb and hence is supposed to be irrefutable. Nevertheless, evolution is an unproved, and we say, unprovable, hypothesis. It is generally supposed to be a sign of erudition to believe the geologists and paleontologists and reject the Word of God whenever these unbelieving scientists choose to propound a theory opposed to divine revelation. But God's Word "is true from the beginning" (Psalm 119:160), and we say with the poet,

"We in His Word confide, And it will ne'er deceive."

People today are ready to accept any theory, or any religion, that will let them have a good time on earth without any consideration for God, and which promises that they will not have to give an account to Him after death. They do not want to have God in their ways and lives, and so they eagerly endorse any theory that makes man a creature of accident, with nothing worse than extinction at the close of life. The wish is parent to the thought. But the sobering fact remains: "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Rom. 14:12. "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing."

Eccles. 12:14,

The young Christian in school may have to search through the National Geographic Magazine for certain information, or he may have to go to various encyclopedias, or reference works of one kind or another; in any of these he is apt to find infidelity given out with a great show of learning. He is living in just such a world, but to be warned in advance is a great help. He should remember that "if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is NO light in them." Isa. 8:20.

We do not believe we should legislate for others what they may have in their homes, but certainly it is not good to have infidelity on our shelves, especially where it may fall into the hands of inexperienced young people. In these days, infidelity has crept into nearly all forms of secular literature, so that carefulness and vigilance is required.

We especially sympathize with Christian parents who have young people in the homes who require mental training and who need reading matter that is at least pure. The daily papers with their sordid stories of corruption and violence and the poisonous so-called comics are certainly deleterious and dangerous, while some of the pictorial and accurate word descriptions of lands far and near, as reported in the National Geographic Magazine, might fill an important place as being instructive and harmless reading.

There is much to cast parents on the Lord for wisdom and guidance in the bringing up of their children. We cannot take them out of the world with its infidelity and corruption, but they need to learn in the home, both by precept and example, what is true and what is false, that they may learn how to "refuse the evil, and choose the good." If they are firmly rooted in the truth of the Word of God, and go forth in dependence on Him, they will not be swayed by infidelity from any quarter. The Christian parents, however, are responsible before God to supervise their children's reading material, or to so advise and instruct them that they will choose with discrimination.

As the end approaches and the moral characteristics of the days of Noah and of Lot begin to become prevalent, in preparation for the dreadful days preceding the coming of the Son of man in judgment, we need special vigilance for ourselves and our posterity against the "corruption that is in the world through lust." These are dangerous times - "the last days."

There is much in the way of current literature which might not be called infidelity, but which certainly has no place in our homes. Perhaps we would do well to ask ourselves the question which the prophet put to King Hezekiah: "What have they seen in thine house?" Is our home encumbered with such literature that we would hasten to remove it if we were to have a visit from, say, the Apostle Paul, or some other devoted Christian? Has our appetite for the imperishable Word been dulled by feeding on the leeks, onions, and garlic of Egypt? For us, Egypt is a type of the world. It had its own characteristic food, while the redeemed Israel fed on the heavenly manna in the wilderness, and on food indigenous to the land of Canaan when they reached that land. The manna is a type of Christ who came down from heaven to be the food of His people; the "old corn" of the land of Canaan is a type of Christ in heavenly glory.

Even the most harmless and innocuous of worldly literature can become a real snare to Christians, and do unmeasured harm by robbing us of the little time we have for reading the Word with quiet meditation, or reading profitable written ministry.

We need to take heed what we read, as well as what we hear. The eyes and ears are avenues to our souls, and what enters by these will give color to our whole Christian life and testimony. The

Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.... Meditate on these things." 1 Tim. 4:13, 15.

Because evil abounds about us, and we have treacherous hearts within, we need to live in the attitude of dependence as expressed by the hymn:

"O Lamb of God, still keep us
Close to Thy pierced side;
'Tis only there in safety
And peace we can abide;
With foes and snares around us,
And lusts and fears within,
The grace that sought and found us,
Alone can keep us clean.
" 'Tis only in Thee hiding
We feel ourselves secure;
Only in Thee abiding
The conflict can endure.
Thine arm the victory gaineth
O'er every hateful foe;
Thy love our hearts sustaineth,
In all their cares and woe.
"Soon shall our eyes behold Thee
With rapture, face to face;
And, resting there in glory,
We'll sing Thy power and grace.
Thy beauty, Lord, and glory,
The wonders of Thy love,
Shall be the endless story
Of all Thy saints above."

Eternal Sonship

Though what is called "The eternal Sonship" be a vital truth (or we lose the Father's sending the Son, and the Son's creating, and we have no Father if we have no Son, so that it lies at the basis of all truth), yet in the historical presentation of Christianity the Son is always presented as down here in servant and manhood estate, as all through John, though in heaven and one with the Father. "This" - this Person - "is My beloved Son" - He who was as man here, yet there. In Matt. 3 the whole Trinity is revealed, and we may say for the first time fully. Wonderful grace it is!

The Everlasting Arms: a Word to the Feeble

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." So spoke Moses, "the man of God," in the blessing wherewith he blessed the children of Israel before his death (Deut. 33:1). There is little need to affirm that the blessing here pronounced - in its truest significance - belongs to the children of God in this dispensation, for "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... bath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Eph. 1:3. Indeed, there is scarcely a scripture in the Old Testament which has been more abundantly used for consolation. Feeble believers - weary ones on sickbeds - led, we doubt not, by the Spirit of God, have appropriated it in all ages; and they have been both sustained and comforted by the thought - the sweet assurance - that "the everlasting arms" are underneath them, folding them, as it were, in a divine embrace.

What then are these "everlasting arms"? Have we any indications in the Word of what is signified by the term? For though we may be able to feel what is meant, it will enhance our sense of the blessedness of the assurance if we are able to arrive at the thought the term was intended to convey. Let us turn then first to Exod. 28 We read there, in the description of the garments of the high priest: "And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth. With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. And thou shall put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial." vv. 9-12. Further on we have, after the direction as to the precious stones composing the breastplate: "And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.... And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually." vv. 21, 29.

We thus see that Aaron, as the high priest, bore the names of the children of Israel, when he went in on their behalf before the Lord, on his shoulders, and on his heart. Now the meaning of shoulder in Scripture is strength, as may be seen from the following: "The government shall be upon His shoulder" (Isa. 9:6); and again, "The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder" (Isa. 22:22). The heart, in like manner, always signifies love, as there is no need to show. "What we have then is, that the high priest upheld the children of Israel before the Lord perpetually with strength and love. An allusion may be found to this in the Song of Solomon. "Set me," cries the bride, "as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which bath a most vehement flame." Chap. 8:6. Here, it will be observed, we have the same combination of strength and love.

Applying this now to the term, "the everlasting arms," there can be little doubt that we have the same thought; namely, the union of strength and love in support of the children of God. That is, the everlasting arms are everlasting strength and everlasting love wherewith God upholds, sustains, comforts His own, and folds them to His own heart in perfect security and repose; or, if we prefer to carry on the thought of priesthood, it is the everlasting strength and the everlasting love wherewith Christ, as our Priest, upholds us before God. Both aspects are true and may therefore be blended in our meditations; and surely we may find in either an abundant source of instruction and consolation. We may briefly indicate the channels, in either direction, in which our meditations will necessarily flow.

If then we take "the everlasting arms," as explained, in connection with God - and this is in harmony with the context, as the preceding clause is, "The eternal God is thy refuge" - we may discover striking correspondencies in New Testament scriptures. An example or two may be given. "No man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." John 10:29. Here the thought is presented to us of strength - the almighty power, indeed, with which we are held in the hand of God, so that none is able to pluck us away. Speaking before the Father - indeed bearing us on His heart before the Father - the Lord prays "that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." John 17:22, 23. Here we have revealed the everlasting love of God - or rather of the Father - calling attention now only to this one feature. Both things are seen in that familiar scripture in Rom. 8 "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." vv. 38, 39. We are thus entitled to the consolation that we are secured in the embrace of everlasting strength and everlasting love. And surely when we are borne down by weakness, or tossing to and fro in pain on a sickbed, or lying wearily through long and wakeful nights, it will calm our hearts, hush every rebellious thought, yea, shed a sweet and soothing peace upon our troubled spirits, to remember that these everlasting arms are underneath us. Our hearts - poor, cold, and sinful as we know them to be - folded to His heart, will be quickened to a larger response as we feel there the beatings of that heart of divine love, and hear the blissful assurance that nothing - no power in earth or under the earth - can ever separate us from this divine and everlasting love! "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

If we look, moreover, at Christ as our Priest, we shall see the union of the same two things. Indeed, it springs from the character of His Person. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," etc. Heb. 4:14. He is Jesus - the Man, and He is the Son of God. As man He was tempted in all points like as we are, apart from sin, and therefore He is One who can sympathize with the feeling of our infirmities; One whose heart can enter into and feel with us in all our needs, and present us accordingly before God. But He is also the Son of God - He whom God "hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds." Heb. 1:2. Well then might it comfort us to remember that He who upholdeth "all things by the word of His power" is the One who is seated - having by Himself purged our sins - as our Priest, on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and that it is He who bears us up there on His shoulders before God. Again and again we are reminded of these two characteristics - His heart

and His shoulder (His strength) - throughout this epistle. Take one more example. "But this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost [all the way through] that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. 7:24, 25. He bears us on His heart in intercession and He is able to save us from beginning to end.

Thus it is clear, also, that the heart and the shoulder of Christ sustain His people; and these are exactly the two things we need as pilgrims passing through the desert. It is true that our place is in the heavenlies; but it is also true that we are in the wilderness; and when we are made to feel that we are there, there is no consolation like that which the heart and shoulder of Christ can give us. His heart sheds brightness upon the gloomiest scene, and His shoulder will sustain us in the extremity of weakness in the presence of the mightiest foes. Thus He also folds us to His heart with the everlasting arms of strength and love. What courage, what endurance will the assurance not give us! And how blessed to give ourselves up to the sweet sense of security and of endearment which the embrace of Christ thus affords!

Faith, Not Discussion

Of the three great feasts of the Jews (Deut. 16:16), in which year by year all the males had to go up to Jerusalem, two ["Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." 1 Cor. 5:7. "When the day of Pentecost was fully come." Acts 2:1.] have had their antitypes; the third has not.

The feast of tabernacles was celebrated after the harvest and the vintage. In it the children of Israel dwelt in booths, in witness that, once strangers, they were strangers no longer. But then there was in connection with this feast an eighth day, showing that along with the accomplishment of God's purposes in respect to the earth, there would be the introduction of a new period, the commencement of a new week.

Jesus was in Galilee (v. 1). "Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto Him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that Thy disciples also may see the works that Thou doest. For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, show Thyself to the world." vv. 2-4. They wanted Him to give a manifestation of Himself adequate to His claims. This was not the time for Christ to show Himself to the world. He will do so; "Every eye shall see Him"; His glory shall be exhibited to the terror of the ungodly. But He is not showing Himself now to the world - and this, to a world lying in wickedness, is mercy, real long-suffering (2 Pet. 3:9). His brethren had no understanding of this, "for neither did His brethren believe on Him." v. 5.

Mark His answer: "My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for My time is not yet full come." When He is manifested in power, it will not be a question of testimony merely against evil; He will say, "Those Mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before Me." Luke 19:27. He takes no such place of vindicating Himself now. Cost what it will, we are to accomplish the will of God while evil is in power; there is no bringing in of power to hinder the evil (Mark 9:13; Rev. 3:10).

Having said this, "He abode still in Galilee"; He had gone there on His first rejection. And though we find Him going up to Jerusalem to keep the feasts, etc., He abode in Galilee. "The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." Matt. 4:15, 16. For judgment was He come into the world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind. "Ye say, We see," He told the Pharisees, "therefore your sin remaineth" (chap. 9:41). He was "Jesus of Galilee." The poor despised Galileans had the light when the Jews of Jerusalem had not.

His brethren having gone up, He also goes up (v. 10), "not openly, but as it were in secret."

And now we find what is going on in hearts. There is much murmuring among the people concerning Him; some say, "He is a good man"; others, "Nay; but He deceiveth the people." The

Lord might bring blessing out of it, but they are reasoning and discussing, and this is just the proof that they have nothing to do with it as yet. In another place He asks His disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" They tell Him, "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." (See Matt. 16.) It was all discussion. But when Peter replies (to the question, "But whom say ye that I am?"), "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," He tells him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." There was personal recognition of Himself, and where there is that, there is no discussion. Discussing Him as subject matter in their own minds, they had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. Where people's minds are at work discussing the right and the wrong, there is not the mind of the newborn babe; they are not receiving, but judging. "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" asked Nathanael (Nazareth was a despised city, and he thought no good thing could come out of it); but when that which was blessed was presented to him, the Israelite without guile received it.

Further, we get instruction here (vv. 14-17) as to receiving the doctrine of God. About the middle of the feast Jesus goes up into the temple and teaches. The Jews marvel, saying, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" He tells them, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." They thought He had received it from man; therefore He says, It "is not Mine." No matter what we have learned, if we have not learned it from God, it is nothing; there is no faith; if learned from man, it is mine. Then He adds, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." Where there is faith, there is the unfeigned desire to do the will of God. Observe, He says, "If any man will [that is, wills to] do," not, "If he have done." "If... thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light"; God will show what His will is. If it be not, what is the good (speaking with reverence) of knowing His will? there is not the intention of doing it. Where the heart is right in the sight of God, He gives the capacity for knowing His will. The heart ought to be, in a certain sense, wary; there is a Christian simplicity, and there is a simplicity not Christian; but there may be this wariness, and yet sincerity of desire to do God's will when known. This is ever the practical test of Christian truthfulness. There may be great ignorance and infirmity, but if the eye be single, if there be the real intention of the heart of doing God's will, he shall know, etc. Very often we do not get light because we are not prepared to walk in the light when known.

The Gifts

The gifts named in Rom. 12 differ from those in 1 Cor. 12 and Eph. 4. In 1 Cor. 12 it is more a question of divine power displayed in man, as a testimony to the world. In Eph. 4 gifts are the precious fruit of Christ's love to the Church - they are for the edifying of the body, and shall continue until that body is complete. In Rom. 12 we have ministry flowing from the various members of the body, each acting in his own proper sphere according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith, and according to the grace given. It is not so much the power of God in testimony to the world, or the love of Christ in the edifying of the body, but rather the ordinary ministry of the members exercised in individual faith, from day to day, according to the grace bestowed. It presents ministry as an abiding institution in the Church of God, in its simplest and broadest features. It is hardly possible to read the three scriptures in connection without seeing the main points of distinction.

Gleanings: Seeing God in Our Difficulties

Do not see difficulties; see God. He will only give as much as His people can bear -no heavier burden. Learn to fall back upon God. How calm! He can do the largest work without neglecting the smallest matters.

We have to do with the same God. He will not neglect the most minute circumstance, nay more, is interested to be brought into them all - yes, and delights to have us bring Him into them.

Measure not God by your feelings and apprehensions of Him, but by His testimony to His own power. Man ever changes. God's power and grace are ever the same; as He was, so He is.

His watchfulness, His character is our safeguard. We have Christ's work and God's word, that our faith and hope may be in God. The soul fears no evil, resting, and counting on His omnipotence, omnipresence, wisdom, and love. The living God is our true portion.

What is more wonderful than the truth that the shrine He delights to dwell in is a broken and contrite heart! Behold God's temple; what nobility! using the arm of the Almighty to sustain our tottering frame. Oh, may our constant cry be, "Hold Thou me up"; and the more we lean upon that arm, the more does He delight to keep us, and to sustain our weakness.

God and Man

If I have not reached my moral end in the cross of Christ, I have never got rid of self. You may try, try, try to get rid of it, but you never will, and Satan will only laugh at you. There is no end for self but in the cross. There God is before me - God manifest in flesh- God revealed in a man down here that I may look at Him. If He had not been a man, He could not have been manifested that we might see Him; and if He had not been God, He could not have spanned the distance that lay between us and God. But having become man without ceasing to be God, in order to do both, He who once measured our distance on the cross, now measures our nearness in the glory. Thus self is gone. It does not cease to exist, but it is gone as to occupation with itself. If it intrudes, it will but detach you from the One who, having won your affections, is the alone object that can fully satisfy the tastes and desires of your new affections.

God's Provision for the Wilderness

I turn to this chapter as showing us, not only the painstaking of God's interest in us and care for us, but also that that interest is taken in us by One who knows the path we are treading. He has trodden it Himself; and so it leads our hearts to quietly rest in Him and wait on Him who has our interests so thoroughly at heart.

In John 13, the dealings of the Lord with souls is restorative. Here it is more preventive, and in the shape of establishing our souls in the fact that there is a rest remaining for us, a rest that can never be broken in upon, and that He has made provision for carrying us on safely until we reach it.

When we know what we meet in this world, and what we are in ourselves, how fearful the heart becomes; and it only finds the answer to these fears in turning to Him whose grace has anticipated and fully met them. How blessed to know then that there is not only a rest, but a rest that cannot be broken in upon, and that is reserved for us. And we rejoice too in the thought of God then having everything suited to Himself; it is not only our rest, it is the rest of God.

Now, through grace, we enjoy rest of conscience and rest of heart in Christ; He comes to us with both, even here; but it is rest in Christ, not in anything that is around us. He does not promise to us rest in that. But the moment I look upward, I say, I can rest entirely there. Here, with any loved earthly object, the thought forces itself in, Something may come to take this away from me; my joy is a thing that I may lose tomorrow. But the painstaking of the grace of God is to establish the hearts of weak and feeble ones in the blessed fact that there is a rest remaining there that cannot be broken in upon. He first removes any difficulties from their minds as to the rest having been given them already, and then shows that there is a rest that remaineth for the people of God.

One meets saints of God who think that things are not very straight here, but that all will be right one day when we get up there. Though this may be in a certain sense true, it is not enough; at least, not if it is used to bring in a thought of indifference as to the present moment. God would teach us the importance of the present time, and appreciation of the provision that He has made for us in it. There is the grace of the Lord which we are called to lay hold upon now. It is the tendency of our hearts to try to get out of the circumstances we are in - to hope for some change that will carry us into some path easier to nature than the one we are placed in - instead of making use of God's grace to enable us to walk where we are, so as to please Him. Of course I am not speaking of wrong circumstances; if we are in such, the only thing is to look to God to deliver us out of them at once.

Now in the verses we have read, the Lord's interest in us is shown. He has not only established us in the sense of His favor as to the forgiveness of our sins, and the knowledge that a rest, God's rest, is remaining for us at the end of our course; but it is also not a matter of indifference to God how we go on until we get to that rest. So the Apostle says: "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and

spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

As soon as we accept this truth, what is the effect of it on our souls? The heart is inclined to answer, Who could maintain that standard in the midst of such circumstances as these? And then the tendency is to lower the standard as to what God expects of His people, because of the difficulties of the way. But I repeat, that the first thing is to get real hold of the greatness of this grace of God wherein we stand; and then I say, I so well understand His grace that I can welcome this statement that His word is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," and that "all things are naked and opened" unto His eyes. Do you think I can welcome such words unless I understand His grace? When I have the sense that God is watching every step of my path, the tendency is to say, "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?" Psalm 139:7.

But God knows my need and feebleness. And the next thing I get is the sense that there is One living at God's right hand for me - One whose strength meets my feebleness - so that I can welcome this dealing of God's which has everything out with me. He gives me God's thoughts about me, but I do not seek to get away from Him, because it is His grace that detains me in His presence while He has it all out with me.

He knows exactly where we are and what we are passing through; and He is not one who underrates the difficulties of the way. We know what it is in trial if anyone comes to sympathize with us who cannot adequately enter into our feelings; but it is never thus with the Lord. He enters fully into the very depths of our sorrows. Our great High Priest is on "the throne of grace." How well He knows what suits me! How perfectly He enters into my need! Does not each one of our hearts say, as He ministers to us His sympathy and power, That comes from One who understands me - from One who knows all about me?

Have you not ever been struck by Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple? As you dwell upon it, you get the sense that here is a man who feels that the greatest good he can desire for his people is that they may find that God has an ear for them. And when you read Psalm 107, you acknowledge how right Solomon was, and that he estimated truly when he judged that when men were in difficulties their greatest boon would be to have God's ear -that when they should cry unto the Lord, He would deliver them and save them out of their distresses. The subject of Solomon's prayer is this: that man's greatest blessing consists in being connected with the greatness of God, and that their greatest boon is for God to give them the assurance that they have His ear.

And to Solomon, He even more than answers his prayer. He goes far beyond it. Solomon prays that God's "eyes may be open toward this house night and day." God answers, "Mine eyes and My heart shall be there perpetually." Is not that a wonderful answer? When in their difficulties, in their trials, when even in the consciousness that their own folly had brought them into the straits they were in, yet might they turn to Him whose eyes would be there continually.

And do not our hearts confess that the greatest boon God can give us down here is the consciousness that, in all we pass through, we have His ear? God's thought is first to establish us in grace, and then to bring in that which should make all things naked and opened unto the eyes of

Him with whom we have to do. What a word for us! Have we the sense day by day and hour by hour that we have to do with God? How simple it makes things, and yet how serious!

Just notice in Heb. 12 the number of ways in which the grace of Christ comes into the heart. How it points out one thing after another! Notice the number of arguments that God brings to bear on the hearts of those who were ready to turn aside. What were their difficulties? Well, they had come out from Judaism with expectations savoring rather of the kingdom and glory than of the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. They expected to find in their present association with Christ a path on earth which they did not realize, and so they were disappointed, discouraged, because of the way - hesitating in their steps, and questioning in their hearts if the path they were treading was of God, and ready to turn back. God sees what a dangerous moment it is for them - the moment of hesitance and of being cast down - and how the enemy watched for it. See how beautifully He brings in Esau just at the very moment when his history would be a warning to them.

How does He warn them? Well, the question is, Under what circumstances was it that Esau sold his birthright? It was in a moment of pressure and weariness; he says, so to speak, "I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birthright be to me?" and he goes in for the present. A mess of pottage found him in these circumstances, and he took it. Now remember Esau, says the Apostle; look what happened then in a time of weakness and hesitance, and take warning. And for your encouragement, you have not come to mount Sinai, the place of law, but to mount Zion, the place where grace was brought in. And is grace brought in in a way that makes us indifferent as to our path here? Not at all. It is, "We receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." Is this being indifferent or careless?

This is a test to many souls. They do not like the thought of God's being a consuming fire, and they say, Oh, that is God out of Christ. It is not at all; it is "our God." God is holy, and He will have His people "partakers of His holiness." In Lev. 9:24, the holiness of God accepts by fire what they had done; but in Lev. 10:2, the same holiness refuses by fire the presumption that disregards its claims. God is holy and God ever remains the same; and thank God that He does. He never changes in His love for us, and it is also an immense mercy that He never changes in His holiness.

And He knows how to bring Himself before us maintaining both these scriptures. He separated Moses to His service when He sent him from the burning bush to be the deliverer of Israel. That was to be the aspect of God's holiness that was to be engraved upon his soul in his service. But if I am not established in grace, it is not a bit of comfort to me, but the reverse, that God has His eye upon me and is winnowing my path as I go along down here. I shall be like Jonah; I shall seek to flee from God's presence. He knew that his prophetic character would go, and that he should be made small before the Ninevites. But you know his history, and how God had to have His own way with him to get him back to the true path, and to bring him to the point of saying, No one will do for me but God; "Salvation is of the Lord."

If we have to do with this wonderful grace of God, we can welcome the fact that everything about us is open to the eye of God. When David hears God's words of grace, he goes in and sits before the Lord, and that forms his prayer. God had revealed wonderful things to him, and he says, "Therefore hath Thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto Thee." Who taught him his prayer? It was as he heard God pour out His heart in blessing for David, that David's heart

answered to God's. And that is what true prayer is.

God does not underrate our difficulties, and He does not overrate our strength; He does not take us to be what we are not. But as we face the gravity of what it is to be down here, we find the provision that God has made for us to go through it. I cannot do without drawing upon all this grace. There is no superfluous provision made. The question is, Are we willing to put ourselves in God's hands and ask Him to have His own way with us? We are not called to anything that God does not give us grace to walk in. Are we ready to say with Peter, "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water"? and are we prepared to hear Him say, "Come"? The only "if" in the question was "if it be Thou." Our poor hearts have fifty other "ifs"; but the only one for the true heart is "if it be Thou." And He said, "Come."

Any really seeking to follow the Lord must expect Him to say, Come. It hangs not on anything in ourselves; it is all on the one "if" and His word "Come." And it is not to take one or two steps and then to sink. No; we are to go on. Why did Peter sink? Because evidently there was lurking in his heart the thought, Ah, Peter, here you are walking on the water! Can a man go quietly on walking on the water? quietly maintaining what is for the Lord amid adverse surroundings? Provision has been made for our doing so by One who knows all that is around us.

Now if these things are true, if this painstaking provision and love are true, what should be the effect upon us? That of leaving us without excuse. I have looked at this subject in a suggestive way, desiring that God's grace may lead our hearts on into the consideration of His care for us by the way - into a deeper understanding of that grace which has made such full provision for our need and weakness,

that we are able to go on unmoved through all the difficulties and trials of the way.

Government on the Earth: the Editor's Column

The proposed abolition of capital punishment in England should be noted in the light of the Holy Scriptures; then it will be seen to be a mark of these last days. It is a part of a trend that is leading up to a scene of confusion and carnage which will precede the "day of the Lord."

Capital punishment was instituted after the flood; God said to Noah, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Gen. 9:6. This was not an idea that originated with Noah, but a divine command, and by it God placed the sword of government on earth in the hands of man. Prior to the flood there was no government on earth, and man became utterly lawless; corruption and violence filled the scene (Gen. 6:11).

The human race had followed a downward course from the day that Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden; this was climaxed in a world of horrible and unthinkable moral corruption and human blood-shedding. Hence God intervened and cleansed the earth with the deluge, while He preserved Noah and his family alive in the ark. By them God gave man a fresh start, and the moral government of the earth was henceforth to be exercised under divine decree. This has never been abrogated, and "the powers that be are ordained of God." Rom. 13:1.

The sentimentalists who argue against capital punishment on the grounds of its flagrant abuse in times past are using one evil as an excuse for another. Some contend that innocent people have been executed on flimsy circumstantial evidence, but the Word of God in the days of Israel specifically guarded against such a thing happening: "Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die." Numb. 35:30. In any matter of dispute, "At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established." Deut. 19:15.

God also carefully distinguished between involuntary manslaughter and murder, and made special arrangements for cities of refuge in the land of Canaan where the manslayer might flee and be safe from those who would avenge the accidental death. (Read Numb. 35, and Josh. 20 and 21.) But one who was guilty of deliberate murder was to die, and no satisfaction of any kind was to be taken in lieu of the life of the murderer (Numb. 35:31).

While these principles are good and right in the ordering of the governments on earth, they do have a special significance in regard to the death of the Lord Jesus. We all know how He was maltreated and then crucified, and how His own people clamored for His death; yet when He was about to die on the cross He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34. In this prayer He was attributing His death at their hands to an unwitting and not a premeditated act; He was making it a case of manslaughter and not of murder. How exceedingly gracious this was, for it supposes that they smote their neighbor "unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime." Josh. 20:5. Yet was it not true that they had hated both Him and His Father (John 15:24)? Were it not for this pleading of the Lord on the ground of ignorance, there would have been no hope for Israel. On the contrary, the gospel which was to be preached after His death and

resurrection was to begin at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47).

Peter on the day of Pentecost preached the gospel to the Jews in Jerusalem, and in so doing held the gates of the "city of refuge" open to them, and the 3000 who confessed their sin and believed on the Lord Jesus that day were brought into the Church, as into the city of refuge. They were thereby saved from the fate which awaited the unrepentant part of the people who were to perish by the sword of the Romans, called in Matt. 22:7, "His armies." Peter, again preaching to them, said, "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." Acts 3:17.

The manslayer was to remain in the city of refuge "unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil." Numb. 35:25. This indefinite length of time brings before us in a remarkable way this whole period of the Church on earth, for while the Church is here the Lord Jesus remains as our Great High Priest in the heavens. Consequently, the only way of escape for a Jew is to believe on Him (the Gentile too being saved only through Him) and thus get into the Church. When the Lord Jesus, the High Priest, comes out from the holiest, it will be to take up Israel as a people again. His death will be the basis of all blessing then as it is now.

The abolition of the death penalty for premeditated murder will only help pave the way for the wave of lawlessness which is coming, for coming events are nearly always preceded by preparatory developments. When the rider on the "red horse" appears (after we are gone to be with Christ) peace will be taken from the earth, and they shall "kill one another" (Rev. 6:4). Even today there is growing lawlessness, and the incidence of homicidal killings is on the increase; the removal of the fear of the death penalty as a deterrent will accelerate the dreadful conditions. Luke 17:26 lets us know that the character of the days of Noah, when life was cheap and unsafe due to violence filling the earth, is to reappear before the coming of the Son of man.

While the placing of earthly government in the hands of man has never been rescinded, it is rather remarkable that nowhere in the New Testament is there any instruction how the Christian should conduct himself in the place of authority. Not once is the Christian exhorted how to govern as a Christian. Surely this is no oversight. On the other hand, the Christian is exhorted how to behave himself toward those who are in the place of authority. He is to submit to every law "for the Lord's sake," to obey magistrates and be subject to the powers that be. He is to pay his taxes, not because he cannot avoid doing so, but for conscience toward God. He is to recognize in the administrator of the law, the minister of God to him for good (1 Pet. 2:13, 14; Rom. 13:1-6). He is also to pray for all those in authority (1 Tim. 2:2). (We must always, however, keep in mind that our first allegiance is to God, and that should the government demand us to do that which His Word forbids us to do - for instance, to deny Christ-we must obey God and suffer the consequences.)

While there is no New Testament instruction how a Christian should govern now, it does suppose a day when the Christian shall reign: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you.... Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" 1 Cor. 6:2, 3. It is evident from the Scriptures that God did not intend for Christians to seek to judge the world, but to be law-abiding subjects, just waiting for the Lord Jesus to come and take them home. When the Apostle Paul sought to correct the life of leisure and indulgence in which the Corinthian saints were living, he said, "Ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." 1 Cor. 4:8. The day for the Christians to reign had not come, for if it had, Paul would be reigning with them. The Christian who seeks to straighten out this world and

engage in politics has missed this important lesson. He is as much out of place as Lot was when he sat as a judge in the gate of the city of Sodom. Lot had his righteous soul "vexed from day to day."

It is true that there are Christians in the place of authority, who seek to act righteously before God; but their conduct in the exercise of power, if governed by scriptural principles, must be done on the basis of the Old Testament and not of the New. In the latter, the saint on earth is looked at as a stranger and a pilgrim, just passing through the world. The more that Christians seek a place in the world where they can exercise power, the more they have mixed earthly government, and Judaism, with the heavenly calling of the Christian; then the distinctive character of each is lost.

But we should not fail to discern the signs of these times when everything indicates the close proximity of the coming of the Lord. The world is being readied for those dreadful closing days of "man's day," but our release here and our being with Christ is ever drawing nearer.

" 'A little while' - the Lord shall come,

And we shall wander here no more;

He'll take us to His Father's home,

Where He for us is gone before-

To dwell with Him, to see His face,

And sing the glories of His grace.

" 'A little while' - He'll come again;

Let us the precious hours redeem;

Our only grief to give Him pain,

Our joy to serve and follow Him.

Watching and ready may we be,

As those that wait their Lord to see.

" 'A little while' - 'twill soon be past,

Why should we shun the promised cross?

O let us in His footsteps haste,

Counting for Him all else but loss;

For how will recompense His smile

The suff'rings of this 'little while.'

"'A little while' - come, Savior, come!

For Thee Thy bride has tarried long;

Take Thy poor waiting pilgrims home,
To sing the new eternal song,
To see Thy glory, and to be
In ev'rything conformed to Thee!"

Grace

There is nothing so hard for our hearts as to abide in the sense of grace. It is by grace that the heart is "established"; but there is nothing more difficult for us really to comprehend than the fullness of grace.

Grace supposes all the sin and evil in us, and is the blessed revelation that through Jesus all this sin and evil has been put away. A single sin is more horrible to God than a thousand sins, nay, than all the sins in the world, are to us; and yet, with the fullest consciousness of what we are, all that God is pleased to be toward us is LOVE! It is vain to look to any extent of evil - a person may be (speaking after the manner of men) a great sinner or a little sinner, but that is not the question at all. Grace has reference to what God is, and not to what we are, except indeed that the very greatness of our sins does but magnify the extent of the "grace of God."

I have got away from grace if I have the slightest doubt or hesitation about God's love. I shall then be saying, "I am unhappy because I am not what I should like to be." But this is not the question. The real question is, whether God is what we should like Him to be - whether Jesus is all we could wish. If the consciousness of what we are - of what we find in ourselves - has any other effect than, while it bumbles us, to increase our adoration of what God is, we are off the ground of pure grace. The effect of such consciousness should surely be to humble us, but also to make our hearts reach out to God and to His grace as abounding over it all.

Growth, Dwarfishness, Second Childhood: Deformity

Growth is the natural advancement of the children of God from the state of babes to become "young men" and "fathers" in Christ (1 John 2:12-14). But this may be either hindered or unnatural, and the state consequently may become all wrong. The Corinthians were still remaining in the condition of babes when the Apostle addressed his first epistle to them: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." 1 Cor. 3:1, 2. The word "hitherto" in this passage shows that they had never yet been in any other condition; they had remained in the condition of babes.

The Hebrews also, when the Apostle addressed them, were somewhat similar, only with this difference - the Hebrews had advanced, but had afterward returned to the state of babes. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe." Heb. 5:12, 13. "Ye are become such" shows that they had gone back to it. "But call to remembrance the former days." Ah, he says, You have gone back from the days when you endured a great fight of afflictions; you have forgotten the time when you "took joyfully the spoiling of your goods," because you knew that you possessed "in heaven a better and enduring substance." (Heb. 10.) "Now the just shall live by faith."

There are three states of soul, or stages of growth, in the children of God to be found in Scripture, three states easily discernible too among Christians in our own day; and all three are evil, because they all arise from an arrested or unnatural growth. First, the dwarf state remaining in the condition of babes; second, the state of second childhood, or returning to that condition; third, the result of both the others - deformity.

I have referred to the first, as illustrated by the Corinthians, and say one thing more as to it ere passing on; namely, that Christians in this state are generally perfectly satisfied with themselves, and with what they know; and they are never found running in Paul's company in 1 Cor. 8:2, and Phil. 3:12-14.

Second, there is the state of second childhood; this we see was the condition of the Hebrews. In this state you have not impeded growth, as at Corinth, but unnatural growth; the internal has not kept pace with the external; it is more difficult to detect, for there is all the outward appearance of wisdom and manhood, but the power is wanting. This is a sad condition. There is refreshment in looking upon the confiding fresh young life of a babe; internally and externally there is harmony in such a one. But it is sad indeed to be brought face to face with second childhood. The hoary head that should have guided aright or curbed the impetuosity of youth by its sage and prudent counsel, that should have encouraged the feeble steps of the tottering babe - what can be more touching than to see its utter impotency and helplessness?

I pass on to notice now the third state - deformity - in which state something is manifested that is externally repulsive to the spiritual eye. I take as examples of those in this condition, the saints addressed in 1 Corinthians and in the epistle to the Galatians. It is clear that in natural things deformity may be either mental or physical; that is, it may be that of the mind, which is internal, but it does not therefore escape a trained eye, or that of the body, which is external and more visible; this too is also true in the things of God, and both are illustrated in those addressed in these two epistles. Doctrine was wrong with the Galatians, practice with the Corinthians, the one internal and far more serious and solemn than the other. Not to all the dreadful moral evil existing at Corinth does he address such solemn warnings and denunciations as he addresses to the Galatians. (Gal. 1:6-9; 3:4; 4:11, 20; 5:1, 4, 7, 12.) No outward immorality is denounced by him as allowed among them, such as we find in 1 Corinthians, and it is possible that there was outwardly very little to complain of, the breaking of bread going on as usual, and those who attended it not blamed. But they had gone back (Gal. 4:9), had begun in the Spirit, but were now hindered, "bewitched." The "first works" (Rev. 2:5) were no longer done, legal works were adopted, and "the bondwoman and her son" were brought back to the house (Gal. 4:30). But what had they done? In effect they had only neglected the teaching of the Word by the Spirit, a certain line of action not left to their judgment, but laid down for them, which is called obeying the truth (Gal. 3:1). This was the result of their bad state, but this was terrible to the Apostle, for if the teaching of the Spirit and the Word are given up by saints, what is left?

It needed no great spiritual discernment to detect the deformity at Corinth. That which was allowed among them was a common scandal, and such as was "not so much as named" even among the Gentiles (1 Cor. 5).

To remain, then, in the condition of babes is dwarfishness, and produces external deformity; while to return to this condition, having known better, is second childhood, and provides this solemn condemnation of the Apostle, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." Gal. 4:11. Doubtless the Hebrews were exposed to the danger of falling into the same state, though not so far advanced as the Galatians in it. But what strikes one is the overwhelming danger of this state. The soul is slumbering and content with itself; and no human power, nothing but the solemn voice of the Lord by the Apostle can arouse it. He was not, and He cannot now be indifferent to such a state.

It is a matter of comfort to the servants of the Lord, that souls in the three evil states we have been considering are not beyond recovery through the application of the Word in the power of the Spirit of God, for we have all three of them addressed in the passages we have had before us. Nothing but divine wisdom can help us in dealing with such souls now, for by ignoring their state we are but continuing them in it; and by ignoring them because of their state we deprive ourselves of the duty and privilege of helping them to recovery.

In 1 Pet. 2:2 (which does not in any way militate against what we have been saying) we find the means of growth: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." We have been looking at growth arrested, and have considered a little what we have termed unnatural growth; we have seen that deformity follows each, but our view would not be complete were it not also to embrace what true growth is and how it is manifested, and for this we must turn again to John's first epistle.

I believe we learn there and everywhere in Scripture, as well as in walking up and down in service among the saints, that true growth always manifests itself in increased occupation of the soul with the Person of Christ. When John is there writing of the "fathers," he says that he has written and still writes to them because they have "known Him that is from the beginning." This is all he has to say of them and he adds no further counsel to them, gives them no further occupation. He does to the young men (1 John 2:15-17). He does also to the babes (vv. 18-27), but to the fathers nothing save in a general way (vv. 28, etc.). But the omission is full of instruction, for the few words he does say of them are in effect, "You have already begun while yet upon earth the occupation of heaven and eternity, and I know of nothing beyond it." Thus true growth was manifested, for in the day of Rev. 5, a day swiftly approaching for us, "Jesus only" fills the scene and occupies the whole of the surrounding companies, "every family in the heavens" (Eph. 3:15; J.N.D. Trans.), and that, whatever their intelligence, or however varied their comprehension of Him and His ways may be. But if this is true in heaven, and we are growing now upon earth, it will manifest itself in more caring for Him and His approval, pleasing the Lord at all cost (2 Cor. 5:9), and how but in ministering to those who are His, those so dear to Him, and those for whom He died? (1 John 5:1.)

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." 1 Cor. 13:11. And, says the Apostle Peter, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus

Christ." 2 Pet. 3:18. May we see that there is no growth but by the Word, and discern the dangerous condition of those who are not obeying it -that "word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." 1 Thess. 2:13. If at first it gave me life, it must effectually work now in me if I am to grow; and may it be thus with us increasingly to the praise and to the glory of His grace.

Have Faith in God

How prone we are, in moments of pressure and difficulty, to turn the eye to some creature resource! Our hearts are full of creature confidence, human hopes, and earthly expectations. We know comparatively little of the deep blessedness of looking simply to God. We are ready to look anywhere and everywhere rather than unto Him. We run to any broken cistern, and lean on any broken reed, although we have an exhaustless Fountain and the Rock of Ages ever near.

And yet we have proved times without number that "creature streams are dry." Man is sure to disappoint us when we look to him. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" And again, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited." (Isa. 2:22; Jer. 17:5, 6.)

Such is the sad result of leaning upon the creature - barrenness, desolation, disappointment. Like the heath in the desert. No refreshing showers - no dew from heaven - no good-nothing but drought and sterility. How can it be otherwise when the heart is turned away from the Lord, the only source of blessing? It lies not within the range of the creature to satisfy the heart. God alone can do this. He can meet our every need, and satisfy our every desire. He never fails a trusting heart.

But He must be trusted in reality. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say" (Jas. 2:14) he trusts God, if he does not really do so? A sham faith will not do. It will not do to trust in word, neither in tongue. It must be in deed and in truth. Of what use is a faith with one eye on the Creator, and another on the creature? Can God and the creature occupy the same platform? Impossible. It must be God or - what? The creature, and the curse that ever follows creature-confidence.

Mark the contrast. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Jer. 17:7, 8.

How blessed! How bright! How beautiful! Who would not put his trust in such a God? How delightful to find oneself wholly and absolutely cast upon Him - to be shut up to Him - to have Him filling the entire range of the soul's vision - to find all our springs in Him - to be able to say, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation: He is my defense; I shall not be moved." Psalm 62:5, 6.

Note the little word "only." It is very searching. It will not do to say we are trusting in God while the eye is all the while upon the creature. It is much to be feared that we frequently talk about looking to the Lord while, in reality, we are expecting our fellow man to help us. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the

reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Jer. 17:9, 10.

How needful to have the heart's deepest motive springs judged in the presence of God! We are so apt to deceive ourselves by the use of certain phrases which, so far as we are concerned, have no force, no value, no truth whatever. The language of faith is on our lips, but the heart is full of creature confidence. We talk to men about our faith in God, in order that they may help us out of our difficulties.

Let us be honest. Let us walk in the clear light of God's presence, where everything is seen as it really is. Let us not rob God of His glory, and our own souls of abundant blessing, by an empty expression of dependence upon Him, while the heart is secretly going out after some creature stream. Let us not miss the deep joy, peace, and blessing, the strength, stability, and victory, that faith ever finds in the living God, in the living Christ of God, and in the living Word of God. Oh! let us "have faith in God.

The Hebrew Servant

I desire to consider a little the service of the saints of God. It is a blessed thing to serve God at all, for we are unable to do so naturally; if a thought of service ever enters our hearts, it is one of bondage - the service of a hard and austere master. This is one of the things which shows how entirely man has departed from God. If we look at angels, those angels "that excel in strength," they "do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word"; "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" The highest angel is but in the place of a servant; yet it is a blessed thing to serve, and they bless God for it.

Everyone has known how painful the thought of service is to the natural heart, and unless we see that service is connected with liberty, such will always be the thought. That which redemption shows us is that we are free, yet free to serve. This is the fruit of redemption, that we are free to be the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the saints, for His sake. If we did not know that we were free, we would only be seeking to serve ourselves. This will ever be the case until we know redemption, how God has saved us, and how Jesus is serving in heaven for us. The great thing for us to do is to observe how the Lord Jesus served.

These verses (Exod. 21:1-7) are not properly a part of the covenant - "Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them." In the 19th Psalm, verses 7-11, we get several distinct things mentioned - testimony, statutes, commandments, judgments. These last I apprehend to be God's decision on certain points. "The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether."

The very first thing God has decided here, is a particular about service - "If thou buy a Hebrew servant." If he were a captive, he would be in the power of his master; but this judgment is concerning one under the law, a Hebrew servant. The Gentiles were never under the law, and I do not find this judgment brought into the New Testament. The Apostle Paul only gives directions of unqualified submission to the master, whether a believing or an unbelieving one; this judgment applies to those who are under the law, and not to those who are not under the law.

The Lord Jesus Christ is presented to us as "made of a woman," and "made under the law." As "made under the law," He magnified it, and made it honorable (Isa. 42:21). The law, the letter which "killeth" to all else, was not the letter that killeth to Him; it drew out the response from His heart, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." The application of the law to the heart of man only works out the enmity that is there, but there was no enmity in the Lord Jesus.

In another way I find the Lord Jesus presented as a faithful servant: "Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." Isa. 42:1. And again, "Listen, O isles, unto Me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called Me from the womb; from the bowels of My mother hath He made mention of My name. And He hath made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand

hath He hid Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver hath He hid Me; and said unto Me, Thou art My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Isa. 49:1-3. He is here brought before us as the servant of Jehovah, and so He constantly speaks of Himself: "I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me"; and that is just the servant's place - the Lord Jesus Christ spoke, as it were, His Master's word.

"Being in the form of God, [He] thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Phil. 2:6, 7. He humbled Himself to become a servant, and blessed was it that He did so; for if He had come in His native dignity, He never could have said, "I am among you as He that serveth." He never could have washed our feet. His native dignity, it is true, broke forth every now and then; but the mystery of redemption is, that the eternal Son of the Father has become the servant of Jehovah, and the servant of our necessities. These are the things that angels desire to look into, and that the prophets have inquired and searched diligently concerning "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

He was the "Hebrew servant," and the faithful Servant who had served His time unto Him whose servant He came to be; and He might have said, Now I can "go out free"; I have served My time, and I can "go out free" (v. 2); and indeed He did say, "Father,... I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." But He might have acted on this judgment and gone out Himself.

All His service seemed in vain as to any present result - "I have labored in vain, I have spent My strength for naught, and in vain: yet surely My judgment is with the LORD, and My work with My

God." Isa. 49:4. But what is the answer? "And now, saith the LORD that formed Me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and My God shall be My strength. And He said, It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth." vv. 5,6. All His service seemed to be thrown away. "Though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him." They said He wrought by Beelzebub, and at last crucified Him.

He "came in by himself," and He might have gone "out by himself" (v. 3). He was the only One who could ever have entered into life by keeping the commandments. He has a right to enter into life. Law knew nothing about saving a person; it promised life through obedience to it - "The man which doeth those things shall live by them." The Lord Jesus Christ alone had earned life by obedience

in every jot and tittle of the law, and He might have gone "out free"; but He would not go out free for the reason here assigned. "If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto the judges; and he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the doorpost; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever."

vv. 4-6.

When Jesus, on His rejection by the chief priests and Pharisees (John 10-19), heard of the desire of the Greeks to see Him, He said, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He was the grain of wheat. Had He not died, He would have remained alone, precious in Himself; but He would have borne no fruit. He might have gone out free, but it would have been by Himself. He might have entered into life, but it would have been alone. He would not therefore go out free, but He became obedient unto death, that He might "see of the travail of His soul"; that He might bring "many sons unto glory," that He might have His wife and children. This was a voluntary act - though free, He was free to serve. He is the One who has come and had His ear bored that He might serve forever.

I desire to look at this a little more. The Lord Jesus Christ, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, is there still as the servant; and when coming out in glory by-and-by, He will be still as the servant.

I need not tell you how that the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of Himself in a subject character, and that this is voluntary. He came not in His own name, but in the name of Him who sent Him. They would have taken Him by force and made Him a king (John 6), but He would not be a king in their name or in His own. As Jehovah's servant, He was His king also; and as they would not own Him as coming from God, He would not be owned at all. We receive Him not, unless we receive Him as the Christ of God.

In verse 5 we read, "If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master." Oh, how plainly did He say it when He cried, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." The servant is one who does not do his own will. It was the love that Jesus had to Him that sent Him, that brought Him down into death, as He says: "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.... This commandment have I received of My Father." Beloved, we are sanctified by His having done the will of Him that sent Him: "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." He said, "Lo, I come... to do Thy will." He was free to go to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was; but He would not go out free. "I love my master, my wife, and my children," I will not go out free. It was love that actuated Jesus in His work on the cross.

I find in that aspect Jesus doing the will of Jehovah; in another place, Jehovah's sword awaking "against the man that is My fellow." In one sense the death of Jesus on the cross is the "burnt offering," a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savor; in another, the "sin offering," which was to be burned outside the camp.

The heart of Jesus could not be satisfied unless He had His bride and children with Him where He was, and therefore He must carry His service down into the depths of death: "If his master have given him a wife." The bride is given to Jesus, just as God gave Adam a wife. I can never separate the love of the Father in this, the gift of the Church by Him to Jesus, and the love of Jesus for the Church in giving Himself for it. So it is with the sheep (John 10); they are the gift of the Father to Jesus. And Jesus, as the good Shepherd, has laid down His life for them. If He love His wife, He must serve for her. Well, Jacob served for a wife a long service, but the Lord Jesus serves forever. He is the constant minister to the Church; as He has won her, as He has died for her, so He

serves her now.

And so with the children "I love... my children" "Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given Me." Because He loved the bride, because He loved the children, He serves forever.

In His personal service when here, He was the servant of everybody; He was always going about doing good, but ever so in the Father's name. Shortly before going out of the world, we see (John 13) that "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet." We find Him doing the most servile act. It was the service of love, and how His love made Him stoop!

Is Jesus serving now? Yes, washing His disciples' feet. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." The example of His own willing service to the Church; a pattern indeed to us, but a specimen of what His service is now while we are walking through this weary sinful world. We need to have our feet washed, and Christ does this by His ministry for us. He still retains the place of ministry and service to which He has bound Himself from love to His Master, love to His bride, love to His children. But surely He is still our Lord and Master; we can call Him Lord, own Him as Lord, pray to Him as Lord, and thus see that the One who "upholdeth all things by the word of His power" is the very One who daily ministers to our necessities. He has had His ear bored to the doorpost; He is a servant forever. I find the Lord of glory is able to serve. He does not need to be served Himself; people always think that God needs to be served, instead of seeing the wondrous thing that He wishes to serve us.

In Luke 12 we find that this service is still carried on when the Lord Jesus Christ comes forth in glory. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait

for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." No one will be able to deny His Sonship then, His Godhead then; but even there He is still the Servant. I do not mean to explain how; I only carry forward the thought of service. It will be our blessed place to serve Him, yet still it is our security to know that He will serve us. He still delights to sustain that character into which He voluntarily came.

We get from this decision of the Lord the principle of service. In this day when many saints are waking to a desire of service, there is a danger of getting off the ground of grace. We are all apt to make the connection between service and glory, instead of seeing that the connection is between grace and glory. The blood is our title to glory, even as it has saved us, even as it has redeemed us. I see in the countless multitude who surround the throne, that they are there because of "the blood of the Lamb."

The servant always hides himself, puts himself aside, that the master may appear; the great danger in any service we are able to render is, lest the servant should appear. Simon Magus gave himself out as some great one; but if we serve according to God's judgment, it will be very unobtrusive service. Joshua was servant to Moses; he abode in the tabernacle outside the camp (Exod. 33:11); but how little prominently does he appear. Joshua is hid, and Moses is the actor.

Our place of service will ever be, in God's wisdom, the place of trial, though the place of comfort too. So it was with the Lord. He did always the things that pleased the Father, and thus proved His love; but He had to set His face like a flint. Our service is not occasional, but continuous. If we are in the place of servants, it is because we are sons. The ear is to be opened "morning by morning" (Isa. 50:4). Domestic duties are to be taken up as service to the Lord; He is to be glorified in them: the service we mostly fail in is domestic piety. Many would desire more time for serving the Lord. But why not make all we do service to Him. "Ye serve the Lord Christ."

The principle of our service is love to the Master. It is the service of love, and not obligation. We are, it is true, not our own; we are bought with a price; therefore let us glorify God with our bodies which are His (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). But the Lord does not address us with that claim; He says, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." God loves a cheerful giver because He is a cheerful giver. Some persons say, Oh, I wish I could serve the Lord more! Well, let your soul enter more deeply into His love, and then you will serve Him. The Lord said, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." The moment I come with a claim, I dampen the mainspring of service; it is by love we are to serve one another. I do believe that this ought to be my feeling; I am a debtor to every saint because the Lord by His grace has made me free - free indeed.

When the saints are in glory by-and-by, it will be still to serve, to minister to the world as well as to the Lord. "His servants shall serve Him." Just as angels serve now, so, by-and-by, there will be the visible ministry of saints.

How blessedly has love been the servant to our necessities; how God in His love has given His Son for us; how Jesus has served us and does still serve us; how He will serve us by-and-by! The active spring of service in the Church ought to be love. May we trace in Jesus the exhibition of it! What a blessed thing it is to serve! May we not serve in self-will, but doing His will. Service in the Church will never make us of any esteem among men; it did not make the perfect Servant so; but still the word was, "He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." Isa. 52:13. And what a blessed thought, what a thought of grace, to hear one now mourning over his unprofitableness and wretched service addressed in these words in the day of the glory, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant:... enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

May the Lord grant us, beloved, deliverance from law service, and lead us to happy blessed service, according to this judgment of the Hebrew servant.

Hope

I rejoice in the thought that every setting sun is bringing us nearer and nearer to a world where suns will never set - where we shall walk together forever in an atmosphere of light and glory - where all the desire, longing, and hope of our hearts will be fully met! How blessed to feel that we have such a hope!

How wonderful that while the world around us is following after shadows, and walking in a vain show, we know and love the truth! - that ours are hopes which will not, cannot deceive.

How to Obtain Peace: a Letter to an Anxious Inquirer

You may be thoroughly assured of this, dear friend, that you will never get peace by looking at your repentance, or your anything. If such a thing could be, it would simply be satisfaction with yourself; and this could never be right. Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross. God preaches peace by Jesus Christ. It is not by repentance, though, most surely, we believe in the necessity of repentance! But what would you say, dear friend, to a person if he were to tell you that he had found peace because his repentance was of the right kind - because he hated sin as God hated it? Doubtless you would say to him that his peace was a false one. Thanks be to God, the believer's peace rests on no such rotten foundation. The Apostle does not say, "Having repented enough, we have peace with God." No; but, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." The believer's peace rests on a divine foundation. It is based on the glorious truth that God is not only satisfied as to the entire question of our sins, but that He is actually glorified in respect to it. He has reaped a richer harvest in the matter of the putting away of our sins than ever He could have reaped in the fields of an unfallen creation. Nothing has ever glorified God like the death of Christ. The hearty belief of this must give peace to the soul. It is not the work wrought in us, whether repentance or aught else, that gives peace, but the work wrought for us. It is not the work of the Spirit in us, precious and essential as it is, that gives peace, but the work of Christ for us. This is a grand and most necessary truth for all anxious inquirers. It is all well and right enough to judge ourselves, our state, our ways - to be humbled because of our shallow repentance, our coldness and indifference - but we shall never get peace by self-judgment. If we have not found peace ere we sit down to the work of self-judgment, we shall find it very dismal work indeed.

It seems to us, dear friend, that you are too much occupied with the thoughts of men. One preacher tells you this; another preacher tells you that; and your own heart tells you something else. Would it not be well to listen to what God says? This is what faith does, and thus finds settled tranquility. The believer's peace can no more be disturbed than Christ can be disturbed from His seat on the throne of God. This seems strong, but it is true; and being true, its strength is part of its moral glory. Let us entreat you to take up the lovely attitude of the soul in Psalm 85: "I will hear what God the LORD will speak" (not what this or that man will speak): "for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints: but let them not turn again to folly." May the blessed Spirit lead you into the enjoyment of that peace which

Christ has made by the blood of His cross, which God preaches in the gospel of His grace, by Jesus Christ, and which faith finds in the simple testimony of Holy Scripture!

In the Light

The possession of an evil nature never makes the conscience bad in the Lord's presence. It is only when it is at work in any way that the conscience becomes defiled. The cloud is felt, preventing the soul's enjoyment of communion in the light. Here then comes in God's blessed provision for that which is made manifest in His presence where there is failure in our ways as Christians. It is confession of sins. Just as when a man with his clothing soiled or in disarray enters a room full of light and mirrors, instinctively arranges his attire (for the light shows whatever was wrong), so one cannot help confessing if when in the light of God there is the slightest soil - anything that the light reveals. "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light," and God is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

When the sinful nature is yielded to and permitted to appear in the shape of "sins" the conscience is defiled and unhappy; the Spirit is grieved, and the more sensitive the conscience the more keenly it feels the stain. Here it is we learn what causes the bowing of the heart and conscience before God about the sin. The advocacy of Christ has been in exercise, not because I have repented of the sin and judged myself about it, but because I had sinned and needed that my soul should be bowed for the failure before the Lord. A living Person - Jesus - deals by His Word and His Spirit with my heart and conscience, makes me feel the sin, and bows my heart in confession to Him who is faithful and just to forgive "and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." It is "If any man sin" (not repent of his sin), "we have an advocate with the Father" (1 John 2:2). He forgives the sin and cleanses the heart from the remembrance of that which had caused the sorrow and distress of soul.

True confession is a deep, deep, painful work in the soul. It has not only to do with the actual failure, but also with the root of the matter which, unjudged, had produced the sin. Peter's case in John 21 gives an illustration of this dealing of Christ when he needed a sense of his sin not heretofore possessed. Peter had "wept bitterly" over the sin (his denial of Christ), yet the roots were unreached and liable to break forth again. The Lord deals with him - not charging him with his sin or even making mention of it: "Lowest thou Me more than these?" Dost thou still have overweening confidence in thyself? for he had boasted that though others would deny Him, yet he would not. The Lord did not look to the stream but to its source. The root was reached and all was out before His eye. The spring was laid open, judged, and dried up. Blessed dealing of One who loves us perfectly and cares too much for us to spare us when we need to learn ourselves.

Jacob's Mistake

What a mistake Jacob made when he said, "All these things are against me," when in fact they were, every one of them, for him (Gen. 42:36).

How different that beautiful utterance of faith in Rom. 8:28, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Beware of Jacob's mistake.

Jehovah's Demand and Satan's Objections: Let My People Go

"Let My people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness." Exod. 5:1.

What a volume of truth is contained in this sentence. It sets forth in plain and forcible language the blessed purpose of the Lord God of Israel to have His people completely delivered from Egypt and separated unto Himself in order that they might feast with Him in the wilderness. Nothing could satisfy His heart in reference to them but their entire emancipation from the land of death and darkness. He would free them not only from Egypt's brick kilns and taskmasters, but from its temples and its altars, and from all its habits and all its associations, from its principles, its maxims, and its fashions. In a word, they must be a thoroughly separated people ere they could hold a feast to Him in the wilderness.

Thus it was with Israel, and thus it is with us. We too must be a fully and consciously delivered people ere we can properly serve, worship, or walk with God. The world is to the Christian what Egypt was to Israel; only, of course, our separation from the world is not local or physical, but moral and spiritual. Israel left Egypt in person; we leave the world in spirit and principle. Israel left Egypt in fact; we leave the world in faith. It was a real, out-and-out, thorough separation for them, and it is the same for us. "Let My people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness." To this rigid separation, as we very well know, Satan had and still has many objections.

1. His first objection was set forth in the following words spoken by the lips of Pharaoh, "Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land." These were subtle words - words well calculated to ensnare a heart that was not in communion with the mind of God. For it might, with great plausibility and apparent force, be argued, Is it not uncommonly liberal on the part of the king of Egypt to offer you toleration for your peculiar mode of worship? Why not take common ground with your neighbors?

This might seem very reasonable. But then mark Jehovah's high and holy standard! Harken to the plain and positive declaration, "Let My people go." There is no mistaking this.

There is something uncommonly fine in Moses' reply to Satan's first objection: "It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as He shall command us." Exod. 8:26, 27.

There would have been a lack of moral fitness in presenting to Jehovah, in sacrifice, the object of Egyptian worship. But, more than this, Egypt was not the place in which to erect an altar to the true God. Abraham had no altar when he turned aside into Egypt. He abandoned his worship and his strangership when he went down thither; and if Abraham could not worship there, neither could his seed.

Beloved, "the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." The motives which actuate and the objects which animate the true believer lie far beyond the world's range of vision; and we may rest

assured that in the exact proportion in which the world can enter into and appreciate a Christian's motives, must the Christian be unfaithful to his Lord.

We speak, of course, of proper Christian motives. No doubt there is much in a Christian's life that the world can admire and value. Integrity, honesty, truthfulness, kindness, care for the poor, self-denial. All these things may be understood and appreciated; but, admitting all this, we return with deeper emphasis to the apostolic statement, that "The world knoweth us not," and if we want to walk with God - if we would hold a feast unto Him - if it is our heart's true and earnest desire to run a consistently heavenly course, we must break with the world altogether.

2. Satan's second objection is very much like his first. If he cannot succeed in keeping Israel in Egypt, he will at least try to keep them as near to it as possible. "I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away." Chap. 8:28.

There is very much more damage done to the cause of Christ by an apparent, partial, half-hearted giving up of the world, than by remaining in it altogether. Wavering, undecided, half-and-half professors injure the testimony and dishonor the Lord far more than thorough out-and-out worldlings. And, further, we may say there is a wide difference indeed between giving up certain worldly things, and giving up the world itself. We may lop off some of the branches, and yet cling with fonder tenacity to the old trunk.

This must be carefully seen to. We feel persuaded that what hundreds of professing Christians need is to make a clean break with the world. It is utterly impossible to make a proper start, much less to make any progress, while the heart is playing fast and loose with the holy claims of Christ.

It is one of Satan's masterpieces to lead professing Christians to rest satisfied with looking to the cross for salvation while remaining in the world, or occupying a border position - not going "very far away." This is a terrible snare, against which we most solemnly warn the Christian reader. What is the remedy? True heart-devotedness to, and fellowship with, a rejected and glorified Christ. To walk with Christ, to delight in Him, to feed upon Him, we must be apart from this godless, Christless, wicked world; apart from it in the spirit of our minds, and in the affections of our hearts; apart from it, not merely in its gross forms, but apart from the world in all that goes to make up that extensive phrase.

But here we may be asked, Is Christianity merely a stripping, an emptying, a giving up? Does it only consist of prohibition and negation? We answer with hearty and blissful emphasis, No! Christianity is pre-eminently positive - divinely satisfying. "What does it give us in lieu of what it takes from us? It gives us "unsearchable riches" in place of "dung" and "dross." It gives us "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven," instead of a poor passing bubble on the stream of time. It gives us Christ, the joy of the heart of God - the object of heaven's worship - the eternal sunlight of the new creation - in lieu of a few moments of sinful gratification and guilty pleasure. And finally, it gives us an the eternal sunlight of the eternity of ineffable bliss and glory in the Father's house above, instead of an eternity in the awful flames of hell.

Men do not find it very hard to give up cinders for diamonds - ashes for pearls - dross for gold. No, reader; and in the same way, when one has tasted the preciousness of Christ, there is no difficulty in giving up the world; no, the difficulty would be to remain in it. If Christ fills the heart, the world is

not only driven out, but kept out. We not only turn our backs upon Egypt, but we go far enough away from it never to return. And for what? To do nothing? To have nothing? no; but to "hold a feast" to the Lord. True it is "in the wilderness"; but then the wilderness is heaven begun when we have Christ there with us. We have already considered two of Satan's objections, and we shall now proceed to the third.

3. "And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: but who are they that shall go? And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the LORD. And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD, for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence." Exod. 10:8-11.

These words contain a very solemn lesson for the hearts of all Christian parents. They reveal a deep and crafty purpose of the arch-enemy. If he cannot keep the parents in Egypt, he will at least seek to keep the children, and in this way mar the testimony to the truth of God, tarnish His glory in His people, and hinder their blessing in Him. Parents in the wilderness and their children in Egypt would be a terrible anomaly - a thing wholly opposed to the mind of God, and utterly subversive of His glory in the walk of His people.

"Thou and... thy house" is a phrase of deep practical import. It involves the very highest consequences, and conveys the richest consolation to every Christian parent; and we may truly add, the neglect of it has led to the most disastrous consequences in thousands of family circles.

What is involved in the weighty expression, "Thou and... thy house"? There are two things involved in it. In the first place, there is a most precious privilege; and in the second place, a holy responsibility. It is unquestionably the privilege of all Christian parents to count on God for their children; but it is also their bounden duty - do we dislike the homely word? - to train their children for God. We are to begin at the very beginning and go steadily on from day to day, month to month, year to year, training our children for God. Just as a wise and skillful gardener begins, while his fruit trees are young and tender, to train the branches along the wall where they may catch the genial rays of the sun, so should we, while our children are young and plastic, seek to mold them for God. It would be the height of folly on the part of the gardener to wait till the branches become old and gnarled, and then seek to train them. He would find it a hopeless task. And most surely it is the very loftiest height of folly on our part to suffer our children to remain for years and years under the molding hand of Satan and the world and sin ere we rouse ourselves to the holy business of molding them for God.

Let us not be misunderstood. Let no one suppose that we mean to teach that grace is hereditary, or that we can by any act or system of training make Christians of our children. Nothing is further from our thoughts. Grace is sovereign, and the children of Christian parents must, like all others, be born of water and of the Spirit ere they can see or enter the kingdom of God. All this is as plain and as clear as Scripture can make it; but, on the other hand, Scripture is equally clear and plain as to the duty of Christian parents to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." And what does this bringing up involve? One thing is certain; namely, that Christian training means a great deal more than drilling our children in religion, teaching them to repeat texts and

hymns like a parrot, and turning the family circle into a school. No doubt it is very well to store the memory of a child with Scripture and sweet hymns. No one would think of calling this in question. "What is really needed is to surround our children with a thoroughly Christian atmosphere from their earliest moments; to let them breathe the pure air of the new creation; to let them see in their parents the genuine fruits of spiritual life - love, peace, purity, tenderness, genuine kindness, unselfishness, loving thoughtfulness of others. These things have a mighty moral influence upon the plastic mind of the child.

But, on the other hand, who can attempt to define the pernicious effect produced upon our children by our inconsistencies, by our bad temper, our selfish ways, our worldliness, and covetousness? Can we be said to bring our children out of Egypt when Egypt's principles and habits are seen in our whole career? It may be we use and teach the phraseology of the wilderness or of Canaan; but our ways, our manners, our habits are those of Egypt, and our children are quick-sighted enough to mark the gross inconsistency, and the effect upon them is deplorable beyond expression. We have but little idea of the way in which the unfaithfulness of Christian parents has contributed to swell the tide of infidelity which is rising around us with such appalling rapidity.

It may be said, and said with a measure of truth, that children are responsible in spite of the inconsistency of their parents. But most assuredly, whatever amount of truth there may be in this statement, it is not for parents to urge it.

We may depend upon it, there is a great deal more involved in this question of training than many of us are aware of. Nothing but the direct power of the Spirit of God can fit parents for the great and holy work of training their children in these days in which we live, and in the midst of the scene through which we are passing. That word falls upon the heart with heavenly sweetness and power, "My grace is sufficient for thee." We can with fullest confidence reckon upon God to bless the very feeblest effort to lead our dear children forth out of Egypt. But the effort must be made, and made too with real, fixed, earnest purpose of heart.

We have to remember that the foundation of character is laid in the nursery. It is in the early days of infancy that Christian training begins, and it must be steadily pursued from day to day, month to month, and year to year, in simple, hearty dependence upon God who will, most assuredly, in due time, hear and answer the earnest cry of a parent's heart, and crown with His rich blessing the faithful labors of a parent's hands.

And while on this subject of training children we would in true brotherly love offer a suggestion to all Christian parents as to the immense importance of inculcating a spirit of implicit obedience. Are we then to be continually chucking the reins and brandishing the rod? By no means. This would be to break the spirit of the child instead of subduing his will. Where parental authority is thoroughly established, the reins may lie gently on the neck, and the rod may be allowed to stand in the corner. There is no need whatever to be continually hawking our authority. There is a quiet dignity about one who really possesses authority; whereas the spasmodic efforts of weakness only draw out contempt.

4. We shall close with the briefest possible reference to the enemy's fourth and last objection which is embodied in the words, "And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Loam; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you." He would

let them go, but without resources to serve the Lord. If he could not keep them in Egypt, he would send them away crippled and shorn. Such is the enemy's last demurrer.

But mark the noble reply of a devoted heart. It is morally grand. "And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the LORD our God; and" (ponder these suggestive words) "we know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither."

We must be fully and clearly on God's ground and at His standpoint before ever we can form any true idea of the nature and extent of His claims. It is utterly impossible while surrounded by a worldly atmosphere and governed by a worldly spirit, worldly principles, and worldly objects, to have any just sense of what is due to God. We must stand on the lofty ground of accomplished redemption, apart from this present evil world, ere we can properly serve Christ.

Moses, the man of God, meets all Satan's objections by a simple but decided adherence to Jehovah's demand, "Let My people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness."

This is the true principle, the true method, the true course, at all times and under all circumstances. The divine standard must be maintained in all its integrity, at all cost, and in spite of all objections. If the standard be lowered the breadth of a hair, the enemy gains his point, and Christian service and testimony are wholly out of the question.

John 11 and 12

These chapters show us in what different channels the Lord's thoughts flowed, from those of the heart of man. His ideas, so to speak, of misery and of happiness, were very different from man's natural thoughts.

Chapter 11 opens with a scene of human misery. The dear family at Bethany are visited with sickness, and the voice of health and thanksgiving in their dwelling has to yield to mourning, lamentation, and woe. But He, who of all had the largest and tenderest sympathies, is the calmest among them, for He carried with Him that foresight of resurrection which made Him overlook the chamber of sickness and the grave of death.

When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He abode two days longer in the place where He was. But when that sickness ends in death, He begins His journey in the full and bright prospect of resurrection. And this makes His journey steady and undisturbed. As He approaches the scene of sorrow, His action is still the same. He replies again and again to the passion of Martha's soul from that place where the knowledge of 'a power that was beyond that of death had, in all serenity, seated Him. And though He still has to move onward there is no haste; for on Mary's arrival He is still in the same place where Martha had met Him. And the issue, as I need not say, comes in due season to vindicate this stillness of His heart and this apparent tardiness of His journey.

Thus it was with Jesus here. The path of Jesus was His own. When man was bowed down in sorrow at the thought of death, He was lifted up hi' the sunshine of resurrection.

But the sense of resurrection, though it gave this peculiar current to the thoughts of Jesus, left His heart still alive to the sorrows of others: For His was not indifference but elevation. And such is the way of faith always. Jesus weeps with the weeping of Mary and her company. His whole soul was in the sunshine of those deathless regions which lay far away from the tomb of Bethany; but it could visit the valley of tears, and weep there with those that wept.

But again: When man was lifted up in the expectation of something good and brilliant in the earth, His soul was full of the holy certainty that death awaits all here, however promising or pleasurable, and that honor and prosperity must be hoped for only in other and higher regions. Chapter 12 shows us this.

When they heard of the raising of Lazarus, many people flocked together from Bethany to Jerusalem and at once hailed Him as the King of Israel. They would fain go up with Him to the feast of tabernacles, and antedate the age of glory, seating Him in the honors and joys of the kingdom. The Greeks also took their place with Israel in such an hour. Through Philip, as taking hold of the skirt of a Jew (Zech. 8), they would see Jesus, and worship. But in the midst of all this, Jesus Himself sits solitary. He knows that earth is not the place for all this festivation and keeping of holy day. His spirit muses on death, while their thoughts were full of a kingdom with its attendant honors and pleasures. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."

Such was the peculiar path of the spirit of Jesus. RESURRECTION was everything to Him. It was His relief amid the sorrows of life, and His object amid the promises and prospects of the world. It gave His soul a calm sunshine when dark and heavy clouds had gathered over Bethany. It moderated and separated His affections when the brilliant glare of a festive day was lighting up the way from thence to Jerusalem. The thought of it sanctified His mind equally amid griefs and enjoyments around Him. Resurrection was everything to Him! It made Him a perfect pattern of that fine principle of the Spirit of God: "And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not." 1 Cor. 7:30.

O for a little more of the same mind in us, beloved! a little more of this elevation above the passing conditions and circumstances of life.

Laodicea and Its End

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth." Rev. 3:15, 16.

The condition depicted here, and which brings unconditional judgment, is that of the hollow profession of Christ's name and service without there being anything really from Him or for Him. Benevolence and service to man-works of this kind there are plenty, done too in His name, and with the claim of being the Church of God, but really without there being anything that is for God's glory.

Thus indifference to God's claims, honor, and truth, with no sense of Christ's love or attachment to Him, characterize the last phase of the professing church. It is Latitudinarianism of the worst kind, where what is held and taught is no matter so long as people are religious, moral, respectable, and where ritualism, evangelicalism, and rationalism are peaceably combined to form the Church-not Jews or heathens, but Christians by profession. He abhors such a state. It is like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold; He will spew it out of His mouth as nauseous to Him-a thing not worth special judgment at His hand. Even the bold and blasphemous Jezebel in Thyatira was more tolerable to Him; He would judge her.

With this utter indifference to Christ and His claims, though with the empty profession of devotedness to Him and His service, there is much pretension and ostentatious parade of resources and competency in themselves that have not Him for their source. Therefore He says, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Worldly possessions, human righteousness, and human wisdom and knowledge are possessed in abundance, with no sense of need of any kind, but nothing properly Christian, nothing of the new creation, nothing suited to God, nothing that will stand the test of divine judgment or last for eternity; hence He addresses them in terms that apply only to the unconverted and unsaved. "Wretched, and miserable, and poor," they needed divine righteousness, that which can stand the fire of divine trial, that which Christ Himself is, who was made sin "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." For this, "gold tried in the fire," they must come to Him, and for it they might well exchange some of their boasted wealth so as to be "rich toward God." He says, "buy of Me," for the very first principle of the gospel is unknown to them, and He takes them on their own ground, like the foolish virgins of Matt. 25 who go to "buy" and return to find the door of grace closed.

"Naked" in God's sight, whatever they were in their own, they required "white raiment," and for this too they must come to Him who alone could communicate to them a life which, in its expression of

living and practical righteousness flowing out of His being in them, should so clothe them that, manifested as those that "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," the "shame" of their "nakedness" should not appear.

"Blind," they stood in need of "eyesalve" that no mere human apothecary could supply, and from Himself alone could they get that "unction of the Holy One," the teaching of the Holy Ghost which would give them divine intelligence, for as yet they saw nothing that was of God in a new creation, and required to be born again even to "see the kingdom of God," not to speak of entering into it and having part with Him there.

Such generally is the internal state of those who compose the church of Laodicea. In the main, they are Christless souls. Still, He lingers over them in grace, while an already pronounced judgment waits its accomplishment. Most solemn moment in the Church's history! - mercy's last pause before all is over.

[To the few who had life He says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." He does not address the whole, but offers individual communion to those who would open

to Him.]

Law and Grace: a Contrast

It is important to see that there were two distinct occasions in which we find tables of stone, according to God's command, committed, though in a different way, to man. On the first occasion, as we know, there was total ruin; and when God uttered His commands then, afterward written down, there was no shining of the face whatever; there was no Moses transfigured by the power of glory. Law, pure and simple, never made the face of man to shine; it is not the intention of law, nor is it the result of law. Law, simply as such, is characterized by darkness and tempest, by thunder and lightning, by the voice of God dealing with the guilty-more tremendous than all together. And so it was on the first occasion when the law was announced by God Himself, and the tables were broken (before ever they reached man) by the indignant lawgiver.

On the second occasion, what a difference! The lawgiver was called into the presence of God, who thereon was pleased to give a mingling of mercy along with law. There was a covenant expressly made of this combined composite character. It was not law alone, and not grace alone, but rather the mingling of grace along with law. For it would have been perfectly impossible for God to have carried on dealings with Israel, or to have brought them even into the land, unless there had been this mingling of grace and mercy with law. Consequently, on this occasion the law was still committed to man; but it was shut up in the ark, not displayed with all its terrors before the eyes of men; it was enclosed, as we know, in the testimony.

Now, there are many even of God's children who think that such is exactly the tenor of the dealings of God with us now; that is, law and grace mingled - grace hindering the action of law - the law bringing us in guilty, but grace interposing to screen the guilty according to the words we read in the early part of Exod. 34 There Jehovah proclaims Himself in the character of lawgiver, though He declares His long-suffering and mercy, as it is said: "The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." But it is also added: "And that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." Now, you will observe that while such is the principle of God's dealings - that it is not law alone, nor grace alone, but the two together - while this is the case, whenever the mediator comes forward to speak to the people, he has to put a veil upon his face. When he goes into the presence of God, the veil is taken off; in glory, in the presence of glory, there is no veil. But as long as man had to do with the law, even though there was mercy and grace mingled with it, the veil must be put on when he spoke with the people.

Now, the remarkable thing that I would call your attention to is this, that our position is in contrast with both. Our position is neither having to do with law alone, nor with law mingled with grace; we are in the presence of grace and glory without law at all. This is precisely what the Apostle shows in 2 Cor. 3 Here he does not refer to the contrast of Exod. 19 or 20, but solely to the occasion of mingled law and grace in Exod. 34; and he lets us see that the ministration on that day was one of death and condemnation. The reason is this: that if the law enters at all, if I have to do with it as

that which governs me, and under which I am, the more mercy that is shown, the more guilty am I, and He will by no means clear the guilty.

Now, that all-condemning character did not come out while God was dealing with men before Christ; but when Christ came, God stood to His principles with the utmost nicety and all His authority. The reason is, that there was One come who could solve all difficulties, meet all need, and deliver from all distress and danger. It was because the Son of God was now become the Son of man, and the Son of man was willing to suffer on the cross, not yet about to administer the glory.

Hence it is that our position is put in distinct and positive contrast. The Apostle says: "If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." 2 Cor. 3:7-9. He does not put us in the place of the children of Israel, but takes care to show that it is after the type of Moses' drawing near into the presence of God, where he takes off the veil. This is the sign of our position now, and not the children of Israel. In short, it is not the man veiled, and the children of Israel afraid of him because of the glory of his countenance, which they could not look upon, but the man unveiled in the presence of God, when he turns, not to the people with a veil upon his face, but to God in glory without the veil.

Such is our position now; such the position of all Christians, if they only knew it. This comes out fully in the last verse. He says, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." "We all" is in contrast with the one man, Moses. The position of the Christian is typified by Moses in the presence of God, and not by the children of Israel in the presence of Moses veiled. "We all"; for God makes not the smallest difference in this respect; the weakest Christian has exactly the same position before God. Whenever it is a question of position, of simple effect or result of what the Lord Jesus has accomplished and given to us by grace, there is no difference whatever. When it is a question of spiritual power, there is a difference and all possible room for variety. Just as in the first Adam there is no difference in the general fact that all have sinned, yet, when you come to look at the extent to which people have gone in sin, there are degrees of difference.

Precisely so with the second Man, the Last Adam. He has brought all who belong to Him now into this common place of blessing. We all with open, or unveiled, face (for this is the true force of it) be-

holding as in a glass the glory of the Lord. This was what Moses saw, and only Moses, and he merely for a moment, whereas it is our constant position. A Christian, all the time he is here below, is, as far as the work of Christ is concerned, one entitled to draw near to God, to look up into the glory, and to be there himself; the veil gone, Christ without a veil. There was a veil, but it is rent. Now there is none - none on the heart of the believer - none on the face of Christ, or ours. It is completely gone. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

What the Holy Ghost now ministers to us is not merely a Savior who came down into our woe and misery to bear our iniquities and sins, but that same Savior after the work of grace is done, when He is gone up as the witness of its perfection into the presence of God; and we are invited by the Holy Ghost to keep our eye fixed upon Him there, glorified according to the excellency of redemption. That will not make His grace in coming down here to be less precious; nor will it make redemption to be less prized, but much more. It will also imprint a heavenly character upon all our ways; and this, nothing less, is our place. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly," and, "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Then it will be perfect; now it is only partial, and according to the measure in which self is judged.

What hinders the practical effect, the heavenly power being reflected from us, is the unjudged activity of our nature. Do we not know it? When is it we do wrong? when is it we form mistaken judgments, and become careless and worldly? Just in proportion as our eye is off Christ as He is now in glory. I grant you that Christ anywhere before the soul is a preserving means. Nevertheless, there is no such power for overcoming the seductions of the world, and that which looks fair and religious in the world; nothing will do it thoroughly but Christ in glory. As far as leading out our souls in love and devotedness is concerned, Christ here below will do it.

But Christ in glory puts out the light of earth's best religion and makes it appear pale and tawdry by the side of its surpassing brightness. We are invited, we are called upon as Christians, to behold Him in that glory continually now. The Lord give us so to walk, and we shall find the fruit of it, "changed into the same image from glory to glory."

One word more. There is nothing so dangerous as to trifle with the truth; nothing more ruinous than for men to use the brightest truth, and to be careless about the matters of everyday life. I beseech of you to remember this. There is something even of a disgusting character about it when we fail in ordinary duties and yet are at the same time talking about resurrection and glory - life and all the special blessedness of the Christian position. I beseech you, my brethren and sisters, especially those of you who are young (though indeed it is a snare for old as well as young), think seriously of this. It is the natural snare of those who are accustomed to an atmosphere of truth, where the words of God are, so to speak, the common household bread. None are in such danger; but it is a danger because the eye and heart are not on Jesus. There will be power where there is simplicity with self-judgment; nowhere else.

Living by Faith

"The just shall live by faith." This weighty statement occurs in the second chapter of the prophet Habakkuk; and it is quoted by an apostle in three of his inspired epistles; namely, Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, with a distinct application in each. In Rom. 1:17, it is applied to the great question of righteousness. The blessed Apostle declares himself not ashamed of the gospel, "For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith [or, on the principle of faith, to faith]: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

In the third of Galatians, where the Apostle is seeking to recall those erring assemblies to the foundation of Christianity, he says, "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."

Finally, in the tenth of Hebrews, where the object is to exhort believers to hold fast their confidence, we read: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which bath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith." Here we have faith presented not only as the ground of righteousness, but as the vital principle by which we are to live, day by day, from the starting-post to the goal of the Christian course. There is no other way of righteousness - no other way of living - but by faith. It is by faith we are justified and by faith we live. By faith we stand and by faith we walk.

The life of faith embraces all that in anywise concerns us in body, soul, and spirit. To live by faith is to walk with God; to cling to Him; to lean on Him; to draw from His exhaustless springs; to find all our resources in Him; and to have Him as a perfect covering for our eyes, and a satisfying object for our hearts; to know Him as our only resource in all difficulties and all trials. It is to be absolutely, completely, and continually shut up to Him - to be undividedly dependent upon Him, apart from and above every creature confidence, every human hope, and every earthly expectation.

The Love of God

If an angel from heaven were to come to my bedside and tell me that Christ was occupied with me, as a member of His body, should I be more certain of His love than I am? It is no delusion but a fact that Christ loves me, and will love me right on to the end; and He will not cease making me know it till He gets me into the Father's house to be eternally in the full fruition of it.

Made All Things to All: Self-Denial

It is important and very needful to observe that when the Apostle declares that he was "made all things to all," it was entirely a matter of self-denial, and not of self-indulgence. He neither indulged himself, nor surrendered a single iota of the truth of God, but made himself servant to all for their good and God's glory. This is our model. May the Lord endow us with grace to imitate it. We are called to surrender, not only our points and angles, prejudices and predilections, but also our personal rights for the profit of others. This is the Christian's daily business.

Man Inherits the Earth — Life Magazine: the Editor's Column

In last month's review of LIFE magazine's article, "Man Inherits the Earth," we left two points untouched which we feel require a few words. One was the composite array of pictures, and the other was its reference to man's language.

The bold, imaginative drawings of the artists which purport to depict various scenes in the upward steps of man's evolution, but which are pure invention to help support an unproved hypothesis, are placed side by side with actual photographs of the Aborigines of Australia. Whether it was intentional or not, this tends to confuse the issue and to make it appear that the line of evolutionary development has been traced on through to the Aborigine of today. Such a deduction, however, is wholly unwarranted. The Aborigines are not proof of evolution; they are human beings in every respect like the rest of the human race, and they are capable of adopting the ways of modern civilization. That they have lived in a primitive fashion is undeniable, but to assume that it is a carry-over of a previous bestial condition is gratuitous indeed.

The reviewed article, without any thought of commending Scripture, says that all mankind alive today sprang from one single species. This is very truth, for the Word of God shows that Adam and Eve were the parents of all mankind, and it also affirms that God "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Acts 17:26. How simple and understandable it all is to one who has faith in God! But God has said that the carnal, or natural, mind of man is at enmity with Him (Rom. 8:7), and the most brilliant mind apart from the submission of faith will ever reason against God and His revelation. But man also has a conscience, and that tells him he is a sinner and will have to meet his Creator and stand trial; much of the effort put forth to discredit the Bible is an attempt to stifle the conscience.

The reference to man's language was this "As man's brain expanded, so did his power of speech, evolving gradually into the complex system of language by which he communicates today." Now this is in direct opposition to the Word of God. Adam was created fully equipped with the power of speech and with a vocabulary to express and receive thoughts. He did not evolve a system of language. It was a part of his endowment.

Adam's creation was altogether unique. He was not created after the manner of the various beasts, fowls, or fishes. When it came to creating the man to rule the earth, God, as it were, took counsel with Himself: "And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." He was to be God's image, or representative, on earth, and have His moral likeness. What a high dignity! Was this crowning work of creation to be left to grovel his way up to the plane on which man stands today? No, indeed. He was a perfect creature and doubtless far superior to what man is today after thousands of years of sin and depravity have taken their toll.

To Adam, as head of the creation, God brought "every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air," to have him name them, and whatsoever he named them was their official designation. Fresh from the hand of his Creator he was endowed not only with language, but with perception of the

character of each being, so that he could intelligently name it. How few today could even list the names of all the beasts and birds.

The second article in the series of "The Epic of Man" was entitled, "The Dawn of Religion." It likewise is dramatically illustrated with pictures conjured up and joined with real pictures of the aborigines of Australia.

The gist of the article is that man had to grope his way for some suitable form of religion to satisfy his religious instincts, and that here again we find the evolutionary process of development at work from crude and base forms to more refined and highly developed religion. This is at complete variance with the Word of God.

Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden had a perfect religion, if we may be permitted to speak of it as religion. There was no need for any spiritual development with them; they recognized their relationship to their Creator and were in happy converse with Him. There was no sin to mar this relationship.

But that man might know his creature place of subjection to his Creator, God placed one, and only one, restriction upon him. This left the entrance of sin a distinct possibility, though by no means a necessity; but without this freedom of choice he would have been a mere automaton, incapable of rendering due intelligent obedience. Alas, sin soon entered, and man fell, spirit, soul, and body. He became estranged from God in his spirit, and in principle became His enemy; his soul, or his moral and natural appetite, was corrupted; his body became subject to death and disease.

Man driven out of the Garden of Eden was left to himself, and became utterly lawless. The divine record is that the earth became filled with corruption and violence; in fact, it became so bad that God cleansed it by the flood which destroyed man and his works. This is not the story of progress and development, but of retrogression and the increasing fruit of sin.

Rom. 1 unlocks the secrets of those past ages when man sank further and further in moral and spiritual depravity. Fallen man was not left without a due witness from his Creator, "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in [or, to] them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." vv. 19, 20.

God judges man according to the measure of his light and privilege, and there was always the testimony of God's creatorial power to be seen in His works - "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." This is found in the 19th Psalm where the palmist goes on to add that these created orbs had neither speech nor language, but without these their voice was heard by men. This left them "without excuse," for they ignored the testimony of God in creation., which 20th century scientists are also wont to do.

Rom. 1:21 adds, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful." After the flood every man on earth had a definite knowledge of God; all that came out of the ark knew in a most remarkable fashion the power and judgment of God. This knowledge became traditional and was handed down from father to son; but, alas, they were not thankful to

God. Has this no counterpart in the present day? How few there are that ever thank God for His creature mercies, or even lift their voices to Him in thanksgiving for the very food they eat. This is indeed a step downward.

Next, they "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." v. 21. Were they the only ones who let their imaginations run rampant? Is it not being done today, often under the guise of science? And "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." v. 22. The vain conceit of man has always led sooner or later to the exposing of his folly.

Man, having given up the knowledge of the true God, invented gods of his own - gods of lust and passion. The unearthed evidences of crude and vulgar forms of religion only confirm the divine record, instead of proving an evolution in religion. A servant of the Lord once said, "Man gave up the knowledge that God was holy, and made gods of his lusts; he gave up the knowledge that God was good, and attempted to appease an angry God."

The degenerative process continued, for in a descending scale man went from the worship of images of fallen men to the worship of reptiles; he "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and creeping things." v. 23. The finger of Satan is here apparent, for he it was who took the form of a serpent when he seduced Eve. He was leading men down from the worship of God to actual, though often disguised, worship of himself. Men worshiped idols, but behind them were wicked spirits - "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils [demons], and not to God." 1 Cor. 10:20.

In this corruption of religion lies the secret to the grossest immorality, and the general debasement of mankind. They willfully gave up the knowledge of the true God when they had it, and gave themselves over to become the tools of wicked spirits. Even as the LIFE article recognizes, men were seeking to communicate with the spirit world, and to gain the favor of certain evil spirits; but, alas, they were taken captive by satanic powers. Debased spiritually and morally, they sank ever lower in their manner of life.

After men had given up the knowledge of God and, insofar as they could, degraded the glory of the incorruptible God, He in His righteous government gave them up to uncleanness. Three times in Rom. 1 we read that God gave them up: "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections....And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." vv. 24-28.

Need we wonder that man lost the sense of propriety of wearing clothes and living in a civilized fashion? Take a man of this great 20th century and give him over to demonolatry, drug addiction, and associated vices, and see what he becomes in a single generation.

Consider the great, favored nation of Israel whom God brought out of Egypt with great demonstrations of His goodness and might; what happened to them when they turned from the only true God to Egyptian idolatry by worshipping

the golden calf? They "corrupted themselves." When Moses came down from the mount with the tables of stone, he "saw that the people were naked, (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies)." Exod. 32:25. They evidently adopted some of the heathen orgies at once. Think what a thousand or so such years would do to any people.

God had to warn His earthly people over and over against following the ways of the heathen, and when they departed from Him they indulged in such hideous and forbidden practices as offering their own children in sacrifices to idols, behind which were demons.

The Aborigines today still make grotesque markings on themselves; were not the children of Israel warned against adopting those heathen practices before they ever came into the land of Canaan? (See Lev. 19:28 and Deut. 14:1.)

The smug reassuring way that some of the quoted anthropologists speak would be amusing if it were not so tragic; such as, "That their [the Aborigines'] religion has its roots in the depths of prehistory cannot be questioned.

And that a similar, if less complex, form of belief prevailed among Paleolithic men 100,000 years ago is also an indubitable fact." Now compare these comments with the following: the town clerk said, "Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly." Acts 19:35, 36. Get at words, confidently spoken, do not always indicate either that the things spoken are facts, or that they are unquestionable. Yea, "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

That the world has advanced, and that much of it has given up the grosser forms connected with religion, is true, but it is in no small part due to the light of God that shone from His truth as revealed in Israel and later in Christianity, although obscured through their respective failures. Men dare not do in the light what they would avidly do in the dark. But the light of God is being again extinguished in much of the world through the advances of atheistic communism, and through plain and outright rejection of divine revelation, as was so brazenly done in the LIFE magazine. Let the world be assured that "God is not mocked" (Gal. 6:7), and that this enlightened Western civilization is going to be given up by God to receive the devil's lie in a day not far distant. "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth." 2 Thess. 2:10, 11. God gave up the heathen world, He gave up Israel after they rejected their Messiah (Mic. 5:3), and will just as surely give up the people of this land to gross darkness and all the results of it.

Dear young Christian, remember that if any "speak not according to this word [the Word of God], it is because there is no light in them." Isa. 8:20. It is not that they have a little light, but none at all. Remember too that "Every word of God is pure." Pro. 30:5. It is living and operative, and it pierces the inmost recesses of the heart, laying bare all its counsels (Heb. 4:12, 13). Its entrance gives light and understanding to those who in simple faith accept it as it is in truth - THE WORD OF GOD (Psalm 119:130). It is that by which we may cleanse our ways (Psalm 119:9). All of it is inspired by God, "and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect [or, complete], thoroughly furnished unto all

good works." 2 Tim. 3:16, 17. Take your stand unflinchingly on it, heedless of the scoffs and jeers of the ungodly, and you will never be put to shame now or in the time to come. That Word will abide for eternity - "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away." Mark 13:31.

A Mariner

How much the Christian resembles the mariner in this wide expanse of ocean! All his bearings have to be taken from the heavens. Earth is out of sight, and there is no beaten path for him in the sea, so the mariner is entirely dependent on seeing the position of the heavenly bodies - mainly, the sun. So the Christian - the things of earth cannot guide him - he takes his bearings here entirely from Christ's position there, and steers his course accordingly. He cannot go on as though Christ were not rejected here, and yet he goes forward fearlessly because Christ who died for him has been received up into glory, and lives for him at the Father's right hand. So he keeps the world at his back, and a glorified Savior before him.

Alas! how many have made shipwreck because they have not so steered; many have even gone on without taking their bearings at all. Happy for us when it can be said, The Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. Nothing to becloud our vision, or to distort our judgments by grieving the Spirit of God.

The Middle East and Russia: the Editor's Column

The recent mission of the United Nations' Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold to the Middle East brought an easing of surface tensions between Israel and her Arab neighbors, but did little to relieve the underlying basic trouble. He secured new cease-fire agreements which are hedged with reservation clauses on the right of self-defense; they are not likely to be kept any better than such previous agreements. The old animosities remain unchanged, and the Arab world is growing stronger and bolder.

Colossians Gamal Abdel Nasser, dictator of Egypt, is evidently bent on developing an Arab empire, of which Egypt would be the head. He is raising trouble in North Africa by inciting the Arabs against the Western Powers, and has linked up with Saudi Arabia in an effort to force the British out of Aden at the mouth of the Red Sea. If he can accomplish this he will be in a position to blockade the Red Sea as he now does the Suez Canal.

This modern Pharaoh finds that it is quite popular with his people to raise a cry against the little nation of Israel. He combines Nationalism and Mohammedanism into an effective appeal to the masses, and this in turn tends to distract them from their own internal condition, for most of them live in abject poverty.

The Middle East is of great and fast-growing importance in world affairs; it has become the great focal point of world tension. And in the center is the nation of Israel, an island of people with Western culture and connections in the midst of an Eastern Islamic sea, cut off from economic contacts with her land neighbors, and limited to a sea and air lifeline with the West.

There are many factors at work to focus attention on the Middle East, but let us not forget that the land of Israel is THE place where God's eyes rest (Deut. 11:12), and that it is to that area that He intends to gather the nations in the days of His wrath (Zech. 14:2).

The great international struggle and intrigue revolving about the Middle East now is basically concerned with oil -that vital fluid of modern economy and warfare-for the Arabian and Persian Gulf areas contain 70 per cent of the free world's known reserves. Whichever side controls these will have the upper hand in diplomacy and warfare.

For generations Great Britain exercised dominant control in the whole Middle East, and it has been a vital link with her world-wide empire; but after having given up Egypt and the Suez, and being driven from Jordan, she now has but toe holds in the area, some of which are in danger at present.

After British withdrawal from strategic bases, Russia stepped into the vacuum. She has made great progress in wooing Arab leaders and is fast displacing Western influence in Egypt. The Soviet bloc has not only sent large quantities of arms to Egypt, but has sent technical and military advisers and economic missions. From henceforth Russian influence is to be reckoned with in the Middle East. All of this seems to augur ill for Israel, but God is working out His own designs. He has said, "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the

end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." Isa. 46:9, 10.

Leaders of Egypt and Saudi Arabia hopefully speak of an ultimate Moslem empire composed of 400 million people. The Moslem world is definitely coming into its own, but we know from Scripture the limitations to its power and leadership. Egypt expects to head up an Arab confederacy, but all that Scripture allows is that Egypt will be a strong power at the end, called "the king of the south" (Dan. 11:40), which will make an incursion into Palestine against the antichrist (the apostate Jew who will lead the mass of the returned Jews and join hands with the beast of the Roman Empire) at the end of the time of "Jacob's trouble."

The greater power in the Arab world will be one lying north, rather than south, of Palestine. The Assyrian of old was the prototype of this future Northern enemy of Israel (see Isa. 30 and 31), and the leader of this confederacy is described in Dan. 8:23, 24 as a "king of fierce countenance," who shall be mighty, "but not by his own power." This may indicate no more than the support of the surrounding Arab and Moslem peoples, but it may also refer to aid rendered by Russia. At any rate, Russia has shown her willingness to strengthen the Middle Eastern nations to the disadvantage of the Western Powers and of Israel, for Israel and the West will be in league during the period of the tribulation (Dan. 9:27).

Which of the Arab nations north of Palestine will assume dominance, or who the "king of fierce countenance" will be, does not yet appear, but he could appear quickly out of the present agitation. Only a few years ago no one could have foreseen the fast rise of Egypt to a place of international importance. Syria has long aspired to Arab league leadership and may easily be the future leader's home country. Psalm 83 gives a list of the confederate peoples of the Northern enemy of Israel.

Whoever the man is, his end is determined and his doom sure, for he, like the head of the Roman Empire, "shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand."

Dan. 8:25. And though Russia may supply his implements of war, "he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." Dan. 11:45. All the might of the Soviet bloc will avail him nothing when he opposes the "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Isa. 30:33 should read, "For Tophet is prepared of old, for the king also it is prepared: He hath made it deep and large; its pile is fire and much wood; the breath of Jehovah, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." It is prepared for the "Assyrian," this king of "fierce countenance," this "king of the north," and also prepared for "the king," a title given to the antichrist -the apostate Jewish leader of that day. This gives us to see that the Northern confederacy head will actually oppose Christ and be cast into the lake of fire, as will the beast of the Roman Empire, and the Jewish king (Rev. 19:20).

Some of our readers may wonder why we should take such notice of the heavings and tossings of the nations, but with the anointed eye we can discern these times. They are the sure forerunner of the days of trouble and of the coming of the Son of man to execute judgment on His enemies.

Everything is shaping fast for the end - Israel, Egypt, the Moslem world, the Western world, Russia and her satellites are all taking their places according to the prophetic word. Soon our Lord and Savior will call us home to be with Himself, and then the things below will ripen for the harvest almost over night.

We may well wonder why there is any delay when so many things are apparently ready for the end; but we see how God is allowing certain checks and balances to operate while He holds the reins and holds all back until the exact moment of His choosing. May we not only wait for Him, but be wide awake, actually expecting that He may come TODAY. Every moment brings us closer to the hour of our seeing the blessed One who loves us, who died for us, and who will delight to have us with Himself for all eternity. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20.

Nineveh's Repentance

"The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here." Luke 11:32.

Such is the testimony of the Lord Jesus to the effect of the short sermon of the unwilling preacher. "They repented at the preaching of Jonas." If we turn to this sermon and mark its effects, we shall see what repentance is, and how faith did and must precede it. (Read Jonah 3.)

Jonah was sent by the Lord the second time, saying, "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." Mark, it was not to be a sermon of his own composing, or the suggestion of his own thoughts, but, "Preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." Oh, what different sermons there would be in this day if the preacher's ear were opened to hear that voice saying, "Preach... the preaching that I bid thee." Many a preacher would rise up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord; most unwilling would some be to declare the coming judgments on this ungodly world.

"So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD." "And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said." Now let us listen to Jonah's sermon. "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." What a sermon! The English translation is in eight words. Not a word about repentance. Not a hope of mercy, or forgiveness, or sparing. This is the whole sermon: The message of Jehovah was of coming judgment, speedy overthrow. And the testimony of the Lord Jesus is, "They repented at the preaching of Jonas." But did they repent first, and then believe? or believe first, and this produce repentance? The answer could not be clearer or more decisive. The immediate effect of this sermon of eight words on the scores of thousands of the people of Nineveh was this: "So the people of Nineveh BELIEVED GOD, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them."

How could they have done this if they had not believed God? Would they have proclaimed a fast? No; they would have treated Jonah as a lying imposter. It does not say they believed Jonah, but they believed God. They believed God, and repented at the preaching of Jonah.

"For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose: from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes." Yes, the sure effect of the word is to bring man from his throne. Blessed effect of faith in God - to break one to pieces.

We will now look at the second step, as brought out in this scripture. "And he laid his robe from him." If any man had a robe worth keeping, Saul of Tarsus was the man. He says, "And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. 3:9. Have you laid your robe, your righteousness, every hope of being able to stand righteous before God by works of law, from you? This is not all.

The third step recorded is this: "and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes." This is deep, deep work in the soul. "What an expression of self-aborrence! Have y o u taken this place? The whole old man covered with sackcloth. This is not merely sorrow for sins we have committed. Repentance in Job's case was exactly the same. He did not say, I hate the sin I have committed; surely we should do this. But he said, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42:5, 6. God must be known and believed, to produce this self-aborrence. When God is thus known, instead of my own fancied righteousness, it is sackcloth and ashes.

We will now notice the fourth step. "And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything: let them not feed, nor drink water." Most assuredly a mere assent to the truths of the gospel is not the repentance of the Scriptures. Has that mighty proclamation been made in every recess of your soul, like the streets of Nineveh, so that your eyes and mouth have been fast closed to everything the world and Satan can present to you? O for a mighty work of the Spirit to bring souls thus before God in brokenness of heart!

And, further, the fifth step. "But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God." Harken to the cry of the awakened jailer, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" These are the inspired marks of repentance.

Neither must we omit the sixth step in the words of the king. "Yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands." Would it have been true repentance in this case, had Nineveh continued to practice the fearful wickedness of an eastern imperial city? Neither is that true repentance in anyone who, while assenting to the truths of the gospel, continues to practice iniquity.

Is it not clear then that if all this could possibly take place before faith and divine life in the soul, then man would save himself? No; they believed God; faith takes hold of God. Nothing could be more striking than the divine order in this scripture. God sends the word, using His poor weak servant. That word comes in mighty power. It brings man from his throne, strips him of his robe, of all self-righteousness - opens his eyes to see his vileness. He abhors himself in sackcloth and ashes. He judges himself according to that word. He fasts; that is, nothing can satisfy his soul until Christ is known in His Person and work. Everything fails; he now cries out mightily to the Lord. He is heard, and this leads to fruits of repentance in a holy life.

What a witness will this repentance at the eight words of Jonah be in the day of judgment! There was no hope of mercy held out, but they believed God, they repented, and now they count on God, they trust God. They say, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away His fierce anger, that we perish not?" Thus it was the goodness of God that led them to repentance. And did God disappoint the trust of the vast multitude of Nineveh? No. "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not." And Jesus says, "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here."

Jonas, an unwilling preacher, came from Palestine to Nineveh, and preached eight words, and scores of thousands believed God, and repented. The Son of God has come from heaven and revealed the whole character of God in righteousness, yet love, of certain and everlasting wrath coming on all who believe not on Him, yet present repentance and forgiveness of sins preached in His name. It is not now, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?" Not a shadow of uncertainty remains. "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Luke 24:47. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31. Jesus has been lifted up on the cross; He has died for our sins. God has raised Him from the dead for our justification. God is pledged in righteousness and love. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

Yes, God is now fully revealed in Christ. With the Scriptures in our hands we can come into His presence and hear the words of Christ. We hear God speaking to us in the Person of His Son. But do not forget, God is now commanding all men to repent. "Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Acts 17:31. Oh, how gracious of God - not merely announcing judgment, as in Jonah's sermon, but now the atoning work is done; God commands all men everywhere to repent.

It is thus the goodness of God leads to repentance. Oh, be not deceived, sin and self must be judged now in the presence of God in grace, or all must be brought out in judgment. Trust not in a false peace - a mere assent to the truth without any exercise of soul as to sin, or any giving up the pleasures of a world which is hastening on to judgment. We fear many souls are thus deceived. They adopt a mere form of godliness, but deny the power.

Notes on the Tabernacle: The Curtains and Coverings

These are described in the next chapter (26). Each color, each number, each part, has its significance; but for the general reader, it may be well not to enter too far into details. Four sets of curtains are mentioned. In our picture we shall see each covering is rolled back in a way to show those that are beneath. The first, or under covering, consisted of ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet. These were coupled together in such a way as to form one curtain, and were called the tabernacle, probably because they were the innermost covering of the tabernacle, and it would be roofless until this covering was put over it. We may gather precious thoughts from the various materials used. The fine linen, "clean and white," mentioned in different parts of Scripture, conveys the thought of spotless purity, and is so used as a symbol. "Blue" speaks of what is heavenly; the symbols used of God are always according to nature; for instance, the earth is carpeted with green, and its many beautiful foliages and deckings are in green; but green is never found among the symbolic colors of Scripture. But if we look into the azure of the vaulted heavens, we find a color that is used to set forth that which is heavenly. "Purple" is the royal color. When Jesus was made a mock king, they put upon Him a purple robe (John 19:2). "Scarlet" speaks of earthly glory (Rev. 17: 3, 4). Also it seems to have been the royal color with the Jews. Matthew, who presents Jesus as "King of the Jews," makes mention of the scarlet robe, when in mockery they bowed the knee before Him. In Jesus we find these glories combined. "In Him is no sin"; He was the only pure and spotless One. He only could say, "I am from above" (heavenly blue); He is coming "King of kings" (purple); He was born "King of the Jews" (scarlet). Thus we have Christ again brought before us. He will come in heavenly power and glory; He will reign over the earth; earthly glory will be His also.

These curtains were to be made with cherubim of cunning work. The cherubim, as we have seen, speak of judgment. Here again, that which belongs to Christ is brought before us, for "The Father... hath committed all judgment unto the Son." John 5:22. When "all nations" shall be gathered together before "the throne of His glory," it is Christ who from that throne shall say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father," and "Depart from Me, ye cursed." (Matt. 25.) And when "the great white throne" is set, and the wicked dead are assembled there, Christ will be the Judge. Condemnation awaits all who will stand before that throne, for the sentence is "according to their works," and according to this judgment none can stand, for "all have sinned." Those who have taken shelter under the blood of the Lamb, will there be seated with Him on His throne. Judgment from God has fallen upon Him who took their place and suffered for their sins, and now they are exempt from the unending sorrow that must come upon those who "will not have this man to reign over" them. (Rev. 20 and Luke 19:14.)

The next covering, which was placed over these curtains, was the "curtains of goats' hair." This covering also points to Christ. It takes all the types and shadows, yes, the whole Scripture, to tell the wonders of that blessed Person; and from God's Word the believer may ever be learning more of Him. But while the Spirit unfolds these "wondrous things" to those who "seek His face," when we shall see Him, with rapturous hearts we shall exclaim, "The half hath not been told." His greatness

and worth far exceed that of any other human being; He is the incomparable One. As we trace His glories and perfections in these remarkable types, as we follow Him in His lowly path on earth, as by faith we gaze upon His face in which the glory of God is now shining, our hearts echo the refrain, "Thou art fairer than the children of men."

In the goats' hair covering, our thoughts are turned to the prophets whose rough garments of hair marked them as such, in their path of separation (Zech. 13:4; Matt. 3:4). The One who is Prophet, Priest, and King may here be seen in His path of complete separation from evil.

The next covering was "rams' skins dyed red." When we remember that the ram was the animal used in connection with the consecration of the priests, and that this consecration was marked by devotedness, we can readily see how this covering would point to the devotedness of Christ to God; and as it was dyed red, it would speak of His devotedness even unto death. No numbers are given with this covering, as with the others, for the devotedness of Christ, in His consecration to God, was without measure. How the perfection of God's Word shines out, as one is able to enter into these details.

The uppermost covering was made of badgers' skins. Its character was such as to resist the elements. It could be seen by those outside, and it presented nothing of beauty to the beholder. Those inside could look up and see the innermost covering in the perfect light that was thrown upon it; and in the dazzling splendor of the reflected gold, its beauties and its glories would fill their vision. How was it as to Christ? Listen to the prophet Isaiah: "When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." The natural heart sees no beauty in Christ, and has no desire for Him. (Here we get those without.) But the heart taught of the Spirit of God (those within) sees ever new and fresh beauties in that glorious One. Even as the light revealed the perfections of those wonderful curtains, so the Spirit of God reveals Christ in His spotless perfection and glory to the soul. "He shall glorify Me." Rain and storm would sometimes beat upon the badgers' skin covering, but would be perfectly resisted by it. So Satan in his dreadful assaults against our blessed Lord was always resisted. There was nothing in Him that responded to the evil one. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." John 14:30.

Not only do these coverings give us a deeper understanding of the fullness of Christ, but they convey also lessons of great importance for the Christian who is left in this world to represent Christ, and whose responsibility it is to follow His steps. If the curtains of fine twined linen bring before us the spotless purity of Christ, the believer should learn that he too must seek to be pure. "Every man that bath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." 1 John 3:3.

If the goats' hair curtains speak of separation from evil in the Servant in whom God finds His delight, the one who would serve Him should see to it that he separates from evil of every kind. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me." John 12:26. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Tim. 2:19.

If the rams' skin curtains speak of the devotedness of Christ in His consecration to God, the life of the Christian should also be characterized by devotedness to Him. Let him heed the exhortation, "That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Rom. 12:1.

If we learn from the badgers' skin covering that Christ resisted "the prince of this world," His followers should be marked as also resisting him; instead of yielding in greater or lesser measure to his alluring power, as too many, alas! do, they should resist him wholly. "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." 1 John 2:14.

Our Need of Dependence

There are many "ifs" in Scripture concerning our walk. What do they mean? Surely they are meant to keep us in constant dependence upon the Lord, in the sense of our own weakness. For example, we read, "If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6, 14). An illustration may help: A mother takes her little child for a walk along a path near the edge of the cliffs, and says, My child, if you let my hand go, you will fall over. Will that mother loosen her hold of her child's hand in such a dangerous place when she speaks thus? Ah, no; but she wants the child to be conscious of its own danger and its own weakness, and so to hold her hand as to cling entirely to her. Thus the Lord holds us by our "right hand" (Psalm 73:23), and wherever He may lead us, whether on the boisterous sea, like Peter, or where the mountains are being rent, which was too much for even faith like Elijah's (1 Kings 19:11), He still holds us, He will not let us go; but He wants us to hold fast to Him, to rely on His all-sufficiency. He may even allow us to begin to sink so that, conscious of our frailty and our nothingness, we may look to Him and carry His Word in our hearts to the end of the journey.

The Parable of the Marriage Supper

"And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding." Observe the character of this parable. It is not God's dealing with natural conscience, nor His looking for fruit as the owner of the vineyard, as in the preceding parables; but it is the King purposing to honor His Son out of the riches of His own house. Clearly the king is not presenting claims; he is giving - he is inviting. His desire is to glorify his beloved son, to have everything worthy of so joyful an occasion as the marriage of his son. He who gives a feast - especially if he be the king- provides everything. The guests are not expected to bring anything, nor is any return looked for. On the contrary, to think of such a thing would be to insult the king- to despise his preparation or his intention. Moreover, the king presents the wedding garments by which the guests are distinguished. If any rich man sought to come in raiment as costly as he could provide, he would only offend the king, just as would a poor man who wished to sit down in rags. There must be nothing which the king does not give - his bounty will richly supply everything.

The king is not merely making a feast for the pleasure of those invited, but the object of their being invited is that his son may be honored. Still, while his chief thought is to show his regard for his son, he would have the guests enter heartily into his joy. He desires that there may be full blessing at his table-happy faces around it-hearts without a care or shade of anxiety, free from every suspicion of his love. Such must be the accompaniments of the marriage supper of the king's son.

How simple and evident is the application of all this in the light of what has gone before. Man has altogether failed. He does not own God's claim or, if he does, he cannot meet it, and must fall into despair. But God has it in purpose, through man, to glorify His Son, and His resources will avail to effect this, notwithstanding man's ruin. It is not within the scope of the parable to show how this apparently insuperable difficulty is overcome consistently with God's holiness; but the fact of His offering such an invitation proves alike His benevolence and the removal of the difficulty.

We have to consider the treatment of the invitation by those to whom it was first sent, and then God's further counsels. One design of the parable is to bring out fully the implacable enmity of the carnal mind against God, in the face of the utmost advances of His love; but this, happily, is not the main design.

God's invitation to the marriage supper of His Son is first given to those who had "the promises"-to those who had received so many proofs of His forgiving love - to those who were called, and professed to be "His own" - to the Jews. "And they would not come." Under such circumstances, we would not be inclined to repeat the offer, but God does repeat it. As before, fresh messengers are sent again to bid them; and to remove all doubts, the preparations are detailed: "Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways." They deliberately despised the invitation of God-they had other and more important things of their own

to attend to. They went, "one to his farm, another to his merchandise." Yet more strange, but awfully conclusive as to man's hatred of the grace of God, when his conscience has not submitted to His righteousness - "The remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them." How far soever the goodness and patience of God extend, the same evil results are met with continually from man.

The counterpart of all this is to be found in "The Acts of the Apostles." The message of the apostles after the crucifixion was, "All things are ready"; nothing remains to be done. Abounding grace offered pardon to those even who had killed the Prince of Life. What estimate was formed of such glad tidings is to be found in

the language of one who, through the grace of God, afterward so fully and so widely proclaimed those very tidings: "Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them off in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." Acts 26:10, 11. As a nation, the Jews heard the gospel only to reject it as they had rejected Him who was the living expression of it. The conduct of individuals may have varied, but in principle it was the same. The evil heart was seen in disowning the claim of God, but more especially in despising His marvelous grace. The carelessness that would make a sinner slight the King's invitation to the feast is precisely the same in kind that would lead him to kill His messengers, or even His Son. Man's "own way" may produce any of these results.

Whether opposition to God's authority is evinced by the neglect, contempt, or rebellion of a nation or of an individual,

His righteous judgments must surely follow, though for a season they may be delayed. So in this instance, "When the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city."

But now we come to a most blessed truth. God has not given up any of the fullness of His love or of His purpose regarding His Son. He must have people around Him, who are happy in being there. His house must be filled to honor His Son's marriage. Fresh guests must be found. "Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests." Here we evidently see the sending out of the invitation to those who were without the privileges and promises of the Jews -to those who had no hope, and who were without God in the world - to the Gentiles. The special characteristic of

God's present action is seen in the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The distinguishing principle is the full outflow of grace-the activity of God's love going out into the world and bringing souls in to partake of the blessings which He Himself has provided. His love goes out in simple grace to find "good or bad" to partake of the goodness of His house. Such is the principle God is acting on in the gospel. It is quite clear that He provides everything. He is not claiming fruit, but ministering blessing.

The effect of rightly understanding that God is glorifying His Son Jesus, is to make us put aside every thought but that. Though we be the most vile and wretched sinners in ourselves (as Paul says, "of whom I am chief"), all anxiety will be taken from our hearts, everything of uneasiness and uncertainty, because of the invitation. It is God's invitation and, for those to whom it is offered, He provides everything that is needed. A poor man, thinking of himself, might say, "Oh, that cannot be for me, a poor man!" or if this doubt were dispelled, "I cannot enter

God's presence-my garments are not fit." In other words, "Can the invitation be for a sinner such as I know myself to be - besides, how can I appear before a holy God?" Thoughts like these may arise in the mind and may continue until confidence is placed in the terms of the invitation, or rather, in Him who gives it. The moment this is simply done, all fear and hesitation will be removed. God's word will be counted on for everything.

But ought not the conscience to be thoroughly set at rest by that which God has done for us? Assuredly; He knows full well our unworthiness, our need, our guilt, and He has fully met them. He has given up His Son, He has sent Him into the place of our sin and misery to bear upon the cross that wrath which was our due; and if, taking the estimate of ourselves which all this implies, we receive, as lost, helpless sinners, God's testimony to the work of Christ for sinners, what room is there for doubt or dread? Christ has tasted death, has taken our place; but God has raised Him from the dead, and has seated Him in power and glory at His own right hand, thus showing the perfect sufficiency of His sacrifice for sin. God has been perfectly glorified in the earth by His own Son, the Man Christ Jesus, and sin has been expiated by the death of the sinless One. These have been done altogether apart from us; therefore God can say, All things are ready - come to the feast.

If we speak one word or have a thought about right to stand in the presence of God, it destroys the whole ground upon which God is acting in fullness of grace. It is quite clear that anyone who allows for a moment the idea that he has to provide his share in the feast, or to compensate for it, can have no sense of the king's honor, or of his own real inability. God does not offer salvation at a price, or for a return. There is no stipulation, no covenant, no vow; but a GIFT is offered which cannot be accented otherwise than as a gift. When it is received as such (and not before) fruit is produced - the fruit of gratitude, issuing in thanksgiving (Heb. 13:15) and life-service (Rom. 12:1).

Any hesitation to accept God's invitation is to cast dishonor to that extent on His power or on His love. The invitation is our sole title and, coming from One who knows it well, it merits our entire confidence. It is for all in "the highways," whether it meets us as beggars or princes, so to speak. The servants "gathered together all as many as they found." No exception was made; none were to be passed by uninvited. The king's command is clear-"As many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage." The only real question for those who hear the gospel invitation is, Has the conscience submitted to the righteousness of God? Is the invitation accepted as one of the purest grace? If so, it is theirs to cast aside all the anxieties that sin occasions, and to enter into the joy of the King in the happy assurance that their place is to sit at His table. Blessing is secure through His sufficiency and His grace.

There is a sad incident which must not be overlooked. "When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." Grace has been

mocked at by this man, for he had not obtained the indispensable wedding robe, doubtless thinking, by foolish comparison, his own good enough. The instruction from this is evident. God has at infinite cost provided for us whose robes are all sin-stained a spotless garment, such as is alone suited to His holy presence; and great indeed is the presumption that, with the pretense of accepting, virtually despises this gracious provision. "And he was speechless." With memory quickened, conscience fully awake, sin seen in its true colors, and the majesty of God apprehended, who shall dare utter a word! Judgment proportionate to guilt shall follow, and heavy surely it will be in the cases of which this is an example. "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

On the other hand, if, acknowledging our guilt and in capacity, we accept that which God vouchsafes to give, our fears will vanish, and our lips will be opened to render to Him the glory, and to rejoice in honoring His Son. Are our hearts thus in the spirit of the wedding? Are our thoughts in unison with those of God regarding Christ? If not, however near to Him we may think ourselves, we have nothing to do with the wedding. The principle of the whole matter is in question - "How camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?"

God's heart is set upon the glory of Christ, and that glory is connected with the joy and blessing of those who have submitted to His righteousness and welcomed the riches of His grace. If our hearts are occupied with the glory of Christ, we shall not be thinking, in one sense, of what we are or of what we were; our thoughts will dwell upon the Blessor and upon the blessedness into which we have been brought.

The Parable of the Two Sons

If all things were not entirely out of course, if every principle of human nature were not astray from God, there would be no need on His part for all the painstaking of which we read in the Gospels -no need for these varied and assiduous efforts to recall people to Himself, which result, after all, in a manner so strange, so sorrowful. We might have supposed, as we sometimes see in the self-willed child on hearing the father's voice of love and entreaty, that instant obedience would be the result of God's bringing to mind the relationship that exists. But no; these constant efforts, this changing of the voice (Gal. 4:20) serve but to show that all sense of relationship between God and man is gone. That voice touches no spring; there is not a chord upon which it can act; the echo of the heart is gone.

In Matt. 21 we read: "When He was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto Him as He was teaching, and said, By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority?" v. 23. God comes into the world to do good, and man demands His authority! Jesus had previously been showing power in healing the blind and lame, and in cleansing the temple, but now He is quietly teaching there; and this entangling question is put by those who find their veil of hypocrisy drawn aside, their authority endangered, their unrighteous gains disturbed by that act wherewith Jesus sought to remove from God's house the reproach of merchandise, and to restore its character as "the house of prayer." The Lord might have replied by appealing to His many miracles, but He had another object in view.

"Jesus answered, and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell Me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; He will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? [for John bore testimony to Jesus]. But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet." That is, He at once, by means of the question which in divine wisdom He puts to them, brings out the real state of their conscience. The embarrassment into which they thought to throw Him falls on themselves. "They answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And He said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

Thus, at the very outset, the Lord puts this great truth before all: the conscience of man is bad in not submitting to the righteousness of God. And such is the case always. Man cannot deny that things come from heaven, but he will not believe. He may bring forth his hard questions, like those of old, but with no real desire after the truth. That which his conscience cannot deny, he will neither allow nor act upon. If pressed to the utmost (look at the extreme case of infidelity), men love darkness rather than light, just as it is said: "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Rom. 1:28.

Having thus put to silence these men, the Lord now proceeds to depict their ways and thoughts in parables which their conscience, already stirred, could not fail to interpret, even when an application was not directly made to them.

"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto Him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him."

In this parable the Lord makes most apparent the difference between formal righteousness and self-will followed by repentance; between the person who goes through the world decently, desiring to make a fair show, and the one who, acting against all the dictates of natural conscience, sins deliberately, but afterward repents.

We see described in the second son the general character of "decent" people. They go on quietly and in outward order, professing to own the will of God, and to serve God; they say, "I go, sir"; but after all, from morning to night, and night to morning, they do their own will, and nothing else.

In the other son there is avowed determination to disobey; just, alas! the description of the thorough willfulness of the human heart. With "I will not," he delights in breaking through all the righteousness of filial relationship; but withal he is conscious of the violation, and afterward owns it with repentance.

There was no regard in the self-righteous Jew, notwithstanding all his profession, for the righteousness of God of which John bore witness, and therefore he believed him not. But the publicans and harlots who had no regard for the ordinances of God or for the commonest morality, on hearing the testimony of John, believed and repented. The Pharisee made clean the outside - owned God in ordinances, but not in heart and conscience. These others openly and outrageously sinned against God, but "repented and went." And their repentance was such as God owns; it consisted not merely in acknowledging acts of sin, but in recognizing Him as the One sinned against; thus it touched the root of all sin. Their condition necessitated this conclusion: that if God spoke, there was nothing they could say, nothing they could do except, indeed, adopt Job's confession, "I am vile," and then lay their hand upon their mouth. Such was their course, while the scribes and Pharisees, seeing it all, remained alike insensible to God's Word and to God's grace in its full operation.

Insensibility to truth when heard is a most hardening thing, and the Lord's caution, "Take heed... how ye hear," needs to be insisted upon again and again. For have we not now in abundance lip profession and routine observance - the "I go, sir," and a certain amount of eye-service - while the heart is cold, the conscience is stifled, and the desires of the heart or of the mind have their sway? There was no greater enemy to the truth - and therefore to Christ - than the Pharisee; and though the name is lost, the type remains in endless variety.

The Parable of the Vineyard

After concluding the parable of the two sons, the Lord passes on to another phase of God's dealings with man characterized specially by responsibility. His language is as strikingly simple and as calm, though, under the guise of a parable, He is foretelling His own rejection and cruel death! "Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it."

We have here not merely the obligations flowing from relationship; that is, men are not left to the light of natural conscience, as in the former case, but God has done something more, through which additional responsibility is incurred. It is He who planted the vineyard - hedged it round about - digged the winepress and built the towers - and then entrusted it to husbandmen. Thus are represented His care and labor, in return for which He looks for fruit. As to general principles, the parable may be applied to all who have heard of Christ and have refused to believe in Him; but, undoubtedly, its primary application is to the Jews, as they must well have understood.

In Isa. 5, the same figure and very similar language are used regarding them; and, as showing that He had taken the greatest possible pains, God there makes this appeal: "What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?" They utterly failed then to meet His just demands; and, in addition, maltreated or killed the prophets who were commissioned to make them. "And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise." After such forbearance, they certainly could expect judgment. They still were the same in heart, as shown by the emphatic words, "Ye are the children of them which killed the prophets." Chap. 23:31.

God had still one resource of which He availed Himself. "Last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son." (Our Lord is represented here as sent for fruit, like the prophets; this was one, though not the ultimate, purpose of His coming to the vineyard.) We all know also how the just expectation of God regarding His Son was met. "When the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." The end of responsibility and of all this patient dealing of God with the Jewish people on that ground was that they were glad of the occasion to kill the Heir in order that they might seize upon the inheritance. "When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" Righteous judgment is so loudly called for, that those who hear the parable can at once pronounce it: "They say unto Him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men."

Here then again, we mark this great principle, that in whatever way God looks for response from man, He finds none. There is such a thing as God's looking for fruit from that which He has planted and nurtured in the world; but there is no fruit to be found from man toward God. The

husbandmen's will was entirely and absolutely wrong. They did not recognize the authority of God in His vineyard. They liked to have it for themselves; and to gratify their desires, they could go to any lengths in unrighteousness. The parable in its most important feature, alas! had its accomplishment; and its perfect truthfulness was but too manifest at the time in the spirit of those who ultimately brought it to pass: "When the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitude, because they took Him for a prophet."

Thus the effect of the ordinances God had given was only to bring out the enmity and hatred of those to whom He had entrusted His vineyard. Man placed in a certain religious position, patiently instructed, and blessed with external advantages, instead of rendering fruit to God, consummates the crowning act of iniquity. Religious man kills the Prince of Life! How solemn a warning for those who would be zealous for God, but who know Him not, because they know not and love not His Son. That religion which has not Christ as foundation and topstone is worse than none at all.

But there are not a few persons of a different spirit who, failing to see the result of this trial of man, are still dealing with God as though He were looking for fruit. They feel that God has given them certain spiritual advantages, opportunities of hearing, and the like, and that therefore they ought to return fruit to Him. And so they ought. But then, although such are not in a condition of soul answerable to that of the husbandmen who killed the heir, they have mistaken, and that altogether, the ground on which God is now dealing. And further, Christ Himself may be only thought of as seeking fruit - only looked at in the same light as the prophets! Where there is honesty and sincerity of heart, and the conscience is touched, deep impressions may result from considering the magnitude of God's love in the gift of His Son, and of that Son's love in coming from heaven to suffer on the cross; yet these vast manifestations of love may be regarded solely as the strongest possible claims *x*, for fruit. Such assuredly they are; but, as the parable shows, and above all its fulfillment proves, claim produces no fruit. Individual experience confirms this too. For one who sees in the love of God only a claim, in the perfection of Christ only a claim, is soon convinced that no adequate return is rendered, and may conclude that there is no hope. Great exercise of soul may thus end in nothing but the sense of deserved condemnation. If God be still dealing with us on the ground of requirement, we must be brought in guilty, and judgment must follow the unsatisfied claim. Thus the love of God in Christ is made a severer and more terrible law than that given by Moses. When this love is put in the place of the law, the more the love is magnified, the greater the guilt in not fulfilling its demands. The more we elevate the claim of God, the more we aggravate our own condemnation.

In such cases, the Word of God has at least not been read or heard unheeded (as, alas! It so often is), though discrimination may have been wanting. The difficulty lies in not seeing that God has abandoned, as useless, the efforts to seek fruit from man. He has tried everything-"Last of all, he sent... his son"; and His cross is conclusive. Man is ungodly; but further, he is "without strength." The next parable (following so significantly that of "the vineyard") tells how fully God has provided for our actual need. The Lord willing, this will be taken up next month.

The Penman of the Apocalypse

In the progress of the book of Revelation, we see John moved by different affections. He trembles in chapter 1:17; he weeps in chapter 5:4; he wonders with great astonishment in chapter 17:6; he loses himself in worshiping delight in chapters 19:10 and 22:8.

That is, he trembles in the presence of the judicial glory of the Son of man; he weeps at the sight of a sealed book which, had it been unsealed, would have told secrets about Jesus; he marvels at the sight of Christendom's apostasy; he loses himself in joy when he hears of the marriage of the Lamb, and when he sees the bride of the Lamb.

What suited affections! what creations of the Holy Ghost in the soul of a saint! He never trembles after the One who was alive tells him not to fear. He that had the keys of death and hades encourages him; and that, surely, is enough for us.

Persevere in Prayer

We should persevere in prayer, but God may keep us waiting. The exercise is very helpful for the soul. There is an encouraging word in Phil. 4 "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." And what then? Does it say, You shall immediately receive what you ask for? No; but "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." This is a most precious word. It presents a character of prayer so blessedly simple. We are encouraged by it to come to God about everything, no matter how small, and that too without raising a question as to whether we have faith. We are to make known our requests to God-though surely He knows them before. He loves to have us come to Him about our little matters, and rest in the happy assurance that He will do what is right and give us what is good; and whether He gives or withholds, His peace shall garrison our hearts and minds.

Positive Redemption

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," is not mere justification from sins, but actual deliverance- entire redemption. Thus in the figure of Israel it was a question between God and Pharaoh-"Let My people go." It is real, positive redemption, not merely a forgiveness, but Christ has brought us out free from all the title Satan can have against us, or power he can have over us, according to the righteousness of God, and for Him. If I buy a slave, he is mine, and no one can have any right over him, and that is true with regard even to our poor bodies; they are to be free from Satan's power; God will have us entirely for Himself by the work of Christ, and that according to His own holy nature and life, and His divine righteousness in judgment. Not even the smallest particle of our dust shall main in Satan's kingdom, and this is why redemption is mentioned last in 1 Cor. 1:30, as it is brought out too in the similitude, as to this; of Israel in Egypt. It is one thing for them to be screened from the destroying angel by the blood on the doorposts in Egypt, and another and very different thing for them to be brought clear out of Egypt by the passage of the Red Sea, thus being entirely delivered from the power of Pharaoh, And more than this, Christ has broken and destroyed all the power of death by which Sa-, tan held us, and taken him captive, whose captives we were, and made us who were Satan's captives, the vessels of God's power and testimony against Satan.

Power of a Lie

When Satan is at work in power among men, the human mind will religiously believe any lie. It will act so as even nature and natural conscience left to themselves would condemn. He that kills you will think that he does God service, was one instance of this; the strong delusion to believe a lie in the latter day is another. The human mind - nature - natural conscience left to itself - could hardly justify Saul's persecution of the Church; it could never justify man's treatment of the Lord's Christ, nor will it attempt to do so when man stands in the light. Passion, lust, prejudice, will go a long way; but Satan will lead, will push, a great deal further.

Prayer and Supplication

Sometimes the Spirit of God may lead us to pray for a certain thing, with the fullest assurance that we shall get it; and He may lead us to wait on God for days or weeks or months or years, in exercise of soul, not getting the answer, but assured that we shall get it. It is not a question of repeating in so many words our desire, but the heart waiting on God for the answer. Then we have that lovely passage in Phil. 4 "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." And what then? You shall get what you asked? Perhaps not. It might not be good for you. But "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." So we can lay down no rule in this matter. There is great largeness and freedom in the way of the Spirit, and great breadth and fullness in Holy Scripture - so unlike our poor narrow thoughts.

Prosperity Is Not the Path of Faith

The Second Book of Samuel sets before us the definite establishment of David in the kingdom, and afterward, the miseries of his house, when prosperity had opened the door to self-will.

The path of faith and its difficulties is that in which we walk with God, and in which we celebrate the triumph which His presence secures to us. A state of prosperity makes it evident how little man is able to enjoy it without its becoming a snare to him. Prosperity not being the path of faith, that is to say, of strength, the evil of the heart comes out in the walk. Compare 2 Sam. 22 (the psalm by which David closes the path of difficulty) with chapter 23, which contains his last words, after his experience of the enjoyment of the prosperity and glory in which faith had placed him.

Thoughts on Psalm 67

There are several most important principles in this brief and beautiful psalm. The first is, that the blessing of the nations is dependent upon the restoration of Israel to divine favor. The remnant cries, "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us; Selah. That Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations." vv. 1, 2. That this is God's order for the blessing of the world, is clear from many scriptures. (See Rom. 11:11-15; Isa. 27:6; etc.) In this day of grace the gospel goes out to Jew and Gentile alike, and "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. 10:13. But there will be no such thing in the present dispensation, during the time of Israel's unbelief, as the conversion of nations. When, however, at the Lord's appearing, the Deliverer comes out of Zion and turns away ungodliness from Jacob, and all Israel shall be saved, blessing will flow out according to our psalm to the ends of the earth; Israel will blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit. Another thing may be observed in connection with this prayer. "God be merciful unto us," they say, "and bless us... that Thy way may be known upon the earth," etc. They desire blessing that their God may be glorified among all nations. This is a very high order of prayer, and cannot but remind the reader of that of the blessed Lord Himself when He said, "Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." We might well be instructed by these perfect models, both bearing the stamp of the same workmanship of the Holy Spirit, whether in the hearts of the remnant or on the lips of our Lord.

The second thing to be pointed out in the psalm is, that the happiness, both of Israel and the Gentiles, in the Millennium, will depend upon Messiah's righteous government. "Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for Thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth." vv. 3, 4. This is in complete contrast with the present time. Now grace reigns through righteousness (Rom. 5:21), and grace is the source of our joy and blessedness (Eph. 2); but then, during the kingdom, while all proceeds from grace, inasmuch as all is based upon the death and resurrection of Christ, it is His righteous reign which will secure and maintain the blessing of the earthly saints, as well as be the theme of their thanksgiving and praise (see Psalm 72).

Last, we learn that the fertility of the earth is bound up with the blessing of Israel and the nations. "Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase," etc. (See Isa. 55:12, 13; Eze. 34:23, 27.) Thus the curse of the ground on account of Adam's sin (Gen. 3) will be abrogated when Christ as the Son of man has all things put under His feet. (Compare Hag. 2:15-19; Amos 9:11-15.) There is even more, for they add, "God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him." It will be a time of universal earthly blessing.

A Question and Its Answer

Answer: There it is Christ's work. That is the condition proper to the Christian. Christ perfectly glorified God on the cross, so I am in a far better place than if I were innocent, for I have all the value of Christ glorifying God (John 13). All that God is, He was perfectly glorified in on the cross. The divine nature in Christ did not screen Him on the cross, but led Him to bear sins. But there is more than sins put away. God was perfectly glorified on the cross (John 17:4).

Redemption and Purchase

"Denying the Lord that bought them." 2 Pet. 2:1. A word on this clause of Holy Scripture may relieve the minds of persons to whom it seems harsh that the Lord had bought false teachers and heretics. You must distinguish between being bought and being redeemed. It is never taught in Scripture that the Lord redeemed a heretic, or any other man that was not saved. There is not a syllable in God's Word that enfeebles the certainty of eternal life for the believer; but it is nonetheless clearly taught there that the Lord has "bought" every man whatever, saved or not - believer or not. The result for man has nothing to do with the Lord's purchase. He has bought the world and everything that belongs to it. This is the doctrine everywhere, whether in parable or in doctrine, whether in gospel or epistle; and this is the constant statement of the Spirit. Of course, therefore, these bad people were bought as well as the rest.

But redemption is another thought and, so far from purchase being the same as redemption, the two things are decidedly in contrast. The object of redemption is to deliver a person from the power of the adversary, to bring one who is a captive out of slavery, to set him free by the ransom paid. This is only true of the believer; he alone is brought out of captivity and made free. It is an efficacious, not a nominal deliverance, and belongs only to faith. It is not merely that there is purchase money; this is not enough for redemption, which is a question of setting a slave or prisoner free, and this is never the case unless a soul believes in Christ. But it is a different thing with purchase; you may buy that which is inanimate, and that which is bought belongs to you indeed, but possibly for harm and shame. Supposing you could purchase a person, what is the effect of the transaction? You make him a slave; thus it is the very reverse of redemption. Redemption makes the slave free, but purchase makes what you buy your property or your slave.

These two facts are both true of Christians, and meet in Christ's blood. The Christian is both redeemed and purchased; but he alone is redeemed. But besides being redeemed, he is bought by the blood of Christ, and therefore it is that he becomes Christ's slave. He is a bondman of Christ Jesus. Perfectly freed by redemption, he is made thoroughly a slave by purchase; and this is precisely the anomaly the natural man never understands. As for the theologians, some of them are only natural men; but one might ask in despair, 'What is it they ever seem to understand? The fact is that they have so confused the two things as to make the subject hopeless in their hands.

It is clear that the dispute between those called Calvinists and the so-called Arminians turns much on this point, which is then very important. Both of them agree in the error that redemption and purchase are the same thing. The consequence is that they never can settle the question. The Calvinist is quite right in his premise that redemption belongs solely to the household of faith; the Arminian is no less right in his premise that purchase belongs to every creature under the effects of sin. But they are both equally mistaken in assuming them to be the same thing; and there they wrangle, as they might forever, without advancing an inch toward settling the matter, because each holds a truth that the other denies.

The truth in this question, as in many others which have distracted Christendom, is that faith receives that which the contending parties lose in the dispute; faith bows to the whole truth instead of being shut up to a part of it.

Here then in 2 Pet. 2, it will be seen that it is only a question of purchase, which does not imply that these men were ever born of God.

Responsibility and Power

The question of man's responsibility seems to perplex many minds. They find it difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile it with the fact of his total want of power. If, it is argued, man is perfectly powerless, how can he be responsible? If he cannot of himself repent or believe the gospel, how can he be responsible? How then, again, if he is not responsible to believe the gospel, can he be judged for rejecting it?

Thus the mind reasons and argues; and alas! theology does not help it to a solution of the difficulty, but, on the contrary, increases the mist and confusion. On the one hand, a certain school of divinity teaches, and rightly so, man's utter powerlessness - that he will not and cannot come if left to himself - that it is only by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit that anyone ever does come - that, were it not for free, sovereign grace, not a single soul would ever be saved - that, if left to ourselves, we should only go wrong, and never do right.

From all this it infers that man is not responsible. Its teaching is right, but its inference is wrong. Another school of divinity teaches, and rightly so, that man is responsible - that he will be punished with everlasting destruction for rejecting the gospel - that God commands all men everywhere to repent - that He beseeches sinners, all men, the world, to be reconciled to Him - that He wills all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

From all this it infers that man has power to repent and believe. Its teaching is right, its inference is wrong. Hence it follows that neither human reasonings nor the teachings of mere theology - high or low - can ever settle the question of responsibility and power. The Word of God alone can do this and it does it in a very simple and conclusive manner. It teaches, proves, and illustrates, from the opening of Genesis to the close of Revelation, man's utter powerlessness for good, his ceaseless proneness to evil. It declares in Gen. 6 that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only and continually evil. It declares in Jer. 17 that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. It teaches us in Rom. 3 that there is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Further, not only does Scripture teach the doctrine of man's utter and hopeless ruin, his incorrigible evil, his complete powerlessness as to good, and his invariable proneness to evil; but it furnishes us with an array of evidence, perfectly unanswerable, in the shape of facts and illustrations drawn from man's actual history, to prove the doctrine. It shows us man in the garden believing the devil, disobeying God, and driven out. It shows him, when thus driven out, going on in wickedness until God had to send the deluge. Then in the restored earth man gets drunk and degrades himself. Man is tried without law, and proves himself a lawless rebel. He is tried under law; he becomes a willful transgressor. Prophets are sent, he stones them; the Baptist is sent, he beheads him; the Son is sent, he crucifies Him; the Holy Ghost is sent, he resists Him. _ _

Thus in every volume, as it were, of man's history - the history of the human race - in every section, very page, every paragraph, every line, we read his total ruin, his utter alienation from God. We are taught in the most distinct manner possible that, if left to himself, he never could and never would - though most surely he should - turn to God and do works meet for repentance. And in perfect keeping with all this we learn from our Lord's parable of the great supper in Luke 14 that not so much as a single merely invited guest will be found at the table. All who sit down there are brought or compelled. Not one ever would come if left to himself. Grace, free grace, must force them in; and so it does, blessed forever be the God of all grace!

But, on the other hand, side by side with all this, and taught with equal force and clearness, stands the solemn and weighty truth of man's responsibility. In creation, under the law, and in the gospel, man is addressed as a responsible being, for such he undoubtedly is. And further, his responsibility is, in every case, measured by his advantages. Thus, in the opening of the epistle to the Romans, the Gentile is viewed as without law, but responsible to listen to the testimony of creation, which he has not done. The Jew is viewed as under law, and responsible to keep it, which he has not done. Then, in chapter 11, Christendom is viewed as responsible to continue in the goodness of God, which it has not done. And in 2 Thess. 1 we read that those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be punished with everlasting destruction. And, finally, in Heb. 2, the Apostle urges home this most solemn question: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

Now the Gentile will not be judged on the same ground as the Jew - nor the Jew on the same ground as the nominal Christian. Each will be dealt with on his own distinct ground, and according to his light and privilege. There will be the few stripes and the many stripes, as in Luke 12. It will be "more tolerable" for some than for others, as in Matt. 11 The Judge of all the earth will do right; but man is responsible, and his responsibility is measured by the light and advantage afforded him. All are not huddled together promiscuously as though they were all on one common ground. On the contrary, there is the nicest discrimination, and no one will ever be condemned for slighting and refusing advantages which were not within his reach. But surely, the very fact that there will be a judgment at all, proves, even were there no other proof, that man is responsible.

And by whom, let us ask, is the very highest type of responsibility incurred? By the rejecter or the neglecter of the gospel of the grace of God. The gospel brings out all the fullness of the grace of God. All His resources are there displayed. The love of God; the precious work and glorious Person of the Son; the testimony of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, God is seen in the gospel, in the marvelous ministry of reconciliation, actually beseeching sinners to be reconciled to Him. Nothing can exceed this. It is the very highest and fullest display of the grace, mercy, and love of God; and therefore all who reject or neglect it incur the most solemn responsibility, and bring down upon themselves the very heaviest judgment of God. Those who refuse the testimony of creation are guilty. Those who break the law are guiltier still; but those who refuse God's proffered grace are the guiltiest of all.

Will any still object and say they cannot reconcile the two things, man's powerlessness and man's responsibility? Let them bear in mind that it is none of our business to reconcile them. God has done that for us by placing them side by side in His own eternal Word. It is ours to submit and believe, not to reason. If we listen to the conclusions and deductions of our own minds, or to the

dogmas of conflicting schools of divinity, we shall be ever in a muddle and a jumble, perplexed and confused. But if we simply bow to Scripture, we shall know the truth. Man may reason and rebel, but the question is whether man is to judge God, or God to judge man. Is God sovereign, or is He not? If man is to sit in judgment on God, then God is no longer God. "O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" Rom. 9:20.

This is the great question. Can we answer it? The plain fact is, this difficulty as to the question of power and responsibility is all a complete mistake, arising from the ignorance of our own true condition, and our want of absolute submission to God. Every soul in a right moral condition will freely own his responsibility, his guilt, his utter powerlessness, his exposure to the just judgment of God, and that were it not for the sovereign grace of God in Christ, he should inevitably be damned. Anyone who does not own this, from the very depths of his soul, is ignorant of himself, and virtually sitting in judgment upon God. Thus it stands, if we are to be taught by Scripture.

Take a case. A certain man owes me a sum of money; but he is unprincipled and extravagant, and he has rendered himself quite unable to pay me. And not only is he unable, but he is unwilling. He has no desire to pay, no desire to have anything to do with me. If he sees me coming along the street, he skulks away down the first opening, to avoid me. Is he responsible? Does his total inability to pay do away with his responsibility?

Further, I send my servant to him with a kind message; he insults him. I send another; he knocks him down. I send my son to beg of him to sell my debtor, to confess, and take his proper place - to tell him that I will not only forgive him his debt, but take him into partnership with myself. He insults my son in every possible way, heaps all sorts of indignity on him, and, finally, murders him.

All this is but a very feeble illustration of the actual condition of things between God and the sinner; and yet some will reason and argue about the injustice of holding man responsible. It is all a fatal mistake, and such it will yet be found to be, in every case. There is not a soul in hell that has any difficulty in the matter. And, most surely, there is no difficulty felt by any in heaven. All who find themselves in hell will own that they receive the due reward of their deeds; and all who find themselves in heaven will own themselves debtors to mercy alone. The former will have to blame themselves; the latter will have to thank God. Such we conceive to be the only true solution of the question of responsibility and power.

Resurrection of Judgment

The resurrection for the great white throne judgment will not consist of a mixture of saved and lost, or of just and unjust. Scripture calls them "dead"- "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." Rev. 20:12. This resurrection is called by our Lord, "the resurrection of damnation," or judgment, in contradistinction to the "resurrection of life," or "the resurrection of the just."

We are further told that all

who appear before the great white throne will be judged "every man according to his works"; and who could be saved if judged according to his works? There is no account, therefore, of any being saved who are judged at the great white throne. Those who are taken to glory at the coming of our Lord, will be raised from among the dead a thousand years before the great white throne judgment. See Rev. 20:5 Thess. 4:16, 17.

You may check your answers with those given on page 157.

What was the name of the world's first city?

What is the last city mentioned in the Word of God? 3. Can you name two cities mentioned in the Word whose names are spelled in English with only two letters each?

The Righteousness of God

God has displayed His righteousness not only in the judgment of sin on the cross, but also in setting Jesus at His own right hand in glory. When He suffered for sins and died, it was for us; therefore, God must have us in glory with Him in divine righteousness. We shall be the continual witness in glory to the worth and eternal efficacy of what Christ has done. Christ would not have the fruit of the travail of His soul unless He had us there.

"And now a righteousness divine

Is all my glory, all my trust;

Nor will I fear, since that is mine,

While Jesus lives, and God is just."

Romans 3:38-39

The Apostle Paul says, I am persuaded that neither

Death

Life

Angels

Principalities,

Powers,

Things present

Things to come

Height

Depth, nor

Any other creature,

shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rosh Hashanah — Seven Feasts of Jehovah: the Editor's Column

On September 6 the Jews will celebrate their New Year, Rosh Hashanah, which according to their calculations will commence the year 5717. They will keep their festivities with blowing of the Shofar (ram's horn) in commemoration of the "memorial of the blowing of trumpets," as originally instituted by God in Lev. 23 and Numb. 29

Unlike what is given in Lev. 23, however, the Jews in their civil year reckon the month Tishri as the first month, while God looks upon it as the seventh month. This they recognize in their sacred year. When they were to be redeemed from Egypt and were first sheltered by the blood of the Passover lamb, God changed their calendar, and said, "This month" (the month Nisan, or Abib) "shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." Exod. 12:2. The object of this change was to mark their redemption by the blood of the lamb as the foundation of all their future blessing. From henceforth everything was to be calculated from that point. Just so, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross as the "Lamb of God" is the foundation of every blessing for the believer now, and for all millennial and eternal blessing.

Little as the Jews realize the fact, the "feast of trumpets" is the next thing to be fulfilled for them from the grand table of events given in Lev. 23 There are seven "feasts of Jehovah" in that chapter (Passover, Unleavened Bread, Wave Sheaf, Feast of Weeks, Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles), four of which have had their fulfillment. They are:

1. The Passover. While the Passover's being kept year by year in Old Testament times looked back to their being sheltered by the blood of the lamb in Egypt, its primary purpose in the ways of God was to look forward to the death of the Lord Jesus as the true Passover Lamb. This foreshadowing was actually fulfilled when, on the very day in which the Jews kept the Passover, the Lord Jesus was crucified and slain. On the cross in the three hours of darkness, He suffered as the Lamb of God, by whose precious blood we are redeemed (1 Pet. 1:19).

"The feast of unleavened bread" immediately followed the Passover and represented the separation from evil as a practical result of our being sheltered by His precious blood. This feast lasted seven days, and as seven is the number indicating completeness, so the whole life of the believer is to be marked by entire separation from evil, of which leaven is without exception the type in Scripture.

The feast of the Wave Sheaf was the waving of the first sheaf of the new harvest before the Lord "on the morrow after the sabbath." On the very day in which this was done in the temple by the priests, the Lord Jesus rose from the dead as "the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20). He was the true Sheaf of the firstfruits, and the fulfillment of the type found in the feast.

4. The Feast of Weeks (Shavuoth) gets its name from the fact that the Israelites were to count seven weeks from the day they offered the wave sheaf "unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath," or fifty days. At this festival they were to offer two loaves of bread "of the firstfruits" before the Lord. These loaves were to have leaven baked in them, and a "kid of the goats" was to

be offered for a sin offering. The type presented in this has also been fulfilled exactly. On the very day when the priests presented the wave loaves with their accompanying sacrifices, the Holy Spirit descended from heaven and formed something new on earth - the Church. It was the fruit of the same harvest of which Christ was the firstfruits. Those for whom the Lord Jesus died and rose again were together in an upper room that day; "And when the day of Pentecost" (indicating fifty) "was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind.... And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" Acts 2:1-4.

The leaven baked in the wave loaves indicated that there would be evil in the Church on earth, hence the sin offering was presented at the same time. There was no sin offering connected with the sheaf of the firstfruits which prefigured Christ in resurrection.

It is worthy of note that the Jews keep two feasts which are strictly connected with the first day of the week - the Wave Sheaf and the Wave Loaves. Both of these were kept "on the morrow after the sabbath." The one spoke of Christ in resurrection, and the other of the formation of the Church; in other words, that which specially marked Christianity was connected with the Lord's day and not the Sabbath. Lev. 23 should settle the matter that the observance of the Sabbath is not connected with Christianity. After the Church has been taken to the Father's house, the Sabbath will have the special place on earth again. The fact is borne out by the Lord's instruction for the faithful Jewish remnant in the tribulation to pray that their flight "be not... on the sabbath day" (Matt. 24). No such instruction was given for the Christians of Jewish parentage who fled Jerusalem in A.D. 70, before its destruction by Titus.

This digression to mark out the feasts that have had their typical fulfillment brings us up to Rosh Hashanah - September 6 of this year. While the Jews keep this feast as a joyous occasion in their calendar of religious festivals, they little realize that it too is to have a fulfillment. The time of its typical enactment is ever drawing nearer, but two things must precede the realization of it the coming of the Lord for the Church, and the seven eventful years which will follow - the latter half of which are designated as "the time of Jacob's trouble." As we are on the very eve of the Church's home going, so the true "memorial of blowing of trumpets" for Israel is close at hand. Just as surely as the first feasts have had a literal fulfillment, so likewise will the last three.

The main typical significance of Rosh Hashanah is the calling back of Israel when the Lord comes with His saints in power and great glory. Then "He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matt. 24:31. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem." Isa. 27:13.

Trumpets were blown in Israel on various occasions, as outlined in Numb. 10 They could be used to call the assembly together, or just to call the princes; they could sound an alarm in preparation for war, or announce days of gladness, or the beginnings of the months. In Joel 2 it says, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand." v. 1. This verse is not what Rosh Hashanah means, for this is an alarm to be sounded when the Lord comes back to execute judgment, when He will bring all nations against Jerusalem for their destruction. This will precede

the calling together of Israel at the memorial of the blowing of trumpets. Later in Joel 2 (v. 15) other sounds of the trumpet are to be heard: "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare Thy people, O LORD, and give not Thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them.... Then will the LORD be jealous for His land, and pity His people." vv. 15-18.

This last quotation signifies a national humbling before God in all phases - political, religious, and family life. When the Lord calls the Jews back with His purpose of blessing, it will be for humiliation and repentance. Even today the Jews look upon the ten days following Rosh Hashanah as days of penitence, and the Sabbath following their New Year celebration as "Shabat Shubah" (the Sabbath of Repentance). This brings us up to the next great Jewish festival - Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). This year this high holy day falls on September 15.

The Day of Atonement too is to have a fulfillment of its typical import. In Lev. 23 we read: "Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be a holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people." It is to be a time of special soul searching and repentance on the part of Jews brought back to their land. This is further borne out by the prophet Zechariah: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem

... And the land shall mourn, every family apart;... all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart." Chap. 12:9-14. They will pass through great searching of heart when they see the One who was crucified; when they actually look on Him whom they pierced, they will go into intense mourning and repentance.

This soul searching is typified in the case of Joseph's brethren when they said, "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." They were finally brought into the realization that the one whom they rejected and sold to the Gentiles was alive and had been exalted to the place of great power and glory. Joseph dealt with his brethren in great wisdom while holding back the deep affections that burned in his heart for them. In all this he was a type of the Lord Jesus, who will lead them step by step until the climax in the soul affliction of Yom Kippur.

The 16th chapter of Leviticus is full of instruction and significance regarding the Day of Atonement. The sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus will be the grand basis for the restoration of the earthly people, and this will be climaxed for them when they see their sins completely borne away by Him as typified in the scapegoat. We are privileged to enter more into the larger character of the sin offering as signified by the bullock, but there was no scape bullock. It was when the priest came

out of the sanctuary that the scapegoat was brought and the sins of the people confessed on his head. So when the Lord Jesus comes back as out of the sanctuary above, the redeemed Israel will enter into the fact that He whom they pierced actually bore their sins away, never to be remembered again.

The Jews' keeping of the Day of Atonement now is a hollow formality, for they have no temple, no priest, and no offering for sins according to the law. They do not even have the shadows of that which alone can cleanse from all sin. Of old they did not acquire a perfect conscience by the sacrifices, but there was a sanctifying "to the purifying of the flesh" (Heb. 9:9-13). Now all this is gone. Of what use is it to have their sins brought to their remembrance and have nothing to cleanse them? The more sincere one is in remembering and confessing his sins, the greater must be his burden when he has no offering for them.

The Jews will also keep the feast of Succoth (Tabernacles) on September 20 this year. We shall not go into the details of its typical meaning, but briefly point out that this feast foreshadows the millennial day of rest. It lasts seven days, or a complete cycle, so the millennial reign of Christ will be for 1000 years, as we learn from Scripture. The feast also has a supplemental day, the eighth day, which foreshadows the day of eternity; for the number eight indicates the bringing in of a new week, or a new thing.

While we may reasonably expect that Rosh Hashanah will be really fulfilled on the day of its keeping - that is, that the Lord will come and send forth His angels with the sound of a trumpet to regather Israel on the day in which they keep the "memorial of blowing of trumpets," which according to the Jewish lunar calendar falls either in September or October each year - yet this is in NO way to be confused with His coming to call His heavenly people home. There is no date or hint of a date for that grand event for which we are waiting. In Lev. 23, which gives exact dates for the seven "feasts of the Loan," there is one parenthetical verse which applies to our being taken to be with Christ. It is verse 22, which reads: "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God."

No date is given for reaping the harvest, nor does the verse seem important to the yearly religious festivals of the Jews, but there, between the feast which prefigured the coming of the Holy Spirit to form the Church, and the Lord's coming to regather Israel, is a parenthesis which indicates that at some indefinite time the harvest was to be gathered in. Even so, the Lord shall come and gather into His heavenly garner the harvest from the earth - the people that He is taking out of the Gentiles for Himself (Acts 15:14).

To confuse the indefinite time of the reaping of the harvest for heavenly glory with Christ's coming to Israel on earth is to mix two entirely separate truths. This has been done by some Christians who, as a result of the mixing things heavenly and earthly, say that the Lord will not come for the Church except in the months of September or October, according to the time of the feast of the memorial of the blowing of trumpets. This conclusion is utterly false, and the net result would be to have Christians go to sleep for ten months in a year, thinking that He will not come in them. This is the work of the enemy, who would have us say, "My lord delayeth his coming." Fellow Christians, let us rouse ourselves from any lethargy and spiritual sloth, and be as men that wait for their Lord.

The grain left in the corners of the field for the poor and the stranger represents blessing left for poor Jews and stranger Gentiles who will be martyred for their faithfulness during the tribulation period. They too will share in the heavenly blessing.

Sanctified by the Truth

"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." John 17:17. This is a saying much to be remembered. It teaches us that we are not to make ourselves the judges of what sanctification or holiness is; God's Word is to determine this because holiness is that character or mind which is formed by God's Word or truth.

We are apt to think that our own moral sense of things is the rule of holiness. But the Word of God claims to be such a rule: "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." An act may be unholy, though done with a good conscience, because the "truth," and not the conscience, is the rule of holiness.

If that rule were applied to many a thing which the moral sense or the religious sense of man approves, how it would change its character! And the Lord cannot change His standard of holiness, though He may be infinitely gracious to the shortcomings of His saints.

Those other words, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth," which stand in connection, have their own force and value also. Thus, in the whole of His utterance in John 17, the Lord strongly takes a place apart from the world, and puts His saints in the like place, praying that they may be kept there. In this sense, I believe, He speaks of sanctifying Himself. Through all this Church age, He is apart from the world and the earth; and sanctification depends on our communion with Him in that separated place. "The truth," testifying as it does of Him, links us with Him in that place; and sanctification is thus "through the truth," leading us to fellowship with an unworldly Jesus.

The Second Coming of Christ

Notes on Luke 12:34-45

The coming of the Lord does not present itself, when we think of it rightly, as a thing we learn; but I see in Scripture that it is constantly identified with all the feelings and character of a Christian, "as men that wait for their lord." It does not say, "As men that believe in the Lord's coming." The feeling of those who had grown cold was not that the Lord would not come, but that He delayed His coming (v. 45). Now in the beginning of 1 Thessalonians they were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven. He was a living, personal reality to them. There is a great deal more in the passage, but that is the first thing - they were converted for that. Expecting Him is the state that becomes a Christian. I do not say there is no other motive, for the blessed love He has shown in His death would lead us to follow Him too; but still the Christian is a person between Christ's first coming to save him, and His second coming to take him out of this scene; and what characterizes him (if he acts on the Word of God) is, that he is waiting for Christ.

It is described in detail in Luke 12. You first get the "watching," and then "doing," while He is away; that is, serving Him. Those who are watching (v. 37), with their hearts upon Himself, He makes sit down to meat (a figure, of course), and He girds Himself and serves them. But when you come to doing (v. 43), then it is He makes them rulers over all that He hath. You first get the blessedness of heaven (v. 37), and then joint heirs with Him (v. 44) - two distinct things - one watching for Him, and the other, doing. You see the Christian knows (if he has really gotten into his place) that he is a person in whom the Holy Ghost dwells, who is the seal to us of the full efficacy of Christ's work on the cross (and our part in it too), and waiting for Christ to come, which will put us into possession of the inheritance. Christ enters into possession not of all things in the inheritance yet, but He is sitting on the Father's throne till the joint heirs are gathered, and then He will put them into glory.

The thing I find most precious in the coming of the Lord is, that the Person of the Lord becomes so prominent. It makes Him more precious. He is coming to take me to be with Himself. It is the Person who is the object of our affections as Christians. But it will be a grand thing when we are with Him, and of course we cannot be separated. It is not our glory that is the great satisfaction, but being with Him. It sets Christ personally as the One before our eyes.

There is another thing it does. This expecting Him every moment detaches us from the world; the life of every Christian would be changed - all thoughts and plans gone. There are two things needed in order to look for the Lord in that way - peace with God, and love enough for Him to care for His coming. Of course we must have peace with God to be able to look for His coming, but it hangs a great deal on the affection of heart for Christ. "Unto you... which believe He is precious." It is wonderful how distinctly Scripture makes being with Christ the thing to hope for. It exercises the conscience also, because if I am looking for the Lord, evidently it will keep my conscience awake, lest I should have anything that will produce a jar in my own heart when He does come.

It is a striking thing as regards the present expectation, that in all the parables, whether it be Christ Himself speaking or the apostles by the Holy Ghost, it never supposes beforehand that His coming is beyond the life of the people He is speaking to. It is the present expectation. The virgins that slept were the same that woke. Those who received the talents were the same reckoned with. He would never present to them beforehand a thing that was beyond present expectation. It is evident we should like to be found, whether absent or present, agreeable to Him when He does come. It gives Christ the place. We are poor things; but if we heard Him saying, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," what a thing it would be to us!

There is a little more than waiting in this chapter. "Loins... girded about." The flowing garments were to be tucked up, not loose, in going on with things as they are in the world, but hearts in order, according to the Word of God - "loins girt about with truth," and then "lights burning" - a full profession of Christ.

There is another thing quite distinct, a very blessed, touching expression of the Lord's love. Here we have to have our loins girded (our hearts in order); but that is now when the Lord is not yet come, but is sitting on the Father's throne; but then "He shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." He says, "You won't have to have your loins girded when you come into My house. I shall make you sit down to meat, and serve you." He will make us sit down and feed upon the things that are in heaven at the table there, and He will minister the blessings to us - infinitely more precious. Not merely the giving us things to eat, but Christ Himself ministering them to us. In that sense Christ never gives up the form of a servant; and when we think that Christ the Son of God takes this place, and has taken it, and never gives it up, what a wonderful thing!

"Blessed are those servants," etc. v. 37. He will make them enjoy themselves, for His satisfaction is to make them happy. We do not enough believe in Christ's heart toward us, and we have not enough heart for Him either. He values our affections: "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations." What a Savior He is! It is constant expectation - not waiting merely, but watching. The second part is doing (v. 43) - in a certain sense an inferior part. He has entrusted us with talents, perhaps it may be giving "a cup of cold water"; but it is, "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." The Lord has committed a service to all. Take an apostle - of course he is entirely given up to service, or it may come down to the giving of a cup of cold water. The reward is not sitting down and enjoying heaven here, but it is the kingdom, or more than the kingdom. The Father has set Christ over all the works of His hands, and He makes us joint heirs. But it is much more blessed to be with God Himself and enjoy Him than to be heir with

Christ, though, of course, that is a wonderful thing. It is especially in the kingdom that the ruling takes place; afterward Christ will give up the kingdom to the Father. There will then be no need for power to be reducing a kingdom to order, for it will all be done.

Seek First

The Word of God says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:33. But with many it seems to be, Seek ye first the things of this world, and then, if you can, heavenly things. If you speak of our being heavenly, it provokes a smile. The Lord give us to know more of what our portion is in Christ.

Service

True service begins with Christ, who is the Head, and when Christ is forgotten, then the service is defective; it has lost connection with the spring and fountain of all service, because it is from the Head that all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, increase s. The body is of Christ, and He loves it as He loves Himself; and everyone who would serve it will best learn to do so by knowing His heart and purposes toward it. In a word, it is Christ who serves, though it may be through us. We are but "joints and bands." If we are not derivative and communicative from Christ, we are useless. To be useful, my eye and heart must be on Christ and not on the issue of my service; though, if true to Him, the end will vindicate me too, however disheartening the interval. He who judges of his service by present appearances will judge by the blossom and not by the fruit; and, after all, the service is not for the sake of the Church, but for the sake of Christ; and if He be served in the Church, though the Church own it not, yet, Christ being served, He will own it. Now the constant effort of Satan is to disconnect, in our minds, Christ from our service; and this much more than any of us, perhaps, have fully discovered. -Whether in reading, or praying, or speaking, how seldom, if we judge ourselves, do we find that we act simply as toward Christ, and Him alone! How often may sentimentality a n d natural feelings affect us in our service, instead of simple love to Him!

Seventh-Day Adventism

In our October issue we partially reviewed, and took sharp exception to, Our Hope magazine's acceptance of Seventh-day Adventism's claim to evangelical orthodoxy. We pointed out the inconsistency of the Adventist claim of supporting the truth of the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ while at the same time defending false doctrines, which when examined are found to be at variance with the essentials of deity. This may be illustrated by supposing the case of an engineer who claims to follow all orthodox procedure in designing bridges, but when his plans are examined they are found to contain the fundamental weakness that the foundation will not support the structure.

This month we purpose to look briefly into the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine relating to the finished work of the atonement wrought by the Lord Jesus. False doctrines invariably attack either His Person or His work, and not infrequently, both.

First, "What saith the Scripture" on this all-important subject? In John 17, where the Lord Jesus takes His place as beyond the cross, as evidenced by these words, "I am no more in the world,... and I come to Thee" (v. 11), He addresses God and says: "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I HAVE FINISHED THE WORK WHICH THOU GAVEST ME TO DO." V. 4. God was glorified in His Son about the whole question of sin, and the work was finished. And the Holy Ghost testifies that "by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." "But this man, after He had offered ONE sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God," or, "sat down in perpetuity." Heb. 9:12; 10:12. See J.N.D. Trans.

The Seventh-day Adventists claim to believe in the finished work of the Savior ON THE cross, but their doctrine makes it necessary for Him to go to heaven to finish the work. One of their prominent writers of years ago was bold enough to state, "Christ did not make the atonement when He shed His blood upon the cross." (Looking Unto Jesus, by Uriah Smith, p. 237.) Their error is the result of a false teaching regarding the great day of atonement, in Lev. 16, which makes it necessary for Christ to go into heaven to present His blood before God, and there plead before Him on behalf of sinners. Speaking of the type in Lev. 16, Mrs. White says, "Important truths concerning the atonement are taught by the typical service. A substitute was accepted in the sinner's stead; but the sin was not canceled by the blood of the victim. A means was thus provided by which it was transferred to the sanctuary." (The Great Controversy, p. 420, 1950.) Many quotations from their writings could be adduced to show that this is their teaching, but we shall give only one more: "The teaching of both Old and New Testaments is that atonement is not made alone by the shedding of the blood of the sacrifice, BUT rather by the shedding of the atoning blood AND the ministration of the shed blood in behalf of penitent sinners by the priest." Quoted by M. E. Kern from The Atoning Work of Christ.

If the Lord Jesus had to do one thing to complete the work of atonement after He went into heaven, other than that which He did on the cross, then the work was not finished when He gave up His life as a sacrifice for sin. The resurrection was the positive proof that the work was done; He

"was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." Rom. 6:4. The whole work of expiation was done, and that forever, on the cross. God was completely glorified about the question of sin, and He was declared righteous in saving every believing sinner. See Rom. 3:25, 26. Jesus never has had to take up the sin question since, and He never will again (see Heb. 9:28).

But Seventh-day Adventists stand by Mrs. White's statement that "in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary."

Thus we see that according to these false teachers the sins were not gone when Christ arose, but that He then bore them into the heavenly sanctuary. Could anything be more foreign to the truth of God? Did not the Lord Jesus make purgation for sins, and then take His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3)? Certainly He did not bring sins up from the tomb and take them to heaven. Speaking reverently - if He, blessed be His name, had one single sin upon Him, He could not have entered heaven. Did not God show His displeasure and holy judgment of sin when He forsook that blessed One in the only time in all history or eternity that He had sins upon Him - the three hours of darkness on the cross? We say unequivocally that if Seventh-day Adventism be true, then the work of Christ was not complete on the cross, and vice versa.

This brings us to another error of Seventh-day Adventism; namely, that there is in heaven a separation between the place of the presence of God (the holy of holies) and an outer sphere (the holy place) as there was in the tabernacle and temple of old.

This is carrying over Judaism with its legal bondage and distance into the heavenly scene. When the Lord Jesus died on the cross, was not the veil, which then hung in the temple dividing the holy of holies from the holy place, rent in two from the top to the bottom? As soon as the work of atonement was COMPLETE, God hastened (as it were) to show that the way was now cleared for Him to come out in mercy to man, and for man to approach to Him. There is no veil now, and not one scripture can be produced to prove that such exists in heaven; but Seventh-day Adventism, which cannot lead souls into the knowledge of acceptance before God in the holiest, would gladly put up the veil again. It is typical of their whole system.

Based on this false premise and other grave doctrinal errors, they claim that the Lord Jesus did not go at once into God's immediate presence, and that in spite of these scriptures:

"Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high";

"Within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus";

"The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the HOLIEST OF ALL was not yet

made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:... but Christ being come,... by His own blood He entered in once into the [holy of] HOLIES [see J.N.D. Trans.; R.V.; A.R.V.], having obtained eternal redemption for us";

"But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God";

"Jesus... who... is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Could Scripture be plainer than that Jesus, the Son of God, after finishing the work of expiation on the cross, entered the very

presence of God and sat down on His right hand - in the holy of holies? But they resort to sophistry to get around the plain simple fact. Milton E. Kern, in his book of 1945, says, "In current phraseology we do not limit the expression 'on the throne' to refer to a particular seat or room. At his coronation the king of England is literally there, seated on a throne, which may be viewed in Westminster Abbey. Though there may be a special place, known as the throne room, the ruler may be any where and yet rightfully said to be 'on the throne.' " p. 34. This is an obvious subterfuge.

Not only did "Jesus the Son of God," go at once into the holy of holies, into the very presence of God, but the believer in the finished work of Christ is exhorted to draw near also into "the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Heb. 10:19. This, intelligent believers do by faith, while the Son is there bodily.

Another scripture which will show the folly of their error is found in Heb. 4:14: "Seeing then that we have such a great high priest, that Jesus the Son of God." (See R.V.; A.R.V.; J.N.D. Trans.; and others.) Not merely did He go into heaven, but through the heavens; that is, through the first and second and into the "third heaven" - the immediate presence of God. The three heavens were typified in the tabernacle of old; it had its court, its holy place, and its holy of holies. On the great day of atonement the high priest went from the brazen altar at the gate through the court, through the holy place, and into the holy of holies where was God's dwelling place among the people. Now in the antitype, Jesus, the Son of God, has passed through all spheres into the HOLIEST OF ALL.

Let us yet look at the book of Revelation which these false teachers say proves their point that there is the veil in heaven; in chapter 8:3 (see also 1:4) the golden altar, or altar of incense, is seen "before the throne." Now if there had been a veil as in the tabernacle of old, the golden altar would not have been before the throne, for the veil would have separated between the throne and the altar. Only by the absence of the veil could the golden altar be said to be "before the throne." But need we multiply scriptures? one is sufficient for the subject mind, and no number of them will convince those whose wills are opposed.

Seventh-day Adventists would also have the Lord Jesus working as a "mediator" for sins in the heavenly sanctuary, but the Word of God is plain that He sat down. His work is finished. There was no place in the old system for a priest to sit down, for his work was never done, "But this man... sat down on the right hand of God." A "mediator" is for sinners, but priesthood, properly speaking, is for those in relationship with God.

This "systematized error" (Eph. 4:14; J.N.D. Trans.) says that the Lord Jesus finally, in October 1844, went into the holiest to finish the work of atonement. (This date is arrived at by a most pitiable application of the prophecy of Dan. 8 regarding the earthly sanctuary being defiled during the days of the Maccabees.) For more than 1800 years He had been at work cleansing the heavenly sanctuary-preposterous delusion!

Since 1844, according to this heterodoxy, the Lord Jesus is in the holiest investigating the sins of both the living and the dead, which they call an "investigative judgment." Mrs. White says: "... in 1844. Attended by the heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies and there appears in the presence of God [when Paul wrote, he said that He was there "now"] to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man - to perform the work of investigative judgment and TO MAKE AN ATONEMENT for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits." (The Great

Controversy, p. 480.)

Mrs. White says, and according to the Seventh-day Adventist cult she is God's messenger whom we are to hear, "The books of record in heaven, in which the names and the deeds of men are registered, are to determine the decisions of the judgment. Says the prophet Daniel: 'The judgment was set, and the books were opened.' The revelator, describing the same scene, adds: 'Another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' Rev. 20:12." (ibid, p. 480.) (The scenes described by Daniel and the Revelation are not the same, nor are they taking place now, nor are either of them enacted in heaven.) The psalmist said, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." Psalm 143:2. David knew better than to want to stand in the judgment and be judged according to his works, for no man will stand there and be justified. Condemnation is the only answer for one who faces the bar of God on the basis of his works. How good for the true Christian to know that for him the judgment is passed, for it was borne by his Say four, and he shall NEVER come into judgment (see John 5:24, R.V.; A.R.V.; J.N.D. Trans., and others). His works will pass in review and he will receive a reward or suffer loss (1 Cor. 3:15), but he shall not come into judgment, Seventh-day Adventist's artful twisting of the Scriptures notwithstanding. When the believer's works are reviewed he will be in heaven in a body of glory, with and like Christ. It is utter folly to speak of his being tried then to see if he has a right to be there.

And by what will Mrs. White's "investigative judgment" be measured? by the law, of course: "The law of God is the standard by which the characters and the lives of men will be tested in the judgment." According to this, the great test of their characters and lives below will be whether they obeyed the law, not whether they accepted the Savior. And what will be the outcome? Mrs. White says: "Those who in the judgment are 'accounted worthy' will have a part in the resurrection of the just.... As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God.

... Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected [of those who have believed on Jesus, mind you]. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life [of true believers, that is], and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God's remembrance." (ibid, pp. 482, 483.)

Let Seventh-day Adventists claim, and Our Hope and others concur, that their teachings are sound regarding the work of Christ and the believer's salvation, it simply is not so. Listen further to the voice of their authority: "All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven [sounds good so far, but see]; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ [a statement which is incorrect and not found once in Scripture], AND THEIR CHARACTERS ARE FOUND TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LAW OF GOD, their sins will be blotted out [notice that not until then will their sins be blotted out], and they themselves accounted worthy of eternal life." Reader, can anything be clearer than that this is a religion based on works and character, with only the hope that the believer's sins MAY be blotted out, and they themselves MAY eventually be accounted worthy of eternal life?

Let us notice a few more quotations on this point: "The work of the investigative judgment and the blotting out of sins is to be accomplished before the second advent of the Lord. Since the dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, it is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the judgment at which their cases are to be investigated." (ibid, p. 485.) "All who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass its searching scrutiny. Both the living and the dead are to be judged 'out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works.' " (ibid, p. 486.) This is contrary to the truth and is folly on the face of it. Only of the wicked dead is it said that they will be "judged out of those things written in the books, according to their works," and this is to take place before the great white throne. Rev. 20 makes it quite clear that this scene will be enacted more than 1000 years after the coming of the Lord for His own. How then can it have a bearing on their so-called "investigative judgment" which is to determine the fate of believers now? But their whole system is one of confusion.

Another nearby quotation is informative about their doctrine: "Our acts, our words, even our most secret motives, all have their weight in deciding our destiny for weal or woe. Though they may be forgotten by us, they will bear their testimony to justify or to condemn." (ibid, pp. 486, 487.) This is not the gospel which Paul preached; it is "another gospel: which is not another," for it is a corruption which falsifies grace so that "grace is no more grace." Paul not only condemns it, but also those who preach it: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal. 1:6-8. A curse is pronounced upon any who pervert the pure gospel of Christ. Never did Paul preach Christ AND anything else for salvation; never did he allow anything to be mixed with the atoning sacrifice of Christ as a means of salvation. After a thorough perusal of Seventh-day Adventist's literature, we say emphatically, Seventh-day Adventism is the Galatian heresy against which Paul wrote so devastatingly. It is a religion of works if "our acts and words" will have weight in determining our destiny, or in justifying or condemning us. It is a gospel that leads either to confidence in self, and hence to perdition, or to despair. No one indoctrinated with their gospel (which is NOT THE GOSPEL) can have peace with God, know true acceptance, or enjoy access into the holiest, for his sins are still a matter of record against him, his case is still undecided, and he must await the so-called "investigative judgment" to see if he will be accounted worthy.

In the October issue we noticed that the Christ of Seventh-day Adventism was not intrinsically holy as a man; He was afraid that He might fail in accomplishing the work of God; He did not see through the tomb in faith of resurrection. And now we see that He did not finish the work of atonement on the cross; that He took our sins back to heaven with Him; and that He is still working to see if believers are to be saved, while He is finishing the work of atonement. There are also other grave errors connected with their teachings of the mortality of the soul, and the annihilation of the wicked and of Satan, and the sleep of the soul while the body is in the grave. But we shall have to continue this examination of their doctrines, and of the so-called evangelicals' granting them a badge of orthodox respectability in another issue.

We have found the examination of Seventh-day Adventism most distressing, and certainly unprofitable, and we have had to seek grace from on high to keep the cover on the vessel (Numb. 19:15) while doing it. The Scripture says, "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil."

We advise our readers against tampering with evil, although we have felt called upon before God to make this examination for the sake of keeping souls from being ensnared by the evil through the whitewash 'being applied by men of evangelical prominence.

Seventh-Day Adventist Cult: the Editor's Column

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Psalm 11:3. This was our feeling when we reviewed a recent issue of Our Hope magazine in which the editor practically gave a clean bill of health to the "Seventh-day Adventist" cult. Our Hope is now in its 63rd year of publication; its present publisher is Frank E. Gaebelin (son of its founder), and its editor is E. Schuyler English. It has been respected for its faithful adherence to the basic truths of Christianity concerning the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. While we have not always agreed with its Biblical interpretations, it is not our policy to attack those whose views differ from our own. In this instance, however, because of its being read by many earnest Christians, and because the veritable truths of Scripture are in danger of being undermined by its endorsement of Seventh-day Adventism, which cult places the writings of a woman on the same level as those of Holy Scripture, we must speak out.

We were utterly amazed when we read the following in the February, 1956 issue of Our Hope:

"To Rectify a Wrong"

"The Editor made a grievous mistake in one of his 'Current Events' paragraphs in the issue of January, 1955. There, under the caption, 'Report on Church Giving' (pp. 409, 410), he implied that the Seventh-day Adventists are affiliated with the National Council of Churches and stated that the Adventists deny Christ's Deity and disparage His Person and work.

"The Editor was in error in making such statements. Several months' correspondence with Dr. L. E. Froom of the Department of Church History, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C., has brought to our attention the following pertinent facts, among others, as to the doctrinal position of the Seventh-day Adventists:...

"Seventh-day Adventists believe implicitly in the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, a fact that is attested in the volume, American Church of The Protestant Heritage, etc

What now are we to think when the editor of a staunch periodical is ensnared by "good words and fair speeches" of a leader of a thoroughly heterodox cult? Did he not look beneath the surface? Did he merely accept the clever protestations of pure Biblical Christianity without ascertaining the facts from their own publications?

It has been our observation for some time that the "Seventh-day Adventists" are seeking to cloak their real teachings and to parade under the banner of orthodox evangelicalism. They are now co-operating with the American Bible Society. Their agents sell their Bibles and distribute their circulars; then they present their own books, which are carefully prepared to conceal their origin. Why should they deem it necessary to hide the fact that they are "Seventh-day Adventists" if they have nothing to conceal? Why not come out plainly if their teachings will not turn people away from them? Why should their radio programs have such harmless titles as The Voice of Prophecy, perhaps introduced with John 3:16, with nothing to indicate to the hearer that he is listening to

"Seventh-day Adventism"? Let the reader or listener beware lest he become ensnared in the soul-damning and Christ-dishonoring doctrines of the false system.

Our Hope quotes at length from Dr. Froom. We cannot here produce it in its entirety, but we shall quote from it:

"Seventh-day Adventists place their sole hope of salvation in Jesus Christ, pre-existent from all eternity, who took our flesh through the virgin birth, lived a sinless life, wrought many miracles, was betrayed and went to the cross where His blood was shed in our stead."

Many people may be deceived by this statement from Dr. Froom, but let us look a little deeper. Remember that Dr. Froom contends (and Our Hope concurs) that the "Seventh-day Adventists" believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ; that is, that He is God, and God from all eternity. Yet an old book of theirs entitled, "Christ and His Righteousness," by E. J. Wagoner, states that He had a beginning; he said, "It was not given to men to know when

or how the Son was begotten.... We know that Christ 'proceeded forth and came from God' (John 8:42), but it was so far back in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of man." (p. 9.) To state that the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, had a beginning is to deny that He was the eternal God (Isa. 9:6); it is a denial of His, deity. The Word of God says of Him, "In the beginning was the Word"; whenever that was, He was there. Dr. Froom does state that He "was pre-existent from all eternity," but either their own writings do not agree, or the truth is later lost in a maze of equivocal evasion.

Let us examine Dr. Froom's own statement: "Jesus Christ,... took our flesh" (p. 468). This may seem innocuous, but is it? What does he mean by He "took our flesh"? Simply this, that at the incarnation the Son of God took our sinful nature. It is blasphemy, but it is a cardinal point of this deception to contend that the Lord Jesus, as a man, had a "sinful nature with evil tendencies." In their periodical, "The Signs of the Times," for March, 1927, L. A. Wilcox wrote, "In His veins was the incubus of a tainted heredity... bad blood and inherited meanness." We shrink from even quoting this damnable heresy; it is shocking to every right-minded Christian.

In a recent book by Milton E. Kern, entitled, "Bible Reasons Why You Should Be a Seventh-day Adventist," the author takes the ground that they "in common with other Christian Evangelicals, recognize the divine as well as the human in the mystery of the babe of Bethlehem." By this "human" he means fallen humanity; the difference between Mr. Kern and true Christian Evangelicals is, that while they fully believe in our Lord's humanity, they recognize that it was perfect, holy humanity.

Mr. Kern censures the author (E. B. Jones) who wrote,

"Forty Bible-Supported Reasons Why You Should Not Be a Seventh-day Adventist," for saying, "Christ possessed the nature of holiness," and says that he recognized "no HUMAN element in Christ." This charge is unsound. Every Christ-honoring, true believer accepts the truth of the real humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and bows in worship before Him who was also truly God. Again we say, His humanity was pure and holy and without any taint of sin. His glorious Person is an inscrutable mystery - "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father." Matt. 11:27. A poet of old has said:

"His glory - not only God's Son- In manhood He had His full part- And the union of both joined in one Form the fountain of love in His heart."

Mr. Kern approvingly quotes from Dean F. W. Farrar (a clergyman who contended against the truth of eternal punishment) who called people "intemperate and ignorant," who "claimed for Him [the Lord Jesus] not only actual sinlessness but a nature to which sin was divinely and miraculously impossible." He also quotes others who wrote in the same vein. Does he not know that the daring impiety of others will not mitigate his guilt or the guilt of his Christ-dishonoring cult?

Regardless of Dr. Froom's protestation of holding to the deity of Christ, and Our Hope's acceptance of his claims, we boldly state that to deny the absolute holiness of the Man Christ Jesus is to deny His deity; He could not be God and have an evil nature. Such facts are mutually exclusive of each other, for "God is LIGHT" (1 John 1:5). What is LIGHT? It is the effulgent excellence of His Person which positively excludes and precludes sin in nature or in act. To claim that the Lord Jesus partook of fallen, sinful nature is to deny that He was God. There is no alternative! When He was in the world, He was its light, but men rejected Him, THE LIGHT, because their deeds were evil. When Peter got one little glimpse of His glory he fell at His feet and said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Luke 5:8.

When the coming of the Savior was announced, it was said, "That HOLY THING which shall be born of thee." Holiness and innocence are not the same things. Adam before he fell was innocent, and so, sinless, but he was not holy; he fell and became sinful and lost his innocence.

Holiness supposes the knowledge of good and evil, but absolute abhorrence of evil, and love of good. The Lord Jesus was "holy, harmless, undefiled." "In Him is no sin"! No taint of sin was in Him. There could not have been, else He could not have been the Savior, for God has nothing but condemnation for sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:3).

Let us read further from Rom. 8:3: "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." In this sublime statement His holiness in flesh is carefully guarded - He was sent in "the likeness of" sinful flesh; that is, He came down to man's low estate and was made like him, but not made the thing man was. He, blessed be His name, was not made sinful flesh. A poet back in 1697 suitably wrote:

"Thou wouldst like wretched man be made

In everything but sin,

That we as like Thee might become

As we unlike had been."

Of course Dr. Froom says He "lived a sinless life," but is that all? No; He was absolutely without sin in His nature; He not only "did no sin," but

He "knew no sin." Heb. 4:15 says He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Notice that the words "we are, yet" are in italics, showing that they were supplied by the translators. What the verse means is simply this: "He was tempted in all points, sin apart." It was not that He was tempted by sin and then did not yield, and so "lived a sinless life," but rather that

when confronted with all the temptations to which man has yielded, they found no response in Him. He was intrinsically holy. The trial was there, but there was nothing in Him which answered to the proffered bait.

Back in the Old Testament types of the Lord Jesus, the meat (or meal) offering prefigured Christ in His life down here; and the sin offering, Christ bearing the sins of His people. It is striking that in both of these types the Spirit of God was careful to guard against this very evil of "Seventh-day Adventism" by stating of the meal offering, "It is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Loan made by fire." Lev. 2:3. Then in Lev. 6:17 He says, "It is most holy as is the sin offering."

Man would sully His holiness in His humanity, or attach some sin to Him in suffering for sin on the cross, but the Spirit of God would guard against all such effrontery.

Again Dr. Froom says, "He took upon Himself a human bodily form, and accepted the limitations of human bodily life." What does he mean by this somewhat ambiguous statement? Does he mean that He took the limitations of the human body brought under the dire effects of sin? This is in keeping with their teaching about his taking our fallen flesh. It would make Him inherit a body subject to death. This is utterly false. True, He assumed a body that could die, for He did die in it; but it was NOT subject to death, nor could be. He voluntarily "offered Himself without spot to God" to put away sin; He died for us that we might live.

Mr. Kern defends their great teacher, Ellen G. White, in saying: "Into the world where Satan claimed dominion God permitted His Son to come, a helpless babe, subject to the weakness of humanity. He permitted Him to meet life's peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss." O the daring of that statement! How could the Son of God - God manifest in flesh - fail? In Psalm 40, quoted in Heb. 10, we are let into the counsels of the Godhead in a past eternity; and there in the book of God's counsels it was written, that the Son said, "Lo, I come... to do Thy will, O God." Could God fail? Was there any doubt about the outcome? No, never. He said before His death that He would be taken, crucified, be buried, and rise the third day. Was there any doubt about the outcome of His mission? The 16th Psalm, which gives us His life down here in this world, closes with the hope of resurrection; yet Mr. Kern defends Mrs. White's blasphemy: "The Savior could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror." Again, we say, the "Seventh-day Adventists" do in fact deny the deity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

One more point on this subject: this false cult teaches that when the Lord Jesus expired on the cross, God died - that He, the Holy One,

ceased to exist for the time He was in the tomb. Why claim to believe the Word of God at all, when they distort it so! He Himself said, "I lay down My life, that I might take it again," and "I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." How could one who ceased to exist - one who no longer was - take up his life? It is an absurdity, and an impossibility; but "Seventh-day Adventism" must square with itself if not with the Word of God. They teach the pagan doctrine of soul-sleeping, so they must support it by denying that when the Lord Jesus died, He was in paradise, whence He received the repentant thief that day. Quite obviously, if they state that He ceased to exist, they of necessity deny His true deity, all claims to the contrary

notwithstanding. Could Deity cease to exist?

Dr. Froom further states, "In some inexplicable way Christ so united Himself with the human race that He bore in His body, and personal experience, the weight of its sorrows and guilt, but not its inherent evil propensities or passions. And through the incarnation Christ snatched the scepter from Satan the usurper, and sealed his doom." These smooth words seem harmless enough, but a careful examination will prove them to be otherwise. He is speaking here of His incarnation, of what was true of Him in His pathway, and Our Hope heads the quotation with this: "Dr. Froom gives also an important pronouncement pertaining to the Seventh-day Adventists' position concerning the incarnation of the Son of God." Did His incarnation cause Him to bear the "sorrows and guilt" of the "human race"? It is perfectly in keeping with their false teachings already referred to, but to attribute to Him in His life the personal experience of one bearing the sorrows and guilt of fallen humanity is heresy of the worst kind. He did NOT in life have the experience of one bearing the guilt of fallen humanity. He did bear their sorrows on His heart during His life (see Mathew 8:17), but He had no personal experience of guilt. It was only in the latter three hours on the cross, the hours of darkness, that He bore sins. To connect with Him in incarnation the experience of guilt is gross error.

It is true that Dr. Froom added, "but not in its inherent evil propensities or passions," but this statement and previous ones are mutually contradictory. It has all the appearance of his saying what will please the ear of evangelicals for the purpose of gaining their support, which Dr. Froom certainly accomplished in the endorsement of Our Hope. We are not surprised at Dr. Froom's statements, for we have long known his organization's teachings, and some of their ways, but we cannot comprehend how an evangelical monthly, respected for years for its orthodoxy, could be seduced to accept heterodox statements and print them, adding, "We rejoice to learn of their adherence to the Scriptures as to the Deity of our Lord and His atoning sacrifice of Himself for sin." This, and their expressed sorrow for "grave misstatements" made in Our Hope regarding the teachings of "Seventh-day Adventists" will do more damage than many issues of "The Signs of the Times," which periodical is dressed for the unsuspecting.

We simply cannot accept anyone's assurances that the "Seventh-day Adventists" are sound as to the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ when they teach doctrines which when examined are found to undermine His deity. Nor can we accept statements that they are sound regarding the atoning sacrifice for sin. To touch the attributes of His deity will necessarily affect His atoning sufferings, and consequently the salvation of the lost. The whole structure of true Christianity will fall if His essential deity is denied in any way. There are also ways in which they deny His finished work at Calvary, but we have not space for that in this month's issue. We shall, the Lord willing, further examine the false doctrines of "Seventh-day Adventism" in a later issue. May what we have already written keep the feet of Christians from becoming entrapped in this delusion, and may God graciously deliver anxious souls from falling a prey to that which cannot lead them to the knowledge of the Christ of God, nor bring them into settled peace with Him.

The Silver Trumpet

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee. When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward. When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys. But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance forever throughout your generations. And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God." vv. 1-10.

We have quoted the entire of this interesting passage for the reader in order that he may have before him, in the veritable language of inspiration, the lovely institution of the silver trumpet. It comes in with striking fitness immediately after the instructions respecting the movement of the cloud, and is bound up in a marked way with the entire history of Israel, not only in the past, but also in the future. The sound of the trumpet was familiar to every circumcised ear. It was also the communication of the mind of God in a form distinct and simple enough to be heard and understood by every member of the congregation, however distant he might be from the source where the testimony emanated. God took care that each one in that vast assembly, however far away, should hear the silvery tones of the trumpet of testimony.

The two trumpets were made of one piece, and they fulfilled a double purpose. In other words, the source of the testimony was one, however the object and result might vary. Every movement in the camp was to be the result of the sound of the trumpet. Was the congregation to be gathered in festive joy and worship? It was by a certain sound of the trumpet. Were the tribes to be gathered in hostile array? It was by a blast of the trumpet. In a word, the solemn assembly and the warlike host -the instruments of music and the weapons of war-all were regulated by the silver trumpet. Any movement, whether festive, religious, or hostile, that was not the result of that familiar sound, would be but the fruit of a restless and unsubdued will which Jehovah could by no means sanction. The pilgrim host in the wilderness was as dependent upon the sound of the trumpet as upon the movement of the cloud. The testimony of God, communicated in that particular manner, was to govern every movement throughout the many thousands of Israel.

Moreover, it pertained to the sons of Aaron, the priests, to blow with the trumpets, for the mind of God can only be known and communicated in priestly nearness and communion. It was the high and holy privilege of the priestly family to cluster around the sanctuary of God, there to catch the first movement of the cloud, and communicate the same to the most distant part of the camp. They were responsible to give a certain sound, and every member of the militant host was equally responsible to yield a ready and an implicit obedience. It would have been at once positive rebellion for any to attempt to move without the word of command, or to refuse to move whenever that word was given. All had to wait upon that divine testimony, and walk in the light of it the very moment it was given. To move without the testimony would be to move in the dark; to refuse to move when the testimony was given, would be to remain in the dark.

This is most simple and deeply practical. We can have no difficulty in seeing its force and application in the case of the congregation in the wilderness. But let us remember that all this was a type; and further, that it was written for our learning. We are solemnly bound, therefore, to look into it; we are imperatively called upon to seek to gather up and treasure up the great practical instruction contained in the singularly beautiful ordinance of the silver trumpet. Nothing could be more seasonable for the present moment. It teaches a lesson to which the Christian reader should give his most profound attention. It sets forth in the most distinct manner possible that God's people are to be absolutely dependent upon and wholly subject to divine testimony in all their movements. A child may read this in the type before us. The congregation in the wilderness dared not assemble for any festive or religious object until they heard the sound of the trumpet; nor could the men of war buckle on their armor till summoned forth by the signal of alarm to meet the uncircumcised foe. They worshiped and they fought, they journeyed and they rested, in simple obedience to the trumpet call. It was not by any means a question of their likings or dislikings, their thoughts, their opinions, or their judgment. It was simply and entirely a question of implicit obedience. Their every movement was dependent upon the testimony of God as given by the priests from the sanctuary. The song of the worshiper and the shout of the warrior were each the simple fruit of the testimony of God.

How beautiful! How striking! How instructive! And let us add, How deeply practical! Why do we dwell upon it? Because we firmly believe it contains a needed lesson for the day in which our lot is cast. If there is one feature more characteristic than another of the present hour, it is insubjection to divine authority-positive resistance of the truth when it demands unqualified obedience and self-surrender. It is all well enough so long as it is truth setting forth with divine fullness and clearness our pardon, our acceptance, our life, our righteousness, our eternal security in Christ. This will be listened to and delighted in.

But the very moment it becomes a question of the claim and authority of that blessed One who gave His life to save us from the flames of hell, and introduce us to the everlasting joys of heaven, all manner of difficulties are started; all sorts of reasonings and questions are raised; clouds of prejudice gather around the soul and darken the understanding. The sharp edge of truth is blunted or turned aside in a thousand ways. There is no waiting for the sound of the trumpet; and when it sounds with a blast as clear as God Himself can give, there is no response to the summons. We move when we ought to be still, and we halt when we ought to be moving.

Reader, what must be the result of this? Either no progress at all, or progress in a wrong direction, which is worse than none. It is utterly impossible that we can advance in the divine life unless we yield ourselves without reserve to the word of the Lord: saved we may be, through the rich aboundings of divine mercy and through the atoning virtues of the Savior's blood; but shall we rest satisfied with being saved by Christ, and not seek, in some feeble measure, to walk with Him and live for Him? Shall we accept of salvation through the work which He has wrought, and not long after deeper intimacy of communion with Himself, and complete subjection to His authority in all things? How would it have been with Israel in the wilderness had they refused attention to the sound of the trumpet? We can see it at a glance. If, for example, they had presumed at any time to assemble for a festive or religious object without the divinely appointed summons, what would have been the result? Or further, had they taken it upon themselves to move forward on their journey, or go forth to war, before the trumpet had sounded an alarm, how would it have been? Or, finally, had they refused to move when called by the sound of the trumpet, either to the solemn assembly, the onward march, or to the battle, how would they have fared?

The answer is as plain as a sunbeam. Let us ponder it. It has a lesson for us. Let us apply our hearts to it. The silver trumpet settled and ordered every movement for Israel of old. The testimony of

God ought to settle and order everything for the Church now. That silver trumpet was blown by the priests of old. That testimony of God is known in priestly communion now. A Christian has no right to move or act apart from the divine testimony. He must wait upon the word of his Lord. Till he gets that, he must stand still. When he has gotten it, he must go forward. God can and does communicate His mind to His militant people now, just as distinctly as He did to His people of old. True, it is not now by the sound of the trumpet or by the movement of a cloud, but by His Word and Spirit. It is not by anything that strikes the senses that our Father guides us, but by that which acts on the heart, the conscience, and the understanding. It is not by that which is natural, but by that which is spiritual, that He communicates His mind.

But let us be well assured of this, that our God can and does give our hearts full certainty both as to what we should do and what we should not do-as to where we should go and where we should not go. It seems strange to be obliged to insist upon this- passing strange that any Christian should doubt, much less, deny it. And yet so it is. We are often in doubt and perplexity, and there are some who are ready to deny that there can be any such thing as certainty as to the details of daily life and action. This surely is wrong. Cannot an earthly father communicate his mind to his child as to the most minute particulars of his conduct? Who will deny this? And cannot our Father communicate His mind to us as to all our ways from day to day? Unquestionably He can; and let not the Christian reader be robbed of the holy privilege of knowing his Father's mind in reference to any circumstance of his daily life.

Are we to suppose for a moment that the Church of God is worse off in the matter of guidance than the camp in the desert? Impossible. How is it then that one often finds Christians at a loss as to their movements? It must be owing to the lack of a circumcised ear to hear the sound of the silver trumpet, and of a subject will to yield a response to the sound.

Thus much as to the beautiful institution of the silver trumpet which we shall not pursue further now, though, as we have noticed above, it is not confined in its application to Israel in the

wilderness, but is bound up with their entire history right onward to the end. Thus we have the feast of trumpets-the trumpet of jubilee, the blowing of trumpets over their sacrifices-upon which we do not now dwell, as our immediate object is to help the reader to seize the grand idea presented in the opening paragraph of our article. May the Holy Ghost impress upon our hearts the needed lesson of "The Silver Trumpet."

Spiritual Understanding

A man might possess vast stores of erudition, and be able with ease to quote every page of this world's dark history, and still not be in the least degree better prepared for the study of God's prophetic word. The humble Christian, unable to read the Scriptures in any language but his own, and entirely unacquainted with the details of profane history, may, nevertheless, prayerfully study the prophetic scriptures. Equally with the most learned he may count on his Father's faithful love to enable him, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to understand and receive what the Scriptures unfold of the diverse glories of Christ, the Son, whether in His relation to the Church, which is His body, or to Israel, the world, and creation, over the whole of which His rule is yet to extend.

Notes on the Tabernacle: Framework of the Tabernacle and Veil

The boards of the tabernacle were of shittim wood, or acacia, overlaid with gold. Being of the same material as the ark and the table of showbread, they too must refer to Christ. But as the house of God is now composed of all believers, the boards would necessarily typify also all believers of the present time. The length of each board was to be ten cubits. This has its meaning, and believers should seek to learn what there may be for them in this. The number ten is given in Scripture in connection with responsibility toward God, so we have ten commandments. Each individual Christian should therefore remember that he is responsible to God for all that he does, since he forms a part of His house. "Holiness becometh Thine house, O LORD, forever." Psalm 93:5.

There were to be two tenons on the bottom of each board. We get the number two used in Scripture in connection with testimony: "That in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." Matt. 18:16. The number of boards to be used was forty-eight. This number is a multiple of other numbers which are used symbolically in Scripture, and in order to get its symbolic force, we must separate it into its factors, twelve and four. Twelve in Scripture gives administrative completeness in government, as we see in the twelve tribes, twelve apostles, twelve gates (where the judges sat), etc. Four gives us completeness on earth - the "four corners of the earth," four winds, foursquare, four gospels, etc. The whole number, therefore, will be administrative perfection displayed in all its completeness in Christ; or, if the boards are taken in connection with the divine dwelling place, this perfection displayed through the house of God.

Under each board were two silver sockets, which would make ninety-six sockets under the boards; and there were four sockets under the pillars that supported the veil, making one hundred sockets, or bases, in all. Again we must resort to its factors, ten and ten, to learn the meaning of this number. According to what we have seen, ten times ten would give the highest expression of responsibility toward God. Let us inquire a little into the meaning of the silver sockets. In order to do this we will need to turn to chapter 30:11-16. Here we learn that when the people were numbered, each man must give half a shekel of silver, "a ransom for his soul unto the LORD." The rich were not allowed to give more, and the poor must not give less. In this we get a vital principle: When the question is the ransom, or redemption of the soul, the man of highest morality must be redeemed at the same cost as that which will be required for the vilest sinner, and that is the precious blood of Christ.

Passing on to chapter 38:25-27, we get the interesting fact that this ransom money amounted to something over a hundred talents of silver, and that out of the talents a hundred sockets *were cast for the sanctuary, "a talent for a socket." Let us look at one more point and then seek to make the application. Each board with its two tenons stood on two of these silver sockets. Now gathering up the thoughts - silver speaks of redemption; every ransomed sinner is redeemed at a like cost; one hundred speaks of responsibility. We have then the blessed and precious truth that each believer stands before God on the ground of redemption, the purchase price being the blood of

Jesus, but he stands in this position as fully responsible to God, and there to bear witness for Christ. His feet have been lifted from the miry clay and placed upon the rock; and now, with glad heart, he can sing,

"On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand."

Feelings that rise and fall even as the waves of the sea have no part in this perfect redemption; nor have the good works of one who has not eternal life any part in it; such works are termed of God, "dead works." All is based on the finished work of Christ the unchanging One.

Looking at the boards as they stand in their silver sockets, we see the house of God formed; but, thus far, the boards are detached, therefore are independent of each other. God could not have His house in this unstable condition. Man's heart would lead him to be independent, and to do as he pleases, but this is not God's thought; He speaks of believers as being builded together for His habitation through the Spirit. The building together, which is according to His heart, is seen in type in the bars which passed through rings of gold at the sides and the ends, and held all securely together. Some see in the five bars a type of the five gifts to the Church, which are given "for the perfecting of the saints," the "work of the ministry," etc. (Eph. 4:11-13.)

The sockets being made of silver, we learn that redemption; is the foundation of the house of God. From the rings being of gold, and the boards and bars being covered with gold, we learn that those who form the house of God are clothed in divine righteousness - gold, as we have seen, being a symbol of divine righteousness - and in this same righteousness they are bound together. We learn from Rom. 3:22 that "the righteousness of God" is upon all them that believe. Thus clad, and thus bound together, believers form a dwelling place for God according to His own heart. He would have His people use diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace (Eph. 4:3; J.N.D. Trans.). There should be on the part of Christians the practical demonstration of what really exists by the Spirit. This maintaining of the unity is entrusted of God to their keeping; but alas! what failure is ever found where man is put in responsibility. Instead of one house, fitly framed together, being represented, God's people are divided into many companies, independent of one another and differing in doctrines and in ways. God has given one center around which He would have His people gathered; that center is Christ. None of the various doctrines, forms of government, and other things which bring so many of God's dear people together, form the ground of gathering according to His Word. "Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." Rom. 15:7. Redemption is the ground; Christ is the center; the Spirit of God is the power that gathers. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20.

As we have seen, the silver sockets on which the boards stood, show that believers stand on the ground of redemption; and the binding together of the boards with bars covered with gold, show that God would in divine righteousness hold His people together. The ark, surrounded by the boards and placed in the innermost chamber, might well speak to the hearts of God's people of the One about whom He would have them gathered.

Notice, we are not told, Where two or three meet, or, Where two or three gather; it is "are gathered." The Spirit of God is the power that gathers to that one center - Christ. If the boards

were taken down and placed in bundles here and there, what has become of the house? Is it not in ruins? And is not that the state of Christendom today - a mass of confusion rather than the manifestation of saints builded together by the Spirit for a habitation of God? Alas! that it should be so. Men have made for themselves centers, and the result is, not one company but many companies. The work of the Good Shepherd was to gather into one His loved flock. The work of the enemy is to scatter; and how well he has succeeded in this evil work, the state of Christendom today testifies. God grant that those who belong to Christ may get their eyes so fixed on Him, God's center, that they will accept no other name to which to be gathered.

The Veil

The object of the veil (chap. 36:31-37) was to divide between the holy place and the most holy. Its materials were the same as those of the fine twined linen curtains; and since these speak of Christ, so also must the veil speak of Christ. That it does so is clearly shown from Heb. 10:20. Thus we find, looking again into the tabernacle, that it is the merits of the Lord that are brought before us. It may be well to notice the difference of the order in which the materials of the veil and those of the curtains overhead are mentioned. In the veil, blue comes first, and the fine twined linen last; in the curtains, the fine twined linen is mentioned first. This, as every other detail, has its significance. The various coverings of the tabernacle, in its wilderness wanderings, present Christ in His pathway here on earth; therefore, the fine twined linen which speaks of the spotless purity of His character, is mentioned first. The veil introduces immediately into God's presence, and therefore the blue, which speaks of that which is heavenly, is first brought to our notice.

Man was shut out from God's presence by the veil. Redemption was accomplished only in type; therefore, entrance into "the holiest" was death. To this there was one exception: once a year the high priest could enter, but not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people. The Holy Ghost signified in this way that the "holiest of all" was not yet made manifest (Heb. 9:7, 8). Death must be the portion of the sinner if he attempts to meet God on the merits of his good works. He must come through Christ; he will be received in virtue of the work that He has done, but in no other way. Full redemption having been accomplished, the believer has "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He bath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." Heb. 10:19, 20. A remarkable and precious truth is revealed to us in these words; it is no longer death to pass behind the veil, because of God's presence there, but joy and blessing to enter that holy presence through Christ, and this in virtue of the shed blood which is of infinite and eternal value in God's sight.

When the work that Jesus undertook to do was done, He uttered those words so full of import, "It is finished" - then bowed His head and gave up the Ghost, and the veil of the temple was rent in two from top to bottom. It was no human hand that rent that veil, neither was it torn from the bottom to the top; it was a hand from above - the hand that smote the Shepherd (Zech. 13:7) - the hand that brought the forsaken One into the dust of death (Psalm 22:15) - the hand that caused all the waves and billows to pass over His soul (Psalm 42:7). Yes, the hand that smote, was the hand that rent the veil from top to bottom, making thus a way into His own presence. Could man ever have devised such a plan? In the words of another, "Access to the heaven of heavens was to be laid open; no love and no power could either have devised or accomplished this, but the love and power of God." The rending of the veil "in the midst" made a way of approach "directly to the very center of the mercy seat where, between the cherubim, the God of glory dwelt. It was not a side access, but the shortest and most direct that could be made to the forefront of the ark." Could the love of God be told out in a fuller or more blessed way? And at what a cost! "Who can tell the feelings of His heart when, compelled by His love to us, He spared not His own Son? Or, who can tell the sufferings of that Son when bruised by the hand and pierced by the arrows of the

Almighty?" Quoting again from another, "The same hand that rent the beautiful fabric which hitherto had concealed the holiest of all, opened simultaneously the graves; one act of God laid open the way, even from the ruin and death caused by sin, up to the height of His own glory. Henceforth no human priest was needed to stand between the sinner and God.

"No steps of approach were prepared in order that, by slow degrees, the unclean might be gradually fitted to draw nigh. The way from the grave to the glory was but one step; by the blood through the veil, the sinner, however guilty, however unclean, might at once with boldness take his place before the throne overshadowed by the cherubim of glory."

Let us review for a moment: the priests, Aaron's sons, ministered in the holy place; the people had no access there; the high priest alone entered the most holy, and that but once a year. Since the veil has been rent, all believers in Christ have been made priests, and through this "new and living way," have access into the very presence of God by the death of Christ. (Rev. 1:5, 6; Heb. 10:19.) God's grace in His thoughts for His people, all of which speaks of His measureless love, may be seen in what He unfolds to us through the veil. The fullness of that love may be known only in eternity.

Cherubim were to be embroidered on the veil, which brings again before us the thought of God as a judge. It is not difficult to trace God's purpose here; entrance into the holiest would have been death, so the way is barred: return to Eden, after man had sinned, there to partake of the tree of life, would have been to prolong life in misery; there also the way was barred. God would hinder both these issues until the prolonged misery, and the death that ends not, come to those who "will not" have Jesus to reign over them.

Notes on the Tabernacle: Hanging for the Door and the Court

The curtain hung at the front of the tabernacle formed the entrance into the holy place as the veil did into the most holy. The materials were the same, but there was this striking difference in the two: no cherubim were embroidered on the "hanging for the door." If the cherubim on the veil would speak of Christ in His judicial character, their absence on the door would present Christ to us in grace. Those within the door could look without fear on that which spoke of judgment, for they were there in all the value of the blood that had been shed. Such was not the case with those without; to them judgment meant death. But God's attitude toward the sinner is that of grace, and so in His merciful provision the cherubim were not wrought upon the door. God in Christ is now reconciling sinners to Himself; those who come to God through Christ, the door, have all fear of judgment taken from them, for they know that Christ has suffered in their stead. "Shall not come into judgment," is true to such (John 5:24).

The veil was hung upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold. Pillars form the support of a house. In the address to Philadelphia (Rev. 3), the overcomers are made pillars in the temple of God; that is, a special portion and special blessing are accorded them. In the midst of weakness on every hand, Christ has been their object, and they have kept His Word and have not denied His name; all this He rewards in a marked way. The pillars supporting the veil would then speak of those who are found cleaving with purpose of heart to the Lord, and who are living epistles known and read of all men.

The hanging for the door was supported by five pillars. The number five speaks of responsibility toward man; the entrance to God's presence must be through the One who has perfectly filled this place of responsibility. The sockets, or bases, of the four pillars for the veil, were of silver, showing that those who stand for Christ, stand on redemption ground. The sockets of the five pillars, for the hanging of the door, were of brass which speaks of God's righteousness in testing man. God would have the walk of His people to be in keeping with the character of the One through whom they enter His presence-the One who so fully filled His place of responsibility toward man, and so perfectly answered to God's righteous testing.

The Brazen Altar, or Altar of Burnt Offering

Passing from the holy place into the court, the first thing that would meet the view would be the laver. As this is a vessel used in approaching God, it is not described until after the priesthood is established. The altar of burnt offerings is next brought before us in the Word. This altar, although made of the same kind of wood as the ark and other furniture inside the golden walls, yet was unlike these pieces, for it was overlaid with brass, while they were overlaid with gold. Both of these metals are symbols of divine righteousness; the one is righteousness suited to God's nature, which is love; the other, as already noticed, is righteousness which tests man in responsibility, and must therefore be told out in judgment, for sin is ever found with man, and "The wages of sin is death." But judgment is God's "strange work" (Isa. 28:21). We get then God's righteousness told out in love, inside, where gold met the eye on every hand. Outside, where the sinner approached in his sins, righteousness is manifested in judgment, and therefore the altar is brazen. The various altars mentioned in Scripture were erected for the purpose of offering offerings, all of which pointed to the one perfect Offering. At the cross of Christ we get the substance of which other offerings were but the shadow. The brazen altar is a symbol of that cross, and this must be the meeting place for the sinner and God. When one approached the brazen altar leading an animal that was to be slain at that altar, he owned in this act that he was a sinner, and that judgment was his due. When the victim is slain and his body burned, God's righteousness in the punishment of sin is told out. Jesus, the Lamb of God, sustained the stroke of judgment for all who came unto God by Him. When atonement was made, God could not only righteously receive back and place at His right hand the One who had glorified Him as to the whole question of sin, but also in value of the "precious blood" that had been shed, He could justify the guilty sinner who would come to Jesus.

When man's hatred and Satan's venom were combined to do their deadly work, and nature's throes added to the awful gloom, the grace of that holy One shone out in strongest relief---"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." O wonder of wonders! "Righteousness and peace have kissed each other." God's righteousness in the punishment of sin has been told out; His deep, unfathomable love in receiving the sinner is made known, for with the yielding of that precious life, the veil is rent and peace is made. Yes, "Mercy and truth are met." Mercy is toward the sinner; truth is meted out in the judgment of sin. What grace! What love! Reader, can you say, All this for me?

"Stroke upon stroke, as God's wrath awoke,

Fell upon Thee for me."

Of the great ones who have trodden this earth, who could say, "Come unto Me"? Not one! Who could say, "I am the way"? Not one! Who among men was sinless? Not one! Who could save? Not one. The Christ of God is the only one "mighty to save," the only "way" to the Father, the only sinless One. "What think ye of Christ?"

At the brazen altar, both sin and burnt offerings were offered, but an important difference was made in the manner of offerings. In both cases the hands of the offerer were laid upon the victim; in both cases the victim was slain at the altar, but, while the burnt offering was wholly burnt upon the altar of burnt offering, the body of the sin offering, after the fat was removed, was carried outside the camp and burnt in a clean place. The burnt offering was a sweet savor offering showing the acceptableness of Christ to God; and never was that blessed One more acceptable than when, amidst the awful agonies of the cross, He was glorifying God about the question of sin. The sin offering presents another phase of the death of Christ. It is not classed among the sweet savor offerings. Sin is abhorrent to God; its desert is death. With the laying on of hands the sins of the people are confessed, and transferred to the victim. Thus "made sin," it is an unclean thing, and its body cannot be laid upon the altar. It must be carried outside the camp to be burned. "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." Heb. 13:11, 12.

The hill of Calvary was outside the gates of Jerusalem, which was called "the holy city," and there the cross was set up, for Jesus, as a sin offering, might not suffer within the gate. The One "who knew no sin" was there "made sin for us" that we "might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Here the depths of human need were met, and the heart of God was told out. Christ, made sin for us, suffered without the gate; and bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, He was forsaken of God. The unutterable love of God for the perishing sinner is seen at the cross as nowhere else—"He spared not His own Son." Here, as nowhere else, His hatred of sin is seen in His smiting that sinless One, "made sin." God must have His portion in the sin offering, for "nothing in the whole work of Jesus so marked His positive holiness, as His bearing sin. He who knew no sin alone could be made sin.... It was a total consecration of Himself, at all cost, to God's glory." God was glorified; God was honored. In order that a sweet savor should go up to Him from this offering, the fat, which is the "energy and force of the inward will," which in Jesus was wholly devoted to God, was taken from the animal before it was carried out of the camp, and was burnt on the altar. It ascended in all the preciousness of Christ to God.

The position of the brazen altar was significant; it was just inside the gate; those from the outside world entered and approached God through the altar. Christ when on the cross, had, so to speak, left the outside world. He hung between heaven and earth; "I, if I be lifted up from the earth"; the only way of approach to God is through the lifted-up One. Since the tabernacle and its vessels of ministry are spoken of as "patterns of things in the heavens," we may be warranted in comparing "the holiest" to the "third heaven," and the court where the brazen altar stood, to the "first heaven," or the "firmament above," the altar being, so to speak, between the outside world (earth) and the court (heaven above).

The Court of the Tabernacle

Hangings of fine twined linen enclosed this court (vv. 9-19). In the order in which these things are revealed to us, the court made the third division of the tabernacle. First came the "holy of holies" - the innermost room - next the "holy place," and now "the court." It was one hundred cubits long and fifty cubits broad. There were twenty pillars on each side, and ten on each end. The east end, at which the entrance was placed, had three pillars on each side of the gate, and four for the gate - sixty pillars in all. On fifty-six of these pillars were hangings of fine twined linen, and on the four for the gate, the hangings were the same as those for the door. That which enclosed this sanctuary of God would thus speak of the purity of Christ. And the bright and beautiful hangings of the gate would convey the thought that all who would approach must draw near in the sense of what was becoming to God. He had provided but one entrance, and that of such character as to speak of the glories and beauties of Christ. Many seek to climb up some other way rather than by entering through Christ, the Door that God has opened for those who will to enter. But such will never enter the courts above; they will fall back, baffled in their useless attempts. Over the gate which entered the court might be written, "I am the way"; over the door into the holy place, "I am the door"; over the veil which led to "the holiest," "the new and living way." The very common expression that all denominations are but different ways to heaven, will not stand the test of Scripture, for Jesus says, "I am the way... no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." John 14:6.

An ecclesiastical position, whether right or wrong, can never be a way to heaven. Christ is the way. God will have no entrance but through His Son. This is typified in the one entrance to the tabernacle.

Other blessed and important thoughts are given us in the sockets, fillets, chapiters, pins, and cords, though we will not attempt to enter into all these details. The sockets were of brass so that at the base, all around the court, was found the mark of God in righteousness, testing man. While the knowledge of this would be necessary in approaching God, fear would be removed when the one who entered would look upon the silver fillets, chapiters, and hooks, which would speak of redemption. (Exod. 38:28.) All God's righteous testing was fully met in redemption. How blessed! God has come to man, revealing Himself in Christ, and now man can approach God through Christ.

The pins and cords also have a voice: they were used to hold the boards of the tabernacle, and the pillars of the court, in position. Looking at the boards and pillars as symbols of all Christians, the pins and cords would picture to us that needful word, "Kept by the power of God." 1 Pet. 1:5. How could these boards or pillars stand without the cords? And how could the Christian stand in a difficult position, tempted from without and tempted from within, were he not kept by the power of God! But while kept of God, there is also a responsibility on the part of the Christian which must not be overlooked, though not prefigured in the pins and cords. God's Word is given to be the guide; and walking in the light of it the believer can say with the Psalmist, "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." Psalm 17:4.

Notes on the Tabernacle: Introduction

Before presenting the typical meanings of the tabernacle, we shall point out briefly the background which led to its construction. God did not dwell with innocent man in the garden of Eden, although He did hold intercourse with him. After the fall, even this was no longer possible, except that God did on occasion visit Abraham - His friend.

It was not until after Israel as a people were redeemed from the just judgment which fell on the land of Egypt and were brought out into the wilderness through the Red Sea that God spoke of dwelling with them. This was on the basis of their being sheltered by the blood of the passover lamb, and their separation from Egypt. Then God said to Moses, "Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." Exod. 25:8. For this purpose Moses was instructed to build the tabernacle. It was to be the place of God's abode among the people.

No discretion was left to Moses as to the manner of its construction; everything was to be made "according to the pattern" which was shown to him in the mount. Man's thoughts have no place when it comes to God's house, or that which pertains thereto.

In this day God dwells by the Spirit in a house on earth which is composed of all true believers in the Lord Jesus. In the Millennium God will have a temple on earth at Jerusalem, but in the eternal state "the tabernacle of God" will be with men, "and He will dwell with them."

This brings us to the section of the book of Exodus which gives us the account of the tabernacle (chaps. 25-30). This section is divided into three parts.

The vessels which manifest God (chaps. 25-27:19).

The garments of glory and beauty, and the consecration of the priests (chaps. 28, 29).

3. The vessels of approach to God (chap. 30).

It will be noticed that some of the vessels which manifest God are also used for vessels of approach to Him, and if the particular order in which the vessels are given to us is noticed, much may be learned in God's wonderful design.

There are also three ways in which we may view the tabernacle in its typical teachings.

A type of Christians as the house of God (Heb. 3:6).

A type of the three heavens (Heb. 9:24; 1 Cor. 12:2), as the tabernacle was divided into three parts - the court (sometimes called the holy place), the holy, and the holy of holies.

3. A type of Christ (Heb. 10:20).

Notes on the Tabernacle: The Altar of Incense and the Laver

We now come to one of the vessels of approach to God (Exod. 30:1-10). God's righteousness was manifested at the brazen altar, but there also He met the sinner in love and accepted him in the value of the sacrifice, and thus opened the way to draw near to Himself. We may then readily understand why this altar is not mentioned until now, for the way of approach must first be opened. Here Aaron burned the sweet incense. Taking coals of fire from the brazen altar, from the fire which God had kindled, and which never was allowed to go out, he carried these to the golden altar, and there placing incense upon the coals, a sweet fragrance arose before the Lord. The position of this altar of incense was in the holy place, before the veil. At the brazen altar, inside the gate of the court, God could meet with the people; at the golden altar, He met the priests, in the sanctuary. Both these altars convey the thought of drawing near to God, and this on the ground of the value of the sacrifices. On the golden altar there was no sacrifice; therefore coal was taken from the altar of burnt offering, showing that the judgment which consumed the offering there was the same that would bring out the sweet savor on the golden altar; and as the priest was accepted in the value of the shed blood, he would be seen in the acceptance through the cloud of sweet incense, in God's presence. It was the action of the fire that brought out the sweet fragrance of the incense, even as the bruising under Jehovah's rod manifested the fullest fragrance of Christ to God. The incense was to be perpetual (v. 8). This would show that the fragrance of Christ is unceasingly precious to God. In the 8th chapter of Revelation, an angel (evidently Christ) stood at the altar with a golden censer, and much incense was given Him that He should add it to, or offer it with, the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar; and the smoke of the incense ascended with the prayers of the saints before God; and God gave the answer in judgments poured out on those who were persecutors of the suffering ones. From this we would gather that the incense offered by Aaron (type of Christ) was of an intercessory character; "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. 7:25. From this scripture we learn the precious truth that Christ saves to the uttermost - that is, through all the difficulties of their wilderness journey - those who come to Him.

"Much incense is ascending Before th' eternal throne;
God graciously is bending To hear each feeble groan;
To all our prayers and praises, Christ adds His sweet perfume,
And love the censer raises, These odors to consume."

In turn, the believer, made a priest unto God, has also sweet incense to offer; for, brought into God's presence in all the acceptance of Christ, he is there as a worshiper, and, filled with Christ, he can give back to God of that which God has given to him - Christ. This is true worship - the heart filled to overflowing, and praise going forth to God out of the heart thus filled. "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." Heb. 13:15. "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy

priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. 2:5.

The materials of the golden altar being the same as those of the ark and table, we have Christ presented to us in all that He is in nature, and also in character, and our approach to God is wholly through Him. And, as we have seen, not only is the thought of believers' acceptance in Christ brought before us in this altar, but, as priests, they have the privilege of presenting Him to God, and of enjoying with Him all the preciousness of Christ. This offering of incense was to be morning and evening, day after day, and year after year - never ceasing. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." Phil. 4:4.

The lamps must be dressed morning and evening at the time of the burning of the incense - a priestly care that there be nothing to hinder the light to shine out in all its brightness. If this care is not taken by believers, there cannot be the enjoyment of Christ in what He is. The two things go together - light and ascending fragrance. It is when the Spirit is ungrieved that He takes of the things that are Christ's, and shows them unto us; and from hearts thus filled sweet fragrance goes forth to God. How careful the Christian should be to keep the lamps trimmed, not allowing in his thoughts, words, or ways, anything that will hinder the power and working of God's Spirit in him.

The Laver

Passing over the account of the atonement money, which has already been referred to in its typical teaching, we come to the laver (vv. 17-21). This closes the account of the tabernacle. The laver, like the golden altar, was needed in approaching God, and, like it, has been left undescribed until after the vessels which manifested God were presented to us. It was placed in the court between the brazen altar and the door into the holy place. Neither the size nor the shape of this vessel are mentioned. It was made of brass; and, as in the brazen altar, the righteousness of God testing man in responsibility is seen. Water was put into the laver for the priests to wash their hands and feet before going into the tabernacle to perform the service of the Lord. The solemn admonition given in connection with this washing with water was "that they die not." This tells of the importance of this cleansing. The altar of burnt offering being overlaid with brass, and the laver made wholly of brass (or copper, according to some authorities), must have for us a like voice. If sinful man comes into the holy presence of God, he must be tested as to what he is and as to what he has done. God is righteous in thus testing him. But man cannot stand the test - sin is there - then "the exceeding riches" of God's grace is manifest; for at the brazen altar, where man is put to the test, a substitute is provided, and judgment falls upon this victim instead of upon the sinner who deserved to die. Christ, the Substitute for His people, has made full atonement and has been accepted of God for them; they are clean from all their sins before the Lord (Lev. 16:30), and their sins and iniquities are to be remembered no more (Heb. 10:17). At the altar then we get man tested and man cleansed. Of what need then is the laver? What voice has it for us? Being of brass, it too must speak of God's righteousness in testing man according to his responsibility. But there is this very important difference in these two brazen vessels: at the altar we find blood; in the laver we find water. Man has utterly failed in his responsibility; death is the wages due; nothing but blood can atone. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." But blood has been shed; sins have been canceled; the believing one is cleared of all guilt - "justified by His blood" (Rom. 5:9). "Washed... from our sins in His own blood." Rev. 1:5. Thus we see blood cleanses from guilt. At the laver we get water, not blood. As we have already seen, water cleanses morally and is a symbol of God's Word by which our ways are cleansed (Psalm 119:9; John 15:3; Eph. 5:26; etc.). This is a thoroughly practical thing. The question arises, Why was the water put in a brazen vessel? Man is tested not only according to his nature, but according to his ways also; born in sin, an unclean thing out of which nothing clean can come (Job 14:4), he is condemned - Christ, "made sin," was condemned. Out of the unclean nature come evil thoughts, words, and deeds; these need forgiveness, and, through Jesus, forgiveness is granted - "justified from all things." But the old nature still being in the forgiven one, there is a recurrence, in greater or less measure, of wrong thoughts and ways; and from these he needs cleansing.

Notice the particular brass out of which the laver was made (Exod. 38:8). It was the "looking glasses of the women." When the metal was highly polished, they could behold themselves in it. As the priests approached the laver, they too would find a reflection of themselves; so now, the believer is tested as to his state, God leading him to feel his shortcomings from day to day. These

failures need the cleansing power of the Word; this we get pictured for us in the water put into the laver. Our state is made manifest, and our ways can be cleansed only through the Word of God. This cleansing is needed daily, for our feet become defiled in passing through an ungodly world. The bath of regeneration is needed but once, for one can be born again but once (John 13:10). The priests were washed in connection with the consecration. After that, they washed their hands and feet in connection with service. Those now made priests unto God should serve continually (1 Pet. 2:5, 9), but the daily use of the laver shows the need of constant self-judgment. How often God's dear people are hindered in prayer, service, and enjoyment of the Lord because of the lack of this.

Some talk about re-application of the blood, but this is not according to Scripture. "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." Heb. 10:10. "By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." v.14. Water filled the laver - not blood. The question of guilt was eternally settled at the cross for all who believe; and it is blessed to be at rest as to all our sins through the finished work of Christ. As to our walk, Christ is the standard; and having this blessed hope of being like Him, there is the purifying ourselves as He is pure (1 John 3:3). May we allow God's blessed Word its full place in our lives, being cleansed by it from the defilement we may gather as we journey down here; thus will we be a separated people - separated from evil, and separated to God - and our lives will be to His glory. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. 10:31.

Before closing these brief notes, we would call special attention to one point; that is, that God cannot dwell with man unless man is made clean. The holiness of God would forbid it; and if such a thing could be, man in his sins would be supremely wretched in presence of the light that would search him through and through. Righteousness cannot have fellowship with unrighteousness; light cannot have communion with darkness. This is specially marked in the earthly dwelling place, that Jehovah had prepared for Himself, which was a pattern of things in the heavens. The purification was by blood; Moses "sprinkled... with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry." "And almost all things are by the law purged [purified] with blood." Blood was carried within the veil and sprinkled upon the mercy seat; blood was put upon the golden altar; upon the horns of the brazen altar, and poured out at the bottom of the altar; it was put upon the tabernacle; upon the people; everywhere God's eye would take in the blood, and thus all, in type, was cleansed. And He had said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Blessed truth! the sinner, saved by grace, is safely sheltered under the blood of Christ which will never lose its value - redeemed not with silver and with gold, "but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Pet. 1:19. It is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. It is the blood that cleanses. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7.

In heaven the blood forever speaks

In God's omniscient ear;

The saints, as jewels on His heart,

Jesus doth ever bear.

'No condemnation!' - O my soul;

`Tis God that speaks the word.

Perfect in comeliness art thou,

In Christ the risen Lord

The fool, who says in his heart, "There is no God," may be allowed the horror of the "blackness of darkness" forever; but, through the exceeding riches of God's grace, many a scoffing infidel has at last found shelter under the precious blood, and has exultingly praised the One who drew him to the Savior. Through the rent veil, all who will may come. Will you, my unsaved reader, be made clean by that all-cleansing blood? He gave His life for you. Has His loving entreaty, "Come unto Me," no power with you? Will you reason that the way is barred and you may not come, when His word is, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out"? Listen while you may; delay not until too late. The day draws on apace when the door will be shut; then none may enter.

" Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. 6:2.

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Heb. 2:3.

Notes on the Tabernacle: The Ark and the Mercy Seat - God's Seat or Throne

The ark and the mercy seat form one piece, and yet they must be viewed separately (vv. 10-22). The law - "the testimony that I shall give thee" - was to be put in the ark, and the mercy seat was to be put "above upon the ark." We may ask, Of what was this ark a type? To use the words of another, "If we want to understand Scripture, we must have the same object before our hearts that God had before His, and that is Christ." Keeping this in mind, we may readily see a type of Christ in the ark. This may be seen both in its composition and in its object. It was composed of shittim wood, and was overlaid with pure gold. These two materials fitly symbolize the humanity and the deity of Christ our Lord who is both God and man. The wood, which is mentioned first, having natural life and growth, would speak of His humanity. The character of this wood, so firm and enduring as to be supposed by some to be the imperishable acacia, would make it a suitable emblem of the Holy One who was not allowed to see corruption. The pure gold which covered all would speak of His deity - gold as a symbol being constantly used to bring before us what is divine. We have thus the outshining of God in Christ beautifully pictured; and the perfection of One, who in His pathway here below was both God and man, is manifest to those whose eyes are opened.

An impenetrable mystery veils the Person of that Holy One. The Son has revealed the Father to man, but none may know the Son save the Father (Matt. 11:27). The "fullness of the Godhead," as also the dignity and sympathy of the perfect Man, may be traced in His life on earth; but in His thoughts, feelings, words, ways, and actions, there is an invariable blending of the two. The One who in weariness of body slept amid the tossing of the billows, was the One who could fearlessly tread the angry waves, and at whose voice they cowered at His feet; the One who wept in human sympathy at Lazarus' grave, was the One who had power over death and the grave, and could release whom He would; the One who was "crucified through weakness" was the mighty God who ruled the universe. Who can fathom the depths of that wonderful God-man! None save the Father.

May our hearts bow in holy adoration before Him; and may we be preserved from seeking to discriminate between the humanity and the deity of Christ, as many have done.

Not only is this blessed Person brought before our hearts as one both human and divine in this type; something additional is mentioned. A crown of gold was to be placed around the top of the ark; this would speak of the One who was rejected by man on earth, but now is crowned with glory and honor in God's own presence.

The law, written on two tables of stone, was placed within the ark, which was a safe place for the law of God to be kept. Man could not keep the law, but the Lord Jesus Christ kept it in every respect. He could say, "Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8.

Looking down from heaven upon the children of men, God said, "They are corrupt." "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." Looking through the opened heavens upon Jesus, He said, "Thou

art My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

The staves by which the ark was carried are next mentioned (vv. 12-15). These were made of the same materials as the ark itself and would therefore symbolize Christ again. These staves were not to be taken from their rings in the ark. This gives a most comforting thought, for it speaks of the presence of the Lord with the children of Israel in all their wilderness wanderings. It was Jehovah Himself who led them "in fire by night," and "in a cloud by day," that they might know the way they should go (Deut. 1:33). This is seen again in Numb. 10:33 where the ark went before them to search out a resting place for them, and it is blessedly true now that Christ accompanies His people in all their path. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." May we follow Him, even as Israel followed the cloud, moving when it moved, and resting when it rested. When, for Israel, the settled place for rest in the promised land was reached, the staves were drawn out of their rings because their journeyings were ended. We learn from 2 Chron. 5:9 that the staves when drawn out were left in "the holy of holies," and so were not seen from without. Rest was obtained, but; he remembrance of the wilderness was still before them.

Having considered the "ark of the covenant," we may now look at that which completed it as God's throne; namely, the mercy seat (vv. 17-21). Its composition differs from that of the ark, there being no wood used. It was made of "pure gold." Again we have before us that which is divine. God's righteousness is what is told out in this type of His throne. Notice the contrast God makes between His own and human righteousness; the latter He terms "filthy rags," for without faith, the good works of man have neither beauty nor merit in God's estimation. But when He uses a symbol to express His own righteousness, He chooses that which is pure, precious, and enduring.

The cherubim on either end of the mercy seat speak of God's judicial power. This judicial character may be seen from cherubim being placed with flaming sword to guard Eden after man was driven out; and again, in the "beasts," or living creatures, of Rev. 4, these creatures being connected with a throne which was a throne of judgment; seraphim were also there, for praise to God is connected with judgment in this case, and seraphim celebrate His praise (Isa. 6:2, 3; Rev. 4:8). In connection with this throne of judgment, we get in the living creatures the strength of the lion; the stability of the ox, seen in the energy of youth in the calf; the intelligence of man; the swiftness of the eagle, which in Scripture symbolizes swiftness and endurance in flight. Thus the throne is characterized by strength, stability, intelligence, and swiftness of execution; in other words, these qualities are attributes of the throne of God; and the cherubim over the mercy seat give, in type, the judicial character of the throne. But righteousness also characterizes that throne (seen in the gold), and this would lead to the guilty sinner getting his just desert - death. But here mercy intervened and judgment is stayed, for the blood is there, and the cherubim are looking down upon the sprinkled blood. That slab of gold has now become a seat of mercy; atonement has been made. As in Egypt the people were secure under the shelter of the blood of the slain lamb, so here the blood of the victim is accepted in lieu of the guilty. This speaks blessedly of the death of Christ as the only means of escape from coming judgment.

At the mercy seat, and "from between the two cherubim," God met and communed with Moses, giving him commandment concerning the children of Israel. Through this mediatorship God could meet and dwell with His people, the holiness of His character being maintained.

Notes on the Tabernacle: The Consecration of Priests and Pictures

Jehovah now instructs Moses concerning the consecration of the priests (Exod. 29:1-35). The first step was their being washed with water at the door of the tabernacle. Water cleanses from physical defilement; in Scripture it is used as a symbol of God's Word which cleanses from moral defilement. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word." Psalm 119:9. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." John 15:3. These and other scriptures show the cleansing power of God's Word as applied to the walk of the Christian. In this case, however, the washing would speak rather of the bath of regeneration or the new birth. The washing by blood cleanses from guilt. Washed from our sins in His blood (Rev. 1:5). The moral cleansing is by the Word, which we have here - "shalt wash them with water." But the washing was entire - the whole body. A different word is used for the washing of the hands and feet at the laver. The same two words are used in John 13:10, and are kept distinct. The one who has come to Jesus has had the bath - been morally cleansed - but in his daily path he contracts defilements, and needs his feet washed often; in other words, he needs the constant intercession of Christ.

Aaron is found here in association with his sons (v. 4), which we will remember gives us a type of the Church, or the priestly family. But none can become priests ("hath made us kings and priests") until they are born again. God does not accept service from any until they have had the bath of regeneration. Priests cannot be made so by man, but it is the office of all true believers to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God (1 Pet. 2:5). After the bath, Aaron is separated from his sons, and clothed in the garments for "glory and beauty," becoming thus again as high priest, a type of Christ. He was then anointed with oil, which is a type of the Holy Ghost. His sons were not anointed until later. Christ was anointed while on earth - His disciples, after He had gone on high and sent down the Holy Ghost. Christ was anointed on the ground of His absolute holiness; His people are anointed on the ground of the cleansing before God by His precious blood. This comes out clearly in the types before us; The sons are sprinkled with blood before being anointed; Aaron is anointed when clothed. Christ was anointed when ready to enter upon His public ministry. Later, Aaron is sprinkled with blood, but in association with his sons, in which case he is seen, not as the high priest, but as a member of the priestly family and, as such, having need of the blood.

After being washed, the sons are also robed, but in garments differing from those that pertained to the high priest. This robing, as applied typically to all believers, is the putting on of Christ. Christ should be seen in the walk, the ways, and the service of believers.

The next thing is the offerings through which the priests were consecrated, without which they could not go into God's presence to serve Him. The sin offering came first (vv. 10-14.) Christ as the sin-bearer is brought before us in this offering. Aaron and his sons were to lay their hands upon the head of the bullock which had been provided for this purpose. In this act their sins were, in type, transferred to the animal. The victim, thus identified, or laden with their sins, must be slain before the Lord: "The wages of sin is death." The stroke of justice thus fell upon the appointed

victim, and the guilty were allowed to go free. "For Christ also bath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." 1 Pet. 3:18. In what was done to the sin offering we get a glimpse of the exceeding hatefulness of sin to God. In its fullness it is told out in what was done to His beloved Son on the cross. Aaron and his sons who stood and watched in that solemn moment when the victim was bound, their sins confessed on its head, and then the victim slain, must have entered in some measure into God's hatred of sin. "The life... is in the blood," and, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." A portion of the blood of the victim was put upon the horns of the altar; the rest was poured out at the bottom of the altar. It is through the yielded life that reconciliation is brought about; the blood was shed. Sinners are "justified by His blood," and "reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. 5:9, 10).

We have already considered, in connection with the brazen altar, the burning of the fat, God's portion, on the altar, and the burning of the body of the victim outside the camp. This is a type of the Lord Jesus bearing the wrath of God on account of sin, consumed like the victim outside the camp; and yet in that death there was that which was a sweet odor to God. As to the laying on of hands, we give an extract containing some beautiful thoughts from a certain writer. He says, "What, then, is the doctrine set forth in the laying on of hands? It is this: Christ was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5). He took our position with all its consequences, in order that we might get His position with all its consequences. He was treated as sin upon the cross, that we might be treated as righteousness in the presence of infinite holiness. He had to endure the hiding of God's countenance, that we might bask in the light of that countenance He had to pass through three hours' darkness, that we might walk in everlasting light. He was forsaken of God, for a time, that we might enjoy His presence forever. All that was due to us as ruined sinners was laid upon Him, in order that all that was due to Him, as the Accomplisher of redemption, might be ours. There was everything against Him when He hung upon the accursed tree, in order that there might be nothing against us. He was identified with us, in the reality of death and judgment, in order that we might be identified with Him in the reality of life and righteousness. He drank the cup of wrath, the cup of trembling, that we might drink the cup of salvation, the cup of infinite favor. He was treated according to our deserts, that we might be treated according to His."

In that fearful hour of sorrow, when the fire of God's judgment fell upon the sinless One "made sin" for us, all nature was convulsed. (Fire is a symbol of God's searching righteous judgment, whether in the acceptance of what was good, or the condemnation of evil. On Matthew Sinai, the sight of God's glory. was like devouring fire [Exod. 24:17]. "The LORD thy God is a consuming fire." Deut. 4:24. When Aaron began his service in the tabernacle, fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering [Lev. 9:24], and thus showed His acceptance of it. The fire brought out only a sweet savor; and God's righteous testing of Christ on the cross, brought out a sweet savor to God. Although forsaken of God, He could say, "But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." Psalm 22:3. God shall judge and punish the wicked with unquenchable fire. The eternal punishment is described as "the lake of fire.") The rending rocks, the quaking earth, the darkness which added its gloom to the awful scene, all served to emphasize His entire abandonment. Of sympathy there was none; human friends had fled; God had forsaken Him. That hour of horror is an hour that stands alone in the annals of eternity. The issue, which will stand for eternity, is - God glorified, and man saved.

Precious truth for the one who can say, The judgment that I deserved has been borne fully by Jesus in those three hours of darkness. O to be able to say, All this for me! (Three is a number which indicates full, or complete, testimony. In the three hours of darkness, testimony was borne to the fact that the judgment of God against sin was exhausted by the One who suffered under it. Three days under the power of death gives complete testimony as to His death. The days were not complete, but, according to Jewish reckoning, they were counted as three days. Not waiting until the hours of the third day had expired, would speak of the fullness of grace in the heart of Him who would announce to His sorrowing ones, the bringing in of full blessing to man.)

What follows is the burnt offering (vv. 15-18). Not only would God have the sins of His people atoned for, and thus blotted out from before Him; He will have that people accepted in His presence. The burnt offering brings this thought blessedly before us. As in the sin offering, the people had to lay their hands on the head of the victim; this laying on of hands in the offerings always speaks of identification, but in these two offerings, the order of identification is reversed. In the sin offering, the victim was identified with the sins of the people; in the burnt offering, the people were identified with the perfection of the unblemished animal, and it was accepted for them.

The burnt offering is the highest sacrifice in Scripture. It is characterized by being "a sweet savor... unto the LORD." All of this offering being burnt upon the altar, and all going up as a sweet savor to God, shows the satisfaction and the delight God took in the blessed One of whom the offering spoke. Another Characteristic of this offering was that the one who offered it brought it "of his own voluntary will" (Lev. 1:3). All this brings out the devotedness of the One whose devotion was even unto -death, and His obedience in His willingly offering Himself. When the burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin became an empty form on the part of the people, and God could take no pleasure in them, Jesus offered Himself; His words were, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:7-9). The old order must give way to the one perfect offering. His will was ever yielded to the will of God. In the agony of Gethsemane, when facing the unmingled sorrow of the cup He would needs drink, His words were, "Not My will, but Thine, be done." In the unparalleled sufferings of the cross, He vindicated God in the expression, "But Thou art holy." Psalm 22:3. Perfection marked this blessed One in all His earthly path, and the cross was the crowning manifestation of it. Although forsaken of God, because bearing the sins of His people in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24), yet at no other time was the sweet savor to God so precious as in that bitter hour. And in all that sweet savor - in all the value of that perfect offering - those who come to God by Him, are accepted of God.

In the ram of consecration, we get another aspect of the death of Christ (vv. 19-22). This offering bears in general the character of the peace offering in which the priests had their portion (Lev. 3). Happy communion with God on the part of One who partook, and communion with His people, is what is represented here. All believers, as priests in association with Christ, are figured in this offering. Being priests, they should be consecrated to God, even as Christ who swerved not, nor turned aside in His devotedness. He came to glorify God, and He came to save sinners; and with death before Him, "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem."

Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon this ram of consecration, identifying themselves thus with it, as with the other victims that had been slain. Its blood was put upon the tip of the right ear, the

thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot of each of them. This ceremony should have a voice for all who have been made priests unto God. Set apart by the blood of the One who has been slain for them, their responsibility is to live in devotedness to Him. Special significance attaches to the blood having been put upon ear, hand, and foot. The ear that is consecrated to God through the death of Christ will listen to His voice. "The perfect Servant of Jehovah was blind and deaf - blind to all fascinations of the world, and deaf to every suggestion of Satan." The theme of some who talk of their consecration is giving up this and giving up that for the Lord, when, unlike the "perfect Servant," they know little of what God says to them in His Word. The truly consecrated ear will seek to hear what God has to say, and to be closed to all else. Then Christ will be the theme, not what has been given up, or what high advancement has been made. The more there is of true consecration, the fuller place Christ will have in the life, and the less of self there will be manifested.

Blood upon the ear is first, then blood upon the hand. Where one has listened to the Word of God and is obedient to it, he is ready for service, and the hand is brought into use. The right hand speaks of power and of skill (Exod. 15:6, 12; Psalm 37:5). The blood on the right hand of the priests fitted them for service in the handling of the sacrifices; the Christian should be found serving God in the strength and with the skill given to him; all he does should be done to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). And his first aim should be to seek "the kingdom of God and His righteousness." What before may have been done for one's own pleasure, should now be done to please the Lord.

Blood put upon the foot speaks of the consecrated and separated walk. The foot that once trod the paths of unrighteousness, and was found in the way of sinners, should now, when set apart to God, be found in the path of the righteous, and should be "beautiful" as the bearer of "glad tidings." Light, not the stumbling of the darkness, should characterize the path. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Pro. 4:18. The believer, thus set apart to God, is not free to go his own way, or to do his own will. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

After the blood had been put thus upon the bodies of the priests, their garments were sprinkled with blood and with oil, the oil being a type of the Holy Ghost. They were in this way "hallowed," or set apart to God. Notice that the oil follows the blood; it is not until one knows that he is "justified by His blood" (Rom. 5:9), and his sins are therefore forgiven (Eph. 1:7), that he is sealed with the Holy Ghost. "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Eph. 1:13.

After this, certain parts of the ram, and "one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the LORD" are all put into the hands of Aaron and his sons to wave them before the Lord (vv. 22, 23). All this is exceedingly blessed when seen fulfilled in Christ. The ram speaks of Christ in His death; the loaves, of Christ in His spotless life, lived in the power of God's Spirit. And note carefully, please, that this was what was filling the hands of the priests; now note that consecrate in the 9th verse of our chapter, is in the margin, to fill the hands, which is the true meaning of the word. And, mark it well, true consecration to God is being filled with Christ. Then, and then alone, have we that to give to God, which is acceptable to Him.

When these things (parts of the ram, and the bread) are given back to Moses, they are burnt upon the altar of burnt offering, and go up as a sweet savor to God (v. 25). The natural man sees nothing to desire in Christ - God finds all His joy in Him. In the portions that were left of the ram of consecration, Moses was to have his part, and Aaron and his sons were to have their part. Not only is God's heart satisfied in His blessed Son, but His people also have joy and satisfaction in that perfect One - both in His life and in His death.

After the seething of the flesh in the holy place, and Aaron and his sons feeding upon it (feeding upon Christ must be connected with the altar), we have the "continual burnt offering," so called because of its being offered daily, morning and evening, throughout their generation. The fire that was kindled of God upon the altar was never to go out. The continual ascending of this sweet savor offering speaks blessedly of what Christ is continually to God, and that for His own people. With the lamb offered twice daily, there was the "tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering" (v. 40). In this we get the meat (or meal) offering, and the drink offering. The one gives Christ in His perfect life, the oil mingled with the flour shadowing forth the truth that "Christ as to His humanity was begotten of the Holy Ghost"; the other is a symbol of joy (see Judg. 9:13), and would tell of the joy the believer has in communion with God in all the perfection of His Son. How wonderful that God should have His creatures, who are saved by His grace, share with Him in His joy, having fellowship with Him in His one object of delight.

The next point is the meeting place. The people were not permitted to go nearer than the gate of the tabernacle, while Moses, through grace, was allowed to go into God's presence before the mercy seat. This is now the believer's place through the finished work of Christ. All God's claims against the sinner having been fully met, and God having rent the veil from top to bottom, the one, made clean, can enter His presence without fear. Thus God could meet His people (v. 43).

The tabernacle and the priesthood were sanctified, or set apart, in the value of the sacrifice, and by the glory of God (vv. 43, 44). In that place alone, of all the earth, was God's glory manifested. Now, God's glory shines in the face of Jesus Christ; and God shines into the hearts of those who believe, to dispel the darkness with which the god of this world blinds, and to give the light of the knowledge of this glory (2 Cor. 4:4-6). When Jesus comes to reign, the whole earth will be filled with His glory.

In starting out, we noticed God's purpose and desire to dwell with man. Now that everything has been arranged, and people and sanctuary have been set apart to God, we get the word, "I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God." How far all this is from the heart of man by nature! He does not want God. He takes without thankful heart all that God gives him and, like the prodigal son, goes off to enjoy it without the thought of God. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us," gently draws man to Himself; and, in the deep love of His heart, not willing to wait until He has His ransomed ones home with Him in the glory, comes down now and makes His abode with those who love Him and who keep His words (John 14:23). "His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus," will manifest "the exceeding riches of His grace" in the ages to come (Eph. 2:7)

Notes on the Tabernacle: The Ephod and Plate of Gold

This robe, which was "all of blue," presents to us the heavenly character of the priest, which was according to the holy place in which he ministered. It symbolizes the heavenly character of the One who was "made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26). Instructions are given that the hole made in the top of this garment be bound, that it "be not rent." Nothing which would admit of imperfection must be allowed in that which symbolizes Christ. On the hem of this robe were placed golden bells and pomegranates. These alternated, and were equal in number, though no mention is made of their number. The position of the fruit on this garment is significant: it hung low, near to the earth, and it is fruit from the earth that is mentioned; also it is fruit that belonged specially to the "holy land" (Numb. 13:23; Deut. 8:8). This fruit was not found in Egypt. We may look upon it as a symbol of those who are saved - fruit that Christ, as the great High Priest, has carried into heaven from this earth. The character of the pomegranate is also significant, being a fruit full of seeds contained in a red fluid. The Lord Jesus Christ has brought every believer to God as the fruit of His shed blood; this fruit is from the earth, and is without number. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Isa. 53:11.

The bells were for the purpose of giving forth a sound, that Aaron might be heard when he went into the holy place, and when he came out. A heavenly melody thus sounded out at each step. This melody was connected with the rich fruit that was carried on the person of the high priest, for it was a pomegranate and a bell alternating all around the garment. But note that these sounds were given forth "that he die not" (or lest he should die). What sounds had he left behind in the camp from which he proceeded? Murmuring, complaint, discord is what marked Israel. Shall Aaron carry these fleshly sounds into the sanctuary? No; heavenly sounds must mark the footsteps of the one who approaches God; his walk must be a heavenly walk. Such must be the walk of Aaron lest he should die. When returning to the camp, his footsteps must be known as from heaven. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Rom. 10:15. Were not Aaron's feet thus beautiful as he came forth to the people with heavenly melody at every step and, standing before them in his robes of glory and beauty, brought them glad tidings of good things - acceptance, security, power, love! When Christ our great High Priest entered the sanctuary above, was it not with heavenly melody: a people redeemed (fruit thus borne to God); glory to God thus sounding from the cross, and ringing through the highest heavens. How blessedly God the Spirit made known to man acceptance through Christ when sent from the Father. To listening ears, how sweetly comes the sound, Christ in heaven, "now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24). When Christ comes forth from the sanctuary above to call His loved people to Himself, what heavenly melody will mark the scene! And how closely associated is this melody with the fruit that is borne to God.

Those who have been made priests to God (Rev. 1:5, 6) should represent Christ on earth - "Christ in you" - while Christ represents them before God. A heavenly walk and "glad tidings of good things" sounded out, will be attended with sweet melody. And the beautifully blended colors of the fruit which ornamented the priest's garment, will be seen in the fruit of the Spirit, which is "love, joy,

peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance."

What pleasure must have been afforded to the heart of God as He gave instructions for the making of these symbols which spoke of the One in whom was all His delight. They can neither be understood nor appreciated apart from seeing their fulfillment in Christ. And how God's heart of love toward His people is told out in His marking beforehand each detail in this way rather than waiting until His Son should come and accomplish these things.

Dear reader, what to you is this One who is the delight of God? Do you find beauty in Him, or is there no beauty that you should desire Him? If you are still far from God, why not turn to Jesus who will receive all who come to Him.

"The Redeemer now calls; will you still turn away?

Is it nothing to you - nothing to you?

There is danger in doubting, and death in delay;

Is it nothing to you - nothing to you?

O then flee to the Savior, respond to His call;

He will save from the sins that now chain and enthrall;

He will welcome you gladly, and pardon you all.

Is this nothing to you - nothing to you?"

As has been noticed, the golden bells were heard not only when the high priest went into the holy place, but also when he came out; and for the believer, a "shout" will be heard when the Lord descends from heaven. To that shout, living and sleeping saints will respond by rising to "meet Him in the air." He will take these ransomed ones to His Father's house, and later will come with them to reign over the earth. A blessed prospect for believers - to see the One who has died for them, and who has represented them before God during the whole of their path down here, and to be forever with Him!

"What will it be to dwell above,

And with the Lord of glory reign,

Since the blest knowledge of His love

So brightens all this dreary plain!

No heart can think, no tongue can tell,

What joy 'twill be with Christ to dwell."

The Plate of Gold

In this plate we get another mark of God's grace toward His people. Only that which was suited to His presence could be accepted by Him. All that was offered must be stamped with holiness. The inscription on this plate - "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" - speaks of this. Christ, as our High Priest, bears "the iniquity of the holy things" (precious thought, that even our failures in drawing near to God are met by Him!), and He Himself is holiness. Thus the worship of the Christian, presented through Him, is acceptable to God.

The plate of gold was placed on the miter which was made of fine twined linen, and which would speak of the purity that was necessary in one who would stand in the presence of God on behalf of others.

The service of Aaron and his sons, when it was a question of atonement, or putting away of sins on which God's judgment must come, was conducted in the fine linen, or "holy garments." The burnt offering which tells of the acceptance of the worshiper according to the sweet savor of the sacrifice, was a service of different character, and it would seem that Aaron in this service wore the garments "for glory and for beauty," which, as we have been considering, represented the people, and therefore identified them with himself in glory and beauty. Thus is the believer now accepted before God, in Christ. When once a year the sins of the people were numbered and brought before God, Aaron laid aside his garments of glory and beauty and, robed in the garments of fine linen, entered the holiest. Spotless from head to foot in these "holy garments," he presents a fitting picture of the One who stood in His own holiness before God, to make atonement for the sins of others. Aaron seems to have had liberty to enter within the veil at all times, until after the death of two of his sons, Nadab and Abihu. They had offered "strange fire before the LORD," and fire had gone out from the Lord and devoured them (Lev. 10:1, 2). On other occasions, fire from the Lord had been the unsparing judgment sent upon sinning ones - fire as a symbol, ever speaking of judgment (Numb. 11:1; 2 Kings 1:5-16). The case of Nadab and Abihu is very full of significance. Fire from God had come down and consumed the burnt offering upon the altar, showing God's judgment upon the victim, and yet His acceptance, when the fire had done its work, for this was a sweet savor offering. This fire, and no other, must be used in the burning of the incense; the sweet fragrance of Christ must go up to God through the judgment that has fallen upon Him. The bruising brings this out in its fullest sweetness - "bruised for our iniquities."

Nadab and Abihu did not use this fire, and fire from God fell upon them instead of upon the victim. In the words of another, "These two eldest sons of Aaron should have taken coals of burning fire from off the altar - fire which had come from the Lord. But instead of this, they put fire in their censers which was common to them, but strange to the Lord. May we not regard this as another form of Cain worship?... Cain offered an offering without the shedding of blood. His was a religion of works, though the name of the Lord was in it. His was not the worship of a false God, but it was false worship of the true God - worship which was not preceded by salvation. Nadab and Abihu were quite correct as to censer, incense and the holy place, but they did not recognize that it was

the fire from God which had fed upon the sacrifice, and that no fragrance could come up to God from the hands even of His priests, unless through the sacrifice consumed in judgment upon the altar. Christ may be owned as the true Christ. He may even be confessed with the lips as the Son of God. Prayer and worship may be conducted in His name, but unless His death be acknowledged and trusted in the way of atonement... the worshiper, whoever he be, is offering strange fire, mingled though it be with the name of Christ."

Sin having thus been brought into the holy place, Aaron was restricted in his entrance into the holiest, and when he went, it must be in the "fine linen" garments. At other times he moved about in the holy place bearing on his shoulders and on his breast the names of Israel engraven on the precious stones, those on the breast and those on the shoulders being inseparably bound together; and the golden plate on behalf of others adorned his forehead.

Notes on the Tabernacle: The Priesthood

Up to this point (chapter 28) God has been revealing Himself (in type) in Christ to man. Now we find Him providing a way for man to be represented in His presence; hence, what follows concerns access to Him. The vessels that have been omitted are those that are used in drawing nigh to God, and these are described after the question of the priesthood is considered. The priest was the medium through which the people had to do with God. He represented the people, and ministered on their behalf. God's character was such, and man's condition was such that man could not know what God required of him, nor could he stand in God's presence, so a mediator is provided. Garments in Scripture speak of walk and character. Here the garments of the priest are described, and bring before us the character of God's beloved Son in His office as High Priest. What is needed for God's presence is necessarily symbolized also. Aaron and his sons were chosen of God to minister to Him in the priest's office. Aaron, when viewed alone, is a type of Christ as the High Priest for all believers now. When Aaron is associated with his sons, he is a type of the Church; that is, they together form in type the priestly family, believers now being made priests unto God. We get, then, in Aaron and his sons, the Church in association with Christ, and in Aaron, as looked at alone, a type of our great High Priest. It was the high priest only who could represent the people, and none but Christ can represent those who are saved. One Christian cannot represent another before God. All Christians have access to God, as priests, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:5-9).

In this 28th chapter of Exodus, two things are presented to us - the garments for the priests, and the priestly office. These garments for Aaron, which were to be "for glory and for beauty," consisted of twelve different parts - the breastplate, ephod, robe of blue, brodered coat, miter, girdle, gold chains, rings, lace of blue, gold bells, pomegranates, and plate of gold for the miter. The ephod, being pre-eminently the priestly garment, is first described. The priest could not fully execute his office without this garment. It was made of the same materials as the various hangings of the tabernacle, with gold added. The divine character of Him who is our great High Priest is brought before us in the gold, which is mentioned first. The blue comes next, and speaks of His heavenly character - then the purple which tells of His glories as Son of man - "Lord of lords, and King of kings." Then the scarlet in its order, telling of Jewish royalty, as Son of David - "born King of the Jews." Last, the fine twined linen which speaks of the spotless purity of His life on earth - "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Christ, acting for us as Priest, is thus beautifully presented to us. In Heb. 4:14, mention is made of this perfect High Priest in such a way as to bring both God and man before us; "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," etc. The gold woven into the garments speaks of that which is divine; the varied colors speak of the perfections of the "man Christ Jesus." But the interweaving of the gold with the other materials, shows the inseparable character of the two. Who but such a Person could be a suitable representative for His people? He is not in God's presence for the salvation of sinners; sinners must meet Him at the cross; He is there on behalf of a saved people (Heb. 9:24). We see this in Aaron who entered the holiest in virtue of the shed blood on "behalf of

God's people. And Christ is before God for us, not according to what we are, but according to what He is. This is a truth of vast importance which we should do well to remember.

The gold was beaten into thin plates and then wrought into the blue, and into the purple, and into the scarlet, and into the fine linen, with cunning work (chap. 39:3). Thus we see all were interwoven; and in the words of another, "The strength and glory of the gold was intimately blended with every part of the ephod, and gave firmness as well as brilliancy to the whole fabric.... Scarlet and blue are colors of the ephod. The purple also - the new and wondrous color which combines in itself both the blue and the scarlet was curiously wrought in this priestly garment - a color denoting that great mystery so inseparably connected with all contemplation of the ways, thoughts, and words of Jesus; namely, that He did combine the wisdom, love, holiness, and power of God, with every true feeling, affection, and sympathy proper to man. All these beauties were inwrought in a vesture of fine twined linen." These materials thus interwoven, would forbid us to say, This part is gold; that part is something else. Neither can we say of our blessed Lord, This part is divine; that is human. But this we can say: Christ can represent His people because He is human; He can go into God's presence because He is divine.

Such is our High Priest, dear fellow believer. When we look at His spotless life, we can say, God sees us there, for we are in Him - "accepted in the beloved." When we look at the glory into which, as man, He has entered, we can say, That is what awaits us, for His own words are, "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." John 17:22. God looks upon the Christian as in Christ, and can, therefore, speak of him as cleansed from all sin through the blood of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:7). On the same principle He could say as to failing Israel, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." Numb. 23:21.

The girdle of the ephod was of the same beautiful materials as the ephod itself. It seems to have been used to bind the ephod upon the high priest. In the girdle we get the thought of service (Luke 12:37). Christ our High Priest never ceases to serve. The love that led Him to die for us, leads Him to live for us. The bitter waters of death that rolled over His soul, could not quench that love; it lives in all its unchanging power and blessedness today. In God's presence for His people, He is thinking of them in all their weakness and all their need; He is concerned in all that concerns them; He is pleading their cause with the Father, and meeting all the accusations that the enemy of souls is bringing against them. Failure after failure marks the steps of His people, but His love for them changes not; their hearts often grow cold, and their feet turn into a wrong path; unwearingly He follows them, and in tenderest love restores; His care for them, notwithstanding their perversities, never ceases. Unflinching He nourishes and cherishes them. The hands of Moses grew weary, and had they not been upheld by Aaron and Hur until the going down of the sun, the battle would not have been to Israel. Our blessed High Priest needs none to stay His hands; they are ever uplifted in intercession in behalf of His people (Heb. 7:25). Those who come unto God by Him are saved "to the uttermost." Triumphant victory will be theirs - "more than conquerors" through Him that loved them.

We get next the onyx stones and the breastplate (chap. 28:9-30). The names of the children of Israel were to be engraved upon two onyx stones, six names on each; these stones were to be set in gold, and then placed upon the shoulders of the ephod which was to be worn by the high priest. We should notice that these names were to be "according to their birth." As a writer beautifully

brings before us, "If looked at in the onyx stones, there was no difference between one of the children of Israel and another. They were alike children of the same father, and each was presented in the same glory and beauty. No order of precedence was adopted - no conduct evidenced by any altered the arrangement. Reuben might prove as unstable as water, and yet he was first in one of the stones. Benjamin and Joseph might be especial favorites, yet they were last. In point of fact, each of the two stones gave forth its glowing brilliancy equally to each of the six names inscribed thereon. Thus it is with all the redeemed now. If viewed with reference to their birth of God, there can be no difference. One is as precious and glorious as the other."

These names were to be engraved on the stones - not simply written upon, but cut into them, there to remain. This pictures to us the blessed security of those whose names are written in the book of life, never to be erased. The stones were to be set in gold, which would speak to us of God's righteousness surrounding and securing His people. The high priest was to bear the stones on his shoulders; this was the place of strength, and since it was not one, but both shoulders, it gives the thought of full strength; the thought connected with the onyx stone is blessedness; and with full strength, the One in the sanctuary above, to whom all power belongs, is bearing His people on to the blessedness that awaits them.

The same precious and comforting truths are brought before us in the breastplate, where again the names were engraven on precious stones. But in the breastplate, each name had its separate stone, while on the onyx stones, six names were on one, and six on another, as we have seen. Also the names were placed in an altogether different order. On the onyx stones each came in the order of birth, the first six were placed on the right shoulder, the other six on the left shoulder, each name being that of a son of Jacob. On the breastplate the two sons of Joseph are found, and Levi, devoted to the service of the sanctuary, was omitted. The arrangement of the twelve on the breastplate was according to the arrangement of the tribes about the camp. Judah, Issachar, and Zebulon were placed on the east side at the front of the tabernacle. They formed the advance guard, being the first to set forth when the tabernacle was taken down. Reuben, Simeon, and Gad were on the south side, and they set forth in the second rank; then came the tabernacle borne by the Levites; next came Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin from the west side; they set forth in the third rank; Dan, Asher, and Naphtali brought up the rear. In this order the names were placed on the breastplate. Each name there had its own peculiar precious stone, and each its own peculiar place. So it is with those who compose the Church of God. Each has his own place, and each is marked by some special Christ-like trait, as love, faith, courage, hope, patience, endurance, gentleness, humility, absence of self, and so on. These beauties of character are seen in different ways and in different measures, even as in the stones: "The gorgeous color of the ruby stone shone out from one; the soft refreshing green of the emerald was visible in another; the brilliant light of the diamond flashed out from a third; and the heavenly azure of the sapphire was displayed in a fourth." Whatever is seen of Christ in the Christian is a joy and beauty to those who behold. It is the light that brings out these beauties.

The breastplate was worn over the heart, the seat of the affections. Deep, sweet comfort is given to the saints of God in this wonderful picture. They are precious to Christ; their names are engraven on His heart, and they are firmly held in this place of affection; they are borne along in all the power of the Omnipotent. Everlasting love and everlasting power are thus combined in their behalf. What more could be asked - what more desired?

Chains of gold in rings of gold bound the breastplate to the shoulders and to the ephod, so nothing was to separate Israel from the strength, affection, and priestly character of the high priest. The chains of gold on a lace of blue would serve to show that these everlasting ties of divine righteousness are connected with the heavenly character. May those who know the Lord, appreciate more fully what it is to have a High Priest in whom these types are all fulfilled, and One who surpasses all. His beauty can never fully be made known; His eternal worth can never be fathomed.

We would make mention of one more thought in connection with the names borne upon Aaron's shoulders. They were there for a memorial (vv. 12, 29). Aaron's presence in the holy place would bring before Jehovah "the love and perfection in which Israel stood accepted before Him"; and thus we have "a constant memorial before God in our great High Priest who presents us in the fullness of His love and power, bright with His own glory, spotless in His own holiness." Can we measure what it is to be "accepted in the beloved"?

The Urim and Thummim were put in the folded breastplate. The meaning of Urim is "lights"; of Thummim, "perfections." Through these "lights" and "perfections," the Lord gave counsel and guidance to Israel (1 Sam. 28:6). But Aaron bore the judgment of Israel on his heart before the Lord in connection with the breastplate on which their names were engraven (v. 30). So Christ has borne our judgment; our names are upon His heart, and according to the "lights" and "perfections" that dwell in Him will be our guidance. God alone could give the lights and perfections of the Urim and Thummim, but this He gave to Israel; and to this people He committed His oracles. And through them, as instruments of God, we are indebted for the preservation of the Old Testament Scriptures. Thus they are given to us of God, according to His own mind. How full, how inexhaustible, how exact is the Word of God. May it be our guide at every step.

Notes on the Tabernacle: The Table of Showbread and Candlestick

Passing from the "holy of holies" into the "holy place," the first thing one would meet would be the golden altar of incense, but no mention is made of it here. As it was a vessel of approach unto God, the account of it is not given until after the priesthood is established. The ark, the mercy seat, and other pieces of furniture yet to be considered, manifest God's character, and because of this have been called by some, "vessels of manifestation." Other pieces, instead of specially showing forth His holiness and righteousness, speak of how He may be approached, and these have been called "vessels of approach."

Before God manifested Himself in Christ, and Christ became the way of approach, the people had to approach Him through the mediation of the priesthood. We can thus understand the choosing and consecration of the priests being described before the vessels of approach are taken up. This is not confusion; the perfect order that governs God in all His ways may be seen in it.

The table of showbread is now described (vv. 23-30). Its materials being the same as those of the ark, we have Christ in type brought before us again. Christ in His varied perfections and glories may be seen at every point when God's dwelling place with man is viewed in connection with the tabernacle; this it is that makes its beauty and its blessedness. The "border of a handbreadth" crowned with gold (v. 25) was doubtless, in its natural use, to hold the loaves of bread in their position on the table.

Does not this speak of the One who is holding His own secure, and out of whose hand no power can pluck them? "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." John 10:28. Eternally secure! That hand of power, actuated by that heart of love, holding His ransomed ones until He has them safe home with Himself, beyond the reach of every foe.

The loaves which were placed upon the table may be viewed in two ways: first, as a type of Christ who is food for His people, as the loaves were food for the priests in the sanctuary - next, as a type of God's people accepted in Christ in all His perfection before God. Thus the loaves represented God's earthly people, Israel, who in turn were a type of Christians, God's heavenly people.

We learn from Lev. 24:5-9 that these loaves were to be made of fine flour which would mark the evenness of character and perfection of ways that marked the Lord Jesus in His lowly path on earth - a path which was ever to the glory of God.

Leaven, always a type of evil in Scripture, was excluded from all the offerings "made by fire" (Lev. 2:11). The fittingness of no leaven in the loaves can readily be seen, for thought of evil cannot be connected with Christ who is "the bread of life," and who is the food for His people.

The priests were to eat the bread in the sanctuary; now the believer feeds upon Christ in the sanctuary of God's presence. He cannot enjoy both Christ and the world. If Christ is the object of his heart, he has lost his relish for the world with its unsatisfying pleasures and vanities. If he

seeks enjoyment in the world, the sanctuary is not his place; Christ in whom he professes to believe does not satisfy the heart.

The loaves were twelve in number, placed in two rows of six each. In this connection we can see how they were used as a type of Israel. The twelve tribes were represented in the twelve loaves, and being held, and that securely, by the table which was a type of Christ, their acceptance before God stands out to our admiring gaze; and this is seen again in the "pure frankincense" which was to be poured on each row, for this speaks of the sweet fragrance of Christ to God. How blessed it all is! "Accepted in the beloved" - loved as He is loved! Dear reader, do you know what it is to have the "pure frankincense" poured upon you, and can you rejoice in that word, "As He is, so are we in this world"? (1 John 4:17.)

The Candlestick

The candlestick comes next in order (vv. 31-40). Like the mercy seat, it was made of pure gold, having no wood in its composition, so that nothing human, only that which is divine is symbolized through it. Its seven branches would speak of perfection, the number seven in Scripture indicating completeness or perfection, whether in good or in evil. The light was furnished by oil, which is a type of the Spirit of God. (In olden days, kings and prophets were anointed with oil. In the present day, believers are anointed with the Spirit of God. See 2 Cor. 1:21, and 1 John 2:20, 27.) In the words of another,

"Putting therefore these three things together in their typical meanings - the number seven, the gold, and the oil - the result is that the significance of the candlestick is divine light in its perfection in the power of the Spirit. It is God giving the light of Holy Ghost, and this is displayed in its sevenfold perfection." The priests who moved about in the holy place could see the beauty of all that was there, as this sevenfold light was thrown upon the golden furniture and walls and reflected back their brightness and fell upon the handsome curtains with their varied hues. Even so now the Spirit of God presents Christ in His loveliness to the soul. "He will guide you into all truth"; "He shall glorify Me." And as this blessed One is unfolded to our hearts, we can say, Yes, altogether lovely! It is in the sanctuary that the light is shining; there it is the beauties are displayed. So it is that we learn Christ in God's presence, as taught of Him by the Spirit. Is there no light outside? Is all lying in darkness? Gross, moral darkness would have filled the scene when Christ, "the light of the world," went up on high, had not God made gracious provision to preserve them from such a calamity. He left a people, in whom He had put His Spirit, in the world, that they might reflect Christ and thus "shine as lights" in the dark scene (Phil. 2:15). This we get in the seven candlesticks of Rev. 1:20. There it is not the sevenfold power of the Spirit of God in the sanctuary, but the seven churches in the world. Christ is seen in His majesty in the midst of the candlesticks, trying the ways of His people, and noting whether or not they are giving forth light for Him. How great then is the responsibility of the Christian to learn Christ in the sanctuary, and to go forth and reflect Him in the world. May each of His own seek to allow nothing in word or deed that would hinder the Spirit to take of "the things that are Christ's" and show them unto him. And may each be a light in the world, reflecting Christ until He comes.

Moses, the Servant of the Lord

(Read Deut. 34:5; Acts 7:20-36.)

One great principle in all true service is the consciousness of being upheld therein by God.

It was thus with the perfect Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom God spoke thus: "Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth." Isa. 42:1. The grand feature in His service was that He never acted of Himself. He said, "I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which bath sent Me." "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father bath taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father bath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." John 5:30; 8:28, 29.

The moment a servant acts independently, he acts from himself, and out of character. There is great danger of mistaking the busy religious activity around us at the present day for true service to God. I believe that God intends to mark very distinctly what man's natural understanding and power can effect, and what the power and wisdom of the Holy Ghost can effect (Rom. 15:19).

Whenever we are living before men instead of before God, there will be restlessness and disquiet. There may be the desire to do many things that are written in the Word, but they will not be done in quiet and peaceful joy. We are never really preserved from hypocrisy unless we are living before God. It is the very best possible cure for the overweening conceit we have, all of us, naturally of ourselves.

But let us seek to gather a little instruction from the history of "Moses, the servant of the LORD."

Moses was an eminent type of the Lord Jesus. And I would just notice in passing, that they are the only two persons mentioned in Scripture whose course we are able to trace from their birth on to the glory.

Moses' parents could not but recognize the remarkableness of their child (Heb. 11:23).

It is worthy of notice that the life of Moses is divided into three distinct periods of forty years.

The first forty, he spent in Egypt as the "son of Pharaoh's daughter."

The next forty, in the wilderness tending the flock of his father-in-law. There, at "the mountain of God," he had a vision of glory, such as would never have been revealed to him in Egypt (Exod. 3:1, 2).

In the third forty, we have the account of the sorrowful and trying course he had run, as the servant of the Lord and of His people Israel, in bearing the burden of that people.

The first portion of his life was spent in Egypt. And Stephen, in the 7th chapter of Acts, speaks of him as being learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and mighty in words and in deeds (Acts 7:22). But this wisdom of Egypt was not anything that God could own. Doubtless, Moses knew that God was about to use him as the "deliverer" of His people; but that which had been acquired in Egypt could not deliver the Lord's people from Egypt.

And Moses himself, "by faith... when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Heb. 11:24-26.

"When he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel." Acts 7:23. Whatever ease and comfort Moses might have enjoyed in Pharaoh's house (its luxury and its refinements, "the treasures in Egypt," were all his) his heart yearned over his brethren. "He went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens." Exod. 2:11. "And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian." Acts 7:24.

"Mighty in deeds," on behalf, too, of the people of God, but acting in the energy of the flesh, not as sent of God (hence, what followed), Moses was thinking how Moses was to deliver the people. "He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them." v. 25.

But no, "they understood not," and Moses had another lesson to learn. God had to teach him that He would only be served by the power and strength that come from Himself, not by the strength or wisdom of Egypt. There cannot be two things more different than a person acting in the energy of the flesh, and one acting in the power of the Spirit. In the first case, there is always disappointment and surprise at the failure of our efforts.

When Moses had spent forty years in the wilderness, doing, as it were, nothing, we find him answering God's message, "Come now therefore, and I will send thee," thus: "Who am I that / should go unto Pharaoh, and that / should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Exod. 3:11.

When he comes to be sent of God, there is the deep sense of the responsibility of it laid upon him, and he shrinks from it. Before, when going forth in the energy of the flesh, he was bitterly disappointed at the failure he met with; now, he has learned his own insignificance, and he says, "Who am I?"

And it is ever thus. When a saint feels that he is sent of God on any mission, there is prostration of spirit. This may be brought about by painful discipline of soul, but the end of God's training is to break down self-confidence so that when at last the person goes forth in service it is with the feeling, "Who am I?"

One great characteristic of the flesh we have acquired by being so long in "Egypt" is the dislike to say, "Who am I?" But God must produce this frame of mind before He uses us. The most cultivated understanding, human wisdom, and research will not stand in any stead in the service of God.

"And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?" Acts 7:26-28.

He gets misunderstood by those whom he seeks to serve. When he would be the man of peace, his reward is the taunt, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?"

Mark this, beloved. I am speaking of Moses as one knowing, in a sense, what communion with God was, but who had not learned as yet to throw off Egypt's strength and wisdom. We must fail when we go warring at our own charges. Many a saint runs on for a while (just after his conversion, perhaps) in the eagerness and zeal of the flesh, doing right things, but not in the spirit of dependence on God. By-and-by his energy flags, and he feels as though he were entirely useless, as though God could never again employ him in His service.

Now this is a profitable lesson, though a deeply humbling one. The Lord often trains an individual thus for much future usefulness in the Church. It was so with Moses.

"Then Moses fled at this saying. and was a stranger in the land of Madian." v. 29.

These forty years of Moses' life are passed over very slightly by God. No doubt, had man written the history of them, we should have had given to us a wonderful account of all that Moses did and said in the land of wisdom. The Spirit of God is silent as to it all. And why, beloved? Because the wisdom of "Egypt" is foolishness with God, and the strength of "Egypt" is weakness with God.

During the next forty years Moses is lost to Egypt and to Israel. But then he is alone with God. In solitude the Lord meets him at Horeb, "the mountain of God" (Exod. 3:1). And I doubt not that Horeb (solitude) is thus named because it was a place where Moses had enjoyed communion with God, and where he had learned a lesson which he never could have learned when in Egypt; that is, dependence on God. In secret he was being prepared for all those mighty achievements he was soon to be called on to perform before Pharaoh, and Egypt, and Israel.

It is in solitude that God chiefly teaches His people. The blessed Jesus sought for refreshment on this earth in being alone with God. And this is the place where the saint learns his own weakness and God's strength. He enters into the depths of his own evil, and also into the depths of God's grace. He learns to deny self, to subdue imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God (2 Cor. 10:5). He proves the necessity of the cross.

"And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them." Exod. 2:23-25. "The time of the promise" had at length come, and now we find Moses about to be prepared and sent forth as the "ruler" and "deliverer" of Israel (Acts 7:17, 35).

One preparation had been forty years passed in solitude, in secret training with God in the wilderness, but there was another thing needful; namely, the manifestation of God's glory. "And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush." v. 30.

There had never been anything like this seen in Egypt. Egypt was not the place for

God to show His "great sight" The wonders of nature were exhibited there, in the periodical inundation of the river and the like. The wonders of art were also there. But here was something that Moses' Egyptian wisdom failed in unraveling. "When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight." v. 31. "The bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." Exod. 3:2.

But unless we have wisdom to understand why the bush was not consumed, we have not the real wisdom of God. It is impossible to see the glory of the living God in Egypt. It is above all human thought or conception. It is something which man has. no power to explain. We may tell people of the sight, but they will not believe us; man's wisdom is at fault.

"And as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying, I am the God of thy _fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold." Acts 7:31, 32.

What must Moses' thoughts have been respecting all the glory of Egypt when he turned aside to see "this great sight?" (Exod. 3:3). And what would ours be, beloved, with regard to the world, were the eyes always and steadily fixed on the glory? When Moses was engaged in solitarily feeding the flock in the wilderness, there might have been some longings after the glory of Egypt; but these must have ceased when he had this manifestation made to him of the glory of God, "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

In Moses' needing a spokesman we are taught that neither the wisdom nor the eloquence of "Egypt" will be of any avail in God's service (Exod. 4:10-16).

Very often there may be busy activity in service, but not the quiet sitting at the feet of Jesus, drinking in from His lips our knowledge of truth and grace. We much need to realize that we have to do with God, even when we are serving others.

Mark what follows. "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of My people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush." vv. 34, 35.

But God must bring Moses out of Egypt first. He could not make such a communication to him there. It was the bane of Abraham to get into Egypt. He had no altar there. And so it is with us. When we get into the world it is the same thing. We cannot have our altar. Communion with God is interrupted.

In the first place God reveals His name: "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham," etc. v. 32. Second, His grace: "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of My people," etc. v. 34. How blessed to be assured that there is not one sorrow of His people, not one groan, but He knows it altogether.

Then God gives the formal commission: "And now come, I WILL SEND THEE into Egypt."

"And Moses said unto God, Who am I?" Exod. 3:11. After he had worshiped God as an unshod worshiper, there was a shrinking from that which God laid on him to do, though, forty years before, he had been most eager to enter upon the same sort of service. It is a most solemn thing to have to do with serving the people of God. The responsibility involved is that under which we must sink if left to ourselves.

Moses now knew that he that would serve Israel must have a great deal of shame and reproach to encounter. Hence the need of the training through which he had been put. So with regard to service in the Church. If Paul is "a chosen vessel" to bear Christ's name "before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel," the Lord, in making this known to Ananias, says, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:15, 16). And what was Paul's after-experience? "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches," etc. Again, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." 2 Cor. 12:10, 15.

Paul had the flesh crushed at the outset; crushed again after he had been taken up into the third heaven; crushed all the way through. In service, he never went on in the energy of the flesh, but as one who knew that it must be endurance to the very end (2 Tim. 2:10).

The preparation for active service is in secret with God, in learning ourselves in communion with Him. There the battle is really fought. Power for active service is acquired, not in active service, but in intercourse with God in secret.

The place of the servant of God is to hide himself and let God appear. Thus it was with the perfect Servant, our Lord Jesus. The most splendid achievement, without this, is not true service to God.

You may check your answers with those given on page 218.

Who kindled a fire because of cold and rain?

Who said, "There is a sound of abundance of rain"? 3. Who said that it thundered when they did not understand the sounds they heard?

Three Widows of Luke's Gospel

In the Lord's absence, it is according as we feel His absence, that He makes known to us His support. If the Bridegroom be absent, what can the children of the bridechamber do but fast? What else is their true and befitting attitude in the day in which He is thus, in one sense, taken away from them? If we realized this, our position, better, and felt more the absence of our Lord, we should more easily and happily ally ourselves to that which causes His absence-to His death. For that death, while it is, on the one hand, the climax of His rejection from the earth, it is, on the other, the portal to us of life and glory. And it is according as we enter into the one, that we practically learn the other. It is as we realize the desolation here, which He so deeply tasted of, and which His absence entails on us, that we know the blessing and deliverance which He has secured for us.

There are three orders of desolation, or widowhood, presented to us in the Gospel of Luke. The first (chap. 7: 11-16) is found at Nain (by interpretation, "beautiful").

The world in itself is beautiful, but at the gate of the city -what a sight! A young man dead - the only son of his mother - and she a widow! To her, however beautiful the place, all hope and light had departed from it. Not only widowed, but bereaved of her only son, her last link is severed; the desolation is complete. But what is the resource to her, or to one now similarly desolate? Christ, known in resurrection power; and the very fact of her desolation gives occasion to this knowledge of Him. If she had not been so desolate, she had not known Him thus; how could she? Her widowhood, her desolation, becomes a gain to her, for she thereby learns the resources that are in Him. To be a widow of this order, is to be with Christ and to know His succor. But unless we take our place as such, we shall not know Him thus. Abraham took his place in power when he offered up Isaac. Jacob took it when, on his deathbed, he turns for a moment from the earthly prospects of others to the spot where his own were buried, and says, "As for me,... Rachel died by me,...and I buried her... in the way of Ephrath." Gen. 48:7. Let the occasion be what it may, whatever brings us into real widowhood, brings us into blessing and likeness to Christ; for it is there that we take His yoke upon us and learn of Him.

The next order of widowhood we find in chapter 18. Here the desolate one is not even left unmolested. Great as is her desolation and inability to help herself, still she is not without an adversary, and power is in his hand. So that is not simple desolation, as is that of the first order. But here is one crushed already and an enemy at hand wielding his power against her. But what is the resource here? "Shall not God avenge His own elect?" We are to pray and not to faint. David at Ziklag was in such a position as this (1 Sam. 30). Widowed of everything, he was also in danger of the adversary; but he "encouraged himself in the LORD his God." And the greater his sense of desolation, the greater was his sense afterward of God's succor to him and the avenging of his enemies.

The third order is in chapter 21, and there it is the highest order. The widow answers to her calling; she is spending her all for the testimony of God. It is but two mites, and she might, one would say, have spent them, or one of them, on herself; but no, she will spend it on the temple- the structure

of testimony for God on the earth. She is a real widow, and that in the highest sense, for she is not only without expectation, but she has so far forgotten herself, that the little possession left to her she will not spend on herself; but her heart being in the circle of God's interests, she will give it to Him, and that without fear, but in simple and happy devotion to His interests on the earth which has no other interest for her. Paul in Philippians is a widow of this order-in prison-without an interest in anything here but what was for Christ's glory. He would spend his all on that. To him, to live was Christ.

The Trend of the Times: a Word in Season

We have a call in Isa. 51:1, issued to the Lord's people of another day, yet coming down to us: "Hearken to Me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Loan: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged."

In the business world it is often necessary to stop and take stock of one's operations to see whether these operations are on a sound basis or not. This is human prudence, but here we have a divine call for a similar course. In the New Testament we are told that the Rock so often mentioned in the Old Testament was Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). We have a similar statement in Psalm 40:2, 3: "He brought Me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set My feet upon a rock, and established My goings. And He hath put a new song in My mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD."

Let us pause and consider. First, let us lift up our gaze and look "steadfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith" (Heb. 12:2; J.N.D. Trans.); then let us look backward and "remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh that at that time ye were without Christ,... having no hope, and without God in the world." Eph. 2:11, 12. Is not this the pit from whence we have been digged? "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [Satan], the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Eph. 2:2.

In Gal. 1:4 we have the work of Christ brought before us in a twofold way. "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." He gave Himself for our sins, and then He also gave Himself to deliver us from this present evil "age." "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the wicked one." 1 John 5:19; J.N.D. Trans.

Another has remarked that there are two great systems in this world: the one that belongs to the Father, and the other that belongs to Satan. We have a remarkable expression in Colossians 1:12-14: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." We learn from this that the child of God is no longer under the power of Satan as he once was; he has been delivered. But we learn elsewhere that he is still in the enemy's land and subject to Satan's wiles. The word is, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11), for we are told, "Whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." Rom. 6:16. At the time the New Testament was being written, the record is that some had "erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

1 Tim. 6:10.

We are warned furthermore, "that in the last days perilous times shall come," and truly we are in the last days. Then further on we are told that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." (2 Tim. 3:1, 13.) Let us look somewhat into the ways of this arch deceiver, that his methods of operation may be understood so that we can "flee these things" (1 Tim. 6:11). His methods have been revealed to us; we are told that "we are not ignorant of his devices." 2 Cor. 2:11. The Apostle John, in the last-written book of the New Testament canon, gives us a remarkable summary of these operations. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." 1 John 2:16. If we search the Scriptures we can see that it is these three things which are used on all that ever came onto this earth. If we turn to Gen. 3, where the first man was vanquished and by whom sin came into this world, we will see that it was by these three things that he was overcome. "And when the woman saw that the forbidden tree was good for food [the lust of the flesh], and that it was pleasant to the eyes [the lust of the eyes], and a tree to be desired to make one wise [the pride of life], she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." Gen. 3:6.

Satan's method of approach is first to challenge - "Hath God said?" - then to flatly contradict what had been said, and then to put forward to those who had given their ear to him what now seemed to them something better than what God in His love and goodness had provided for His creatures. It has been remarked that Satan only puts forth half-truths; he said, That ye shall know good, but he did not say that they would lack the power to do it; then he said that they would know evil, but again he failed to put before them that they would lack the power to keep from evil. All through the Old Testament history we will be able to trace that when man walked in his own strength and intelligence and did not seek the wisdom from above, he was under one or more of these three things. However, it is not now my object to attempt to trace this, but to pass on to the One spoken of as the "second man, out of heaven" (1 Cor. 15:47; J.N.D. Trans.). He it is of whom Moses and the prophets did write, the One who would glorify God where everyone else had failed. Immediately after His baptism, He "was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil." Luke 4:1, 2. This did not take place in the "garden of delights" where God had placed the first man, but in a barren wilderness. We are not told what these temptations were, but when they were ended and after His fasting forty days, the devil came unto Him. Heaven at His baptism had opened unto Him, and a voice had announced, "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." Luke 3:22. The devil brought before Him the same three things in the most seducing way that had ever been presented to a man, and, as stated above, the Apostle John tells us at the close of the New Testament canon, that these three things summarize all that is in the world. So we do well that we examine them carefully and prayerfully, that we may receive instruction.

We are also told that "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." 1 Pet. 4:7. The enemy knows this too, as his demons challenged the Lord when He was here, with "Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Matt. 8:29. The scriptures referred to show us that his efforts are intensified as he approaches the time of the end. Rev. 12:12 also brings this before us: "For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

If we examine these three temptations as brought before the Lord, we shall see a very subtle effort concealed in each of them. The first temptation was at the completion of His forty days' fast: "He afterward hungered." Satan suggests a way to appease His hunger and at the same time manifest His power as the Son of God. He intimates that there would be nothing wrong in satisfying His hunger now that His fast was over, but the only begotten Son was ever in the bosom of the Father, and He came down from heaven, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him (John 6:38). To have listened to the wiles of the tempter would have taken Him out of the place of dependence on His Father. So He answers from the Word of God: "It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." Luke 4:4. Another has said that the Lord did not walk through this scene manifesting the glory that belonged to Him as the Son of God except on rare occasions; but there ever shone out the moral glory, which could not be hid, which belonged to Him as the Son of man, which attracted to Him those who labored and were heavy laden for the rest that He, in the path of the dependent Man from heaven, alone could give. That One was treading the path of faith and fulfilling the Word of God and so marking out a path in which to lead the "many sons unto glory" (Heb. 2:10).

How does Satan now apply to the Lord's people this method which he tried out on the Lord, and which He withstood? We are fast approaching the time spoken of in Rev. 13:17: "And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." I do not doubt that to the natural man it will appear as a wonderful system of things, and it is being developed now.

John, in his first epistle, chapter 2:15, tells us to "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." We are told that the word "world" used here expresses an "arranged age." It is the same expression used in Gal. 6:14: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." It is a world arranged by a masterful hand at deception. In Matt. 13, while men slept, the enemy sowed tares in among the good seed planted by the Sower. He would entice the people of God to mix with the tares in all their activities, that they might have a better time in this world. This would take them from the path of dependence into what Satan would fain have them believe is an easier path. "Man shall not live by bread alone," was the answer to this; that is, it was not His object in life to consider bodily needs first and to sacrifice the divine principles of the Word of God for sustaining life here. The Word of God was to be a lamp unto His feet and a light for His path.

The second temptation was to see if the Son of God could be lured from the path of dependence by the lust of the eyes. It is said that people are impressed far more by what they see than by what they hear. Thus we can perceive how important what is brought before the eyes is to the tempter. He takes the Son of God to a very high mountain, as though he were doing Him a very special favor to bring Him into such a prominent place that He might have a favorable viewpoint, and "showed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time" (Luke 4:5; in Matthew is added, "and the glory of them"). He promised, "All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them.... If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine." Luke 4:6, 7. I suppose that there was never a more magnificent display of "the world" and "the things that are in the world," and we can say without any doubt that it will never be matched again by men or Satan. It is not necessary for him to give such a display to dazzle the eyes of the ordinary man. We are, however, fast approaching the time for the stepping up of displays to man. "And then shall that Wicked be

revealed,... whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." 2 Thess. 2:8-10.

In a series of lectures on The Revelation delivered by J.N.D. more than 100 years ago, he made this remark concerning this time of the end: "The miracles wrought by the spirits of demons are those which are so beyond the power of natural science to interpret that they cannot be understood in the age in which they are worked. A more advanced age might be able to understand them. The devil has uncommon knowledge of the resources of nature and science; they may be beyond the power of man to effect, but such a combination of natural things are within the reach of Satan." (Collected Writings, Vol. 34, page 336.)

The coming of the one styled "the beast" is foretold in The Revelation, and in chapter 13:3 is added, "All the world wondered after the beast." Again in verse 8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Many have wondered in times past how the actions of this beast could be brought before the whole world to cause them to wonder at him. This is very apparent now in this stepped-up age, for by the aid of television all his acts which he wants to be seen can be brought into the homes in that day. He is training mankind to that end now, bringing into the homes in his enticements that part of the world he desires that they should see.

It will be noticed that when Satan brought before the Lord his masterpiece of the kingdoms of the world and their glory, that he did not bring before Him their poverty, oppression, misery, and corruption. That would not be in line with his methods of operation. His purpose has been at all times to deceive. Whether in the garden of Eden, or with the Lord on the high mountain, or in the living rooms of the present time, he never tells the complete story in connection with his allurements. Truly indeed he is manifesting himself more and more as the prince of the power of the air.

How did the Lord meet the deceiver? In the same way that His people can meet him now: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Luke 4:8. Do these things hinder worship of the Father? We are in the hour of which the Lord spoke in John 4:23, 24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The Apostle tells us in 1 John 4:6: "He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." Can there be the worship of the Father when partaking of the spirit of error? He also says in chapter 2:15: "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

The third temptation was the most subtle of all, for there he quotes a scripture referring to the Messiah in an endeavor to lead Him from the path as a dependent Man to have Him make a demonstration before all as to who He was. But Satan omitted part of the quotation when he said, "He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee [in all Thy ways]: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." Luke 4:10, 11. To have heeded this temptation would have taken Him out of the ways of the Messiah marked out in the Word, and would have placed Him in the ways of Satan. But the spring of the pride of life was not there in the One "who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26), and His

answer given in Matthew 4:7 is, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

It is well to bear this in mind when the tempter, his agents or ministers, quote Scripture, that it is written again. Satan is ever ready to seduce by disassociating scripture from its proper connection. If the lust of the eyes is to further the manifestation of the beast referred to above, the pride of life is to bring about the training necessary to produce him and to train the world to accept him when he does come. "And they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies." Rev. 13:4, 5.

A great deal of emphasis has been laid on the promoting of self-expression in child training, to the disregard of the teaching of the best Book that was ever written on child training - the Holy Scriptures. Some alarm has been voiced by those who have had to cope with the problem of juvenile delinquency, as to where this sort of training is going to end. The prince of the power of the air has his program and he knows where he wants it to lead.

In closing this article, a scripture comes to mind of a parallel in a yet future day. We have a woman brought before us in Rev. 12 who no doubt is Israel of a past and a future day and she is to endure great persecutions. "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth." Rev. 12:14-16. The Church also is looked at as a woman in 2 Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:23-32, and Rev. 21:9. Let us look at 2 Cor. 11:2, 3: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Does it not look as though the "prince of the power of the air" is casting "out of his mouth... a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood"?

It is necessary that the bulwarks of Scripture be erected that this flood might be diverted into channels that the earth might swallow it up. "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following." Psalm 48:12, 13. In one sense, if the flood is not diverted, there will be none left to tell it to the generation following. The Lord may have to use "the stranger from a far land" to pass the story of His grace on to the "generation following," for if He tarries, He has a story to be told, and it will be told. "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen." 2 Pet. 3:17, 18.

True Humility

While it takes grace to take the low place, it takes more grace to do it in the right spirit. There is such a thing as taking the low place with the spirit of an injured man, and with the feeling that you are some kind of a martyr.

True humility, on the other hand, will take the low place cheerfully and not only submit to the will of God but agree to the same. A false humility is pride in disguise.

True humility can not only take the low place, but any place, provided the Lord is glorified.

Upon This Rock

Men may talk much about the Church, but there is no understanding of it till the Person of the Lord is known. Simon was only a poor ignorant fisherman, but he made a glorious unwavering confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." There was no pause, no hesitation; he knew it. But the knowledge came by revelation from the Father, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." There was no happier man on the face of the earth than Simon at that moment. Then indeed there ensues a further revelation: "And I also, I say unto thee that... on this rock I will build My assembly" (J. N.D. Trans.) - "builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit."

But in Eph. 5 we have another thing; this blessed Person has "loved the church" and given Himself for it. The Spirit here employs the nearest and dearest of earthly ties -the love of equals. It is not here an angel I am called to love, but a fellow creature brought into the happiest and closest relationship with myself - "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." But if that is so sweet, what is it to be the object of the love of the Son of God? When we learn His Person and then His love to us, we may learn about the Church.

We are not only living stones on the Rock, but we are "builded" there. We are not loose stones to go anywhere, nor are we thrown down into the road in a heap, but we are "builded together," each having his own place to fill in the "spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2:5), and nothing can, in His grace, move us from this allocation, nor from Himself the Builder and the Rock, and by-and-by He will present to Himself His Church in all its glorious completeness, ourselves then perfected in glory (John 17:23).

Vitality and Freshness

In order to enjoy and retain spiritual vitality, freshness, fervor, and power, we require to be kept in living contact with Christ Himself, and this can be done only as our minds are freshly nourished by the Holy Ghost with the truths of the Holy Scriptures.

If we study the Word with prayer, faith, and dependence, and get the knowledge of Christ in His Person, life, death, headship, and glory, we shall have the elements of vitality and freshness within our reach; but in the Lord's supper we are brought very solemnly in contact with Christ in His death, and thereby the desires and affections are drawn forth toward Him in a manner and with an intensity of fervor and spiritual enjoyment that will lead to the happy and spontaneous outflow of thanksgiving, adoration, and praise. W. R.

The Way Into Heavenly Places

We must remember that all these things which are written "happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Cor. 10:11: This expression, "ends of the world," has its importance, as also this, "once in the end of the world" (Heb. 9:26). It is what we are in as Christians, consequent on the end of all the dealings and ways of God with man as to teaching or testing him. Now man as man has been fully tried, and God has set up another Man. He is more than man, too, but still another Man, and it is in grace too, surely, for sinners, that we may find a better paradise than that which has been lost. The Lord Jesus Christ could say, when He came to the end, "Now is the judgment of this world." We find man tried in every way from innocence to the cross of Christ, and the Son Himself is cast out of the vineyard and slain. John the Baptist came after the law and the prophets, and preached repentance (Matt. 11), but they would not repent. When he mourned, they did not lament; and when the Lord came and piped, they would not dance. In that same chapter He says, "Come unto Me." Now man must come to Christ as ruined, according to His own invitation.

Man may be decently alienated from God, or indecently, but it is all the same. "The carnal mind is enmity." We must come to the second Man -to Christ. God did not set up the second while He could recognize the first. He cannot own both; and to acknowledge man in the flesh now, is to set aside the fact that God has set up another. What I would now set forth is the full deliverance we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. I need not say this is not deliverance as to our body, but blessed liberty of spirit while we are waiting for the deliverance of the body. We are not only forgiven, but we are brought into liberty of association with God in holiness.

This deliverance is shadowed in Israel's history by figures -Egypt, the wilderness, Jordan, Canaan. We are all aware that the general idea is that Jordan means death, and Canaan, heaven. But as soon as we enter Canaan, we get conflict. This is evidently not the heavenly places as a place of rest. That which characterizes Canaan is conflict, and we get a figure of what we find brought out in Eph. 6 - the wrestling, not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places, for which we need to have on the whole armor of God. But if we are to have conflict there, we must first be there. What I would speak of at this time then is the way we get into the heavenly places. Remember, Christ, is there. We find in the history of Israel the way a soul progresses to the heavenly places. It is when they were in Canaan, and not in the wilderness, that the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. They kept the Passover as circumcised; they ate the old corn of the land, and the manna ceased.

And this is the way the soul gets into deliverance "from this present evil world," and is introduced into the heavenly places.

The children of Israel were slaves in Egypt, making bricks without straw; but God comes down to deliver them and He talks only of Canaan, and not of the wilderness. But first He appears in the character of a judge. He must pass them through the judgment. They were as great sinners as the Egyptians (perhaps greater, for they had a greater knowledge of God); but still, wherever the blood

was, there was shelter - perfect security. It was only because the blood was on their houses that God passed over. It was not a question of communion, but the blood keeping God out as a judge.

So with the believer now. It is a blessed fact that, wherever the blood is relied on, God cannot see a single sin. God would have to deny the efficacy of the blood if He did not pass over. What screened them was not their seeing the blood, but God's seeing it. Many souls are saying, I do not know whether I have accepted it aright; but what gives peace is knowing that God has accepted it. They think they must look into their hearts to see if they have accepted it aright; yet a simple soul would not think of such a thing, but would only be too happy to rest in God's value of Christ's blood. It is quite true that we ought to find the blood more precious each day, but that is not questioning my acceptance. It is a question of growing affections; but what gives peace is not growing 'affections, but the fact that God has accepted the blood, and He must deny the efficacy of the blood of Christ if He did not receive me. The effect of it was to arrest His hand in judgment. Not only has my sin been pardoned, but God has been glorified at the cross of Christ. That gives full value to the blood.

If God judged sin only, then He is righteous, but there is no love. If He had said of men, They are poor wretched things, and cannot help it, so I will pardon all, there might be love shown, but there would be no righteousness. It would not be holy love. But when we come to the cross, we have perfect righteousness, and perfect love. God's truth and majesty are fully brought out there, because He, the captain of our salvation, was there made "perfect through suffering." He has suffered, and now the Son of man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. He has run the race, and is now set down at the right hand of God.

"God hath highly exalted Him." In virtue of the cross, man is glorified. Stephen sees the Son of man in heaven; that is the wonderful thing. Stephen did not say, I see the glory (this was natural in heaven), but "I see... the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" in the heavens - Man in heaven. He is there not only as Son of God, but as man. He gets His place in the glory of God. We have this wonderful truth because He has finished the work God gave Him to do. None but He could sit there. God has been glorified by what Man has wrought. He was divine, of course, or He could not have done it. This becomes the basis of everything - man's having a place in the glory of God, not at His right hand, which is the place of pre-eminence for Christ alone. Now that He is there, He has sent down the Holy Ghost to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment - of righteousness both to the believer and to the unbeliever - to the unbeliever because he rejects Christ - to the believer because he is associated with Him. He convinces the world, not as individuals, but all in a lump. When the world cast out Christ, the Father said, I will have Him; and now He is set down as the result of His finished work. He receives it now from His Father as man. The angels desire to look into this. All God's moral attributes have been glorified in man in the Person of Christ. It is the foundation not only of the putting away our sin, but of the glory of God in righteousness and truth.

When we have passed through the veil and entered within the holiest in the consciousness of our souls, what value do we not see in the blood! And now we apprehend what the cross is! Now we contemplate the cross for the affections of our souls. We meditate and think of the cross; then we get growth. When we are at home with God, there can be growth. It is not there we find peace, for peace is had by learning that righteousness has accepted the blood which love gave. Now love

gives it to me, but righteousness is exalted in giving it. Israel goes to the Red Sea, and here they are brought to a standstill. They found they were hemmed in on every side, and they were sore afraid. So often when a person is delivered from judgment in one sense, he meets somehow with death and finds Satan pursuing. Many a soul gets peace and comfort while looking at the cross, but is afraid when it thinks of judgment. "I am a poor sinner delighting in the cross; it just suits me." Does judgment suit you? When they came to the Red Sea, it was not judgment, but God a positive deliverer. They had known God as a judge in Egypt, and the blood had screened them. Now they learn Him at the Red Sea as a deliverer. They never see the "salvation of God" till they get to the Red Sea, and they pass out of Egypt. They are not only sheltered from judgment, but brought into a new place.

The blood screens us from judgment on account of our sins, and by that same cross and resurrection we are brought to God. Christ dead and risen is what we have in Romans, and the result is we are brought to God as our Father. Death and resurrection take me clear out of the place I was in. If I say, I am a guilty sinner, He says, You are justified. If I say, Defiled, He says, You are cleansed. If I have offended, then I am forgiven. He has met every question that could perplex the soul.

The new place of man is as perfectly redeemed and brought to God. Not only are his sins put away, but he is delivered, brought out into the wilderness. When God speaks of deliverance, He does not say a word of the wilderness. I am brought out into a new place altogether - not yet the heavenly places, but I have "redemption through His blood." So we find two conditions of the Israelites - in the wilderness, and in Canaan. And there are two distinct parts in the life of a Christian: first, what we find in Hebrews and Galatians, the place of deliverance from the present evil world (Gal. 1:4); that is, the wilderness. Second, I am in Canaan, the heavenly places, as shown in Ephesians and Colossians. The wilderness is what the world is to the Christian. What has a dead and risen man to do with the world? Now death and judgment are behind me, but I have not left conflict behind.

The blessed Lord went into death, and bore the judgment. If I am associated with Him, it is all behind Him. If I have a part in Christ, I have a part in the deliverance. (See Psalm 22.) As soon as heard "from the horns of the unicorns," He says, "I will declare," etc. The first thing the Lord does in resurrection is to declare the Father's name to His brethren. He brings them out into the same place He is in. In John 20 He says to Mary Magdalene, "Go to My brethren," and then He leads their praises as the first-born of many brethren: "In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." He brings them to His God and their God, His Father and their Father. He has been all alone in His suffering and wrath. Now all is settled, and now He says, "In the midst of the congregation." He associates us with the praises-"not ashamed to call them brethren." He never said, "My brethren," nor "peace," until after He was risen. He had said, "Fear not," and anticipatively He had said, "My peace I give unto you"; that is, you shall have it. But peace was not then made, and it is not till He had made peace by the blood of His cross that He came and preached peace to them that were "afar off" and to them that were "nigh." He passed into the new place as man, and says, Now you are here with Me. Now we are associated with Christ, as Israel sings, "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation." We have the promise of glory too: "Thou shalt bring them in."

(Exod. 15:13-17.)

The Way Into Heavenly Places

The wilderness is the path of a Christian in which he learns himself. It is the place of a soul who is really at rest before God. There may have been experiences before of slavery, etc., but they were the experiences of a soul in which God has acted, but which is not yet delivered. It is where a soul is who knows he is redeemed. If I only knew the blood, I am still in Egypt; but if I have passed through the Red Sea, I know God as a deliverer. I am not in the flesh but in the Spirit (Rom. 8). The prodigal son had experiences before he returned home, but they were the experiences of one who had not yet met the father. There was a work in the man. He found he was perishing. He had repented and set out, but there still remained the question, 'What will he say to me when I meet him? Will he set me on his right hand, or left? He had his speech already made up, and had fixed the place he was to take in the house - that of a servant - but he had not yet met the father. He learns what his place was in the house by what the father was to him when he met him, and he says nothing about the place of a servant. He is brought in as a son. He did not, could not, say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants," for his father was on his neck. It was not what he was for God, but what God was for him. He put the best robe on him, not a robe. He met him in his sins, but did not bring him in in his sins. God met him in rags, but he is brought in in Christ.

If I have got through the Red Sea, God is a deliverer and not a judge, in virtue of the full blessed work of Christ. I am not in the flesh. It is not merely that my sins are forgiven, but I am in the second Man, in Christ, before God. The first practical effect is, I am brought into the wilderness. A person has a great deal to learn after he is redeemed. I am out of the flesh, and have my place in and with Christ; but the learning of the flesh in me is a humbling process. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee," etc. "Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years." (Deut. 8.) God was thinking about their very clothes and their feet, but He gave them all the discipline and correction needed to show them themselves. And when through their unbelief they refuse to enter the land of Canaan, being unwilling to go up and fight the Amorites, He in His grace turns around in unflinching love and patience and dwells with them all the forty years of their wilderness journeyings.

What characterizes the Christian is the presence of the Holy Ghost, God dwelling in him in virtue of redemption. He does not dwell with man in innocence; He never dwelt in Eden. The dwelling of God with man was always consequent on redemption, whether in the cloud with Israel, or in the Church by the Holy Ghost. He had walked with Adam in the garden, dined with Abraham, so to speak, but He never dwelt with them. But as soon as He gets a people redeemed, He dwells with them and talks of holiness. He adapts Himself to their circumstances. When they were in bondage in Egypt, He came to them as deliverer; when they were in the wilderness dwelling in tents, He pitched His tent among them, and led them through. When they arrived at Canaan, He met them, sword in hand, as their captain, to lead them in conflict; and when at length they were all settled down, He built a beautiful house and dwelt in their midst. So with His people now. He dwells with us by the Holy Ghost: first in us as individuals ("Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost"); second, in the Church collectively ("In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit"). It is not merely that they are born of God, but they have the

blood on them, and there the Holy Ghost dwells. "After that ye believed," etc. "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." "He which stablisheth us... is God." He quickens unbelievers and dwells in believers. The presence of the Holy Ghost is what forms the distinctive character of the Christian and of the Church. The leper was washed, sprinkled, and anointed - the blood placed upon his ear, his hand, and his foot; and then the oil upon the blood. It was most holy; nothing must pass into the ear or be done by the hand, that would defile; neither must they do anything that would defile the feet in walk. The anointing - that is, the presence of the Holy Spirit in us - is the seal of the value of the blood. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." Rom. 5:5. The Holy Spirit is the earnest, not of the love of God (for we have this), but of the inheritance for which we wait.

In the wilderness God is humbling us, proving us, and making all work together for good. Circumcision is not practicable in the wilderness. Israel comes to Jordan and crosses it. Here we have a figure, not of Christ dying for me, but of my dying and rising with Him. It is not simply that Christ died for me, but I am crucified with Christ. I reckon myself dead and have received Christ as my life. I am dead, risen, and seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. I am gone out of the wilderness altogether. I was dead down there in sins, and Christ came down and died for sins; and now I am quickened, raised up, and seated in Christ. That is the new place altogether. This is the doctrine taught in Eph. 1 am no longer looked at as alive in the flesh at all. I have got into heavenly places. And the moment I have got there, all is mine - "All spiritual blessings in heavenly places." But then it is only as I set my foot on my blessing, that I make it practically my own. And then I find that there is another foot there - the enemy is in possession - so that I have need of the whole armor of God. The place we have to pass through is the world as a wilderness; but, as to my position, I am in the heavenly places, and I must walk accordingly. If I am living in the world as a man in the flesh, I meet my neighbors and I may find them kind and obliging, but as soon as I begin to talk of heavenly things, I find them opposed.

Well, I have got to show forth Christ in living relationships. If it is true that I am in Christ, it is true also that Christ is in me. "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." John 14:20. The standard is not a man running on toward heaven, but it is showing out the Christ that is in me. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. 4:10) -that and nothing else. "Death worketh in us, but life in you." I hold that Paul is dead. It was Christ acting through Paul. If we fail, that is wilderness work. If Christ is in me, I must never let a bit of anything but Christ be seen. Now you have Christ in you, which is positive power and nothing else; now you see that that is seen and nothing else. Joshua says, Set your foot on it. It is yours. I have got into Canaan and I get conflict directly. I am sitting in heavenly places in Christ. It is all mine, and now I am seeking to get hold of the things that I have a right to. "As captain of the host of the LORD am I now come." We get testing in the wilderness, conflict in Canaan. When I am in Canaan, I have spiritual intelligence and activity in that which belongs to me. "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" - how much have we each realized of the spiritual blessings which are ours?

In the stones taken out of Jordan, we find that the believer takes with him the character of death. The ark went down. We died to sin. The world and Satan's power is all gone. We belonged to death once; now death belongs to us. Now I am bound to say, Reckon yourself dead. We are never told to die to sin, but we "are dead." The first thing is, we have passed through Jordan dry,

and that is our title to reckon ourselves dead. Circumcision is the practical application of this. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," etc. (Col. 3). If I see a man impatient, I do not deny he is dead, but I say, You need a little of Gilgal. If I see a man looking at nonsense in the town, I say, I do not deny you are dead, but you need to be circumcised. That is the practical application of the death of Christ to our souls, actually realizing it. Most strikingly in Joshua we get Ai taken, then conquest after conquest; but we find Gilgal, the place of circumcision, was always the place to which the camp returned after their victories. No matter what success you have, you must go back to Gilgal. The book of Joshua is the history of successful energy; the book of Judges, of failure, with God coming in and removing it from time to time.

Gilgal, the place of self-judgment, is the place of practical divine power. We find even victories dangerous unless we return to the judgment of the flesh. After preaching the gospel, the most blessed work that can be, we must go back to Gilgal. Israel began well at Jericho; what were the high walls to faith? The higher the walls, the more the tumble when they come down. But instead of returning to Gilgal, they get self-confident and send up a few to take Ai. But there we have failure. They have to return to Gilgal and judge the flesh. In Judges, the angel of the Lord goes up from Gilgal to meet them at Bochim; that is, from the place of power to the place of tears. They had left the place of power for the place of sorrow. They sacrifice there, but it is in tears.

After the passage of the Jordan, the first thing we saw was the setting up of the twelve stones; second, circumcision; third, we find the Passover. They can now look back at the foundation of everything in redemption. They keep it now, not as guilty and protected by it - that they had been in Egypt - but as celebrating the truth that the death of the blessed Son of God is the foundation of all blessing. The Lord's supper is nothing less than celebrating that which is the foundation of God's giving of everything. The more we look at it, the more we find the cross holding a place that nothing else has, except Him who died on it. "As is the heavenly," etc. "As He is, so are we," etc. The cross is even a deeper thing than the glory. The glory has been obtained by it, but the cross is where the moral nature of God, His holiness and His love, have been glorified. Here we see the circumcised believer in Canaan feeding upon the lamb, the remembrance of the death of Christ. The fourth thing seen is that they feed on the "old corn of the land," and the manna ceases. The old corn is a type of the heavenly Christ. The manna suited the wilderness - Christ come down from heaven. In the midst of all the circumstances down here, He meets us on the journey, and we feed on Him. It is the same Christ - only in another character - that we see in the old corn of the land. We have a humbled and glorified Christ for the food of our souls - not only

His life down here, but what we find in 2 Cor. 3 "We all, with open [unveiled] face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." It is the fruit of the land - a humbled Christ who is now in the Canaan to which we belong. They had not yet taken a city, but they sit down at the table which God has spread for them in the presence of their enemies. All is mine before a single victory. I sit down in the presence of my enemies. He has spread a table for me. God's delight is my delight. Before I draw my sword in conflict, I sit down and know that everything is mine.

Last, we have the man with the drawn sword come to take his place as captain of the Lord's host. In heavenly things it is all conflict. Mark the word here. It is a question of, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" There is no middle place, but a complete split. If you are for the world, you are

against Christ. The moment it becomes a question of Christ, it must be either for or against. The world has crucified Christ, and He has said, "He that is not with Me is against Me"; and "He that is not against us is on our part." I know that the meaning of these two statements has been questioned and thought difficult to reconcile, but it is very simple. If we are for Christ, we must be against the world; and if we are not against Him, the opposition of the world to Him is so strong that it will not have us. "Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light," and there can be no uniting of the two. You never see the world accept faithfulness to Christ. The human heart is enmity to Christ. Satan's great object is that Christians should suit their Christianity to the world. You will never get the world to take God as its portion. "As captain of the host of the LORD am I now come." Of course, it was the Lord Himself.

We have the same words here as at the burning bush to Moses, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy." In the spiritual conflict we have to carry on, holiness is as much a question as redemption; and when we come to have conflict, we must be as holy as we shall be when we are with Him. Thank God, redemption has done this. You will have the Lord with you. The One who carries on the warfare is the Holy One who has redeemed us, and the Lord's own strength is with us.

How far have we the testimony? Can we say, I am dead, and my life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3)? Is your thought and purpose to be at Gilgal or at Bochim? Is it your thought to go on in the knowledge of perfect redemption? to have everything of the flesh judged? and to have the Lord's strength with you for successful conflict?

"Prove all things." By what standard? My own comprehension, or God's revealed Word? "Hold fast that which is good."

What Faith Sees

The world would persuade us to be "good Christians" while acting and walking as others. Called to glory, faith of necessity quits Egypt; God has not placed the glory there. To be well off in the world is not to be well off in heaven. "All that is in the world... is not of the Father." To leave the world, when the world has driven us out, is not faith; it is to show that the will was to remain there as long as we could. Faith acts on the promises of God and not because it is driven out by the world. Moses sees "Him who is invisible." This makes him decided. When we realize the presence of God, Pharaoh is nothing. It is not that circumstances are less dangerous, but God is there. In communion, they become the occasion of tranquil obedience. Jesus drinks the cup, Peter draws the sword; that which brings out obedience in Jesus is a stumbling block to Peter. Where there is lack of communion, there is weakness and indecision.

What Seek Ye? Part 1

In the chapter we have read, we are reminded by our blessed Lord that we are not always going to stay here. Things are not always going to run on as they are now, from day to day. There is a great crisis in the offing. We are going to be taken out of this scene one of these days, and ushered into new surroundings. We are not there yet. We are on the way.

In this chapter we have certain exhortations and admonitions that are to be for our profit while we are waiting for the translation. This paragraph opens with the word, "Rather seek ye the kingdom of God." Everyone here is a seeker. I take it that I am not speaking to an audience composed of aimless people. A tramp is someone who is going, but he is going nowhere. He leads an aimless life; one place is as good as another, and one day is as good as another; so he lives from day to day with no object. Not so with you. You are a seeker. You have an object before you.

Perhaps it would be well to stop and let the Lord ask us a question that He asked those in the 1st chapter of John's Gospel: "What seek ye?" I believe that is a question we need to ask often. Remember, He was the One who asked it. "What seek ye?" The exhortation here is, "Seek ye the kingdom of God." Is that what we are seeking?

We have entered a new year. Yes, the old is in the past. The sands have all run through the glass. Now we are starting over again. 'What is the object before our souls? Shall we take inventory? What would you like this year to bring forth in your life? "What seek ye?" Those two in the 1st chapter of John's Gospel gave a lovely answer. They said, "Master, where dwellest Thou?" What were they seeking? Companionship with Christ. And He said to them, "Come and see," and they went and saw where He dwelt and they abode with Him that same hour. Oh, they found the end of the quest, didn't they? They found Christ as the object of their souls, and they dwelt with Him. We are not in heaven yet; we are beset with the perplexities and problems that have to do with the necessities of life. We are fathers and mothers and husbands and wives and children and employers and servants. We have our various relationships here in life. We cannot ignore the fact, but at the same time, what is the overall object that is giving color to all these relationships? What is the gripping motive of the heart? the driving power in the life that is carrying us on through all these various human relationships? The exhortation here is, "Seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you."

That term, "kingdom of God," is a very wide one in Luke's Gospel. I take it that the kingdom of God takes in all those moral questions of every relationship of life, in responsibility to the One who placed us here in this world. You and I came not into this world by any choosing of our own. We did not ask to come here. We find ourselves here, and when we come to years of intelligence, we gain the knowledge of the One who placed us here. (I trust that those to whom I am speaking this afternoon have made the acquaintance of that One, not only as the One that spread the heavens, but as the One that died for sinners - have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior, and have become a part of the family of God.) You now have a heavenly relationship, so you start all over again and you bring every relationship of life to Him, and say, Now, Lord, I am going to be a

father, I am going to be a mother, a son, a daughter, a brother, a sister, a child, a master, a servant, in a new way. I am going to seek to be a father that walks before God. I am going to seek to be a mother that has the consciousness all the time that I am responsible to bring up my little family to the glory of my beloved Lord; and if you are a master, you seek in that position of yours to carry the spirit of Christ; and if you are a servant, you are not one with eye-service, as men pleasers, but you realize that solemn word, "Thou God seest me." Every relationship of life assumes a new dignity now. You bring it to Him, and you ask Him to bless it. Ah, what a happy service that is. What a transformation of life that is. Every day becomes a day when you and I can use every relationship of life to the glory of God.

"What seek ye?" What is our object? - and one wonders sometimes if we get our eyes off the true Object. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." This room is well filled with young people. I have always had a warm spot in my heart for them. I was young once myself. Young folks, what are you seeking? You are laying your plans; what do you have ahead? I trust that you have bowed the knee many a time, as you are making decisions in life, regarding the kind of home you are going to buy, where you are going to locate, the kind of position you are going to accept. and asked the Lord if this is His will. Is it for the glory of God? "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

We are living in strange days. Man seems to have a sense of insecurity as perhaps he has never had in the history of the world, and there is a desperate effort on the part of those in this world to reach a measure of security. They are seeking it nationally and internationally, but not only so; the man of the world seeks individually to make himself secure in a temporal way. He takes out insurance against that catastrophe and against this and that possibility, so that the ramifications of insurance have become exceedingly complex - all in an effort to establish a sense of security in this world. What does our verse say? "Seek ye first the kingdom of God,... and all these things shall be added unto you." Are you willing to step out on that promise? By way of illustration: In the old "Traveler's Guide," there was a picture of a man standing at the edge of a frozen river and testing the ice with his cane. He wondered if it would hold him, yet in the middle of the river was a huge sled load of logs drawn by a yoke of oxen! How foolish we are! Is not the God that built the sky able to take you and me safely through this journey if we make first things first? "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Luke 12:32: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Here we have one of those sweet and precious "Fear nots" of the Bible. I have never counted them; perhaps you have, but their number is legion. "Fear not, fear not, fear not!" Who says it? Oh, it is our God who says it to us. We mentioned a moment ago that we are on the threshold of a new year. Are you apprehensive? Do you tremble? Do you wonder what lies ahead? Do you shrink back? Listen. "Fear not." Who says it? The blessed Lord. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

"Little flock." We are living in the days of bigness. People love to talk in superlatives, and everything is bigger and better. Sad to say, that spirit has invaded the spiritual realm. It has gotten in among God's people, and they are trying to run competition and keep up with the activity and pace of the world, so we draw our pattern of spiritual progress after the pattern of the great men of this world. Oh, beloved, when our Lord spoke these words, He was addressing a little flock, a

precious little flock. They were not numbered by the thousands and tens of thousands. No, they were numbered by the two's and three's.

"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." After our Lord had served here for a matter of 31/2 years of intense ministry, how many were there in that great city - Jerusalem - waiting in the upper room for the promise? One hundred and twenty. After 31/2 years of labor and toil and tears, a little group of 120 waiting in the upper room for the promise. Oh, beloved, when we deal in the things of God, we must remember that we are dealing with what He can own as real. "Little flock." We cannot look out over this world, so apostate from God, and think for a moment that that is the little flock about which He is talking. But in the midst of a great, sinful, apostate world, God marks out here and there a precious soul that is washed in the blood of the Lamb, and numbers them among the little flock.

"Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not."

God is not looking for mammoth programs. He is not looking for vast amphitheaters. He is seeking precious souls. He is seeking them where they are to be found, and you and I from day to day can seek grace from Him to speak faithfully of Christ as we have opportunity. I sometimes wonder, as I behold the methods that have become so popular about us today in the proclamation of the gospel, what the dear Apostle Paul would think if he came back into this world. My heart is grieved and burdened as I think that we have reached a place where the servants of God have become too big for the little flock. They must have their thousands and tens of thousands; they can boast in their hundred thousands. Oh, beloved, that is not the language of Scripture. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

In the verses that follow, we have an exhortation to be, as a dear servant of Christ used to put it, "distributors rather than accumulators." We need to have a bank account up there, so He says here, "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupt eth." There is some heavenly bookkeeping going on, and you and I are making deposits, day by day. I wonder how the account stands at the end of this year. If we were to turn to the 16th chapter of Luke, we would find this verse: "Make to yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it fails ye may be received into the eternal tabernacles" (J.N.D. Trans.). That is the transmutation of the vain mammon of this life into the coin of heaven. You and I have the privilege, as we go through this world, of seeking to use our time, our talents, our strength, our means, our homes, in such a way that by-and-by, when we change worlds, there will be something on the other side. Brethren, sisters, how does the account stand?

We hear a lot about bankruptcy. Well, it is a bad thing to go bankrupt; but oh, heavenly bankruptcy would be a lot worse, would it not? God has given us a means whereby we can send on ahead to meet us in that coining day those things that He has entrusted to us down here. I trust that we know something about stewardship. Let us not confine it to terms of dollars and cents, for I judge that it includes all the powers with which we have been endowed by God - our time, our strength, our means, our gifts, our abilities, whatever it is. Are we using them in view of the coming day?

Luke 12:35: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning." Girded loins means that we realize life is serious. That is the opposite of rocking chair Christianity. "Loins girt about with truth" -

the Word of God guarding and guiding us day by day. Ah, how we need it! There is a lot of loose living among Christians today, sad to say. If we have a piece of work before us, we gird our loins to get ready for it. So the Lord Jesus here is exhorting you and me to gird up those loins. "And your lights burning." That light was not given to be put under the bed. No, that is not the place for it, nor under the bushel. In other words, that light can be darkened either by taking it easy in the pleasures of this life, or by the treacherous bushel - the business that occupies us so thoroughly. The things of this life can obscure that light. But it is to be put on a candlestick, and it gives its light to all in the house.

What Seek Ye? Part 2

Devotedness is a much deeper and, at the same time, a much simpler thing than many suppose. Most think that if they are earnestly engaged in the Lord's work, and looking to Him for guidance and blessing, this is being devoted; but it is much more. It is having Christ Himself as the delight and resource of my heart, and the bent of my mind toward Him. The highest service we can render to the Lord is to serve His heart, and that is a service to which few devote themselves. Occupation with Christ, with a view to becoming more intimately acquainted with His character; studying Him that we may learn what pleases Him, is very rare indeed. Many can be found who are occupied for Christ, like

Martha - few who are occupied with Him, like Mary. When we have reached this, we have reached the foundation stone of true devotedness. This is the Gilgal where the serving one returns to encamp, and whence he issues like the sun to run his course, and like a giant refreshed with new wine. It is because the saints know so little of this Gilgal in the Lord's presence that there is so much unsanctified activity and really profitless work. If there is zeal and ability, without a knowledge of God's mind and when to use it, how can there but be a turning to take counsel from nature; and how can we expect that the results flowing from such a source will be otherwise than profitless?

What We Do Not See: "Now We See Not yet"

"Now we see not yet all things put under Him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." Heb. 2:8, 9.

Here the Apostle states two things - what we do see, and what we do not see. With regard to earth, we do not yet see all things put under Christ; with regard to heaven, we see Him there in power and glory. But in the intelligence and enjoyment of Christ in resurrection, faith contemplates the lower scene in its relation to Him. When we are near enough to Jesus, He covers the eye. Men and things are seen in relation to Him. Thus, and thus only, is our estimate of earthly things correct. Christ is not in earth's fairest scenes -the eye does not see Him there. The busy, active, crowded, and, it may be, gorgeous, scene is empty. The glory of all nations, tongues, and peoples may be concentrated within the limits of the eye's vision; still, He is not there - all the glory fades before the eye of faith - the thought of His absence dims its brightest luster. But, alas! this is not always so. It sometimes happens that Christians get so far away from Christ in heart, that they become engrossed in the affairs of this life, and some can even visit and enjoy the poor, empty, tinsel shows of this world's vanity. What could be more lamentable? They forget that death's stamp is deeply graven on everything this side of resurrection. But such actions clearly prove that the heart must have been away from Christ for some time. Such points are only reached step by step.

Even the natural man himself, although he knows nothing better, will own that such things are but the mere glitter of human vanity, and all vexation of spirit. But, in faith's estimation, everything is empty which Christ does not fill; and there, it has to confess, His hand is not seen in the whole assemblage of this world's glories. They are not yet under His hand-they are not yet the reflection of His glory. Hence, important questions arise - Whose hands are they under - Of whose glory are they the reflection? Faith's ready answer is - What is not of the Father is of the world -What is not of Christ is of Satan - 'What is not of the Spirit is of the flesh. "We see not yet all things put under Him."

We have only to wait "a little while," and "the world to come" shall be put in subjection under the Son of man. The expression, "world to come," means the dispensation to come, or the millennial age. The Lord's name will then be excellent in all the earth, and His glory above the heavens (Psalm 8). But, till then, the Christian must pass through the world as a stranger and a pilgrim. Our citizenship is in heaven; we cannot be citizens of both heaven and earth at the same time; once we were citizens of this world; now we are citizens of heaven, and ought to walk, though still here, as such. We no longer belong to the old world out of which the Lord has called us, but to the new world into which He is leading us. What a good report the Spirit gives of the pilgrim fathers on this point. "And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city." Heb. 11:15, 16. 'What a noble testimony this is! "God is not ashamed to be called their God." Happy for

the believer when the Lord is not ashamed of the place he takes in this world, or rather, outside of it!

Let us now turn for a moment to the second thing - what we do see. "We see Jesus." This is more important to us than the coming Millennium. He who bore our sins on the cross and suffered death for us is on the throne. What could be more grateful to us? And what a proof to us that our sins are gone! This ought to be the complete settlement of every question-the perfect rest of the heart, and the living spring of joyous worship. The first glimpse of Jesus crowned with glory and honor should separate the heart forever from the world which crucified Him, and, practically, unite it to heaven. It should change completely the thoughts and feelings, by transferring them all to Him who is there. All we love is there -all our interests are there. This is the only way of becoming heavenly minded. We can never become so by trying; we must be occupied with a heavenly object-we must "see Jesus,... crowned with glory and honor."

True, most true, there are many still here whom we love, and many may be the tender ties and interests that we cherish; but everything is to be viewed in the light of the risen Jesus, and loved according to our connection with Him. But there are few things that we realize so little as our resurrection life.

What then do we see when we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor? Most surely, we see our place and image in Him there. How simple, yet how powerful! It is the proper action and power of faith. Christ is the divine expression -the perfect definition - of every Christian's position in the presence of God! Oh, what a truth this is, and what a power it has when enjoyed in communion with the mind of heaven. The more we contemplate Him, the more intensely and fixedly the eye gazes on Him there, the more will our thoughts and feelings become heavenly. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. 3:18. This is the only way of becoming spiritually minded -the only path to true happiness-the only ground of heavenly worship and of continual joy in the Lord.

Work for the Lord

A very necessary protest has been raised against carnal activity in Christian work. A word of warning against the opposite extreme is also often needed, and never more so than at the present time. In too many cases a purely contemplative Christianity has been carried to extremes, resulting in dwarfed energies and spiritual uselessness.

Do we half realize the awful future which awaits the majority of those around us? Do we ever think that some of our acquaintances, with whom we smilingly exchange the civilities of society, will ere long awake in HELL? that many we daily meet in business will shortly find their portion in the lake of fire? I ask, Do we realize this? And do these thoughts added to an intense desire for their salvation, nerve us to brave their vulgar ridicule or polite contempt, and speak with affectionate importunity of the ark of safety in the Christ of God?

This is no time for idleness. The time is short; eternity with silent tread draws daily nearer; the harvest is almost past, the summer is almost ended, and many, many souls are still unsaved.

"Go, labor on while it is day;

The world's dark night is hastening on.

Speed, speed thy work, cast sloth away;

It is not thus that souls are won.

"Men die in darkness at thy side,

Without a hope to cheer the tomb;

Take up the torch and wave it wide,

The torch that lights time's thickest gloom."

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