



For:
Christian Workers and Bible Students

SERIES 1 – 10 ... By Pastor James Smith
Series 11 – 12 ... By Robert Lee

BOOK 11.
Preface

MY first introduction to "HANDFULS ON PURPOSE" must have been as far back as 1907, and was on this wise.

The late Sir Harry Veitch, the eminent Horticulturist, not only carried on his own great business, but was also interested in Christian work. As President of a flourishing Mission Hall in Chelsea, London, he had to give occasional addresses and Bible Readings, and having little time for preparation, and longing for some book assistance, sought the advice of the late Alfred Holness, who at once recommended "HANDFULS ON PURPOSE." Purchasing a copy, he found in it just the help he needed, so that he procured all the volumes then and subsequently issued, and took a real delight in recommending and presenting copies to others.

These are days of whirl and rush, leaving little time for original study, hence the value to busy preachers of such Homiletical helps as "Handfuls." Then there are many who lack the creative faculty, and in consequence find it extremely difficult to get new addresses. Such can do wonders with just a bare outline.

When the late Pastor Smith began the preparation of "Handfuls" he never imagined that so many volumes would be required to cover the Bible, and that he would not be spared to complete the task. Shortly after the issue of his last volume--Vol. X—he was called to higher service. When the Publishers requested me to prepare these, the concluding volumes, I viewed the task as a great privilege, yet a serious responsibility. Re-studying "Handfuls" in an effort to capture Pastor Smith's spirit and plan, I have prayerfully and carefully prepared these volumes.

Living an exceedingly busy life, the preparation of these books has nevertheless been a task that has brought great blessing to my own soul. Though the preparation of these volumes has been accomplished amidst much other work, the actual studies it contains are the fruit of many years' study, the notes of which I had preserved. That fellow-workers in the Gospel might be helped in their own private studies, and in preparation for Gospel ministry by these volumes is the ardent prayer of the author. What an honour and privilege to be a helper of others!

In the New Testament Outlines, the following letters indicate the various renderings: R.V., Revised Version; W., Weymouth; M., Moffatt Version; 20th Cent., Twentieth Century New Testament; J.N.D., J. N. Darby's excellent Version; C. & H., Conybeare & Howson's Version; Way, Way's most valuable translation; R., Rotherham; Y., Young's Literal Translation.

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HANDFULS ON PURPOSE
Series 1 - 12

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Exodus	2.
Leviticus, Numbers,	3.
Deuteronomy to Judges,	4.
Ruth to Kings,	5.
2 Kings to Esther,	6.
Job,	7.
Psalm,	7, 8.
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Hosea to Malachi,	10.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew,	1, 2.
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Luke,	3, 4, 5.
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Acts,	8.
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Handfuls on Purpose
New Testament Studies
Philemon

This is the briefest of all Paul's Epistles. It is the only sample of the Apostle's private correspondence that has been preserved. It is known as "The Courteous Epistle. " Its object was to persuade Philemon not to punish, but reinstate, his runaway slave, called Onesimus, and as he was now converted, treat him as a brother in the Lord.

THE TASK AND ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT.
PHILEMON.

I. The Task.

Invariably, in those days, runaway slaves were crucified. Paul must try to conciliate the master-Philemon—without humiliating the servant—Onesimus; to commend the repentant wrong-doer, without extenuating his offence; thus he must balance the claims of justice and mercy.

II. Its Solution.

1. Touching Philemon's heart by several times mentioning that he was a prisoner for the Gospel's sake.
2. Frankly and fully recognised Philemon's most excellent Christian character, thus making it difficult for him to refuse to live up to his reputation, and to lead him to deal graciously with the defaulter.
3. Delayed mentioning the name of the penitent until he had paved the way.
4. Referred to Onesimus as his "son," thus establishing the new kinship in Christ.
5. After presenting his request, assumed Philemon would do as he had requested (21) .
6. Refused to command with the authority of an apostle, but entreated as a brother, as a bosom friend. See verses 8, 9, 20; especially "Dearly beloved" (v. 1).
7. Frankly acknowledged the wrong done (11), and promised to make good any loss (18, 19) .
8. By a careful choice of words, avoided irritation, as, for example, he says "departed" (15), not fled or runaway, etc., etc.
9. Feels the slave must not encounter his outraged master alone, so arranges for Philemon's friend, Tychicus, to accompany him and act as mediator. It is clear that Tychicus conveyed this letter to Philemon with Onesimus. (See Colossians 4. 7-9).
10. Mentions his plans to visit Philemon (22) ; and how could he meet him if he had refused to carry out his request ?

A FOURFOLD FELLOWSHIP. PHILEMON .

I. Fellow-believer. TRUSTING (6).

1. "Fellowship of thy faith" is R.V. "This faith which you share with us" (Way.).
2. What a glorious fellowship is this of faith. What an honour to be numbered as a member of the Lord's Household of Faith.

II. Fellow-soldier. FIGHTING (2).

1. Apphia is called "The Sister" in R.V. Was she Philemon's wife or daughter?
2. It is generally understood that Archippus was Philemon's son.
3. Fighting follows trusting. Soon the young believer discovers this. Fightings without—yes, and fightings within—"Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (Gal. 5. 17). Remember it was immediately after God had given water (type of Holy Spirit) to Israel, that Amalek (type of flesh) fought Israel. (See. Exod. 17. 1-8). Observe force of "Then" in verse 8. But in this fight, through our Heavenly Moses on the Mount—our Lord Jesus as Great High Priest—we are more than conquerors.

III. Fellow-labourer. WORKING (1).

1. Philemon is not mentioned in the Epistle to the Colossians, but Archippus, whom Paul associates (in Philemon 2) with Philemon, is mentioned in such a way as to imply that both were office-bearers (Col. 4. 17) . "Sharer in our toil" is Way's translation. Philemon was one of Paul's converts.

2. "Our fellow-workman" (J.N.D.).

IV. Fellow-prisoner. SUFFERING (23).

1. Only Epistle where Paul begins by simply calling himself a "prisoner." Six times does he allude to this (1,9, 10, 13, 22, 23).
2. The Epistle begins with Paul in bonds, but leads up to Paul in prayer.
3. Observe, "prisoner for Jesus Christ" (I, R.V.). He does not dwell on this in any spirit of boasting or proud display, but for a benign purpose.
4. Suffering for the Lord falls naturally to the lot of all born-again ones. The lustings of the flesh, for example, cause suffering. Then grace does refine, making us more sensitive to the jeers and taunts of the world, and to the unkind and uncharitable criticisms of fellow-believers.
5. But let us never forget we are not the only sufferers, for this is the common lot of all believers. 'Fellow-prisoner.'
6. It is generally understood that the prominent brethren took turns in voluntarily sharing

the Apostle's imprisonment, so as to minister to him in his bonds, "not being ashamed of his chain" (2 Tim. 1. 16) . By such a fellowship of suffering they must have refreshed the heart of the Apostle.

7. Epaphras is the shortened or provincial form of Epaphroditus.

AN ANALOGY OF OUR SALVATION. PHILEMON.

I. Original Position. God created man perfect, and thus man was His property. But in sinning he not only departed from God, as Onesimus had done, but also robbed Him of His rights and just dues.

II. Sad Plight. As Onesimus fled to Rome, and was in a parlous position, so with man. As Roman law gave a slave no right to asylum, so the Law of God affords man no right of asylum, no resting place, no way of escape. The Law says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

III. God has a Partner (17). It is thought by some that Philemon and the Apostle had been partners in some business concern. In Jesus, God has a Partner utterly and entirely one with Him. He interposes on our behalf. Knowing to the full how much we have wronged God, and how much we owe Him, Jesus says, "Put that on Mine account." All our debt is put to Christ's account.

IV. Grace Intervenes. Roman law permitted a slave to flee to his master's friend, who could plead for him. Onesimus sought out his master's friend, Paul the Apostle, and he was born again—"whom I have begotten in my bonds" (10). Sinners fly to the Lord Jesus Christ. In Him, and through Him, they receive pardon, are begotten anew as sons, and find both a Saviour, an Intercessor, and a Father. The sinner returns to God, and is received, not as a runaway slave, but as Christ Himself (16).

IN CHRIST JESUS. PHILEMON 5-8.

THERE are eleven references to the Lord Jesus by name in this short Epistle of but one chapter. The specially significant phrase, "In Christ Jesus," occurs oftener than in the same number of verses anywhere else in Scripture.

The Lord Jesus is referred to in many offices, as follows:

I. The Object of the faith and love of His people (5).

"A faith that looks up to our Lord Jesus" (Way).

II. The Channel through which God's grace and peace becomes ours (3, 25) .

III. The Source of any good thing in us (6)

IV. The Transforming Power (16) . In verse 11 we have two pictures of one man. Here is a play upon the meaning of the name of Onesimus. which is "profitable." Profitable by name, he became, through sin, unprofitable to his Maser, but through the grace of the Lord, and through Christ's wonderful transforming power, profitable to both Paul and his friend Philemon. The Lord transforms waste into wealth. "In the Lord" (16), that is the explanation of the wonderful transformation in Onesimus

V. Gives Boldness to His servants (8).

VI. Gives Satisfaction and refreshment to workers, by prompting their converts to generous and praiseworthy actions (20)

VII. Gives Restfulness in the consciousness that He knows all, and that nothing can come to us save by God's permission (1, 9, 23). Observe, Paul calls himself, not a prisoner of the Roman authorities, true though that was, but of Jesus Christ. Behind Rome he saw the Lord, and knew his imprisonment could not have been but for Divine permission.

**RECEIVE.
PHILEMON.**

This may be taken as the key-word of the Epistle, and forms both its heart and radiating centre. Observe the gathering emphasis in his repetition of this word, how he strikes each time a louder note and a higher key.

I. The Act. What was he to do? Receive (12).

II. The Manner.---How was he to receive Onesimus?

1. As PHILEMON WOULD RECEIVE PAUL HIMSELF (12, 17). "As my own flesh and blood" (C. & H.). "As piece of my very heart" (Way). "I send part of myself (W.). As Dr. Scofield has pointed out, "Receive him as myself"--reckon to him my merit. "If he hath wronged thee or oweth thee ought, put that to my account"--reckon to me his demerit. Striking illustration of the Divine reckoning in our justification.

2 As A BELOVED BROTHER IN THE LORD (16). In the flesh , Philemon as his brother-man for his slave;: in the Lord Jesus he bas the slave for his brother. By con version, one sinner becomes son to Paul and brother to Philemon, his owner and master.

III. The Period. "Receive him for ever" (15). "For perhaps he therefore departed for an hour (lit), that thou shouldest receive him for ever." What a contrast we have here. Paul suggests a loving Providence over-ruling.

BESEECH.
PHILEMON 8-10.

NOTE the intensity of feeling apparent by Paul's use and repetition of the strong word "beseech." But pray also note the Apostle's great wisdom in waiving his authority to command.

I. Paul's Authority (8). "Therefore, though I might with Christ's authority speak very freely and order you to do what is fitting, it is for love's sake that—instead of that— .I entreat you" (W.). Paul had authority to command Philemon to reinstate Onesimus, because-

- 1st. He was an Apostle.
- 2nd. He was Philemon's spiritual father.
- 3rd. Philemon was an office-bearer under Paul.

II. Paul's Wisdom (9). Paul wisely decided, in this case, not to exercise his authority, but to appeal to their mutual love, and to his aged and suffering condition. Elder brethren, and Christian leaders in Churches, would be well advised to more frequently emulate Paul's example, and to take care that their responsible position does not create a permanent, officious, domineering, autocratic, and dictatorial spirit. Such can easily be developed. Note the frequency in Paul's Pastoral Epistles of his commendation of a "gentle" spirit. There is a world of wisdom in that exhortation.

III. Paul's Success (10). 'There is no doubt whatever that Paul succeeded in his plea. His skill in presenting his case, and, above all, his gentle, loving entreaties were overwhelming. More success would be granted in many difficult Assembly and Church matters if Paul's example were more frequently copied.

HEBREWS

HEBREWS is an anonymous book. Though no one can dogmatise with regard to its authorship, it does seem to be of Paul's thinking and Luke's composition and writing. It was addressed to the converted Jews living in Judea, who, on account of bitter persecution, were wavering in their allegiance to Christ. It is an epistle of exhortation, comfort, and warning.

HOW TO PRESENT THE GOSPEL TO JEWS.
HEBREWS.

THOSE who are called to evangelise Jews declare that there is no better statement of the Gospel to present to Jews than this Epistle. Let us trace the method of presentation, as seen in this Epistle.

We notice first, that -

THE AUTHOR HERE PROVES TO THE JEWS THAT THE JESUS OF NAZARETH THEY PUT TO DEATH ON THE HATED CROSS IS NONE OTHER THAN CHRIST THEIR MESSIAH, THE SON OF GOD, THE SECOND PERSON IN THE BLESSED TRINITY. This is an important point. We cannot but admire the courage and faithfulness of the Apostle, for the Jews then, as now, were prepared to admire much in Jesus, but would not listen to His claim to Deity. Observe how slowly and methodically he declares and proves this.

I. Greater than Prophets. The prophets whom all Jews value, were great, but Jesus was greater than any or all of them (1. 1-3) . Why? Jesus is the-

1. ORIGIN of all things: "By whom also He made the worlds" (2) .
2. SUSTAINER of all things: "Upholding all things" (3).
3. GLORY of all things : "Brightness of His glory" (3) .
4. UNIQUE amidst all. Here the writer points out the absolute uniqueness of Jesus. However great were the prophets, none shared Deity, none were the "express image of" God.

II.. Greater than Angels. Angels are great beings, but Jesus is greater than any or all of them put together (1, 4-14), because:

1. Divine NAMES are given to Him (1. 2, 5, 8, 10).
2. Divine WORSHIP was offered Him (1. 6).
3. Divine NATURE is announced as His (1. 8).
4. Divine MAJESTY is ascribed to Him (1. 8).
5. Divine ANOINTING bestowed upon Him (1. 9).
6. Divine WORKS are assigned to Him (1. 10).
7. Divine ATTRIBUTE OF IMMUTABILITY (or Permanence, of constant continuity) residing in Him (1. 11, 12).
8. Divine COMPANIONSHIP was His-companion of the Most High (1. 13).
9. Divine RULE committed to Him (2. 5-8).
10. Divine REDEMPTION worked out by Him (2. 9-18).

III.. Greater than Moses. Moses was very great, but Jesus was, and is, greater. This must have staggered the Jews. But the writer proves this point thus:

1. Moses was only a SERVANT, whereas Jesus was Son of God, and a son is greater than a mere servant (3. 5, 6).
2. MOSES WAS "IN God's House" (3. 5), but Jesus "OVER" God's House.
3. Yea, more, Moses was only in GOD'S House," but Jesus "over His OWN House" (3. 5, 6).

IV. Greater than Joshua. Joshua was a great leader, but Jesus far greater (4. 1-13) . Because Jesus renders a more conspicuous service in the bestowal of a Rest far better than the one Joshua (R.V., verse 8) led Israel into. Study verses 5 and 8 in contrast to verse 9.

V. Greater than Aaron. Aaron, the first high priest of Israel, was great, but Jesus greater (5. 4 to 8; compare 7. 10 to 28). How can this be?

1. His TITLE. Aaron was High Priest, but Jesus called "Great High Priest" (4. 14).
2. His SONSHIP. No high priest ever was called "The Son of God" (4. 14). Note, not "a" Son, but "The Son."
3. HIS PERFECT SYMPATHY. "Touched with the feeling of our infirmities" in a more perfect fashion than any earthly priest (4. 15).
4. His SINLESSNESS. All priests, or high priests, are only sinful men, but even the bitterest enemies of Christ have had to acknowledge His sinlessness (7. 26).
5. His KINGSHIP. Jesus is King and Priest, a combination not permitted to any king of Israel or Judah (7. 1). (Study Num. 16. 40; 18. 7; 2 Chron. 26. 18). He was made Priest after the order of Melchisedec, and Abraham acknowledged Melchisedec to be his superior (7. 4-10).
6. His SPHERE. Jesus ministers in a far better sanctuary than Aaron or any of his successors (8. 1-4; 9. 1-15) .

**WHY JESUS CHRIST CAME DOWN TO THIS
WORLD OF OURS.
HEBREWS 1. 3.**

Much confusion exists in the minds of many men and women as to our Lord's chief errand in coming here to this world of ours. Was He sent into the world

I. To be the Prophet of God? He did come with a message from the Most High, and such a message! It was entirely original and unique. He was and is the (not a) prophet of God, yet that was not His primary mission.

II. To be the Revealer of God? "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us," said the disciples to our Saviour, thus articulating man's agelong hunger and passionate desire. Now Jesus did reveal the Unseen. He declared "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"—marvellous statement. Yet that was not His supreme mission.

III. To be the Ruler of God? He was not only born of the tribe of Judah, but of the family of David, thus of the Davidic line. He entered Jerusalem as King after three and a-half years' ministry. He claimed the Throne of David. But He was rejected. Yet He must ascend that throne by and by. The next king of united Israel must present and prove his descent from David. Only one Person can do this—the Man Christ Jesus.

For all genealogical registers were burned at the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the Temple, A.D. 60, and the only descendant of David who can present his genealogy is Jesus, for that has been preserved in perpetuity in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Yet He came to do something very important, ere He could reign.

IV, To be the Lamb of God? Yes. Heb. 1. 3 declares the primary work lie came to do. This was the work for which He came. lie came to be a man and die. Seeing He came to purge our sins, why spend so much time in these early chapters of Hebrews to prove His Deity and His Majesty? Ah, the importance of the work performed is proved by the greatness of the Agent. The more important work of the State is entrusted to the most important servants. When the King entrusts a duty to his own firstborn Prince, all are conscious of the importance of the task.

THE ETERNAL FRESHNESS OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE.

HEBREWS 10. 20; REVELATION 5. 6.

DR. CHADWICK draws attention to the Greek word rendered "New," stating that it is unknown elsewhere in Scripture, and means "newly slain." Thus is declared the perpetual freshness of the offering of Christ. This is further taught in that pregnant sentence in the Revelation, "A Lamb as it had been slain," as if freshly slain. Luther saw this point, and remarked, "It seems but yesterday that Jesus died on the Cross." A modern poet also saw this truth and crystallised it in that line of poetry: "Dear dying Iamb, Thy precious Blood Shall never lose its power. "

THE ETERNAL COMPLETENESS AND EFFICACY OF CHRIST'S DEATH.

HEBREWS 8. 12.

THIS is brought out and emphasised many times in this Epistle (7. 27; 9. 25, 26; 10. 1-3), but particularly in association with Heb. 8. 12. The late James Neill, M.A., has so well pointed out that the New Covenant referred to in chapter 8. 6-13, begins at a point to which the Old Covenant never for a moment reached. For there was no sacrifice to atone for wilful sin under the Old Covenant, with four exceptions only:

1. Wilful concealment of knowledge as a witness (Lev.5. 1).
2. A wilful lie (Lev. 6. 2).
3. Perjury (Lev. 6. 2).
4. A sin of uncleanness (Lev. 19. 20, 22).

As to all else, it is said: "The soul that acts presumptuously . . . that soul shall be cut off" (Num. 15. 30). That shows the force of David's petition, "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it" (Psa. 51. 16). He is referring to his wilful sin, for which no provision had been made. But of this New Covenant, well, it begins at a point where the Old Covenant never reached—the full, free, forgiveness of all sin. Praise the Lord! Hence the force of "The Blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1. 7) .

BETTER.
HEBREWS.

This may be taken as the keynote of the Epistle. The Jewish Christians, to whom this Epistle was specifically addressed, owing to the taunts and jeers of their persecutors, were beginning to undervalue their Christian possessions. Therefore the writer rings the changes on the word "better," conceding they had certain things under the Law, but under Grace far "better."

1. Blessings (11.40).
2. Sacrifice (9. 23) .
3. Blood that Speaks of Better Things (12. 24).
4. Hope (7. 19) .
5. Covenant (8.6; 7.22).
6. Promises (8. 6) .
7. Substance (10. 34).
8. Country (11. 16).
9. Resurrection (11. 35) .

"WE HAVE."
HEBREWS.

THE Jewish Christians were being taunted by their unconverted countrymen that through espousing the cause of Christ they had lost everything. The Apostle proves to them that they have only lost the shadow for the substance. The "We have's " of the Apostle must have greatly impressed them. "We have"

1. A Great High Priest (4. 14) .
2. Such a High Priest (8. 1).
3. A Strong Consolation (6. 18).
4. A Cheering Hope (6. 19) .
5. Boldness (10. 19) .
6. A Better Substance (10. 34) .
7. An Altar--Christ (13. 10).

SALVATION.
HEBREWS.

1. Our Name: HEIRS. "Heirs of salvation" (1. 14).
2. Our Salvation: GREAT. "So great salvation" (2. 3).
3. Our Peril: How? "How shall we escape?" (2. 3) . The unanswerable question. What must I do to be lost? Just nothing. No need to reject salvation or treat it with contempt--just neglect it.

4. Our Benefactor: AUTHOR. "Captain of their salvation (2. 10). Captain means author or originator.
5. Our Destiny: ETERNITY. "Eternal salvation" (5. 9).
6. Our Blessings: THINGS, "Things that accompany salvation" (6. 9).
7. Our Goal: UTTERMOST. "Saved to the uttermost" (7. 25) .
8. Our Hope: WITHOUT SIN. "Without sin unto salvation" (9. 28).

SAVED TO THE VERY END.
HEBREWS 7. 25

This verse has been called "The Gospel for Saints." But why saints? Sinners need the Gosp-1, that is universally admitted. But do saints need a Gospel message? Yes; and when the message of "uttermost" is understood, the for of this word is seen. The meaning of the word in the Greek rendered 'uttermost' is really "to the very end." "The end"-.not end in time but end in place. It is true His salvation is good for both. But we are endeavouring to penetrate into the meaning of this word before us.

Israel was saved from death in Egypt by the sprinkling of the blood, and saved from the power of their enemy when the waters of the Red Sea drowned the pursuing army. But they were not saved "to the uttermost," i.e., "to the very end" (as Rotherham renders it) until, after the forty years' wanderings expired, they crossed the Jordan and took possession of the Promised Land. This is a great word. If a redeemed soul has not yet fully entered into his possessions in Christ, and in consequence is not living the life of victory and communion of Beulah land, he has not yet been saved "to the uttermost ? "

1. His Ability to Save. "He is able."
2. Whom He Saves. "Them that come."
3. Extent of His Salvation. "To the uttermost," right up to Canaan, i.e., the life of fellowship and victory.
4. Period of His Salvation. "To the very end" (R.).
5. Ground of this Salvation. "He ever liveth."
6. Character of His Salvation. "Completely" (J.N.D.).

DWELLING AT COURT.
HEBREWS 10. 19-22.

THE Doctrinal part of the Epistle is now ended, and the important application begins. Here we reach the goal. Here we see the child of God at home. That Home is the Holy Place, the very presence of God. "Christianity is a religion of access."

I. The Privilege. "Having therefore liberty" (19, A N., marg.). The privilege of dwelling in the Secret Place is the fruit of Christ's death. And this privilege is for to-day, and all our days, for time as well as eternity.

II. The Enablement. "Let us draw near." Observe: Boldness,' associated with "the Blood of Jesus."

III. The Conditions.

1. A True. HEART. Heart right with God.
2. "Full ASSURANCE." Faith in full, vigorous, healthy exercise.
3. GOOD CONSCIENCE. Through His Blood we find release from the haunting sense of guilt.
4. PURIFIED BODIES. A dedicated and purified body and a life cleansed from all outward degrading and ignoble habits and practices.

FAITH IN OPERATION.

HEBREWS 11.

THIS chapter has been called the Westminster Abbey of the Bible. Herein are preserved word-portraits of some members of the family of God in relation to the life of faith.

Have you ever wondered why mention should be made of their faith and not their sins? Why? Obviously because every believer is seen here in the light of chapter 10. They stand in the Covenant of Grace, and are seen as those who have fully accepted the great sacrificial work of the Redeemer, and that means the pardon and blotting out of their sins, never to be remembered again for ever. Praise the Lord!

Let us summarise this chapter:

In verse I we have THE NATURE OF FAITH—that it is not a guess, nor an airy nebulous sort of thing, but "substance," "evidence." In the rest of the chapter we have demonstrated THE POSSIBILITY OF FAITH to all classes and grades of individuals, women and men, servants and master, the weak and the strong, the educated and the illiterate.

FAITH'S: HEBREWS 11.

FAITH.

1. Description, .. Substance and Evidence (1).
2. Report, Elders (2) .
3. Credence, Creation (3).
4. Worship, Abel (4).
5. Witness, Enoch (5, 6).
6. Work, Noah (7).
7. Walk, Abraham (8).
8. Patience, Abraham (9, 10).
9. Willingness, ... Sarah (11, 12).
10. Welcome, .. .Unknown Heroes (13-16).
11. Sacrifice, Abraham (17-19).
12. Triumph, Isaac (20-22).
13. Preservation, Parents of Moses (23).

14. Renunciation, Moses (24-26).
15. Flight, Moses (27).
16. Contagion, .. "He" then "Them" (28, 29).
17. Exploit, Israel (30).
18. Salvation, Rahab (31) .
19. Manifold Activities, Many Saints (32-40).

THE RACE.
HEBREWS 12. 1, 2.

IN the Bible there are various views of life. Here is an athletic one, that of a race. This simile is suggestive.

I. The Race. Speaking of

I. STRENUOUS effort.

2. RUN, not loiter.

3. CHANGEFUL. life implied, with fresh views.

4. A PROGRESSIVE life, calling for

5. CONCENTRATION.

II. The Appointment. "Set before us."

III. The Incentive. A cloud of witnesses. We are being watched, at anyrate by our Blessed Lord.

IV. The Preparation. "Let us lay aside."

"The Weight"—lawful things, yet things not helpful. "The Sin"—besetting sin.

V. The Speed. "Let us run," not loiter.

VI. The Spirit. "Run with patience."

VII. The Inspiration. Looking unto Jesus.

VIII. The Goal. The Glory.

Note.—For a more detailed study of this Epistle, see the Author's "The Outlined Hebrews," where there are 118 separate and distinct studies in addition to these.

JAMES

OR, the Epistle of Jacob, for James is another form of Jacob. This is a letter written primarily for the Jewish Christians. It is the most practical of all the Epistles, and could be called "A Practical Guide to Christian Life and Conduct," or "A Guide-Book for Everyday Religion.

Note the vivid and picturesque style. James thinks in figures, and illumines his theme with metaphors. He is often quite dramatic. He frequently states great truths in a form which touches on paradox, so compelling active thought.

THE DEITY OF OUR LORD.

JAMES 1. 1; 2. 1.

Bondman. That is the real meaning of the word "servant." "James, bondman of," etc. (J.N.D.). Most of the servants of that time were slaves, and the New Testament writers proudly accepted that title as an apt description of their association with God and with Christ.

Observe the humility of James in abstaining from any reference to his earthly relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom he was brother according to the flesh.

Though James mentions the Name of God seventeen times, he repeats the Name of Jesus but twice, here, and in 2. 1 , but note how reverently and devoutly he does this; and what a world of significance there is in his deliberate association of the awful Name of God with Jesus. Though James was bitterly opposed to Jesus and His claims prior and up to His death, he was, immediately after the Resurrection, converted by a special and private interview with the Risen One (1 Cor. 15. 7). This adds value to the testimony of James with regard to the Deity of our Lord.

I. An Arresting Fact. James only refers to his own brother Jesus twice, and then in a reverent and devout fashion. Though they knew each other so well, there was no familiarity, for he called Him, Lord and Christ as well as Jesus. This is an arresting fact.

II. An Impressive Fact. The fact that a brother associates his relative in such a way with God as to imply an equality with the Almighty is very impressive. If Jesus were not Deity, then such an association would be blasphemous. Note, "God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ."

III. A Glorious Fact. James calls his brother Jesus "The Lord of Glory" (2. 1). This is a glorious Old Testament title for God.

IV. A Significant Fact. James calls himself the slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. That implied on his part full surrender of will and life. A slave because:

1. PURCHASED—by the Blood of Christ.
2. LIBERATED—from sin's guilt and servitude.
3. PLEDGED—conscious of blessed freedom, in great thankfulness he pledged life, service, and possessions.
4. DEPENDENT—in conscious utter dependence upon Him.

V. An Interesting Fact. "To the twelve tribes." Then there were not any lost tribes, for he addressed his letters to the twelve, whose location was evidently well known at that time.

TEMPTATIONS. JAMES 1. 2, 12-15.

AFTER the briefest of greetings, James at once plunges into his subject. He begins by telling them how they are to regard their temptations.

I. Nature (13). The temptation dealt with here is not that testing of character so familiar in other parts of the Bible (Gen. 22. 1, etc.), but the enticement to sin.

II. Origin (14). We must not lay the blame on wrong shoulders. Whilst testings of character come from God, temptations to evil come not from Him, but from the evil one through our own corrupt nature. "Fall," not "go into" (2).

III. Form. "Manifold" (Young). "Divers temptations" (2). "Hedged in" is the Weymouth rendering.

IV. Estimation. "Count it all joy," etc (2). "Greet it as pure joy" (M.). We usually count it joy when we escape from temptation, sorrow, or loss. Instead, we should count the testing a glorious opportunity of proving our faith.

V. Purpose (3) . Why we have to count it joy is not the trial itself, but its purpose. God makes such the instrument of blessing. It is quite possible for trial to work impatience, but He will give grace that the real purpose of it may be accomplished.

VI. Blessedness. The man who does not escape, but survives and conquers temptation, is blessed, and becomes happily conscious of the Lord's benediction (12).

COUNTING. JAMES 1.2.

SPIRITUAL arithmetic is of value. The arithmetic of the Bible is important, and no Christian believer can afford to ignore it. James, in verse 2, invites his Christian brethren to "count."

I. God's Counting.

1. HIS COUNTING OF IDENTIFICATION. As Job, on account of his sickness, was counted an enemy (Job 19. 11; 33. 10) , and a stranger and alien (Job 19. 15) , so God counted the Lord Jesus on the Cross, as we should have been counted—an enemy and an alien.

2. HIS COUNTING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. As Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness (Gen. 15. 6), so with us (Rom. 4.3).

3. HIS COUNTING OF COMFORT. He counts:

- a. Believers as "Seed of Promise" (Rom. 9. 8).
- b. All our Steps (Job 31.4).
- c. All our Hairs (Matt. 10. 30). Most of us only see the Lord's care in counting our hairs; but the late Dr. Pierson saw much more. Said he "Numbered, not simply counted. Every hair has its own number, and if one has disappeared, that number has gone off the list." What a marvellous thought this is!
- d. Counts the place of our birth as deserving of honour (Psa. 87. 6) .
- e. Delights in counting His servants as faithful ones (1 Tim. 1.12).
- f. And as partners (Philemon 17).

II. Believer's Counting

1. BLOOD AS PRECIOUS (I Peter 1. 19), in contrast with some who count that same Blood an unholy thing (Heb. 10. 29)
2. GOD'S THOUGHTS, AS PRESERVED IN THE BIBLE, TO BE PRECIOUS (Psa. 139. 17, 18).
3. HIMSELF AS A SACRIFICE, and to live, day by day, the sacrificial life (Acts 20. 24).
4. ALL HUMAN MERIT as loss for Christ (Phil. 3. 7).
5. PREPARED TO UNDERVALUE everything, counting it as "dung" in order to gain a more excellent knowledge of Christ (Phil. 3. 8).
6. COUNT THE COST of loyalty and devotion to our Lord (Luke 14. 28) .
7. TRIALS AS PROFITABLE (James 1. 2).

PATIENCE.

JAMES 1.3,4; 5. 7, 8, 11.

WHAT a man James was for the word "patience!" Both J.N.D., W., M., and Young give "endurance" in 1. 3, 4, which is one fruit and manifestation of patience.

I. Its Passivity. The Dictionary defines patience as forbearance; longsuffering; endurance. "Patience" in verse 3 is translated "endurance" in some other versions. Patience is a passive virtue. It enables us "to grin and bear up" under the most trying and testing ordeal.

II. Its Activity (1. 3, 4). Yet patience is not only passivity--it really does work. "Let patience have her perfect work." If patience is allowed full scope and operation in our lives, then we shall speedily mature, and enjoy fulness.

"That ye may become perfect and complete, deficient in nothing" (W.).

III. Its Production. The various allotments of Divine Providence come as testings, and these, by God's grace and blessing, will produce patience (1. 3 and 4).

IV. Its Exercise (1. 4). Patience is a grace, for which special grace is given. Its muscles require exercise for development. "Long patience" is suggestive (5. 7). "Let your endurance be a finished product" (M.), on verse 4.

V. Its Exemplar (5. 11) . Job is brought before us as an illustration and exhibition of patience. Ponder the phrase, "The end of the Lord," i.e., His purpose in permitting and designing Job's trials. There was an end to Job's patience, but none to the Lord's.

WISDOM.

JAMES 1.5; 3. 13, 15, 17.

Wisdom was a great word amongst the Jews. It is required for every walk of life. The presence of wisdom here in association with temptations is suggestive. It is specially difficult to behave wisely in times of testing, when wronged and insulted. But the wisdom from above will enable us so to do. Let us put together the teaching on wisdom found in this short Epistle.

I. Lack of Wisdom. It is possible to lack wisdom. This is suggested by the sentence: "If any of you lack wisdom . " What a sad lack. What a mess such a lack can lead us into.

II. Uniqueness of Wisdom. Does James say, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him sit down and think, or take a course of study?" No. Then the wisdom he has in mind is absolutely unique.

III.. Origin of Wisdom. This wisdom is "from above" (3. 17), from God (1. 5). We get from the sky, and not from the earth, all those gracious influences without which our world would be only a gigantic, lifeless cinder, rolling through space. Light and heat, sunshine and rain, come from above. Our spiritual life as well as our earthly life is dependent upon what comes from above.

IV. Condition of Wisdom. Its possession follows "asking of God" (1. 5). Prayer leads to the possession of this wisdom.

Y. Counterfeit of Wisdom. This is the point suggested by 3. 15. How sad to be deceived—to imagine oneself to be wise. Yet the wisdom which comes not from God is at the best but "earthly," and possibly "sensual," yea even "devilish."

VI. Proof of Wisdom. "Which of you is a wise and well instructed man? Let him prove it by a right life with conduct guided by a wise and teachable spirit," is W. most excellent translation of 3. 13. The crowning proof of wisdom is in our "conversation" (3. 13). it is here in tongue, when under trial, we so often fail. Wisdom from above will influence our tongue.

V11.. Manifestation of Wisdom. The tree wisdom is manifested by the possession and practice of the following most excellent qualities recorded in 3. 17:

I. PURITY.

2. PEACEABLENESS.

3. GENTLENESS—"Courteous" is W.

4. EASY TO BE ENTREATED—"Not self-willed" is W.

5. "FULL OF MERCY"—"compassion" is W.

6. "WITHOUT PARTIALITY"—"free from favouritism" is W.

7. "WITHOUT HYPOCRISY"—"free from all insincerity" (W.).

THE GIVING GOD.

JAMES 1 . 5.

OUR God is a God who loves to give. Alexander the Great said to one overwhelmed with his generosity, "I give as a King." Jehovah gives as the infinite God. Someone has stated that the sentence here could be translated: "Ask the Giving-God." He loves to give because He is Love, and love must give and continue giving.

I. What? THE IDENTITY of His gifts. He gives many things, but wisdom is mentioned here. How much we need wisdom. God gives that mercy.

II. To Whom? THE RECIPIENT of His gifts. God gives "to all," for He is no respecter of persons.

III. When? THE DATE of His giving. "Let him be asking of God," is Rotherham's rendering. We must continue asking, not presenting our petition once only, but again and again.

IV. How? THE SPIRIT of His giving. "Who gives with open hand to all men, and without upbraiding" (W.). Observe:

I. HE GIVES LIBERALLY. His giving goes beyond our asking.

2. HE GIVES UNGRUDGINGLY.

3. HE GIVES WITHOUT CRITICISING OR SCOLDING. "And reproaches not." is J .N .D.'s rendering. He does not reprimand our ignorance, nor scold our foolishness. He utters no word of reproach. He casts up nothing of the past.

PRAYING.
JAMES.

IN the first few verses of this Epistle, James touches on most of the things he later on elaborates. That is particularly true of the subject of prayer.

Prayer is one of the easiest subjects for speakers to preach, or authors to write upon, but not so easy to practice. After listening to an address on prayer, to ask the speakers how much time they devote to prayer might give them a very bad half-hour.

Now James has much to say on prayer. What about his practice! Ah, he did practice what he preached. The tradition concerning him is that, when on his death, the women came to bestow upon the

body the last sad attentions, they found that his knees were worn hard as a camel's through his constant habit of prayer.

I. Necessity. James, in common with other of the New Testament writers, points out the necessity, and extreme value of prayer.

II. For Whom? "For each other" (5. 16), as well as for ourselves (1. 5).

III. When? Of course at all times, in the common and everyday affairs of life, but especially when "afflicted" (5. 13), or sick (5. 14) .

IV. How?

1. EARNESTLY (5. 17).

2. FERVENTLY. "The fervent supplication."

V. Requirement ?

I. FAITH (1.6; 5. 15). "Prayer of faith."

2. ENERGY (5. 16, 17) . The energy of the Holy Spirit is required. "The supplication of a righteous man, when it is energised" (R.). "The fervent supplication" (J.N.D.).

3. RIGHTEOUSNESS. "Of a righteous man," that is of a man who has discovered the worthlessness of his own righteousness, and the righteousness of God which becomes ours by faith.

4. WHOLEHEARTEDLY. "The heartfelt supplication of a righteous man" (W.).

VI. Success.

1. "VERY STRONG is a working supplication of a righteous man" (Y.) Prayer is strong with God
2. "MUCH AVAILETH, the supplication of a righteous man" (R.),
3. "EXERTS A MIGHTY INFLUENCE" (W.).

VII. Exponent. Elijah (5. 17, 18).

THE RICH AND THE POOR.

JAMES.

JAMES in his Epistle shows characteristic disregard of, yea, almost contempt of, wealth. Whilst there were many poor folk in the early Christian assemblies, there were also the rich. Evidently there was a tendency to exaggerate the importance of wealth, and on the part of some to show undue regard and respect to the wealthy, to the detriment of the poor. James seeks to correct this mistake There is a place for respect in daily life. To show respect for age, for weak, for women, for official position, for authority, is a Christian duty. For subjects to show respect to their King, Emperor, or President, is commended in Scripture. But the respect James denounces is quite different. Respect of persons is not only a breach of good manners, and discourteous to the poor, but sin against God (2. 9). What James here forbids, the world does every day—worships the successful, strong, and wealthy; and despises the man who is poor. Believers must not follow the example of the world.

1. The Poor:

1. Should rejoice in being heirs of the Kingdom (2. 5).
2. Should see that they are rich in faith (2. 5).
3. Should humbly rejoice in any improvement in employment or wealth (1 . 9).

11. The Rich:

1. Should bow humbly to the various. adverse allotments of Divine Providence (1. 10).
2. Should not expect any preferential treatment in the assembly (2. 2-4) .
3. Should humbly remember injustices inflicted by some wealthy folk or the poorer members of Christ's flock (2. 6, 7).

ON BEING DECEIVED

JAMES 1. 16, 22, 26.

THREE times over in this chapter does James warn God's people upon the possibility and danger of being deceived. Wise are we if we take heed to the warning.

I. About God (1. 16) "Be not deceived" is the r.v. At first sight we are riot sure whether this is a warning against (13) blaming God for our temptations to evil, or imagining changefulness in Him (17). On a second sight we decide that it has to do with verses 17 to 21.

1. God's GIFTS ARE:

- a. "Good."
- b. "Perfect."
- c. "From above" (17)

2. GOD HIMSELF.

- a. Source of all Light—like the sun, the centre and chief of all the glories of the visible universe.
- b. Free from variableness—is to be relied upon.
- c. "Free from shadow cast by turning" (R.).

II. About Ourselves (1.22).

1. If only a hearer and not a doer of the Word, we shall deceive ourselves (1. 22).
2. Such are like most of us who have a habit of looking into the mirror in an absent-minded sort of way (1. 23, 24) .

III. About Religion (1. 26).

1. The religion that does not influence the tongue is not a true or vital one.
2. True vital godliness leads to, and includes:
 - a. Control of tongue.
 - b. Purity of life—"Unspotted from the world."
 - c. Usefulness in life—"Visit the fatherless and widows."

THE BOOK.

JAMES.

IT is both interesting and instructive to trace what James has to say about the Holy Book of God. Putting all together we get a helpful study.

I. Its Names.

1. "WORD." Origin of it (1. 18). Word proves authorship. A word is the result of the mental and vocal exercise of a personal being. Therefore in that simple word of four letters, W-O-R-D, we have taught the origin of the Book—God Himself.
2. "LAW." Authority of it (1. 25). What a paradox we have here. Law imposes restraint. Yet we find here the phrase, "Law of Liberty." Observe a few points:
 - a. Restraint of the Book—"Law."
 - b. Liberty of the Book—"Law of Liberty."
 - c. Perfection of the Book—"Perfect Law."
 - d. Authority of the Book—Law implies the Law-giving God.
3. "TRUTH"—finality of it (1. 18). It is the Word of Truth—that suggests its finality. Both Christ, the Living Word, and the Bible, the Written Word, are Truth.

4. JUDGE. Exercise of it (2. 12). This verse declares no new thought, but only enforces what our Lord Jesus declared (John 12, 48). The Word of God will be our judge at that Great Day.

II. Its Operations.

1. CONVINCES (2. 9). The Law convinces of transgression.

2. BEGETS (1. 18). We are born of God's Holy Spirit, through the Word. The Word is the great regenerating medium.

3 IMPLANTS (1. 21). "Lay aside all filthiness and abounding of wickedness" is J.N.1). translation. The word "engrafted" is suggestive, teaching that upon the stem of our natural life God engrafts His Word, and so infuses His own life. For "engrafted" J.N.D. gives "implanted," teaching the inwardness of the operation of the Word.

4. ENERGIZES (1. 25) . The phrase "Law of Liberty" is suggestive of power, of energy. Law stands for force, power, energy.

III. Our Attitude.

1 . EXAMINE (1. 25). "Looketh into." In this, and also verse 23, the Word is likened to a Mirror, into which we peer, and the content, of which we are to examine.

2. HEAR (1. 23). "Hearer of the Word." What a privilege it is to hear His Word.

3. RECEIVE (1. 21). But hearing the Word is not sufficient, we are to "receive" it "with meekness."

4. Do (1. 23). How practical is James. We must not be satisfied with only "hearing," we must go on doing.

THE TONGUE.

JAMES 1. 19, 26 3.

IN the early Christian Church there evidently was great freedom of speech, and that liberty was abused. From the severity with which James deals with the tongue it is clear that there had been a great deal of ill-considered, ill-natured, self-assertive and violent speech amongst the Jewish Christians.

Probably this had taken the form of angry debating and bitter strife in the Assembly. At any rate verse 1 of chapter 3 seems to hint at this. The verse clearly shows that there were many who aspired to leadership and public ministry, without taking in mind the serious responsibilities of that position. In this verse James refers to the danger associated with too great a readiness to put forward one's opinions on matters of religion.

Associated here with warning are bright Gospel lessons, and the reminder that one proof of our justified state is seen in our words; that our speech will reveal what and whose we are.

A young man was sent to Socrates to learn oratory. On being introduced to the philosopher he talked so incessantly that Socrates asked for double fees. "Why charge me double?" asked the young fellow. "Because," replied the orator, "I must teach you two sciences, the one how to hold your tongue, the other how to speak."

I. An Awakening Statement (3. 2) . Who is a perfect man? James informs us: "If any man offend not in Word." Having mastery of that difficult member, the tongue, the rest is easy. "Able to curb his whole nature" (W.). "The same is a perfect man" is in W.: "That man has reached maturity of character." This then is the mark of a mature Christian.

II. A Sobering Description. Note the suggestive descriptions James gives of the tongue.

1. A FIRE (3. 6). Setting the whole being on fire as from Hell.
2. "A WORLD OF INIQUITY" (3. 6). Defiling the whole being of each individual.
3. "FULL OF DEADLY POISON" (3. 8) .
4. "UNRULY EVIL" (3. 8) .

III. A Dread Possibility (3. 9, 10). That the same tongue can:

1. Bless and curse (3. 9, 10) .
2. A fountain sending forth two kinds of water (3. 11) .

IV. A Wise Admonition (1. 19; 3. 13-18). Notice how affectionately James addresses his readers. "Swift to hear, slow to speak"—what wise words! A wise man will seek only to produce "Good conversation."

V. A Sad Confession (3. 7, 8). Most living things can be tamed, yet "the tongue can no man tame," save the Man, Christ Jesus.

VI. A Glorious Possibility (1. 26; 3. 3-6). This point forces itself upon us as we ponder the figures used by James for the tongue.

1. BIT AND BRIDLE (3. 2, 3) . To turn the whole body of the horse a firm hand on the bridle is required. The hand of the Man, Christ Jesus, can grip and firmly use the bit and bridle on our tongues.
2. SMALL HELM (3. 4) . The pierced Hand can firmly control and wisely use the helm of our lives—our tongue.

THE ROYAL LAW.
JAMES 2.8.

THE Law of Love is here called the Royal Law. This is a lovely and suggestive description, teaching

- I. Its Origin. This Law comes from Heaven's Royalty, the Triune God.
- II. Its Dignity. It is a ROYAL Law. Nothing petty or mean about it.
- III. Its Authority. The fact that it comes from God gives it royal authority, the very authority of Heaven.
- IV. Its Breadth. Its Royal sweep, taking in not only myself and my own, but others. "Thy neighbour" with the interpretation of Luke 10. 29, 36, means any and all.
- V. Its Subject. Love, not admire or respect. What a Royal quality.
- VI. Its Quality. There is Royalty in its quality. We are to love "As thyself ." But the new commandment (John 13. 34) is even of richer quality and a higher standard, "Love one another as I have loved you."
- VII. Its Power. Its Royal power. Love is here called a Law, i.e., a power, a force, a dynamic.

WHAT IS SIN ?
JAMES 2.9; 4.17.

WHAT a simple question I Yet how it floors many. Mark you, the question is not : "What do men say sin is," but, "What saith the Scriptures ? " Give the very words of the Bible. There are seven definitions of sin in the Book—two given by James, two by John, one by Paul, and two by Solomon.

1. Stepping Over, or breaking the Law of God (1 John 3. 4) .
- II. Coming Short of the requirements of the Law (1 John 5. 17) .
- III. Not Living Up to the Light God has already given to us (James 4. 17) .
- IV. We Can Sin in Thought as well as by actions (Prov. 24. 9) .
- V. We Sin when we do Things we are Doubtful about (Rom .14.23) .
- VI. Sin Viewed as Pride and Vanity, and the performance of legitimate and indeed essential things, such as ploughing, with a wrong motive (Prov. 21.4) .
- VII . Respect of Persons (James 2. 9) .

SOLIDARITY OF THE LAW.

JAMES 2. 10-12.

WE are here exhorted ever to keep in mind the fact that we shall be judged by the Law, called here the Law of Liberty (v. 12) and that the constant remembrance of that fact should influence our speech and conduct. "So speak and so do, as they that shall be judged by the Law of Liberty.'

There is another point we shall deal with in our next study, but we must now note the solidarity of the Law.

It is human to gloss over sin. Said a little girl when excusing some questionable act, "I haven't broken the commandment, I've only cracked it." Here in verses 10 and 11 we are told that if only one commandment be broken, we are "guilty of all' that, in the breaking of one we break all. Read Gal. 3. 10 which enforces this fact, observing the word "all." We may have a fine chain, but of what use is it if all links are good save one? That one broken link renders it useless. "For whosoever obeys the whole Law, and only makes a single slip, is guilty of everything" (M.).

Another fact. It is clear that the one sin thought of here is that mentioned in verse 9., viz., respect of persons. And there are few, if left to themselves, who would ever dream of reckoning such behaviour as sin.

These are facts to ponder.

JUDGMENT AND MERCY.

JAMES 2. 13.

THE point in this verse is that alluded to by our Lord in Matthew 7. 1 and 2, that as we treat others, so shall we be dealt with. "For He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy."

But are there not positions in which it is difficult to think of the exercise of mercy? Certainly. What then? For your guidance observe that fine phrase, "Mercy rejoiceth against judgment, or, as Dr. John Kerr remarks: "In the face of it." "It is a fine figure, mercy looking full in the face of judgment, and not losing a particle of its joy." These are great facts in human history and experience.

I. Judgment Without Mercy. Bad for the sinner (Psalm 1. 5). No standing for the ungodly.

II. Judgment With Justice. Bad for the Saviour. Justice and judgment are the habitation of God's throne (Psa. 89. 14; 97. 2). He suffered in our stead.

III. Judgment With Righteousness. Good for the sinner (Psa. 33. 5) . At Calvary, God's mercy and righteousness met in the Person of Christ, and God's judgment was satisfied.

IV. Judgment With Mercy. Good for our neighbours. Such an exercise produces song (Psa. 101. 1).

V. Judgment Defied by Mercy. One principle in our treatment of those who have wronged us. Good for our erring brother (James 2. 13).

FAITH AND WORKS.

JAMES 2. 14-26.

This is the very heart of the Epistle, showing that real living faith is always known by its fruits. Many have imagined that James wrote these verses to combat Paul's teaching concerning justification by faith, as unfolded in the Epistle to the Romans. As a matter of fact, James wrote his Epistle some years before Paul wrote Romans. There is no conflict between the two Epistles, as the one is the complement to the other. Faith and works are inseparable, as the following proves.

An old ferryman, a man of much thought and observation, but of few words, a reader of the Bible and a firm believer in its truths, had among his regular passengers two business men, who crossed together on the same day once a week. Their conversation often turned to this matter of faith and works, one of them thinking he could do without works if he had faith, and the other thinking he could do without faith if he had works. The ferryman's patience was so tried by the frequent and fruitless repetition of "faith" and "works," used as they were in a sense so different from their import and so destructive of their Scriptural harmony, that at last he felt that he must intervene. He said nothing, but fell upon the following expedient. On one of his oars he painted the word "Faith," and on the other "Works." When on his next passage across with the two friendly disputants, he reached the most dangerous part, he took in "Faith," and with all his might plied "Works." The boat went round and round, to the annoyance and fear of the two passengers. "Put out the other oar," called one of them in a loud and angry voice. "Very well," was the old man's calm reply, as he took in "Works" and put out "Faith," which he used as he had formerly used the other. Of course this produced the same result, and the two men thought he must be out of his mind. The old man, however, continued his practical demonstration for a little, and then called their attention to the names painted on the oars. "I have tried your way," said he, "and yours; and you have seen the result. Now, observe my way." And as he gave a steady pull to each oar the boat at once acknowledged in its forward course the power of their harmonious strokes, and in a few minutes was at the land-place. "Thus it is," he added, "that faith worketh by love." So faith without works, or works without faith, will not suffice to bring us unto our desired haven. But let there be both, and the haven will be safely reached.

I. A Live Faith. Works are an evidence of a real live faith. The possibility of the possession of a dead faith is here declared (14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 26). Just as a live body will manifest its life in action, so live faith will move.

II. A Profitable Faith. Works make faith Profitable (14). "What doth it profit?" is a great question. Here we have profit associated with faith. It is essential that we should have a profitable faith..

III. A Working Faith.

1. FAITH LEADS TO SHUDDERING (19). Real faith leads us to believe in a living God. But what does such a faith lead to? It makes even devils tremble, or, as it could be rendered, "'The devils also believe and shudder" (M. reads, "So do the devils, and they shudder"). Has your faith in the existence of God led to shuddering yet?

2. FAITH LEADS TO SACRIFICE (21) . Abraham's faith led him to Mount Moriah, and to offering his son. Real faith will lead us to Calvary, and to accept the sacrifice Christ has made.

3. FAITH LEADS TO JUSTIFICATION (24). That. is, real, living faith.

IV. Perfection of Faith (22)_ Faith can mature. The proof of a strong and maturing faith will be seen in a plenitude of works.

FRIEND OF GOD.

JAMES 2.23; 4.4.

UNWORLDLINESS is here shown to be an infallible proof that we stand amongst the justified, that we have real and saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Has this phrase, "The friend of God," ever gripped you? God evidently needed a friend, and He found in Abraham just that friendship that His heart craved.

What are the essentials to true friendship with God? This question is answered by noting what are the requirements for earthly friendship.

I. Confidence. There can be no real friendship without confidence, trust. This is its foundation. Confidence is the child of knowledge. The more we know of our friends, the more we trust them. Faith is the beginning of friendship with God.

II. Love. Confidence alone will not make an ideal friendship. Love is essential. This is essential to friendship, true friendship with God.

III. Frankness. Friends have frank, familiar intercourse one with another. A little girl defined a friend as one who knows all about you, and yet loves you in spite of that. A friendship that cannot bear the truth is of no value. Friendship with God welcomes the truth.

IV. Consideration. Friends delight to meet each other's wishes. They consider each other in every sense. We, if friends of God, will give Him every consideration.

V. Sacrifice. Even going to the point of real sacrifice in so doing. And, of course, real friends love to give presents to each other.

VI . Loyalty . Tale friends will stand up for each other, especially when absent the one from the other.

VII. Perpetuity. A true friendship is not for a time, but will stand the passage of the years.

THE CRAZE FOR PLEASURE.

JAMES 3 18; 4. 1-5

FOUR times the word "lust" occurs in this section. What is lust? Dr. Pierson defined it as "A natural, normal longing which oversteps the limits God appoints. Passion should be our slave, and not our master." Dr. Jowett defined it as "anything that steams the windows of the soul," and thus blurs our vision.

Instead of the word "lusts," in verses 1 and 3, the A. V. margin and J.N.D. give "pleasures," and that forms the key to the meaning of these verses, and also the clue to the teaching they contain. Here we have a craze for pleasure, for sinful pleasure, and the results. Over-indulgence in pleasure is sinful.

THE WORK OF PLEASURE-MANIA.

I. Fomentation. "From whence come wars and fighting ("brawlings" in margin) among you? Come they not hence, even of your pleasures" (4. 1). Inordinate pleasures, the craze for pleasures, fomented trouble in the Church. Compare the "fruit of righteousness" (3. 18) with the results of sinful pleasures in 4. 1-4.

II. Penetration. "Your pleasures that take the field in your members," or Dr. Young's translation, "that are as soldiers in your members." These renderings are suggestive. If pleasure is allowed to have its own way in us, like soldiers, it takes the field in our members; that is, gets the mastery of us, and the results are saddening.

III. Agitation. "Ye covet" (Rotherham's rendering) and have not." "Ye envy (margin of A.V.) and desire to have. Ye fight and war" (4. 2). What a state of agitated unrest have we depicted here, as a result of indulgence in sinful pleasures. And we note a further sad result described in one word

IV. Dissatisfaction. Observe: "Ye covet (R.) and have not" . . . "Desire to have, and cannot obtain." What an unsatisfied and dissatisfied condition have we here.

V. Stagnation. Note: "Ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your pleasures" (4. 2, 3). What a dreadful effect over-indulgence in pleasure has upon the prayer-life, as shown in these verses. What a dreadful picture of spiritual stagnation! First—prayerlessness—"Ye ask not." Secondly--fitfulness--"Ye ask and receive not." Why? Because "ye ask amiss," asking for a wrong purpose, actuated by a wrong motive.

VI. Degeneration. What dreadful backslidings have we expressed in the following: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses"—"Friendship of this world," "Enemy of God" (4. 4). How these believers had degenerated in their Christian walk, practice, and experience. They were now unfaithful to their God.

VII. Is there a Cure? Yes. Examine closely verse 5, reading from Dr. Weymouth's translation: "The Scripture saith . . . the Spirit which He has caused to dwell in our hearts yearns jealously over us" (4. 5). Or, as the late Dr. F. B. Meyer loved to say: "It could be translated, 'The Spirit which He made to dwell in us jealously yearns for our entire devotion.'" No believer who has fallen a victim to pleasure can ever be satisfied in that sad state. Certainly the Holy Spirit is not. How the Holy Spirit must love us to "yearn jealously over us." The cure is shown in the following verses, viz., getting low before the Lord, and seeking His full deliverance.

HUMBLED OR HUMILIATED—WHICH?

JAMES 4. 6-10, 13-17.

WHAT a difference there is between being humbled or humiliated I The first is my act, the second is the act of God; the first is remedial, the second retributive; the former is the beginning of blessing, the latter is the commencement of a curse, There is no escape from either the one or the other. If I do not humble myself under the mighty hand of God, the mighty hand of God will humiliate me.

I. Submit to God (4. 6, 7). Why should we submit ourselves to God?

1 . IN VIEW OF THE SADNESS OF THE PAST (4. 1-4) . What a sad catalogue of sin and failure we have in verses I to 4, showing what a mess we ourselves have made of our lives. This comes from the lack of surrender to God.

2. IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT POWER OF THE EVIL ONE. Observe, before we are exhorted to "resist the Devil" we are urged to submit ourselves to God. To attempt to withstand the Evil One without fully surrendering to God, is asking for trouble. When the Devil is resisted by those who previously have fully surrendered to God, he flees.

3. IN VIEW OF THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE (4. 13-15) . How easy it is to plan without God, yet how futile. All our plans should first be submitted to God, and even then announced as "If the Lord will."

4. IN VIEW OF THE SURPRISES OF GOD (4. 13-15). This is another line of thought suggested by these verses. Life is a series of surprises. By the division of time God isolates us every day, loving to surprise us. Indeed life is a series of surprises. What a wonderful God have we!

II. Draw Nigh to God (4. 8, 9). This is one, and, indeed, the first expression, and proof of submission to God. How must we draw nigh to Him?

1. WITH SINCERITY (8). Seeking cleansed hands and purified hearts.

2. IN PENITENCE (9) . With real sorrow for sin.

III. Humbled in the Sight of God (4. 10). Remembering our sinnership, taking the lowly place. Then—what ?

1. GOD WILL LIFT You UP. As a parent lifts up the sorrowing head of a child.

2. GOD WILL GIVE GRACE (4. 6).

OPPRESSING THE HIRELING.

JAMES 5. 1-11.

EVIDENTLY many of the poor amongst the Christian Jews were oppressed by the wealthy, and defrauded of their hard earnings (verse 4). Faith in Christ and His Coming will lead us to a patient sufferance of evils we cannot avoid. "The Just One" is R.V. of verse 6. "Murdered the Righteous One" is Rotherham's rendering.

THE LABOURER'S:

1. Hire. "Kept back by fraud" (4) . Observe Crieth." What a striking phrase. Crieth with a voice God can hear.

II.. Patience (7, 8, 10, 11). James turns from the oppressors to the oppressed. "Suffer with long patience" is the marginal note. This is wise advice. For agitation sometimes is futile.

III. Hope. But why be patient? How long should patience be exercised ? The defrauded labourer who cannot find immediate redress by man, must remember the future Advent of our Lord when all wrongs will be righted. Read in the prophecies of the Old Testament the glowing results of Messiah's reign. Our great hope is the Coming of the Lord. That Coming "draweth nigh." That was true in those days—how much more so in our day. There are impatient folk who desire immediate redress of all wrongs, and who object to the advice here given. This is the ideal, not immediately realizable. What then? Should not patience be allowed to operate until wrongs are swept away. And who will sweep these things off the face of the earth? Man has done his best and failed. Ah, there is one—the Man, Christ Jesus. "He, the Judge, standeth before the door" (verse 9). In the meantime, let us who cherish ardently this hope be patient, and reveal our patience in.

IV. Silence. That is taught in verse 9. "Grudge not one against another," is, in the margin, "Groan not one against another," or, as J.N.D., "Complain not one against another," or as Rotherham, "Be not sighing one against another." Surely this means that, counting on the Coming of the One Who will sweep away all abuses and punish the oppressors, we shall cease to complain to one another, or of one another, ceasing to be constantly "dinning"

into other people's ears the story of our grievance. Groaning will give place to glorying—glorying in the Lord. Silent to man on our grievances because not silent to the Lord.

V. Prayer (13) . Ah , here is the great result of uncomplaining--we pour out into the ears of our loving God our sorrows, and the wrongs inflicted upon us..

PURE SPEECH.

JAMES 5. 12.

Turin is a closer connection between this verse and the subject of the oppression of the hireling already dealt with, than at first sight imagined. Under the galling pressure of injury and oppression one is tempted to the use of expletives, of impure and unwise speech, as one outlet, but this is here forbidden. Is not this verse but an echo of words spoken on the Mount by the illustrious Brother of James, as recorded in Matthew 5. 33-37.

Our speech, to be golden, must be:

I. Pure. "Swear not."

II. Unadorned. "Let your yea be yea," etc.

III. Dignified. As becometh believers.

IV. Inspired. By and from the right source. "For whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matt. 5. 37) ; or, as Weymouth, "Comes from the evil one," suggesting that the Evil One is the author of impure and undignified speech.

V. Disturbing. Anything else causes us "to fall into condemnation," disturbing our own consciences, and grieving the Lord.

PRAYER AT ALL TIMES.

JAMES 5. 13-18.

WHAT James preached he practised, for he himself prayed much. All the way through this Epistle the writer has insisted on the necessity and extreme value of prayer.

I. Pray when Afflicted (13) . When a man is suffering he is tempted to forego prayer. This temptation must be resisted.

II. Pray when Sick (14, 15). The afflicted one must pray, but the sick one should call for others to "pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord." Strange, that believing men and women forget to pray when sick! What a gracious promise of answer to such prayers is given here.

III. Pray when Faulty (16) . Here we are urged to confess to each other our faults, but not our sins. The latter should be confessed to God only. What should confession lead to? To prayer for each other.

IV. Pray when Merry (13). To sing Psalms means to pray through sacred song, for the best prayer book in the world is the Book of Psalms.

V. Pray when Thriving. M. reads: "Is anyone thriving let him sing praise." Singing and praying are signs of spiritual health.

AN ERRING BROTHER.

JAMES 5. 19, 20.

THE gracious ministry of restoration is here commended. That is how this Epistle closes. No leave-taking but an abrupt close on a high note.

I. Possibility. Possible for even brethren to err. "Brethren if any of you do err."

H. Defection. Err in what? "Err from the truth."

III. Seriousness. Deflection from the truth creates a multitude of sins.

IV. Peril. Death is the peril. "Save a soul from death." What a dreadful peril!

V. Salvation. Whilst the Holy Trinity operates in salvation, here it is human ministry which is stressed. For usually the Triune God operates through the agency of man.

1 Peter:

This letter was written by the Apostle Peter towards the close of his life (A.D. 60), whilst staying at Babylon (v. 13), where a Christian Church had been established. It was intended principally, though not exclusively, for Hebrew Christians. Observe—"Jews" (1. 1, R.v.); "Gentiles" (2. 9, 10). It was written for two purposes. First, to show that Peter agreed with Paul's teaching. Second, to strengthen and comfort God's people passing through fiery trials. It is a Book of Comfort.

LIVING AS FOREIGNERS.

I PETER 1. 1.

I. Introduction. The writer of this Epistle needs no introduction. In fulfilment of our Saviour's exhortation and commission: "When thou hast once turned again strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22. 32, R.V.),

Peter wrote this Epistle to comfort and strengthen his Christian brethren passing through a time of sore trial and bitter persecution. So richly is it stored with counsel, warning, and consolation, that Luther, the reformer, greatly prized it. The depth of doctrinal insight surprises us. "Whence bath this man this wisdom?" Most assuredly from God the Holy Ghost. Nowhere else in Scripture do we find fuller teaching on the Trinity. You will specially note how Peter seeks to comfort sufferers, by filling their minds with great thoughts of God and His salvation. Would you be skilled in comfort's art? Then take notice of this fact. Place before sufferers great and deep thoughts of God, His salvation and truth.

II. Strangers. There are various opinions held concerning the folk Peter meant when he addressed his letter to "strangers." Some think he simply meant Jews who were scattered in Asia. Yet Paul in Ephesians speaks of the Gentile Christians as "strangers" (Eph. 2. 11, 12) . Pray note:

1. Our time here is a sojourning (1 Peter 1. 17).
2. Once we were strangers to grace and God (Eph. 2. 14) .
3. We are now in these matters "no more strangers" (Eph. 2. 19) .
4. But so far as the world is concerned, we are "strangers and pilgrims," that is, pilgrims because strangers (1 Peter 2. 11) .

III. Foreigners. Weymouth gives "foreigners," and Moffatt "exiles" for "strangers." What is the duty of a foreigner? A foreigner's

1. ABSENTMINDEDNESS. He ever thinks of his native land. Let us "Set our affections on things above." Thus we shall have an absent heart and mind.
2. SEPARATION. A foreigner differs in dress, appearance, and palate, from those amongst whom he is living. As foreigners, we must live the separated life, being moulded not by the world's maxims and laws, and enjoying new food.
3. DETACHMENT. Does not take "root" in a foreign soil , Ever remains detached.
4. LOYALTY. Seeks, in a foreign land, .o maintain the honour, and advance the interests of his own country. This is an important thought.
5. LITERATURE. An exile loves to browse on literature from his own native land, and to satisfy that craving, makes arrangements with publishing houses in the land of his birth. If we are truly living as foreigners here in this world, we will love to read and study the literature of the Better Land, which we have already provided for us in the Bible.

6. FELLOWSHIP. An exile loves to meet for fellowship with fellow-exiles, and will go to no end of trouble to thus meet them. Spiritual foreigners love to have fellowship with kindred spirits.

ELECTION.
I PETER 1. 2.

DUE to wordy battles of the past, many of the Lord's people are frightened of the words "elect" and "election." Yet they are Bible words and Bible truths. "Chosen" is the word Weymouth gives. Election in Scripture is employed for three purposes:

1st, Describes an election to, or being chosen for, an office (John 15. 16).

2nd, Appointed to certain privileges (Psa. 135. 4).

3rd, To salvation. These scattered Christians are called the elect of God. What an honourable title!

I. The Origin of Election. Not sanctification, as some think—that is our sanctification, though in one sense we may say that this election was made possible by Christ's sanctification to the work of salvation and His obedience unto death, for that really and truly was its purpose. The true origin of election is the grace of "God the Father," It is comforting to find that Peter associates (as some consider) , the harsh doctrine of election with the softening and comforting doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. The one delightfully blends with the other. Election is the electing love of the Father.

II. The Possibility of Election. Observe here in verse 2, also verse 20, and also Acts 2. 23; Rom. 8. 29; Rom. 11. 2; and 2 Tim. 2. 19, the association of God's foreknowledge with God's election. In these verses we are permitted to enter the council chamber of the Most High, and to listen to the Eternal Counsels. This association of foreknowledge with election has been of great assistance to the puny minds of earthly mortals when grappling with this deep, deep truth.

III. The Proof of Election. The infallible proof of our election is of a twofold character.

1. INTERNAL. To feel and constantly foster within us the sanctification of the Holy Spirit.

2. EXTERNAL. To render swift obedience, and to live as exiles, as foreigners in this world.

IV. The Purpose of Election. "Is given that you may learn obedience, and may be sprinkled by blood," is 20th C. rendering. Thus two things are in the purpose of election.

1. "With a view to their obedience," is W. Our obedience.
2. And that we might enjoy the sprinkling of blood.

V. The Privilege of Election.

I. THAT THE ELECT SHOULD BE CONSTANTLY SPRINKLED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

2. GRACE AND PEACE MULTIPLIED. This means more than given. They had been given and received, now they are to be multiplied. These blessings travel hand in hand. First, Grace, i.e., God's unmerited favour which is ours through Christ. Grace is also a name for blessings that are ours in Christ. These are to be multiplied, now that they have been received.

Peace—peace with God, through our Lord Jesus, and peace of God. Someone has remarked that "grace is the nurture of the Christian life; peace is its character."

Note the phrase, "Sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience." Learn from this that—
a, True sanctification is of and by the Holy Spirit.

b. The purpose and result of sanctification is a life of obedience, not merely our happiness and comfort. God thinks more of our holiness than of our happiness, though He is not forgetful of that mercy.

THE BIRTH OF A DOXOLOGY.

I PETER 1. 3-5.

PROBABLY you have noticed in the New Testament writings the frequency of Doxologies. It is both interesting and profitable to study it., seeking to track it to its source. Here we are able to do that. This Te Deum is sung at the remembrance of redeeming grace in regeneration.

How easily these early Christians burst forth into Doxologies. Why? How is it that we are so far behind them in this practice? Has not the Lord done as much for us as He did for them? Is not the reservoir of grace still as full as ever? Yes! Surely the reason is the poverty of our individual Christian experience. The rush of daily life leaves little time for reflection on the wonders and marvels of grace; and so few believers appropriate, as they ought, the riches that are their own in Christ Jesus.

I. The Doxology.

1. A NEW THEME. `Blessed be the God," etc. The word rendered "Blessed" here has not the same significance as the word used in the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. Here it is blessing on account of something inherent in the person, whereas in the latter it describes blessing received. "Blessing God," literally means, "Speaking well of Him." It is good when a father blesses his child; it is touching when the child blesses the father. Here we find a child blessing his Heavenly Father.

2. A NEW RELATIONSHIP. "Blessed be the God and Father." This is a new relationship. This relationship in the New Testament sense, is unknown in the Old Testament. Note, "God and Father." Note John 20. 17. Not "Our Father," but "My Father and your Father." Also, "My God and your God," not "our God."

II. Its Origin.

1. A NEW BIRTH. "Hath begotten again." This is one of the unique phrases of the Christian vocabulary, not found in other religious systems. Other systems emphasize culture, training, discipline, education, evolution.

2. A NEW LIFE, "Has given us a new life," is the 20th Century New Testament rendering.

3.. A NEW HOPE. "A new life of undying hope" (20th C.). Before regeneration, there was nothing to which to look forward. Note the connection of hope here with the Resurrection of Christ. Certainly if He had not risen from the dead, then our hope would never have been born. The Christians' hope is a Living, or as we have it here, "a Lively Hope," because Christ is living. The grave is no longer a terminus, but a thoroughfare.

4. A NEW INHERITANCE. "To an inheritance" (4).

We are born again to an estate. As sons of Adam we have a dread inheritance--heirs of a fallen nature and of the wrath of God. Now, through grace, heirs of "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

5. A NEW SECURITY. "Who are kept" (5). The R.V. substitutes "guarded" for "kept," thus retaining the military metaphor which is in the text. Guarded by God's power—Jesus (1 Cor. 1. 24), and "in God's power" (R.). The inheritance is preserved for the heirs, and the heirs for the inheritance.

6. A NEW SALVATION. Salvation is a big word, including not only what God has already done for us or is doing for, or in us, but which He will yet do for us--"a salvation which even now stands ready for unveiling" (W.).

THE BIRTH OF A PARADOX.

1 PETER 1. 6, 7.

IN our last study we were tracking a doxology to its source; in this we are to watch the birth of a paradox. In 2 Cor. 6. 9, 10, we have a cluster of paradoxes. Here is Peter's paradox: "Leaping for joy," and yet "in heaviness."

I. The Paradox.

1. AN EXUBERANT JOY. "Wherein ye greatly rejoice." "Wherein ye leap for joy" is another rendering. The one thing that amazed the heathen world of that time was the joy the believers enjoyed and exhibited in the midst of suffering. Our Christian faith enables us to face trials with undiminished and undimmed serenity and cheerfulness. Our salvation is one that leads to great gladness.

2. A DEPRESSING SADNESS. But the Joy mentioned here is gladness plus sadness. "Though now for a season ("for the passing moment," M.), if need be, ye are in heaviness ("ye are put to grief," R.)." "Though for the passing moment you may need to suffer various trials; that is only to prove your faith is sterling" (M.).

How can an exultant joy and a depressing sadness exist together in our experience. That we have "heaviness" is beyond question-on account of personal trials, and outside pressure; that we "greatly rejoice" is also beyond question.

II.. The Explanation. There is a great difference between always and only rejoicing. The joy and the sadness do co-exist. The joy does not deprive the heaviness of all its weight, nor the sorrow of all its sting. There is no artificial stoicism. about the Christian faith; nor any attempt to explain things away.

III. The Possibility. What is necessary to make this paradox possible?

1. CONTEMPLATION OF OUR GLORIOUS PRIVILEGES.

That little word "wherein" connects what has gone before with this statement. We are not asked to manufacture spiritual emotion. We are urged to determine what to think about most, and what to look at most. The possibility of this paradox depends on the object of our contemplation. Are we dwelling on the truths proclaimed in verses 3 to 5? Then this paradox is possible.

2. THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE TRANSCIENCY OF SORROW. "For a season if need be," is the A.V., or, as M., "For the passing moment." How quickly will this moment pass.

3. RECOGNITION OF THE PURPOSE AND RESULTS OF THE TRIAL. "If need be." There is therefore a needs be. Faith is very precious. As a man's faith is, so is the man. Fire tries and refines. The word "prove" in the R.V. means more than test. It really means to reveal, strengthen, confirm.

4. A REMEMBRANCE OF THE GREAT REWARD. "Might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." When suffering, keep your eye on the Corning of the Lord. Keep in mind the joy of hearing His "Well done, good and faithful servant."

NOT SEEN, YET TRUSTED AND LOVED.
I PETER 1.8.

Introduction .

NOT SEEN. Remember Peter is speaking and writing. He had seen the Lord. There seems to be a kind of tender pity in the words, "Whom having not seen." Twice over he repeats the statement that they had not seen Him.

You have never seen Him, and yet you love Him. And though you do not even now see Him, yet you believe in Him and exult with a triumphant happiness too great for words'. (20th Century). "You never knew Him but you love Him; for the moment you do not see Him, but you believe in Him" (M.).

BELIEVE. Surely here we find Peter re-echoing the words of His beloved Master as we have them recorded in John 20,29.

LOVE AT SIGHT. "Love at first sight" is a well-known phrase. Most human love follows the sight of the eyes. But the love Peter refers to is not love at eye-sight, but love at heart-sight. (For they had never seen the Lord with the eyes of flesh.)

PROOF OF LOVE. Do we love Him? How easily one can be mistaken in imagining admiration to be love, which it is not. Here are the proofs of real love.

I. Attachment. Love unites two into one. In "marriages made in Heaven," the marriage ceremony in Church, indispensable according to the law of God, is, after all, only an outward recognition of a union that has already taken place, the union of hearts and minds, of affections and ideals, of purposes and plans. Love, real love, unites two into one.

II. Obedience. Love delights to meet the wishes, and to obey the slightest commands of the loved one. That is pre-eminently true in each individual experience if we really love the Lord. Love will obey His commands (John 14. 15), and impel to deeds of sacrifice (2 Cot. 5. 14) in service.

III. Separation. Love will separate us from all other likes and admirations, and unite us in lonely and glorious devotion to the person and interests of the one loved; and 1 John 2. 15 is the verse we have in mind in this connection.

IV. Consecration. Love leads us to strip ourselves of our treasures and place them at the disposal of the loved one, becoming utterly devoted to their interests. This we see in the love Jonathan had for David (1 Sam.18. 1-4). If our love to the Lord Jesus has not led us to bow low before the Lord whom we love, and strip ourselves of all we have, and are, and hope for, in the words of the well-known hymn, then our love is lacking in its essential quality.

"Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

"Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

"Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

"Take my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

"Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine:
Take my heart—it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

"Take my love: my Lord I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only ALL for Thee."

V. Anticipation. Love lives in anticipation of more blessed fellowship. Love renders each other essential to life. Lovers find a difficulty to live their separate lives, and longingly anticipate the time when they can live under one roof, and never be absent the one from the other only when compulsory for the purpose of earning a living. If we really love the Lord we will ardently look forward to being with Him in the glory, when we shall see Him face to face and be known even as we are known.

THREE UNSPEAKABLE BLESSINGS.

I PETER 1. 8, with 2 COR. 9. 15; 12. 4.

Introduction. George Eliot, in her "Scenes in Clerical Life," speaks of the possibility and danger of having a New Testament good religious vocabulary without a corresponding religious experience. A real peril lurks here. It is possible to have a tolerably good grasp of religious truth, to be able to define Christian doctrine, and to express our views in clear language, and yet to be without the experience of those truths.

The fact that one can talk fluently on Divine themes is no proof of the possession of a real and vital experience.

There is another peril, that of possessing a religious experience that can be reduced into, and expressed by, a vocabulary. That such an experience is rather common must be admitted. A weak, sickly spiritual life can easily be described. Such has but few if any thrilling experiences. Quite easily words can be found whereby it can be described. Shame on us if this is true concerning us.

Cowper calls speech a "Sacred interpreter of human thought." And what a wonderful interpreter it is to be sure. Yet it is possible for the most skilled interpreter to come prematurely to the end of his resources. We have witnessed the inability of a splendid interpreter to translate some florid phrases. That sacred interpreter of human thought cannot but fail to translate some experience into words. That is true regarding even earthly things. All the deepest and richest things in everyday life are unspeakable. "A mother's love! Who has discovered a symbol by which to express it? It is unspeakable. A profound grief! Where is the speech in which it can be enshrined? It is unspeakable." A glorious sunrise or sunset---who can find words to fully and adequately describe them? The majesty of the mountains, the beauty and fragrance of the lily, and other flowers---where is the language that can tell all?

If that is true regarding earthly things, what about the heavenly? If a mother's love is unspeakable, what shall we say concerning Divine love?

"But what to those who find? Ah ! this,
Nor tongue nor pen can show:
The Love of Jesus, what it is.
None but His loved. ones know."

Even inspired apostles found now and again the inadequacy of human language. They then press into service the word "unspeakable," which occurs three times in Holy Writ, and each we shall now notice.

I. Unspeakable Gift. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9. 15), or, as Weymouth renders it, His "Unspeakably precious gift," or as another rendering, "Thank God for His unexpected bounty." This is one of Paul's doxologies. With most of them there appears to be no connection between the subject he is dealing with and the doxology. Often, right in the midst of a profound argument, he has to pause for worship. But there happens to be a connection here. The Apostle has been referring to the generous gifts of the Macedonian Christians, holding them up as an example worthy of copying by the Corinthians, when the thought of the wonderful grace and goodness of God overwhelmed him, and he found relief in this outburst of adoring love and worship.

There is something wrong with us if, now and again, we, too, are not similarly affected. One infallible test of a real growth in grace is a growing appreciation of the love of God in Christ, and of His substitutionary death on the Cross. For God's gift cannot be overestimated, cannot be over-valued. His riches are unsearchable, and His love passeth knowledge. God's gift is a Person. And such a wondrous Being. Have you thanked God to-day for His unspeakable Gift ? Is that Gift unspeakably precious to you?

II. Unspeakable Words. "How that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful or possible for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12. 1-4). It is Paul speaking. He is here disclosing a personal secret he had kept for fourteen years. Just at that time Paul was stoned outside Lystra (Acts 14). No one could be stoned and live. Undoubtedly he was killed, and whilst his poor battered body lay still, he himself went up to Paradise, but as his work was not yet finished, God performed a miracle, and he and his body were re-united. Whilst in Paradise he heard words he could not possibly find human words to describe.

Incidentally this is important, as showing the effect of Christ's death and resurrection on Paradise. Before the Cross, Paradise was beneath (Luke 16. 19-31) , in the heart of the earth (Matt. 12. 40), to which Christ went at His death. When He rose from the dead, He transferred Paradise to the third Heaven, the immediate presence of God (2 Cor. 12. 2, 4; Eph. 4. 9-10), though leaving the place of the departed ungodly just as before.

What rapturous words are these! And they are applicable to us in this life. Is not this true of prayer and communion with God? Living in communion with Him we shall hear unspeakable words, as the hymn, "In the secret of His Presence" expresses it:

"If I tried, I could not utter
What He says when thus we meet."

Our Paradise now is to have beneath us the Everlasting Arms, and hear His words of love; our Paradise by and by will be the immediate presence of the Lord.

III. Unspeakable Joy. "Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1. 8), or as another version has it, "Ye exult with a triumphant happiness, too great for words!" There are joys that weaken and impair the soul. Not so this—it is crowned with glory. Who were these happy folk to whom Peter addressed himself? A poor, despised, persecuted folk, many of whom had been robbed of their property for the sake of the Name. They were believers in the Lord Jesus. Joy, therefore, depends not upon what we have, but what we are; not on circumstances, but on Communion with Christ.

Observe, this is not an exhortation, but a statement of fact. He was not urging them to rejoice, but simply stating what had already taken place in their own experience. Evidently this was their normal experience. How far short believers of to-day seem to come of an experience of this sort!

Now pray note the order of these three "Unspeakables." Unspeakable Gift first, THEN Words, and finally Joy. Before the experience must come the reception of the gift. The first act of importance is the reception of that gift. "Then it is our privilege to commence to walk and talk with God in holy blessed Communion. That will mean the possession of a joy that cannot be described.

THE GLORY AND GREATNESS OF OUR SALVATION.

1 PETER 1. 9-12.

Introduction.

SALVATION. It is quite evident that Peter loved to repeat the word "salvation." See how it slips off his pen in verses 5, 9, and 10. Apparently he never thought of it without a thrill. This is brought out in the Moffatt rendering: "And you will thrill with unspeakable and glorious joy to obtain the outcome of your faith in the salvation of your souls." That is to say, the thought of the glory and greatness of our salvation thrilled him with joy, as it most certainly will do so in our experience.

THRILL.

Have you ever been thrilled as you have thought of your own personal salvation? Some do not value a thing until they discover others greatly value it. In this study we are to see that our salvation has been, and indeed is, the wonderment of the prophets of the past, and of angels in the past and present.

I. The Description of Salvation. Note the remarkable variety of words and phrases employed here to describe one thing—salvation.

1. **SALVATION.** A great word, pregnant with meaning.
2. **GRACE.** It comes in grace, and it is grace.
3. **GLORY.** What a description of the fruit of grace.
4. **GOSPEL.** Great word.

II. The Basis of Salvation. Peter stresses here that the sufferings of Christ form the base or foundation of our salvation. This is the fundamental fact of Christianity. Here you observe that Peter never speaks of the sufferings of Jesus, or of Jesus Christ, but of Christ! He prefers to dwell upon the passion of Christ in its official aspect, and not in its personal sense. Examine the first Epistle and you will be impressed by this fact. He refers to "Jesus Christ" in 1. 2, 3, 7, 13; 2. 5, and so on. In the following Scriptures he refers to Jesus simply as the Christ: 1. 11, 19; 2.21; 3. 18; 4. 1, 13, 14; 5. 1. Peter never forgot that the very day he confessed Jesus as Christ, he took His Lord to task for speaking of His suffering and death (Mast. 16. '22, 23).

The Gospel is not that Jesus died, but that "Christ" died for our sins (1 Cor. 15. 3). "Christ" is Jesus' official title, thus the use of that draws attention to the official aspect of His death. He died, not a martyr's death, but the death of a sacrifice. Observe the Gospel is-

1. Not a speculation.
 2. Not a mere theology.
 3. Not amorality.
 4. Not a declaration of principles.
- It is a history of fact, of things done on this earth of ours.

III. The Prophecy of Salvation. It was foretold by the prophets (Luke 1. 69, 70). Our salvation was the substance of prophecy.

The unity of salvation is disclosed in the fact that the things which the prophets foretold are spoken of as the same as those "which are now reported unto you by them" (verse 12)

Some of the people to whom Peter wrote this Epistle—particularly the Jews—had a great veneration for the prophets, and would be tremendously impressed by the fact he emphasises, that they foretold this wondrous salvation now ours. He is great on the theme, as Acts 3. 18 proves. Paul also stressed this fact (Acts 26. 22, 23). Also note John 8, 5, 6. The Gospel unlocks the treasures of the Old Testament. The Old Testament creates an attitude of expectancy, pointing onward, with ever increasing distinctness, to Christ. So much was this so, that the pious souls stood, as it were, on the tip-toe of expectancy when the "fulness of the time had come."

IV. The Investigation of Salvation,

1. The PERSONS who searched. "The prophets."
2. The OBJECT of their search- "Time," "Salvation."
3. The MANNER of their search. "Inquired and searched diligently-"
4. The SUCCESS of their search. What a sublime disappointment was theirs, as is shown in verse 12. Read Hebrews 11.40

V. The Angelic Study of Salvation. "Which things the angels desire to look into" (verse 12). "Bend aside to see." This is the literal rendering, indicative of a strained attention to something which has caught your eye, something out of your usual line of sight.

Scripture. 1 Cor. 4. 9; Eph. 3. 10; 1 Tim. 3. 16.

Ruskin wrote: "There is a mean curiosity, as of a child opening a forbidden door, or a servant prying into his master's business; and a noble curiosity, questioning, in the front of danger, the source of the great river; a nobler curiosity still, which questions the source of the River of Life, and of the space of the Continent of Heaven, things which the angels desire to look into."

CHERUBIM.

1. The idea in the word, "Look into," is that of eager desire and fixed attention.
2. The outspread wings and bended heads of the brooding Cherubim which sat above the Mercy-seat, gazing down upon the miracle of love that was manifested beneath them there, is here suggested.

POETS. This reference to angelic curiosity has seized the fancy of poets. C. Wesley:

"Ask the Father's Wisdom how
Him that did the means ordain;
Angels round our Altars bow,
To search it out in vain.

"Angels in fixed amazement
Around our Altars hover,
With eager gaze adore the grace
Of our Eternal Lover.

FINAL POINTS.

1. "Has the grace come unto you (10).
2. Does "the Spirit of Christ" in you "point unto anything?" (11).
3. Do you know the "testifying" of the Holy Ghost" (12).

Subject of Inspiration. The present passage is one of the most striking in the whole of the New Testament regarding the subject of inspiration.

1. the prophetic writings, which we now possess, the result of that inquiry?
 - a. Was their knowledge gained as a result of personal effort? If so, how this rebukes the sluggishness and slothfulness of many. Yet this is not so.
 - b. Rather, the prophetic writings were the subject of their inquiry, then God gave the knowledge they possessed.
 - c. They knew they were speaking concerning a salvation but they knew nothing about details.
2. How far were their utterances their Moen and how far suggested to them from on high?

The prophets found themselves impelled to say and write words which they were conscious of choosing, and using, but which they felt to have a deeper meaning than they themselves were conscious of intending. This is a notable fact.

GIRDING THE MIND.

I PETER 1. 13-16.

Introduction. The modern emphasis on the mind, upon the importance of the thoughts in the realm of good living, is thought to be a new psychological discovery. As a matter of fact it is no new thing at all, so far as the Bible is concerned. For proofs of this note, Geri. 6. 5; 8. 21 ; Prov. 23. 7; Phil. 4. 8. here in Peter we are to note the close connection there is between the girding mind and a holy life.

"WHEREFORE." This wee word at once connects this and our last lesson. The last meditation was on the intense and reverent curiosity of the prophets of old, and even of the angels, too, in the wonderfully devised scheme of redemption. The word "wherefore" gathers up all the wealthy results of the previous study. What effect should the result of our previous study have upon us? A girded mind leading to a holy life.

I. The Girded Mind. "Gird up." Is this an echo of John 21. 18? It seems likely. The figure of the passage is taken from the flowing garments of the oriental dress. The flapping robes caught the wind and wrapping about the legs, become serious hindrances to easy and progressive movement.. The wearer, therefore, lays hold of the hindering garments, tucking them into a girdle which discharges the ministry of a belt..

"A similar disorder may prevail in the realm of thought and affection. Our life may be characterised by mental slovenliness. Our thoughts may trail in loose disorder. How much loose thinking there is concerning Divine things." Now loose thinking is dangerous. Like the trailing garments, it may trip us up; it might lead us to careless and inconsistent living.

"Brace up" is the 20th Century rendering. The navy or coal worker tightens the belt to brace himself up for some particular laborious task. So we must "gird up our minds," or "brace up our minds" for the great task before us.

II. The Cool Mind. "Be sober." This is more than an injunction against intemperance. It is a call to serious thought. This is a frivolous, butterfly kind of age. Yet do not confuse gravity with gloom. We have to be grave, yet not sullen. Moffatt's rendering is, "Keep cool." Let sufferers keep their heads when a blow falls, and not make any railing accusation against the Lord. "Let them keep cool." A fevered condition is dangerous.

III. The Controlled Mind. "Exercise the strictest self-control," is the 20th Century rendering. That is really one fruit of girding.

IV. The Obedient Mind. "As obedient children." Obedience in relation, and as one condition, to holiness. We shall return to this subject.

V. The Optimistic Mind. "And hope to the end," or, "Hope perfectly," as in the margin of the R.V. The reference here is not to duration, but to the quality of the Christian hope. Observe:

1. THE OBJECT OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE. "And hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." "Is being brought" (R.V., margin), i.e., is already on its way. It is very remarkable language. The light from fixed stars may take centuries to reach us, but is speeding through space all the while. So the grace that is to be revealed when the Lord comes in on its way.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE. "Hope perfectly" is the margin. Then there are degrees in hope. Hope may be weak at first, but should develop and strengthen by use.

HOLINESS.

1 PETER 1. 14-16.

UNDOUBTEDLY the Apostle Peter had Leviticus 11. 44 in mind in speaking as he does on holiness. Yet there is a difference. Guided by the Holy Spirit, he changed the imperative command ("Ye shall be holy") into a loving appealing exhortation ("Be ye holy").

I. The Dislike of Holiness. Dr. Stuart Holden writes: "I remember a man who spoke to me, finding fault with something that had been said from the platform because he disagreed with it. He said, 'I do not believe in all this teaching about holiness and Christ conformity. I am quite content to know that I am saved and on my way to Heaven;' and I had to say to him, 'My friend, that is hardly the proper criterion of judgment. You are satisfied to know that you are saved and going to Heaven. But is God satisfied? Is that what Christ died for?' And the man was silent."

Bishop Moule declared: "The fully pardoned must long to be fully holy."

II. The Need of Holiness. Said one concerning a woman for whom he had an admiration, though imperfect knowledge, "She is the salt of the earth!" "Yes," replied one who knew her much better, "Salt! Why, she is mustard and pepper, and the whole cruet!" That is the sad meaning of unlovely goodness. A friend called such folk, "The Lord's acid drops." They have their niche in life, but they are at times a sore trial to others.

III. The Definition of Holiness. in one sense it is indefinable. George Goodman remarks "No words can describe holiness, for it is known only to those who yield themselves to God." It is well to remember this, and to note that the best definition may be faulty and imperfect. What is holiness? "It is just complete conformity in all things great and small alike, to the Holy Will of God; being at one mind with God in all the judgments of the mind, in all the feelings of the heart, and in all the outgoings of the life, agreeing with God's estimate of things."

Thomas Carlyle stated that "holy," in the German language heilig, also means healthy; our English word "whole," all of one piece, without any hole in it, is the same word. You could not get any better definition of what holy really is than healthy, completely healthy.

"Holiness," says George Goodman, "is to have a conscience clean through the Blood, and a life guided by the Spirit through the Word. It is to have the power of Christ resting upon you, and to be glad in the freedom He gives."

IV. The Condition of Holiness. This is pointed out in 1 Peter 1. 14 as obedience—obedience to all known commands and desires of our Lord. Obedience to Him always leads to the Blood (1 John 1. 7).

V. The Pattern of Holiness. "As He" (1 Peter 1. 15). Our Gracious God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, are our true Pattern.

VI. The Imperative of Holiness. "Ye shall be" (Lev. 11. 44). Law, in his "Serious Call," says, "We may choose a married life or a single life, but it is not left to our choice whether we will make either a state of holiness, humility, devotion, and all other duties of the Christian life. It is our duty to devote ourselves to God in these states."

VII. The Field of Holiness. Holiness in "conversation" (1 Peter 1. 15) ; or conduct (M) ; or behaviour (R.) ; holiness even in trifles. One has said: "Whosoever has not a Christianity that sanctifies the trifles, has a Christianity that will not sanctify the crises of life."

VIII. The Possibility of Holiness. The very fact that God here in His Holy Word, urges us to Holiness should be quite sufficient to settle the possibility of holiness. Yet, for your help, note that holiness is wrapped up in Christ. "Christ for us is all our peace before a Holy God; and Christ in us is all our strength in an unholy world." "Holiness is both a gift and a process." It is a good gift from God in Christ; it is also a process to be worked out in daily life.

"PASS YOUR TIME IN AWE."

1 PETER 1. 17-21.

This is one of several surprising statements in this section. Further, there are in these verses several extraordinary conjunctions of terms. Fear! I thought the believer was delivered through grace from fear.

But what is meant by fear? It does not mean terror or dread. We are not to pass the time of our mortality in paralysing dread, or to go through life cringing like slaves. Both Rotherham and 20th Century New Testament give "reverence" for fear." "Fear" here really means a wholesome awe, a fear which grows out of love, a fear lest we should grieve One so abundant in mercy. There is a lamentable lack of reverence amongst the Lord's people. There is a call for more reverence in thought, prayer, and walk. We should cultivate a reverential fear. How? Well, the rest of the verses will show. It all lies in remembrance. We are to remind ourselves of three facts.

1. The Character of the Author of Redemption. "If ye call on him as Father," is the r.v. "Call," let that word arrest you. It means more than sending a wireless telegram to the Most High, brief, though commendably to the point. It means a long telephone call; yea, more, it surely is a long personal interview face to face, though at present we see Him not. He is always "At Home." "Call" means to wait on Him. Remember He "called" upon you first. Return that "call."

Another point. "Father," "Judge." What a surprising conjunction of opposites. Is God both? Verily. But what an amazing union of opposites. "Instead of the friendliness of the fireside, we have the awfulness of the throne; instead of the hearthstone, we have the Great White Throne." Some think all of the Father and forget the Judge; and some conceive of Him only as Judge and forget He is Father also. Do not let filial confidence drive out legitimate fear. Holy sovereignty must be an element in our conception of the Fatherhood of God.

Yet, let us ever keep in mind that our loving Heavenly Father is also the august Judge of all the earth, that His Throne is not only of grace, but of impartial justice. "Who without respect of persons judgeth." Such remembrance will generate reverence and annihilate undue and unbecoming familiarity. Yes, the Author of Redemption is the Father Judge. Never to.- one moment forget this.

II. The Cost of Redemption. "Forasmuch as ye know" (1. 18). Know what Why, that we have no cheap redemption. It cost all that God had—His Beloved Son. Oh, let us ever move with breathless steps amidst the mysteries of redemption. Have you ever been gripped by that verse in Psalm 130: "There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared." Feared? Should it not be loved? Ah, no. When we realise the awful cost of redemption we fear Him with a fear that fears to sin against Him. A cheap redemption might have made us easy, but it would never have made us good. A cheap forgiveness would only have confirmed the sin it forgave. When we fully realise the cost of redemption we will seek to have done with sin.

III. The Purpose of Redemption. It is helpful to note the various renderings which bring out the purpose of redemption here disclosed.

1. "From your VAIN CONVERSATION" (A.V.).
2. "From your AIMLESS LIFE in which you were brought up" (20th C.).
3. "From your FRIVOLOUS HABITS OF LIFE" (W.).
4. "From your VAIN BEHAVIOUR" (R.).

PURITY.

1 PETER 1. 22.

WHAT fulness of teaching and of truth we have in this first chapter of Peter. Consequently, in our study we are making slow but steady progress.

There are two subjects before us in this verse: Purity and Love. We deal with purity in this study. The key words are "in," "through."

I. The Need of Purity. This is purity of the soul and of life that Peter recommends, actual and not merely ceremonial purity. It is personal purity.

II. The Means of Purity. "In" obeying the Truth. Moffat spells truth with a capital "T.," thus suggesting that He who is the Truth is meant here. Certainly in obeying His Word we are obeying Him.

III. The Bestower of Purity. "Through the Spirit." The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Purity, and the source of Purity.

IV. The Issue of Purity. "Unto unfeigned love of the brethren."

LOVE OF THE BRETHREN.

1 PETER 1.22.

THERE are eleven Commandments—the ten given by God through Moses, and the eleventh, the New Commandment given by the Lord Jesus: "That ye love one another as I have loved you." We love the Lord Whom we have not seen (1. 8) ; we must love our brethren whom we have seen and do see. The latter is indeed the test of the former (I John 4.20).

I. Its Nature. Now love is more than courtesy, attachment, or affability. It means self-denial, self-giving; it means that we shall check the hasty word, the unkind speech, the damaging criticism. It is a fair and exquisite flower. The flower of love Peter has in mind is a tender exotic. There is a coarser kind more easily grown, common to all, irrespective of creed or belief. But this is a tender plant, yet, oh, so much needed in this weary world!

II. Its Reason. "Being born again." Love possessed, enjoyed, and lived out, is an evidence of the New Birth and a result of the New Birth.

III. Its Soul and Atmosphere. Purity of heart and life is here pointed out as the soul and atmosphere of true love. There is such a thing as impure love. Moffat renders it "purified your souls for a brotherly love." "From a pure heart fervently" is R.V. and W. "For cherishing sincere brotherly love."

IV. Its Cultivation. "See to it that ye love one another,," etc. The mode of its growth is the Word of God loved and indwelling. Love is knowledge of the Word set on fire. The cause of its growth—the maintenance of purity within.

V. Its Guardianship. "See that ye love," etc. We are in charge of that tender exotic. We are its guardians. Vt. Its Quality.

1. BROTHERLY LOVE. "Love of the brethren" (22).
2. UNFEIGNED LOVE. That is to say, no mere pretence at loving. Often we are tempted to profess more than we feel.
3. 'STEADY Love Moffatt's rendering: "Love one another heartily and steadily." A love that is steady, whatever its testing or trial.
4. FERVENT LOVE. Not a cold love. "Heartily and fervently" is the W. version.

THE. WORD OF GOD.
I PETER 1.23-25;2. 1, 2.

Introduction.

WHY WE SHOULD LOVE. The Apostle Peter introduces the subject of the New Birth as an additional reason why we should love one another. Through the New Birth we have become members of a new family, sharing one life, and for this reason we ought to love.

THE NEW BIRTH. In referring to the New Birth he made two great statements. The first is, how this great change called the New Birth was brought about. In so doing he magnifies the Word of God. That is the principal theme in these verses. Yet we must look at the subject of the New Birth in passing.

IS IT GOD OR THE WORD THAT LIVETH AND ABIDETH FOR EVER? The A.V. states that it is the Word. The R.V. and R. teach it is God. The Word of God Who liveth, etc., is R.V. margin. "Through means of the Word of a living and abiding God," is R., Moffatt reads, "By the living, lasting Word of God." The fact is, you cannot divide the two without great loss. What can we know of God but for His Word? God speaks to us through His Word. Neglect the Bible and your spiritual life will suffer. Note:

- I. "All flesh is as grass." Men and women pass away as the successive crops in the meadows.
2. "The glory of man." The very elite, like the flowers of the earth, share the fate of the nimble blades of grass.

1. Its Might Like a Hammer (Jeremiah 23. 29).
1. THE MIGHT OF THE WORD OF GOD. Smashing hard hearts.
2. THE USEFULNESS OF THE WORD OF GOD. How useful in daily life is a hammer.

II. ITS Usefulness and Warmth like a Fire. This simile is also found in Jer 23. 29, and conveys three thoughts:

1. Its DESTRUCTIVENESS. Fire destroys the consumable and inflammable. The Word of God as fire burns up our tinsel and dross—the wood, hay, and stubble in our lives.
2. ITS WARMTH. What a comfort is a fire on a cold stormy night. What a comfort is the Word of God when conscious of the coldness of the world, and in times of sorrow and darkness.

3. ITS PROTECTION. In wild regions travellers find a fire at night a wonderful protection from the wild and ravenous beasts.

III. Its Fruitfulness likened to Seed.

1. Verse 23 answers the question: How to be born anew. It was through the Word of God there was given to us the seed of a regenerated life.

2. The best seed that the world knows of is corruptible, but this is incorruptible.

3. "Through the Word of God" is R.V.

4. Here we have the fruitfulness the Word of God brings into barren and unfruitful lives.

IV. Its Sustenance likened to Milk.

1. Here we are told how to grow (2. 1, 2)

2. "So oft with all malice" is M. rendering. For "guile," F. F. gives "deceit;" and for "malice," F. F. gives "vice."

3. "As new born babes." The metaphor is a very touching one. The world is but the nursery in which the heirs of God are spending the first lisping years of their existence.

4. "As new horn babes desire," or as R.V., "long," or M. "thirst."

CHRIST, THE LIVING STONE.

1 PETER 2. 4-8.

Was Peter, when he wrote these words, thinking of what the Lord Jesus said to him, long, long ago, up there at Caesarea Philippi? (Matt. 16. 17, 18; John 1. 42). It seems likely. Peter is an old man now. He vividly remembers the past, and here is one echo of his thoughts.

Jacob was the first to think of the Lord as a Stone (Gen. 49. 24), to be followed by Moses, David, and others

Peter piles up his metaphors in rich profusion—babes, stones, priests, etc. In the Old Testament the Lord is likened to a Stone, or a Rock. But the New Testament goes further—a Living Stone. Though in nature a living stone is unknown, in the spiritual world it is a fact.

Christ, the Living Stone-

I. In His Essential Characteristics.

1. EVERLASTINGNESS. Rock of Ages—exactly. Rocks and stones seem everlasting. He is the everlasting One.

2. INVINCIBLE STRENGTH. How strong stones seem.

3. ABILITY To UPHOLD. He upholds the whole weight of the glory of God. The salvation of His people rests upon Him and is safe, solid, and enduring. He is also the foundation stone on which we build.

4. COMBINATION OF OPPOSITES. Two ideas, opposite in themselves, are joined in this title "Living Stone," showing how wonderfully all combine in the Lord Jesus.

- a. Life and death.
- b. Warmth and immobility.
- c. Sternness and gentleness.
- d. Meekness and anger.

II. In God's Estimation and Man's. There is a tradition that during the erection of Solomon's Temple, a stone was brought up by the straining oxen which refused to fit into any of the rising walls. It was cast aside, soon forgotten, and covered by weeds. At last, as the building neared completion, it was found that a stone of special form would be required to knit the walls and fill a particular corner. The need suggested the forgotten and rejected bit of masonry, which fitted perfectly. Does not this remind us of Psalm 118. 22, quoted by our Lord Himself ?

Note the rendering-:

- 1. "Rejected indeed by men as worthless" (W.).
- 2. "But chosen of God and precious" (A.V.), or as F. F., "Distinguished in the Presence of God."

Man's unbelief and lack of appreciation does not depreciate His value (verse 7).

III. In His Blessed Ministry to Man.

1. DRAWS US BY HIS LOVE. In the old mythological fancy the stones of Thebes were drawn by the Lyre of Amphion. We do know that the living stones now being built into a spiritual temple—redeemed men and women—have been drawn to the Lord Jesus by the attractive force and power of His love. This Precious Stone attracts men and women to Himself.

2. COMMUNICATES HIS OWN MARVELLOUS CHARACTERISTICS. Coming to Him, we become what He is Himself. A combination of opposites, in blessed harmony. We, who spiritually are as dead as stones, become living stones.

3. UNITES THE SEPARATE UNITS INTO ONE HOUSE OR DWELLING FOR GOD. He is the "Corner Stone" binding the separate units into one. What wonderful unity amongst people is the result of union with Christ!

4. PROVIDES ESSENTIALS:

a. A place of safety in danger.

b. A sure foundation for building character and hopes.

c. A safe foothold for wrestling with the powers of evil. For, as Psalm 40 shows, He not only lifts us out of the pit, but "sets my feet upon a rock."

A PECULIAR PEOPLE.

1 PETER 2. 9-12

Introduction.

"BUT." Peter turns from a contemplation of the fate of rejecters of Christ with evident relief to a happier and more pleasant subject. He contrasts the blessed position of the Lord's people with the sad position of the worldly and unsaved people. Yea, more, he contrasts the Church's present glory with the forfeited glory of Israel.

"YE." The pronoun "ye" is very emphatic. He is drawing a contrast between the disobedient and unbelieving Jews and Christian people.

I. Our Past. What we Once Were (10).

I. "Not a people."

2. "Had not obtained mercy." "Unpitied" in M.

II. Our Present. What we Are (9).

1. ELECT RACE (R.V.). "Select Race" (F. F.). The Jews certainly were God's elect nation. During the present period of their rejection, the Christian Church has been summoned to the glorious work of becoming the channel for the Divine blessing to mankind. They have become a "chosen generation."

2. A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD. "A spiritual house" (5) were they. Those who were once but as the rubble on the hill sides, are not only constituted part of the spiritual fabric, but by a rapid change in the thought, they are represented as performing priestly functions, "an holy priesthood." The reference is undoubtedly to Exodus 19. 6 (when the Chaldee renders "kings, priests"), a character and an office one of the Jewish commentators says will return to the Jews in time to come. In the meantime, it has come to the Church.

"A Royal Priesthood," with the-

- a. "Power of kings," over sin and Satan.
- b. "Riches of kings." "Unsearchable riches of Christ."
- c. Apparel of kings. The Robe of Christ.
- d. Fare of kings. Sitting at the King's table, feeding on royal dainties.
- e. Retinue of kings. Angels being our servants and life-guard.

A priestly people, with direct access to God, and also representing God to man. These two offices were jealously kept apart in Israel. In Christ they blend (Zech. 6. 13).

3. A HOLY NATION.

4. A PECULIAR PEOPLE. This word rendered "peculiar" is a difficult word to translate. Authorities say that it was a word in ancient time for the slaves who were allowed to earn and retain their earnings. There are great differences in the Lord's people to people of the world. For "peculiar," M. gives, "the people who belong to Him." Surely in this word we have an echo of Exodus 19. 5. Our gracious God bears towards His people-

- a. A peculiar love. Bestowed.
- b. Peculiar blessing. Takes.
- c. Peculiar care of them', and makes them
- d. His peculiar treasure. The Hebrew word rendered "jewels" in Malachi 3. 17, has the same significance as the Greek word rendered "peculiar." The Lord's people are the Lord's "jewels," the Lord's treasure.

III. Our Duty. What we Should Be (11, 12).

1. An affectionate title: "Dearly beloved."
2. And an affectionate entreaty: "I beseech you."
3. Note the suggestive title: Pilgrims. Observe the order: not pilgrims and strangers, but "strangers and pilgrims." That is to say, pilgrims because, through grace, we have become strangers to the world and worldly things.
4. "Which war against the soul," or, "which take the field against the. soul."

IV. Our Mission. What we should Do (9).

1. Instead of "a peculiar people," F. F. gives "A people for action." Here we have a hint as to service.
2. Our mission is to show forth His praises. How may we show forth His praises?
 - a. By Proclamation. "That you may proclaim the wondrous deeds" is M. rendering of verse 9. We must publish abroad His praises.
 - b. By Testimony. "Show forth His praises." We must testify to His wondrous grace.
 - c. By Life. Showing forth in our lives His virtues, or His excellencies.

THE MINISTRY OF SEEMLY BEHAVIOUR.

I PETER 2. 11-25.

Introduction. The late Dr. Jowett saw in these verses "an appeal for the evangelising influences of a chaste and winsome character. A glorification of the silent witness of saintliness."

We may not all be called to the ministry of the pulpit or platform, yet we may all exercise the ministry of seemly behaviour. "Every man may be an ambassador of life discharging his office through the medium of holiness.'

It is instructive to note how literally these precepts were obeyed. Tertullian contrasts the behaviour of the early Christians with the heathen. It was then stated that the holy example of the primitive Churches was one of the principal causes of the conversion to Christianity of the old pagan Roman Empire.

Peter points out that Christ's death was more than an example. Verse 24 was written as well as verse 21. Why did He die?

1. That we might live? Yes.
2. That we might be healed? Yes.
3. That we might break with sin? Verses 22 and 24.

"By His stripes." "By His weals." Slaves then knew the meaning, by bitter experience, of stripes and weals. He bore the cruel punishment in our stead. Those stripes were both the price of our redemption, the evidence of our purchase, and the sign-manual of pardon.

Peter and Paul on Death of Christ. Have you ever noticed that, while Peter and Paul both make the Cross of Christ the centre of their teaching, Paul speaks more about His death, while Peter speaks more of His sufferings. The reason is that in Peter we have the eye-witness of a loving Friend's sufferings, which led him to dwell upon the accompaniments of His death. (Study this in connection, i. 2, 19; 1.11;2.21;3. 18; 4. 1, 13;5. 1.)

I. Our Duty as Individuals (11, 12).

"ABSTAIN." A new kind of abstinence to that which we are usually familiar.

"As." Confess that you are pilgrims by and in your life as well as by speech.

"HAVING YOUR CONVERSATION." A perfect man is one who offends not in tongue.

II.. Our Duty to the State (13-17). It was a favourite charge against the early Christians that they were plotting the overthrow of the Empire, and the dethronement of Caesar, in favour of "One, Jesus." Their private meetings were supposed to be convened for unlawful political purposes.

It was, therefore, necessary that men's minds should be disabused of the impression that any violence was contemplated. Peter, therefore, exhorts them to conform, as far as they were able, to the demands and usages of the people amongst whom they sojourned. For

the Christian man is one who recognises the necessity of social order. Note how wise were the words of exhortation given by the Apostle.

1. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man"—"any human authority" (M.), "every authority set up by man" (W.), "for the Lord's sake."

2. Here is "the will of God" revealed. "Put to silence" is literally, "muzzled as a dog."

3. Note:

- a. All men to be honoured. How many are obedient to this command? Are not our eyes too often upon the dress or incidental trappings rather than upon the man himself ?
- b. The Christian brotherhood to be loved. Love is not sentiment, but self-sacrifice.
- c. God to be revered. (See M.).
- d. The earthly king to be honoured and respected.

III. Our Duty to our Employers (18-25). Remembering that "servants" meant mostly "slaves," the exhortation is most touching and forceful. "This is thankworthy" (19), is in 20th Century. "This is a beautiful thing." "Live like free men" is M. for "as free" (16). "The froward," mentioned in verse 18 describes, as otherwise rendered, "surly," "unreasonable" (W.), "unfair" (20th C.), or "perverse" (F. F.) masters. "With all fear" (18) is in M. "with perfect respect."

THE IDEAL WIFE AND HUSBAND.

I PETER 3. 1-13.

IN the passage before us the Apostle delineates some of the characteristics of the ideal wife and husband. As Christians we not only have to show our Christian faith by Christian actions toward king, country, and neighbours, but in our own homes. In speaking to wives and husbands Peter was qualified by experience. Remember the problems then confronting them because of-

1. Woman's emancipation through the Gospel.
2. The common human tendency to rush to extremes.
3. Many of the wives who had become followers of the Lord Jesus wondered if they ought not to leave their heathen husbands.

Observe, "That your prayers be not hindered" (verse 7).

I. Concerning Wives (1-6). Elements in true feminine adornment

1. LOYALTY to "own husbands" (1) . The emphasis on "own husbands" is impressive.
2. SUBJECTION (1). "Be in subjection." A wise woman knows her rightful place.

3. ROBE OF PURITY in conversation and behaviour (2). "When they see how chaste and reverent you are," is M. rendering of verse 2.

4. "HIDDEN CHARACTER RIGHT" (R.) (4). "The hidden man" means the hidden character.

5. GENTLE. "With the immortal beauty of a gentle and modest spirit" is M. rendering of verse 4.

6. MODEST. As M.

7. RESPECTFUL (5, 6).

8. FEARLESSNESS (6) . "Are not afraid with any amazement" is in M. "Yield to no passion, " or as r.v., "Not put in fear by any terror."

The rendering of verse 3 in the 20th C. New Testament is very fine. "A woman's attractions should not depend upon such external things as the arrangement of her hair, the jewellery she wears, or the style of her dress; but upon the inner life—the imperishable beauty of a quiet and gentle spirit, for this is very precious in God's sight." This, certainly, was how the holy women of old made themselves attractive.

II. Concerning Husbands (7) . Husbands are to be—1. CONSIDERATE. "Ye husbands must be considerate" is M.

2. INTELLIGENT. "According to knowledge." Suggests the need of intelligence, of being well-informed.

3. RESPECTFUL. "Give honour unto the wife," or paying homage, that is, bowing down in the spirit in the posture of serious and religious regard. Why? For two reasons:

1st. They are the weaker vessels.

2nd. We are "heirs together."

III. Concerning Each Other (8-13) .

1. To FELLOW-CHRISTIANS there should be

a. Oneness of mind (8).

b. Compassion (8).

c. Love (8).

2. To THE WEAK AND ERRING. `Be pitiful," i.e., tenderhearted (8) .

3. To EQUALS. Be courteous (8, 9).

4. To ENEMIES. Do not retaliate (13).

THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE PERSECUTED.

I PETER 3. 13-17.

VERSE 15 is a quotation from the Prophet Isaiah (8. 13), with some very significant variations. Isaiah was in danger through faithful preaching, whereupon the Lord sends, or rather gives him, a reassuring message. This Peter quotes, substituting, without any explanation or vindication as if it was a matter of course, the name of Christ in place of Jehovah of the Old Testament. Remembering the reverence the Jews had, for the Scriptures, their intense monotheism and dread of putting any creature in place of God, something of the significance of this act will grip you.

Another difference. The Lord is the Sanctuary in Isaiah, whereas in Peter we are the sanctuaries. These are important points.

The Persecuted. Peter is still concerned over the persecuted ones. Persecution brings suffering. In all Paul's Epistles the word "Suffer" occurs but seven times, and never twice in the same Epistle, whereas it comes twelve times in one short letter of the Apostle Peter. Don't forget to connect verse 12 with verse 13. The lesson is: If God's eye is upon you, who shall harm you?

The Safety of Zeal (13). It may seem a strange sentence, yet it is most certainly true, that our safety depends upon ourselves, as well as upon the Lord. Note the importance of the little word "if." "Arid who is he that will harm you if"—"if" what? "If ye be zealous of that which is good" (R. V. and R.). Moffatt reads, "All who will wrong you if you have a passion for goodness." It could be rendered, "If ye make yourselves zealous." Our Lord Jesus was clad with zeal as with a cloak (Isa. 59. 17). And so should His followers be donned. The idea of zeal as a cloak is suggestive. A cloak is (1) a protection from the weather, so we are partly secure in our own enthusiasm. (2) a cloak is seemly and becoming. Not to be zealous for the Lord and His cause is very unseemly and unbecoming of us.

SANCTIFYING THE LORD.

1 PETER 3. 11-17.

Introduction.

A HEART RELIGION. Note the emphasis here upon a heart religion. This is something that has to take place in the hearts of God's people. "Reverence Christ as Lord in your own hearts" (M.). "In your hearts consecrate Christ as Lord" (W.). "But love the Lord Christ in your hearts" (F. F.).

MAN A SHRINE. The heart of a Christian man or woman is a shrine. It is a place of worship. There is a large congregation there, consisting of wishes, motives, ambitions, desires, likes, unlikes, passions, wishes, longings. And Christ also is there. He ought to be chief, the One in command. He first comes as Guest, but ought to become supreme Master—Lord, in every sense of that word. This should be our deliberate act—place the

Guest on the throne of our being, ask the Passenger to mount the bridge and take command of the vessel. Ask our Companion to take supreme command.

I. What it Means to Sanctify Christ.

1. SET HIM APART FROM THE COMMON AND ORDINARY TO SPECIAL USE. To sanctify in the Bible means to "set apart," and in consequence to view in a different light, ceasing to use or treat as formerly. What is the common use made of our Lord? A Fire Escape. We first begin to think of Him as Saviour from sin and the wrath to come. He is a Fire Escape. But He is much more. He should become everything to us. Thank God that He has saved you from Hell, but also find out what He has saved you to! If a believer, He is already in your heart as Christ. Now make Him your Lord, Master, Sovereign.

2. WORSHIP. To sanctify the Christ in your heart as Lord means that you do set Him on the pedestal and pinnacle of your being, and that you bow down before Him with adoring love and wonder, and with reverence and submission, worshipping Him.

3. HALLOW. Sanctify is the same word in the Lord's Prayer rendered "hallowed be Thy Name." We sanctify or hallow One who is holy already, when we recognise that holiness, and honour in speech, thought and act, what we recognise. It means to hallow Him by lip, thought, and service.

II. What will be the Result of such an Act on our Part ?

1. A GOOD CONSCIENCE (16). What a boon. A conscience void of offence toward God and man.

2. PURITY (16). Purity of heart and thought and life, so patent to our persecutors, "they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation (or life) in Christ."

3. FEARLESSNESS AND CALMNESS (14) . "Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." When Christ is Master within our hearts, He calms and steadies, and gives us calmness and courage.

4. MENTAL ALERTNESS (15). "And be ready" of the A.V. is in R.V. "Being ready," that is to say, mental alertness follows the setting apart of Christ as Lord. Mental sloth and inability to grasp spiritual things is a malady only too prevalent, and one which would largely disappear if Christ was made Lord of our being.

5. GENTLENESS Being ready always to "answer gently and with reverence" is the M. rendering. Another wonderful and impressive result of sanctifying Christ as Lord.

THE SPIRITS IN PRISON.

1 PETER 3. 18-22.

WHAT a problem this section is! Regarding it, the late Dr. Jowett wrote , "The concluding passage of this great chapter is like a landscape in the uncertain light of the early morn. Here and there the black shadows still linger and prolong the night. The hollows are filled with mist. A prevailing dimness possesses the scene. From only a few things has the veil dropped, and their lineaments are seen in suggestive outline. On the whole, we are dealing with obscure hints, with partial unveilings, which awaken wonder rather than convey enlightenment."

Three separate views of this subject of preaching to the spirits in prison are held, two of which we reject.

I. A Probation After Death. After His death our Lord descended into Hell to preach the Gospel. Some think this probation is only for those who have never heard the Gospel of Christ. Oh, the folly of building such an idea and hope on one solitary vague Scripture. This Scripture does not say there is a probation after death. Our probationary period is now, in life.

II. Jesus Went to the Angels, the Fallen Angels, in prison, to proclaim His triumph on the Cross. There is more in these verses to support this view than the first idea we have noticed. For the word rendered "spirits" by itself, without any qualifying description, is used always of supernatural beings, higher than man, and yet lower than God.

By comparing certain passages, such as 2 Peter 2. 4 to 9; 1 Tim. 3. 16; Jude, verses 6 and 7, we learn that prior to the Flood, certain angelic beings sinned. But note this, the word translated "preached" is never used in connection with the preaching of the Gospel. R. renders it "proclaim" or "herald." If we accept this view, then what the passage simply states is that the triumphant completion of Christ's death on the Cross was made known to Hell as well as Heaven. We are not told that any repented, or even could repent.

III. A Preaching which Took Place in the Days of Noah, by Noah Himself. The late Dr. Pierson, who was very level-headed, declared: "These Scriptures do not refer at all to His (Our Lord Jesus) own preaching to them after His death, but in the person of Noah by the Holy Spirit who guided Noah as a preacher of Christ." Noah was a preacher. He preached, for the Lord, by the aid of the Holy Spirit. "By which (Spirit) He went and preached (through Noah) to the spirits (now) in prison" (C. H. M.).

Do not let this problem of the "spirits in prison" crowd out the main idea of the verses. Peter is comparing the sufferings of our Lord with the sufferings of His persecuted followers. Are you suffering? Take heart, you are not exceptional. Ever. our Master was not exempt from suffering, and suffering need not hinder our usefulness.

Important Points.

1. "Once suffered" (18). This overthrows the idea behind the sacrifice of the Mass, of repeated sacrifices.
2. "For." That preposition contains a whole volume of theology. It announces the substitutionary aspect of the death of Christ.
3. "Bring us to God." "Introduces us to God" is the R. rendering.

ARMED.

I PETER 4. 1-6.

ARMED with a mighty thought in order that the life might be dominated by the Will of the Spirit of God.

Introduction. There are several arresting phrases in this section.

1. "ARM YOURSELVES" (4. 1) . "Nerve you" (M.). This is a picturesque metaphor. Life is a battle, a campaign. We must arm ourselves! What with? A thought! And a thought about the death of Christ and its implications and applications.
2. "CEASE FROM SIN" (4. 1). "Gets quit of sin" (M.). "Ceased unto sins" (R.V., margin). "Is at rest from sin" (W., margin) . What a glorious message we have here!
3. NOTE THE TWO WILLS. The Will of God (4. 2) versus the Will of the Gentiles (4. 3).
4. NOTE THE TWO "THINK IT STRANGE" (4. 4, 12). They were not only astonished, but also persecuted.

I. Reign of the Flesh. "APPETITES" (3).

1. There is no harm in any natural appetite, considered in itself. Appetites have been given for the preservation of the race, and for our physical well-being.
2. But our appetites have been spoiled by the Fall. They have been disturbed by sin, so that they do not work as God intended. As the late Dr. F. B. Meyer wrote: "When man fell , appetite broke from the grasp of the will, and began to seek often its own gratification, irrespective of those necessary uses and legitimate bonds which had been assigned by God's love and wisdom."
3. These appetites, these habits, have been strengthened by generations of evil living.
4. Now, here is the problem: These appetites must not be eradicated. This must not be, else the race would perish. Instead, they must be cleansed, sanctified, controlled. Is this possible?
5. The sins in the appalling list given in verses 3 are, most closely connected with the flesh, literal flesh.

II. The Reign of the Spirit. How is verse 2 possible? This is the very purpose of the Gospel (6). And how can this be brought about? Arm yourselves with a thought. Thus we see the effect of mind upon character.

Someone has remarked: "Christian morality brought two new things into the world—a new type of life in sharp contrast with the sensuality rife on every side, and a new set of motives, powerfully aiding in its realisation. Both these novelties are presented in this passage."

WHAT THOUGHT? We are to arm ourselves with a thought. What thought? 1st, That suffering in the flesh is not, as the world counts it, an unmixed evil, but often a deep blessing. 2nd, That Christ's sufferings during life were because of the fact that "His life was dominated by a supreme thought; it was controlled by an all-commanding purpose. He rejected the sovereignty of the flesh; He subordinated the temporal ! He uncrowned the body, making it a common subject, and compelling it to obeisance to high commands." 3rd, The thought of the Cross of Christ. Drink in the meaning of Christ's death. "The pious contemplation of His death will most powerfully kill the love of sin in the soul, and kindle an ardent hatred of it." 4th, The thought of my death in Christ, of my identification with His death. Drink in the spirit of Christ's death till it be repeated in you. Dead men do not sin. We are viewed in the Mind and Purpose of God as having died with Christ in His death, and raised in His resurrection. We must regard ourselves as having passed out of this life in which flesh and sense reign supreme.

HELPS TO THE PRAYER LIFE.

I PETER 4. 7.

Introduction. To those who read the signs of the times, two movements are noticed with delight. First, a general expectancy of the Lord's Coming. Second, a general revival of prayer. Is there any connection between the two? Yes. The latter is the result of the former. Read 1 Peter 4. 7.

The subject of prayer is one of great importance. Prayer is the first evidence of the new life; (Behold he prayeth," Acts 9. II) in elementary condition of the fulness of the Holy Spirit (Luke 3. 21 and 22). Occ of the first conditions for the hearing of God's Voice is shutting the door (Matt. 6. G exemplified in John 20. 19 23) . and for success in Christian work, see what followed Elisha's shutting of the door (2 Kings 4. 33, etc.).

Of course we must work as well as pray.

1. A ship was overtaken by a storm. The tumult of the wind and the waves was rendered more fearful by the flashes of lightning and the roar of thunder. The captain issued orders, and ail but one man ran to their several posts of duty. "This one, overcome with terror, tell upon his knees on the deck, and prayed for mercy and deliverance. Seeing the man on his knees, he ran at him, shook him by the collar, crying, "Say your prayers in fair weather."

2. Two Scottish ministers were once crossing a loch in the Highlands. It was a ferry, and the boat was full of passengers. A sudden storm, as often happens in these mountain waters. It seemed a time of peril. One of the passengers exclaimed: "Let the ministers Pray, or we'll be drowned." "Na, Na," said the boatman, "the little ane may pray, but the big ane maun tak' an oar and pull while he prays."

I. Self-Control. "Exercise self-restraint and watchfulness, to help you to Pray" (20th C.). "Therefore, sober-minded and temperate, so that you may give yourselves to prayer" (W.). Let there be a noble self-restraint in respect to every lawful appetite.

II. Sobriety of Thought. "Steady then, keep cool and pray," is the Moffatt rendering of verse 7. The thought of the nearness of the Lord's Coming should not lead to excitement and neglect of common duties, but to sobriety of thought.

R. gives "of sound mind" instead of sober. This is suggestive of health--a healthy mind. Life is to be chastened by reasonableness and sanity. We must avoid panic and giddiness.

III. Alertness. "Watch unto prayer." Note the association elsewhere of alertness and Lord's Coming (Matt. 24. 44; 25. 13), and also prayer (Matt. 26. 41, Eph. 6. 18; Col. 4.2).

LOVE, I PETER 4. 8-11.

Introduction.

PETER'S LESSON. We are not surprised to find the Apostle Peter insisting so strenuously on love. Could he ever forget the interview the Lord had with him when the Master thrice reminded him that the supreme qualification for ministry was love. The agreement of the Three. In giving pre-eminence to love as the greatest of Christian virtues, Peter is in perfect harmony with both Paul and John. It is of special interest in this connection to remember the different natures of these three men, and to observe their agreement in this emphasis. Paul was a theologian ; Peter a zealot; John the mystic. Yet all are agreed, as is evident by their writings, that love is the distinguishing virtue of Christianity.

THE QUALITY OF LOVE

1. Peter assumes that the charity is there, but insists on the quality.
2. It must be fervent:
 - a. At boiling point.
 - b. A love that is warm, ardent.
 - c. "He did not so much suggest a love that is ardent as a love that is tense. The very word tense is almost the original word" (Jowett).

3. A love that will show itself in many practical ways. I. Love Covers. "Love throws a veil over a multitude of faults" (W., 8).

1. This is a quotation from Prov. 10. 12.

2. Have you ever connected Prov. 28. 13 with this statement in Peter?

3. There is a covering of sin which is allowable, if the sin be another's, and not my own.

4. Love forgets as well as forgives.

5. Love does not keep hinting at Past failures and past revolts. Love is willing to hide them in a nameless grave. 6. Few of us are without faults.

II. Love Gives (9).

WHAT? Many things, but hospitality is here referred to. How? Without "grudging" or "murmuring" (R.V.).

1. Most of the early Christians were very poor, and living in what we would call hovels. Yet they were exhorted to be hospitable.

2. The need then of hospitality is clearly seen.

a. Those who had lost homes for Christ's sake.

b. Those who were pilgrim preachers away from their own homes.

III. Love Ministers (10).

1. For "gift" M. gives "talent."

2. "Manifold." "Many coloured" was Sir Arthur Blackwood 's translation.

a. He did not merely mean by manifold, "many."

b. "Varied" (M.). Variegated, many coloured, Not a question of quantity, but quality.

3. "Let every man bring his colour, and let all the world see how variegated in charm and love is the total grace or gift of God."

4. "Every man holds his own colour of grace as a steward."

5. Shades of colour only look well in the whole.

6. Other variegated mercies are as follows:

a. Wisdom (Eph. 3. 10).

b. Mercies (Nehemiah 9. 19, 20).

c. Works (Psa. 104. 24) .

d. Grace (Eph. 3. 7).

e. Talents (1 Peter 4. 10) .

7. "Received." Then we must not take any credit.

IV. Love Dogmatizes (11). "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." Or, as M., "preach as one who utters the Words of God ;" or W., "as uttering God's truth. Love speaks with no uncertain sound. For love speaks with authority. There is also in this phrase the thought of speaking in the Holy Spirit as the oracles of God were written.

V. Love Glorifies. The master-passion of love is that the loved one—the Lord--should be glorified. "That God in all things may be glorified. "

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUFFERING ONES.

I PETER 4. 12-19.

As already pointed out, Peter wrote his Epistle particularly to comfort sufferers. This is a precious section. Let us summarise. His advice to suffering saints is-

I. Don't be Surprised (12). Note the depth of his sympathy as expressed in "Beloved." "Do not be surprised at the ordeal that has come to test you, as though some foreign experience befall you. You are sharing what Christ suffered" (M.) . Once Peter thought differently. (Study Matt. 16, 21 to 23). Now he thinks it strange that he or anyone could have imagined anything else.

To save you from thinking "it strange" that you should be called to pass through fiery trials, remember:

1. **WHAT YOU ARE.** You are a child of God at enmity with Satan and opposed to the world.
2. **WHERE YOU ARE.** You are passing through enemy territory. You are travelling through what rightly could be called "Emmanuel's Land," but the enemy has invaded and captured it, and has become "the God of this World."
3. **YOUR DESTINY.** You are marching through enemy territory to "fairer worlds on high." No wonder you are assailed and persecuted.

Observe, "Fiery trial." W. renders it "The scorching flame of persecution." Fire.

- a. Tests character.
- b. Purifies lives.
- c. Unites believers.
- d. Introduces to a holy and blessed companionship (See Daniel 3. 25) .

II. Be Sure and Rejoice (13) . Why? You are sharing suffering with the Lord. He suffers with you. You will, in consequence, share in His triumph. "Ye may be glad also with triumphant gladness" (W.).

III. You are to be Envied (14). "If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ you are to be envied." (W.). Why? Several reasons may be given, but Peter gives one—a special gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon sufferers. "Spirit of God Himself resteth upon you" (M.).

IV. Yet be on your Guard (15, 16) . Take great care that you yourself, by misconduct, do not bring suffering down on your head.

V. Be Assured that He will Avenge You (17, 18). Does not He say elsewhere, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord?"

VI. Let there be a Definite Commitment on your Part (19). "According to the will of God" is in 20th C. "Because God wills it, commit your lives."

Commit! Had Peter Jesus' dying commitment in mind? (Luke 23. 46) . It seems likely. The Lord Jesus did this in the hour of His greatest suffering.

"Saved with Difficulty" is 20th C. rendering for "scarcely be saved." This is very suggestive, and is fully dealt with in another section of this volume of "Handfuls on Purpose"

QUALIFICATIONS FOR SERVICE.

I PETER 5. 1-7.

VERSES 5 to 7 form a suggestive grouping of helpful and important thoughts on Christian Service. Observe some interesting facts:

1. The simplicity of the constitution of the primitive Church showed in the simile "Flock of God."
2. Word "Feed." ""rend" in the R.V. means more than caring. It means defend, govern, restrain.
3. Was Peter thinking of John 21. 16 when he wrote these verses? He certainly was put in charge of the Lord's lambs and sheep. But that is not a Petrine prerogative: it is a duty that devolves upon others.

I. A Witness (1). "A witness of the sufferings of Christ." This is the one qualification for tending the flock of God: beholding, each for himself, the sufferings of Christ with the eye of the soul. This seeing is also a qualification for sharing the glory.

II. A Willingness. "Not by constraint" (2). "Not reluctantly," but eagerly, according "with the will of God," is W. rendering.

III. A Call. "But willingly, according unto God" is R.V. Does this mean a call to the work itself, or as to how to do the work?

IV. Eagerness. "Not reluctantly, but eagerly" is W. This suggests eagerness for service as a fourth essential.

V. Affection. "Not for filthy lucre," but for love's sake.

VI. Cheerfulness. "Of a ready mind" is in W. "Of a cheerful mind."

VII. Humility (3-6) . "As lords" or "lording it." For "God's heritage," R. V. gives "allotted portion;" not merely God's portion, but the portion He entrusts to you. Instead of "clothed" with humility, M. reads "aprons of humility," that is, put on the slave's apron.

Dr. Maclaren has a nice word on this: "The Apostle used here an expression of a remarkable kind, and which never occurs again in Scripture. The word rendered in the A.V. "be clothed," or better in the R.V. as "gird yourselves with," really implies a little more than either of these renderings suggests. It describes a kind of garment as well as the act of putting it on, and the sort of garment which it describes was a remarkable one. It was a part of a slave's uniform. Some scholars think that it was a white apron or overall, or something of that sort; others think that it was simply a scarf or girdle; but at all events, it was a distinguishing mark of a slave, and he put it on when he meant to work, and, says Peter: "Do you strap round you the slave's apron, and do it for the same reason--to serve."

When Peter wrote this sentence, was he thinking of his Master's act, as recorded in John 13. 4 and 5?

VIII. Trustfulness (7) . What a grand verse! "Let all your anxieties fall upon Him, for His interest is in you" (M.). "Throw all your anxieties upon Him, for

He makes you His care" (20th C.). "Banish care and welcome glee" is a good motto. When Florence Nightingale had reached the age of ninety, and could no longer follow sustained reading, she still liked to hear familiar hymns. Her biographer says: "A favourite, if one may judge by the frequency with which verses from it appear in her latest written meditation was:

"O. Lord, how happy should we be,
If we could cast our care on Thee,
If we from self could rest."

Once the expression of an aspiration; now, perhaps of attainment."

SOBRIETY. I PETER 5. 7, 8.

FREQUENTLY we find in the New Testament exhortations to sobriety, and this means much more than abstinence from intoxicating drink. We can be intoxicated by pride, self-esteem.

I. Commended. Here it is commended in our Scripture.

II. Definitions. Sober has been rendered:

1. Be WATCHFUL.
2. Be VIGILANT.
3. Be SOUND.
4. Be MODERATE. "Curb every passion" (W.) .
5. Be PRUDENT.

6. Be DIGNIFIED IN RESTRAINT. "Exercise self-control," is 20th C. rendering, instead of sober.

III. An Extra.

1. ADD TO HOLINESS (1 Tim. 2. 15). With moderation and prudence.
2. ADD To ACCEPTANCE of Second Advent Truth (1 Peter 1. 13).
3. ADD TO PRAYER (I Peter 4. 7 and 8).

IV. Sober in What?

1. THOUGHTS (Rom. 12). Sound mind.
2. WORDS (Acts 26. 25). Prudence and moderation.
3. LIFE (Titus 2. 12). Temperately and prudently
4. MIND (2 Cor. 5. 13). Sound and prudent. A mind evenly and well balanced (1 Thess. 5. 6, 8., i.e., Let us be mentally alert or watchful).

V. Why? We are of the day (1 Thess. 5. 8). Therefore be watchful and alert.

VI. Who?

1. BISHOPS (Titus 1. 8; 1 Tim. 3. 2). Be vigilant.
2. WIVES (1 Tim. 3. 11). Be vigilant.
3. AGED MEN (Titus 2. 2) . Sound-minded.
4. YOUNG WOMEN (Titus 2. 4) .
5. YOUNG MEN (Titus 2. 6) .
6. WOMEN (1 Tim. 2.9).

THE ENEMY.

1 PETER 5. 8-14.

Introduction. Is there a personal Devil? Of course there is. "A gang of thieves is never so dangerous as when they have it widely rumoured that they have left the neighbourhood" (Meyer).

I. Our Adversary (8) .

1. His IDENTITY. Here we are told he is the Devil.
2. His GUISES. He has a fairly extensive wardrobe. He is a quick-change artist. He has three common and familiar guises. He assails us more frequently in either of these three guises than any other. Let us take them in their Biblical order:
 - a. Serpent (Rev. 12.9; Gen. 3. 14).
 - (i.) As a Serpent he is more dangerous than a Roaring Lion.
 - (ii.) This name suggests that he beguiles our senses, perverts our judgments, enchants our imagination.

b. Angel of Light (2 Cor. I 1 . 14) .

(i.) Deceiving with false views of spiritual things.

(ii.) As thus, he poses as an evangelist and teacher, all the while undermining the faith he is professing to teach.

(iii.) 'If the evil that assails us were as frightful in its aspect as it is in its essence, we could run little danger from its assaults, but often it besets us in fair forms and is dazzlingly coloured, and here lies its peril.'

c. Roaring Lion (1 Peter 5. 8).

(i.) Terror in his threatenings.

(ii.) Exhibited in threatenings and persecutions.

(iii.) In blows and blasphemies of the roaring multitude.

(iv.) Strength—bearing us down.

(v.) Seeking to destroy us by violent oppositions.

II. Our Duty (8, 9).

1. KEEP COOL (M.).

2. KEEP AWAKE (M.).

3. RESIST. Also give no place (Eph. 4. 27). Stand against (Eph. 6. 11) .

4. "CURB every Passion" (W.). Exercise self-control (20th C.) 8.

III. Our Safety (9).

1. "Keep your foothold in the faith" (M.).

a. Have you planted your foot upon the faith?

b. It provides a firm foothold.

2. Remember your testing is a common experience.

IV. Our Enabling (10, 11). `But ... God."

I. Are you FEARFUL at the thought of your adversary? 2. `BUT GOD."

3. BEAUTIFUL TITLE: "of all grace."

4. "HIMSELF SHALL" (R.).

5. ARCHITECTURAL METAPHORS.

a. Perfect. "Repair" (M.). Put you in joint.

b. Stablish. Established.

c. Strength. "Firm" (W.).

d. SETTLE. Settling on its foundation.

THE GOSPEL. IN BRIEF.

GAL. 2. 20.

This verse has been called "The Gospel in Brief." Bengel affirmed it to be "The summit and marrow of Christianity." The Christian life is:

I. A Dying Life—"I am crucified"—dying daily.

II. A Living Life—"I live."

III. A Dual Life—"I—Christ."

IV. A Faith Life—"By the Faith."

II Peter

This Epistle the Apostle Peter wrote for an altogether different purpose to First Peter. The latter was intended for encouragement to Believers passing through severe trials and bitter persecutions. On the other hand, Second Peter was written to warn the Lord's people of the presence and propoganda of false teachers and of their corrupt and corrupting doctrines. First Peter was written to console; Second Peter to warn.

A GLORIOUS EQUALITY.

2 PETER 1. 1 and 2.

Introduction. As Dr. Jowett pondered over these first two verses, there leapt into his mind the watchwords of the French Revolution, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Certainly these three words sum up admirably the truths here.

I. Liberty.

"A BONDMAN." Paul (Rom. 1. 1; Phil. 1. 1; Titus 1. 1) ; James (James 1. 1) ; Peter (2 Peter 1. 1) ; Jude (Jude 1).

1. How strangely that sounds! "Simon Peter a bondman!"
2. Knowing what slavery meant then, this is indeed strange.
3. Read on: "a bondman ... of Jesus Christ."

WHERE DOES THE: LIBERTY COME IN? Ponder over the following quotations:

1. "At the heart of all true freedom there is a certain bondage."
2. "Even anarchist societies are compelled to have some rules; and the making of a rule implies the forging of a chain."
3. "Bondage is the secret of freedom"
4. "The man who will not be bound to anything or anybody, is always the most enslaved."
5. "The greatest triumph of the Gospel is the fact that it leads men from lives of undisciplined freedom into lives of willing bond-service."
6. "Consecration is the entering into a deeper bondage."

7. NOTE:-

- a. A slave, but not servile. No cringing.
- b. The slavery of a lover—a lover slaves for loved ones.
- c. Recognition of his rightful ownership.
- d. The meaning of this in the life can only be discovered as we go on in the Christian way.

II. Equality.

WHO ARE THEY WHO ARE EQUAL?

- 1 To them ... with us," "like
2. We are not superior to you. We ate on a Gospel equality. EQUAL—WHAT IN?
 1. Spiritual privileges.
 2. There are many inequalities in temporal things.
 3. In "Student in Arms," Donald Hankey, in chapter entitled, "An Experiment in Democracy," writes: "Equality of opportunity had been granted, and the inequality of man had been demonstrated."

"LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH."

1. "Equally precious faith" is R.
2. Not that all had an equal amount of faith.
3. But their faith was alike though differing in robustness, as brothers can resemble each other, though differing in health and other things.

PRECIOUS. Why?

1. By it we enter into possession of righteousness.
2. Because of the wealth which, through it, comes into the life.
3. "Door of faith." A door is of little value in itself, but if it opens into a palace it is of value.

How OBTAINED?

1. "Obtained by lot," i.e., a good gift from God.
2. Greek word implies that they had not won or earned it for themselves, but that it had been allotted to them.

THROUGH THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

1. This is a great surprise.
2. This is a so-called Pauline word, yet Peter utters it.
3. Instead of "through," read "in."
4. Does the word here mean what it means in Romans? Luther and others think so.
5. Certainly in bestowing righteousness God is no respecter of persons.

"EQUITY" is the Moffatt rendering, instead of "righteousness." "In the absolute justice and favour of God you have obtained an equally precious faith with us," is another rendering.

How OBTAINED? You obtain this blessing of faith through faith, yet owing to the righteousness of God.

III. Fraternity.

1. Listen to the wishes of Peter and other sacred writers for one another: "Grace and peace be multiplied."
2. It is encouraging and cheering to receive the well-wishes of others.

**THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD THE
ONLY SOURCE OF BLESSING**

2 PETER 1. 2, 3.

Introduction.

KEY WORD.

1. In the first Epistle we hear much about suffering; in this second Epistle much about knowledge.
2. Peter knew His Lord so well, therefore speaks much of the necessity and result of knowledge.

GNOSTICS.

1. Very early in the Primitive days there arose those who laid claim to exclusive knowledge, calling themselves gnostics, i.e., knowing ones.
2. The same tendency to arrogate to ourselves superior wisdom always exists.
3. In this Epistle we are shown the true knowledge. "IN."

1. Instead of "through," read "in"—i.e., sphere.
2. The knowledge of God is the sphere in which all spiritual blessings come to us.

"PERSONAL."

1. "In the personal knowledge" (R.).
2. Not an intellectual knowledge merely, but spiritual and evangelical to the individual.

"FULL" (2 Peter 3. 18) . It must be a growing knowledge.

1. "Full knowledge" is literal rendering.
2. Shallow knowledge makes superficial Christians.
3. How can my knowledge grow'

- 1st. By coming to Him.
- 2nd. By living with Him.
- 3rd. By communing with Him.

4th. By silence before Him. "Be still and know."
5th. By His Word.

"OF GOD AND JESUS." What a wonderful union!

A DREAD POSSIBILITY. Be barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord (1. 8).

THROUGH GROWING KNOWLEDGE we have:

I. Grace and Peace (2) .

1. Grace first, peace next. God's favour, then the effects of that favour.
2. You possess these, but they can be multiplied.
3. Others in the New Testament only express the wish, but do not point out the path to that experience.
4. How? Through a growing knowledge of Him.

II. Every Requisite for Life and Piety (3) .

1. "All things needful" (W.) ; "necessary" (20th C.) ; "suited" (R.).
2. "Hath." Already in our possession.
3. "All" things.
4. Called us to "glory and excellence." "By" (20th C.) or "through" (R.).
5. "It is impossible to live a holy life," say some. Nay; do not say that. Do you wish to know how? Get to know Him.

III. Purity (2 Peter 2. 20) .

1. There are awful pollutions in the world to be sure.
2. Is it possible to escape from them every day and all the day? Yes.
3. How ? By partaking of the Divine Nature through regeneration.

Application. How can I secure this knowledge, and how may it be deepened?

1. Coming (Matt. 11. 27,28).
2. Communing. The more we talk with people, the deeper our knowledge of them.
3. Word. Learn God's heart in God's Word,
4. Stillness. Be still and know (Psa. 46. 10).

"SHARERS IN THE VERY NATURE OF GOD."

2 PETER 1. 4.

Introduction.

BOLD. These are indeed bold words. They are staggering. This was the fondest dream of the Ancients. They thought it a possibility only for Emperors and such exalted personages. But now "YE." the common crowd, the ordinary folk! Only an original phrase for an old truth. Just another way of speaking of regeneration.

SHARERS. Note the W. rendering. "Become sharers in the very nature of God."

MINISTRY OF WEALTH. Connect verse 3 with verse 4. This wealth brings blessing.

The ministry of this wealth is to effect

- a. A Deliverance—from corruption. A wonderful escape.
- b. A Glorious Adoption into the Family of God.

"EARTHLY CRAVINGS."

1. Is (W.) for "lust."
 2. Thus lust means more than animal appetite; it means an earthly ambition.
- I. Note how he piles up the adjectives.
2. Promises a. Size=great. Exceeding great.
 - b. Quality—precious.

3. Isaac Watts lay dying. He observed, in conversation with a friend, that he remembered an aged minister who used to say that the most learned and knowing Christians, when they came to die, have only the same plain promise of the Gospel for their support as the common and unlearned. "And so," he said, "I find it. It is the plain promises that do not require much labour and pains to understand them, for I can do nothing now but look unto my Bible for some promise to support me, and live upon that."

Peter, now that he was old, emphasised the value of the promises of God. Oh, it is blessed, if the promises become more precious to us the older we become!

PROFOUND AND ORIGINAL CONCEPTION. What a profound and original conception is this: Vital participation in His own sacred and glorious nature!

I. The Negative Aspect.

1. No EXCLUSIVENESS IN GOD.

- a. In all human society there is an unhappy tendency to exclusiveness and self-absorption.
- b. It has been said that "the end of human law is to prevent the dispersion of the benefits which certain groups of men have made their own."
- c. The end of Divine Law is to diffuse the wealth of God, even to the being and life of God.

2. No DIVINE NATURE IN MAN.

- a. What do you mean by saying "there is the Divine in all men?" Are you referring to God's image, or God's Life ?
- b. Oh, the need of care just now.
- c. His image remains in us, though marred (I Cor. 11. 7). But not an atom of His Life. We are dead, lifeless, so far as the Life of God is concerned.

3. No ABSORPTION IN GOD.

- a. Partaking does not mean absorption.
- b. This is the dream of extravagant mysticism.
- c. Absorption, as a drop of water which goes back into the ocean and is lost ? That can never be.
- d. For there will always be "I" and "Thou"—two separate and distinct personalities.

4. No SHARING IN ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES.

- a. Shareholders, not of the essence of God so as to be deified.
- b. Shareholders, not of the essential, but the moral attributes of God.
- c. Shareholders, but not as Christ. In Him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

5 No ABSOLUTE, BUT A GROWING PARTICIPATION.

This participation is a growing thing. Therefore not absolute.

II. The Positive Aspect. We become sharers in the Divine Nature by becoming-

1. PARTAKERS OF THE PROMISES (1 . 4, with Eph. 3. 6). Thus we have the ministry of the Word in regeneration (E Peter 1. 23)

How? By becoming-

2. PARTAKERS OF CHRIST (Heb. 3. 14).

- a. "Companion" (literally) of Christ.
- b. Shareholders (literal) in Christ.
- c. How?

3. BY PARTAKING OF BREAD (1 Cor. 10. 17).

- a. That is, by taking Christ, who is the Bread of Life.
- b. This is an act of faith.
- c. How?

4. By PARTAKING OF HOLY GHOST (Heb. 6. 4).

- a. What a wonderful phrase!
- b. Surely when the Holy Spirit enters, we become partakers of the Holy Ghost.

III. The Blessed Results.

1. As TO CHARACTER. Partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12. 10).
2. AS TO LIVING. Partakers of His sufferings (1 Pet. 4.13).
3. As TO CONSOLATION. Partakers of His comfort (2 Cor. 1.7).
4. AS TO SERVICE. Partakers of His hope (1 Cor. 9. 10).

SPIRITUAL SHORTSIGHTEDNESS
OR, SPIRITUAL ADVANCEMENT IN GRACE AND HOLINESS
2 PETER 1. 5-9.

Introduction.

"FOR THIS VERY REASON,"

1. Is the M. rendering in place of, "and beside this."
2. This connects our past meditation with this.
3. We are sharers in the very Life of God, therefore we must press on to possess more.

DILIGENCE.

1. Peter was a man of action.
2. This is just like Peter to insist on need of diligence.
3. This is a demand for business vigilance in the realm of the spirit.
4. Original meaning of the word is haste. It is employed to describe the eager swiftness with which the Virgin went to Elizabeth after the angel's salutation and annunciation.

ADVANCE.

1. Peter desires to excite and engage them to advance in grace and holiness.
2. One has said: "Diligence is the panacea for all diseases of the Christian life. Where there is faith all that is needful in order to possess any other grace is diligence."
3. Is this correct?

LIMITATIONS.

1. There are limitations in the mastering and possessing of things natural. Example: Musical Attainment, Language, Art.
2. But there is no kind of moral worth which is beyond the attainment of believing diligence.

CHORIC DANCES.

1. Word translated "add," in its primary significance alluded to the Choric Dances, where, with hands joined together, the performers kept up a measured movement to the sound of music.
2. Hand linked in hand, let all the graces advance together, faith giving one hand to courage, courage giving the other hand to knowledge, knowledge holding with free hand to temperance, etc., etc.
3. That is the significance of the R.V.: "IN your faith." These are not detachable graces, but faith is the root from which virtue and all other graces grow.

ADD.

1. It is not one grace which makes a Christian.
2. These graces will not come without an effort, nor remain without culture.

Let us note separately these graces:-

I. Faith.

1. Faith leads the van or chorus. Indeed is the root.
2. No number of excellencies make a Christian unless they be excellencies added to faith.
3. Faith is the foundation grace; but a foundation is of little use if no structure follows.

II. Virtue.

1. What virtue is meant here? "A noble character" is rendering in (W.). "Resolution" (M.).
2. Courage or fortitude is meant, or manliness—the holy courage which enables men to quit themselves as men.
3. "Brave," without "bluster"—fearless without ferocity.

III. Knowledge.

1. Intelligence (M.).
2. General and particular knowledge, of science, and particularly that of the Bible and of Divine things.

IV. Temperance. "Self-control" (W.). A proper and limited use of all enjoyments.

V. Patience. "Power of endurance" (W.). "Steadfastness" (M.).

VI. Godliness. "Piety" (M.).

VII. Brotherly Kindness. "Affection" (W.).

VIII. Charity.

Application. Not to do so means:

1. Spiritual myopia, a word the oculist uses for physical short-sightedness.
2. If a man has these things he has sight.
3. Cannot look back far enough ("Hath forgotten") and cannot look forward as he ought.

SPIRITUAL CERTAINTY.

2 PETER 1. 10, 11.

Introduction.

"DILIGENCE."

1. Here we have this businesslike word again.
2. 2 Peter 1. 5; 3. 14.

CONNECTION.

1. He speaks in verse 5 of the need of diligence in acquiring spiritual graces.
2. He that lacks such things suffers from spiritual shortsightedness.
3. Do not let that be so, "but give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

BLESSEDNESS OF CERTAINTY.

1. Life is full of uncertainty so far as natural things are.
2. The certainty respecting spiritual things is possible and desirable.
- I. Spiritual Uncertainty is One Fruit of Spiritual Immaturity.

"SPARE NO EFFORT.

1. To put God's call and choice beyond all doubt" (20th C.).
2. "Spare no effort" : (a) In prayer. (b) In study. (c) In converse with elder Christians.

PETER HAD No DOUBT.

1. Peter thus wrote, not because he entertained any doubt concerning them. See Peter 1. 2.
2. Whilst he entertained no doubt, probably they were the prey of doubts.

"CALLING AND ELECTION."

1. That was how they referred to salvation.
2. This expresses the Divine side of our salvation.
3. Giving diligence to make sure and certain.
4. None can look into the Book of God's Eternal Counsels and Decrees. Yet we have something to do.
5. "Though God has called and elected us in Christ, yet it depends on our own care to make them effectual to salvation" (An Old Bishop) .

SOME SCRIPTURES.

1. On Predestination (Rom. 8. 29, 30; Eph. 1. 5, 11).
2. On Election. Israel, God's elect people (Isa. 45. 4). He has an elect to-day (Rom. 8. 33; Col. 3. 12; 1 Peter 1. 2; Rom. 9. 11; Rom. 11.5; 1 Thess. 1. 4).

How TO MAKE SURE.

1. By examination of our own lives. Are we manifesting the graces of the Spirit.
2. By seeking the witness of the Spirit.

II. Spiritual Certainty Produces Blessed Results.

1. STABILITY IN GRACE. "Ye shall never stumble" (R.V.). "Never make a slip" (M.).

- a. Life is full of slippery places.
- b. Growth in grace means strength to our spiritual ankle bones.

2. STABILITY IN PURPOSE. "Ye shall never falter" (F .F.).

- a. No ruinous hesitancy.
- b. Many a battle has been lost by hesitation.
- c. To know definitely the mind of God is grand.

3. A TRIUMPHANT ENTRANCE INTO GLORY. "A triumphant admission" (20th C.). No crawling through the Gate of Heaven. We shall go sweeping through the Gate.

4. FREEDOM FROM SHAME WHEN BEFORE HIM. "Fully equipped" (F .F.).

- a. In a grand review, how ashamed an ill-equipped soldier would be.
- b. Anything lacking in the uniform would merit censure. What about the Grand Review at the Reward Seat of Christ?

TWO REASONS FOR MINISTERIAL URGENCY.

2 PETER 1. 12-15.

Introduction.

NEGLIGENT.

1. Peter has been urging his hearers to diligence.
2. What about himself? I, too, will not be negligent.
3. I will not neglect my duty.

REMEMBRANCE.

1. Peter had a duty to perform—he had been appointed a remembrance for the Lord.
2. This is the office of all faithful pastors.
3. Note: (1) "Always." (2) "Of these things." (3) Though they knew them. (4) And were established in them. ("Fixed in the truth"). And it was "meet."

4. We need to be put in mind of what we already know to prevent our forgetting it, to improve our knowledge, and reduce all to practice.

Reasons for Ministerial Urgency:

I. A Common Proneness to forgetfulness.

1. COMMON MALADY (see 2 Peter 1. 9) .

- a. Forgetfulness is a common malady. More prevalent to-day than in olden times.
- b. "Memory is such a child of caprice," even in purely secular matters.
- c. It plays us curious pranks.
- d. "We remember People's faces but forget their names; we remember a single injury, and

forget a multitude of gracious benefits."

e. It is more pronounced in things spiritual.

f. We find it easier to remember material than spiritual things.

g. Note: Israel in the past. "Then they forgot the Lord their God."

2. NEED OF REMEMBRANCE.

a. We feel our need of aids to memory in things material and commercial.

b. Humorous are some of the stratagems. (Tying a piece of thread or ribbon on our fingers) .

c. God has his methods of reminding us, as:

(i.) The ministry of the Word (2 Peter 3. 1) or,

(ii.) The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. "A piece of broken bread recalls the broken body of the Lord;" and also

(iii.) The ministry of His servants.

NOTE.

1. A minister's duty is to remind us of truths we already know as well as to bring to our notice new truth.

2. And to do this even to fully established souls.

3. Memory is admitted not to be as good to-day (owing to mind helps) , as in Old Testament days, when the memory had more work to do. Therefore the need of being reminded to-day is greater than in past.

II. The Brevity of the Worker's Life (14).

1. Note the force of Wycliffe's rendering: "Knowing that swift is the putting off of my tabernacle," i.e., my death will be swift and sudden.

2. Body likened to a tent. "Little tent" (F .F.).

3. This was a popular metaphor.

4. Stands for:

a. A frail, fragile structure.

b. A moveable structure.

c. The home of a tenant.

d. Easily removed—" Exodus."

e. Must be put off.

MAN-GOD.

1. Man forgetting God (Deut. 32. 18; Isa. 17. 10; Jer. 2. 32; 3. 21; 13. 25; Hosea 8. 14) .

2. God never forgetting man (Isa. 49. 15).

THE TRUTH OF OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH.

2 PETER 1. 15-21.

Introduction.

"ALWAYS IN REMEMBRANCE."

1. Peter's diligence that they should keep all these things "Always in Remembrance."
2. But are they worthy of an effort to remember?
3. There bursts upon his memory the scene on Mount of Transfiguration.
4. Indeed it must have been often on his mind, for he frequently speaks of his own departure & the very word which the heavenly visitors had used of Christ's departure on the holy mount—Exodus.

DECLARATION.

1. Yes, they are worthy of all belief.
2. They are not "cunningly devised fables," like other religious beliefs.
3. We made known the
 - a. Power of our Lord Jesus.
 - b. Presence (R.) (R.V.) of our Lord Jesus.
 - c. Not Second Advent, but Incarnation.

PETER AND PAUL. One has said: "It is interesting to compare the Epistles of Peter with those of Paul. Peter's Epistles tell of grace—Christ on this earth; Paul's of glory—Christ in the Heavens. Peter saw the Transfiguration on the earth; Paul was caught up to the Heavens and saw the God of Glory. Peter tells of the things he saw here: Paul of the revelation and of the word 'unspeakable.'"

I. The Truth of Christianity Demonstrated.

1. THE TESTIMONY OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE (16).

- a. "Eye-witnesses of His Majesty."
- b. Such evidence in favour of Christianity has a vast cumulative value for us.
- c. Put first by Peter. Please do not forget your own experience.
- d. "What took the kick out of my life?" asked a friend of another.

2. THE TESTIMONY OF THE DIVINE (17).

- a. Personal experience is not sufficient.
- b. What an experience that must have been. "When there came such a voice." There was the testimony from above. Here was the testimony of the Divine.
 - a. THE ORAL TESTIMONY (16).
 - a. 99% of our knowledge comes by hearsay. "When we made known."
 - b. The testimony of others is of value.

4. THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE (19-21).

a. "More Permanent."

(i.) Read the forcible (W.) rendering to 19. "And in the written Word of prophecy we have something more permanent."

(ii.) "And thus we have gained fresh confirmation of the prophetic Word" (M.).

b. "More Sure." Made more sure because we have received the confirmation of all that the prophets spoke dimly of.

II. Confidence in Scripture Justified.

1. ITS ORIGIN (20, 21) .

a. From Heaven, "when carried away by the Holy Spirit" (M.).

b. Private Interpretation.

(i.) Not the product of the prophet.

(ii.) Not the prophet's own interpretation of the vision presented to his mind.

c. Definition of Inspiration.

(iii.) All Scripture agrees with Scripture.

(iv.) No Pope or body of men are to limit or dictate what the interpretation of the Scripture is.

(v.) Can only be understood in the Spirit (Read 20th C.).

2. ITS DESIGN. A Lamp.

a. Illuminating.

b. Squalid places—exposing the squalor of its time.

3. Its AIM.

a. It shines like a guiding lamp. A fuller light of day dawns upon the soul, as the believer, led by the prophetic Word, realises the personal knowledge of the Lord.

b. Progress of Revelation—lamp or star.

c. The Day.

(i.) Of Christ's fuller revelation to the soul.

(ii.) Of Christ's Second Advent.

d. Does this mean that we have less use of the Scriptures when living near to God? No.

4. ITS INTERPRETATION (20.).

a. "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation," i.e., "Its own interpretation." That is, each separate Scripture to be understood clearly must be compared with other Scriptures.

b. Ponder over the 20th C. rendering of this verse: "First be clear on this point—There is no prophetic teaching in Scripture that can be interpreted by man's unaided reason." Thus we require the light of the Holy Spirit.

APOSTASY.

2 PETER 2.

I. False Teachers and their Destiny.

1. CHARACTER OF CHAPTER.

- a. "This is a dark and appalling chapter.
- b. There is no softening of the shade from end to end."
- c. It is a chapter of unrelieved gloom.

2. ONLY ANOTHER SIMILAR.

- a. Only one other portion of Scripture like it—Book of Nahum.
- b. Nineveh was an apostate people. So that Nahum's message was to apostates.

3. AWFULNESS OF APOSTASY.

- a. Apostasy is worse than ignorance.
- b. Only thing God can do with apostates is to destroy them.
- c. "Light that is trifled with becomes lightning."

4. GOOD AND BAD.

- a. In previous lesson we read of good prophets.
- b. Now we learn of the bad prophets.

5. ACCOMPLISHED FACT.

- a. Peter says "shall be"—a prophecy.
- b. Jude says "are"—an accomplished fact.

6. CROWNING SIN AND PROOF OF APOSTASY.

- a. "Denying the Lord that bought them."
- b. This is the mark by which to test and reject the false teacher.
- c. That which lowers Him and His redeeming work must be false.
- d. The force of this—Peter denied His Lord three times.
- e. This is "a shorthand expression for all sorts of sin."
- f. How we may deny:

(i.) By speech.

(ii.) By life—an ungodly life

(iii.) By doctrinal views.

II. Swift and Certain Punishment upon Past Apostasy. Proved by that of

1. Angels (4) .
2. The whole world (5) .
3. Cities of the plain (6).

III. God's Power and Willingness to Keep Us if we Desire to be Kept (5-7 to 9) .

1. Noah lived and preached righteousness (5) .
2. Lot lived righteously and never got reconciled to unrighteousness (8) .
3. "The Lord knoweth"-no one else does (9).

IV. Description of Apostasy.

1. CUNNING-privily (1).
2. CHIEF SIN AND MARK (1).
3. END (1, 3, 12, 13).
4. SUCCESS-"many" (2) .
5. IMMORALITY-lascivious (2, 10, 14, 18).
6. TREACHEROUS and Deceitful (3).
7. PRESUMPTUOUS (10, II).
8. BEASTLY (12) .
9. MERCENARY (15, 16).
10. EMPTY (17) .
11. SAD COMMENTARY (20, 21, and 22).
12. UNDETERRED BY MIRACULOUS EFFORT TO GUIDE ARIGHT (16).
13. POPULARITY (18).

THE LEISURELINESS OF GOD.

2 PETER 3. 1-9.

Introduction.

It may be well to remind ourselves of the difference between the First and Second Epistle. First Epistle written to strengthen those who were passing through trial; the Second to warn of terrible dangers; the First concerned with dangers without, the Second concerned with dangers within. The dangers within are more perilous than those without.

1. GOOD AND BAD PROPHETS.

- a. We have noticed Peter's reference to the good and had prophets.
108 Handfuls on Purpose
- b. He returns to this subject. In effect he says: "I don't want you to be forgetful of what those good prophets said" (2) .

2. WRITINGS OF APOSTLES AND OF OLD PROPHETS (2) .

- a. Note the force of verse 2.
- b. Peter, without any hesitation, places his own writings and the writings of the other Apostles on a level with Old Testament writings.
- c By R.V. Peter claims Divine origin for his and their writings.

3. OPTIMIST AND LAST DAYS

- a. This optimistic and energetic writer has much to say concerning the last days, and that the last days would be sad days.
 - (i.) "Scoffers"—"mockers" (R.V.).
 - (ii.) Suggests that mocking had become a habit, for they mocked at everything.
 - (iii.) These scoffers were bad living men.
 - (iv.) The sad fact to-day is that good living men scoff at Advent Truth.

(v.) Oh, the sadness!—making sport of the great Hope of the Church.

4. WHY DO THEY MOCK? Their arguments amount to the following:

- a. He is not coming because He has not yet come.
- b. Nothing will happen out of the usual, because nothing unusual has ever happened.

5. WILFULLY FORGETFUL. They are forgetful deliberately and wilfully:

- a. Of the Deluge—things have not remained since the Creation unchanged.
- b. The Deluge.

6. SINGULAR APTNESS. There is a singular aptness in the reference to the Deluge as a judgment on sin.

7. WATER AND FIRE,

- a. Note "stored with fire" (R.V., margin).
 - b. What water failed to accomplish fire will secure.
8. WHY His DELAY? His slowness—absence of hurry—leisureliness.

I. In Sphere of Nature.

1. How slow, and sure, and splendidly persistent God has been in fashioning the world.
2. God is patient because He is Eternal (Augustine).
3. There are 1000 years within His day.
4. The "Day of Salvation" has lasted 2000 years nearly.

II. In Sphere of Revelation.

1. There is one thing God has never done, and that is to be in a hurry to reveal Himself.
2. To have revealed everything all at once would have been:
 - a. Cruelty, and not kindness, for men would have been blinded by the glare.
 - b. Besides, it would have been worse than useless.

III. In the Sphere of Judgment.

1. Sometimes God is very swift in Judgment.
2. At other times inexorably slow.

IV. In the Sphere of Christian Living.

1. IN THE REVELATION OF HIS WILL TO US.

- a. Not all in a moment, but step by step does God reveal the pathway of our duty.
- b. Paul wished to go southward to Galatia, and wished to turn northward to Bithynia. But the Lord directed otherwise.

2. IN ANSWER TO OUR PRAYERS. Not all at once does He answer.

3. IN THE BESTOWAL OF SOME OF HIS GIFTS (Gal. 4.4).

4. LESSON. Be patient.

HURRYING UP THE GLORIOUS TIME.

2 PETER 3. 10-14.

Introduction. Why doth He tarry, the absent Lord? Oh, why? At Burial Service we pray that "Thou mayest shortly accomplish the number of Thine elect." Here in our lesson we have one important thought.

1. Two DAYS (10 and 12) .

- a. In the verses we have two distinct days mentioned.
- b. "The Day of the Lord" and "Day of God" are not the same.
- c. The four days:

- (i.) Man's Day (1 Cor. 4. 3, marg.) is the Day of Salvation.
- (ii.) Christ's Day (2 Thess. 2. 2) is the Day of Glorification.
- (iii.) Lord's Day is the Day of Tribulation.
- (iv.) God's Day is the Day of Realization.

2. PETER ON DAY OF LORD.

- a. He says it will come as a thief—silently, stealthily, unexpectedly, so far as the world is concerned.
- b. "Heavens vanish with crackling roar" (M.).
- c. "The stars will be set ablaze and melt" (M.).
- d. "Works of man ... shall be burned up" (W.).

3. PETER ON DAY OF GOD.

- a. The terrors in heaven and earth usher in the Day of God, concluding the Day of the Lord (verse 12).
- b. New heavens and new earth (13).
- c. Righteousness in heaven and earth.

I. Our Expectation.

1. "Looking for." "Unto you that look for Him" (Heb. 9. 28).
2. "Expecting" (R.)—that is what "looking for" means. We look not merely out of curiosity, but with great expectancy.
3. What expectations have you?

II. Our Preparation

1. Hurrying up the grand Day of God.
2. Accelerating it by our repentance, prayers, and effort.
3. How WE MAY HASTEN.

- a. By Holy Living (W., verse 11). "All holy living."
 - b. By Godly Conduct (W., verse 11). "And godly conduct).
 - c. By Holy Conversation (R.V.). Take care of your speech.
 - d. By Eagerly Looking (W., verse 12). "Eagerly looking forward."
 - e. By a Godly Aim (M.). "You who expect and hasten the advent of the Day of God."
- Note (1) Diligence—we shall never be holy without diligence. (2) "Found of Him" (14).

III. Our Becoming Attitude (14).

1. All this is becoming of those looking for the Lord's Coming.
2. Are you looking forward for His Coming? What effect has that hope had upon you?

GROWTH

2 PETER 3. 15-18.

Introduction.

1. How differently Peter ends Second Peter to First Peter, and how differently it ends to other Epistles.
2. He is dwelling upon a solemn subject, and is so full of the subject that he ends abruptly.
3. Meaning of His longsuffering: (1) Not slackness. (2) "Means salvation"—in His longsuffering He has purposes of salvation.
4. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." "Our beloved brother Paul," though he had withstood him to his face" (Gal. 2. 11). "BELOVED brother Paul."
5. "If any lack wisdom" etc. "Wisdom given unto him."
6. Wisdom from above required for letter writing. "Hath written unto you."
7. Brain sweat (16). "Hard to understand."
8. Paul's writings placed on a level with other Scriptures (16).
9. Sad misuses of Scripture (16) .
10. "Ye . . . know ... Beware" (17). Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.
11. "Beloved." (1) Not like Jews "For the Father's sake," but for Jesus' sake.

UNUSUAL. You would never think of telling a child to grow any more than you would tell a plant to grow. But Peter does tell Christian men and women to grow. Why? Because they are not plants, but men and women with wills, which can resist, and can either further or hinder their progress.

I. An Environment Essential to Growth.

1. Significance of "The" in the R.V. and other versions.
2. No growth out of grace and personal knowledge.
3. You cannot "grow" into grace.
4. Here are conditions for growth.

II. The Nature of that Growth.

1. "GRACE" Grace stands for one of three things.

- a. "Favour" (Luke 2. 52, R.).
- b. Gifts.
- c. Graciousness.

2. "KNOWLEDGE."

- a. Increase your acquaintance with Him.
 - b. In the possibilities of His Saviourhood (fully saved).
 - c. In the possibilities of His Lordship.
 - d. In His Jesus (Joshua) nature—Leadership.
 - e. In His Christhood—the Anointing—One who anoints.
- ## III. The Necessity for Growth.

1. Growth is necessary for steadfastness.
2. No standing still in Christian life.
3. Each going on or getting off.
4. "Be always" (W.).

"YET NOT I."

IN the New Testament Paul several times makes use of a corrective—"I , yet not I." Why? Was it a new Christian form of speaking he had not yet got into the habit of using? Hardly. Was it not rather a reminder to himself and others of the great change that had taken place; or better, a declaration that the "I" always remains, only by conversion with a wonderful plus—Christ. In Spiritism there is the extinction of personality—never in Christianity. Though Christ and I are separate personalities, by grace we become one, yet retaining our separate identity. The "I, yet not I":

- I. Of Living,..... Gal. 2. 20
- II. Of Service, I Cor. 15. 10
- III. Of Offence, Mark 14. 29
- IV. Of Speaking, I Cor. 7. 10
- V. Of Glorifying,2 Cor. 12. 5

THE PENITENTIAL PSALM A THREEFOLD VIEW OF SIN. PSALM 51.1-5.

INTRODUCTION.

1. The 51st Psalm is one of the great Penitential Psalms.
2. It has been called "The Sinner's Guide. "
3. Have you ever read it on your knees? For years the Author has read this Psalm on his knees every Lord's Day morning.

4. Remember it was the prayer of "a man after God's own heart , " who had gone astray.
5. It is thus the prayer of a sinning saint.
6. A whole year had elapsed between David's crime and David's penitence (Far, far too long).
7. It had been a year of misery, as Psalm 32 shows. (Psalm 32 is David's account of his experiences during that year.)
8. In mercy came Nathan the Prophet.
9. The cold frost that had bound his soul melted away, and he confessed his sin.
10. Though forgiven immediately, yet he comes into the sanctuary and wails out this hymn of agony and sorrow.
11. This Psalm repays careful study.
12. First, let us study David's view of sin.
13. Here we see how David viewed his sin after (not before) his restoration. No one can have a right view of sin until forgiven.
14. There is a threefold repetition that is very impressive. "It is not a mere piece of Hebrew parallelism. It is more than the requirements of poetical form. It is the earnestness of a soul that cannot be content with once asking for the blessing, but dwells upon them with repeated supplication."

What a Man Thought of Sin who had Sinned.

1. The very hard things that are said in this Psalm about sin, are said by this man about himself.
2. Pray remember, we have here not merely what a man thought of sin, but what a man thought who had sinned.
3. We have something more than a theological treatise. Tread Softly.
 1. And because of that we must tread softly.
 2. We must handle the words with the reverent sadness with which we enter the house of mourning.

Why have we Largely Lost the Sense of Sin?

1. A young minister put this question to an eminent Christian Judge, and he replied: "Because the world is losing its consciousness of God, and when men lose the consciousness of God's existence they lose their fear of sin."
2. Fear is a very wholesome preventative in our civic and national life.
3. Men fear to break the laws of the country because of punishment for so doing.
4. When I am possessed of a consciousness of God I not only fear to sin, but fear because of sin.

I. HE VIEWED HIS CRIME AS TRANSGRESSION (1 and 3).

1. The startling fact discovered from a study of the word "sin" is that it means much more than stepping over a mark, the interpretation usually given.
2. For it is the English translation of the Hebrew word "pesha"—rebellion.
3. By Young's Concordance we find the word "transgress" in our English Bibles is the translation of several different Hebrew and Greek words.

- a. Deceive—to deal treacherously—"Bagad."
- b. Trespass—"Maal."
- c. Passover—"A bar."
- d. Rebel—"Pasha."

- 4. In the New Testament the words there carry all these meanings: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth (does lawlessness) the law."
- 5. That is the root idea in the word transgression.
- 6. It really means rebellion, a breaking away from, and a setting of oneself against lawful authority.
- 7. Transgression is rebellion against a rightful sovereign.
- 8. In this word we get the outward aspect of sin.
- 9. And this is the first view of sin in the Psalm.

II. HE VIEWED HIS CRIME AS INIQUITY (2, 5).

- 1. Observe, he first used the plural, now the singular.
- 2. This is the inward aspect of sin.
- 3. Young gives "perversity" as the meaning of "anon," the Hebrew word here.
- 4. This indicates that iniquity means that which is twisted, bent, wrung, or warped from the straight line of right.
- 5. To that line, drawn by God's law, our lives should run parallel, bending neither to the right hand nor to the left.
- 6. "I was shapen in iniquity." This does not mean that motherhood is a sin, and maidenhood more holy and blessed, but that the twist in our natures is inherited from our parents.
- 7. Sin consists not only in wrong doing, but in wrong being.
- 8. It also consists not only in actual wrong committed, but in the intention, the will, the wrong attitude of the soul. An aged and wealthy physician in Prussia was found dead in his bed, with finger marks around his throat, and a knife wound in his chest. His house had been plundered. Soon after an upholsterer was arrested in a neighbouring town with some of the stolen property in his possession. He made a full confession, telling how he had killed the aged physician in his sleep. But the Doctor who had performed the post-mortem examination declared that the man had died of apoplexy, and must have been dead before the burglar had broken into the house. The prisoner, in spite of his murderous intent was only punished for burglary. Under human law he was a burglar; under Divine law he was a murderer.

III. HE VIEWS HIS CRIME AS SIN (3,4, 5).

- 1. Young gives the Hebrew word to be "chata," i.e., missing the mark.
- 2. Sin is coming short of God's mark.
- 3. It seems to point out that every sin is a blunder as well as a crime.
- 4. "Thee only." What is the meaning of this? Has not David made a mistake? Had he not wronged man as well as God? Answer:

a. Here we have the language of a thoroughly penitent man. The half repentant man fixes his eye on the humiliation and shame, on the opinion of his fellows, on the disgrace it will mean to him. But the man who has got to the heart of the matter puts men and reputation out of view, forgetting every one but God.

b. Strictly speaking, sin can only be against God.

c. The returned prodigal in Luke 15 put Heaven first, then his parent: "I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight." A sure and convincing proof of his genuine repentance. And how this prayer was answered we shall see in our next study.

A TRIPLE BLESSING.
"Blot"—"Wash"—"Cleanse"
PSALM 51. 1, 2.

INTRODUCTION.

Opinions.

1. "The 51st Psalm is theology made luminous" (Prof. Elmslie).
2. "The 51st Psalm is the noblest expression of Penitence."

What it Follows.

1. It is well to remember that this Psalm followed Nathan's declaration of the Divine forgiveness toward David.
2. This teaches:
 - a. The revelation of God's love and wonderful grace precedes and is the cause of the truest penitence.
 - b. The assurance of pardon, so far from making a man think lightly of his sin, is the thing that drives it home to his conscience, and teaches him what it really is.
 - c. Here is the true reason of verse 4. Pardoned, you think less of the consequence of sin, and more of the act (see Ezek. 16. 60-63) .

Mercy.

1. He appeals at once to the mercy of God before he mentions his sin.
2. Mercy is a foremost attribute of God. The Lord passed by before Moses and proclaimed: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful" (Exod. 34. 6).
3. The word "merciful" in Latin is very expressive—it is misericordia, "miseria"—misery, and "cor" heart, i.e., a heart touched and pained at the misery of another.

"According to," i.e., in proportion to.

1. Note how he heaps up these phrases.
2. "Love-in-kindness;" "multitude of Thy tender mercies. "
3. His whole hope rests upon God's own character as revealed in His Word and in the endless continuance of His acts of love.

Triple Blessing. As he spoke of sin in a threefold fashion, so he asks for a triple blessing.

A Query.

1. Have we here David's cry for pardon?
2. Have we here how David thinks of forgiveness?
3. Why he was forgiven already!
4. We know that he knew very well that he was already forgiven (Psa. 32. 5), and certainly he would not ask for what he already possessed.
5. We shall see in our study that he was asking for three further blessings:

- a. God's forgetfulness of His crime.
- b. God's sanctification of his soul.
- c. Fellowship with God and His people.

I. "BLOT OUT"—FORGETFULNESS OF SIN (1, 9).

1. Young gives meaning of original as "To rub or wipe off."
2. He deserved to be blotted out of God's Book (Exod. 32. 32), instead he asks for his sin to be blotted out.
3. I wonder if the Psalmist had Numb. 5. 23 in mind—the blotting out of the curse from a scroll?
4. Here David asks the Lord to deal with his sin as an erasure of a writing or indictment, as the wiping out of a record of rebellion.
5. Is this possible? We know from Isaiah 43. 25 and 44. 22 that it is.
6. Praise God, He not only forgives but forgets.
7. And it is done because of the Cross (Col. 2. 14).

II. "WASH"—DESIRE FOR PURITY (2) .

1. An examination of Young's Concordance shows that the Hebrew word "Kabas" (met with 37 times) is always used in relation to the cleansing of a garment. Another word is used for cleansing of hands and feet and body.
2. He recognises that sin, though pardoned, has defiled his soul, and now, being forgiven, he requires cleansing.
3. The garments of the soul require purity.
4. Note "Wash me thoroughly," literally "again and again."
5. He is praying for purity.

III. "CLEANSE"—ADMISSION INTO FELLOWSHIP (2) .

1. This is ceremonial cleansing.
2. It is the technical word for the priestly act of declaring ceremonial cleansing from the stain of leprosy (Lev. 13. 6-34) .
3. Observe, the leper already was clean from his leprosy, but he had to be pronounced

ceremonially clean before being allowed fellowship with God and Israel in Tabernacle or Temple worship.

4. David recognised that sin cut him off from fellowship with God; he is craving for restored fellowship.

THE JUSTIFICATION OF GOD..

PSALM 51. 4.

INTRODUCTION.

Uncommon.

1. This certainly is an uncommon subject.
2. The justification of the sinner is a well-known topic.
3. Not so the justification of God.

Important.

1. Yet one can easily see its importance.
2. Can God be justified in all His dealings with mankind?
3. You see, His very character is at stake.

True Meaning.

1. I don't think anyone will doubt that here David is anxious for the justification of God.
2. Bishop Patrick's paraphrase makes it clear: "If Thou shouldst pronounce the heaviest sentence upon me for my crimes, and execute it with the greatest severity, I could not accuse Thee of too much rigour, but must still justify Thee in Thy proceedings, and clear Thee from all such unjust imputations."

Unique.

1. This is a unique illustration, and proof of a great desire for the glory of God.
2. More than desire—a consuming passion.
3. Contrast this with other illustrations:
 - a. Adam and Eve—Silent at the judgments of God.
 - b. Cain (Gen. 4. 13). Here is a puzzle. Was he complaining at the severity of the judgment? Or was he admitting his case as hopeless?
 - c. Eli (1 Sam. 3. 18). Resignation, but that alone.
 - d. Hezekiah (2 Kings 20. 19).

I. MAN JUSTIFYING GOD BY REPENTANCE AND A TURNING TO CHRIST (Luke 7. 29).

1. These were the words of the Lord Jesus Himself.
2. This is a very unusual way of putting the truth.
3. In what way did these people justify God?
 - a. They believed and accepted the message God had sent to them by John.
 - b. That message contained much that was stem. It foretold judgment to the unrepentant.
 - c. They admitted the justice of God's condemnation and accepted His offer of mercy.

4. At the proclamation of the doom of the impenitent many charge God with injustice.
5. But we justify God.

II. MAN JUSTIFYING GOD IN THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE SINNER (Rom. 3. 26).

1. What is the message of the Epistle to the Romans? Justification of repentant sinners?
2. No; not the justification of the sinner, but the justification of God in justifying the sinner.
3. Remember it is more important that God be justified in this act of mercy than that sinners be justified.
4. If in the justifying of the sinner God became unjust, then the whole scheme of salvation falls to the ground.
5. But the Divine plan of Redemption is so wonderful that God is justified in justifying the sinner.

III. MAN JUSTIFYING GOD IN HIS DEALINGS WITH JEWISH NATION (Rom. 3. 4).

1. This is part of one great argument.
2. Here Paul is dealing with objections to the levelling of the Jew to the plane of the Gentile.
3. In doing this, does not God prove faithless to His promises to the covenant people?
4. No; and then Paul quotes the LXX ,rendering of Psalm 51. 4.

IV. MAN JUSTIFYING GOD IN THE SEVERE JUDGMENTS AND CHASTISEMENTS HE HAS TO BEAR (Psalm 51. 4).

1. And for this David provides by a frank acknowledgment of his sin, and by confessed meriting of all God's severities.
2. What an example here for all to copy:
 - a. For the saved sinner, suffering physically as a result of a life of vice and sin in the unregenerate days.
 - b. For the saint suffering through the breaking of some of nature's laws.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

PSALM 51. 10, 11, 12.

INTRODUCTION.

1. Three Petitions. Connected with the word Spirit, we have in the great Penitential Psalm three separate petitions.
2. Though we have the same word three times, we have not the same thought.
3. The first one most certainly stands for disposition or character; the second word stands for the Third Person in the blessed Trinity; the last some think is like the first, standing for disposition or character; but surely it stands like the middle one, for the Holy Spirit, only it gives another view of His character.
4. Shall we take them in the order in which they occur?

I. "RENEW A RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN ME" (10). Introduction.

1. He desired an inward work.
2. "Renew," once it had been there.
3. What is a right spirit? Best answer to that question is the other renderings.

Renderings.

1. R.V., "Steadfast."
2. A.V., margin, "Constant."
3. F. F., "Put a new mind in my breast."

Significance of "Steadfast" Rendering..

1. I have so easily yielded to temptation.
2. Renew within me a steadfast mind, a mind steady in following the path of duty, an unyielding spirit.
3. John Bunyan, in his immortal allegory, has a Mr. Standfast, a most attractive character.

Meaning of Rendering "Constant."

1. Think of a mariner's compass or a clock.
2. A compass or a clock, always right and dependable, are to be prized and valued.
3. Oh, to have a mind always set on God!

Right Spirit. A wrong spirit can take possession of us. Renew.

1. It was once there.
2. Lord, put it there again!

"Within."

Here he desired an inward work of grace. How Often should we Offer this Prayer?

1. More frequently than we imagine we should.
2. For our dispositions seem mercurial, as changeable as the weather.
3. The ideal is: "The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."
4. The same, without sameness.
5. God alone can accomplish this work.
6. Let us present this prayer daily.

II. "TAKE NOT THY HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME" (11).

He Possessed.

- 1, David regards himself as still possessing the Spirit.
2. We know when the Spirit first possessed him (1 Sam. 16. 13).
3. What longsuffering on the part of the Spirit to remain in an unclean life.

Saul.

1. Had David Saul in mind when he prayed thus? (1 Sam. 16. 14).

Dispensation.

1. Is this a prayer for this dispensation?

2. Scofield's valuable note: "No believer in this dispensation aware of the promise of His abiding (John 14. 16) should pray, 'Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me' (Eph. 4. 30) ; but, while Christian position is not bound here, Christian experience in essence is."

3. Observe the force of John 14. 16.
What can be taken away?

1. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THAT HOLY PRESENCE.

- a. This is our Heaven below.
- b. We may live in the regular enjoyment of that presence.
- c. The manifestation of the Spirit is the fruit of loving obedience and watchfulness.

2. THE POWER OF THAT ALMIGHTY PRESENCE, though not the presence.

- a. When we lose that power we become "weak as other men," as in Samson's experience.
- b. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that makes all the difference between preachers and workers.

III. UPHOLD ME WITH THY FREE SPIRIT (12). Introduction.

1. Two facts attract one in this prayer—the desire to be upheld, and the adjectives describing the character of the Spirit.
2. This is the prayer of conscious weakness. Renderings.

1. "Willing." R.V., margin, "Thy willing Spirit."
2. "Princely." Lit., "Thy princely Spirit."
3. "Free." Spirit has wonderful freedom. "Thy free Spirit."

A Wonderful Description of God's Holy Spirit.

1. God's Spirit is Royal and Princely in character, and communicates a Holy, and Royal, and Princely dignity to us.
2. God's Spirit is a "Willing Spirit," willing to work for and in us, and will communicate to us a willingness and an ability to do God's will.
3. God's Spirit is a "free" Spirit, imparting wonderful freedom. Uphold. Oh, keep me! Hold me up!

Application. Thos. Waugh discovered "though he had the Spirit, he was not filled with the Spirit; though he had welcomed the Spirit as Guest, he had not welcomed him as Host." Let the Guest become Host, i.e., Lord. Instead of, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," Rotherham has, "Where the Spirit is Lord, there is liberty."

WHITE, THEN WHITER THAN SNOW.

ISAIAH 1. 18; PSALM 51.7.

(This study appears also in Scripture Couplets in Vol. XII, only here there are additional thoughts in harmony with the Penitential Psalm Studies)

NOT SYNONYMOUS.

1. These are not statements that mean one and the same thing.

2. POINTS OF DIFFERENCE are easily noted:

- a. One was the Word of the Lord to Israel, the other a prayer by a king to the Lord.
- b. The first is the Lord's promise, the second a penitent's plea.
- c. At least 300 years separate the two utterances.
- d. The first describes the work of God when He pardons and justifies the sinner; the second describes a deeper and an inward-work of grace desired by the restored sinner.
- e. This order is always observed: White as snow, then whiter.
- f. The one is righteousness imputed, the second is righteousness imparted.

3. This does not mean that the first work was imperfect. No. It was a perfect work of justification.

I. WHITE AS SNOW. How familiar is this statement in Isaiah 1. 18. It is:

1. A Word of Authority: "Come now."

- a. Therefore it is a word that cannot be treated lightly.
- b. What is behind a command is of importance.
- c. If I say, "Move on," to loiterers in the street, they can afford to treat it lightly; if a policeman says the same, they will either have to "Move on" or "Move in!"

2. An Appeal to Reason. God appeals to reason as well as to affections, to our heads as well as to the heart.

3. An Importunate Word: "Now." It brooks no delay.

4. A Word for All. And that is so because it concerns sin.

5. A Word for the Double-dyed Sinner.

a. Those who understand the original declare that the word translated "scarlet" here really means the double-dyed—the twice dipped.

b. For the scarlet colour in ancient times was the result of two dippings.

c. "But I am not a double-dyed sinner," do you say? But you are.

d. We are all twice-dipped sinners—first in the vile pool of original corruption, then in the bath of actual transgressions.

e. In other words, we are sinners twice over—by birth and by choice.

6. A Word Teaching the Permanency of Sin.

a. Scarlet is a fast colour, fixed and permanent.

b. It is the Bible colour for sin, not black.

c. There is no power in chemistry that can take the scarlet colour out without destroying the fabric.

d. But what is impossible in chemistry is possible in grace.

II. WHITER THAN SNOW.

Arctic Grave. Away in the far North, on the brow of a hill covered with snow, illuminated by the light of the Polar Star, a member of an arctic expedition lies buried. A

large stone covers the dead, and, on a copper tablet at the head of the grave, this text is inscribed: "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." There, amidst the eternal snows, man's passionate longing for purity finds a voice.

David's Mistake.

1. But did David not make a mistake when he prayed thus?
2. Surely nothing can be whiter than snow.
3. The fact is that the snowflake is not pure.
4. It seems that everything that touches this sin cursed earth is contaminated.
5. Elements of earthliness are wrapped up in the bosom of every snowflake that falls upon the earth.
6. It has been calculated that a slight fall of snow carries to the surface of the county of London alone 343 tons of solids in the following parts: 75 tons of dissolved solids, 142 tons of suspended matter, 100 tons of coal, 25 tons of salt, 1 ton of ammonia.
7. So this is a passionate longing after a deeper purity. Oh, for a purity as God counts purity! He who imparts the longing and inspires the prayer will grant the desire.

A THREEFOLD JOY.

PSALM 51.8, 14, 15.

INTRODUCTION. In this Penitential Psalm we not only have a threefold view of sin, a threefold blessing, and a threefold reference to the Spirit, but also a threefold view of joy and gladness.

Songless Birds.

1. The Psalmist had been for a year songless.
2. No Psalms had he composed and sung, and no song could be found in his heart.
3. "When I kept silence"—suggestive phrase. He had been silent. "My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long"—strange paradox. Silent in praise, but conscience roaring—that is the meaning.

Longing for Old-Time Joy.

1. Here he longs for the old-time joy.
2. Here he longs and asks for double joy—joy and gladness.
3. Read verse 12: "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation."
4. Observe:
 - a. He wanted and longed for God's joy.
 - b. The joy associated with His salvation.
 - c. A joy that deepens as our salvation becomes more thorough.

Three Organs.

1. David refers to three important organs—ear, tongue, and lips.
2. Each of which have to do with joy and gladness.
3. Let us take them in the order in which they are found.

I. CONCERNING THE EAR (8).

Introduction.

1. It is notable that he begins with the ear.
 2. Deafness and dumbness are associated.
- Sin has a Sad Effect upon our Spiritual Hearing.

1. The unforgiven one has no ear for joy and gladness. He feels out of harmony with heavenly melody, for the great discord has entered his soul. He cannot bear or tolerate joy in others when in that sad mood.

2. How could he be expected to enjoy music when he was as a wretch with every bone broken.

a. For he likens himself to one whose bones are crushed. 6: And crushed by no ordinary means.

c. He groaned under no mere flesh wounds. Like some poor sufferer, he is swallowed up of himself.

3. Then sin had made him hard of hearing. Sin always does. He pray 's for the recovery of hearing.

4. Before joy and gladness there must come:

a. Forgiveness and cleansing. The sense of forgiveness is like a glad morning to song birds.

b. The recovery of hearing.

c. The mood to enjoy music.

5. Another rendering: "If you hear me I joy and am glad" (F. F.). Joy and gladness the result of the assurance of God bearing and answering prayer. What a joy that brings!

II. CONCERNING THE TONGUE (14).

Literal.

1. It is clear that David has in mind the guilt of Uriah's death.

2. Uriah's blood weighed upon his soul.

3. Is there a condition of soul more awful than this, to have another man's blood resting on us!

4. Well might he be songless.

Spiritual.

1, But there is such a thing as spiritual blood-guiltiness.

2. Read Acts 20. 26.

3. Without doubt Paul had Ezekiel in mind. Read Ezek. 3. 17 to 21 ; Ezek . 33.1 to 9.

4. What a serious view this is of pastoral responsibility.

5. Watchmen were the police of the East, or rather, a combination of police, soldier, and sentinel.

6. Note, the watchman's:

a. Commissioner--God (Ezek. 3. 17). Usually the people appointed a watchman, but God appointed this Watchman

- b. Privilege. Friendship with God. Hear the Lord's voice "at my mouth . "
- c. Self-sacrifice. Self-denial; awake when others were asleep. Self-sacrifice—sometimes to die for others.
- d. Chief Duty. "Give them warnings."

How to be Free from Blood-Guiltiness.

- 1. Unwearied labour. In rules drawn up by John Wesley for the guidance of his young preachers, we have this: "Only through unwearied labour and perseverance can we really be 'free from the blood of all men.' Go into every house and teach every one therein, young and old." (He meant the house of all members of the Wesleyan Society.)
- 2. Declaring the whole counsel of God.
- 3. Warning.

III. CONCERNING THE LIPS (15).

- 1. Praise is not easy. It is spoken of as sacrifice.
- 2. Only God can make praise possible.
- 3. How does God unlock the lips? By way of the heart. For praise is the employment of happy and thankful hearts.
- 4. It was sin that closed his lips; God would open them by dealing satisfactorily with his sin.

CONCLUSION.

- 1. Sometimes it happens that the older we get the more songless we become.
- 2. Should this be so?

THE PROBLEM IN THE PENITENTIAL PSALM.

PSALM 51.16-19.

INTRODUCTION.

A Problem.

- 1. These verses present several problems for solution.
- 2. What affinity has verses 18 and 19 with the rest of the Psalm? Have they never grated upon your spiritual senses? Have you never felt a jar upon your spiritual sensibilities when you reached them? You are confessing sin and unworthiness and pleading with the Heavenly Father for soul fitness and spiritual equipment, when you come smack up against 'Lion and bricks and mortar. What has the blotting out of sin and sanctification of the soul to do with the Walls of Jerusalem? Why, this sentence seems an alien, a stranger, in this torrent of confession.
- 3. Then again, are not verses 16 and 17 in flat contradiction to the evangelical teaching concerning the Atonement. Is not salvation by blood repudiated? Does not David try to saddle God with those heterodoxical views?

An Attempt. Feeling the sentence to be alien, several solutions have been suggested, some of whom are very drastic, more in the nature of the surgeon's knife.

1. F. F. makes another Psalm of them.
2. Prof. Blaikie says they are a "Later Addition."
3. Dr. B. says "probably added by Hezekiah."
4. Dr. Adam Clarke: "A Psalm of themselves, a kind of ejaculatory prayer for the redemption of the captives from Babylon, the re-building of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the Temple worship."

Reject.. I am not afraid to say that I reject those views. Rightly considered, we shall find they are an essential part to and complement of the rest of the Psalm. Instead of being alien, we shall find they are of the same blood and ancestry.

I. DAVID'S SIN was so heinous that no provision was made for it in the Mosaic economy (16, 17).

1. "Murder and adultery were by law punishable by death; and therefore no sacrifices were appointed to be offered by those who were guilty of them."
- 2.. Now read verses 16 and 17 with that fact in mind.
3. A murderer could only appeal to the mercy of God, as in verse 1 of this Psalm.
4. Here is an interesting Dispensational fact--the taking of life is God's prerogative which He reserved for Himself in the Adamic dispensation (Gen. 4. 15), but handed over to magistrates in the antediluvian (Gen. 5 and 6).
- 5 . Let us remember that that last decree has never been repealed, so that the agitation for the abolition of capital punishment is wrong and unscriptural.
6. If I was asked to visit a murderer in his cell, I should direct him to Luke 23. 34-43, and the story of David with the 51st Psalm.

II. THE GREAT VALUE OF REAL REPENTANCE, plus the Sacrifice of the Cross (17 and 19).

1. Oh the importance of that little word "Then" in 19.
2. What a fine description of true penitence we have in verse 17.
3. Penitence alone has no saving element in it.
4. Yet only the true penitent can enter into the benefits of Christ's death.
5. God has no delight in sacrifices and burnt-offerings for their own sake; but merely as shadows of the true atonement and expression of a penitent and believing heart.
6. An impenitent spirit bolts and bars the door against the mercy and grace of God, and makes of no value the death of Christ.
7. Of what value is the repetition of the General Confession without true penitence ?

III. THE GREAT BULWARK OF A NATION consists primarily in spiritual fitness and qualification (18) .

1. What, think you, is the great bulwark of a nation? Not warriors and warships, but godly men and women. "Sin is a disgrace to any people, but righteousness exalteth a nation."
2. David's sin had exposed the whole nation to disaster.

3. David feared lest his guilt should render him as an Achan in the congregation of Israel, and therefore he concluded his penitential prayer with entreating God to protect and prosper Zion.

4. His sin had, as it were, broken down the walls of Jerusalem. Grace alone could rebuild.

5. I doubt whether our City Missions would be reckoned by many as a national asset; rather they would be estimated as a non-producing class, therefore parasites. But the fact is, they are re-building and strengthening the national wall of defence against our foes.

6. The workers are under-masons, working under the great Master-mason and Architect of the Universe. Let us build well-, for we are building for eternity.

SOUL-WINNING.

PSALM 51. 13.

INTRODUCTION.

Final.

1. This, our eighth study, must for the present be our concluding study of Psalm 51.

2. And from the standpoint of workers, what a fine conclusion this is to be sure.

"Then."

1. How important some little words are.

2. The first word of this verse is of supreme value. Soul-Winners.

1. All believers should be professional soul-winners, carrying on soul-winning on non-professional lines.

2. Here are several important points:

I. ITS QUALIFICATION.

1. In his Presidential Address at a Wesleyan Conference, Dr. Ritson made this statement: "The Christian ministry is the only profession in the world in which the message and the messenger are inseparable."

2. The success of our message depends very largely upon the success of the message with and in us.

3. In order that the right quality might be behind the work, there must be soul adjustment with God.

4. "THEN." When?

a. Be converted (Luke 22. 31 and 32). The Lord might at times use unconverted people, but that is not His usual rule.

b. Be converted again, i.e., restored.

c. In the enjoyment of pardon, assurance, fellowship, purity, gladness.

d. In the possession of Pentecostal fulness.

e. In the practice of prayer.

II. ITS MOTIVE.

1. "Then." When? When additionally indebted to God for wondrous grace.
2. An expression of gratitude for abounding mercies received personally.
132 Handfuls on Purpose
3. As a great longing for others to share in the same blessed experience.

III. ITS USUAL PRELIMINARY.

Teaching God's Ways. And what a wondrous teacher David would become. From bitter experience he could discourse on:

- 1 The evil nature and bitterness of sin itself.
2. The nature of true repentance.
3. The requirement in order that sin might be forgiven, i.e., Cross.
4. Encourage them to come by relating own experience.

How we May Teach God's Ways.

1. Through the Word, noting God's ways With others.
2. Through a relation of our own personal experiences.

IV. ITS ULTIMATE END. "And sinners shall be converted UNTO THEE."

1. Not unto a Church, or denomination, or Assembly, or system of belief, good and essential as these are.
2. "Unto Thee."

BOASTING.

NEGATIVE: "No flesh shall glory" (I Cor. 1. 29).

POSITIVE: "Let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1.31). BOASTING seems part and parcel of our make-up. All glory in something. God has prepared a cure, not by repressing the instinct, but by giving it a worthy subject and object. Boasting is therefore quite legitimate if the right theme be adopted. And the theme? Jer. 9. 23 and 24. Paul gloried in:

- I. The Cross, Gal. 6. 14
- II. The Lord, I Cor. 1.31
- III. Tribulation, Rom. 5.3
- IV. Infirmities, 2 Cor. 12. 9

THE GOLDEN PASSIONAL OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah 53.

No subject more important than the substitutionary death of Christ. Burdened with that thought, the author prepared for "Threshed Wheat" a series of studies in defence of the old interpretation of Isaiah 53, and as an exposition of that Golden Passional. Conscious

of the timeliness of these studies, by the courtesy of the Editor, they are here reproduced. The Hall-mark of Our Saviour. Dr. J. R. Miller tells a story of a Scottish mother who once accidentally wounded her child's wrist with a knife. To comfort him in his grief, she said: "Never mind, my bonnie bairn; your mither will ken you by that when you are a man." They had been separated for years, and when one day a fine-looking man called on the old woman and announced himself as her son, she was sceptical until he drew up his sleeve, and cried, "Mither, mither, dinna ye ken that?" In a moment the old woman had her boy in her arms. She knew him by the scar.

The scars are the hall-mark of Christ. So though we have never seen Him as we see each other, some day we shall, and then
We shall know him

By the print of the nails in His hands." We fail to recognise in much of the preaching of to-day the true Saviour of sinners. Men paint sometimes very sweet arid winning pictures of the Christ. They picture the poetry of His actions, the unsullied whiteness of His thoughts, the moral stainlessness of His conduct, the sweetness of His words; but in all their portraits there is no trace of His sacred wounds, no vision of His atoning death. There cannot be a Saviour without the Cross. We fail to recognise the kind of Saviour for the lost many modern preachers proclaim.

Eulogies.

1. Ever since this wonderful chapter we know of as the 53rd of Isaiah was written, it has been considered as peculiarly sacred and pregnant with meaning.
2. "It looks as if it had been written beneath the Cross of Golgotha," writes a great German scholar.
3. As far back as Apostolic days we find it was treasured. Polycarp, the disciple of John, called it "the Golden Passional of the Old Testament."
4. Luther said that every Christian ought to be able to repeat it by heart. (Can the reader do this? If not, will the reader set about to memorise it?)
5. Augustine considered the whole of Isaiah, and, of course, particularly the 53rd chapter, as "not a prophecy but a Gospel."
6. Dr. Culross has suggestively written: "It is a prelude to much that is most distinctive in New Testament doctrine, and is the root from which not a little of the thinking of Christian ages has grown. Its phraseology has entered largely into Christian speech, and it has supplied more texts to the Gospel preacher than any other portion of the Old Testament. There are individual phrases in it resembling peaks, from which we faintly descry vast realms of truth which we cannot yet explore, but which shine with a mystic light whose summit is Divine."

Heart of Consolation.

1. The Rabbis call this second section of Isaiah "The wonderful book of consolations," and
2. Isaiah 53 forms the very centre of that second section, and of course
3. Is the very heart of all true consolation.

History. So realistic is it that, as my old and valued friend, the late David Baron says "Instead of a prophecy uttered centuries in advance, it reads like an historic summary of the Gospel narrative of the sufferings of the Christ and the glory that should follow."

I. ITS JEWISH CRITICS.

Torture. This has been called "The Torture Chamber of the Rabbis," and "the bad conscience of the Synagogue," and no Jew is allowed, on pain of severe penalties, to study it until of age.

Conversion. The fact is that no portion of Scripture has been used more than this in the conversion of Jews.

Puzzle. It certainly was a puzzling chapter to all Jews before and since Christ. The portrait it gives of a suffering Messiah was utterly at variance with the popular conception.

Fact. Yet until nearly in the eleventh century the Messianic interpretation of this chapter was almost universally accepted and adopted by the Jews.

A Sample. Here is a sample of Jewish interpretation as evidence of this. Jonathan ben Uzziel (first century) begins his Targum (i.e., paraphrase or commentary) with, "Behold My Servant Messiah shall prosper" (Isa. 52. 13).

An Important Date. Rabbi Solomon Yirchaki (or Rashi) 1040-1105, was the first to apply it to the Jewish nation. Right up to his time it was almost universally adopted by Jews that this had to do with the Messiah.

Synagogue. In the Jewish Synagogue on the Day of Atonement, in the Liturgy for that day is the following sentence: "We are shrunk up in our misery, even until now, our Rock hath not come nigh us; Messiah our Righteousness has departed from us. Horror hath seized upon us, and we have none to justify us. He hath borne the yoke of our iniquities and our transgressions, and is wounded because of our transgression. He beareth our sins on His shoulders, that He may find pardon for our iniquities. We shall be healed of our wounds at the time the Eternal will create Him (Messiah) as a new creature."

Other Jewish Interpretations. Several other interpretations and identification :is have been given of the Servant, such as Jeremiah; others say Isaiah was meant; and Hezekiah, Joshua, or Job have also been suggested.

II. ITS GENTILE CRITICS.

Past. If for seventeen hundred years the Jews beheld the Messiah in Isaiah's portrait, so also the Christian Church for eighteen centuries has identified this portrait with Christ.

Present. To the amazement and disgust of loyal Bible students there has arisen a school of Gentile modern thinkers who deny that Isaiah 53 has anything to do with Christ. To our

sorrow hosts of ministers of religion take that view. This is alarming!

Seriousness.

1. We see in this modern attack on Isaiah 53 an attempt against the Atonement.
2. Of course the truth of the Atonement does not depend completely on Isaiah 53.

III. WHY WE HOLD TO THE ORTHODOX VIEW.

1. Our Lord Himself recognised and taught that Isaiah 53 was a prophecy concerning Himself (see Luke 22. 37. Note "In Me," "Concerning Me).
2. Paul recognised the message of the Servant sent to ignorant nations as the good news concerning Christ. (See how Paul refers to Isaiah 52. 15 in Romans 15. 21.)
3. John finds in Israel's refusal of Jesus the direct fulfilment of the prophet's heart-broken cry concerning unbelief. (John quotes Isaiah 53. 1, in John 12. 38.)
4. Matthew recognised in Christ's healing miracles the Servant who was to carry our sicknesses and to exhaust Himself with our healing. (He quotes Isaiah 53. 4, in Matthew 8. 17.)
5. Mark recognises in the two robbers the transgressors with whom Isaiah's Servant was to be catalogued. (Isaiah 53. 12 in Mark 15. 28.)
6. Philip, when filled with the Holy Spirit, and speaking under His command, answers the Eunuch's question on the identity of the Servant by preaching to him Jesus (Acts 8. 32).
7. Israel is sometimes called the Servant of Jehovah, but never as here in 53. 11, "My Righteous Servant" (41.8; 43. 10; 44. t).
8. Note "For the transgression of My people was He stricken"--one Person suffering for a people.
9. This 53rd chapter portrays an innocent Servant suffering for others (verse 9). "He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth." Was this true of the Nation? Were they innocent? What has the first chapter of Isaiah to say about this?
10. The suffering Servant portrayed here in Isaiah 53 is a voluntary sufferer. Read verse 12: "He hath. poured out His soul unto death." Did the Jews go voluntarily into captivity? Were they not dragged into it by force ?
11. The suffering Servant portrayed in Isaiah 53 is an unresisting Sufferer. "He opened not His mouth." "He is brought as a lamb." "He opened not His mouth" (53. 7). Was that Jewish Nation an unresisting one? A very hasty glance at their history is quite sufficient to convince us of this.
12. The sufferings of the Servant ended in death Verse 8, "cut off" (see 9). Have the

sufferings of the Jewish nation ended in the death of that nation? The nation, in spite of centuries of persecution, is very much alive.

13. "Oh," says the critics, "nowhere else in Scripture have we suffering associated with the Messiah, hence this chapter is out of harmony with all previous conceptions of the Messiah, and cannot be accepted as applicable to Christ. An individual with such features has no analogy in Hebrew prophecy" But that is not true. What about Genesis and Psalms.

14. "Is it not impossible," says some, "or at least improbably inconsistent, for the same prophet first to have identified the servant with the Nation, and then to present Him to us as an individual?" Our reply is "No."

15. The Experimental Argument. We know the orthodox view is the correct one because it has brought salvation to us. We found the Atoning Saviour here, and that brought salvation to us. Now we can say: "Surely He hath borne my griefs, and carried my sorrows. He was wounded for my transgressions; He was bruised for my iniquities. With His stripes I am healed. Alleluia!"

IV. ITS STYLE. Jewels are best appreciated when in a suitable setting. The Golden Passional of the Old Testament is more valued when its setting, style, and outline are noted.

Differs.

I. It differs in style from all the rest of Isaiah.

2. It is "broken, sobbing, and recurrent," whereas the rest of Isaiah runs smoothly with "formed flowing sentences."

3. This peculiarity is so pronounced that, "added to the fact that, if it be omitted, the prophecies on either side readily flow together, have led some critics to suppose it to be an insertion, borrowed from an earlier writer."

4. But that is no argument. Principal G. A. Smith, who is favourable to Higher Criticism, sensibly exclaims, "Surely both style and words are fully accounted for by the novel and tragic nature of the subject."

Pronouns. It is important to notice the personal pronouns. Much of the meaning of the poem depends on the use of the pronouns "we" and "he."

Mysterious. A student has drawn attention to the element of mystery in this Passional: "Most wonderful and mysterious of all is the spectral fashion in which the prophecy presents its Hero. He is named only in the first line: elsewhere He is spoken of as He. We never hear or see Himself. But all the more solemnly is He there."

V. ITS SETTING. It is necessary to observe the structure of the Book in order that we might see clearly its setting.

Isaiah.

1. At first sight the book of Isaiah falls into two great divisions—1st, chapters 1 to 39; 2nd, chapters 40 to 66. On closer inspection it can more readily be divided into three:

a. Denunciatory--1-35. Prophetic.

b. Deliverance-36-39. Historic.

c. Consolatory-40-66. Messianic.

2. This third section falls into three sections:

a. Comfort--40-48.

b. Servant-49-57.

c. Future Glory-58-66.

3. In this poem of the broken heart there are 15 verses.

4. It is the middle chapter of the middle section of the third book.

5. It has been pointed out how remarkable is the structure of the book of Isaiah when compared with the Bible:

a. Bible has 66 books, Isaiah 66 chapters.

b. As the Bible has two great divisions (Old and New Testaments) so Isaiah.

c. There are 39 books in the first division of the Bible—that is the Old Testament—and there are 39 chapters in the first division of Isaiah. There are 27 books in the New Testament; 27 chapters in second section of Isaiah.

d. The prevailing note in the Old Testament is Law, and prevailing note in first section of Isaiah is Judgment; prevailing note of the New Testament is Grace, and of second section of Isaiah, Comfort.

VI. ITS OUTLINE.

Stanzas.

1. There are 15 verses in the Poem. The Poem begins at 52. 13.

2. These fall into five sections or stanzas of three verses each.

3. In the Hebrew the strophes appear, not of equal (as in A.V. or R.V.) but of increasing length.

1st, 9 lines. - 2nd, 10 lines. - 3rd, 11 lines. - 4th, 13 lines. - 5th, 14 lines.

4. Each strophe begins with one word or two words, which summarise the meaning of the whole strophe, and forms a title for it :

a. Behold—Servant.

b. Who bath believed—Faith.

- c. Surely He bath borne—our Substitute.
- d. He was oppressed—His oppression.
- e. And it pleased the Lord—Lord's pleasure.

The Outline,

- 1. Study the chart on the next page.
- 2. Note its first stanza:
 - a. We have God's Ecce Homo.
 - b. The Servant would gain success through His prudence.
 - c. This first stanza is really a summary of the whole of the poem, and contains in brief the whole story of Messiah's suffering and the glory that should follow.

VII. THE MYSTERY OF CONTRADICTION. Have you noticed the bundle of apparent contradictions in this Golden Passional? Calmet points out: "THE OLD TESTAMENT plainly foretold that the Messiah would be God and man: exalted and debased: master and servant-, priest and victim; prince and subject; involved in death and yet a victor over death; rich and poor, a King, a conqueror glorious, a man of griefs; exposed to infirmities, unknown, and in a state of abjection and humiliation." But how bewildering all this must seem!

Look at Isaiah 53.

- 1. Root out of a dry ground (2)—Yet fruitful (10).
- 2. No form or beauty (2)—Yet God's Servant (11).
- 3. Despised and rejected (3)—Yet the appointed Messiah.
- 4. Suffering unto death (8)—Yet ever living (10). S. Without generation (8)—Yet numerous seed (10).
- 6. Rejected and beaten (4)--Yet prospered (10).
- 7. Cut off (8)—Yet prolonging His days (10).
- 8. Growing up (2)—Yet Eternal Son.
- 9. A tender Exotic (2)—Yet bearing and enduring an awful storm.
- 10. No beauty to lead us to desire Him (2)—Yet the desire of all nations.
- 11. Wounded to death—Yet those wounds that led to death are life to us.
- 12. Jehovah laid upon Him (6)—Yet He was Jehovah Himself.
- 13. Helpless in the hands of His persecutors. Yet omnipotent and delivering others from their oppressors (7).
- 14. Dying---Yet dividing the spoil (12).

Harmonise.

- 1. No wonder the Jews were embarrassed when they abandoned the old view
- 2. In the Lord Jesus they harmonise.

THE SERVANT AND HIS SERVICE.

ISAIAH 52. 13.

I. "BEHOLD." At once our attention is invited and arrested. The "Beholds" of Scripture are all impressive and important, and without exception, challenge and merit our most careful attention. This "Behold" excels all others, for it is the herald drawing attention to the only Begotten of the Father.

God the Father is not ashamed to draw attention to His Son. "Hast thou considered My servant Job?" God proudly drew Satan's attention to the patriarch; "there is none like him;" and right nobly did Job bear up under his crushing sorrows. He did not let God down. There yet was sin and also much imperfection in this honoured and much tried servant. The fiery trial brought to the surface the sin of self-righteousness Job never dreamt was present in him. There is no such fear in our examination of the Lord Jesus. No one ever detected a flaw or blemish in His spotless character. The fiery trial only brought out all the clearer His perfections, as the fire from the Altar in Tabernacle and Temple only revealed more than ever the wonderful fragrance of the sacred incense.

There are four specially attractive "Beholds" connected with the Lord Jesus, and they wondrously harmonise with the predominant message of the four Gospels.

1. "Behold thy King" (Zech. 9. 9), agreeing with the Gospel of Matthew wherein is drawn for us the portrait of the Lord Jesus as the King.
2. "Behold My Servant" (Isaiah 52. 13) agreeing with the portrait drawn of our Lord in Mark's Gospel.
3. "Behold the Man" (tech. 6. 12) agreeing with Luke's portrait of the Saviour, wherein the humanity of the Lord is emphasised over and over again.
4. "Behold your God" (Isaiah 40. 9) where attention is drawn to the Deity of the Servant, as in John's Gospel.

II. THE SERVANT. It is well to observe that God the Father is not ashamed to direct the attention of the Universe to His only begotten Son as "the Servant." There is nothing derogatory in this. In distant parts of the earth, in the habitations of paganism, idolatry, and cruelty, a gentleman is one who never works, and as a proof of this, allows the finger nails to grow to great length, and is arrayed in lengthy and costly robes. But the very glory of Christ is that lie came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. On the eve of His Passion, fully conscious of His Deity and glory, like a common Eastern slave He girded Himself with a towel, and washed the feet of His disciples. He could even say, "I am among you as one that serveth." There is a great deal of miserable cant in even these so-called democratic days. For why should a domestic servant be considered worthy of less respect and honour than another girl in office or professional labour?

Even the King and Queen upon the Throne are but the servants of their subjects. The Lord Jesus, by becoming a servant, has for ever sanctified and dignified that humble word Here in this Golden Passional the great service rendered by the Divine servant is that of atoning for the world's sin. The Hebrew word for servant means a person at the disposal of another, to carry out that person's will, to do that person's work, to represent his interests, and to fulfil a mission. This also is the New Testament definition of a servant. In those days a servant and a slave were synonymous terms. The Lord Jesus placed Himself entirely at the disposal of the Father.

In the Scriptures various individuals are referred to as God's servants.

1. Worshippers (Psa. 134. 1) are called God's servants. How important worship is to be sure, and what an important service it is.
2. Trusting Ones (Psa. 34. 22) are honoured by that designation. To place and exercise faith in God is delightful and important service.
3. The Jewish Nation (Isa. 41. 8) is so designated. It would have been well if they had more constantly remembered this, and lived up to this great honour.
- 4.. Certain Individuals are so marked, as for example; David (Isa. 37. 35) ; Isaiah the Prophet (Isa. 20. 3) ; and NEBUCHADNEZZAR (Jer. 25. 9). But the greatest and most glorious of all the servants of the Most High was the LORD JESUS (Isa. 42. 1 to 7).

III. THE QUALITY OF HIS SERVICE,

1. Filial Service, the Service of the Son. There is a tremendous difference between a mere servant and a son-servant. That is, between a mere hireling and one who, because of a recognised and proud relationship, renders the service more whole-heartedly and more devotedly. It is well to notice He was first Son, then servant, or may we put it—God's servant because He was God's beloved Son. Before we can become God's servants labouring in His vineyard, we must become His children through faith in Christ Jesus.
2. Compulsory Service, the Compulsion of Love. "The love of Christ constraineth us," was the testimony of St. Paul, and was the secret of his incessant and abundant labours in the Gospel. Love was the great constraining force in the life of Christ. It was because He loved the Father that He was so ready to place Himself at the Father's disposal; it was because He loved mankind that He so readily came to render the service of the Cross. Love should be the great dominating force in our lives.
3. Heart Service, not the Service of the Eye. How significant is the phrase used by St. Paul with regard to service. "Not with eye service as men pleasers." Our blessed Lord's service was a real heart service, and so should ours be.
4. Chosen Service, a Service by Wondrous Grace.
"My servant whom I have chosen" (Isa. 43. 10). Undoubtedly our gracious Master is

referred to here. He was the chosen one of the Father. But how significant when we can place side by side with this, that amazing verse in John 15, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." We, too, are His chosen ones. He has some special work that we alone can do, for which His choice has fallen upon us.

5. Commissioned Service, not an Unrenewed Commission. "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." He came for a definite and specific work, and He has some definite and distinct work for us to do. It is the highest wisdom for all young Christians to place themselves entirely and unreservedly in the hands of the Redeemer

6. Powerful Service, Energised by the Holy Ghost. "For He spoke with authority, and not as the Scribes," There was wonderful unction in all His addresses. Not one of His words fell to the ground. God save us preachers and speakers and Sunday School teachers from becoming as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, a mere sound. But may there ever be recognised a definite power behind all that we say.

7. Sustained Service, Upheld by Wondrous Grace. Isaiah 42. 1 clearly shows this. Is that not a significant phrase found in Revelation 2. 1, "He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand," indicating the seven leaders of the seven churches in Asia upon whom so great a responsibility rested had special supporting grace given to them. He will sustain us. We, too, will always be held up by wondrous grace.

THE SERVANT'S PRUDENCE.

"Behold My Servant shall deal prudently"

Isaiah 52. 13.

In this introductory stanza to the Golden Passional we have God's "Ecce Homo." Let us never forget that this was a prophecy uttered many years before Bethlehem and Calvary. Have you ever thought of the goodness of the Father in not only prophesying of the sufferings of Christ, but also of the glory that was to follow? "He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." These are expressions confined by Isaiah to the Godhead (consult Isa. 6. 1 ; 57. 15) . Therefore we here not only have prosperity foretold, but much more than that: surely this means nothing less than the exaltation and enthronement of Deity. Unlike mere mortal and finite men, the Man of Sorrows knew exactly all that awaited Him—the betrayal, the failure of His followers, the cruel scourgings, and the awful death. But how often, as He reflected on all these sad accompaniments of His death, His heart must have been cheered by this bright and attractive forecast..

That prosperity should follow prudence is to be expected. "My Servant shall deal prudently—He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." Sometimes prudence fails in man, but never in the Man Jesus Christ.

I. THE NATURE OF HIS PRUDENCE. What is prudence? Prudence and wisdom are not one and the same thing. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent"—here they are referred to as separate and distinct, though closely related. Prudence is wisdom in action. The prudent are not only the possessors of wisdom. They are those

who use that wisdom wisely and well. It is possible to be wise and yet not prudent. In other words, for wisdom to dwell alone. But prudence always dwells with wisdom, as is pointed out in Proverbs 8. 12:

"I, wisdom, dwell with prudence." Prudence and wisdom are twin sisters.

II. THE FACT OF HIS PRUDENCE. Our Blessed Lord Jesus was greater in wisdom and prudence than Solomon. Indeed He was, and is, the source of all wisdom and prudence. The greatest and grandest example is found in Him. This declaration in the Golden PASSIONAL is, of course, a prophecy. His own life is its fulfilment.

III. THE EXERCISE OF HIS PRUDENCE. A very devoted and eminent preacher of the Gospel of our own time has pointed out how our Lord so wonderfully exercised prudence in His life, and manifested it also in His death.

1. In Not Prematurely Surrendering His Life. Time and again His enemies sought to slay Him, but our Lord and Saviour took every precaution. Till He knew His work was done He would not allow His life to be squandered.

2. His Insight into Character. All who came into touch with Him became conscious of the fact that He knew them through and through, better than they knew themselves. They were aware, time and again, of the fact that He could read their thoughts; and He acted toward all with unerring wisdom.

3. In the Adroitness of His Replies. Christian workers cannot do better as a preparation for missionary work, whether at home or abroad, than to study our Lord's methods with individuals. Both as a preacher and as a teacher He manifested amazing skill—was calm, never flurried, had always an apt reply, ever hitting the nail on the head. Over and over again we simply marvel at His replies.

4. In His Concessions to the Limitations of His Hearers. That He was the All-Wise One, and the All-Knowing One, possessing and exercising in His human life all the attributes of Deity is a fact, yet He never talked or preached above the heads of His hearers. As an example of this He stooped to parabolic teaching, conveying the most abstruse thoughts in simple language. Hence "The common people heard Him gladly," as well as the learned scholars of His time. Many a public teacher is destroyed through lack of prudence.

5. In His Encouragement of all Good Living and Well-Intentioned Folk. Time and again, in dealing with individuals, He recognised and complimented them where He could. As for example: "Thou art not far from the kingdom." How encouraging this must have been. "Ye search the Scriptures" (R.V.) . There He admitted their diligence in ascertaining the mind and will of God in the written Word.

6. In His Work of Salvation. He ever recognised that man's greatest need is not teaching, but disposition, not merely a code of morals, but a clean heart. Nicodemus right away

opened the interview by acknowledging our Lord Jesus as a peerless teacher, assuming that all that was required for the regeneration of mankind was better teaching, but this our Lord at once countered by a firm declaration that man's chief need was a new life.

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

7. In His Wondrous Scheme of Redemption. Study Ephesians 1. 8. It is in the redemptive work of our Lord that we have the greatest example of His prudence. So marvellous is the scheme that Satan with all his skill has never yet been able to find fault with it, and we may add, he never will. Every Divine attribute is in perfect and harmonious operation in this wondrous plan of salvation. There at the Cross mercy and truth met together, there, righteousness and peace kissed each other.

IV. THE REWARD OF HIS PRUDENCE.

1. Exalted to the highest pitch of honour. Study Ephesians 1. 21.
2. Extolled. Study Philippians 2. 9-11.
3. Glorified.

V. THE EXAMPLE OF HIS PRUDENCE. These records of His wonderful prudence are given to us not merely for our admiration, but also for our emulation Heavenly wisdom is exceedingly practical, as is pointed out in James 3. 17. Prudence is much to be coveted and desired in our daily lives and service, and "who is sufficient for these things?" Christ is. The marvel of our redemption is that not only did our Lord Jesus suffer on the Cross in our stead, but after we have accepted that great fact and received Him, He comes to dwell within us and to live out His own wondrous life. The Prudent One will be prudence to us. Oh, that He might fill us with His own gracious presence!

CHRIST, THE STARTLING ONE.

"So shall He startle many nations"
ISAIAH 52. 15, R.V., margin.

(This study appears in the author's "Cameos of Our Lord," but is here reproduced with additional thoughts, to complete the series of studies.)

DURING the last few years the nations of the world have been startled as never before. The greatest war of all time sobered and alarmed them, and post-war happenings have continued to agitate and unsettle. But if this short inspired utterance means anything, it announces another and a greater startling, and that by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many scholars object to the A.V. reading of Isaiah 52. 15. Without doubt the original has proved a sore trial to translators, for it is not the usual word for "sprinkling," and therefore ceremonial cleansing is not meant. One learned authority affirms, "It is simply treason against the Hebrew language to render it 'sprinkle.'" On the other hand, the late David Baron defends the A.V. rendering in a learned fashion.

Bishop Chandler says: "That to sprinkle is used for to surprise, to astonish, as people are that have water thrown upon them." So we can combine both views, and say what is meant here is that nations would be startled as a man is when cold water is suddenly and altogether unexpectedly dashed upon his face.

I. THE ONE WHO STARTLES. As one closely studies this great stanza of the Golden Passional in order to answer the question—who is the one who will startle many nations?—only one reply is possible—the Servant of Jehovah, the Saviour Himself.

II. THE TIME OF THE STARTLING. In a measure, this was true of Him in the past. It has been truly remarked that "there was something amazing, portentous, sensational about Him. He set all Palestine in a ferment. He "troubled" Herod and all Jerusalem at His birth. And He continued to startle the people up to His death on the Cross. There was something electric, explosive, volcanic, in the very air while Jesus lived amongst men." And yet He never made any attempt at the sensational. He startled the world:

1. By His Birth. He was born of a Virgin. That is to say, He had no human father. This was something altogether new. The so-called Incarnations in Pagan faiths bear no comparison whatever with the birth of Jesus Christ the Lord. It was startling to find Deity in humanity and the frail bush not consumed.

2. By His Lowliness. He was born in a cattle-shed, was brought up in a peasant's home, and not a Royal Palace. He came as a servant. Considering His lofty claims His lowly condition was startling.

3. By His Teaching. His teaching and preaching altogether differed from that of His day. "They were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught as one having authority and not as the scribes." His teaching was accompanied by miracles, and these performed without strain or effort were startling.

4. By His Death. There is a great difference and a swift and altogether startling change between verses 13 and 14. In the former we have His exaltation, in the latter, His degradation. From the picture of His enthronement we find Him confronted by a ring of shocked and horrified spectators (read Luke 23. 48). Verse 14 must be considered in the light of a parenthesis. And that is quite fitting. In the reading of a narrative, we usually lower the voice on reading a sentence in parenthesis, and verse 14 should be read in a subdued and reverent manner. Dr. C. I. Scofield declares that the literal rendering is terrible: "So marred from the form of man was His aspect that His appearance was not that of a son of man," i.e., not human, the effect of the brutalities described in Matthew 26. 67, 68; 27. 27-30.

As the spectators watched Him on the Cross, many thoughts would enter their minds with startling effect.

a. THE FACT THAT ONE SO GOOD AND USEFUL SHOULD SUFFER. That, of course, was an old and familiar problem. All along in the history of the world the sufferer has been an astonishment and stumbling-block. Did not the sufferings of Jesus prove His guilt? And yet the governor declared he could find no fault in Him !

b. THE FACT THAT THE POWERFUL JESUS WAS NOW SO WEAK. A few days before He acted and spake with power and authority. But now He seemed weak and powerless, suffering an entire eclipse.

c. THE MARRING OF HIS VISAGE AND FORM. This has been entitled "The Marvellous Marring." Observe "His visage," i.e., His face; "His form," i.e., His body.. "More than other men." This must not be considered as exaggerated language, but to be taken literally. What mars? Suffering mars the visage, sometimes almost beyond the possibility of recognition. If the face and body of the Son of God were marred more than any man, it certainly was because He suffered more than any man. And we must remember that His keenest sufferings were not physical. It is perfectly certain that the accompaniments of crucifixion caused untold and unimagined bodily suffering. But the spiritual and mental agony of forsakenness, and the natural shrinking of a pure soul from contact with a world's sin, were ingredients in His cup of suffering we cannot comprehend or assess.

Of course there is a possibility of unduly magnifying the incidents and surroundings of His death. After all, the death was the all important fact. Yet are we Protestants not in danger of ignoring or minimising the incidents surrounding His death? It is by reflecting upon these incidents that we travel along one way of understanding and grasping the awful cost of our redemption.

III. THE CAUSE OF THE STARTLING. But the greatest startling is yet future. Note the value of observing verse 14 as a parenthesis, and the force and power of the wee word "so." Certainly His sufferings startled, but He will be the cause of a greater startling in the future. In verse 13 we have a word-picture of enthroned Deity—"Exalted . . . extolled, and be very high," are expressions confined by Isaiah to the Godhead (study Isa. 6. 1; 57. 15) so we have here something more than a mere prophecy of prosperity. What will startle His own nation, and "many nations," will be that the One who stooped so low should rise so high. What will His enemies say when they behold, seated on the Throne of the Universe, the One they nailed to the Tree. Will not our exaltation also startle those who despise us? He has promised that we should sit with Him in His Throne.

IV. THE RESULT OF THE STARTLING. "Kings shall shut their mouths at Him. " Tongues will be silenced in amazement. If the silence of amazement be the first result of the startling, surely the second result will be cleansing. "He will cleanse many nations" is another rendering. The Jewish nation will be born anew in a day in consequence of their startling, and no doubt many Gentiles will share their blessing as in the Exodus of the past. The third result will be refreshing. "So shall He cause to leap or spring up for joy," as another renders this sentence. After the awakening and cleansing, will come a great joy.

REASONS FOR REJECTING HIM.

ISAIAH 53. 1-3.

WHAT rapid changes we have in this Passional. In former studies we saw a group of horrified spectators, then another large group of nations and kings speechless with wonderment and astonishment. Now our attention is directed to a further group—the godly remnant confessing their astonishment at the unbelief of the chosen people. In this second stanza we have reasons for rejecting Him:

1. Unbelief (verse 1).
2. Lowly origin and mysterious growth (verse 2) .
3. Lack of beauty (verse 2).
4. Despised.
5. Treated as a leper.

Has it ever occurred to you how abruptly this wonderful chapter opens? It is as if the thought of the rejection of the message overcame the prophet: "Who hath believed our report ? " This challenging question is twice quoted in the New Testament Scriptures—John 12. 38, as an explanation why all did not believe in the days of His flesh prior to Calvary; Romans 10. 16, as an explanation why all the Jewish nation had not believed the Gospel preached by the Apostles and disciples. To whom, in the first instance, is this question presented? Here the person is not mentioned, but by the two quotations we see it was the Lord. It is good to take all failures to Him. It is well if the Lord's servants to-day would now and again apply this question to themselves. The great object of our ministry, either by speech or pen, is to get a verdict for Christ. We have a report to give. Are there any reasons in us why it is not believed? Is it simply what we have heard? "Who have believed that which we have heard" (R.V., margin). Of course, it is right and proper that we should pass on what we have heard or read, but only when it has become ;hart and parcel of ourselves. We must firmly believe it ourselves. And further, we must exemplify and illustrate it ourselves.

I. THE ARM OF THE LORD. This is one of Isaiah's favourite expressions. What is meant by this term? God is pure Spirit, and therefore "without body, parts, ear passions. It is a figure of speech. The arm is that by which we execute a purpose. It is used in Scripture as an emblem of power. It is a natural symbol of the active energy of Jehovah. The reference to the arm made bare is an Eastern figure, as a warrior would throw back his loose robes when he would strike, or as the workman would pull up or tie his loose flowing sleeves in order to do his work. As we carefully ponder the references to the arm of the Lord, we seem to note here and there hints respecting the personification of the arm. Two Persons in the blessed Trinity form the Executive—the Lord Jesus is, as it were, the outstretched Arm of Jehovah, and certainly the Holy Spirit is also.

1. WHERE SEEN. The Arm of the Lord is seen in:

- a. Creation (Jer. 27.5; 32. 17).
 - b. Redemption (Exod. 6. 6; Psa. 77. 15). Creation is spoken of as the work of His fingers (Psa. 8. 3), but redemption required His arm, i.e., more difficult to redeem than to create.
 - c. Salvation (Isa. 59. 16) .
 - d. Providence (Isa. 51.5).
 - e. Eternal Preservation (Isa. 40. 11).
2. His CHARACTER. The Arm of the Lord is:
- a. Almighty in strength and might.
 - b. Guided by unerring wisdom.
 - c. Controlled by unfailing love.
 - d. Paralysed by unbelief (Isa. 51.9, with Matt. 13.58).

II. CHRIST WAS NOT THE PRODUCT OF HIS AGE is one of the most startling facts connected with His birth and growth, and to this our attention is drawn in verse 2. This is at the very threshold of the statement clearly declared.

1. The Fact of His Growth. "He shall grow up." Read Luke 2. 52. There certainly was physical growth, for His wee baby form grew to boyhood, youth, and manhood. There was also growth in wisdom and knowledge. Yet He was, and is, the All-Knowing, and the All-Wise One. Have you ever pondered over Psalm 22. 9? If this verse means anything, it certainly declares that, as a babe on His mother's breast, He possessed self-consciousness, mental alertness, spiritual longing and hope, that is, a God-given conviction respecting future things. Only one babe ever had that experience, and that was the Babe of Bethlehem. What a wonderful mystery is the Incarnation!

2. The Delight in His Growth. "Before Him." In His development the Father took special delight. Does this not also convey that He grew up ever conscious of the Father's presence?

3. The Protection of the Growth. "As a tender plant." Tender—oh, so tender! Yet guarded and kept by the Father's love.

4. The Royalty of that Growth. "As a root-sprout." The tree is in prophecy an emblem of royalty (see Isa. 11. 1) .. Royal descent is here referred to, but from a royal house fallen on evil days.

5. The Mystery In that Growth. "A root out of the dry ground." Born in a stable, He grew up in a tiny village among the hills of Galilee and opened out as He grew the wondrous blossom of a perfect humanity, such as had never before been evolved from any root, nor grown on the most sedulously cultivated plant. Brought up in a tiny village, how was it he was entirely free from provincialism? Reared in a peasant's home, how was it He was fit to grace an earthly monarch's presence, and was well-mannered and of kingly presence? The only education He had was in a humble village school, yet He manifested marvellous wisdom and knowledge, outshining all the greatest authorities of that and all subsequent time. And what is the explanation? Only this is sufficient, the Lord Jesus does not

represent so much the ascent of man as the descent of God; not so much the climbing of the human into the Divine as the condescension of the Divine to the human; that His birth was not a mere birth but an incarnation.

6. The Beauty of that Growth. "He hath no form or comeliness ... no beauty." What is the meaning of this? Surely this cannot mean He was ugly!

Charles Kingsley was overheard in his last illness murmuring quietly to himself: "How beautiful God is! How beautiful God is!" Augustine cried: "O beauty, so old, and yet so new; too late I loved Thee!" Only a beautiful mind could have produced so beautiful a world! Let us never forget that God is the Author and Giver of all the colour, fragrance, glory, and song. Only a beautiful mind could have created such beautiful things. And the Son of God was beautiful. He had:

1. PHYSICAL, BEAUTY, a perfectly formed and beautifully fashioned body.
2. MENTAL BEAUTY, for only a beautiful mind could have conceived the Sermon on the Mount.
3. MORAL BEAUTY most certainly was His, as also
4. BEAUTY OF DISPOSITION, and
5. BEAUTY OF ACTION.

And yet because there was an absence of martial glory the leaders of His nation were blinded by prejudice and unbelief to His moral glories. There was nothing in His appearance that the carnal or worldly-minded could be attracted by, so different was He to the popular expectancy.

III. AN ILIAD OF WOES. No value was set on Him. "We esteemed Him not." "He was despised." All rejected are not despised—He was both. The rejection followed the despising. Another rendering reads, "He was despised like one hiding his presence from us," just as a leper hid his face and presence. So they treated Him as a leprous person. But pray take note of the tenses. He was despised—that is past history. But pray observe, "He is." Is He still the despised and rejected One? Yes, by many. God grant not by you, dear reader!

THE BURDENED SERVANT.

ISAIAH 53. 4-6.

Is it possible in a short sentence to present our faith? That question has been asked of late. We might point to that wonderful compendium of faith as expressed in the Apostle's Creed, but then it occupies more space than a sentence. When Robert Taylor asked Spurgeon, in his last illness, if he could state his faith in a sentence, without hesitation he gave it in four words: "Jesus died for me." Dr. Fullerton tells of a Church sister who, in visiting a hospital was asked by one of the nurses to speak to a dying boy, who was as much a heathen in Central London as if he had been born in Central Africa. Evidently guided by the Holy Spirit, she said: "Sonny, God made you; God loves you; God came down from Heaven and died for you: and now He is going to take you home to be with

Him for ever." "Say it again, lady," he pleaded, so she said it again twice over: "Sonny, God made you; God loves you: God came down from Heaven and died for you, and now He is going to take you home to be with Him for ever." Pulling himself up by the rope hanging over the bed, the boy, who seemed to have gained new vitality, said: "Then thank Him for me," but before she could respond he fell back lifeless, and proved it all for himself, and gave his own thanks face to face with the Eternal. Any preaching or teaching that does not centre on, and radiate from, the substitutionary death of Christ, is doomed to failure, and has no Gospel in it. Is it possible in a short sentence to present our faith? Most certainly. Here is the inspired word: "The Gospel—Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15. 1 to 3).

In the third stanza of the Golden Passional which is before us at this moment we have presented to us the Burdened Servant. The speakers are the penitent people of God in the future. In outline we have:

1. An Assumption. "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (verse 4).
2. A Confession. "Yet we did esteem Him stricken," etc. (verse 4).
3. A Declaration, "But He was wounded," etc (verses 5 and 6) . We find ourselves contrasting His burden with ours, as shown in Psalm 68. 19.
4. God Burdening His People with Blessings. "Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits." Here in the Golden Passional God's Servant is seen with a load of sins laid upon Him by God.
5. God Sharing His People's Burdens. "Blessed be the Lord, who daily beareth our burden" (R.V.). But in the Golden Passional He had to bear His crushing load alone.

Examining very closely this third stanza, we find two burdens.

I. THE BURDEN OF SYMPATHY.

The Bleeding Sympathy of the Servant. On the surface of these verses we have a declaration of Christ's true sympathy. "And Jesus, moved with compassion." That last word is an exceedingly strong one. "Passion"—that is a word descriptive of the sorest of suffering. "Corn" —together, a suffering with another, a sharing of the sorrow because of the most intimate and closest affinity. Two harps, if perfectly tuned together, though at either end of a room, if one be struck the other will respond. We have not a High Priest who is not touched with the feeling of our infirmity. His manhood was, and is, so perfectly attuned to ours, that when we suffer, He suffers with us. A truly sympathetic sick-visitor will, when in the sick room beholding the gasping sufferer, involuntarily have the same sensation, and for the moment feel as if he or she were struggling for breath.

Our Lord's sympathy is a heart sympathy. He not only speaks the consoling word, but shoulders our burdens, getting right under our sorrows. True sympathy always means this. Let all Christian workers pray for grace to retain their tender and sympathetic touch, and to be preserved from those dulling and hardening effects of daily routine and constant contact with suffering. But there is infinitely more suggested here than the sympathetic identification with the sorrows of others: we have

II. THE BURDEN OF SIN.

The Vicarious Suffering of the Servant. That is to say, we have here declared an active bearing of those consequences of sins which He had not committed. It is here we part from much, very much of the preaching and teaching of to-day. So-called "Modernism" sees only in the death of Christ the bleeding sympathy of Jesus with us. We, too, see that—but we go very much further. If words mean anything at all, verses 5 and 6, do clearly and emphatically declare the Saviour's death as substitutionary.

There is a close connection between verses 3 and 4. They supposed He was suffering on account of some great sin of His own. But they had erred. It was for sin—but not His own actual transgressions. It was our sin imputed unto Him, and in that sense, and only in that way, made His own. This third stanza is an acknowledgment that they had erred.

Of course this is prophecy yet to be fulfilled so far as the Jewish nation is concerned. Even up to the present day they persist in their cruel and erroneous mistake. To-day, the orthodox Jew considers our Lord suffered for His own sins, and He is called Poshe--the Transgressor. "In the Talmud Jesus of Nazareth is placed in hell alongside of Titus and Balaam, and as undergoing not only the severest, but the most degrading form of punishment." But they will alter their view. May that day be hastened!

A very eminent Jewish authority, himself a converted Jew, known and beloved by me in my own Mildmay days, but now with his Lord in the Glory, on verses 4 to 6, declared that no plainer or stronger words could be used to express the thought of vicarious suffering than those employed in the original of this verse. The verb "to bear," is continually used in Leviticus of the expiation effected by the appointed sacrifices, as, for instance, Leviticus 16. 22. Both the verbs used in Isaiah 53. 4, "borne," "carried," are to be understood in the sense of an expiatory bearing, and not merely of taking away. "The meaning is not merely that the Servant of God entered into the fellowship of our sufferings, but that He took upon Himself the suffering which we had to bear, and deserved to bear, and bore them in His own person, that He might deliver us from them."

DECLARING HIS GENERATION.

ISAIAH 53.7 to 9.

In our study of this Golden Passional we come to the most difficult portion. No words in the Hebrew Bible have been so variously rendered as those which constitute in the original language verse 8. Translators have been puzzled how to adequately translate them.

I. THE SILENCE OF THE LORD JESUS (7). Of all animals, only one is silent when handled roughly by man, and that is the sheep. Rarely is a bleat heard in a shearer's shed or slaughter-house. The prophet points to this unusual animal characteristic as a figure and prophecy of the attitude of the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, toward and under His suffering. What a picture we have in verse 7 of the unresisting endurance of the Servant! Surely here we have the most perfect, pathetic, and majestic picture of meek endurance!

There is a danger of forgetting the need and value of silence in this fussy and noisy age. There are moments when prolonged and unbroken silence is golden, and more expressive and fitting than words. Hannah Moore, in one of her essays, remarks, "That silence is one of the great arts of conversation is allowed by Cicero himself, who says there is not only an art, but even an eloquence in it." But silence never shows itself to so great an advantage as when it is made the reply to calumny and defamation. The prophecy of verse 7 was literally fulfilled in our Lord's silence under gross injustice. "He opened not His mouth." Jesus' lips were opened in witness, but never in complaint or remonstrance. What a majestic silence!

Now let us consider verse 8.

II. THE DIFFERENT RENDERINGS of Verses.

1. "He was taken from prison and from judgment" (A.V.), i.e., His death was a judicial murder.
2. "By oppression and judgment. He was taken away" (R.V.), i.e., the violence meted out to Him, and the suddenness of His death.
3. "By tyranny and law was He taken" (Smith), i.e., by a form of law that was a tyranny..
4. "Without restraint, and without a sentence was He taken away" (a Rabbi), i.e., the swiftness, suddenness, and unseemly haste of His murderers.
5. "And who shall declare His generation" (A.V.).
6. "And as for His generation, who among them considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living" (R.V.), s.e., the indifference of public opinion.
7. "And of His life, who shall recount, for He was cut off" (R.V., margin).
8. "And of His age, who reflected" (Smith).
9. "And among His contemporaries who was concerned" (Von Orelli).
10. "Who shall declare His life," i.e., the mystery of His being.
11. "Who can declare the number of His generation" (Hengstenburg), i.e., of those inspired by His Spirit, or filled with His life.
12. "Who can declare the length of His life hereafter" (Luther, Calvin, and Vitringe).
13. "Who can declare His posterity" (Kimchi).

III. PRISON AND JUDGMENT. "He was taken from prison." He was not imprisoned for long. At the longest but an hour or so. He was arrested at 1 a.m. and crucified at 9 a.m., and in between a great deal took place. The following time-table has been suggested:

1. Arrested and taken before Annas (John 18. 13), 1-5 to 1.46 a.m.
2. Trial before Caiaphas (John 18. 19), 1.46 to 2 a.m.
3. Taken before Sanhedrin (Matt. 26. 59) , about 2 a.m.

4. Trial before Sanhedrin (Luke 22. 66-71), 5.6 a.m. to 5.50 a.m.
5. Taken before Pilate (Luke 23. 1), 5.51 a.m.
6. Taken before Herod (Luke 23. 7), 6 a.m.
7. Condemned and scourged (Matt. 27. 26), after 6 a.m.
8. Crucified, 9 a.m.

IV. DECLARING HIS GENERATION. What a problem this has been to generations of Bible readers and students. This expression ceases to puzzle one when an old custom is remembered. In those olden days, under the Jewish law, it came to be the custom that every condemned man should receive forty day's grace before his execution, during which period an official, somewhat of the character of our old town-crier, passed to and fro through the town, city, or neighbourhood, and "cried" the offence and sentence of the man, together with his tribe, family, and branch of the family, and announcing that any of his generation (i.e., family or tribe) who could adduce evidence of innocence could appeal before the end of the forty days for a new trial.

But Jesus had no forty days' grace, and no one declared His generation. Thus. no opportunity was given for a new trial What unseemly hate!

V. THE BURIAL. The A.V. rendering, "He made His grave," etc., suggests that He had the power to select His grave, and, of course, He had, yet that is not the truth here. The R.V. clears up that point: "They appointed."

Those who know the Hebrew well are startled to find that it is deaths, not death. Assuming that a man can have but one death, critics have fixed upon the plural here as either supporting the application of this Golden Passional to the Jewish nation, and not an individual; or to the extreme violence of that death, the very pain of which made it like dying again and again. But in a surprising fashion, the plural here fits in with the actual facts of the case. For there were two deaths on the cross, spiritual first, then physical. On the Cross Jesus died before He died. What is the death of the soul but separation from God, and the Redeemer "tasted death" during the three hours' darkness (Matt. 27. 45 and 46) when He declared He was forsaken! What an awful "taste" that was! It was then He tasted spiritual death. But it soon passed. Afterward He experienced physical death. Respecting the death of criminals, Josephus states the Jewish law thus: "He that blasphemed God, let him be stoned, and let him hang upon a tree all the day, and let him be buried in an ignominious and obscure manner," usually in an unclean place. Thus even after death, shame followed the criminal.

The Jewish leaders, not content with the humiliation and sufferings heaped upon Him, nor with the cruel and shameful death inflicted, followed Him with hatred to the grave, for "They appointed His grave with the wicked," intending His mortal remains to be interred in an unclean place. But that was an appointment never kept. He died at 3 p.m. Joseph of Arimathaea, a member of the Jewish Council, boldly went and requested the body of Jesus which was granted, and with the help of Nicodemus and others, he took it from the Cross, wrapped it in one cwt. of spices to prevent corruption, and placed it in his own rock-hewn tomb, this burial taking place between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. And thus "that

body, reverently bedewed with tears, wrapped in fine linen, clean and white, softly laid down by loving hands, watched by love stronger than death, lay in fitting repose as the corpse of a king, till He came forth as a conqueror." He was buried in a rich man's tomb.

And what is the force of this? The fact that the authorities permitted His friends to have the body of Jesus was a proof that they did not consider Him guilty; that although slain as a criminal, He was not a criminal! What a vindication of His innocency and honour!

A CLUSTER OF SPIRITUAL PARADOXES.

ISAIAH 53. 10 to 13.

A PARADOX is a statement seemingly absurd yet true. There are quite a number in this Golden Passional, and there are a cluster of them in this last stanza. Observe that the speaker is the prophet speaking for God, and the main subject, the glory that should follow the suffering.

I. THE PLEASURE OF THE LORD. The opening sentence of this last stanza found in verse 10 is at first sight startling. It has a grim r0pulsiveness about it. He who has no pleasure in the death of the wicked was pleased to put His Righteous Servant to grief. Surely the God of the Bible does not resemble the many gods of the heathen in being a lover of blood and agony!

The explanation of this problem is found in other two statements concerning the pleasure of the Lord, in Psalm 149. 4, "He taketh pleasure in His people;" and Psalm 35. 27, "He taketh pleasure in the prosperity of His people." The pleasure He takes in His people themselves, and in their prosperity, urged Him to take pleasure in the sufferings of His beloved Son, for, without that atoning death they could never have become His people, and they could never have prospered.

11. THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST DIVINELY INFLICTED. It is distinctly stated that it was the Lori who bruised Him. This might be objected to: was not His death due to the hatred and plottings of wicked men? Study Acts 2. 23, where it is shown that whilst the murderers of Christ were acting in fulfilment of a Divine decree, their deeds were really and absolutely their own. It was the Divine counsels that used the enemies of Christ as His instruments. Now in the recognition of this great fact lies the secret of composure. The secret of a happy life is the recognition that nothing can come to us without God's consent. This is the thought and fact that makes pain tolerable, and lights up the profound mystery of suffering. We can always find good shelter behind either His actual or His permissive will.

III. THE SOUL AN OFFERING (verse 10). This sentence is impressive. It was His soul and not merely His body, or should we not say, it was His soul plus His body, or through His body, that was the offering for sin. "The prophet lays no particular emphasis upon Christ's bodily sufferings, because, though visible, it was not the main part of His atoning sufferings. Mental pain is harder to bear than bodily pain. The soul, with its larger capacities, finer sensibilities, and chief place as governor of the body, is more sensitive."

IV. HE SHALL PROLONG HIS DAYS (verse 10). Note the second occurrence of this sentence, "the pleasure of the Lord." Is it not remarkable that the prophet says nothing about the Saviour's activity on earth till after death! When He is dead He begins to work! Having died He prolongs His days, sees His offspring, and carries into effect the Divine purposes I What a cluster of paradoxes!

V. THE SERVANT'S TRAVAIL (verse 11). The word travail, coined to describe the toil and agony attendant on motherhood, is also used in Scripture for painful toil and exhausting labour for Christ. There is a place for travail in Christian service. Toil without God is, in Eccles. 1. 13 and 3. 10, described as a travail. But Paul also uses the word in 1 Thess. 2.9; 2 Thess. 3.8 to describe the exhausting nature of his labours for his blessed Master. Do we know anything of soul-travail in our missionary labours, or are we "easy going?" What about your prayer-life? Is there ever any travail in it?

VI. THE SERVANT'S SATISFACTION. Many an one is not satisfied with the fruit of his labour—not so the Saviour. As creation ended with the rest and satisfaction of the Creator, so the redemptive work of our Saviour has and will end with the Redeemer's satisfaction. For He will be satisfied with:

1. The Number of the redeemed (Rev. 7. 9) : "A great multitude which no man could number."
2. The Variety of the redeemed: "Of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues."
3. The 'Character and attainments of the redeemed.
"I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness." And He cannot be satisfied with anything else.
4. The Prospects of the Redeemed (John 17. 24).
5. The Praises of the Redeemed (Read Rev. 5. 9, 11 to 14; 7. 10; 14.1 to 3; 19.1 to 7).
6. The Service of the Redeemed.

VII. THE SERVANT'S KNOWLEDGE AND OUR JUSTIFICATION. How perplexing is verse 11. What has knowledge to do with our justification? Are we not justified by faith? Then whose knowledge—the Divine Servant's, or our own? There are three explanations.

1. The Punctuation Explanation. A Biblical scholar thus renders and punctuates: "Satisfied by His knowledge, My righteous Servant shall justify many." That is to say, His knowledge of the vast numbers who will be justified through His sufferings, brought satisfaction.
2. Instruction Explanation. Another thus renders the sentence: "By His instructions, My Servant will make many righteous." He is One under authority, and has acted under instruction.
3. The Objective Explanation. David Baron declares that the phrase in the original cannot be understood definitely to be in either a subjective or objective sense, as grammatically it can be rendered either way. But he points out that all the commentators who understand

by the Servant our Lord Jesus Christ, prefer the latter, viz., by the knowledge of Him on the part of others. He also points out that the Hebrew "Yada" stands in the Bible for experimental knowledge—a practical experimental knowledge. That is to say, it is not His knowledge of me, but my knowledge of Him which leads to my justification.

And even that knowledge, the knowledge of His death and resurrection, of His atonement, of the conditions of justification, we have gained by His grace.

VIII. THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR A GREAT CONQUEROR. There is a singular contrast in verse 12 to the rest of the prophecy. In the former we have the lowliness and the suffering—the minor key; here we have the rapture and the triumph, the major key. Here the once suffering Servant is depicted as a Conqueror, leading back from His conquest a long train of captives, a rich booty. "He shall divide the spoil." This sentence is taken from the custom of distributing the spoils of victory after a battle. In ancient time, one convincing proof of a victory was the securing of captives and booty. Note:

1. The Time of the Victory. Here is a striking fact, another paradox, the victorious campaign and glorious conquest is achieved after the Servant is dead. This is never so in the case of mere man.
2. The Allies in the Victory. Note the singular blending of God's power and the Servant's own activity: "Therefore will I"—"He shall divide."
3. The Condition of Victory. Note "Because"—that is an important word. The Cross was the condition of the Servant's victory.
4. Evidences of Victory. Great spoil.
5. Recompense Accompanying Victory. Viewing the spoils, He will feel amply recompensed for all the toils and perils of the battle.

"Numbered with the transgressors." He, the Sinless, was counted sin that we sinners might be counted righteous (2 Cor. 5 21) . He was numbered with the transgressors that we might be numbered with the redeemed. His name was placed on the roll of transgressors that I might have my name written in the Book of life. "He bare the sins of many." This may seem to teach a limited atonement for a select few. But that is not so. Hebrew scholars say the stress should be placed on the article "the many." It might be rendered "The masses," "an indefinite expression, which, if not declaring universality, approaches very near to it . " Thank God for I John 2. 2: "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

IX. THE INTERCESSOR. The Golden Passional closes with a sentence which summarises the whole. In the A.V. we have the past tense—"Made" intercession; in the K. V. we have the present tense—"Maketh intercession." It takes both the past and the present tense to describe His work. He made intercession by His death.

Observe the close connection between His death and intercession in the verse. But He "maketh" intercession now in the Father's presence in the glory.

"Why don't you beg ? " exclaimed a passer-by to a ragged man. "Beg?" he replied, "why, every rag on my body begs with a loud voice!" In the glory Jesus Christ bears the marks of the crucifixion in His glorified body. Every one of those marks prays and intercedes for us with a loud and prevailing voice. Thus His very presence is a mighty and overwhelming plea on our account. (Note Heb. 7. 25.) Glory to His Name !

RIGHTEOUSNESS.

1. God Is Righteous (John 17. 25) . So is the Lord Jesus (1 John 2. 1) .
2. Man is Incapable of Righteousness (Isa. 64. 6; Rom. 3. 10). Sin is any want of conformity to the character of God, whether it be in act, disposition, or state.
3. Yet there have been some Men and Women who were Righteous (Luke 1.6)_ Indeed it is one of the names of the true Christian.
4. How is this Possible?
 - a. God alone can make this possible (Rom. 5. 17).
 - b. And then, only through Christ (Rom. 3. 21 and 22).
 - c. It first is imputed (Rom. 3. 22; 1 Cor. 1.30).
 - d. Then imparted, indeed is one characteristic of the New Birth (Rom. 8. 4; 1 John 2. 29).
 - e. Promises for those who hunger and seek after it (Matt. 5.6; 6. 33).

THE DEATH OF CHRIST SUBSTITUTION.

THE SIMPLICITY YET SUPREMACY OF THE SUBSTITUTIONARY

THE importance of any item of news can be gauged by the amount of space given to it in the newspaper. The same rule is applicable to the Bible. Take the subject of death. As we commence to read the Bible, we find the smallest possible space given to notices of the death of Bible characters. That first impression is deepened as we prayerfully make our way through the sacred volume, until we come to the New Testament, when we find a great deal of space—whole long chapters—devoted to the death of Christ. Matthew devotes a chapter of 66 verses; Mark, usually very brief in all his statements, 47 verses; Luke, 56; and John, 42. How is this? Surely the implication is that that death was different to all other deaths! The fact is, our Lord's supreme work for the salvation of men was accomplished in His death. We come to live; death ends our work. He came to die; death was the means of accomplishing the work He came to do. And another fact is equally impressive, and that is that the Bible declares that there is no salvation apart from that death.

One of the simplest aspects of the death of Christ is that of Substitution. That is taught in innumerable portions of Scripture, such as John 10. 11; Gal. 2. 20; 1 Peter 3. 18. But no clearer explanation or illustration of substitution can be found than what we have in Genesis 22. 13, "In the stead of." That great evangelist, D. L. Moody, was right when he remarked: "You take the great doctrine of Substitution out of the preaching of Paul, Peter, John, James, Philip, and all other holy men, and you take out all that they preached. There does not seem any ray of hope for men that ignore the blessed subject of Atonement . "

Coming back to Genesis 22, why give Abraham a journey of three days to offer up his son? To show that the act was not one of hasty impulse, but of calm, deliberate, and measured intent. This is one of the clearest pictures of the substitutionary death of Christ in the Bible. The intended sacrifice, Isaac, resembled the Son of God, God's great Lamb, in his supernatural birth; in the fact that he was his father's dearly beloved and only begotten son; in his willingness to be sacrificed; and that he, as later the Lord Jesus, carried the wood (in the Latter's experience, the wooden Cross) to the place of death; in their loneliness, the two apart from all others, in this great act, a faint picture of the loneliness and isolation of God the Father and God the Son on the Cross, shut off from the crowd by the three hours of darkness. Only no substitute was found for the Son of God, as was done in the case of Isaac, for instead, the Lord Jesus was our substitute, and died in our stead. Have you beheld, with the eye of faith, God's Lamb, as John bade his hearers in the famous words: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world?"

PROPITIATION.
CHRIST'S DEATH AS A PROPITIATION: ITS NEED.
METHOD AND ENJOYMENT.

"GOD is angry with the wicked every day" (Psa. 7. II), is a statement in the Book of all books that many would like to get rid of. For there are those who object to any such quality in the Most High. They cling proudly to the declarations concerning the love of God, yet scornfully reject those statements, equally inspired, which ascribe to Him anger and wrath. Yet in all parts of the Bible we find such statements: "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses" (Exod. 4. 14) ; "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure" (Psa. 6. 1). These are but samples of very, very many references to the anger of the Lord. Even in the New Testament they are found in plenty. Though pre-eminently the New Testament books stress the love of God, we find many references to His anger and to His wrath.

The simple reason why God is at times a God of anger, is because He is a God of love. For the God of the Bible is not a cast-iron Colossus, without emotional qualities or feelings! Why, it is written: "Like as a father pitieth His children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." And the human being who knows best his own heart never boggles at such statements concerning His anger, for in his heart of hearts he knows that he has merited by his sins the fiercest wrath of the Almighty.

And when the Holy Spirit of God awakens a sinner to a sense of his own sin, he becomes also conscious of the Lord's displeasure on account of his wickedness, and the need of propitiation.

But what is the meaning of Isaiah 12. 1: "And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me?" What wonderful words! Here the individual, once alarmed to find that the anger of the Lord was his portion, now is blessedly conscious of the glad fact that that anger has been turned away. How is this? God is holy, and must hate sin. And His holiness and hatred must be manifested, and meet and strike someone. His wrath against sin must strike somewhere, either the sinner himself, or a lawful substitute. "The Lord hath laid on Him" (literally, "Made to strike upon") the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53. 6).

Ah, there is the secret of Isaiah 12. 1--the stroke due to us fell upon Him, and by the Blood He had become propitiated. There is no thought in the Bible doctrine of Propitiation of placating a vengeful God, but of doing right by His Holy Law, and so making it possible for Him to righteously show mercy.

This word Propitiation only occurs three times in the A.V. of the Bible, and is the translation of two different yet related Greek words. In I John 2. 2, and 4. 10, it is the rendering of the Greek hilasmoss, i.e., that which propitiates; and in Romans 3. 25, Greek, hilasterion, i.e., the place of propitiation. In Hebrews 9. 5, hilasterio is the Greek word used by the Holy Spirit for the Mercy Seat. Whatever the Mercy Seat was to Israel typically, that the Lord Jesus Christ is actually to the believer. The Mercy Seat was sprinkled with atoning blood on the great Day of Atonement, in token that the righteous sentence of the Law had been (typically) carried out, so that what must else have been a Judgment-Seat could righteously be a Mercy Seat, a place of blessing.

I. The Divinely Appointed Means of Propitiation—The Death of Christ. "For Him bath God set forth in His Blood, to be a propitiatory sacrifice, by means of faith, thereby to manifest the righteousness of God; because in His forbearance, God had passed over the former sins of men in the times that are gone by" (C. & H. 's rendering of Romans 3. 25). This verse will ever be memorable as the means of the conversion of Cowper the poet, at St. Albans, in 1764.

Here is a difficulty. While God had proclaimed His Law and had not yet proclaimed His Gospel, yet He did bear with sinners. Why? Did He think lightly of their sin? Far from it! This verse is the answer. God's past forbearance was exercised in virtue of what the Lord Jesus was to do in the fulness of time.

To propitiate is to appease and dispose to kindness or favour, with consequent blessing. This can only be done by sacrifice. But whose? Such an effectual sacrifice the Lord Jesus has made. The Blood of Christ avails to appease His holy and righteous anger.

II. The Divinely Appointed Place and Pledged Security for Propitiation, is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. What the Mercy Seat was typically to Israel, so Christ Himself is to the believer to-day. Note what is said, "HE is the propitiation" (I John 2. 2). Not merely that He has effected propitiation, but that He is, in His own person, the pledge and security of Propitiation.

Think of the old Mercy Seat, and see how it portrays Christ.

1. It was made of pure solid gold, costing £25,000. So our Mercy Seat is pure, Divine.

2. It hid the two unbroken Tables of Stone, witness to the sin of Israel. Ah, but between the symbol of God's presence in the Shekinah Glory over the Mercy Seat, and that witness of the sin of Israel, was the sprinkled Blood on the Mercy Seat. It was that Blood which made what should have been a Judgment Seat a Throne of Mercy and Blessing.

3. It was only here where God could meet with sinful man in grace, and only here where God's voice could be heard in mercy. It was here where God communed with redeemed man. God now says to the sinner: Do you desire, in spite of your sin, to meet Me? Would you be no longer My enemy estranged from Me? Do you desire My blessing? Do you desire to commune with Me in peace and unity? Would you do business with Me? Would you like to beat peace with Me? Would you have traffic with Heaven? Well then, come to Christ, as the Israelite came to the Mercy Seat, where I can meet with you in grace and wondrous blessing.

RECONCILIATION. CHRIST'S DEATH AS A RECONCILIATION.

IN a recent book issued in connection with a new and unsound modern movement occurs this passage: "The ancient sacrifices spoke of an angry God Who needed to be propitiated by the blood of victims 'on Jewish altars slain.' The Cross of Christ revealed a God of love Whose love, so tender and so vast and so deep, could go even to the Cross of Calvary."

To say the least, this is a mischievous paragraph. It certainly is a caricature of the truth. How foolish to attempt to pit the New Testament against the Old, with the intention that the latter should be discredited. For remember, the Old Testament is equally a revelation of the love of God as the New, as Deuteronomy and other Bible books prove. And why should an attempt be made to laugh out of court the wrath of God? For it is found in the New Testament equally with the Old. Romans I. 17 and 18 and many another Scripture proves that the Gospel is not only a revelation of the love of God, but equally a revelation of His righteousness and righteous wrath. Besides, the God of the Old and the New Testaments is not an unemotional, stereotyped Being. He is love, and loves all, yet is "angry with the wicked" in the sense that His wrath burns against them in so far as they identify themselves with their sin.

It is quite evident that behind this statement is a deep dislike to the substitutionary Aspect of the death of Christ, and to the truths which most certainly lie behind such a necessity.

In certain quarters much bitterness has been shown in Criticism Of CHARLES WESLEY'S well-known verse:

"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning Voice I hear."

Say they: "If the Atonement was an act of reconciliation, it was rebellious men, and not God, who needed to be reconciled, for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5. 19). God is love, and cannot need to be reconciled." This statement is inaccurate. Certainly men need to be reconciled; but was there no need for reconciliation in God? God is indeed Love, but that is why His reconciliation was a first necessity. However startling this may be to some, it certainly is the truth.

I . Reconciliation of God to Man. "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ? " (1 Peter 4. 18) . What is the meaning of the word "scarcely?" It cannot mean that there is the least degree of uncertainty concerning our Salvation. The believer's salvation is assured the very moment they trust the Saviour. There is the glorious ring of certainty concerning this vital matter.

Neither does it mean that, though our ultimate salvation is assured, we shall only just be saved, as a shipwrecked mariner scarcely gains the shore on a plank. No doubt that will be the character of the Home-going of many. Yet it is not God's ideal. He desires for us an "abundant entrance," and that we should go sweeping through the gates of the New Jerusalem.

The word "scarcely" really means "with difficulty." That is the rendering in the margin of the Scofield Bible. "If a good man is only saved with difficulty," is the rendering of this verse in the Twentieth Century New Testament, and Weymouth reads: "And if it is difficult even for a righteous man to be saved, what will become of irreligious men and sinners?" The same word rendered "scarcely" is used in Acts 14. 18: "And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people ; " and Acts 27. 7: "And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus."

This verse surely means that, in arranging His scheme of redemption, God was confronted with great difficulties, and the first great difficulty lay within Himself. He had no difficulty whatever in loving us. How could He, seeing "God is love." Neither had He any difficulty in persuading Himself to lay bare His arm on our behalf, for His love is most practical. The difficulty lay in His Attributes.

God has been pleased at sundry times to reveal, by word or act, that certain characteristics or qualities reside in Him. These are known theologically as His Attributes. An Attribute is that which belongs to a person as distinguished from the person Himself.

Five of the Divine Attributes are known as Absolute or Essential, because they are essential to Deity—Eternity, Unchangeableness, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, and Omniscience; and five are known as moral Attributes: Holiness; Justice (or Truth or Righteousness); Love; Mercy; and Faithfulness. Now of necessity every act of God must be in perfect harmony with each separate Attribute. Not a single Attribute can be overlooked or violated. The problem was: How could God be just, and yet the Justifier of the ungodly? The Attribute of Justice clamoured for man's condemnation, yet the Attribute of Mercy desired his pardon; the Attribute of Righteousness demanded the death of the sinner, whereas the Attribute of Love pleaded for the salvation of the sinner.

In the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen there is a single sentence: "What shall I do?" (Luke 20. 13), which is a small four-paned window letting in a flood of light. Does this not reveal the Divine dilemma, the Lord puzzled? Speaking, of course, as man speaks. We talk about "the simple plan of salvation," and we are right. Yet there is a danger of forgetting in the thought of the simplicity the difficulty of salvation. In Psalm 85. 10 we have a statement regarding a meeting in perfect accord of those very Attributes: "Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other." Surely this was a prophecy uttered many years before it came to pass. That prophecy was fulfilled at the Cross. It was there the Divine Attributes met and found the means of perfect Reconciliation.

In pondering much on this theme, many thoughts have been suggested, overthrowing popular ideas. Rather hesitant at these discoveries, one has been helped by the mature thoughts of several devout and fully accredited Biblical scholars.

"The reconciliation, which is the foundation of the Apostolic Gospel, is not something which we effect when we lay aside our unbelief and enmity and turn to God in repentance and faith (though we must say there is truth in this statement, as we shall note in our second point). It is something immeasurably more important, something which God effected through the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ."—A. E. BARNES-LAWRENCE, M.A.

"The whole tenor of Scripture is to the effect that through the vicarious sacrifice of Christ a change was wrought in God of this nature, that whereas previously He could not, consistently with the perfection of His attributes, grant forgiveness or repentance, now He Can."—LITTON.

These are great thoughts. Of course, we must observe that the Atonement was necessary, not to induce God to forgive, but to enable Him to pardon sin without injustice.

"The death of Christ removes all moral hindrances in the mind of God to the saving of sinners. By Christ's death, God's infinite love and power are released from restraint by the accomplishment of every judgment which His righteousness could demand against the sinner."—L. S. CHAFER.

Thus in the death of Christ a basis is provided upon which God can deal in perfect justice, yet in wonderful mercy, with the world. The fact that Christ died provides a sufficient ground upon which God in full harmony with His holiness is free to save even the chief of sinners.

During a mission in Aberdeen conducted by Major WHITTLE many years ago, a young man of eighteen years testified: "I am saved by the justice of God." This greatly startled the Major. But the young man continued: "By the justice of God I was condemned; by the justice of God, Jesus Christ became my Substitute, I died upon the Cross, and I am saved by the justice of God." That young man had had revealed to him by the Holy Spirit a great truth, and a real stabilising truth, too, of which thousands in our day are ignorant. Oh, it is glorious to find that our salvation rests on so solid a foundation!

The late Dr. A. T. PIERSON has splendidly outlined another aspect of the problem of all problems. "The problem of redemption was this: to justify the sinner without justifying his sin; to save him from legal penalty, and yet save God from compromise and complicity with his guilt. Justice demands the execution of the penalty in the interest of law, and of perfect government; mercy yearned to rescue the offender in the interests of love. The problem was so perplexing that only Infinite wisdom and grace together were equal to its solution. Now that it is solved, it may seem simple."

Blessed be God, on account of the substitutionary death of Christ, the problem has been solved. God is now reconciled, and He can be both "a just God and a Saviour" (Isa. 45. 21); "Just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly" (Rom. 3. 26) ; "Faithful and yet just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1 . 9).

II. Reconciliation of Man to God. The dictionary declares that reconcile means "to bring to agreement; to bring to acquiescence; to restore to friendship." All these definitions are suggestive in relation to the reconciliation of man to God.

Now the sad fact is that the sinner is not merely helpless and in danger, but is actively rebellious and persistently obstinate, which state and temper bears sad fruit in a dreadful defiance of God and His Law.

The truth of reconciliation in the Bible is of a twofold nature. The first necessity was a reconciliation in God Himself. And so far as that is concerned, it was accomplished at the Cross (Eph. 2. 16) . The second necessity is a reconciliation of man to God, and that, too, was made possible at the Cross (Rom. 5. 10; Col. 1. 20, 21; 2 Cor. 5. 18, 19).

"While it is never implied that the world enmity towards God is removed, it is declared that the judicial state of the world is so altered before God by the death of Christ that He is said to have reconciled the world unto Himself."—L. S. CHAFER.

Another theologian has finely expressed it thus: "The overture of reconciliation is from God, the acceptance is of man." Estranged as we are by nature from God, God has taken the first step.

God was reconciled to man; the worst of men might now be reconciled to God. Now He sends forth His servants with the Gospel, with the great message of Reconciliation to proclaim: "Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5. 20) .

One Of JOHN WESLEY'S preachers, testifying of saving grace, said that Charles Wesley's hymn, particularly the first verse, was blessed to his conversion, quoting:

"All ye that pass by
To Jesus draw nigh;
To you is it nothing
That Jesus should die?

Your ransom and peace.
Your Surety He is;
Come, see if there ever
Was sorrow like His?'

He remarked: "I then believed that God for Christ's sake had forgiven all my sins, and found that peace which arises from a sense of reconciliation."

<p style="text-align: center;">ATONEMENT. CHRIST'S DEATH AS AN ATONEMENT, AND MUCH MORE.</p>
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ON one occasion, when TENNYSON the poet was on holiday in a country place, he asked an old Methodist woman if there was any news. "Why, Mr. Tennyson, there is only one piece of news that I know, and that is, 'Christ died for all men. '" He responded, "That is old news, and good news, and new news," and he was right. Surely there is no better news, old, yet ever new, because its meaning and

power are being personally discovered and experienced continually by first one and then another.

It is rather startling to find that in the Revised New Testament the word "Atonement" disappears; but there is no cause for alarm; for whilst that word disappears, the truth concerning the sacrificial death of Christ remains. Rather than be perturbed, we should be profoundly thankful, for nothing brings out the perfection and thoroughness of the work of Christ on the Cross more than this disappearance.

In the Authorised Version of the Bible the word "Atonement" occurs 77 times in the Old Testament, and but once in the New Testament—Romans 5. II. In the Revised Version the word is retained in all the Old Testament passages in which it is used in the Authorised Version, but it disappears from the New; the word in Romans 5. 11 being correctly rendered "reconciliation." The fact is that in the original text of the New Testament, the Old Testament word for "atonement" does not once appear in the New.

What is the significance? The meaning of words change with the passing generations, as any English Etymological Dictionary will prove. That is so with the word "atonement," The Biblical use of the word "atonement" differs from its present theological use. In the Old Testament it stands for one Scriptural experience only. To-day in theology it covers the whole sacrificial and redemptive work of Christ. In that sense, of course, the Atonement is the fundamental fact of our Christian life. Salvation through the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ is not merely one of importance, but the essential and characteristic feature of our Christian faith. Indeed it is the fundamental fact of our Christian faith.

We must ever remember that the work Christ wrought on the Cross was so great, so stupendous, and so varied in its aspects, both God-ward, man-ward, and creature-ward, that it cannot possibly be compressed into one word. For clarity of thought, and in order to note the varied aspects of the word "atonement" in its Biblical sense, the following outline will be helpful.

I. The Origin of the Atonement: Sacrifice. From time immemorial, whenever man thought of approaching Deity, he invariably did so through sacrifice. This practice seems universal. In all parts of the globe this custom is observed.

II. The Reason of the Atonement: Sin. The Bible is the only sacred Book in the world that gives this true reason for the fear of the Divine. That dread lies in man himself—his sin.

III. The Meaning of the Atonement: To Cover Up. The Hebrew word "atonement" means "to cover up." The very first occurrence of that word is in Genesis 6. 14, where we are told that Noah's ark was covered with pitch, within and without, and thus made judgment-proof. With regard to sin, it means that sin is so covered up that God regards it as neutralised, disarmed, inoperative to rouse His anger.

This is clearly the teaching of Genesis 32. 20. Just when Jacob was about to meet his brother, whom he had angered and wronged, he sent the present and said, "I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterwards I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me." The presents that Jacob sent on before his party were to cover the face of the offended person, Esau, so that he could no longer see the offence.

Blood was sprinkled on and before the mercy seat, that satisfaction might be given to Jehovah. Why? The Mercy Seat hid the two tables of stone, evidence of Israel's guilt. There was in the death of the Lord Jesus that which satisfied the righteous ire of the Holy God Who had been made angry by men's sin.

But the work of Christ was more thorough. At the Cross there was no temporizing or partial dealing with sin. Christ's work does not pass over or overlook sin, but takes it away. Study John 1. 29; Col. 2. 14; Heb. 10. 4; 1 John 3. 5. Have you really grasped this? Thousands of true believers have not. The Levitical offerings covered, but did not take away (Heb. 10. 4). These sins God passed over (Rom. 3. 25). According to Scripture the Levitical sacrifices covered the offerer's sin, and secured the Divine pardon. Yet the sin

was not put away. Christ's death Puts away sin completely.

There is another point. However welcome the provision of the Levitical offerings, the latter imperfectly met the need. For example, it does seem that there were sins, for which those offerings were unavailing. As Mr. Neil points out, there does not seem to have been any atonement for wilful sin under the Old Covenant, with four exceptions only (Lev. 5. 1; 6. 2; 19. 20-22). The Law provided sacrifices only for sins of ignorance, accidental omission, or forgetfulness, not for any wilful breach of the Ten Commandments, with three exceptions in the case of the ninth, and one in the case of the seventh (Lev. 4. 2, 3; 5, 18; Num. 15. 22-29).

David knew this well, and in his sorrow cried, "Thou desireth not sacrifice; else would I give it." His sin was wilful; for which no provision had been made. The Lord was merciful to him notwithstanding. But the sacrifice of Christ provides pardon for ALL sin. What saith I John 1. 7? "The Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." "ALL"—blessed, blessed word!

IV. The Source of the Atonement: God Himself (Isa. 53. 6, 10). Not man. Oh, no. You would never have thought of this, if God had not devised this scheme.

V. The Foundation of the Atonement: Love (John 3. 16; Eph. 5. 2 and 25; 1 John 4. 10). Not anger. Though God is a Being capable of anger and wrath, of pleasure and displeasure, love is behind the Atonement.

VI. The Method of the Atonement: Blood (Lev. 17. 11; 16. 27; 19. 22). The Lord said to Moses, "With My hand will I cover you" (Exod. 33. 22). But that only took place after Moses stepped into the cleft rock, a picture of the Rock of Ages cleft for me.

VII. The Essence of the Atonement; or the Abiding-Place of the Atonement: Jesus Himself (I John 2. 2).

The late Dr. EDWARDS of Bala, whilst engaged with his admirable treatise on the Atonement, was suddenly gripped with this thought. He rose from his desk, writes Dr. M'INTYRE, leaving his books and papers as they lay, went into the street, and cried aloud, "Jesus is the Alone went! Jesus is the Atonement!" Then he returned to his study to write down sentences like this: "This is the Atonement—not the sufferings, and not the death, but the Person of the Son of God in the sufferings and in the death. He is the Propitiation. He is the Atonement—not He Himself without the act, but He Himself in the act ... the Atonement is eternally offered to the Father in the Person of the Son . "

VIII. The Result of the Atonement: Salvation.

If covering of sin meant salvation in the Old Testament, what a wonderful salvation for us in the putting away of sin!

REDEMPTION.

CHRIST'S DEATH AND THE GLORY OF REDEMPTION.

LANGUAGE has been called the amber in which a thousand precious and subtle thoughts have been safely embedded and preserved. This is peculiarly true with regard to the word "Redemption." Though, in addition to the precious and subtle thoughts, we must add many painful and saddening ones. Let us explain:

One of the most familiar of sights in the ancient world was long lines of manacled war-captives, on their way to the capital city. After taking a compulsory part in the victorious captor's triumphant entry, usually a price for redemption was placed upon their heads, whereupon they were imprisoned to await its payment, or death. In Israel there was an additional provision of a Gaal, i.e., one who, because a near relative, was duty bound to redeem a captive, or even to redeem an insolvent relative's inheritance. Redemption therefore means a buying back, or a changed state or condition of freedom from bondage as a result of that act of redemption.

The Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is, in a sense, a great mystery, or better, there is a mysterious side to it. Attempts have been made, in various ways, to explain and make clear something of its wondrousness, and one of the clearest is to think of it as a Redemption. Indeed it is surely the earliest conception by man, and one of the most beautiful aspects of that sacrificial death. View sin as a slavery; sinners as bondmen to sin and to Satan. Christ's Blood as the Ransom Price, paid to the holy demands of God for the sinner; the Christian as one freed from just condemnation, restored to liberty and much more, and you will begin to understand something of its length and breadth, its height and depth.

Only we must never forget that purchase implies a new ownership. The redeemed must now serve as loving and devoted slaves the One who has redeemed them. It has been well said that "the conception of God as Creator is the foundation-stone of the Christian revelation, the conception of God as Redeemer is the soul and substance of it."

The following outline of Redemption, the result of years of brooding upon the subject, is here given in the hope that it may be of service to the Lord's people.

I. The Author of It • Redemption is by God. The tatter hopelessness of man ever redeeming himself or others is shown in Psalm 49. 6 to 8. Why? The price of redemption is far too costly for any to pay. But observe verse 15, and how triumphantly the Psalmist exclaims, "But God will redeem." He is our only hope. Note "Of God" in 1 Cor. 1.36.

II.. The Channel of It: Redemption is through Christ. Has Ephesians 1. 7, "In whom we have Redemption," ever gripped you? There is no redemption apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Kinsman-Redeemer: "Any of his kin." "One of his brethren may redeem

him" (Lev. 25. 25, 48). See Gal. 4. 5.

III.. The Price of It: Redemption is by Blood. That the Blood of Christ is the price of Redemption is clearly taught in Eph. 1.7; Col. 1. 14, and 1 Peter 1. 18 and 19.
"Redeemed ... with the precious Blood of Christ."

IV. The Depository of It. Redemption is in Christ. That Redemption is in Christ is the teaching of the following Scriptures: Rom. 3. 24; Col. 1. 14. Redemption is in Him, and only there can it be secured. When I receive Him, I receive Redemption.

V. The Security of it: Redemption Includes the Holy Spirit. In this connection ponder over Eph. 1. 13 and 14 , and. 4. 30. By the Holy Spirit we are "Sealed unto the day of Redemption," and the same Holy Spirit is the "Earnest of our Redemption." In land purchased in ancient times, instead of 10% of the agreed amount of money deposited as legal bond, the vendor would stoop down, and taking a handful of the earth bought, hand it to the purchaser. In giving the Holy Spirit to us, we receive the Earnest of our full Redemption. Double security.

VI. The Operation of It: Redemption is by Power. "I will redeem you with a stretched out arm" (Exod. 6. 6). "By strength of hand the Lord brought .us out" (Exod. 13. 14). The power of the Spirit, the Executive of God in this dispensation, sets the captive free on the ground of the Blood of Christ. "The law of the Spirit .. hath made me free" (Rom. 8. 2). Turn to Heb. 11. 35, where the word rendered "deliverance" is the same word rendered elsewhere Redemption.

VII. The Scope of it: Redemption is for All. Read and study I Tim. 2. 6. This clearly shows that there can be no Redemption apart from the Lord Jesus, for "He gave Himself a Ransom," and that Redemption is "for all." It is thus available for all, yet only enjoyed by those who receive Him.

VIII. The Amazing Breadth of it: Redemption is Inclusive. See what a wide sweep Redemption has, and note its blessings. What are we Redeemed from?

1. CURSE OF THE LAW. Gal. 3. 13. Note how the Old Testament ends with a curse (Mal. 4. 6) , and the New Testament with a blessing (Rev. 22. 21) .
2. ALL INIQUITY. Psalm 130. 8. This is not only a promise for Israel, for Titus 2. 14 shows it is a promise for to-day.
3. ALL EVIL. Genesis 48. 16. "Which hath redeemed me from all evil" is R.V.
4. DESTRUCTION. Psalm 103.4.
5. DEATH. Hosea 13. 14.
6. DECEIT. Psalm 72. 14.
7. ALL TROUBLES. Psalm 25. 22.
8. LONELINESS, as illustrated in Ruth, for which see our next point.
9. THE BODY. Romans 8. 23.

In these Scriptures we see what we are Redeemed from; now note what we are Redeemed to: (1) The first conscious blessing is the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1. 14; Eph. 1. 7) . (2)

The next conscious blessing is freedom from sin's power as well as from its guilt, as is shown in point 6.

IX. The Enrichment of it: Redemption Is by Union. This is the teaching of the Book of Ruth. Especially study Ruth 4.4 to 11. To redeem the possessions of Ruth, meant the union of Boaz and Ruth in marriage, meaning good-bye to loneliness and penury. For she then shared the companionship of her husband.

X. The Period of It: Redemption is for Eternity. Hebrews 9. 12 clearly shows that He secured an Eternal Redemption for us. Thus the fact with its privileges and blessings, extends beyond time, right through Eternity.

"Glory to Him, whose love unknown,
Touched man's abyss from Heaven's high throne;
Like some new star its radiance beamed.
A new song rose: REDEEMED! REDEEMED !"

**THE REMISSION OF SINS.
CHRIST'S DEATH MAKES THE REMISSION OF SINS
POSSIBLE.**

AT the last supper our beloved Lord said, "For this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the Remission of sins" (Matt. 26. 28), and in the letter to the Hebrews the Apostle writes, "Without shedding of Blood is no Remission" (Heb. 9. 22) . Remission is certainly one of the great themes of the Bible.

In the solemn and dangerous Covenanting days a Highland lassie was on her way to an unlawful Conventicle, when a party of Claverhouse's troopers surprised her. "Where are you going, my pretty maid?" inquired the Captain. To have frankly declared her destination almost certainly meant instant death. "Oh, my Brother has died: I am going to hear His will read, and claim my share," was her quick reply. "Good luck to you," said the military officer, as he made way for her to proceed on her journey. And she was quite right. He who is "not ashamed to call us brethren" (Heb. 2. 11) has died. Is not the Bible the Will? Why not claim our share, every time we read it! We would be richer and better Christians if we did.

Now in a Will that concerns us every single word receives careful study. Why do we not pay more attention to single Bible words? Only by so doing will we learn the riches of our inheritance, and be enabled by wondrous grace to appropriate and enjoy to the full the fruits of His death.

REMISSION is the translation of the Greek word Aphesis. Only it is rather curious to find that Aphesis is not always so rendered. Yea, it is more than curious, for it is really an important fact, and in the due noting of it is great wealth. That same Greek word is translated Remission nine times; Forgiveness six times; Deliverance once; Liberty once.

Take up an ordinary English dictionary, and you will be surprised to find the variety of meanings attached to that one word, all of which are significant. It is a word used by the tradesman, as remittance, payment for goods; by a Court of Law, discharging one from a penalty or a fine; by a Sovereign, meaning the pardoning of guilt and annulling the penalty; by a Physician, meaning to abate or relax a fever; by an Emancipator or Restorer, meaning to deliver or to re-instate. By putting all these meanings together we get a wonderful grasp of the deep, deep significance of Remission. Observe:

I. The Foundation and Ground of Remission.

When a customer sends an order for goods by post, he usually sends with the order a Remittance in the form of a cheque or Money Order. The price of the Remission of sins was the Blood of Christ. When He poured out His life on the Cross He made the Remission of our sins possible. In fact, the Blood made possible every blessing found in the Divine inventory. Every blessing we are in the enjoyment of comes to us Blood tipped. Apart from that precious Blood there is no hope and no blessing. Next, note:

II. The Sovereignty and Grandeur of Remission. Wherein does pardon, forgiveness, and justification differ? We have in them three aspects of Divine truth, and three views of our God. In pardoning, we have God acting as Sovereign; in forgiving, we have Him acting as Father, in justifying, we have God acting as Judge.

Strictly speaking, a converted and born-again person should never ask God for pardon, but for forgiveness. On the other hand, an unregenerate sinner has no right to ask God for forgiveness, but for pardon. The correct order is first pardon, swiftly, oh, how swiftly, followed by justification; then, as a child of God, day by day we need His grace of forgiveness. We do mix up these mercies in our prayers, and the Lord graciously overrules. Remission certainly means pardon, and includes forgiveness.

When the Moravian missionaries first went to the Eskimos, they did not find a word in their language for forgiveness, so they had to manufacture one, and here it is: Issumagijoujungneinermik. It is a formidable looking word, a puzzle to us as to pronunciation, and yet one of beautiful meaning in their language—"Not-being-able-to-think-about-it-any-more." Praise the Lord! Now notice:

III. The Reality and Enjoyment of Remission.

In a Law Court, Remission means to discharge from a penalty or a fine. Is not this just the result of His pardoning and justifying grace? Verily so. It means the blessed consciousness and full enjoyment of the Lord's pardon and justification. It is not only His will that we should be thus treated, but that we should be instantly conscious of those great and beneficent transactions. It is very important that we should learn:

IV. The Breadth and Significance of Remission.

Remission is a word of broad and deep significance. It means, indeed is translated

deliverance in Luke 4. 18. That means much more than deliverance from the guilt and punishment of sin, though, of course, it does mean that; it means "Deliverance to the captives," and "To set at liberty (another translation of the same Greek word) them that are bruised" (Luke 4. 18). Let us never forget that the Blood of Christ is:

"Of sin the double cure,
Saving from its guilt and power."

There we have it—the double cure! It is His will that we should not only be pardoned and justified, but liberated from the prison house, not only hear sweet words of pardon in our ears, but the fetters on our hands and feet struck off, and full liberty given.

There is full and blessed deliverance and liberty from all evil habits, from all sinful desires, from every evil thing. A wonderful liberty is our Blood-bought heritage. Get rid of the old sinful idea that the only way to be kept humble is to frequently fall into sin. The branch of the fruit tree that bends the lowest is the one that bears the most fruit. If we fully surrender ourselves to Him, and to His Holy Spirit, He will fill our lives to the full with the fruit of righteousness, and in us the fruit of the Spirit will mature and multiply.

Remission also means healing and enrichment. We have noticed that Remission is a medical word used for the abating of a fever. Our Heavenly Physician not only pardons and justifies, but also sanctifies. He not only has accomplished a great work for us, but begins and continues a good work within us. He is able to cope with the fevered condition that inbred sin produces. Remission is used for re-instatement, or enrichment. All that we lost in Adam we gain, and much more indeed, in Christ. But to enjoy we must by faith appropriate.

Dr. GUTHRIE, in his ,autobiography, describes an old Scotch parishioner of Airbirlot, "who died as he lived, a curious mixture of benevolence and folly." The lawyer who drew his will, after writing down several legacies of five hundred pounds to one person, a thousand to another, and so on, at last said: "But, Mr. --, I don't believe you have all that money to leave." "Oh," was his reply, "I ken that as well as you, but I just want to show them my good will." But God's "Good will toward men" is no mere pretence of bestowing gifts. We need to ascertain what has been left us, then we can claim our share in the Name of the One who shed His precious Blood for us.

**A PERSONAL INTEREST.
THE IMPERATIVE NEED OF A PERSONAL
INTEREST IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST SHOWN
BY AN ANCIENT CENSUS CUSTOM.**

A WISE tradesman will hold an annual stock-taking in order that he might discover how his business is faring. Nations as well as individuals have their stock-taking, only the former call it by another name--a census.

The taking of a census is an ancient custom. We know the Egyptians were adepts at it, for

they were most methodical, and were born organisers. Yet the most ancient census on record was not in connection with the Egyptians, but Israel, and it took place more than three thousand years ago. This is referred to in Exodus 38. 26, when Israel were numbered in the Wilderness

When led to the Saviour over half a century ago, the writer became conscious of a great hunger and thirst for the Word of God, and was never so happy as when reading and meditating upon it. Well does he remember coming for the first time across 1 Peter 1. 18, and upon reading, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold," he rather emphatically exclaimed, "Why of course not, no one has ever been redeemed from sin, death and outer darkness, by such corruptible things as silver and gold: it is the Blood that maketh atonement."

But later, when he began to read and ponder on the Old Testament Scriptures, to his surprise and bewilderment he learned in Exodus 30. 11 to 16 of such a provision ordained of God. Unlike any other nation, every time a census was taken, whether it was a national census, a roll call after a battle, the conclusion of a military campaign, or for any other national purpose, every male Israelite from twenty years and upwards had to pay a small silver coin called a half-shekel, in value about 1/24 or 1/44.

There were other differences to those of our time, as for example, the census was taken just when the leader or king ordered, was carried out by the military, and women and children were not counted. But the outstanding

difference was the payment of this small silver coin, and to omit this exposed the individual to terrible danger. Its payment in Exodus 30 was stated to be (a) a ransom (verse 12); (b) a preservation (verse 12); and an atonement (verse 15).

Before considering the significance of this strange custom, let us trace the eleven numberings recorded in the Scriptures. Probably there were many more, but of those no records are preserved.

The First Census took place four months after the Exodus (see Exodus 38. 25 and 26) . The second took place nine months later, or four weeks after the erection of the Tabernacle (Num. 1. 1 to 3; with Exodus 40. 17 and 18) . Very shortly afterwards the third census was taken, which was confined to the numbering of the firstborn in Israel and the tribe of Levi, following the decision to take the latter in the place of the former, and those over the number of Levi had to pay a special redemption price of fifteen shillings (Num. 3. 46 and 47).

The Fourth Census took place thirty-eight years after in the plains of Moab (Num. 26). Shortly after this a fifth was taken (Num. 31.49 to 54), but this was more in the nature of an army roll call after a dreadful military campaign against Moab in which the prophet Baalim was slain. To their utter amazement, though the slaughter amongst the enemy had been great, not a solitary Israelite warrior was missing, and as a special thank-offering for this, miraculous preservation, they asked to be allowed to offer gold instead of silver, which request was granted.

The sixth was the one ordered by King David and recorded in 2 Samuel 24, when 70,000

men died by the plague. Had David the king, Joab the commander-in-chief, and the men numbered forgotten to pay the half-shekel as atonement money? It may be, for there is no mention of it whatever. If that is so, have we not in that omission a sufficient reply to the challenge to the justice of God in punishing 70,000 for the sin of one man? None numbered were innocent; they shared the guilt by not giving the half-shekel.

The Seventh Recorded Census was taken by Solomon, referred to in 2 Chronicles 2. 17. Was this the completion of the census begun but not ended by David and Joab ? The eighth was taken on the return from Babylon (Ezra 2) ; the ninth at the birth of Christ (Luke 2. 1) . The tenth took place during His wonderful, life, and is referred to in Matthew 17. 24 to 27, when He admitted Peter to share in the miraculous redemption, reminding us how he admits every believer, to a share in His redemption now, and afterwards the glory. The eleventh is referred to by Gamaliel in Acts 5. 37.

The proceeds of the first census was used in providing the silver blocks for the Tabernacle to rest upon, this symbolising that God's dwelling with man, and our oneness and communion with Him, all rest on the solid basis of Redemption. Afterwards the redemption money was used to support the services of the Sanctuary.

But now, what was the mission or lessons designed by this remarkable custom? What special spiritual truths did it convey? What would the Lord have us to learn, or be reminded of, as the outcome of this meditation?

I. Personal Unworthiness.

"They shall give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord" (Exod. 30. 12), In being numbered amongst Israel, they naturally would dwell on the great honour thus conferred upon them, and might begin to swell with pride, imagining the honour was by merit and not of grace. This Divinely appointed ordinance was designed to keep them humble and lowly at His feet. The moment of the numbering was the very moment God designed for the payment of the half-shekel to remind each individual of his personal unworthiness, sinfulness, and need of redemption. Hence they would be saved from that great peril—spiritual pride.

It has been well said that there are four kinds of pride:

1. PRIDE OF PLACE—proud of one's position or standing in the world of men, or in the Assembly. Yet, whence came the qualities that make for leadership, and whence that insight into His Word that makes our ministry profitable and helpful to others? Whatever we have we have received from God. Of ourselves we are nothing, yea, less than nothing,

2. PRIDE OF RACE—boastful of the accident of birth. But God hath made of one blood all nations of men, determined when we were to be born and where (Acts 17. 26). Why forget these facts?

3. PRIDE OF FACE. Probably this is more common amongst the young, though the older

folk are not always free. But we should remember that all beauty is from God, and that beauty of face is only skin deep, unless it be beauty of soul and spirit.

4. PRIDE OF GRACE. Beware of this. It is a most subtle form of pride. Fancy, to be proud of our humility, or standing in His grace and Kingdom I Amazing! If the Devil cannot trip us up in any other way, he will make his appeal in this direction, and frequently he succeeds. Oh, keep humble and lowly before Him! Ever keep in mind your utter dependence upon His grace and the merit of our Redeemer. If this ancient census custom has ceased because of the perfection of Christ's work on the Cross, the coming week by week to the Lord's table, so far as a remembrance is concerned, has taken its place. As we eat the bread and drink the cup in remembrance of His broken body and shed Blood, we should say in our heart of hearts:

"My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride."

II. Personal Appropriation.

"Every man" (Exod. 30. 12). "Every one" (14). In the numbering, each Israelite came, as it were individually before God, and each one, irrespective of birth or position had to give the half-shekel as a ransom "for his soul." The rich and poor were of precisely the same value before God, and equally in need of redemptive grace Redemption therefore, is a great leveller. If all are not sinners alike, all are alike sinners and need a Saviour. Every man had to give for himself, not for another Every one must have a personal interest in Christ and His great redemption. This is important. There must be an individual appropriation of the Blood of Christ and of the merits of our Saviour.

III. Personal Thanksgiving.

The offering of the half-shekel at a numbering after a battle or campaign would not only be of the nature of atonement and ransom money, but also of thanksgiving. For sparing mercy each one individually rendered thanks to God. So complete and perfect was the one offering of Christ on Calvary for sin that the work was then completed once for all. "It is finished," was His cry. It was a great triumphant proclamation.

We are not now required to ,make an offering to atone for our sin—that has been done once for all by our Saviour. Our first need is to accept the work done. But, after this act of appropriation and identification there should be the giving, first of ourselves, then of our treasure, as an act of thanksgiving for a ransom and atonement completed. As we meditate on the Cross, there should not only be a deepened sense of personal unworthiness, and a fresh realisation of the worthiness of Christ, and the perfection of His finished work, but the out-pouring of our thanks to Him in prayer, and the offering of money, for the support and furtherance of His work at home and abroad. Not, of course, to buy salvation, but to celebrate a salvation already received and enjoyed.

**THE FINISHED WORK.
THE GLORIOUS COMPLETENESS OF THE WORK
ACCOMPLISHED BY CHRIST IN AND BY HIS DEATH,
AND WHAT IS MEANT BY "RECEIVING DOUBLE."**

No one can deny the presence of difficult and puzzling statements in Holy Writ. Time and again in our reading of the Book we encounter them. How they challenge and arrest us. As we halt and wrestle with them, what a glow such healthful exercise bestows. Whilst the Holy Scriptures are so simple a child can understand them, there are portions so profound that the keenest intellect is baffled. Some erroneously conclude that the presence of the stiff intellectual problems in the Bible are so many proofs that the Book is not from above. Rightly understood, the contrary is really the case. Is it not perfectly natural to expect in the writings of the Master Mind, statements far beyond our grasp and thought, that challenge us at every turn? Verily that is so.

But some of these difficulties arise through ignorance of old Eastern customs. As the years have marched on, a then well-known custom behind a Scripture had lost its popularity, and falling into disuse, is now forgotten. In consequence of this some of the Scripture preserved for us in the Divine Library becomes a kind of enigma. Isaiah 40. 2 is an instance of this. "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." "Double" what? How puzzling this seems Receiving double! In plain English, this word means "twice as much." In Jewish Inheritance Law it meant an extra portion. But these meanings do not help us here.

When we turn to the Commentaries this mystery deepens, for in the multitude of words counsel is darkened. The most popular explanation is positively and emphatically erroneous, and at variance with the rest of Divine revelation. In one of the recognised and authoritative expositions of Isaiah, a learned University Principal states: "It declares that Israel has suffered of punishment more than double enough to atone for her sins," and recognising that this was antagonistic to the usual view of Christian doctrine, defends his views by asserting that we must not square the teaching of the Bible by our views of Divine truth, but rather subject ourselves to the authority of the Word. Quite so. But one interpretation of a Scripture which violates other clear statements of Holy Writ cannot possibly be the correct one. If one thing is true, it is that sin always breeds suffering; but the sinner can never atone for his sin by his own suffering.

The simple fact is that here we have an old Jewish bankruptcy custom. Insolvency was then considered a very serious matter indeed. When it was quite patent to the clamorous creditors that a debtor was hopelessly insolvent, notification was given to a certain Jewish official, who, after inscribing on parchment the name, family, and tribe of the bankrupt, with the amount of the debt, would make sad procession to the gate of the city or town, and nail up the document. This was a trying exposure of the unfortunate debtor. Ecclesiastically excommunication followed the nailing up, and this was considered a dreadful punishment. If subsequently the debt was paid by or on behalf of the debtor, the official would make another journey to the gate, and reaching the offending document,

and withdrawing the nail, would double it up so as to effectively hide its contents, and then drive the nail with all his might through the doubled sheet to the post. Then the towns-people would excitedly gather around to inspect it, proudly exclaiming: "So-and-so has received double for all his debts." To double up the document meant the cancelling and hiding of the sad record, and the withdrawal of the excommunication. Now the boycotted and ostracised individual was admitted to religious fellowship.

Is not this gloriously suggestive of the blessedness and reality of the Divine forgiveness?

When He forgives He forgets—doubles up—and all repentant ones who accept the Saviour enter into this blessed experience. The blessed fact is the doubling up has already taken place. For is not that the teaching of Colossians 2. 14. "Having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." When you think of the Cross, what do you see there? Paul saw the record against him doubled up Every nail driven into the body of Christ was a nail doubling up the record standing against us.

Have you ever heard the story of the good wife of a celebrated officer in the French army, who had offended the first Napoleon—offended him so sorely that it seemed probable he would have him executed? His loving wife ventured into the presence of the great soldier and began to plead her husband's cause. She thought that he had been unjustly accused, and she began to explain the matter and excuse her husband. Then it was that Napoleon rang his bell, sent a messenger to bring the proofs of this man's guilt, and handed the incriminating document to the pleading wife. She read it through her teary, and could plead no longer that he could be forgiven as a matter of justice; she owned his guilt, but pleaded now for mercy.

Then Napoleon, in a moment of compassion, said to her: "Madame, as you hold in your hands the proof of your husband's guilt, destroy it, and so disarm the severity of our martial law."

What do you think she did? Why, she walked straight away to the blazing furnace and thrust the documents into the very heart of the flames. She acted wisely. There could not have been any better thing to do in the matter, unless Napoleon himself had burnt the proofs. That is what Christ has done. He has taken our sin, the evidence of our guilt, and nailed it to the Cross, put it into the fire of forgiveness. It will never be found again; the sin has all been put away, obliterated, forgiven.

The literal application of Isaiah 40. 2, is of course to literal Israel. This will be fulfilled in the coming glorious days when Judah and Israel will be restored not only to their own land, but also to the Divine favour. The spiritual application is for our enjoyment here and now.

And now we must note the blessings which follow an acceptance of this great and glorious fact. With this in view, let us note some occurrences of the word "double. "

I. Deliverance from the Shame of Guilt. Note Isaiah 61. 7: "For your shame ye shall have double." Sin is a disgrace to any nation or individual. There is the shame of guilt. The awakened soul blushes at the revelation of inward and actual depravity. But when that soul turns in penitence to the Throne of Grace, pleading the merits of the precious Blood of Christ, pardon is granted, and indeed very much more of the Divine clemency and grace, and the one who, like the publican, was ashamed to draw near or look up (Luke 18. 13) goes down to his house delivered from the shame of guilt, and justified.

II. Deliverance from the Shame of Bondage. "Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope; even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee" (tech. 9. 12). This was a favourite text with the preachers of a past decade or two, but is seldom used these days. This has literal application to Jerusalem in the time of Jacob's trouble. But it has spiritual application here and now. "Prisoners"—we are not only by nature bearing a load of guilt, but in present bondage to sin. The Law is both prison and jailer (Gal. 3. 23).

We not only are conscious of the shame of guilt, but also of the shame of defeat. But thank God, there is hope. If "prisoners," we are prisoners of "hope," and not of despair, for in Christ there is not only deliverance from sin's guilt, but also from sin's power. Thus He saves from the shame of defeat.

III. Deliverance from the Shame of Insolvency. This is behind Isaiah 40. 2. Ours is a far worse debt than the one in Matthew 18, 24 (67,5(x1,000) . We are hopelessly insolvent. But we are frankly and freely forgiven for the sake of One who paid it all. Then all the resources of God in Christ are at our disposal. Thus, by grace now in the enjoyment of the heavenly riches, we are able to live the life we ought to live. See the play upon the word "double" in Isaiah 61. 7. In Christ we receive more than Adam ever lost.

IV. Deliverance from Heart-Grief. "Comfort ye" (Isa. 40. 2). No wonder there is a great change of tone between Isaiah 1 to 39 and 40 to 66. For sin pardoned, blotted out, and all the riches of Christ at our disposal, sadness goes and comfort arrives. Debt shut the Jew out from taking any part in the religious festivities. He was cutoff. . But grace admits us into the family and fellowship of God.

**ALWAYS WHITE.
THE ENJOYMENT IN OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL
EXPERIENCE OF SOME OF THE BLESSED FRUITS
OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST.**

THE brightening of the walls of our homes by artistically illuminated and tastefully produced texts of Scripture is both good for its inhabitants and for visitors. We cannot be reminded too often of God's Word. Moreover, it is quite Scriptural (Deut. 6. 9, 11. 20) , and is one method of confessing our faith in Christ and His Book.

Spending a week-end in Gospel ministry away from home, and being shown to my room, over the wash-stand a card was seen with these words "Let thy garments be always white." In the dim light of evening, it was thought to be only a motto, but in the better

light of morning, it was discovered to be an inspired utterance from Ecclesiastes 9. 8. It had conveyed one simple yet important lesson, the same Dr. F. B. Meyer had in mind when he remarked to one who had become a missionary: "It is not cleverness but cleanliness that really matters." But what did this simple message convey to an Eastern mind when it was first penned, and afterwards? By research, one discovered it would convey one or all of five distinct messages.

I. Divine Acquittal. "Always white" means, live daily in the enjoyment of the Divine acquittal, for that would be the first lesson it would convey. When a Jewish priest was charged with a crime and brought before the great Sanhedrim, if found guilty he left the court dressed in black, if declared innocent he left the court dressed in white, White, therefore, was the colour of acquittal. This was also the case in ancient Persia. In relation to God and His justifying mercy, here is the marvel and miracle of grace—only the guilty, who own up to their guilt and unworthiness, and show repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, are acquitted, justified. Marvellous grace! Guilty, yet acquitted. And the proof of my acquittal is the wearing of the white robe, the white garment ok imputed righteousness.

So far as purity is concerned, the natural man is naked; so far as righteousness is concerned, clothed with filthy rags. But what are those filthy rags? Not his drunkenness, impurity, iniquity, but his righteousness. That is what our best things are in God's sight. Then what must our evil things be! The white robe of innocence has gone for ever, but there is another robe—the robe of righteousness imputed. All believers recognise this glorious Gospel fact. But do we constantly enjoy our justification? Remember, the blessed fruits of Christ's atoning death are for the enjoyment as well as possession of believers. "Let thy garments be always white"—live constantly in the enjoyment of the Divine pardon and justification.

A devoted servant of the Lord, the late Sir ARTHUR BLACKWOOD, wrote that he had been living a whole week on two words, "Justified freely." Some of God's dear children do not seem to enjoy their salvation. The joy in salvation can be restored by daily remembrance and meditation on God's justifying mercy.

II. The Life of Victory. "Always white" means, live daily the life of victory, which should follow our justification by faith, as another result of Christ's death, and is the second message this simple admonition conveys, for white in ancient Greece and Rome was the colour of victory. It is not significant of triumph now. The white flag is the symbol of submission, and the white feather is the badge of cowardice. But in Solomon's day it was the symbol of victory. In the official state receptions to military conquerors the hero entered the city amidst the plaudits of the throng, dressed in white. Hence the significance of Revelation 3. 5: "He that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment."

Precisely! "I felt so beautifully saved this morning, till the clothes-line broke," mournfully exclaimed a weeping woman," and since then I've not felt the least bit saved." Poor soul. She had not been long on the Lord's side. In the moment of testing, when a

whole morning's labour was lost, her old habits of passion and bad language overcame her. She was assured that in Christ there was not only forgiveness, but deliverance from the chain of evil habit, and getting low before the Lord, and confessing her sin and failure, she went on her happy way dressed in white.

Let thy garments be always those of a conqueror. Yea, through Him we may become "more than conquerors" (Rom. 8. 37).

III. The Life of Purity. "Always white" certainly means, live daily the all white life, the life of purity, because of His Cross, for white is the symbol of purity in every language, and in every land.

In Canada, the highest compliment that can be paid to any is, "He's white," by which is meant, he is genuine, upright, open, honest, brave, courageous, pure, one who would not do a mean thing to save his life. This is not the garb of innocence, but of those who have by grace overcome their sins. He can keep us sweet and pure wherever we dwell, and whatever our occupation.

IV. The Life of Joy. "Always white" means, live daily the life of joy, for white was the Jewish festive garb. Three times a year every male of twelve years old and upward had to appear before God in Jerusalem dressed in white. White is the colour which expresses joy. There is something gladsome in the light. It summons forth the music of the birds, and awakens the world of nature. Sometimes, like a wizard, it charms away the sadness and depression of the night. "Let thy garments be always white." This is an appeal for brightness and cheerfulness. We are not to go through life robed in sack-cloth or suit of mourning, but clothed with light, for if we are living in communion with Him, every day will be a festive day.

V. The Life of Service. "Always white" means, live daily the life of service, for white was the livery of heavenly service. It was the garb without which service in the Tabernacle and Temple by priests and Levites was not allowed. It is the garb which the angels wear. Live to self, you live in vain. Live for others, you taste the sweets of life. Pray note the progression of truth in the order of our thoughts. Before I can enjoy victory I must receive and rejoice in God's justifying mercy, then with justification and daily victory the life of purity and joy will be mine. Then I shall be fitted, experimentally, for service.

But how is this possible in this world of sin? How difficult it is to keep things white in our sooty atmosphere. There is an absent note in Solomon's exhortation. He says, "Let your garments be always white," but does not explain how this can be brought about. It seems humanly speaking utterly impossible. But as we turn over the pages of our Bibles we discover that secret. In Revelation 7. 13 and 14 we learn how they can be made white: "Washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb." Then in Revelation 3.4, how they can be kept white: "They shall walk with Me in white." This must be taken not merely as the reward of purity, but the cause of purity. "Walking with Me, they shall walk in white."

Finally, Solomon not only urged, "Let thy garments be always white," but added, "and let thy head lack no ointment." Surely the anointing and filling with the Holy Spirit is meant; and that is the pledge and secret of whiteness.

In one of our large cities a little waif was rescued and taken to a home. After much labour he was made clean and clothed with a lovely velvet suit. Never had he known the delights of such a suit before. How proud he was, and how much he admired himself. By and bye bedtime came when, to his consternation and regret he was undressed. Then the matron attempted to teach him his first prayer, asking him to repeat the well-known children's prayer: "Now I lay me down to sleep," etc. Sleepily he murmured:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my clothes to keep."

And though they attempted to correct and explain, he again repeated his request as formerly. Can we not offer intelligently the same prayer? He can keep them white.

"THE CARDINAL FEATURE OF YOUR FAITH"

(1 Cor. 15. 1 to 8, Way's Rendering).

This is one of the sublimest chapters in Scripture. It is the great Hymn of Immortality and Life. In verses 1 to 19 Paul epitomises the proofs of our Lord's Resurrection, and in verses 20 to 30 and onward he bursts into a glorious wealth of thought.

1. Cardinal Fact. Way's rendering is as title. Cardinal is a strong word.
2. Historical Fact. The cardinal fact is historical. Christianity is based on historical facts, and not human surmisings.
3. Personal Fact. This cardinal fact is based on a person—Christ. No other fact is so.
4. Few Facts. There is no more concise statement of the central facts of the Gospel in human language than this. Christ's death (the Greek preposition translated 'for' can only mean 'on account of'). our sins were the impelling cause of His death. Christ's burial and resurrection. Just three facts.

WITH JESUS AT BETHLEHEM. FINDING THE LORD JESUS.

THE story of the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem is an old and familiar one. Yet we can never say the last word on it. The birth of our Lord Jesus into the world was unique in the history of the race. We begin our existence at our birth; He lived from all Eternity—before the worlds were He was. He was the God-Man. Not God indwelling a man; not a man deified; but God and man, combining in one Personality those two natures. He had a human mother, but not a human father. He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary.

Study the genealogical tables in the Gospels. A Mohammedan in Southern India was first drawn to faith in Jesus Christ by reading the genealogy in Matthew. Such a procession, he thought, must lead up to a mighty name; and he approached with reverence the story of the Nativity.

What is the genealogical list in Matthew, but the proof of the Messiah's connection with Abraham and David, showing Him to be the true and final successor to the Throne of the Davidic kingdom. The late David Baron pointed out that "This is an indisputable fact, that the Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the last in Jewish history whose descent from the Royal line can now be established by sufficiently authentic proof." At the destruction of the second Temple, all the national genealogical records perished; and, apart from a few worthless traditions, there is nothing that any Jew now on the face of the earth can appeal to to prove even from which tribe, not to say from which family he springs. There is neither a tribe of Judah, nor a separate Davidic family now existing, and yet the true King of Israel must prove himself a son of David. The only genealogical

**GOSPEL STUDIES
WITH JESUS AT BETHLEHEM.
FINDING THE LORD JESUS.**

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It seems quite clear that the Lord Jesus was born in His ancestral home. This Inn was known in the days of Jeremiah as the Inn of Chimham (see R.V., margin). Chimham was Barzillai's son (Jeremiah 41. 17), whom David honoured for his father's sake (see 2 Sam. 19. 37 to 40), and, as suggested by the late Dr. Schofield of London, gave him his ancestral home near Bethlehem (the house of Boaz and Ruth), who, on his death, made it an Inn. To give a Khan or Inn to a town then was equivalent to giving a park or a hospital now.

I. The Toilers Seeking Jesus (Luke 2) . The shepherds represent the working class—the toilers. See how our Lord honours the lowly and the humble. A lowly maid was selected to be the mother of Jesus; the lowly town of Bethlehem was selected to be the place of His birth; and working men were honoured by receiving first the glad and joyous news.

1. **THEY WERE IN THE DARK**, and so are we, if we have not yet taken the all-important step to Christ. Not material darkness, as was theirs, but spiritual darkness, the darkness of sin and doubt.

2. **THEY GOT INTO THE LIGHT**, a light from above that fell upon them, and so may we, and we most certainly will if we come to the One who has proclaimed Himself to be the Light of the World. It was a glorious light that shone about them.

3. **THEY WERE FULL OF FEAR**, for light from Heaven always produces fear in the heart of the unconverted. Fear in the heart is one proof that light from Heaven has been given, and is the result of guilt of sin.

4. **THEY HEARD THE GOSPEL**, and the Gospel was preached by angels, a rare privilege for them. The angel declared Good Tidings, for unto "you is born . a Saviour." Not "unto us"—for there is no Saviour for the fallen angels.

5. **THEY OBEYED THE GOSPEL**, for they determined to see for themselves, and the Gospel is to be obeyed as well as to be believed.

6. **THEY FOUND THE SAVIOUR**, as all earnest and genuine seekers do.

7. **THEY REJOICED GREATLY**, as all they who find the Saviour do, and they glorified God.

II. The Thinkers Seeking Jesus (Matthew 2. 2) . The fact that not only representative toilers sought Jesus, but representative thinkers did likewise is impressive. The greatest thinkers the world has ever seen have been humble followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible is a Book of Wisdom, and points out the true source of all wisdom. Ponder over this statement: "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." There we find how we may become wise men and women.

Note a few facts about these wise men showing their wisdom.

1. **THEY WERE IN A FAR COUNTRY**, and so are we, if we have not yet come to Him. They must have been in a far country, for they came from the East.

2. **THEY SAW GOD'S MESSENGER**, and just where they were, too, and that was a sign of real wisdom. There are some folk who see nothing, going through the world with either eyes closed or unobservant. "We have seen His star in the east." Some, like the man with the muck rake do not see because they do not look up. Remembering Balaam's prophecy (Numbers 24. 17), they took great heed, recognising in the Star God's messenger. The Holy Spirit is God's Star to-day, and He is ever seeking to draw the attention of sinners to the Lord Jesus. He is seeking to draw us to the only One who can do helpless sinners good.

3. **THEY STARTED FORTH TO FIND AND WORSHIP JESUS**. Some see, yet never come. The purpose of the star was not to amuse, but to lead. They had a long journey to make, but we have not far to go to see and find the Saviour. We find not a weak babe, but a strong One mighty to save.

4. **THEY SEEM TO HAVE MADE A MISTAKE**, taking their eyes off the star and leaning too much on their own reasoning. Surely, thought they, that the Great One would be born in the capital; so they took their eyes off the star, following human reasoning, and came to Jerusalem.

See the disastrous results that followed—the massacre of the innocents at Bethlehem. Far better to keep our eyes on the Heavenly messenger, and to be guided by the Lord.

5. **AH, SOON THEY FOUND JESUS**, as all real seekers do, and what satisfaction that find brought to their hearts and lives.

6. **THEN THEY WORSHIPPED**, presenting their costly gifts, as all should act who are the found ones of the Lord. Yet, alas, so many take all the Lord Jesus has to give, but forget to give as a thank-offering, first themselves, then to consecrate all they have to the One who has done so much for them.

COME.

ONE of the sweetest words in the Bible. "O words of words the sweetest." The first "Come" in the Bible is one of salvation (Gen. 7. 1. Note "Come," not "Go!" A proof the Lord Himself was in the Ark), as is also the last (Rev. 22. 17) .

I. What Must we Come For?

1. Rest—"Come, and I will give you rest," Matt. 11.28
2. Knowledge— "Come and see," John 1. 39
3. Satisfaction—"Come unto Me and drink , " John 7. 37
4. Discipleship—"Come and follow Me,"Mark 10. 21
5. Victory—"Come, ... put your feet upon the necks," Josh. 10. 24

- 6. Fellowship—"Come and dine," John 21. 12
- 7. Refreshment---"Come and rest a while," Mark 6. 31
- 8. Inheritance—"Come ... and inherit," Matt. 25. 34

II. How Must We Come?

We must come just as we are, without any attempt to make ourselves presentable, for the very good reason that we are too far gone, and only He can do anything with us, and then He will make us new creatures—a new creation—in Jesus Christ.

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy Blood was shed for me.
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee;
Oh, Lamb of God, I come!"

III. When Must We Come?

"One hour before you die?" said some one. Well, when will that be? You cannot say, so you had better come now. In fact, those are the instructions: "Come NOW," found over and over again in the dear old Book.

**WITH JESUS AT THE RIVER JORDAN.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST'S BAPTISM.**

"Thus it becometh us" (Matt. 3. 15).

Introduction.

"BECOMING." That is a word often on our lips and in our thoughts. It is one of the tests of life. It decides matters concerning behaviour and dress. The answer to "Does it become me?" decides choice of material and style of dress, and, "It is most unbecoming of you" settles for us language and conduct.

The Lord Jesus makes this the one reason why John should baptise Him. And we, too, are included, for He said, "Thus it becometh us," not me.

400 YEARS' SILENCE. For four hundred years prophecy had been silent. At last the silence was broken, and a voice was heard in the land speaking like those of old. It was the voice of one who was clad in the hairy cloak and leather girdle of the old prophets.

ROUGH SPEECH. "And," as old Bishop Hall put it, "his raiment was rough, so was his tongue; and if his food was wild honey, his speech was stinging locusts."

"WHO" (Matt. 3. 7). This phrase arrested our attention a while ago. As there was absence of any marks of true penitence, John asked under whose preaching they had been moved to ask repentance.

CHARACTER OF HIS PREACHING.

1. Spoke Plainly about Sin.
 - a. Taught absolute need of repentance.
 - b. Repentance must be proved by works.
 - c.. Warned men not to rest on outward privileges.
2. Spoke Plainly about the Lord Jesus.
 - a. That He was mightier than he
 - b. He was only slave. Jesus was the King.
 - c. He baptised only with water, whereas the Lord would baptise with the Spirit.
3. Spoke Plainly of Holy Spirit.
 - a. Such a thing as baptism of Spirit.
 - b. Special offer of Lord Jesus to baptise thus in Spirit.
4. Spoke Plainly about Awful Danger of Impenitent.
 - a. Told them there was a wrath to come.
 - b. He preached of the unquenchable fire.
5. Spoke Plainly about the Safety of Believers. He taught there was a "garner" for all who were Christ's wheat.

JOHN'S RELUCTANCE.

1. Had John ever seen the Lord? We know not.
2. He felt abashed at His presence. He noted in His face a majesty, purity, and peace, making him feel his unworthiness.

WHY DID THE LORD JESUS SEEK BAPTISM?

1. It is a difficult question.
2. John's baptism was of repentance—but He was spotless!
3. One explanation is that, at this age, Levites were bathed and anointed and admitted to service.
4. We want to give four reasons why it was becoming of our Saviour to be baptised.

I. Serious Interest. It betokened a serious interest in this national religious movement, and surely that was becoming. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee."

IN CARPENTER'S SHOP. Whilst the Lord was working in the Nazareth workshop, news reached His village of the appearance of John, and the multitudes from all parts flocked to hear him. It was the beginning of a national religious movement. He showed sufficient interest to travel 24 miles to hear John.

INDIFFERENCE.

1. We do not doubt that there were thousands who showed not the least interest in this movement.

2. It is so to-day—and that fact is a puzzle to us.
3. Surely a movement that has existed so long and has wrought such marvellous changes is worthy of a little serious interest.

UNBECOMING. We would say to the thousands who have not the slightest interest in the Christian religion that, to say the least, such an attitude is most unbecoming.

BECOMING SERIOUS. It was not uncommon years ago to call conversion "becoming serious." And judging from the faces of some of its professors, it appeared to be a very serious matter indeed. It ought to be "becoming joyful." Yes, but you must become serious before becoming joyful. In one sense all unsaved are often sad enough.

II. Humility. His coming to be baptised of John was a proof and fruit of humility, and surely humility is becoming. "Then cometh Jesus to be baptised of him."

USUAL. When a King is to be baptised a minister is sent for. But He did not stand on His dignity and send for John. He came. Usually when a King is to be baptised, a prelate or pontiff must officiate—some high dignitary at any rate. But He came to be baptised of this lowly prophet-preacher.

HUMILITY. Humility of heart and mind will betray itself. And humility is most becoming of us.

III. Identification. It was an act of identification with His people, and surely that was most becoming of Him.

WHY? It is a sinners' ordinance—but He was no sinner!

LOST HIS CHARACTER.

1. Have you ever thought of this, that our Lord lost His character by this act?
2. Only sinners came to the waters of baptism.
3. Note:
 - a. He was numbered with the transgressors by His baptism.
 - b. It was an act by which He consented to take His place among sinners.
 - c. It was an act of identification with the people.
 - d. It was, in figure, what He would actually do for them by and bye-die.

IV. Submission. It was His submission and obedience to a Divinely appointed ordinance, and surely that act was most becoming. His first public act is one of obedience to the Voice of God as in the rite of baptism.

DON'T Go Too FAR. There is a danger of some of us making too little because others make too much of ordinances.

ONLY Two SACRAMENTS. Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

OUR DUTY. Our becoming duty is to observe them.

V. Glorious Result.

1. Opened Heaven. This suggests, or rather, proves, the perfection of the thirty years He had lived at Nazareth.
2. Holy Spirit. First time Trinity clearly made known.
3. Voice. Proclaiming His love to His Son.

**WITH JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS.
THE TEMPTATION
(Mark 1. 12, 13) .**

Introduction.

RUTHERFORD. Old Samuel Rutherford, who knew the heart of man as few do, wrote in one of his letters: "If we knew ourselves well, to want temptation is the greatest temptation of all."

GENERAL.

1. Temptation is probably the most familiar experience of the Christian.
2. If we call the Christian life a life of joy and peace many will tell you they do not know it as such.
3. But speak of it as a life of temptation, and every regenerate soul will readily admit that such is the case.

COMFORT. Seeing the experience of temptation is universal, how blessed it is to learn that:

1. He was tempted in all points like as we are.
2. That "He suffered, being tempted"—and to be tempted really meant suffering to Him as it does us.
3. That, seeing "He suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.

NOT SIN.

1. It is well for us to note the distinct ion between sin and temptation.
2. It is not a sin to be tempted.
3. Sin lies in parleying and playing with temptation (as a cat plays with a mouse).

COUNT IT JOY.

1. James says, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."
2. Nothing to be doleful about.

WITH JESUS.

1. We are to accompany the Lord Jesus into the wilderness .
2. We have frequently to go into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil, but we are safe if with Him.
3. And His presence makes the wilderness and the solitary place become glad, and the desert blossom as the rose.

DEEP AND MYSTERIOUS.

1. It is well to note the deep significance of the conflict.
2. Jesus was there in the wilderness as our representative.
3. Milton finishes his "Paradise Regained" at this point.
4. The first Adam stood as the head of the race and falling, dragged the race down with him. The last Adam stood as the Head of the new race, and, being victorious, lifted that race with Him, or made the lifting possible.

POINTS OF DIFFERENCE.

1. The Devil challenged the first Adam, the last Adam challenged the Devil.
2. The Devil ruined the first Adam, the second Adam spoiled the Devil.
3. The first conflict took place in a Paradise, the second in a Wilderness.

AFTER BAPTISM.

1. The three Evangelists all state that the conflict followed immediately after the season of blessing after baptism.
2. Learn:
 - a. No spiritual privileges saves us from fiery trials.
 - b. The hour of blessing is often the hour of peril. I. The Peril of Materialism. The first temptation—Stones into bread.

1. ITS APPLICATION TO JESUS.

a. It was a Blow to His Sonship. "If." Satan likes to throw the "if" of doubt into our mind respecting our sonship.

b. It was a Blow at His Life of Dependence.

(1) It was a temptation to self-reliance.

(2) Temptation to abandon the life of dependence the Father required of Him.

c. It was a Blow at His Life of Dependent Service. It was a temptation to use the power to work miracles for an inferior purpose. Jesus always refused to work miracles to please the vulgar curiosity of the people.

d. It was a Temptation to Think of the bodies of the People before or even instead of the Souls. The peril of modern social movements is just this—as all keen observers can see. This age thinks more of boots or clogs for bare feet. dinners for empty stomachs, weeks at seaside, than salvation of soul. Let that come first, and all the rest can follow.

e. It was a Temptation to Materialism.

3. ITS APPLICATION TO US. This temptation comes to us in various forms.

a. The temptation to place body and its needs first (Devil's order is "Bread, trust, worship." God, "Trust, worship, bread"), then soul.

- b. To satisfy a legitimate craving of the body in an illegitimate way.
- c. What I need bother my head about is bread for the body, and never trouble about the soul.

HERE ADAM AND EVE FELL.

1. But Jesus conquered.
2. He conquered by the Word.

MARK'S ACCOUNT.

1. How much Mark compresses into small space.
2. He is a master in the art of concentration and condensing.
3. Learn
 - a. The driving as well as wooing power of the Spirit.
 - b. The forty days were all days of temptation.
 - c. Probably the foe was invisible during the forty days and temptations were within.
 - d. It was at the end of forty days that Satan came boldly out in visible form, and presented temptation without.
 - e. Wild beasts were there, and were with Him. These creatures recognised His authority and lost their ferocity
a picture of the Millennial Day, when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together.
 - f. The angels ministered unto Him. He who would not tempt God by working miracles at the Devil's bidding to procure bread, or by throwing Himself down, to see if angels should come and bear Him up from harm, now sees angels come and bring Him bread in the desert.

II. The Peril of Sensationalism. The Second Temptation—Leap from Pinnacle of the Temple. SUBTLETY.

1. You trust in God? Very well, prove your trust by throwing yourself down from the pinnacle of the Temple.
2. You quote Scripture. I will also give you one to show that God will keep you.

ANALYSIS.

1. It does appear that such an act would have been an act of faith.
2. But on closer examination we think you will see it would have been a clear proof of lack of trust.
3. It would have been an experiment.
"When we doubt a person we make experiments to discover how far they are to be trusted."

APPLICATION TO JESUS.

1. It was the popular belief that their Messiah would appear suddenly, and in some marvellous way, as, for instance, a leap from the Temple roof into the midst of the crowd below.
2. It was a temptation to gratify the vulgar desire for wonders.
3. It was a temptation to dazzle the people.

4. To appeal to the senses by, in our day, awesome buildings, ritual, music.

APPLICATION TO US.

1. This temptation comes to us when he tries to show us we must show our trust by doing something extraordinary.
2. No; we must show our trust by doing the ordinary things of life in an extraordinary way.

III. The Worship of Satan. The Third Temptation—Worship Satan. There must be no compromise with evil.

QUICK PANORAMA.

1. Luke 4. 5 tells us Christ saw the vision in a moment of time.
2. He gave the Lord a quick panoramic view of the kingdoms of the world.

OBSERVE.

1. Satan claims some right to the kingdoms of the world, and our Lord acknowledged that claim by later calling him Prince of this World.
2. In Psalm 2. 8 and 9, God expects Jesus to ask of Him the world. But the temptation here was to ask of the Devil. In view of Psalm 2. 8, how impressive is Satan's temptation.

APPLICATION TO JESUS. It was temptation:

1. To secure the Kingdom without the Cross.
2. To take a short and easy way to possession.
3. To take the help of the Devil.

APPLICATION TO US.

This temptation comes to us when we are tempted to live without the Cross.

SECRET OF VICTORY.

1. Be born of the Spirit. Well begun is half done.
2. Be filled with the Spirit. This is our privilege.
3. Be assured of your Sonship. Never doubt your standing in Christ.
4. Be acquainted with the Word.

WITH JESUS AT A MARRIAGE.

THE MARRIAGE AT CANA.

"Thou hast kept the good wine until now" (John 2. 10).

Introduction.

LAMP IN A SEPULCHRE. Someone has spoken of religion as a "lamp burning dimly in a sepulchre." It sounds poetical, and has an element of truth in it. If it is a lamp in a sepulchre, it burns brightly, not dimly. But the thought behind the sentence is utterly wrong, viz., that we only need the Saviour in our times of sorrow, and as a preparation for the future. Many, alas, act on that thought, and never think of the Lord until face to

face with death or sorrow.

TIMES OF GLADNESS. The subject before us dispels that thought. Here we find the Lord present at a marriage feast. He took a journey of 43 miles (from Bethabara to Cana) to attend. After all, experience teaches us that it is times of gladness which especially need such a sanctifying presence. Then, it is mean to expect the Lord to share with us life's sorrows, and be debarred from its joys.

JESUS NOT OUT OF PLACE AT A MARRIAGE. And don't, for a moment think He was out of place. You are out of place anywhere if He is not with you. He had no monkish idea of the unholiness of marriage. Marriage is a solemn and Divine institution. And the presence of Jesus proclaims its sanctity.

JESUS WAS THERE. Probably the first Christian wedding the world has seen. How we linger over verse 2. If the Lord Jesus was present at your marriage you will never write as one (lid: "Oh! how many torments lie in the small circle of a wedding ring." I is a Christless wedding that leads to such a woeful testimony.

SHORTAGE. An illustration of the failure of all this world's joys. Shortage, yes, even with Jesus present. Probably He and His disciples were the cause of the supplies running out, more coming to the feast than they had made provision for. But the difficulty was soon mastered. All will be well if He is there.

MARY'S THOUGHTFULNESS. It is a simple and homely act of forethought to save her neighbours [rout shame and confusion. She might have taken no notice, or said, "It is no business of mine," or gloried in the bad management of the parties.

WHY TURN TO JESUS? Why did Mary turn and tell Jesus of the need? It was her regular habit to do this. She had ever been accustomed to turn to Him in all her difficulties, and certainly she never consulted Him in vain.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN. Said a friend to a Romanist: "Have you ever heard of the Gospel of the Blessed Virgin?" And it is: "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."

SERVANTS OBEDIENCE. Fall not to notice the ready obedience of the servants. And their faith, too. Each held about 20 gallons---hence 120 gallons in all.

RULER'S TESTIMONY.

1st. That this was a sober party, for they could distinguish between the two kinds of wine.

2nd. a. It was a high commendation of His work.

b. But this is invariably His rule of working.

c. The world gives its best first, and then it is not lasting, for "earth's pleasures come in

cups, not in fountains," and the supply is limited and soon exhausted.

d. Not so Christ. With Him it is always getting better.

I. In Creation the Best came Last.

1. What a sad condition we see in the beginning! Read again Genesis 1.
- 2.. The first step to improvement was calling forth of light.
3. That is to say, a fuller revelation of the ruin.
4. Note the successive stages.
- 5.. At last man, the crowning work of Creation, appears.
- 6.. The best came last.

II.. In Revelation the Best carne Last.

- ! . Through sin came revelation of Gospel truth, yet in stages.
2. How dim, how obscure, how incomplete, for generations.
3. But it was the dawn. Gradually the sun rises higher and higher, until the full blaze and glory of God was seen in the face of Jesus Christ. The best then came, and it was the last.

III. in Christ's Life the Best comes Last.

- I. "Man of Sorrows," "acquainted with grief."
2. Misunderstood by His own—hated by many,
3. The Cross with all its agony and shame.
4. But there came the Resurrect ion and the Ascension.
5. Best has still to come, when He conies for His own, and ushers in the Golden Age.

IV. In your Life, oh Worldling, the Best May Come Last.

1. What you may be tasting of life might seem all right.
2. But it is proof you haven't tasted Christ's wine.
3. These both thought theirs best until they tasted Christ's
4. Then, what an awful outlook you have—Hell gaping wide to receive you.
5. Oh, worldling, thou art receiving the good things now, and thy evil things will come last.
6. It can be different, and it will be if you turn to Him.

V. In Christian Experience the Best ought to come Last.

1. The bitterness of repentance is followed by sweetness of forgiveness.
2. The sadness of conviction is followed by gladness of conversion.
3. And it ought to be ever improving.
4. Sad to say, in many experiences it is not so.
5. "Oh that I was as in days past," they exclaim.
6. Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord?
7. But this should not be. Get low before Him and He will put things right.

VI. In our Christian Life the Best will come Last.

1. Cross-bearing is followed by Crown-wearing.

2. Disowned by the world, we shall be owned by the Lord before the assembled hosts of the Universe.
3. For our present weary pilgrimage will come eternal settlement in the promised land.

**WITH JESUS AT DIVINE SERVICE.
JESUS IN THE SYNAGOGUE.**

"He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up, and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day" (Luke 4. 16) .

Introduction.

A HARD CHURCH TO JOIN.

1. A negro had applied repeatedly for membership to St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Burlington, United States.
2. Bishop Hall was not satisfied that the negro's state of soul justified admission, so he kept delaying the matter.
3. At last he advised the applicant to pray that his spiritual condition might improve.
4. After doing so, he made a new application. The Bishop said to him: "Well, Erastus, have you prayed as I told you to?" "Yes, indeedy suh; I done prayed an' I done told de Lawd I wants to jine St. Paul's Church, an' de Lawd He says to me: 'Good luck, Rastus I been trying to jine dat Church fo' twenty years mahse'f.' There is something more than humour, it seems to us, in this anecdote. It will bear thinking over.

OUTSIDE MANY CHURCHES.

1. That reply reminds us of the possibility of the Lord Jesus being outside the Churches.
2. That is the teaching of Rev. 3.20. "Behold I stand," etc.
3. And consequently there is lifelessness and barrenness.
4. There are some places of worship where all there is of the presence of God is what you take yourself.

PROBLEMS THAT ARISE THEREON.

1. And that fact raises many problems.
2. What must I do when I go away on holiday, or remove, and cannot find a congregation or minister that come up to my ideal?
3. Our subject will be a help to us in the solving of this problem.

SOMETIMES WE CAN GO TO SYNAGOGUE TO FIND HIM.

1. That was not so in case of crowd in John 6.
2. After miracle of feeding 5000, etc., Jesus and disciples crossed the lake.
3. People hunted and at last found Jesus.
4. It would seem by verse 25 they found Him on seashore.
5. But by verse 59 we find they found Him and heard His discourse on Bread of Life in the Synagogue.

6. Do we not sometimes lose the Lord Jesus, or the consciousness of His presence, like Joseph and Mary, in the crowd (Luke 2. 44) .
7. Thank God, like them, we may find Him in the sanctuary (Luke 2. 46) .

How BLESSED TO TAKE HIM WITH Us. Ah, there is sure to be blessing then. This is the ideal.

THE SYNAGOGUE IS AN INTERESTING SUBJECT.

1. Much might be said of it.
2. Its origin is lost in antiquity.
3. It came into common use in time of Babylonian Captivity.
4. Reading of the Scriptures a very important part of its worship.
5. Here is the significance of this study: "It was from the Synagogue, and not the Temple, that the early Christian Church took her constitution, and in the main, her forms of worship. The Anglo-Catholic Revival seeks to take from the Temple."

I. Our Lord had a Regular Habit of Going to the Synagogue on the Sabbath Day. As HIS CUSTOM WAS.

1. This does not refer to a habit cultivated since He entered upon His public ministry.
2. But it was His invariable custom from infancy. GOOD HABITS.
 1. It is important to form good habits.
 2. They play an important part in our lives.

How HE VIEWED.

1. Perhaps he first viewed the Synagogue behind the trellis division in the gallery with His mother.
2. Then by and bye with Joseph in the men's part.

II. This was His Habit when Away from Home as well as when at Home.

1. It is well to emphasize this point.
2. Before the statement in verse 16 you have verse 15.
3. Many will, of course, attend the Synagogue in their native place.
4. But how different when they go farther afield, where they are not known.

III. He did not Attend simply Because He had been Asked to do Something.

1. He simply attended as an ordinary inhabitant of Nazareth.
2. It seems quite clear He had never taught—hence their astonishment at the wisdom betrayed by His discourse: "They were astonished, and said, Whence hath this Man this wisdom" (Matt. 13. 54).
3. Perhaps He had been Reader at times, but never expounder.

IV. He Attended Regularly though He Knew Far More than man could ever Teach Him.

1. This thought is worth careful pondering.
2. We fancy we ought not to attend a place of worship unless we are sure we shall learn something, and hear something fresh.
3. That was not so with the Lord Jesus.

4. In Him were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

V. He Attended Regularly although He Knew there were Hypocrites and Self-seekers also Attending.

1. Undoubtedly He had met with such in His Synagogue worship.
2. Read Matt. 6. 1, 2, and 5; and Matt. 23.6.
3. How He hated all such hypocrisy! How it must have grieved Him!
4. Yet He was regular in His attendance notwithstanding.

VI. Whenever He Attended Something Happened (Luke 4. 16) .

1. WE ACCOMPANY HIM TO NAZARETH SYNAGOGUE AND BEHOLD ANGER AROUSED.

- a. If the first effect of His preaching at Nazareth was astonishment, the second was anger.
- b. Anger because:

(1) The thoughts of their hearts had been laid bare.

(2) The truth had been proclaimed.

(3) They had been rebuked.

c. Nothing unusual even to-day, for things like this happen.

d. How many have gone out of Assembly, Church, or Hall in anger because they have been found out by the Word of God applied by the Spirit of God?

2. WITH HIM TO A SYNAGOGUE IN CAPERNAUM TO BEHOLD THE CASTING OUT OF AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT (Luke

4. 33).

a. An astonishing fact—one such in a house of prayer!

b. Presence of purity made impurity squirm.

c. And loudly protest.

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d. He was teaching, and people in astonishment were listening.

e. When the quietness of the place is disturbed by the awful cries of this demon-possessed man.

f. Note, the calmness and quietness and perfect ease of our Lord.

g. And unclean spirits still obey Him.

3. WITH HIM TO A GALILEE SYNAGOGUE To BEHOLD THE HEALING OF WITHERED ARM (Luke 6. 6-11).

a. It was his right hand--only Luke tells us this.

b. Note:

(1) Bade him step forward right in the midst.

(2) Stretch forth in faith.

(3) Type of good people not converted—only conscious of something lacking, something short, not of vileness, nor of moral leprosy.

4. WITH JESUS TO AN UNKNOWN SYNAGOGUE, PROBABLY IN GALILEE, TO BEHOLD THE HEALING OF THE CROOKED WOMAN (Luke 13. 10) .

- a. It was a trouble of long standing (15 years).
- b. It was a degrading trouble (could not look up). C. Jesus
- (1) Saw her. (2) Laid hands on her. (3) Cured her. d. Had she not gone there that day she may never have met Him again.

Conclusion.

1. We may have representations of all these cases in any Church or Assembly.
2. Some who may have a consciousness of vileness.
3. Others only conscious of shortcoming or crookedness.
4. But they are where the Lord can meet them.
5. Let Him heal.

**WITH JESUS AT THE SEASIDE.
AFTER A FISHING EXPERIENCE.**

"Depart from me, for I am a sinful roan, O Lord"
(Luke 5. 8) .

Introduction.

SEASONABLE.

1. We have here quite a holiday subject.
2. We are to accompany our Lord to the seaside.
3. To the piece of water fourteen miles long, and nine wide, known by three names: Lake of Gennesaret, Sea of Tiberius, Sea of Galilee.

PRESSED UPON HIM.

1. One morning our Lord was walking on the seashore.
2. The people saw Him, and rushed together in crowds to hear Him.
- 3 "Pressed upon Him to hear the Word of God," not word of man.
4. What an inspiring sight is it to see men eager to listen to the Word of Life!
5. And what is more, they were not disappointed, for the R. V. says: "As the people pressed upon Him and heard."

THE FISHERMEN WERE WASHING THEIR NETS.

1. Too engrossed with their work to notice the Lord, or
2. Too busy to spare time to listen to the Lord. They were disappointed men, and disappointment sometimes makes hearts leaden.
3. How many treat Divine things like that.
4. We wonder if our Lord had not a double purpose in entering into Simon's boat—not merely to use it for a pulpit, but to get Simon's attention?
5. Simon granted our Lord's request, and thrust out a little.
6. And now was compelled to listen.

WHY HE TAKES US FROM OUR NETS.

- I. That is why He sometimes has to take us from our nets.

2. We are prone to allow even legitimate things to monopolise too much of our attention.
3. We pray you, let Him have the pre-eminence in all things.

RECOMPENSE.

1. The Lord was determined that Simon should not be any the loser by lending his boat, and being taken from His work.
The Lord will not remain in debt to any.
3. He desires to recompense Simon for the loan of the boat..

NOTE THE ORDER.

1. He entered first, thrust out a little, then launched into the deep.
2. We have in mind many who are unwilling to give up the world and its pleasures.
3. My friend, don't bother about your unreadiness to do that, but invite Him on board your vessel—let that be your first concern.
4. The "thrusting out" followed, not preceded, His entrance. Get Him on board first.
5. Don't forget that the launching out followed the thrusting out.
 - a. Don't be content with the shallows.
 - b. Don't have a shallow, but a deep experience in Divine things.
6. Note, great success in service followed the launching out (or deepening of spiritual life) .

IMPERFECT OBEDIENCE.

1. Peter's words sound all right.
2. But, on closer inspection, we note obedience was imperfect.
3. The Lord said nets, not net, plural, not singular. **ASTONISHING SUCCESS.**
 1. This was a miracle.
 2. A great "catch of fish" at an occasional time is not miraculous.
 3. But that this was a miracle appears from Peter's words.
 4. Effects:

(1) Astonishment to all.

(2) But spiritual crisis in the soul of Peter. It burst upon him who Jesus was—Lord God.

1. It was the Language of—Whom?—What? **WHERE WAS HE?**

1. At first sight, it is difficult to say—saved or no.
2. Not the first time he had come into contact with Jesus.
3. It was his brother Andrew who brought him to Jesus.
4. He had been following Jesus for a while.
5. But here he is back into the old ruts again.
6. There are thousands we are not sure of.

DREADFUL POSSIBILITY.

1. It is an awful thought, that it is possible to see and hear the Lord, have Him pointed out as God's Lamb, note His miraculous work, and yet be unsaved.
2. Many admire Him, but do not resign to Him themselves.
3. Friend, it is not admiration, but submission, He asks first of you.

WE THINK WE MUST PUT THEM AMONGST THE LORD'S DISCIPLES.

1. It says they definitely believed on Him as result of miracle at Cana.
2. But, oh, the pity, that there should be the least room for doubt.
3. "This man put his hand to the plough and never looked back." So reads the epitaph on a tablet in Exeter Cathedral.

II. It was the Language of One Overwhelmed by the Consciousness of Sin and Unworthiness.

DISCIPLE BEFORE HE RECEIVED CONSCIOUSNESS OF SIN.

1. It is not a consciousness of sin that is essential.
2. But the recognition of the fact of sin.
3. We read that Sir A. Blackwood had no sense of sin until long after conversion.

How HE GOT THIS REVELATION.

1. He had been gradually learning more of Jesus in the previous weeks or months.
2. Now it suddenly bursts upon him Who it is that sits beside him in his own boat.
3. This sense of unworthiness and self-loathing is ever the effect of the Divine power and presence.

EASIER. It is easier to see sin in others than in ourselves.

III. It was the Language of One who Mistook the Purpose of the Revelation.

NOT WILLING TO DIE.

1. It was generally understood among the Jews that he who had had a special manifestation of God would die.
2. This was based on, "No man can see My face and live."
3. Simon did not wish to die yet.

IV. It was the Language of Ignorance.

HUMILITY.

1. It was the language of humility, yet of ignorance.
2. "A sinner such as I am is not fit company for Thee."
3. Peter shuddered at the thought of so much unworthiness being so near such purity and grandeur.

FALSE CONCEPTION. What a mistake Peter made. Why, He came to company with sinners.

SEE WHAT IT WOULD HAVE MEANT.

1. Separation from the Sin-Bearer--from Lamb of God.
2. Separation from Emancipation--"If Son shall make you free."
3. Separation from the Baptiser with Holy Spirit.
4. Separation from the Model--the Exemplar. All of these had been known by Peter

through John the Baptist.

V. It was a Request Mercifully Unheeded. GRANTED ONCE. Others made same request, only for a different reason, and the request was granted (Luke 8. 37) .

VI. It was a Request that brings, "Fear Not." ROTHERHAM'S rendering is: "Do not fear, henceforth thou shalt be taking men that they may live." PROSPERITY. They left all to follow Him, when their calling thus prospered.

SOME IN CHARGE. Mark says: "They left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after Him."

VII. A Warning: Those who say "Depart from me" shall have the Lord's "Depart from Me" (Matt. 7.23; 25. 41).

1. No earthly judge makes the criminal's doom a matter of personal relationship to himself. Christ does.
2. "Depart from Me." In the final word lies the serious significance of the sentence.
3. Who is He from whom they are cast away?
 - a. The Lamb. My sin must be taken away by Him if I am to be rid of it. To depart from Him means to depart from all hope. Expelled from the presence of Him Who alone can remove it.
 - b. The Saviour. To depart from Him means no hope whatever.

WITH JESUS IN A STORM.

"Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" (Mark 4. 38; Matt. 8. 23; Luke 8. 22-25).

Introduction. There is a story of a Christian Army. Officer at sea with his family in a storm. There was great terror amongst the passengers, but he was calm. His wife, in her consternation, chided him, saying that he ought to be concerned for her and her children, if not for himself, in such danger. He made no reply, but soon came to her with his sword drawn, and with a stern countenance pointed at her heart. She was not the least alarmed, but looked up into his face with a smile. "What," said he, "are you not afraid of a drawn sword at your breast?" "No," she replied, "not when I know it is in the hands of one that loves me." "And would you have me," he asked, "to be afraid of this tempest when I know it to be in the hand of my Heavenly Father, who loves me."

Two Lessons.

1. One lesson we are to learn from this Bible experience is that even in the wild tumults of nature we should be at peace, since our Saviour is Lord of nature.
2. And the other is that even in the fierce storms of life there should be a calm confidence in Him.

Day of Labour. This incident happened at the close of a day of great labour. Again He had preached from a boat as from a pulpit. Parables of Sower, etc., were uttered.

Without Preparation. He was weary and tired, and, as night drew near, He suggested crossing the lake. Probably He longed for rest and quietness, and could not otherwise escape the crowd. Without leaving the boat, and without any preparation, they started forth. (This is the meaning of "Took Him, even as He was.")

Subject To Squalls.. The Sea of Galilee lies 600 feet below sea level, and, like all inland seas or lakes, is subject to violent hurricanes of wind, which at times sweep down from the hills with great velocity.

Unusual. This must have been a storm of unusual severity. For the disciples, who were well seasoned sailors, lost their nerve.

HE SLEPT. But, while the wind howled, and waves leapt into the boat, Jesus was fast asleep. He slept because "His human nature was exhausted by His God-like acts," and because His human life was real, and not merely played or acted. But why did He sleep? How could He sleep in such a storm ? It was because He had such perfect trust in His Heavenly Father.

STATE OF PANIC.

1. These brave fishermen's faith was paralysed by fear.
2. They held out as long as possible, and then awoke the Lord by a cry of rebuke.
3. Why conflicting reports?
Matt.: "Lord save us, we perish."
Mark: "Carest thou not?"
Luke:" Master, Master, we perish."
4. The truth is, all are correct.
5. The fact is, they all cried at once. All place on record what they heard, or saw, or said.
6. They were in a state of panic.

WHAT AWOKE HIM. Observe, what the shriek of the storm could not do, the weak, frail cry of a human soul in distress achieved.

Two "AROSE." And what was the result. "There arose a great storm." "And He arose"—never fail to connect both. If ever a storm arises, remember He will, too.

SPOKE TO THEM FIRST. Here again there is an apparent discord. Matthew states He spoke to them before He commanded the storm to be still, Mark and Luke afterwards. We believe both are correct. He calmed their souls first, then nature.

THREATENED.

1. The original expressions, so we are given to understand, are singularly forcible, and are most happily rendered by the French translation, which says, "He threatened the wind and the waves."
2. Just as a master who, waking up, finds his servants in uproar and confusion, and

addresses them in menacing tone, Jesus, beholding the commotion in the elements, said to the winds, "Silence!" to the waves, "Keep still!" to all nature, "Be calm!"

THE IMPOSSIBLE. "It is proverbial to express an attempt at impossibilities, by saying: You may as well speak to the winds." He did it. The wind is not accustomed to drop, in a moment, and when there is any approach to this, the sea is not instantly calm. Yet such was the power of Christ, and such the obedience of all nature to His Voice, that this was accomplished.

FRUITFUL IN LESSONS. This incident is fruitful in lessons. All of the utmost value. I. They had Embarked with Christ.

PRIVILEGED. What a boon and privilege His presence was.

HAVE You? We are all sailing on the ocean of life, to the vast shores of Eternity. Is He on board your frail barque ?

ALL CAN HAVE HIM Now. That was not so then. "There were also with Him other little ships"—only near Him, they had not Him on board. What became of them in the storm ? We know not

GET HIM IN CALM AS THESE DISCIPLES DID. Men sometimes laugh at religion while the sun is shining. But when the tempest comes they are glad of Him. Seek Him while the sun still shines. If the storm is raging, and you have not the Lord on board, let us assure you that He is within hailing distance.

11. His Presence on Board is no Guarantee of Perpetual Calm.

1. One might think it would be so, but it is not.
2. Surely His presence in our hearts rouses the Devil.
3. The reason why this was so fierce a storm was because, we suspect, the Devil was trying to get rid of the Lord Jesus.
4. But if His presence means now and then a storm, remember "He maketh the storm a calm."
5. One enjoys the calm all the more because of the previous storm.

III. The Arrival of the Storm does not Mean that He has Left Us.

1. We should not conclude Christ has left us because the elements roar, and the deep threatens to swallow us up.
2. Therefore, let us trust Him in the darkness.

IV. Do not Lose Faith and Patience if He Seems Calmly Indifferent.

PROBLEM OF THE AGES. This is the problem of the ages--the Lord's apparent indifference to our pain and suffering. Sometimes Christ seems unconcerned in the trouble of His people, and regardless of their prayers.

"Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord? Arise, cast us not off for ever," is the exclamation in Psalm 44. 23.

WORSE OFF THAN Disciples. They could see Him, and get hold of Him. We seem

sometimes to be forgotten, and we cannot get hold of Him, and He seems a long way off.

BUT HE DOES CARE. One of these who cried: "Carest Thou not," years afterwards wrote: "He careth for you" (1 Peter 5. 7). Many of His silences we can now explain, and those still unsolved some day will be understood.

V. Remember, His Fortune is Bound up with Yours. If your ship sinks, lie will go down with it.

**WITH JESUS AT CAPERNAUM.
THE ROMAN OFFICER AND HIS SLAVE.
"Who was dear (precious, R.V.) to Him" (Luke 7. 2).**

Introduction. This is a charming incident in the life of our Lord. And it conveys an important lesson, especially as a study in contrast.

This was most unusual conduct on the part of a master. It is not often that a master will put himself to inconvenience these days for a sick servant, and was most unusual in those distant days. Then, they got all they could out of the servant, and when of no further use, cast them off as a piece of orange peel. Then remember that the master was a proud Roman officer.

Note the trouble he took for this poor sick slave. He first sent a deputation of Jewish Elders (verse 3) ; he then sent some friends of his own (verse 6) ; and, finally, he was so concerned that he came himself (study Matthew 8. 5 to 13) . This last step was most certainly a wise thing for him to do. It certainly is good to get other people to go to God for us, but that is not sufficient unless we go to Him for ourselves.

WHY DID HE DO THIS?

1. Not from a mere sense of duty. For no one felt it to be their duty in those days. There was no public conscience on matters of this sort.
2. it was not out of fear for a Coroner's Inquest, for there were none then, so cheap was human life.
3. It was love that moved him.

No DOUBT ABOUT His LOVE. Why is there no doubt that the Roman officer loved his servant ?

1. The way he acted emphatically proved this.
2. But the way he referred to his servant spoke volumes about his love. The beauty of the original is hidden in the A.V. The elders asked the Lord to heal the Centurion's slave; but the friends of the Roman officer took a direct message, which by and bye he himself supported, calling the sick slave, "My child." He does not use the rough word which

implies a bonds slave, but a term of endearment. This is brought out in the various renderings. "My young man," is the Weymouth rendering; "My boy," is the R.V.; and "My child," is Bullinger's rendering. This is delightful. Love betrays itself not only in conduct, but also in words, yea, in tone also.

A MORE REMARKABLE FACT. But there is a more remarkable fact still, and that is that God has, and does, put Himself about for us. More, He did not send a deputation, but came Himself. And He came to be a man and die. There is no doubt at all about His love—His works and His words all proclaim this. And God's treatment of us in such a gracious manner is more remarkable. And for the following reasons:

I. This Servant was Deserving of such Attention. Whereas we are not. There is no doubt that the Centurion loved him because he was worthy of that love; yea, that he had merited that love. It is generally understood that he had, at the risk of his own life, saved the life of his master. No wonder then that he was loved, when his Master owed life itself to his slave. But what about ourselves? Have we done anything notable for God? Why, the very opposite. We are, by nature, "enemies of God by wicked works," as the Bible declares. Yet, though utterly undeserving, we are dear to Him.

II. He was his Master's own Slave, whereas we Belong to Another. For the Centurion to put himself about concerning this servant really was not so very wonderful when considered from our standpoint, for was he not caring for his own property. Things are different with us, for we are the slaves of another, the enemy of God. Yet, though the slave of another, God loves us.

III. He was Dying, whereas we are Dead. That makes a tremendous difference. Whilst there's life, there's hope, we say; in our case we are lifeless, so far as spiritual life is concerned.

IV. He was Helpless, and so are We. And, as in his case, Another is, and has, interested Himself in us. See what He has already done on our behalf--sent His Son to die for us; bestowed the Holy Ghost to convict, woo, and win us; and given us a wonderful Book for our guidance and learning. Is He Dear to You? You are dear to Him! It was the sickness of this servant that brought his master into contact with the Lord on His behalf. Surely you won't wait until sickness drives you to Him ?

WITH JESUS AT JERICHO. THE CONVERSION OF ZACCHAEUS.

"He looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house" (Luke 19. 1-10).

Introduction.

Most UNUSUAL. That is to say, the Lord invited Himself. This was a most unusual thing for the Lord to do. In fact, this is the only instance on record when our Lord did do so.

Therefore this incident stands unique in the sacred Records.

His CUSTOM. With this exception, He only became a guest when invited. He even acted in this manner towards His disciples.

1. In the account of our Lord walking on the water (Mark 6. 48). Mark states He "would have passed by them."
2. And in the walk to Emmaus (Luke 24. 28), Luke states that "He made as though He would have gone further."

OFTEN A GUEST. He had often gone before as a guest into houses. Into houses not only of His friends, but also of His secret foes----but always as an invited guest. Yes, even into the houses of His enemies.

ENEMIES. If you feel a bitter enmity in your heart toward 1-Iiln--take encouragement. He will enter your heart as a guest, even though you hate Him. He will then turn the hatred out.

ACTED AS A KING. If you ask the reason why, there are two answers, One we shall deal with presently, the other we state now. This conduct of our Lord harmonises with the events narrated in this chapter later. This chapter gives an account of the one occasion on which He allowed His Kingship to be publicly acknowledged. Usually He checked and forbade any such acclamations.

His RIGHT. As a Royal Person He has a right to invite Himself. He has the right to command His subjects. That is what our own King does.

CLUE To FORMER STUDY. Luke alone records this event. We said in another study that we knew not what length of time passed between the healing of the one blind man as He entered and the healing of the two as He left Jericho. But this gives us a pretty good idea. He must have stayed overnight with Zacchaeus.

UNIQUE. So unusual an incident is worth our closest study. Why should Zacchaeus be selected? What was there about his character that justified this He was once a pure, patriotic. Jewish boy. (Name reveals that he was a pure Jew.

I. The Descent of Zacchaeus.

1. BEGAN WITH HIS CHOICE OF BUSINESS.

- a. I was going to say with his choice of residence.
- h. For without doubt he lived in a place that had a bad name.
- c. Probably he had been born there.
- d. But, without doubt , his first step down was when he decided to become a tax-gatherer under the Roman Government.
- e. Not that the business in itself was wrong.
- j. Rates and taxes are respectable, legitimate, nuisances.
- g. It was the method of gathering the Roman taxes which offered plentiful opportunities

for robbery and extortion.

h. Of course it was possible to conduct such a business honestly. We fancy Matthew (once a publican, afterwards an Apostle) must have done so.

i. But to one of a weak nature like Zacchaeus such was next to impossible.

j. Some trades had far better be abandoned by some who wish to live the better life.

2. HIS DESCENT INCREASED RAPIDLY WHEN HE SUFFERED THE LOSS OF REPUTATION.

a. We do not love tax gatherers even in this country, for none care to be compelled to give to Governments.

b. But in Judea, the tax gatherers were hated for an additional reason, that they had become the officials of a Heathen Power.

c. Note how they had christened him—"Guest with a sinner" (7).

d. Not that they did not admit themselves to be sinners (as in China) .

3. His DESCENT BECAME SWIFT WHEN BY LOSING HIS REPUTATION HE LOST SELF-RESPECT, AND CONSEQUENTLY HAD NO CHARACTER TO SUPPORT.

a. Usually it is easy to degrade a person by reckoning them so.

b. The first step downward is to sink in the estimation of others.

c. The next step downward is to sink in a man's own estimation.

d. As he had no character to support and live up to, he just let himself go.

4. AT THE BOTTOM..

a. There you see him at last right at the bottom.

b. With a load of guilt.

II. The Ascent of Zacchaeus. God must have been at work with him. The first evidence of his ascent is:

1. IT BEGAN WITH HIS REPENTANCE AND RESTITUTION.

a. Verse 8 has been understood as his decision after our Lord's entry into his house.

b. But please not the present tense—not "I will give," but "I give."

c. It was a policy he had been pursuing unknown to his enemies.

d. And he only declared it to justify our Lord before the eyes of them, not for any personal honour.

e. Think of it--this man, so condemned, had, all unknown to them, commenced to lead a better life.

f. Ah, many a person we sit in judgment upon is perhaps leading a better life than we ourselves are.

g. But we pray you to note, salvation did not come to him then.

h.. Repentance and restitution did not save him.

i. Salvation only came when Christ came.

2. IT INCREASED WITH HIS REFUSAL TO ALLOW A HINDRANCE TO KEEP HIM FROM JESUS.

- a. "Though Jesus did not follow after fame, fame followed after Him," wrote an old writer. Crowds followed.
- b. No doubt curiosity led Zacchaeus to seek to see Jesus.
- c. But there was heart hunger too.
- d. There is always something to keep us from Him, some crowd of engagements, friends, pursuits.
- e. Note:

- (1) He pocketed his dignity.
- (2) He did not mind being laughed at.

3. HIS QUICK RESPONSE TO OUR LORD'S ROYAL COMMAND.

- a. How did our Lord know Zacchaeus was there in hiding?
- b. How did our Lord know his name?
- c. Only one answer is possible—He was, and is, Divine.
- d. "To-day"—not to-morrow.
- e. Perhaps it was the first time for years his name had been uttered in kindly accents.
- J. He came down. There must be always a coming down ere He can abide in our hearts.
- g. Oh, how few, comparatively speaking, give Christ the glad, unhesitating obedience of Zacchaeus.

4. HIS GLAD AND Joyous RECEPTION OF THE LORD JESUS.

5. HIS HUMBLE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST.

- a. "Stood."
- b. The place of the humble slave.
- c. His acknowledgment of Jesus' lordly authority and dignity.'

Application. This is a message to:

- 1. That one who, with a real heart hunger for better things,
- 2. And despised by others,
- 3. Is overburdened by a sense of unfitness and unworthiness.
- 4. "Oh! make haste!" cries the Lord.

WITH JESUS AT JERICHO.

"And he, casting away his garment, sprang up and came to Jesus" (Mark 10. 46-52, R.V.).

Introduction. That was how blind Bartimaeus came to Jesus long ago, and that is what we desire all poor sinners would do. Coming to Him always means a "casting away." Some cast away before they come to Him, whilst others come, then cast away. The all-important matter is "COME!"

This is one of the most familiar Bible incidents. We have always admired the man who would not be silenced. But, familiar though it be, there are points about it all have not noticed.

Our Lord was on His last journey to Jerusalem before His death. That journey was more in the nature of a Triumphal Journey than others He had taken. Crowds accompanied Him. He seemed exceedingly popular. The shouting multitudes are escorting Him out of the city. They had just passed the gate, and are in the act of turning toward the mountain gorge through which runs the Jerusalem road, when, amidst the plaudits of the throng a cry of need is heard.

And what then? Could one cry of need be heard above the din? Certainly it was not a weak cry, for it could be literally rendered, "He screamed." But even then, what was the scream of but one amidst all that noisy Eastern crowd! Ah, the cry of wretchedness was far sweeter to Him than all their hollow Hallelujahs. It was heard, and it stopped the Lord in His progress.

Have you ever been puzzled about prayer, and wondered if one cry from you would be heard, and felt tempted to give way to doubt and despair? Ah, take heart from this true story. Just think of the multitudes now hymning His praises in the glory. What is one cry? Everything to Him. Cry, and you will be attended to.

It was wonderful that Joshua of old could command the sun, and it was stopped in its progress; but here is something more wonderful still—a poor blind beggar arresting the steps of Him who bade the sun to be, and Who keeps it whirling in its orbit. He got to the Lord Jesus; and so may every sinner if they will take the five steps this man took. They are five words we can take as key-words, and they are: "Heard," "Cry," "Came," "Received," "Followed."

I. He Heard of Blessing Granted to Others (Matt. 20. 30; Luke 18. 35). Our Lord's Name had become a household word in Palestine. He had been labouring there for three years or more. There is no doubt that this blind man had heard of Him. Without a doubt he had heard of the blessing received by the blind man on the other side of Jericho, but a wee while before. A discrepancy has been supposed in the three Gospels. Matthew says that two men cried "as they departed from Jericho." Luke says one man cried "as He came nigh to Jericho." Mark says one man "as He went out of Jericho." Those who believe we have here a discrepancy do so on the assumption that they all tell of one and the same event. But the Scriptures do not say that this is the case. Surely there were three men healed at different times.

We have here a most solemn and yet an encouraging fact. The unknown man Luke tells about who influenced Bartimaeus, and Bartimaeus influenced his unknown companion in sorrow, are facts that are impressive. Who knows but that the salvation of someone depends upon your stepping out, as in the case before us!

II. He Recognised the Lord Jesus as the Divine One. He must often have pondered over the person and work of Christ, and he felt that here was One who was more than merely human. Asking the reason of the commotion, they informed him that "Jesus of Nazareth" was passing by, when he called out, "Jesus, thou Son of David," not merely "Jesus of Nazareth." He recognised His Messiahship .

III.. He Made the Best of his Opportunity. Note that the Lord Jesus never entered in person Jericho again, so that this was the blind man's last chance, which he made good use of, thank God! Of course, now the Lord Jesus is present always everywhere, yet there are times when He seems to specially visit places and persons in salvation grace.

IV. He Did not Mind being Conspicuous. To come right out into the open means suffering to retiring dispositions, yet why should we not be bold in confessing our need of a Saviour. This blind man shouted to attract the attention of our Lord, never troubling about the attention he was drawing to himself.

V. He Refused to be Silenced. How changeable are folk, bidding us hold our tongue one minute, and then urging us to redoubled effort the next moment. But the more they tried to silence him the more he shouted.

VI. He Cast Aside every Hindrance. This happened to be the long Eastern cloak which hindered free movement. Observe, it was something useful and lawful, yet it hindered him coming. Whenever we think of coming to Him hindrances always crop up. These, by His grace we must lay aside, whether lawful or otherwise.

VII. He Received the Blessing. Observe, he was called whilst still in his blindness. His sight came after he came to Jesus and not before. He recognised sight as a gift to be received, and not as a reward to be merited or earned. He received his sight immediately. So will we.

VIII. He Followed, Glorifying God.

WITH JESUS AT THE LAST SUPPER.

"And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves" (Luke 22. 17) .

Introduction.

THANKFULNESS. Lessing, considered by some as one of the great thinkers of the eighteenth century, once remarked: "A single thought of thankfulness to Heaven is the most perfect prayer."

PRESENT DIFFICULTY.

1. Observe, He not only took the cup, but then gave thanks, and gave to others.
2. The difficulty is to persuade us to take the cup; and then to secure our thanks, and finally to get us to hand it to others.

LORD'S TABLE MANNERS.

1. Here we incidentally get a glimpse at our Lord's table manners.
2. The Jews generally partook of their meals in a serious and devout manner, after a solemn blessing and thanksgiving to God for His goodness.
3. To partake of food without offering thanks to God was considered sacrilege.

4. We can almost say with certainty the exact words our Lord uttered.
 - a. The usual grace said before partaking of bread was: "Blessed be Thou, our God, King of the Universe, who brought forth bread out of the earth."
 - b. And before partaking of the contents of the cup they said: "Blessed be our God, King of the Universe, the Creator of the fruit of the vine."

ORIGIN OF GRACE BEFORE MEAT.

- I. It is generally conceded that here we have the origin of our present custom of saying grace.
 2. Do you say grace?
 3. In homes where this duty is not practised, it is often the first confession of Christ by the new convert.
 4. The bowing of the head, not in an ostentatious spirit, but in grateful and adoring thanks.
 5. It is reported that a good King noticed that his courtiers never said grace, so he resolved upon giving them a lesson. He picked a beggar from the streets in his rags, and told him how to act. The King brought him to the Royal table. After feasting on all the good things provided, to the astonishment of the courtiers, he arose up, and went away without giving thanks to the King for his liberality. At the expression of anger at the man's ingratitude, he reminded them how they had treated their Heavenly Father.

Before proceeding, whilst on the subject of grace before meat, let us make one or two remarks.

- a. Don't ask the Lord to make you thankful—what base ingratitude. Tell Him you are thankful.
- b. Long graces are not advisable, for the dinner will get cold. An impressive grace we heard was just, "We thank Thee!"
- c. Avoid saying grace in a mere formal fashion. Jesus would not repeat the usual Jewish grace in a mere formal fashion.

THE LORD'S HABITUAL PRACTICE.

1. But this action of our Divine Lord was His habitual practice.
2. Not only at the taking of the daily cups at the homely meals, but all the cups His Heavenly Father gave to Him.
3. There were four cups used at the Passover feast.
 - a. At the commencement.
 - b. During supper.
 - c. Cup of blessing (verse 17).
 - d. At the singing of hymn (verse 20) .
4. There are three cups mentioned in Scripture. One the Lord drank. Two we can drink.
 - I. The Cup of Indignation and Wrath (Psa. 75. 8).

1. That is the cup referred to in this Psalm and Luke 22. 42.
2. The cup our Lord dreaded was cup of indignation and wrath.
3. In the Father's hand there was a cup—and the Saviour took it and drank it to the bitter dregs. That cup was not one of physical, but spiritual suffering.
4. Dr. Pierson has told a touching story relating to the war between Russia and Circassia in the middle of the last century.
5. The prophet chief, almost adored by his followers, found that someone was exposing to the enemy his designs and plans, and he issued a decree that if the traitor was found out, one hundred lashes on the bare back should be administered.
6. A few days later it was discovered, to his astonishment, that the guilty party was his own mother.
7. He went into fasting and retirement for two days, and coming out pallid and ghastly, ordered his mother to be brought from the tent, and her back bared for the scourge. He stood by while one, two, three, four, five of those fearful lashes gashed her flesh, then he made the executioner to arrest his blows, bared his own back, and took the other ninety-five lashes on his own person, till the flesh hung in shreds.
8. And the effect it is said was electric. His followers were melted, and even his mother was utterly subdued, as she never would have been by force.
9. Jesus stood forth.
 - a. Bore all the stripes that were ours by right.
 - b. Drank this cup, we by legal right should take.
10. Let your prayer be: "Oh, make me understand it, Help me to take it in; What it meant to Thee, the Holy One, To bear away my sin. "
11. But He drank the cup of wrath in order that another cup might be ours. The. The Cup of Salvation (Psalm 116. 13).
 1. Thinking of the Cross, my heart cries: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?"
 2. What can I do to show my gratitude?
 - a. Our first expression of gratitude ought to be to "take"
 - (1) For before you can begin to toil for Him you must trust Him.
 - (2) Before our Lord cried "Blessed," He said "Repent.
 - (3) "Take"—He offers it to you.
 - (4) It is a gift—we are to be His guests.

- b. Your second expression of gratitude must be "divide" —i.e., hand story to others.
- 3. All you have to do is to take, give thanks—and give it to others after partaking of it yourself.
- 4. "How low down can I drink?" asked a poor little girl when handed a glass of hot milk. She belonged to a poor family, where such things had to be shared. She was astonished when informed she could drink it all.
- 5. Oh, drink deeply. Drink much of His Salvation. Drink, and drink again.

III. The Cup of Suffering (Matt. 20. 22, 23) .

- 1. It is good when mothers come to the Lord on behalf of their sons—as the mother of Zebedee's children did.
- 2. "Ye shall indeed drink of the cup"—no escape from it.
- 3. The cup of suffering falls to the lot of all. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.
- 4. But the advantage of the Christian over the worldling is that he takes the cup out of a loving Father's hand.
- 5. In the days of our childhood the bitter medicine went down the easier if the loving hand of our beloved father or mother handed it to us, rather than the hand of a stranger.

HOW DO YOU TAKE THE CUP OF SUFFERING?

- I. But how do you take it?
- 2. One we know was a long while ago called to pass through sorrow.
- 3. Whilst walking in a busy thoroughfare, and pondering over this text, like a flash the rebuke came: "You have taken the cup of suffering, but have never offered thanks,"
- 4. Jesus did—He took the cup, and gave thanks.
- 5. There are cups of disappointment we have to drink Plans concerning your future service are overthrown. Plans concerning your children are upset. Plans concerning your position in life crumble to pieces.
- 6. What must we do under the circumstances? Take the cup and give thanks.

LET US GIVE TWO HELPS TO THANKFULNESS.

- 1. Don't Forget Past Mercies.
 - a. Look at life as Gladstone did.
 - b. When he was reminded of the pain he suffered during the last six months of his life, he said there were no reasons why he should forget that he had enjoyed twice 86 times six months of wonderful painlessness.
 - c. Generally we allow the little suffering to obliterate from our memories the years of painlessness.
 - d. In Stanley's "Life of Arnold," we have a similar example. Taken suddenly ill, his son entered the room and sat down with his mother at the foot of the bed. Presently his father said in a low voice: "My son, thank God for me!" And as his son did not at once catch his meaning, he went on saying: "Thank God, Tom, for giving me this pain. I have suffered so little pain in my life, that I feel it is very good for me; now God has given it to me, and I do so thank Him for it."

2. Don't Forget the Bitter Cup is Handed to you by the Pierced Hand. Seek for the grace of thankfulness, so that you may be able to say:

"My God, I thank Thee, Who hast made
The earth so bright,
So full of splendour and of joy
Beauty and light;
So many glorious things are here,
Noble and right.
"I thank Thee more that all my joy Is touched with pain:
That shadows fall on brightest hour:,
That thorns remain.
So that earth's bliss may be my guide,
And not my chain.
"For Thou Who knowest, Lord, how soon
Our weak heart clings.
Hast given us joys, tender and true,
Yet all with wings;
So that we see, gleaming on high,
Diviner things. "

Introduction. How fitting it is for the Lord's people to meditate on the seven last words of our Lord from the Cross. Not His seven last words--His last word can never be spoken, for He is the Eternal One.

Out of the hundreds of people mentioned in the Bible, it has pleased the Lord to move the inspired writers to allude to the dying words of but some half-dozen, and then in the briefest possible manner. But there is one exception, and exceptions to general rules in the Bible arrest attention. That exception is the Lord Jesus. The chapters devoted to the account of Christ's death are altogether out of proportion to those dedicated to the record of His life. This fact is impressive. We know the lesson—the work He came to do was to die for men. That is the Gospel: "Christ died for our sins."

The seven words from the Cross fall into two clear sections—the first three for others; the following four concerning Himself.

Suffering is a great test of character. What we really are is the more easily manifested through suffering. Observe that our Lord's first thought was not for Himself, but for others; and you realise one of the great revelations of His suffering. As He had to suffer the most agonising of pains, He could have been excused if He had been absorbed in His own sufferings and pains; but no, He thought of others—others were His first concern.

I. Forgiveness. Christ's first word from the Cross is the sinner's first great need, viz., forgiveness: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23. 34).

"THEN." When? Mark well that adverb. It was when, having nailed Him as vermin to the

Cross of wood, and raising it, had allowed it to fall into the hole made for it with a dreadful and awful thud and jolt, that lacerated the newly made wounds—"THEN!" There was not a trace of resentment or bitterness. Prior to Him comforting His mother, before He gave thought to Himself or anything else, He prayed for His executioners, and the Jewish authorities who were behind the sentence.

'FATHER.'" What a tender word! But that tender and loving word was to be addressed to God no more till after the close of that awful three hours' agony. God remained His Father, but He took the sinners' place, and as the sinners' substitute could not use that word. This is an important thought, and explains a great deal.

ADVOCATE. The Lord Jesus was Sacrifice and Advocate all in one. An Advocate always seeks for extenuating points. The moment the sacred Blood began to flow the intercession for sinners began. Jesus pleads in extenuation, the guilty party's ignorance.

ANSWER. This prayer was answered very speedily in the case of the dying thief; in the Centurion's case; in the case of the people on the Day of Pentecost; and in every penitent sinner since, including you and me, dear reader.

SOME QUESTIONS.

1. Have you been forgiven? Do not stay away from Him. Has this prayer been answered for you yet?
2. Have you forgiven? Has the Spirit of Jesus taken possession of you? We forgive, not to be forgiven, but because we are forgiven (Eph. 4. 32).
3. Let me ask myself three questions: 1st, Am I a forgiven sinner? 2nd, Am I a forgiven saint ? 3rd, Am I a forgiven servant ?

H. Future Life. Christ's second word from the Cross settles the fear in most hearts concerning the future, and was spoken to the dying thief, viz., "To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23. 39 to 43). It is quite clear that at the first both thieves railed at Christ. To prove this, we have only to turn to Matthew 27. 44, and Mark 15. 32. Why the change? Certainly due to the Holy Spirit. Yet the Holy Spirit usually works through others. Assuredly it was the wonderful spirit of forgiveness manifested by the Lord Jesus, and indeed His whole demeanour which influenced the thief.

THE EVIDENCES OF CONVERSION are three:

1. His honest confession (verse 41) . The first step to God usually is the taking by the sinner of his proper place.
2. His frank declaration of our Lord's Divinity and Kingship. Note: "Thy Kingdom."
3. His conviction that the soul after death still lives: "Remember me."

THE LORD'S SWIFT REPLY.

1. Overthrows the teaching concerning Purgatory. "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." No such place as Purgatory here. From earth to Paradise right away, direct.
2. Explains what Paradise is. The value of the promise is in two words, "With Me." To

have entered Paradise alone, without a friend to introduce him, and to plead for him, stained as he was with guilt, would that have satisfied and comforted him? But "With Me"—ah, that made all the difference in the world!

3. Overthrows the "sleep" theory. Jesus meant not that his soul should be with Him in sleep. Surely His words mean the conscious presence of two personalities thoroughly awake. "To-day, etc.," would have been deceitful language unless it meant that the soul of the penitent thief should be conscious of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sleep is only used for the body.

LEARN.

I. Here was salvation by faith only. He could not perform any works to save his soul, for he was nailed to the Cross.

2. A great deal of knowledge is not required to be saved.

3. There is a way to Heaven from the very gate of death.

4. The suddenness of conversion, and of spiritual change. In a moment.

5. Note also the swiftness of spiritual growth. Rapidly the dying thief got a grasp of Messianic truth, and other truth as revealed in his request.

6. There is hope for the worst of sinners.

"The dying thief rejoiced to see

That Fountain in his day.

And there may I, though vile as he, Wash all my sins away. "

7. Do not despise death-bed repentances—the Lord Jesus did not.

III. Home Circle. Christ's third word on the Cross touches the home circle, the loved family, wherein He commits as a legacy to John His mother (see John 19. 25 to 27). After the Incarnation and birth of the Saviour, the blessed mother of Jesus seems to retire behind the scenes. We hear very little about her. Her work in the world was to be the mother of His humanity. Not the Mother of God, as some erroneously declare.

MARY AT THE CROSS.

1. Being His mother, she is there at His death. How mother-like!

2. She is there submissively and uncomplainingly.

3. She is not alone, for other two Marys are with her—the blessedness of companionship in, sorrow.

THE SACREDNESS OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

1. Here, in the hour of His greatest sorrow, He sanctifies the ties of home, the relationship of the hearth. Public servants should never forget private family claims.

2. Love needs only a hint. The disciple who understood Jesus, knew what our Lord's short message meant, and fulfilled his charge by taking Mary to his own home.

3. Have you ever been impressed by the fact that nowhere in Scripture does the Lord Jesus ever call Mary, "Mother!" Of course she was His mother, but in view of Mariolatry, how impressive is this fact!

IV. Atonement. Christ's fourth word reveals the awful price He had to pay to atone for

our sin. The fourth word was the cry of the Forsaken One (see Matthew 27. 46). From noon till 3 p.m. there was darkness. What happened to our Lord Jesus during those three hours we know not. We must respect the silence of Scripture. The darkness was Nature's sympathy with its Creator. Extraordinary light attended His birth; extraordinary darkness attended His death. At last the silence is broken by a cry. So there was not only the darkness of nature but there was darkness in the soul of our Saviour.

"My GOD." Only once did the Lord Jesus call upon His Father: as God. And it was here. He appeals to God as the Creator, and that is the very lowest ground. Here in His agony He goes back to the language of His childhood, for He speaks in Syriac, His old vernacular. In the darkness He has not lost the consciousness or fact of Sonship, but the right, for the time being, on account of taking our place, so He does not use nor avail Himself here of the term Father.

His ONLY QUESTION. You will notice this is a question, the only question ever uttered to the Father from those lips. And how startling to find that to that solitary question there was no reply.

WHY THAT CRY?

1. Was it weakness? No. It could not be weakness, because later He cried with a loud voice. This proved He was not exhausted.
2. Was it imagination? Sometimes we think we are forsaken of God, for most have their times of deep depression. But of course we are mistaken, for He Himself has declared: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Was He mistaken? Had He made a mistake? He never made a mistake in His life.

HE WAS FORSAKEN BECAUSE HE WAS MADE SIN. "This really is a cry that no created intelligence can fathom. It is a cry out of deeper depths than the human soul has ever touched." It was really true. He was forsaken because we ought to have been; He was forsaken in order that that fate might never be ours.

REFLECTION. The Lord's people sometimes have to walk or sit in darkness (read Micah 7. 8) . Remember even in the darkness we can still say, "My God." Jesus had no desire or intention to abandon the God who had forsaken Him.

V. Thirst. Christ's fifth word from the Cross is the cry of His humanity, "I thirst" (John 19. 28). This is the only word of the seven that brings home to us the real humanity of the Lord Jesus. He really became flesh. For a while His spirit was completely triumphant over His body; but presently His bruised body asserted itself, and physical anguish must find language. This is the shortest of the seven words.

VARIOUS THIRSTS.

1. There is bodily thirst. This was the anguish of physical thirst in its most acute form.
2. There is thirst for God. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee." His cry after God was an evidence of the

possession of this soul-thirst.

3. There is thirst after the souls of men. "He thirsted to be thirsted after."

VI. Accomplishments. Christ's sixth word was, "It is finished" (John 19. 28 to 30). Rightly understood, this is a claim unique. It means much more than, "It is all over." Most men leave unfinished tasks. Jesus accomplished everything He set out to do. "The finished work of Christ" was a phrase our fathers were very fond of. By this phrase they meant that God did not need to be propitiated, for Jesus had accomplished that great work.

PROFESSOR CLOW gives four thoughts on this phrase. In it he saw:

1. A Sigh of Relief. What a relief it is when we have completed some arduous task. "There, that's finished," we exclaim. This meant for the Saviour that His life of suffering and of loneliness was finished.
2. A Shout of Victory. Tennyson declared that "The most pathetic utterance in all history is that of Christ on the Cross, 'It is finished!'" "Nevertheless," says his biographer, "He also recognised the note of triumph in 'It is finished.'"
3. A Message to the Father. He^o was not ashamed to announce to His Father the completion of the work entrusted to Him. The work had been well and truly done.
4. A Proclamation to Men. What has this to do with me? The fact that someone else has completed a task may have little interest for me! But this has to do with me! The successful completion of His work is a matter of life and death to me.

WHAT WAS FINISHED? The work of atonement!

VII. Rest. Christ's seventh and last word on the Cross is a very precious one: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Luke 23. 46. These words were uttered in a loud voice, proving that Jesus did not die of weariness, that His life was not forced from Him.

OBSERVE.

1. He died with Scripture on His lips. You will find these words in the Old Testament.
2. He again calls God by the endearing term, Father. The storm of God's wrath beat fiercely upon that devoted head—but the storm has passed and the sunshine has come again.
3. Note, "Thy hands." Not the Devil's. Some erroneously say that when He died Satan got hold of Him, and took Him to Hell.

No; no; a thousand times, no! He was in the Father's safe and loving keeping: "Thy hands."

William the Conqueror died exclaiming: "I commend my soul to Mary." But Lady Jane Gray, laying her head upon the fatal block, said: "Lord, into Thy hand I commend my spirit." She followed her Lord's example.

Then we read that our Lord "Dismissed His spirit"—wonderful statement! This was an act of Deity. We can never dismiss our spirits. He did.

**WITH CHRIST AT CALVARY.
IN DARKNESS.**

Sitting in Darkness,	Luke 1. 78 and 79
Hanging in Darkness,	Matt. 27. 45 and 46
Called Out of Darkness,	1 Peter 2. 9
Turned from Darkness,	Acts 26. 18

Four Scriptures which have a close connection with each other, as we shall see in the course of our meditation.

I. Sitting in Darkness (Luke 1. 78, 79) . With glee some Bible critics have pointed out here a supposed inaccuracy. "See," say they, "how Zacharias, filled with the Holy Ghost, misquotes Scripture!" This they say on the supposition that he was quoting Isaiah 9. 2. But Zacharias did not say so. He was so saturated with Scripture that, on examining his utterance, we find that he was quoting from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Malachi. As a matter of fact there are in Isaiah two special Scriptures on darkness—1st, one on Walking in Darkness (9. 2). But 29 years later, the prophet spake on Sitting in Darkness (42. 7).

It is a picture of deterioration and degeneration, and in our Lord's day it had come true. Once, though in darkness, they exercised an element of freedom and unsettlement and dissatisfaction, for they walked in darkness; now, in fast and fatal bondage, they sit in a dark and loathsome dungeon.

Allow this picture language to grip you. The late Dr. Jowett has so graphically drawn attention to it. "Sitting in darkness!" Try to realise it. You sit by the fireside on a winter's night, with a bright fire making the room genial and warm. You sit on, until the fire burns low, and eventually dies out, and the warmth gives place to a searching chill. Then the lamp goes out, and darkness is added to coldness. But you still sit on, and terrible bondage becomes yours. And there are people whose soul-life is just like that. There is no fire in the grate, and their light is gone out, and they abide in cold and dreary desolation, and hard bondage.

It was not ever thus. Once there was a fire in the grate, and it bright light showing and shining. The soul of man was lighted by the presence of the Holy Spirit, and warmed by the fact and presence of Divine love.

But sin changed all this. Sometimes a darkened room helps an invalid to recover health, but a darkened soul is the result of a spiritual catastrophe, and betokens the presence of a dead spirit, a lifeless soul. Job speaks of "a land where the light is as darkness "

SITTING IN DARKNESS. This is either a picture of enjoyment, contentment, or enslavement and despondency, or all.

II. Hanging in Darkness (Matt. 27. 45, 46) . Have you ever connected Sitting in Darkness with Hanging in Darkness? There is a very close connection. If we had never walked or sat in the darkness of sin, He would never had found it necessary to have hung in darkness. He hung in darkness to atone for our sin, and to make it possible for us to sit in light--the light of His presence and love. The solar darkness He experienced, was an

emblem of soul-darkness He endured on our account.

III. Called Out of Darkness (1 Peter 2. 9). This declares that for those sitting in darkness God has a tender regard. That., for them, "a Day-spring from on High hath visited us." That also a voice is heard, calling out of the darkness.

IV. Turned from Darkness (Acts 26. 18) . Do you say: "I hear the voice calling me out of darkness, but I am chained fast, and cannot respond." Well, for you there is hope, for there is One Who will turn you out of darkness, for He can liberate you from the fetters of sin, and lead you right out into liberty.

PROVISION FOR NEED.

"And Abraham called that place Jehovah Jireh"
(Gen. 22. 14) .

THE name of Jehovah Jireh is a monument of a great discovery and a great deliverance. It means either the Lord will see, or the Lord will provide. In common speech these two words "see" and "provide" are distinct in their meaning. Yet the moment we deal with God the two words are found to be one and the same, for His prevision means His provision.

"In the mount of the Lord it (A.V.)—He (R.V.)—shall be seen." Surely here we have a hint and explanation of John 8. 56. God gave Abraham insight into the mystery of the Cross. We can say that the Lord has now provided for man's great needs.

I. For Man's Insensibility and Slumber, He has provided in the Person of the Holy Spirit an Awakener, One to rouse us from the slumber of sin.

II. For Man's Sin, the precious Blood of Christ. It is not left to the sinner to provide a sacrifice (Gen. 22. 8), for God Himself has done this. The Lord Jesus died in our stead, as the ram died in the stead of Isaac. Dr. Dinsdale T. Young has so splendidly declared: "Every day I live, yes, every day, this possesses me more and more completely in mind and heart--that that death was a substitution. I know it is an old-fashioned word, a word that is spurned in some quarters. I confess that it satisfies my guilty conscience and comforts my troubled heart, and gives me a joy in my religion incomparable.

When I look up and say, He took my place, I cannot understand it. But He did it. He bore my sins in His own body on the Tree."

III. For Man's Ignorance, His Word, the Bible. Read Psalm 119. 98 and 99. We must be people of the one Book, whatever other books we may possess and read. We must give the Bible its chief place in our lives.

IV. For Man's Weakness, the Holy Spirit. How weak is man. But the Holy Spirit communicates strength, through Regeneration and Renewal.

V. For Man's Emptiness, the Divine Fulness. There is fulness of blessing for all who

believe. It pleased the Father that in His beloved Son all fulness should dwell, and when He comes and fills my heart and life with His holy and blessed presence I have the fulness.

VI. For Man's Loneliness, the Divine Companionship. He has promised never to leave us. What ample and blessed provision He has made for all our needs.

THE NAMES OF OUR LORD JESUS.

Matthew 1. 21, 23.

- I. EMMANUEL—What He was, HIS PERSON.
2. JESUS—What He was to Do, HIS WORK.
3. CHRIST—What Place He was to Fill,HIS OFFICE.
4. LORD—What Claim He was to Make,HIS HEADSHIP.
5. KING—What Rank He was to Hold,HIS KINGDOM.
6. SON OF GOD—In Relation to God, HIS MISSION.
7. SON OF MAN—In Relation to Man.

PASSING OVER.

"And when I see the blood, I will pass over you"
(Exod. 12. 13).

Introduction.

NOT PASS By. Have you ever been gripped by that ? For years we thought it just meant He would pass by them, but when the real import of the language used came home to one, how beautifully new this old verse became.

National history is always interesting and instructive. Exodus gives the history of Israel and their development from a family into a nation. Exodus 12 gives very unusual particulars concerning the great event which led up to their emigration from Egypt to Canaan, and we are prepared to pass on, thinking it had no further interest for us, only we cannot forget several important and impressive facts.

1. THE SPACE DEVOTED TO THE PASSOVER ATTRACTS OUR ATTENTION. If a great deal of space is given to any one event in the Bible, we can be quite sure that, in the mind of the chronicler, that particular event is of prime importance.
2. WE BECOME IMPRESSED BY THE REFERENCES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TO THE PASSOVER, especially that statement: "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for

us" (1 Cor. 5. 7). So that, without doubt, this great Passover event is of prime importance to us.

3. WE BECOME IMPRESSED BY THAT WORD "IT" In verses 4, 6, 9, and 10 of Exodus 12. On Passover eve not less than 250,000 lambs would be required to be slain to meet the needs of the nation, yet all those thousands of lambs are considered as one. Never do we read, "Kill them," but "Kill it." Evidently those thousands of lambs in the mind of God stood for but one—the Lord Jesus Christ, who was declared to be by the forerunner, "The Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world."

4. It is also impressive to note that WHAT SAVED WAS NOT THE EATING OF THE LAMB, BUT THE SPRINKLED BLOOD. This is very important. Eating the Lamb was part of the ritual, but only after the sprinkling of the blood. We are not saved by going to the Lord's Table to partake of the Bread and Wine, sweet memorials of the Broken Body and shed Blood, but by hiding under the protection of the Sprinkled Blood.

5. OBSERVE WHERE THE BLOOD WAS. SPRINKLED. First, on the lintel of the door, suggestive of protection from the righteous wrath of Heaven; then on the doorposts, separating them from Egypt. Oh, do please take note of this important fact--the same if which save i from the wrath ,- a Holy God, separated than from all :ground :hem. When we come to the Blood of Christ, we are not only saved from our sin, but also separated from the world unto the One who has shed His Blood on our account. Pondering on the verse at the head of this study, we note that the Sprinkled Blood meant eight great mercies:

I. A Substitutionary Mercy. "A lamb for an house." Interest in each lamb for each person. The Gospel is "That Christ died for our sins," that is to say, His death was a substitutionary one.

II. A Sparing Mercy. Authorities state that "I will pass over" could mean, "Step over," or "Leap over." The idea of sparing from the judgment that went abroad that night all over the land.

III. A Brooding Mercy. Better still, the word "Passover" means "Brood Over," as a bird broods over her young, protecting them with her own body (see Deut. 32. 11, and Matthew 23. 37), When we trust the Blood of Christ, He covers us with His wings, and we are then and thus safe from all harm.

IV. An Assuring Mercy. "When I,°" not you, "see the blood." Thus He assures us of our safety, and thus we should be free from all fear.

V. A Regeneration Mercy. As suggested in the sentence "Beginning of months" (verse 2). Israel were thus to commence their reckoning from the date of the blood shedding and sprinkling, so that Redemption and Regeneration are linked. The moment we come under the shadow of the Cross of Christ, that moment we are regenerated by the Holy Spirit of God.

VI. A Feasting Mercy (see verse 8). Blood sprinkled before eating, yet eating following the sprinkling of the blood. Feasting in the Scriptures always speaks of great joy and gladness. What joy follows a reception by faith of the Lord Jesus Christ as our Atonement.

VII. A Cleansing Mercy (verse 17). The Feast of Unleavened Bread always follows the Feast of the Passover. Did not put leaven out in order to be saved, but because they were saved. There really was no break between the two feasts. Nor can the doctrinal truths and experiences they symbolise be separated.

VIII. A Delivering Mercy. After the Feast of Passover, there came glorious deliverance from Egypt. And that after many years of hard, hard bondage. How welcome would be this liberty!

Warning. The blood was not to be sprinkled upon the floor, and none on the threshold. Is that not an awful word in Hebrews 10. 29: "Trampled under foot the Son of God . and accounting the Blood . . . an unholy thing.' Dread possibility!

WHY GOD WANTS US TO DRAW NEAR.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. To Hear (Words before Works) | . Josh. 3. 9
. Gen.45.4 |
| 2. For Revelation of Himself and His Will, | .. Josh. 10. 24
.. Ezek. 44. 15, 16 |
| 3. For Victory, | |
| 4. For Ministry, | |

CHRISTENING AND CURING.

HAVE been much amused at the remark of old Aunt Matilda Jane, who said, when the doctor told her she had nasal catarrh: "It is a common cold in the head, but I haven't sent for you to christen it. but to cure it." In the moral and spiritual realm there is far too much christening and too little curing.

Yet a right christening is not to be despised. Doctors cannot deal satisfactorily with a patient until first they have made a right diagnosis.

What is the Matter with Mankind? There are too many quacks about, so let us turn to the Expert, for none can make a diagnosis like Him. See what He says about our hearts: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord" (Jer. 17. 9, 10). Also note His diagnosis in Isaiah 1: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint, from the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it." It is an appalling description of our state by nature.

Note:

1. Heart wrong. Heart is seat of affection.
2. Head wrong. Head is seat of intelligence.
3. Foot wrong. Feet make possible movements.

The Cure. Ah, has it ever gripped you that on the Cross:

1. Blood flowed from His head, to atone for our sins of thought.
2. Blood flowed from His heart, to atone for our sins of affection.
3. Blood flowed from His hands, to atone for our sins of action.
4. Blood flowed from His feet, to atone for our sins of walk. What a perfect atonement!

In the Old Testament ritual (Cleansing of the Leper, etc.) oil followed the blood, that is, the Holy Spirit, for oil is an emblem of the Spirit. If the Blood be applied to us, His Holy Spirit will anoint our heads, feet, and hands, thus with a new heart created within us, we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus.

A SELF-RIGHTEOUS MAN'S REST AND COVERING.

"For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it:
and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it " (Isaiah 28. 20).

Introduction.

1. To appreciate to the full the force of this statement you need to read it on some cold frosty night.
2. Then the thought of some poor body having to pass the night on a bed too short for them, and a covering so narrow they cannot wrap themselves in it, simply makes one shudder.
3. What a night of unrest and discomfort he is sure to have; yea, further, what a positive danger is he in, through lack of proper clothing, for a serious and probably fatal illness might ensue.
4. That is but a faint picture of the condition of the self-righteous. His resting place is too short for his need; his covering is frightfully narrow and totally inadequate. In fact everything is short about him, for it is written: "There is no difference, all have sinned and come short." And that one is in terrible danger.
5. So was it with these men of Jerusalem (v. 14), to whom this word was spoken by the prophet Isaiah. They were in jeopardy from other nations. Though still away from God, they had made their plans, and boasted about their rest and safety.
6. But the Lord said: "Your refuge is a refuge of lies. you have found a resting place and a covering you think will hide you, but both are totally inadequate for your need."

7. The overflowing scourge shall pass through, and ye shall be trodden down by it.
8. You are wise in scenting danger, but you have erred in making to yourselves a refuge.
9. May this not be a message of warning for some of us.
10. Like them, you see the danger. "A prudent man foreseeeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished" (Prov. 22. 3) .

II. But the question now is: On what are you resting your hopes upon; what are you relying upon in the way of covering? Could our text be truthfully applied to you?

12. But before we proceed, let us inquire:

I. Do you Feel your Need of Rest?

1. For, after all, what is the use of talking of a resting place, unless you feel your need of rest.
2. It is only the weary who desire a resting place.
3. That sweet invitation of our Lord: "Come ... and I will give you rest," sounds only as music in the ear of the weary.
4. All are not conscious of soul-weariness.
5. And the reason is simply that they have never given the salvation of their soul a single thought.
6. Standing by the sick bed of a young man, I asked him that question, and he had to confess he never had.
7. And I said he reminded me of some young married couples, who, in order to get a good house of furniture, denied themselves of even the necessaries of life, so much so, that they weakened their bodies, and easily fell victims to a contagious disease.
8. They thought solely of their house, and forgot the inhabitants of the house.
9. Frank Buller, in his "Apostles of the South East," speaks of some "who live the life of an intelligent animal, without the wise instincts which prevent an animal from doing harm to its own body."
10. May we just note what leads to weariness?
 - a. DISAPPOINTMENT leads to weariness. Life is full of disappointments. Life's friendships are often full of bitter disappointment. Could you not say, "I've tried the

broken cisterns," etc.

b. THE BURDEN-BEARER soon gets weary. The one whom the Lord invites in the sweet invitation is the "heavy laden," for it is the heavy laden who feel their need of rest. Have you no burden to bear? What about your guilt, your burden of iniquity?

c. LABOUR leads to weariness. It was to those who "labour" our Lord speaks. That is, to those who were desperately hard at work, seeking to gain salvation. That one who seeks Justification by works is sure soon to be weary, for it is a hard and hopeless task.

d. DISEASE leads to weariness. One of the first symptoms of a diseased condition is weariness. Bad sign when you awake weary to begin the day. What about your spiritually diseased condition?

II. On What are you Relying for Rest and Covering?

1. This message is really for those who do feel their need of rest

2. May we ask what is absolutely required for full and complete rest? A resting place and a covering sufficiently large to meet all needs.

3. Mark you, these are not essential for sleep.

4. Some boast they can sleep on a clothes line. I do know that one can sleep on a hard board.

5. But there is a vast difference between sleep and rest. You can have a very restless slumber.

6. Even those seeking rest on a short bed and narrow covering sleep.

7. That is the trouble—the unconverted are asleep. S. But whilst there is sleep, there is no comfort and no rest.

9. Your bed, oh, self-righteous one, lulls you to sleep.

10. Your place of rest may satisfy you, but does it satisfy God ! And is it sufficient for your needs?

III. The Perfection of His Rest.

1. We used to sing: "On the other side of Jordan there is rest for the weary," etc.

2. You have no need to wait for "the other side.:" On this side Jordan you can have rest.

3. We hear a great deal of "rest cure." Certain it is that His rest is a cure for all the ills of the soul.

4. On Him there is room sufficient for complete rest—you can stretch yourself.

5. In Him you have ample covering.

Application.

1. You invite me to come, but I don't feel weary! Have I to wait until I find myself to be weary? No, come just as you are.

2. You are more weary than you imagine.
3. Often you only find out how weary you are after you lie down.

CHRIST'S ASCENSION AND ELIJAH'S.

2 Kings 2. 11.

1. Elijah did not ascend; he was carried up. Jesus did ascend, without any outward sign to accompany His slow upward movement through the quiet air.
2. The Lord Jesus went up by His own power; not so Elijah.
3. Elijah left his cloak; the Lord Jesus left a benediction and sent His Holy Spirit.
4. When Christ went up on High He relinquished nothing of His activity for us; Elijah's work was done when he was carried up on High.

A DOUBLE PORTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

2 Kings 2. 9.

THE Double Portion was the eldest son's portion, the portion allotted to the heir. Jacob treated his son Joseph as his eldest son by giving him a double portion. Elkanah, as a mark of his special affection for his wife Hannah, gave her a double portion (see R.V.) of sacrificial food. Job received a double portion when the Lord turned his captivity. The Lord Jesus is God's Firstborn, entitled to a double portion, and we are joint-heirs with Him. By and by, when the Lord again takes up Jacob and his descendants, the Lord will give them a double portion (Isa. 61.7; Zech. 9. 12; Isa. 40. 2) .

NOTHING BUT LEAVES.

Mark 11. 13.

Strange.

1. But why curse the fig tree for not bearing figs, seeing it was not time for the fruit? How strange!
2. It is our Lord's only destructive act. Circumstance.
 1. Jesus had spent His last Sabbath on earth with Martha, Mary, and Lazarus at Bethany.
 2. Though He had just left that hospitable home, He became hungry—evidence of the reality of His manhood.
 3. Though passing many fig trees by the wayside, only one particularly attracted His attention though "afar off." He came expecting figs and found nothing but leaves. Why expect figs though it was not the time for figs?

CLUE.

1. The fig tree produces fruit first and leaf afterwards, and in some cases • the leaves accompany, but do not precede the fruit. 2. This fig tree was false and untruthful; it made a loud profession by its leaf, but there was no possession. Two LESSONS. "And Jesus answered" (14): He heard what the fig tree said.

1. Jesus draws a lesson on the wonderful power of the prayer of faith.
2. Indirectly there is given to professing Christians a solemn warning on the peril of mere profession without possession.

DIRECT.

1. The direct application of the parable is to the Jewish nation.
2. The heathen nations of that time were barren enough, but they were not professors as Israel were.
3. A curse has rested on Israel for now 19 centuries.
4. But that fig tree will yet be restored to fruit and blessing.

ALPINE CLIMBERS.

1. It is said that skilled Alpine climbers can tell their altitude by the kind of vegetation they see growing around them.
2. Skilled spiritual guides can tell a person's spiritual plane by the graces to be observed in that life.
3. Worldly habits and outlook proclaim a life lived on the low altitude of the world.

WHY LEAVES ONLY IS CONSIDERED SERIOUS.

1. Misrepresent our Christian faith. For true religion does not consist in mere church or meeting attendance.
2. Such hinder seekers.
 - a. The blessed man in Psalm I is the one who stands not in the way of sinners.
 - b. Mere professors have always been the stumbling-block.

WHY NO FRUIT?

1. No life, in some cases, though not in this, as leaf proves.
2. No nourishment--poorness of soil.
3. No concentration. Expending strength in producing wood and not fruit. Wasteful expenditure of energy.
4. No shelter. Exposed to the cutting east winds. Do you shelter in Him
5. No careful scrutiny. Take time to be holy.
6. Uncongenial atmosphere. In some towns plum trees will not grow, nor some kinds of apple trees, because they are very sensitive to soot-laden atmosphere. (Cinema and theatre attenders).

APPLICATION.

1. Jesus hungers for fruitfulness, for goodness and usefulness. Shall we not seek to satisfy Him?
2. Remember, He will come for the last time, and then the curse will fall. The date of this miracle has an important bearing on its meaning and purpose. It occurred on the first week day morning of the last week of Christ's ministry.

A FATHER'S PRAYER. A little boy knelt down at his father's knee to say his bedtime prayers. After he had repeated his usual ones, the father suggested offering some other. After some hesitation, the wee one said: "Dear Jesus, when I grow up, make me big and

strong like daddy." The words sank deep into the father's heart for he had gone astray, and very late that night, hours after, he prayed, "My Father, now that I am grown up, make me pure and sweet like my boy." And his prayer was answered.

TWO COMMANDS.

1. "Come down and sit," Isa. 47. 1 The Sinner's Position.
2. "Arise, shine," Isa. 60. 1 Following the Sinner's Salvation.

THREE QUESTIONS IN JEREMIAH.

1. "What have I done ? " Jer. S. 6
2. "What wilt thou do?" Jer. 12. 5
3. "What wilt thou say?" Jer. 13. 21

"CALLED, HELD, KEPT, USED."

Isaiah 42. 6, 7.

FRANCES RIPLEY HAVERGAL, the sweet poetess, whose lyrics have cheered so many weary pilgrims on their way to the Celestial City, found great comfort in these words in her last moments.

On the last day of her life she asked a friend to read to her Isaiah 42. When the friend reached these verses, Miss Havergal stopped her, saying, "Called, held, kept, used," then she whispered, "Well, I will just go Home on that." And she did go Home on that, making the promise her triumphal chariot in which she went through the gates of pearl into the city of gold.

What spiritual insight she had in the meaning of these verses. With what skill she brought out the ideas enshrined therein. If these thoughts were a source of consolation to her when dying, they should be a fountain of encouragement to those who are living.

Of course, literally, these words were spoken in reference to the Divine Servant—the Lord Jesus. But they have an application to the Lord's servants here and now. We, too, are the "called ones," as is emphasised so often in the New Testament.

I. Called—Salvation.

1. All are called, yet all have not responded to the call. Once in a Court of Law a very small man was pushing his way through a crowd. "What are you pushing for?" inquired some. "Why, I'm called," he replied. At once all made way for him.
2. The call to salvation is a call to holy living as text shows.
3. He has z. perfect right to call us we belong to Him. He has right as well as love on His side.

II. Held—Companionship.

- I. What condescension on His part
2. When we respond to His call, He will become our Friend. We shall then be admitted

into His fellowship.

III. Kept—Preservation.

1., Kept, not always from temptation and trial: not always from sorrow and affliction, not from crosses and losses, but kept in and through, and sometimes by, all these processes of discipline.

2.. On a tombstone there is simply name and one word, "Kept." What a glorious epitome o a life of faith and trust in the Saviour.

IV. Used—Service.

1. It is said that in Athens of old, there was a law to the effect that any man who had a lighted candle, and refused to allow another to light his at it, was punished with death.

2. If God has lighted our candle, let us light others. Let us allow others to be lightened by us.

BIBLE READINGS REASONS FOR LOVING THE LORD.

A WEE girlie was playing with her doll in a room where her mother was busily engaged in some literary work. When mother had finished she said, "You can come now, Alice!" The child ran to her, exclaiming, "I am so glad, for I wanted to love you so much." "But I thought you were very happy with dolly?" "Yes, mother, I was," replied the maiden, "but I soon get tired of loving her, for she cannot love me back."

"And is that why you love me, because I can love you back?" mother queried "That is one why," replied the wee philosopher, "but not the first or best one--you loved me when I was too little to love you back."

What a mercy it is that God does not "soon get tired of loving" us because of no response to that love. He loves all. Yet He has a special love for those who respond to His love (John 16. 27). He not only loved us when we were little, but much further back than that--"Before the foundation of the world."

There are Seven Facts Concerning His Love. It is:

- 1 . Infinite in its character (John 17. 23).
2. Constraining in its power (2 Cor. 5. 14).
3. Inseparable in its object (Rom. 8. 35 to 37).
4. Individual in its choice (Gal. 2. 20).
5. Universal in its extent. (John 3. 16).
6. Unchanging in its purpose (John 13. 1).
7. Everlasting in its duration (Jer. 31. 3).

Some Bible Testimonies as to Why Others Loved Him. Giving reasons why we, too, should love God.

- 1, He first loved me (I John 4. 19).
2. He has heard our prayers (Psa. 116. 1).
3. He cares, preserves and rewards us (Psa. 31 . 23).
4. He is with us as one of us (I Sam - 18. 16) . That was why Israel loved David, and that is another reason why we love our Lord.
5. He overrules everything for our good (Rom. 8. 28).
6. He gives surprisingly both now and hereafter (I Cor. 2. 9).

CONFESSION OF CHRIST.

Romans 10. 9-10.

WHEN the German Army, during the Franco-Prussian War, was proceeding towards Paris, they passed through many villages. At one of these villages the inhabitants went out to resist their progress armed with crude weapons of various descriptions. It is said that an old woman came out with a crutch, which she swung in the air. "Go back! they will think you mad," her fellow-villagers exclaimed. "I don't care what they think," said she, "as long as they know whose side I am on." Bravo! Isn't that fine! We could do with a little of that fearlessness in Christian living. Do all our relatives, friends, and neighbours know on whose side we are?

I. The Duty of Confession. Note the twofold emphasis on heart and mouth in Romans 10.6-10.

1. HEART (verses 6, 8, 9, 10).
2. MOUTH (verses 8, 9, 10).

They ought never to be separated. The mouth without the heart might be hypocrisy; whilst the heart without the mouth might be cowardice.

II. The Subject of Confession.

1. MY SINS; BUT ONLY TO THE LORD. Sins (I John 1. 9), Transgressions (Psalms 32. 5), Iniquity (Lev. 26. 40).
2. MY FAULTS; TO BRETHREN OR SISTERS IN THE LORD. (James 5. 16).
3. MY SAVIOUR: TO ALL (Matt. 10. 32). Whenever we confess our Lord, we receive His "Blessed art thou." We always benefit by and through confessing Him.
4. THE DEITY OF OUR SAVIOUR (I John 4. 15). Why be hesitant in confessing this essential aspect of His Being?
5. THE LORDSHIP OF OUR SAVIOUR (Phil. 2. 11). Observe in Rom. 10. 9, in the R.V.: "If thou shalt confess ... Jesus as Lord." More confess Him as Saviour without going on to confess His Lordship.
6. THE SECOND ADVENT OF OUR SAVIOUR (2 John 7, R.V.). "Many deceivers

who confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh."

III. Methods of Confession.

1. BY WRITING LETTERS. A young convert felt that she ought to speak to a railway porter on the matter of salvation, but she was very nervous. She wrote very prayerfully a letter, then just as the train was moving, handed it to him through the open window. This broke the ice, and she became bolder.

2. BY CARRYING OR EXPOSING A BIBLE. Directly Captain Hedley Vicars got right with God, he felt he must confess Christ to his brother officers, but he was timid. However, he secured a Bible, put it on a small table in his tent, and in that way made known his new-found Saviour and Lord.

3. BY WORD OF MOUTH. This is pre-eminently the method of confession. The eminent Sir Robert Peel, at dinner was saddened by the improper language of the gentlemen. Calling his carriage, he arose and said, "Gentlemen, I must ask you to excuse me: I am still a Christian."

4. By SAYING GRACE AT TABLE This was the author's first confession of Christ at his home, where grace before meat was never practised.

5. By BAPTISM. This is another mode of confession. (See a Study of Baptism in this book) .

6. THE LIFE: and, of course, we must confess Christ by our changed lives.

IV. The Fruits of Confession.

1. FORGIVENESS. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (I John 1. 9).

2. CLEANSING. "If we confess our sins—and to cleanse us from all iniquity" (I John 1 . 9) .

3. ASSURANCE. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so" (Psa. 107. 2). Dr. Fullerton knew a lady who did not get assurance of salvation until she confessed Christ.

4. SALVATION. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10. 9, 10). This word 'salvation' is a big one, meaning much more than pardon or justification It include, all the blessings that are ours in Christ Jesus.

5. PRESERVATION. It is far, far safer for a young convert to nail at once his colours to the mast, than to endeavour to be a secret disciple. People then know what you are.

6. HEALING. Bodily healing is declared in James 5. 16 to follow confession.

7. BLESSING. Whenever we confess Christ we become conscious of the Master's "Blessed art thou" (Matt. 16. 17) , and the knowledge that we are pleasing Him is truly a reward.

THE HIDDEN LIFE.

"For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God"
(Col. 3. 3).

THE military campaigns of the last two generations have demonstrated to the world the absolute importance of combatants in modern warfare keeping out of sight.

This is a lesson the soldiers of the Cross would do well to take to heart. In fact we cannot become His soldiers if we are not hidden. It is our Captain's wish that all His followers should be His hidden ones, in the deepest sense of the word.

Israel could boast of being the Lord's hidden ones (Psa. 83. 3). Every saved person can to-day lay the same claim to be one of His hidden ones. If Israel's position was secure, ours is doubly so, for ours is a double rampart: "Hid with Christ in God."

Sir Arthur Blackwood always referred to the words of our text as the means of his conversion. By grace he became an awakened sinner. Yet he hesitated taking the step to Christ owing to the difficulties of his social position. In this frame of mind he attended Church at Barnet, when Mr. Pennefather, the godly vicar, gave out Newton's hymn:

"Though many foes beset your road,
And feeble is your arm,
Your life is hid with Christ in God,
Beyond the reach of harm."

The last two lines the Holy Spirit brought home to the seeking heart, and he ventured his all on God.

Said a Pagan ruler to a Christian: "If you, do not renounce your faith, I will take away your life." "That you cannot," was his reply, "for my life is hid with Christ in God."

Surely this reveals to us the value God places upon us. In Matthew 13. 44 we are told of a "find" that was considered of so good a value that it was hidden by the fortunate finder. The fact that we find ones are hidden by God is a proof that we are of great value to Him. Though worthless in our own sight, He thinks the world of us; though counted by the world as fools, we are in His estimation worth the hiding.

The Christian life is the hidden life. Hidden—in what sense? In six.

I. The Hidden Life is the SAFE Life, for we are hidden in Christ for Salvation, as Noah and his family were hidden in the Ark (Isa. 32. 2; Heb. 11. 7).

II. The Hidden Life is the JUSTIFIED Life, for we are hidden in Christ for Justification, as the stones of the Temple were hidden by cedar wood (red wood, the emblem of the Atonement) , and gold (emblem of Divine Righteousness) (I Kings 6. 18). Not a stone of the Temple was seen.

III. The Hidden Life is the JOYFUL Life (Isa. 42. II). Walking hurriedly along a country road to catch a train one cold, drab, gloomy morning, a burst of merry singing near the Workhouse arrested my steps. It was a robin hidden safely in a hollow tree, protected from the stormy blast, and pouring out its merry song to the Faithful Creator. Hidden ones can sing for joy.

IV. The Hidden Life is the COMFORTABLE Life, as the believer is hidden in Christ in the sense of the weak chick hidden safely and securely under the warm shelter of the parent bird (Matt. 23. 37).

V. The Hidden Life is the FRUITFUL Life, for we are hidden in Christ as the corn of wheat is hidden in the earth—for fruitfulness. "How can I die to myself? It is true that it can be said of those in Christ, "Ye ARE dead." But the question is: How can this doctrine, which is true positionally, become an experimental fact in our individual experience? How does the corn of wheat die, but by -fully surrendering to its environment. Our actual salvation began when we first surrendered to the Lord Jesus, but it will progress in proportion to the constancy and completeness of that surrender (John 12. 24).

VI. The Hidden Life is the INVISIBLE Life, the "I live, yet not I" life, for we are hidden in Christ as the High Priest was hidden from the sight of the worshippers when in the most Holy Place (Psa. 91. 1). Said a well-known Manchester Christian engineer of a past generation: "The Holy Ghost is the only real power for service. Why have we not got this power? Because we are not willing to be made invisible by the investiture." This is a searching word. Moses could no longer be hidden by his devoted mother, because he had continued to grow. May we never grow so big that we cannot remain hidden. It is when we are little in our own eyes that we are kept out of the sight of men. The only "I's" in the Bible that wear a crown are the small ones—"i"; at the Reward Seat of Christ will you receive a crown?

THE NEW SONG.

"He hath put a NEW song in my mouth" (Psa. 40. 3). No singing until the Psalmist had been delivered, established, and assured. And even then the New Song was Divinely inspired: "HE hath put a new song in my mouth."

A PUZZLE. It is indeed a puzzle how gloom and sadness have become associated with religion. For the Bible is a Book of singing, of songs. Solomon composed one thousand

and five (1 Kings 4. 32). Even in that most solemn of all Bible books, the Book of the Revelation, there is great gladness and joy, for there we find more singing than woe. Nine times is "woe" mentioned, but there are ten songs sung by eight different choirs (Rev. 4. 8-11 ; 5 , 8-14; 7. 9-12) . In the Temple worship many Levites were set apart for nothing else save the singing of the Lord's song. Singing is the employment of happy and thankful hearts.

REMARKABLY, Fact. Here is a remarkable fact, that the only singing in the Bible is in connection with Redemption. Even angels are never said to sing: "Praising God and saying," not singing. "And they (redeemed men and women) sang a new song, and no man could learn that song save . . . they that were redeemed" (Rev. 5. 9; 14. 3). The lesson is on the surface: there can be no true happiness apart from God and His wonderful salvation.

I. The New Song Begins on the Rock (Psa. 40. 1 to 3). Palestine had many dried up water cisterns. Many of these were "horrible," because of the filthy sediment left at the bottom. This is a picture of the sinner's condition—down one of these horrible places. How is he to get out? Not by his own effort, for the more he struggles the more he will sink in the mire. Salvation must come from outside.

A girl had read the fortieth Psalm as her evening portion, whereupon she retired for the night. When, lo, she found herself down a horrible pit, her feet sinking in the mire. What could she do? Desperately she struggled, but that made matters worse. At last, thoroughly exhausted, she sank back and looked up, when lo, at the top of the pit she saw a patch of the blue sky, and there a star shining, and as she gazed upon it she felt herself being lifted up, up, up, until her feet were on the green grass. "Only a dream," do you say? Ah, more than a dream. For does not the Lord call Himself the Bright and Morning Star, and are not we bidden to look unto Him and be ye saved? Yes; salvation must come from the Lord.

II. The New Song Continues in the Rock. "Let the inhabitants of the Rock sing" (Isa. 42. 11) . In troublous times Eastern folk left their homes in the plains and valleys and dwelt in the rocks. Once there, assured of safety, they could sing. We are not only on the Rock, but in the Rock, dwelling in the "Rock of Ages, cleft for me."

III. The New Song is Enriched at Consecration (2 Chron. 29. 27). "And when the Burnt Offering began, the song of the Lord began also." The Burnt Offering was an emblem of consecration, both the Saviour's and others. When you offer yourself as a whole Burnt Offering, the joy of the Lord will flood your being.

Has this thought ever gripped you, that it is only the small birds that sing. Never a note of music do you hear from the turkey, the eagle, or the ostrich; only from the small birds such as the robin, canary, lark, etc. Am I big in my own estimation? Then I shall never know fully what is real joy. The consecrated are those who become smaller and smaller in their own estimation, but greater in the Lord's.

IV. The New Song Increases in Volume as we Follow on to Know the Lord. In Isaiah 24. 14 there is the striking phrase: "They shall sing for the majesty of the Lord." As our knowledge of the Lord increases and more and more of His Majesty and grandeur are discovered, our joy will be increased.

V. The New Song is Mightily Helped by Prayer (Acts 16. 25) . "The Lord giveth songs in the night."

"NOT YOUR OWN."

WHILST the believer values the whole Bible, there are portions that are particularly precious, due to the Lord speaking through them at great personal crises. "Ye are not your own," is such an one in the experience of the author.

A few years after his conversion, due to lack of training, and to the worldly Church atmosphere he had to breathe, he became cold and worldly. Becoming thoroughly ashamed of himself, and very, very dissatisfied, he felt that a decision must be made that very evening, and upon reaching his lodgings, and retiring early, immediately he had locked the bedroom door, he fell upon his knees in penitential confession of worldliness and sin, asking for the Lord's forgiveness, but pleading for something additional and deeper, if so be such a mercy was in the Divine programme for him in Christ. Whilst confessing and pleading with the Lord, a voice whispered very clearly, "Ye are not your own." Immediately he responded, "Why, of course I am not my own," whereupon the fire of God fell, and he was blessedly conscious of a very, very real inward work of cleansing, renewal, and the filling of the Holy Spirit, and his life has never been the same since. Has the reader ever acknowledged to the Lord that he or she does not belong to any other than the Lord who has saved them ?

Ponder over this sentence written by the late Dr. Handley Moule: "He saved us to annex us." Note, He has saved us not that we should do as we please, but to annex us! There are three questions we must ask and answer:

I. Why Am I Not My Own? There are four good reasons why we are not our own.

1. PRESENTATION. We have been given by God the Father to God the Son. "I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gayest Me out of the world. Thine they were, and Thou gayest them Me" (John 17. 6). Jesus Christ was and is God's love-gift to the world, and believers are the Father's love-gift to Jesus Christ .

2. PURCHASE. We have been bought, and, oh, what a price! "For ye are bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6. 20). Dr. Moule has a fine word on this: "We are the bought property of our Saviour, bought altogether for His ends."

3. POSSESSION. We have not only been purchased by the Lord, but we are already possessed by Him and the Holy Spirit. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 6. 19).

4. PRESERVATION. Some of us have had serious illnesses, when, humanly speaking, our lives were despaired of, and medical attendants gave us up. But the Lord has raised us up, and lengthened our days. What for? Surely we cannot but look upon our lives as specially sacred.

II. What Obligations does this Fact Impose upon Me?

1. WE MUST NOT REMAIN THE SLAVES OF MEN. That is the teaching of 1 Cor. 7. 23. If we belong to Him, we become His servants and slaves, and no longer governed by worldly maxims and fashions. It is possible to be truly the Lord's, and yet not to be wholly the Lord's. We are apt to say that what we have is our own, and we can do as we like with our own. But the Bible says otherwise: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." Being the slaves of the Lord, we must not remain the slaves of sin; slaves to the opinions of men; or slaves to fashions or earthly standards.

2. WE MUST GLORIFY GOD (1 Cor. 6. 20). We must glorify God in our bodies—our outside deportment and life; our spirits—the inside and hidden life.

III. What Results will Follow such an Acknowledgment?

1. CLEANSING. Someone handed Miss Frances Ridley Havergal a tract entitled "All for Jesus." The reading of it awakened such an interest that she wrote to the author for further light. He replied by giving her two hints: 1st, All is to be laid on the altar—Christ. 2nd, All thus laid on Christ is cleansed.

She put this advice into practice, and then she wrote: "One of the intensest moments of my life was when I saw the force of that word, 'cleanseth,' First, I was shown that the 'Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.' And then it was made plain to me that He who had thus cleansed me had power to keep me clean, so I just yielded myself to Him, and utterly trusted Him to keep me. I see it all; and I have the blessing. The utterly unexpected and altogether unimagined sense of its fulfilment in me on simply believing it in its fulness was just indescribable. I expected nothing like it short of Heaven. It is very simple--all yielded to God, and all thus yielded cleansed by the ever present efficiency of the all-atoning Blood." Miss Havergal was never the same afterwards. Her life became enriched, and most of her great usefulness dates from this experience.

2. FILLING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT. Remember that under the Old Covenant fire only fell upon sacrifices. If I dedicate myself to Him, surrendering myself fully to Him, upon such a living sacrifice the fire of the Holy Spirit will most assuredly fall.

3. AT EVERY STEP OF THE PILGRIM JOURNEY WE SHALL CONSULT OUR OWNER. Day by day our prayer will be: "Lord, what will Thou have me to do?"

"Not my own! my time, my talents,
Freely all to Christ I bring.
To be used in joyful service,
For the glory of my King.

SELAH!

THIS is a word found 74 times in the Book of Psalms, and three times in the Book of Habakkuk. It is a Hebrew word, the meaning concerning which few can agree. The Translators of the Bible were somewhat puzzled with it, so they passed it on as it was, only putting it in English dress. What a lesson for those who have puzzling and bewildering providences which sorely try their faith and patience. What must we do with them? Why, just what the Translators have done—don't worry about them, but leave that to the Lord, who, some day, will explain. At the present He says: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Some time we shall understand; in the meantime we can trust.

I. Is it a Musical Rest Note? That is the opinion of many. And this suggestion fits in splendidly with many Psalms, such as Psalm 7. 5, and others. There is need in our lives for frequent rest pauses. The daily quiet time is such an one. The blessed Lord's Day is another. Whilst there is no music in a rest, the making of music is in them, and without them there could not be much harmony. Is that why there seems discord in so many lives?

II. Is it a Note of Exclamation? That is the latest view. The late Pastor Archibald G. Brown, who succeeded Thomas Spurgeon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, strongly held to this view, and several Hebrew experts assured him that he was right in his declaration. He held to the view that it could be rendered, "Think of that!" and he preached an interesting sermon in exposition. Read, for example. Psalm 3, and when you come to Selah, instead of repeating that word, say "Think of that I" and you will fall in love with this helpful interpretation and explanation.

III Was it a Musical Sign to Indicate to the Musician that he should get on to a Higher Key? This is also a helpful suggestion, and works well when adapted in the reading of some of the Psalms where Selah appears, For example, look at Psalm 4; how doleful the Psalmist begins, and everything seems to be in the minor key, until we reach the sign Selah, then how differently things become, when everything begins to move on a much higher level.

If this is the right meaning of the word Selah, what a splendid motto it provides. Dr. Maclaren of Manchester, in addressing a large body of young men, said: "Young men, do not make it your ambition to get on, but to get up." If this is the right meaning, then Selah is in Hebrew what Excelsior is in the Latin, meaning "Higher." Get up! The Christian life

is the higher life. To get higher means a great deal. On the cliffs at Boscombe we could hear quite clearly the splendid band playing on the Pier, but when we descended to the beach it could no longer be heard. Get higher, then you will hear more clearly the voice of the Lord giving you directions for your life, and communing with you. The pile driver can only do its work by being drawn up high. But how can we get high?

1. ASK TO BE LED "TO THE ROCK HIGHER THAN I," the Rock Christ Jesus. Ah, this makes all the difference possible. He will lift you up out of the horrible pit. and from the miry clay, and plant your feet firmly on that Higher Rock. This is the beginning of the higher life, its very A, B, C.

2. ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT TO FILL You. The great gasometers that attract our attention when we get in the region of the Gas Works, rise higher and higher the more gas that is passed or forced in. The fuller it is the higher it rises. Which thing is a parable of the Christian life. Oh, to be filled with all the fulness of God!

3. WE NEED TO BE DAILY BATHED IN THE DEWS OF His GRACE. One of the attractions of sailing in tropical seas is the presence of flying fish. How long can flying fish keep out of their rightful element? It has been proved that these bonny creatures can fly in the air only so long as their wings (or rather fins) are wet. Directly they get dry, down they fall into the sea. Ah, have we not a lesson here? Let us see that each day the dews of His grace fall upon us, as they will in our quiet times of private prayer, when we shall live the life with wings.

"FROM ABOVE."

MESSAGE OF SPIRE. When we approach an English town or village the most conspicuous object is the tower or spire of the church or minster, rising above other buildings, and casting its shadow over all. And each spire is preaching a sermon every second, pointing men upward, Heavenward, where they "might see gleaming on high diviner things." Thus every spire is a finger pointing upwards.

NEEDED To-DAY. It is a message much needed to-day. There is a danger of us becoming so engrossed by the affairs of this life that we forget there is a Heaven, i.e., another life. Many, alas, are grovelling like worms in the dust, when they ought to be living in the Heavenly Place. Bunyan's word picture of the man with the muckrake is true of many to-day.

DULL. How dull and gloomy is that life lived without God. A picture without a sky is a dull, lifeless thing. It is the sky that glorifies. So with life. A life without a sky is dull, empty, flat, lifeless.

ENIGMA. Not only is life dull without a sky. It is a mystery, an unintelligible thing. Many things puzzle, and cannot be explained if you leave Heaven out. History is simply an enigma if you leave God out of your reckoning.

"FROM ABOVE." The two words grip one. It is the translation of the Greek Anothēn. Let us trace them.

I. "Revelation from Above." The only satisfactory explanation of the depth, purity, wisdom, and existence of the Bible, and is given in Luke 1. 3. "From the very first," or "From another."

ABOVE. The Greek word (Anothēn) is rendered in other places "from above." Luke had derived much knowledge from eye-witnesses. And that knowledge had been confirmed by revelation. Yet Luke here claims a Heavenly origin for his Gospel. Luke's Gospel was not traditional, but by revelation as well as inspiration.

NOT UNREASONABLE.

1. This is not unreasonable.
2. Is it likely that God should take all the trouble He did put Himself about for man and leave him ignorant of His will?

ONLY EXPLANATION. This is the only explanation that satisfies us. Only explanation which satisfactorily explains the Bible. Though written by human hands, it was indited by the Holy Spirit.

II. A Saviour from Above. The only satisfactory explanation of the mystery of the person of Christ (John 3.31,8. 23).

THE BEAUTY OF CHRIST. We reach Advent season when we celebrate the birth of our Lord. All, even His enemies of the past days and of our own, admire His love, gentleness, etc.

THE MYSTERY OF THE LORD. But the Lord is a mystery. He Himself said He was. "No man knoweth the Son" (Matt. 11. 27). John the Baptist's last testimony, and our Lord's own statement, is the only explanation of that mystery.

III. A Salvation from Above. The only satisfactory explanation of the ascent of many a lost soul (Psa. 18. 16).

A picture of a drowning man is given us in this Psalm. Can that man save himself by clasping his own hand? No; salvation

1. Is outside of a man.
2. Is from above.

Every one must be a Moses, for that name means "drawn out," Moses was called so because he was drawn out of a wltery grave.

IV. A New Birth from Above. The only satisfactory explanation of the transformation and revolution to be observed in the lives of God's people (John 3. 3, margin). "Born from above." What is it that marks out some from others? The infusion of a new life.

V. Gifts from Above. The only satisfactory explanation of the enriched lives of the Lord's people (James 1. 17). His gifts are many, and can hardly be enumerated. But note five-

1. His Son.
2. Forgiveness.
3. Life.
4. Grace.
5. Glory.

The point is, only the best and perfect gifts come from above.

VI. Wisdom from Above. The only satisfactory explanation of the wisdom exhibited by God's people (James 3. 15 and 17).

LAWRENCE. The natives of India had a saying about Sir Henry Lawrence: "When Sir Henry looked up twice to Heaven and once down to earth, and then stroked his beard, he knew what to do." They acknowledged his wisdom was from above.

PURITY. See, James speaks of purity and other moral virtues as proceeding from this wisdom.

VII. Power from Above. The only satisfactory explanation of the sweet resignation of the Lord (John 19. 11). This was our Lord's reply to Pilate's proud boast. Here you have one explanation of our Lord's serenity and sweet resignation. Pilate's power was by God's permission.

"Every joy or trial
Falleth from above;
Traced upon our dial
By the Sun of Love. "

THE GREATNESS OF THE SHUNAMMITE.

2 Kings 4. 8 to 37.

Introduction.

1. This is a most interesting and instructive incident.
2. Shunem was quite close to the Palace of Jezreel.
3. Despite its nearness to a corrupt court, there was quite another moral atmosphere about this home.
4. The woman was great in many senses—specially in mind and soul.
5. Why was the husband not mentioned save incidentally? Perhaps the property had originally been her's, or was she the better man of the two? He was much older than she (14).
- 6 Let us consider the greatness of the Shunammite

SHE WAS GREAT:

- I. In Religious Hunger. She had a great appetite (verse 23) for spiritual things.
- II. In Persuasive Power. "She constrained" (verse 8) Was he at first unwilling to accept the invitation to the great house ?
- III. In Perception (verse 9). "I perceive." She judged Elisha to be a good man by his demeanour whilst a guest.
- IV. In Generosity. "A little chamber" (verse 10). She proposed sacrificing the most cherished position in an Eastern house. A stairway from the outside would give him absolute privacy.
- V. In Patriotism (1) to 13). "I dwell among mine own people." She thought the world of her own townsfolk.
- VI. In Humility (13). Humble-minded, she cared not for a position at Court. And God rewarded her with a little one.
- VII. In Self-control (18 to 21) . Not one peevish word did she utter; not one rebellious word! Evidently she mentioned not the death to her husband.
- VIII. In Earnestness (22 to 24). "I may run." Also look at verse 27. Poor Gehazi—what a lack of imagination ! He was a slave to the proprieties.
- IX. In Faith. "It is well" (26). "All well," and yet the child dead in the house! It was faith in God that was speaking. (Was she curt with Gehazi because of his lack of sympathy?)
- X. In Persistence. She had little faith in Gehazi, and refused to leave Elisha (30)
- XI. In Imitation. She had imbibed Elijah's and Elisha's great lesson on the self-existence and supremacy of the Lord (verse 30).
- XII . In Prayer (33) . Elisha prayed with her before going up to his own chamber where the dead boy lay.
- XIII. In Gratitude. Fell at his feet (37). Too full for words.

THE LITTLENES OF GEHAZI.

2 Kings 4.

GEHAZI never shines in the sacred narrative. He is an illustration of what a servant should not be. He fails at every step.

I. Lack of Sympathy (26) . Why was she so curt with Gehazi. Was there an utter lack of sympathy? It is hard for selfish indifference to carry tender words without freezing them. A lesson for us servants of the Lord.

II. . Lack of Imagination (27). He was a slave to the proprieties. Poor, weak, phlegmatic, unimaginative soul! "The Lord hath hid it from me." Elisha was usually in the Lord's secrets.

III., Lack of Faith (29 to 31) . Why send Gehazi? To arrest corruption or to bring life again? The vanity of all outward ceremonial is here evidenced.

IV. Lack of Personal Touch (34 to 35) . If we would be a blessing to others there must be close personal and sympathetic touch . This is symbolic Of the closeness of approach to our nature, dead in sins, which the Lord of We makes in His Incarnation and continual drawing near to us . Th c day is coming in the Upper Chamber when parted ones shall meet.

QUIETNESS AND CONFIDENCE.

"In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Isaiah 30. 15)

The DIFFICULTY. Israel was in peril from Assyria. She always felt difficulty in placing full reliance upon God in rational affairs, and was ever hankering after alliances with Assyria against Egypt, or Egypt against Assyria. The effect was that whoever was victorious, Israel suffered; it was the battle-ground for both; it was the prize of each in tern. The prophet's warnings were truly political wisdom of a high order, as well as religious.

The APPEAL. Here Judah is exhorted to forsake the entangling dependence on Egypt, and to trust wholly to God. They had gone away from Him in their fears, They must come back by their faith. To them the great lesson was trust in God. Through them to us the same lesson is read. This was advice they had not heeded: this is advice we would do well to observe and take to heart.

I. Our Need for such Counsel.

I, Dangers Without.

- a. Adverse circumstances.
- b. Sore temptations.
- c. Fierce assaults from enemy.

2. DANGERS WITHIN

- a. From our weakness.
- b. Our own little faith.

3. NOT EASY. It is not easy to carry this out.

II. The Nature of the Counsel.

1. RETURNING.

- a. Some depart from God by sin.
- b. Some depart from God by speculative thought.
- c. Some depart from God by anxious care.
- d. Want of confidence is a departure from God. We go away from Him not only by open sin, but by forgetfulness, by want of faith.

2. REST.

- a. "Submission" is F. F. rendering.
- b. Submission is really the prelude to rest.
- c. Rest is leaning hard upon Him.
- d. This is the fruit of returning. Nearness to God brings quiet rest. Confidence in God stills and quiets the soul. The very exercise of communion with Him brings rest.
- e. Rest in spite of the presence of causes of disturbance.

3. QUIETNESS.

- a. This is the result of rest.
- b. Resting upon Him brings quietness.

4. CONFIDENCE.

III. The Blessings which Follow.

1. Saved. In every sense.
2. Strength. Trust is strength. Freed from fear we are strong. He strengthens us.

JABEZ AND HIS PRAYER.

I Chron. 4. 9 and 10.

Introduction.

MULTUM IN PARVO.

1. A Latin proverb, Multum in parvo, suitably expresses the wonderful biographical skill shown in Biblical biography.
2. All that we know of Jabez is contained in these two short verses, and one other incidental reference, and
3. Yet what a lot we have.

WHAT IS NOT TOLD US.

1. We are not informed of the name of his parents, the place where he lived, the time when he lived, nor when or how old he was when he died.
2. And yet what a lot we have in small compass.

I. The Man.

1. He was a member of the honoured nation of Israel.
2. He was a member of the Royal tribe of that nation. Not definitely stated, but he appears in list of Judah.
3. He was a worshipper of the one and only true God. "God of Israel"—not God of any Pagan nation.
4. His birth was associated with peculiar and unusual sorrow. His Name was given him by his mother, not by his father. Did she die in bringing him into the world?
5. He was more honourable than his fellows. And that was because of prayer and piety. "More honourable"—. does not that mean more upright in character, in business dealings, in speech about others, more Godlike! That sprang from his prayer life.
6. He was a man of prayer—and that means a lot. He knew what supplication is—pleading the promises of Dent. 12. 20; 19.8; 32. 13; Exodus 34. 24).
7. He was an ambitious man. He desired more territory, greater influence, greater responsibility—all right and good in their place.
8. He was a scholarly man (1 Chron. 2. 55). Did Jabez found the town of Jabez? The Scribes dwelt there. It was a place of learning. These scribes were the descendants of Moses' father-in-law, were noted for their total abstinence principles (Jer. 35), and are known as Rechabites. He was only a man. "That it may not grieve me," that is the flaw in the prayer, "Thee" would have been far, far better. How longsuffering and forbearing our God is!

II . The Prayer.

1. DIVINE BLESSING SOUGHT.

- a 'Me!' Should it not have been others?
- b. No, no, we won't find fault. If He will only bless me, then I shall be a blessing to others.
- c. "Indeed"—how definite and emphatic.

2. DIVINE ENLARGEMENT COVETED.

- a. "There is a godly ambition which may he reverently cherished for wider influence over men, not for its own sake, but the Master's" (Meyer).
- b. "You may feel that you have fulfilled the measure of your present possibilities, but have unexhausted power and talents. Tell God so, and ask for a wider extent of territory to bring under cultivation for Him" (Meyer).
- c. God promised enlargement to Israel if they were obedient (Exod. 34. 24) .
- d. Remember, there is not only enlargement of coast, but also enlarged

- (1) Stride (2 Sam. 22. 37).
- (2) Heart (Psalm 119. 32) .
- (3) Character (Psalm 4. 1).

3. DIVINE CO-OPERATION IN ALL MY WORK SOUGHT.

- a. Divine co-operation is meant.
- b. Divine strengthening is implied.
- c. Divine companionship implied. Jesus is God's Hand, i.e., God's executive.

4. DIVINE PROTECTION FROM EVIL.

- a. In the work.
- b. In me.

III. God's Magnanimity. He granted the prayer.

PRIDE.

1. Origin.

- a. Devil (1 Tim. 3.6).
- b. World (1 John 2. 16) .
- c. Heart (Mark 7. 21 and 23).

2. Work.

- a. By pride Satan fell (Isa. 14. 13, 14; Ezek. 28. 17).
- b. It is one definition of sin (Prov. 21. 4).
- c. It is, alas! part of our natural make-up (Rom. 1.30).

3. Course.

- a. Deceives (Jer. 49. 16) ..
- b . Hardens and debases (Dan. 5. 20) .

4. Cure. God and His Salvation.

STUDIES FOR BELIEVERS

CROSS-BEARING.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9. 23).

Introduction.

STARTLING.

1. It is difficult for us to imagine what such a statement meant for the disciples, and how startled they must have been.

2. To them the Cross was a hateful, accursed thing.

3. Our Lord first mentioned the necessity of bearing the Cross when He commissioned

them (Matt. 10. 38) . Now He speaks most emphatically.

CROSS DEIFIED.

1. One reason why it is difficult for us to imagine what their feelings were when they first heard of the Cross is that now we view it differently.
2. The Cross is now a symbol of all that is holy and precious.
3. Alas, by many it is deified and worshipped.
4. This was never God's intention.

WHEN CHANGE OCCURRED.

1. It was not until the commencement of the fourth century when Rome, the mistress of the world, adopted the Cross to supplement the Eagle as a military ensign, that this change took place.
2. Constantine sought to honour the Cross, to which he ascribed the success of his arms, and the attainment of his ambition, by putting a spear in that form into the hand of the statue erected for him at Rome.
3. A most baneful sign indeed.
4. The spear and the Cross had met before under totally different circumstances.
5. But now a worldly policy had practically made the Cross of Christ of none effect by taking it under patronage in a most public manner.

EARLY CHRISTIANS.

1. It is significant that the Cross was never used by the primitive Christians of the first century. Indeed, it was not until the fourth century that they began to do so.
2. To them it was simply a symbol of torture and shame.

WHO INVENTED IT?

1. No one can tell us who invented' the Cross.
2. It is believed the Romans introduced it from India for the punishment of criminals and slaves, and others whom the executioner must disgrace as well as kill.

WHAT IT MEANT TO BEAR THE CROSS.

1. To bear the Cross meant to bear disgrace.
2. To bear the Cross meant to bear the instrument of suffering and death.

OUR LORD'S WORDS .

1. Our Lord declared that none can follow Him unless: 1st. Deny self.
2nd. Take up Cross.
3rd. And that every day.
2. Indeed, in Matthew 10. 38 He declares we are not worthy of Him if we do not.
3. And in Luke 14. 27 declares otherwise we cannot be His disciples.

NOT AS A PUNISHMENT FOR SIN.

1. It must be understood that we are to bear the Cross not as a punishment for our sins, nor to put away sin.
2. His Cross does that.
3. We come to Him, and get deliverance from one burden only to receive another.

Two CROSSES.

1. No one can be a follower of our Lord without bearing two crosses.
2. One is a cross laid upon us, the other is a cross we take up.
3. The first is an inward cross, the second an outward. I. The Inward Cross, the Holy Spirit and Divine Nature.

COMPELLED .

1. Let us again remind you of our Lord's word "cannot."
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2. There was one who was compelled to bear Christ's Cross—Simon (Matt. 27. 32) .
3. No choice was left to him in the matter.
4. The difference is, that Cross was laid upon him by the Roman Government; ours by God Himself.

Two CRUCIFIXIONS.

1. Think you that Christ had two Crucifixions?
2. His Divine nature was the constant Cross of His human nature.

WHAT MAKES A CHRISTIAN?

1. Is it not the anointing? The word Christ means the anointed one, and you are not a Christian until you receive the anointing.
2. What is the anointing but the coming in of the Divine nature.

REAL CROSS.

1. The Crusaders used to carry a painted cross on their shoulder.
2. Our inward cross is no painted one.
3. And we carry it, not on our shoulder, but in the heart .

How COLISEUM WAS SAVED

1. It is said that when the Roman Coliseum began to fall into decay, the people used to take the stones of which it was composed to build their own houses. To such an extent was this practice carried, that many feared this noble relic of the Imperial City would soon disappear.

2. To prevent so great a loss, antiquarians consulted together, and talked, and talked, but all to no purpose.
3. At last the Pope devised a simple plan. He had a huge cross made and planted in the centre, whereby declaring the building hallowed.
4. And it thus became sacrilege to remove the stones.

How GOD SAVED HUMANITY.

The world was in an awful condition as Romans, chapter 1, shows.

But the planting of the Cross of Christ brought fresh life—brought regeneration and renewal

ARE WE SAVED MORALLY?

- I. Men's souls, like the Coliseum, are taller to ruins.
2. How is the work of the spoiler to be stopped?
3. The planting of the 'Cross, the infusion of a new life and a new nature.

HOW CAN WE MORTIFY?

- 1 The Cross is the emblem of that which is painful and mortifying to the flesh.
2. We are exhorted to mortify ourselves--but how?
3. The only way is by the true inward cross.

II. THE OUTWARD CROSS. Suffering and Disgrace.

1. Most of the references to the Cross in the Gospels imply suffering for Christ 's sake.
2. "If any man desire to come after me," said the Lord Jesus, he must be prepared to suffer pain, disgrace, and persecution for My sake.."

EASY TO SEE.

1. You will readily see why this must be so, when you remember whose territory we are marching through.
- 2 "We're marching through Immanuel's ground," we sing. But are we?
3. As a matter of fact we are marching through the enemy's territory.

NOT SULLENLY ENDURE.

1. But please observe that little word "take."
2. If we are followers of Christ we cannot get away from these outward crosses.
3. But how shall we act ?
 - a. We may put up with it as that which is inevitable.
 - b. We may sullenly endure it.
4. But there is no joy in such an attitude.
5. Our Lord wants us to consent to it, to carry it willingly, to take it up as an act of willing submission.
6. To shoulder the Cross bravely is the noblest way of all.
7. And the path of blessing.

WHAT RUTHERFORD FOUND IN THE CROSS. We have in one of our favourite

authors—Samuel Rutherford—an illustration of this. He had to suffer grievously for conscience sake. But he shouldered his cross heroically—and see

1. He found it Light. "However it be, the din, and noise, and gloom of Christ's Cross are weightier than itself."

2. He Found it a Joyful Thing.

a. "Seven crosses---seven joys."

b. "If it were come to exchanging crosses I would not exchange my cross with any."

c. "Some have written to me that I am possibly too joyful of the cross, but my joy overleapeth the cross, it is hounded and terminates upon Christ. I can report nothing but good both of Him and it, lest others should faint."

3.. He Found it Light and Helpful.

a. "The Cross of Christ is the sweetest burden ever I bear. It is such a burden as wings are to a bird, or sails to a ship, to carry me forward to my harbour.'

b. Not a hindrance, but a help--lifting him up to God like the wings of a bird, and helped him on, like the sails of a ship.

4 . He Found Christ and His Cross Inseparable.

a. "Christ and His Cross are sweet company, and a blessed couple. He and His Cross are two good guests and worth the lodging."

b. "No cross, no crown"—we rightly say.

c Let us also add "No Christ, no Cross."

5. Application.

a. Will you not invite this Guest?

b. Will you not say with Rutherford: "Welcome, welcome, sweet, sweet and glorious Cross of Christ; welcome, sweet Jesus with Thy light Cross."

TRUE SELF-DENIAL.

"Then Peter took Him ... saying, Pity Thyself, Lord."

"Then said Jesus, . . . If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself" (Matthew 16. 22, 24) ("Let him cross himself out," Burroughs.)

Introduction. Pity thyself--Deny thyself.

DIFFERENCE.

1. What a vast difference between these two statements

2. Yet all are either doing the one or the other—either pitying and sparing, or denying and ignoring self. MARVEL.

I. Men often wonder why there are, comparatively speaking, so few disciples of Christ.

2. We ought, instead, to marvel there are so many.

3. For look at the conditions of discipleship—they are not easy.

4. For no teacher or leader had ever proposed such conditions.
5. In profane history we read of many noble acts of self-denial, but no lives of habitual self-denial.
6. Yet that is what our Lord claims of all His followers—it has got to be done every day. St. Luke adds that to his account in Luke 9. 23.
7. No holiday but our habitual habit and practice. **FIRST TIME.**

- I. This is the first time our Lord referred to the denial of self as a condition of discipleship.
2. Cross-bearing and self-denial up to now had not been the badge of discipleship. **RESULT.**

1. Until our Lord made this declaration He had many followers.
2. Up to this time our Lord had proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom.
3. But He had been rejected.
4. Now He hints at a new order of things: the calling out.
5. For the first time He spoke of the Church.
6. Now it is not the Kingdom, but the Church.
7. And from that time His followers dwindled. **EVIDENCE OF HUMANITY.**

1. Do you not detect an evidence of His humanity—in the question He asked His disciples? (verses 13 and 15).
2. He was curious to hear from His disciples (of course what He already knew) of the world's estimation of Him.
3. How differently they viewed Him: John, the ascetic; Elijah, the ardent, enthusiastic, and fierce; Jeremiah, the prophet of the tender heart and tears. They saw all three in Him.
4. Then He inquired: "What am I to you?" He desired to know their own views of Him.

OPINIONS.

1. But there is in these questions something else besides an evidence of humanity.
2. Is there not manifested here His deep concern respecting the opinions of His disciples?
3. Say some: "It matters not what our opinions are—it's conduct that counts."
4. This is utterly wrong—creed influences conduct.
5. The inquisitors had hearts of flesh, but creeds of iron.

WHAT IF HE HAD PITIED HIMSELF?

1. "From that time" He spoke of Cross and self-denial.
 2. This was too much for loving and impulsive Peter.
 3. If He had pitied Himself we would verily have been in a pitiful condition.
- WHAT IF You Do? And if we pity and spare ourselves we shall at last be found in a pitiful condition in spite of that atoning death of Christ.

WHO SUGGESTS?

- I. Note, the suggestion to pity self is from Satan. 2. To deny self, from God.
- I. The Nature of Self-Denial.

GENERAL IDEA.

1. The general idea is that which is exhibited in weeks of self-denial—denying to ourselves certain things—food or pleasure—pleasant to the natural man.
2. We would that there were more of this.
3. But true self-denial is something much more.
4. Possible for self to be very prominent in self-denial.
5. And so-called self-denial to be really self-glorification.

'HIMSELF."

1. Note these words were addressed to men who had already made great sacrifices in order to follow Jesus.
2. But He asked of them an even greater sacrifice—themselves.
3. Observe, deny, not to himself, but himself.
4. To ourselves is but one aspect of self-denial.

II. The Necessity of Self-Denial. "But," you may inquire, "why should I deny myself?"

1. THERE IS NO SALVATION WITHOUT SELF-DENIAL.

a. Do not imagine it is a thing of little consequence or merely the high attainment of some few of the saints.

b. It is a thing all must have that will be saved.

c. As Baxter, the Puritan, says: "It is a plain contradiction to be saved without self-denial. For as it is self that we must be saved from, so to stick to self is to be lost and miserable, and therefore not to be saved."

d. Self is the root, tree, and branches of all the evils of our fallen nature.

e. Every son and daughter of Adam are in the service of self, and what an awful and disastrous service it is.

f. What hurried Eve headlong upon the forbidden fruit, but that wretched thing herself? What drew that one to kill his brother Abel, but that untamed self? What drove the old world on to corrupt their ways? Who but themselves, their sinful selves.

g. Listen to Rutherford: "Every man blameth the Devil for his sins, but the great devil, the house-devil of every man, that house-devil that eateth and lieth in every man's bosom, is that idol that killeth all, himself. Oh! blessed are they who can deny themselves, and put Christ in the room of themselves!

h. Remember this: "Till a man deny himself, he denieth God" (B.).

i. "Deny self or you will deny Christ" (B.), for self is both an Atheist and an idolater, self is an Antichrist, and glories in self-exaltation."

j. The initial act of self-denial that leads to our salvation, must become the habit of our lives.

2. THERE CAN BE NO SUCCESSFUL SERVICE FOR GOD WITHOUT SELF-DENIAL.

- a. A man and a boy went fishing. The boy caught plenty, but the man had not a single bite.
- b. The man inquired; when the boy replied, "Ah! thee mun lie thee daan, mon!"
- c. He was tall, and stood up, and the sun cast his shadow upon the water, frightening the fish.
- d. It is the shadow of self that mars our work.

III. The Example Our Lord Gave to Self-Denial.

1. LOOK AT THE LIFE OF OUR LORD--PONDER OVER THESE SAYINGS.

- a. "I can of mine own self do nothing" (John 5. 30).
- b. "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which bath sent Me" (John 5. 30).
- c. "I do nothing of Myself, but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things" (John 8. 28).
- d. "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works" (John 14. 10) .
- e. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself" (John 17. 19).

2. LEARN.

- a. He came to this earth by the Father's wish.
- b. Not a word did He speak by His own power.
- c. Not an act did He do of Himself.
- d. He was moved and controlled by God.

3. IF JESUS THOUGHT IT NECESSARY TO DENY A HOLY SELF, WHAT SHALL WE SAY ABOUT OUR SINFUL SELF?

IV. The Path to a Life of Self-Denial. But how can I possibly live such a life? By walking close to Him.

1. A little boy was walking by the side of a missionary on the way to a meeting. The little fellow amused himself by the shadows they cast upon the path as they walked. After trying in vain to keep the shadow of himself from appearing outside that of his friend, he gave up the attempt, and said, "Please take my hand." In a little while he cried, "Oh, look, you can't find me now; you can't find one bit of my shadow now. I'm lost in you."

2. Exactly.

3. If you try by yourself to deny self, you will fail.

4. It is only companionship with Him that makes such possible.

5. It is only as we walk with our hands gripped in His.

6. Is not this sentence significant: "And Peter followed afar off." If following afar off led Peter to the denial of his Master, surely following very closely will lead to a daily denial of self.

CONCLUSION.

1. To pity self is to destroy yourself.
2. You cannot "come after" unless you come to Him.

THE LORDSHIP OF THE SPIRIT.

"WHERE the Spirit is lord, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3. 17).
(Rotherham) .

Introduction. The Apostle is contrasting the glory of the Old Covenant with that of the New, the Ministration of Death (verse 7), and the Ministration of the Spirit (verse 8). the Ministry of Condemnation (verse 9) , and the Ministration of Righteousness (verse 9). The veil, originally on the face of Moses, is here spoken of as on the hearts of the people (verse 15). Now we have to admit that there is not always liberty where the Spirit of the Lord is, so it is with relief, we note Rotherham's very fine rendering.

I. The Presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is first without us, striving with us for God, seeking to convict us of sin. He then loves to draw us to the Saviour. The moment we come to the Blood of Sprinkling, the moment we come to the Fountain of Blood opened for us, that moment the Holy Spirit regenerates us, imparting to us the very life of God.

Yet the Holy Spirit may be dwelling within us as a. grieved Spirit—grieved because of our disobedience and carnality--grieved, yet not departed.

II. The Lordship of the Holy Spirit. A woman—a godly Christian woman--lost her husband just when her two boys required the firm hand of a father. She had to take in lodgers to make a living. One of her lodgers, a file Christian man, after staying there for about a year, married the widow. The guest became lord and master. It was most interesting to watch the change for the better in that household. It made all the difference in the world when the guest became master.

The Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit at your conversion, dear reader, entered your heart and life as Guest. Have you made them Lord yet? Unless, we recognise the Lordship of the Holy Spirit , and make Him Lord of our lives, we can never have lordship over ourselves, can never have the mastery over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Instead, our experience will be a very up and down one. Unless the Spirit is lord within us, we are unmastered, and our being is not in harmony. Pray observe, the Holy Spirit can be less than lord to us!

III. The Liberty Through the Lordship. In history we read of a Roman Emperor taken out of prison, yet with chains on hands and feet, placed on the Imperial Throne in order that state business might be transacted. How like many a Christian man and woman—truly

the Lord's, yet in bondage to sin and the world. Verily he is not free who drags his chain. "Oh, Lord, make us grammatical Christians," earnestly prayed a man in a prayer meeting. Of course he really meant "genuine," only he had got a bit mixed in his English. A woman there took the petition up, and prayed, "O Lord, Thou hast blest us in the past tense; Thou art blessing us in the present tense; and oh, Lord, Thou wilt go on blessing even in the future tense!" One present at once thought of 2 Cor. 1. 10, where we have the three tenses connected with deliverance. Praise God, He can do all three!

IV. The Growth Through that Lordship. 2 Cor. 3. 17 could read: "Now the Spirit is Lord, and where the Spirit is Lord there is liberty." And the next verse: "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 from a Spirit that is Lord." This is a suggestive rendering. It clearly proclaims that, after we have made Him Lord, there is rapid development in our Christian lives, with a marked growth in the Divine likeness. Our gracious British King honours a public benefactor with a peerage, a lordship. The Holy Spirit has bestowed and conveyed to you great benefits, make Him Lord! Then greater blessings will follow.

V. Three Statements About the Spirit. In Ephesians 1. 13 and 14, we have three statements concerning the Holy Spirit.

1. HE IS CALLED TIDE SPIRIT OF PROMISE (verse 13).

He is called by this name either because He was the promised Spirit, or He is the Spirit whose coming to us promises so much, is full of promise, and those promises are never broken or frustrated, only save through our own folly. To see some of the glorious possibilities, note the full significance of the other two names.

2. HE IS LIKENED TO A SEAL. The Holy Spirit Himself is the Seal. And the fact that we are sealed:

- a. Is a proof of our value, for only valuables are sealed.
- b. Proof of our acceptance in the Beloved (proof that Mordecai had gained the King's favour was in possessing his seal, the seal of the kingdom--study Esther).

C. Proof that we are owned by the Lord. For He would not seal anything or anyone not belonging to Himself.

- d. Pledge of Safety. Pilate sealed the tomb of Jesus to make it safe.
- e. Pledge of freshness. We seal jars when filled with jam to preserve.
- f. God's method of conveying the Divine likeness. The seal makes the impression.

3. HE IS THE EARNEST (verse 14). When we come to Christ, we become joint heirs with Him, and the Holy Spirit is the earnest and pledge of our ultimate possession to the full of that blessed inheritance.

HOLY FURY.

"And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly" (I Sam. II, 6).

WHAT a strange effect of the Holy Spirit of God! We all know well that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, and other most admirable and desirable virtues—but. ANGER? Well, that is a surprise: The biographer of SAVONAROLA, the great Italian patriot, commenting on his writings of the year 1492, remarks, "They are filled with manifestations of religious zeal to which the term Holy Fury may well be applied." What a striking phrase—HOLY FURY! The Reformer was furious in his denunciation of wrong and his agitation after national righteousness, and this holy and true expression is Holy Fury.

There is one command in Holy Writ that has troubled many, viz.: "Be ye: angry and sin not." What does this mean? Human and sinful anger laments injury to self, whereas Holy anger laments the injury done to God. The way to be angry and sin not is to be angry at nothing but sin. When God's holy fire shall fall upon me, then I shall know what it is to be angry and sin not.

The tidings that came to Saul was indeed sad. Read the context. God had not forsaken His people. He had one He could use, so He filled Saul with the Holy Spirit:, and the result was righteous anger and Holy Fury.

But note the preparatory work. It is very clear by chapter 9 of I Sam. that Saul's first interview with the prophet Samuel was at a great sacrifice. The step to that Sacrifice was a step to the Throne. We too must meet the Lord at the Cross, discovering there God's view of ourselves, and His great purposes for us in the future.

A question is asked in Psalm 90: 'Who knoweth the power of Thine anger :' What a question.. Only the Lord Jesus got to know the power of God's anger, and then at the Cross, particularly during the three hours' darkness.

"The Lord in the day
Of His anger did lay
Your sins on the Land
And He bore them away"

The next step in the preparation of Saul was when he was "turned into another man" (I Sam. 10. 6 to 11), and that by the action and operation of the Holy Spirit. Does this not stand for what we know as Regeneration, the New Birth?

And it all comes to this: Before the Spirit of God can fill me with holy anger and fury, He must be allowed to lead me to the Cross to see my sin dealt with, to save me from my sin, change me into another man by His wonderful regenerating grace, and then fill me with His Holy Spirit.

THE NEED OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon,
and he blew a trumpet" (Judges 6. 34)

The Holy Spirit required for the right performance of common duties, Did Gideon really need the special enduement of the Holy Spirit in order that he might blow a trumpet? "At Christmas," you say, "I only know too well that my children can blow trumpets quite easily without any special assistance!"

Ah, you miss a great lesson by reasoning of that sort. The great truth here is that we require the aid of God's Holy Spirit for the right performance of our ordinary everyday duties, as well as for the extraordinary things of life. Nothing counts in Heaven save that which is done by His grace and power. Really, what He desires is that we should do the ordinary things in life in an extraordinarily effective and efficient a manner. Even to quote a very familiar text, in the proper and effective way, we need the Holy Spirit (see 2 Chron. 15. 1 and 2).

The late Dr. A. B. Simpson, in one of his addresses passed on a thought all Christian workers would do well to heed. It is as follows:

One Touch of God. At one time a group of men were attempting to raise an obelisk in Egypt to its base, and the work was under the supervision of a very exact and careful engineer.

They had raised the great mass of granite to within few inches of the level of the base and then were unable to lift it further. They could not get it up to the level of the pedestal by their utmost efforts.

But there was a secret in Nature that they did not know. There was a sailor there who knew all about it. He shouted, "Wet the ropes!" As they did so, the ropes began to groan, and strain, and shrink, and the great mass rose, and rose, till it came to the level of the base, and they could push it over and establish it firmly on its pedestal.

It was a little secret, but it was an effectual one. The men had pulled at the cordage and strained away at it, but the obelisk was in mid-air, and there it hung until the cry came to wet the ropes. Dear friends, the instant we let the Holy Ghost saturate the soul, the Lord Jesus Christ brings into it all His infinite forces of love and power. One touch of God will do all that our tugging and struggling could not do.

"O, YE OF LITTLE FAITH."

There are four occurrences of this word:

1. When our Lord rebuked Care, Matt. 6. 30
2. When our Lord rebuked Fear,Matt. 8. 26
3. When our Lord rebuked Doubt, .. Matt . 14. 31

4. When our Lord rebuked Faulty Reasoning, Matt. 16. 7, 8

FIRST THINGS.

1. Seek, Matt. 6. 33
2. Give,.. 2 Cor. 8. 5
3. Reconciled, Matt. 5. 24
4. Cast Out, Matt. 7. 5
5. Learn, 1 Tim. 5. 4
6. Say, Luke 10. 5
7. Count, Luke 14.28

FIRE, AN EMBLEM OF THE SPIRIT.

"He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire"
(Matt. 3. 11) .

Introduction.

HOLY FIRE.

1. Or "with Holy Fire," as Dr. B. says it can be rendered.
2. Not, as some have thought, Holy Spirit and Tribulation .
3. But the fiery influence and power of the Holy Spirit WANTED.

1. A Chinese convert was asked what China needed. "What China needs are men with hot hearts, to tell the love of Jesus."
2. That is the great need of the world.
3. Whitsuntide shows us how that need and lack can be met.
4. It is being immersed in this Holy Fire; it is by knowing experimentally the fiery and glowing character of the Spirit's operations.
5. What China needs, Lancashire and all Christian countries require.

CONTRAST.

- I. In this verse we see John's lofty conception of the work of Jesus. Water and fire—our two great cleansing ministrants. Which is the more searching?
2. As is the difference between the two elements, so was the difference between his ministry and that of the Lord.
3. "The one effecting an outward cleansing, the other being an inward," penetrating and purifying power, "searching men through and through."
4. The one cold and negative, the other glowing and positive.
6. John recognised that the religious movement under his ministry was not sufficient for the human need. It was not equal to the deep corruption within men. It was a mere cleansing by water whereas what was required was a cleansing by fire.

EMBLEM OF DEITY.

1. Fire, all the world over, has been considered an emblem of Deity. In some cases it has

been worshipped.

2. And in the Bible it is a much used symbol.

a. Lamps of fire passing between the dismembered sacrifice and Abraham. (Here fire represented God.)

b. The fire which enveloped the bush that Moses saw, and the pillar of fire at night, and fire on Mount Sinai.

c. New Testament says: "Our God is a consuming fire."

3. And how diverse in the Bible are His operations. Sometimes the fire of God's Spirit is a wrathful energy, working pain and death to the transgressor. At others a merciful omnipotence, bringing light and warmth and joy and peace.

TRINITY, DOVE. "For the first time the Trinity, foreshadowed in many ways in the Old Testament is fully manifested." "Spirit descends. Father's Voice," and presence of Jesus.

1. How opposite to the other emblems.

2. Spirit fell upon our Lord as a Dove, on disciples as fire.

3. In Christ there was nothing to consume; in the disciples there was much to destroy.

4. Before we can know the Holy Spirit in His Dovelike, gentle office, we must know Him as the Fiery Destroyer, as a Consuming Fire.

THE POWERFUL AND SEARCHING MINISTRIES OF FIRE.

1. What this emblem of the Holy Spirit can teach is simple and easy to discover and grasp.

2. We have eight of its ministries in mind—others may suggest themselves to you.

I. Fire Awakens.

FIRE OF LONDON. Strange find after Great Fire of London.

1. It is said that the heat of the Great Fire of London in 1666 so penetrated and warmed the soil that unknown flowers sprang from long and deeply buried seeds.

2. There the seeds lay asleep and forgotten in their tombs.

3. But the fire awakened them—called them forth. SEED OF THE WORD.

1. Is that not taking place in the spiritual world every day.

2. The seeds of the Kingdom have been lodged in heart and mind from infancy, buried and forgotten.

3. But the fiery energy of the Holy Spirit calls them forth—and they spring up and bear fruit.

4. Oh, that God might do that now

RABBI DUNCAN.

"One day as I sat down to study, and took my pen in my hand, I suddenly became the passive recipient of all the truths which I had heard and been taught in my childhood. I sat there unmoved for hours, and they came and preached themselves to me." So testified Rabbi Duncan.

II. Fire Reveals. I Cor. 3. 13.

1. This is the statement in this Scripture: "It shall be revealed by fire."

2. Fire shines as well as searches—it reveals as well as tests.

IT TESTS AND REVEALS MY GODLESS MORALITY.

1. When the fire of God begins to shine upon us we find out the true nature of our godless morality.
2. And this is one of the most difficult matters.
3. Only when we see ourselves in His light do we get a right view of sin and unworthiness.

III. Fire Consumes. Isaiah 40.7.

1. There is a strange and unusual phrase in Isaiah -40. 7. "The grass withereth and the flower fadeth because the Spirit of God bloweth upon it."
2. We would have written the contrary.
3. Here the Spirit is spoken of as a Destroyer!
4. Probably Isaiah had primarily the scorching east wind in mind—for there is but one Hebrew word for wind, breath, or spirit.
5. Even then we have a helpful lesson—he counts the withering, scorching wind as from the Lord.
6. But you will see he has men and women in mind.

RECREATION GROUND.

1. One Spring we saw men burning rank grass.
2. In September of same year the site of the charred mass was covered with beautiful fresh grass.
3. Before there can be fresh useful grass there must be a destruction of the old.
4. Death is the prelude to life.
5. The old growths, the product of your old life, must go in order that you might be clothed with the garments of beauty.
6. And under the breath of God's Spirit that beauty which is the product of the old nature will wither in order that you may be clothed with His beauty.

IV. Fire Purifies. How appropriate is Mal. 3.2 and 3. PURIFY.

1. Only by fire can we separate the dross from the precious metal.
2. And fire, better than anything can destroy the impurities which are the germs of disease.
3. It is said that the Great Plague of London lingered and kept bursting out until the City was thoroughly purified by the Great Fire of London.
4. For the fire destroyed the germs of disease.

MY NEED.

1. Purity.
2. Sweetness.

V. Fire Softens.

- I. Stone and iron become soft under its fierce rays.

2. What need of tender hearts and bowed necks.
3. his Holy Fire can melt my hard heart, making it soft to take His impress.

VI.—Fire Transforms.

1. Here is a piece of hard, cold, rusty iron.
2. Put into the fire it loseth its rust and becomes white and glowing.
3. Fire lays hold upon cold dead matter, making it sparkle and blaze and turning it into the likeness of its own leaping brightness.

VII. Fire Enflames.

1. It transforms the hard cold iron into a glowing mass.
2. And Holy Spirit comes to kindle in men's souls a blaze of enthusiasm, of Divine love, melting all the icy hardness of the heart.
- 3 He gives ardent desires, warm and glowing hearts.

VIII. Fire Protects.

TRAVELLERS in wild regions protect themselves at night by fires. Surrounded by fires they are safe and secure. **THREE FIRES.**

- I. Observe a triple reference to fire.
2. But these three fires have not the same effect.
3. The first and last destroys, the second cleanses.
4. The first and last are in the form of serious warnings and threatenings, this is a gracious promise.

REMEMBER.

1. There is a fire of anger as well as of love; the fire of the lightning which burns and consumes, as well as the fire of sunshine and of the cheery hearth.
2. Will you be baptised in the fire or consumed by it? JOHN.
 1. What must I do to be baptised with the Holy Ghost?
 2. First and foremost I must come to the Blood.
 3. Note order in John 1:

1st, Christ as Lamb of God bearing away sin.

2nd, as Baptiser with the Holy Spirit.

3rd, Behold Lamb—just the Lord as Example.

4. Be first taken up with the work of Christ for you then the work of Christ in you.

THE SPIRIT AS STANDARD BEARER.

"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against Him" (Isaiah 59. 19).

Introduction.

STANDARD BEARER.

1. The Standard Bearer was an important officer in olden times.
2. He not only bore the military insignia under which the army fought, but he always began the battle by striking the first blow, e.g., when Romans invaded Britain,
3. He was thus in the forefront of the battle, and bore the brunt of the fighting.
4. In the severe conflict, in the long campaign the Christian is engaged in, he has a standard-bearer, the Holy Spirit.
5. Thus the Spirit is the Standard-Bearer for and on behalf of the Lord's people.
6. To lift the standard
 - a. Means the declaration of war.
 - b. Also organisation for war—gathering of foes.
 - c. The actual conflict.

REASONS FOR NOT BECOMING A CHRISTIAN. NOT REFRAIN FROM DOING.

1. The advice our Lord gives in Luke 14 has been misunderstood by many.
2. He did not mean that, before you commence to build or go to war, you must first sit down to count the cost and refrain from doing so if you think you cannot succeed.
3. He meant that, by sitting down and carefully thinking over the matter, be able thus to make full and complete preparation so as to carry on the work successfully.

WHY SOME REFRAIN FROM DOING SO.

1. There are many who, after calm reflection, fear to decide, for, say they, I fear to step over the line because Satan and temptation will come in like a flood sweeping me off my feet, bringing to me dismay, disaster and dishonour.
2. My friend, you have done well, not to underestimate the power of the enemy, for at times he does come in as a deluge, but Another will meet him for you.
3. Oh, timid soul, look up! Remember there are always two coming-ins,

EXAMPLES.

1. Do you think God will allow the enemy to triumph? Never.
2. The enemy's coming in is always met by the coming in of the Spirit of God.
3. And we have abundant proofs of this in Bible and history .

IN THE BEGINNING.

1. It was so in the beginning.
2. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
3. But according to Isaiah 45. 18, He did not create it without form and void, as we have it in Genesis 1. 2.
4. It was the coming in of the enemy as a flood that brought about chaos.
5. Was the enemy to have all his own way?

6. The Spirit of God lifted up a standard against him: "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

IN THE DAYS OF His FLESH.

1. Was it not so in the days of His flesh? Before the Lord's temptation there was His baptism.
2. Was not that awful tragedy on the Cross an evidence that the enemy had come in as a deluge ?
3. But what about the Spirit of the Lord?
4. Pentecost followed Calvary.

IN HISTORY.

1. It has often been so in history.
2. Often and often the enemy has come in as a flood, and everything seemed to be at his mercy. But the Spirit has come in, and all was changed.
3. Take the time of the French Revolution as an example.
4. Christianity was dethroned, and Atheism ruled supreme, and the streets of Paris ran with blood.
5. But do you know things were ripe for similar events in this country--yet the Spirit of God through the revival under Wesley stemmed the horrid torrent.
6. Are we not ripe for a similar effusion of grace? (Note the awful coming in of evil in our own day and generation).

IN THIS CHAPTER.

1. So in this chapter.
2. It opens with an appalling description of Israel's moral condition. (Read verses 3, 4, 7 and 8.)
3. Then in verse 9 to 15 we have a heart moving confession.
4. And then, as there was no intercessor (verse 16) , God Himself interposed, and the Spirit of the Lord sweeps in.
5. This is a prophecy, and shall take place in Israel's history.

DIFFICULT VERSE.

1. This verse has evidently been a difficult one to translate.
2. An alternative rendering in R.V.: "For He shall come as a rushing stream which the breath of the Lord driveth."
3. Showing not only His agility, but also force, the power. of His coming.
4. Put him to flight—showing the success of His coming.
 - a. To masticate, break up food, is necessary to digestion.
 - b. We love to take a text and break it up.

1. The Enemy is a Person and not an Influence, and his identity is clear.

- I. "The Lord shall lift up a standard against him," note.
2. This statement needs emphasising these days.

3. The master stroke of the enemy is his persuasion of men that he does not exist.
4. No one can hold this belief who clings to the inspiration of the Bible.
5. He is a person to be reckoned with.
 - a. It was he who inspired Hannibal, Alexander, Napoleon, to execute their campaigns.
 - b. He is at the bottom of all sin and intrigue.

II. His Coming Implies a Former Ejection.

HE MUST BE OUT.

1. His coming in implies that he must have been out.
2. Is this so with you?
3. This is a word of comfort addressed to those out of whom he has been cast out.

THE ENEMY'S HOME.

1. What a telling description our Lord gives in Mathew 12. 43, of the unclean spirit's resting place: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none."
 2. No real rest for the enemy out of our corrupt heart.

How HAS THE ENEMY TO BE PUT OUT?

1. Only the Spirit of the Lord can, as margin has it, "put him to flight."
2. And to secure the incoming of the Holy Spirit there must be a coming to the Precious Blood.

III. The Casting Out of the Enemy is Followed by a Twofold Peace.

1. Have you noticed the twofold peace in John 20. 19 to 22?
2. Twice over our Lord said: "Peace be unto you."
3. The first is the peace which rests on the blood; the second is the peace which depends upon the Spirit.
4. "He showed him His hands and His side," as much as to say, "It is a peace which rests on sacrifice accepted."
5. But when I receive that peace I am yet conscious of war within. An inward disturbance.
6. That war will only end by the incoming of the Spirit.

IV. The Condition of His Coming--Come to the Blood.

1. So it is in this chapter.
2. Before we read of the Spirit, we hear of the Intercessor and the Redeemer.
3. We must know the efficacy of the Blood before we can know the power of His anointing.
4. There must be repentance and a turning to the Blood: "Repentant tears are the waters upon which the Spirit of God moves."

V. When Once Ejected, the Holy Spirit will Keep him Out.

SHE EJECTION OF THE ENEMY.

1. It is one thing to get the enemy out, another thing to keep him out.
2. That was a sad case our Lord referred to in Matthew 12. Then he saith: "I will return unto my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished."
3. There was no Spirit to withstand him.
4. The soul garrisoned by the Spirit of God is impregnable.

VI. When the Enemy Swoops Down upon us we shall Not Succumb—for the Holy Spirit will Put him to Flight.

HOW TO KEEP THE ENEMY OUT.

1. Some temptations come to us as a wee purling stream.
2. Others gather force and come in as a pent up flood.

"Tempted and tried I oh, the terrible tide
 May be raging and deep, may be wrathful and wide
 I Yet its fury in vain, for the Lord shall restrain,
 And for ever and ever Jehovah shall reign.

"Tempted and tried I There is One at thy side,
 And never in vain shall His children confide;
 He shall save and defend, for He loves to the end—
 Adorable Master and glorious Friend. "

CHRIST, THE HEALER OF THE BROKEN HEARTED.

Psalm 147.3 and 4; Isaiah 61.1; Luke 4. 18.

Introduction.

A COMMON MALADY.

1. A broken heart is a very common thing at the present day.
2. Perhaps commoner now than it ever has been in the world's history.
3. Heart-break is not a rare and tragic episode in human experience.
4. Note, there is a difference between being broken-down and broken-hearted.

BROKEN-DOWN, NOT BROKEN-HEARTED.

1. "Broken-down" people are not always brokenhearted folk.
2. We have known some who were broken in health, broken in wealth, even broken in love, yet not brokenhearted.
3. No; when we speak of people broken-hearted we mean more than broken-down.

RUPTURED HEART.

1. We have heard of people who have died of ruptured heart.
2. Through brooding over sorrow.

I'M HEART-BROKEN.

1. Meaning a great and overwhelming grief.

2. Something more than a pin-prick.

HOPELESS.

1. So far as this world is concerned, such are hopeless.
2. Science has to a great extent conquered physical pain.
3. But science has done nothing to diminish mental pain.
4. Christian Science—which is no science at all—seeks to cure by leading people to ignore—funny sort of cure, isn't it?

VARIOUS CAUSES FOR HEART-BREAK.

1. Broken by Grief.
 - a. That is suggested by Psalm 147. 3 (for "wounds," margin has "griefs").
 - b. Grief through bereavement.
 - c. Grief through loss and sorrow.
2. Broken-Hearted by Failure.
3. Broken by Sin. "The sacrifices of God are a broken and a contrite heart." "He will have a whole heart or none, yet He won't despise a broken one." - a. Their Own Sin.

(1) There is little of this, alas, to-day.

(2) Why should there not be? We have sinned as great as our fathers. - b. The Sins of Others.

I. The Lord's Commission (Isaiah 61. 1). He is the Great Heart Specialist from the Court of Heaven.

1. The great and crying need has been met, thank God. "Sent. "
2. A skilful physician or surgeon sometimes is sent to a Crowned Head suffering, in response to a pressing need.
3. He was sent:
 - a. Not because we asked Him to come.
 - b. Nor because we desired Him to come.
 - c. Not to the great ones only, but to all.

4 He is a Heart Specialist, from the Court of Heaven, sent by the Father Himself. "He hath sent me." FIVE SYMBOLS (Luke 4. 18) of sin's handiwork.

- 1 . Poor—sin impoverishes.
2. Captives--sin imprisons and captivates.
3. Blind—sin blinds.
4. Bruised—sin bruises.
5. Broken-hearted--the result of the discovery of all the former.

II. The Lord's Qualifications. His Greatness.

1. THE LORD KNOWS, THE MYSTERY OF THE STARS (Psalm 147. 3 and 4) .
 - a. What a strange combination.

- b. The Psalmist speaks of star-counting and heart-healing in the same breath.
- c. What a grand breathless thought of God!

(1) "He telleth the number of the stars."

(2) The mystery of the stars is known by Him.- d. Why speak thus of God?

(1) Only the infinite can heal the soul.

(2) Gal could not minister to broken hearts if the stars were too much for Him.

(3) "The mystery of the stars, and the mystery of human pain are parts of one great mystery that is no mystery to God."

(4) The God. Who alone can heal is the God Who counts the stars.

(5) No thought of God narrower and lower than that can ever truly comfort us.

2. HE HAS RECEIVED THE HEAVENLY ENDUEMENT. He has received the Spirit in fulness.

3. HE HAS SUFFERED WITH THE SAME MALADY.

a. Jesus died of a broken heart, and not as the result of the physical tortures of the Cross.

b. We could not insist upon medical men suffering from certain maladies before they attempt to cure them. Yet Jesus has suffered from a broken heart.

c. A broken-hearted man needs a broken-hearted Saviour.

4. HE MADE THE HEART.

a. He who made the heart alone can heal it.

b. He is the only real heart doctor.

III. The Lord's Success.

HE FIRST BINDS.

a. Giving instant relief.

b. Giving instant rest.

So BINDS THAT IT "HEALS."

a. It is not a partial or temporary healing.

b. It goes to the very core.

How DOES HE HEAL?

a. Ah, you must leave that to Him.

b. Come to Him.

Application.

1. To find healing for such sorrow as this men must find God.

2. When our Lord read Isaiah 61. 1 and 2 in the Nazareth Synagogue He added: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

3. Has it been fulfilled in your experience? It may be.

THE SERAPH'S WINGS.
ISAIAH 6. 2.

Introduction.

1. This is the only mention in Scripture of the Seraphim.
2. Are they identical with the Cherubim? Note, Cherubim are always spoken of as before the Throne, whereas the Seraphim above.
3. These are celestial beings named but unexplained.
4. Word "seraphim" means "burning ones."
5. Burning ones:

- a. Nearest the Throne.
- b. Flashing with splendour.
- c. Full of swift energy, as a flame of fire.
- d. Glowing with fervid love.
- e. Blazing with enthusiasm.
6. There is no ice in His presence.
7. The nearer we get to Him the more we shall glow and burn.
8. Cold religion is a contradiction in terms, though it is a reality in professors.

I. The Wings of Reverence. "With twain he covered his face." As a man brought suddenly into the sunlight, out of a darkened chamber, by an instinctive action shades his eyes with his hands.

1. The incapacity of the highest creature, with the purest vision, to gaze undazzled into, the shining light of God.
2. Though with far feebler sight. and more sinful, we may behold His glory veiled in Christ.
3. Absolute need of the lowliest reverence in our worship of God.
4. In many congregations it is apparent to all that there is a carelessness and shallowness, and a want of a realization of the majesty of the Father. This should not be.
5. If a seraph hides his face, surely it becomes us to do likewise, crying "Holy."

II.. The Wings of Humility, "With twain he covered his feet."

1. An instinctive lowly sense of unworthiness, caused him to fold wings over his feet.
2. The nearer we get to God the more we shall be aware of our limitation and unworthiness

Once get that sight, and away goes any self-conceit, ad all my fancied superiority above others.

III. The Wings for Service. "With twain he did fly." 1. That is the emblem of joyous, buoyant, unhindered motion. Alas, how slow-footed we are!

- 2, Whoever, beholding God, has found need to hide his face from the light and to veil his feet from the All-seeing Eye, will also feel impulses to go forth in His service.
3. The act of service here was the purging of a sinner from his uncleanness
4. Cherubim have to do with brazen altar, Seraphim with the the laver
5. Those make the best workers who are reverent and humble, and who see the King of Glory,

THE VISION.

ISAIAH 6.

I. The Vision of the Lord.

1. He was worshipping in the Temple when he saw the Lord.
2. Whether he saw this outwardly or inwardly we know not.
3. Great leaders go; but God remains. The Throne of Judah had been emptied but he saw the Throne that is ever filled.

II. The Vision of Perfect Service. Only reference to seraphim in the Bible. He saw two of the Lord's servants.

- I. POSITION. Near the Throne. Oh ! to be near ! - "above it."
2. POSTURE.
 - a. Covered faces—reverence.
 - b. Covered feet—self-hiding.

- (1) Forgetful of past service rendered.
- (2) Not taken up with past service.
- (3) Hidden service. - c, Flying.

- (1) Alacrity. Rendering swift, unquestioning obedience.
- (2) But not before adoration. d. Fellowship with one another. "One cried unto another."
 - (1) Not dumb to each other.
 - (2) Spoken to each other of the Lord.
 - (3) Spoke of the holiness of the Lord.

THE PROPHET'S CONFESSION.

1. He discovered his own impurity by gazing on purity.
2. The revelation given to him was of uncleanness and unfitness in speech and word.
3. He had been busy pronouncing six woes on others, he reserved the seventh for himself.
4. What he confesses is not what he had done, but what he was: First, "I am": we are concerned about what we iii e dose at conversion; Second, at what we are - Sanctification..

THE PROPHET'S CLEANSING.

1. God uses three main agents in cleansing men from their defilements--Blood, fire and water, i.e., Calvary, Pentecost, and the daily action of God's Word upon the conscience.
2. The prophet was cleansed by fire and blood—"Live coal" (burning wood) from off the altar of sacrifice.

NOTE THE POINTS—SEVEN C'S.

1. Contemplation. "I saw."
2. Conviction. "I am unclean."
3. Confession. "Woe is me," etc.
4. Cleansing. "Thy sin purged."
5. Call. "Whom shall I send?"
6. Consecration. "Here am I."
7. Commission. "And He said Go."

THE MINISTRY OF THE CLOUD.

"It shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud" (Gen. 9. 14).

Introduction. There were three Covenant signs.

1. The Rainbow. Sign of God's promise to preserve the earth from another flood.
2. Circumcision. Sign that the circumcised was in the covenant of blessing.
3. The Sealing by the Holy Spirit. A sign of the Justification and Regeneration of the believer.

The rainbow was God's first covenant sign. He did not want His people to live in fear and dread. The appearance of the rainbow, which seemingly united Heaven and earth, proclaimed the friendliness of God.

I. Clouds Come Over Us.

1. How familiar we are with the clouds in the sky.
2. Clouds come not only over the sky of nature, but the sky of our lives.
3. Often there is for us the clouds of adversity, of sorrow, sickness, and bereavement.
4. We sometimes say, "So-and-so is under a cloud," and we know what is meant.
5. But if clouds come over us, let us not forget it is

II. Only by God's Permission.

1. "I bring a cloud." Clouds do not please themselves, but obey wonderful laws, and the Lawgiver.
2. God knows all about our clouds.
3. We read, the disciples on the mount of Transfiguration "feared as they entered into the cloud."
4. We ought not to fear, for
 - a. He has brought the cloud.
 - b. The clouds obey Him, and, further,

III. God is in the Cloud.

1. Said He to Moses: "I come unto thee in a thick cloud."
2. Thus the clouds are the dwelling-place of God.
3. Often God answers our prayers to be drawn nearer to Him by sending a cloud.
4. We get to know each other better in the mist, before the mists are rolled away.

5. The clouds shut us in to God.
6. Remember

IV. His Presence Is in the Cloud.

1. Therefore brightening and glorifying it.
2. We read in Exod. 16. 10: "The glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud."
- V. There is no Cloud Without a Bow of Promise. "The bow shall be seen in the cloud."

V1. Dark Clouds Mean Bright Blessing.

1. This is so in nature: dark clouds mean showers of fertilising rain.
2. It is equally so in grace.
3. Thus the clouds are more than shutters; they are also springs of blessing.

Application.

1. A woman prayed for more patience.
 2. God answered the prayer by sending tribulation.
 3. Tribulation worketh patience.
- "Ye fearful saints fresh courage take.
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercies, and will break
In blessing on your head. "

THE METHOD OF THE DIVINE PLOUGHMAN.

"The plowers plowed upon my back" (Psalm 129. 3) .
"Doth the plowman plow continually to sow?
Doth he continually open and break the clods of his ground ? "
(Isaiah 28. 24, R.V.).

I. The Ploughing.

1. How often we are able to repeat the words of the Psalm.
2. They are particularly applicable to our Lord.
3. And Israel as a nation, too, can take up the words.
4. Yes, we, too, know something of the work of the Divine Ploughman. The plough of God's providence has often cut deep, turning over our plans, and purposes, breaking up the even tenor of our life.
5. And making the once clear plain a sea of choppy ridges.

II. Why the Ploughing?

1. The joy of harvest is the outcome of the painful operation of ploughing.
2. We would never know ourselves unless the plough had not turned over revealing the hidden depths of our being.

III. How Long?

1. Not continually.
2. If God ploughs, He ploughs to sow.
3. He does not use the plough for fun.

4. He does not exercise Almightyness to crush feebleness.

IV. Great Comfort.

1. To ISRAEL. The plough has been at work nearly two millenniums, but it will cease and blessing follow.

2. To SINNERS.

a. Plough of God's Spirit at work, but will be followed by

b. Conversion and regeneration.

c. The plough is working, let Him lead you to the Saviour.

3. To SAINT.

a. Plough of God's providence works in our lives.

b. The calm will follow the storm; day follows night; harvest follows Spring.

c. There will be the joy of a great harvest by and by.

OUR HAIRS NUMBERED.

"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered"

(Matt. 10. 30) .

OBSERVE, "numbered," not simply counted. Dr. Pierson has pointed out that "every hair has its own number, and if one had disappeared that number has gone out of the list.

What marvellous thought it is!" Note the statement just before this: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father." This means more than that God knows: it means that He is with the fallen bird.

This is wonderfully comforting, especially when we remember that we are of more value to Him than many sparrows.

THREE HARVESTS.

1. Past, Jer. s. 20

2. Present, Matt. 9. 37

3. Future, Matt. 13. 39

COME.

1. And Rest, Matt. II. 28

2. And See, John 1.39

3. And Drink, John 7.37

4. And Dine, John 21. 12

5. And Follow Me, Mark 10. 21

6. And Rest Awhile, Mark 6. 31

7. And Inherit, Matt. 25. 34

WEEPING, YET SOWING.

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psa. 126. 5 and 6).

WHAT a splendid verse is this! It has been an inspiration for the Christian worker ever since it was penned by good King Hezekiah nearly two and a half millenniums ago. It may be called an inspired proverb. It has found its way into general literature, and is frequently quoted for different purposes. It really is prophecy, fulfilled many times in Israel's history, with a fuller and grander fulfilment yet ahead.

But right on the surface it presents a problem. For whoever has heard of a weeping sower, of a farmer or gardener weeping as they sowed! Usually this process is undertaken in a spirit of great cheerfulness and abounding hope. They surely never "sow in tears" though they "reap in joy." What a problem this presents.

Yet the clue is very simple. Study the whole Psalm and readily the problem will be solved. It is a Psalm of Captivity, or rather, a Psalm of the return from captivity. "When the Lord turned again the Captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream." The news of imminent emancipation seemed too good to be true. Yet the promise materialised. "Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing." Even the heathen exclaimed, "The Lord hath done great things for them," so overwhelmingly patent was their deliverance of the Lord's own doing. When the happy and fortunate freedmen heard this they with one consent exclaimed, "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

Gladly, joyfully, triumphantly, they returned to their own beloved land. But the sight of ruined cities towns, villages, and vineyards unsealed the fountain of tears and the mourning choked the new-found joy. But here is the point: Did they abandon themselves to their sorrows? Did they nurse their grief with folded arms? By no means. Though with tears, they commenced their labours to remedy the sad state of affairs. They ploughed, and harrowed, and sowed, though with tears. Though they went forth weeping, yet they carried with them their seed baskets, bearing precious seed. Consequently, by and by, they came again "with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

The application is not difficult to see. Many a business man to-day is face to face with ruin. A good business, the result of years of labour, has ceased to exist. What then? Must the unfortunate, one abandon himself to despair? No; though with tears, the old tasks must be taken up. The day following the disastrous Chicago fire, this notice was found on the blackened ruins of a once flourishing shop: "Everything lost, except wife, children, and 1 fie ! Business resumed as usual to-morrow morning ! " Capital.

Leaders of Christian enterprises sometimes, through no fault of their own, find the work of years undone, what then? Hope must not be abandoned, but the seed basket taken hold of, and the old familiar tasks taken up in the certainty of an abounding harvest.

Is there not a message here for defeated and dispirited believers who are grieving over their backslidden state, and over the waste and ruin in their lives and experiences. If confession of sin is made, there will not only be forgiveness, but in Jesus Christ there is full and complete deliverance, and the restoration of the years that the locusts have eaten. Such may, ye must, take up again the old and blessed familiar tasks in the Lord's service, assured that "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

There are seven facts concerning the Christian worker to be noted in pondering on this Scripture.

I. His Activity. "He that goeth," God has a work for all to do. Happy are we if the tasks occupying our time and thought are Divinely appointed.

II. His Unselfishness. "He that goeth forth." Willing to leave comfortable arm chairs and warm firesides at the call of duty, remembering that there can be no gains without pains.

III. His Sincerity_ "He that goeth forth weeping." That is to say, attending to the allotted tasks in no mere dry and perfunctory manner. Doing our work in no empty professional manner, but with real heart and feeling. Suffering is the price of all real progress.

IV. His Resources. "Bearing precious seed." The seed is the Word of God. His precious truth has to be sown in faithfulness and confidence. What a glorious seed-basket have we in the Word of God.

V. His Assurance. "Shall doubtless." Turn that word round—less doubt, without any doubt. We can go forth in absolute hope of a glorious harvest.

VI. His Gladness. "Come again with rejoicing." The joy of harvest is a real very joy indeed.

VII. His Reward. "Bringing his sheaves with him." Coming before the great Reward Seat not alone, not empty handed. What reward for sacrificial service.

LO!
ONE OF THE MONOSYLLABLES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

The Lo ! of

1. Spiritual Surrender, Mark 10, 28
2. Consecration, Isaiah 6. 7
3. Christ's Continual Presence....., .. Matt. 28. 20

4. Doing the Will of God, Heb. 10. 7
5. Real Worship, Rev. 5. 6; and 14. 1

THE FLOWING OIL.
2 KINGS 4. 1 to 7.

Introduction.

TRIVIAL.

1. "A simple, trivial, incident, not worthy of incorporation in a Divine Book," say some.
2. "Simple," we admit; "trivial" we deny. It is as full of lessons as an egg is full of meat.

THE STORY.

1. "A certain woman." Rabbis say she was wife of Obadiah.
2. She had lost her husband. Sad, sad loss!

 . He had left her with a load of debt. Not the first or the last of such instances. How careful husbands should be!
4. The creditor-, according to Mosaic Law, had the right, which he was about to put into practice, of taking the children to be bondmen . (See Exodus 21. 1 to 11; Lev. 25.)
5. ' Pot of oil." Had she kept this for her burial?

I. Literal Application to Those in Money Difficulties.

WIDOWS.

- I. This is one amongst many instances in the Bible of God's care for widows.
2. Jer, 49. 11 has been a comfort to many: "Leave thy fatherless children I will preserve them alive, and let tli widows trust in Me." This :s a glorious promise.

LITERAL.

1. We have so spiritualised this that we have lost sight of the fact that it was a literal money difficulty.
2. How this debt had been incurred we know not. Rabbis say Obadiah incurred it in feeding the 100 prophets.
3. "He feared the Lord," therefore it was not incurred by ill-living.

A NATURAL INSTINCT.

1. The afflicted, by natural instinct, look to religious people to help them in their hour of trial.
2. They even come to penniless people like Elisha and missionaries.
3. Unlike many such suppliant, she was a good woman.

How SOLVED.

I. By the "Shut Door."

2. By the woman's "Shut Door," and not merely Elisha's.
3. Many ask our prayers, but do not pray for them selves.

EASIER.

1. Some say it is easier to pray about the soul than the purse.

DEBT PAID FIRST. Note: First pay debt then keep rest for yourself.

H. Spiritual Application is to Spiritual Insolvency.

1. What about the empty vessels of our neighbours? Empty hearts, minds, lives.
2. You are to fill them. How?
3. You must have your own vessels filled first, then your neighbours.
4. How filled. "Shut Door." The value and importance: of prayer for others and for ourselves.

1. HER CONDITION OF NEED. Spiritual Insolvency.

(1) There is such a thing as spiritual as well as financial insolvency. (In Church: death of great men. In individual life: carnal living.)

(2) There are spiritual obligations:

- a. To God. He expects holiness.
- b. To man. They expect more of us.

(3) There is such a thing as spiritual bankruptcy. A bankrupt is one who is unable to meet his obligations..

(4) She herself was not the cause of her unfortunate position. It was due to another. So is this with you and me. Our state of insolvency is inherited.

(5) Others were dependent upon her.

- (a) No one liveth unto himself
- (c) Others suffer for our lack of grace

2. Her Assets.

a. She had Good family connections.

(1) Some are proud of noble ancestry. The boast of possessing "Blue Blood".

(2) "Have you any lords in your family?" asked a schoolboy of another. "Well," said the little fellow, "I have heard my mother say as how the Lord Jesus is our Elder Brother."

(3) By nature we have a sad family connection—with Adam in his fall.

(4) By grace we have a glorious family connection—with and in Christ.

(5) Can you declare your pedigree? Have you the assurance of salvation?

b. She was Thoroughly Dissatisfied.

c. She had a Good Friend to Consult. Yet that was not sufficient.

d. She Already Possessed a Little Oil.

(1) Oil, emblem of Holy Spirit.

(2) Only applied after the Blood.

(3) Unless we have the Spirit we are none of His.

(4) But has the Holy Spirit got possession of us?

3. HER DELIVERANCE.

a. Was by the Way of the Cross. In two cases. First: Cross of Christ. Second: Her own cross.

(1) She had to be quite willing to become to her neighbours a laughing stock.

(2) This was not the world's way of wiping away debt.

(3) Remember He is still without the camp!

(4) She came to an end of herself. - b. Was by the Multiplication of Oil

(1) That was how her insolvency disappeared.

(2) But when did the oil multiply? -c. Was by the Shut Door.

(1) Not by the reading and study of good books.

(2) Not by attending good meetings.

(3) But by getting alone with God.

(4) By spreading before Him our own empty vessels of desire and expectancy. (We can do this each day.)

(5) And the neighbours empty vessels, too!

THE SHUT DOOR. Can we undervalue the Shut Door? Yes. It is of vital importance in life and service.

1. It meant Salvation for Noah and his family (Gen. 7. 16). First Shut Door in the Bible; and God shut that door.

2. It meant Sanctification in figure for the widow in 2 Kings 4. 4.

3. It meant Satisfaction for Thomas and rest of disciples (John 20. 19 and 20). No other Evangelist mentions that Shut Door.

4. It meant Success for Elisha (2 Kings 4. 33). Gehazi did not shut his door.

THE IRON THAT SWAM.

2 KINGS 6. 1 to 7.

Introduction.

THE INCIDENT.

1. Some of the most wonderful stories are recorded in the life of the prophet Elisha. Possibly none more wonderful than this of the "Lost Axe Head."

A school of prophets flourished under the fostering care of the prophet, who lived with and at the school.

2. The prophetic College became too small. Need of larger premises.

3. The prophet's permission for extension was first sought, then his presence solicited.

4. They decided to do the alterations themselves.

5. On reaching the Jordan banks they commenced operations.

6. Whilst engaged in this healthful exercise, one of the young prophets, possibly wielding his axe with more force than judgment, caused the iron head to fly off and disappear

under the water.

SOME SMILE.

1. Some worldly wise folk smile unbelievably when they read or hear read this incident.
2. It is valuable.

I. A Lesson on the Divine Care.

1. This spiritual application is thus put by John Newton:
Not one concern of ours is small. If we belong to Him;
To teach us this, the Lord of all,
Once made the iron to swim.

2. This may seem a triviality to the worldly folk.
3. But He takes a real, living, practical interest in everything in our lives.
4. It was bad enough to lose an axe head; but worse, seeing it was borrowed.
5. He is interested in your axes and knives, and pots and pans and brushes.

II. A Lesson in Spiritual Effectiveness.

1. It points out for the Christian believer's edification, the danger of losing spiritual effectiveness.
2. The man did not lose the whole of his axe, but the effective part of it, without which he was useless in the work.
3. The axe head was lost. - a. At a time of growth and expansion. - b. In the midst of service.
4. He did not lose: - a. The axe handle, nor - b. His knowledge of how trees should be cut.
5. How he recovered his loss. - a. He confessed his loss. - b. He returned to the place where he lost it.
Satan does not mind if we deepen our knowledge and keep sound our doctrine, but he wishes to rob us of the keen edge of spirituality that is effective.
6. One great secret of retaining our spiritual effectiveness is abiding in Him, as in our next point.

III. A Lesson on the Importance of Union.

1. In this story the truths set forth in John 15 may be found.
2. Two kingdoms here. Iron, belonging to mineral; wood, to vegetable.
3. When separated—useless.
4. Nothing must be allowed to come in between the Lord and ourselves.
5. If left to ourselves we shall "sink" and be useless.
6. There is always the downward pull in the world, and always something in our old nature to answer to that pull.
7. How to maintain our abiding.
 - a. Union maintained.
 - b. Meditation of the Word.
 - c. Cleansing by Word.

IV. A Lesson on the Salving of a Sinner.

THE SINNER.

1. The axe head may be taken to represent the sinner.
2. He had lost what was really not his own. We belong to God.
3. Its nature was to sink deeper. So poor sinner is only capable, apart from the power of God, of getting further away.

THE PLACE.

1. The place where it fell, Jordan, the sinner's position before God, viz., in the death of trespasses and sins.
2. Jordan stands for death.

How TO BE SAVED.

1. Can the axe head raise itself? No; help must come outside itself.
2. God has cut down a branch (Isa. H. 1) , and cast it into the pit of death
3. When cast into the waters it disappears.
4. But only for a moment, to re-appear in resurrection.

COMES TO US.

1. The stock came to where the axe head lay.
2. So the Lord Jesus comes to where we are.

THE RESULT.

1. Recovered.
2. Raised.
3. Not "the iron did float"—a dead corpse can do this.
4. The iron did swim—does what is contrary to nature. This meant progress.
5. Union with the living Christ means:
 - a. Life.
 - b. Energy.
 - c. Progress.
 - d. Restoration.
6. Restoration to proper and original owner.

God. HOW TO BE RAISED.

1. Tell the Lord.
2. Consult the servant of the Lord.

THE LORD WRESTLING WITH JACOB.

GENESIS 32. 24-32.

THIS CONTEST

- I. A Literal Fact. Not a dream or vision.
- II. Its Purpose. To bring him to the end of self.

- III. It Took Place. When he was alone with God.
- IV. It Concluded. When resisting Jacob became clinging Jacob.
- V. Its Fruit. Shrivelling of self-life and enriched character.

LOW SHELVES. The late Dr. F. B. Meyer once wrote: "I used to think that God's best gifts were on tall shelves, and I must grow tall in order to reach them. Now I have learned that they are on low shelves, and that we must get down in the very dust to take them." The Lord had bestowed many gifts and blessings on Jacob, tall though he was in his own estimation, but ere he could have the best of all he had to bend very low.

JACOB'S PRAYER. He schemed and plotted first (3 to 8), then prayed. He reminded God he was on this journey by His command (verse 9) ; confessed his unworthiness (10) ; remembered God's bountiful kindness to him (10); frankly disclosed his fears (11); reminded Him of His promise (12). "The best we can say to God in prayer is what He has said to us."

THE FRUIT.

1. A Life-long Limp. "The limp of Jacob was indeed a life-long disability, but it was also the patent of his nobility."
2. The Shrivelling of the Sinew was symbolical of the shriveling of the "I," the self-life.
3. The New Name. He was knighted on the field, on the scene of his defeat.
4. Power with God and Man.
5. Sunrise. It is sunrise with the soul which has definite experience with God.

THE APPLE OF HIS EYE.

ZECH. 2. 8.

AT first sight it is not easy to say whether "His Eye" means God's eye, or the eye of the one who seeks to injure God's servant. The latter is certainly true. He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his own eye, i.e., will do himself irreparable damage, or injure himself in the most sensitive part. The enemies of God's people sooner or later find this out by bitter experience.

But we may take it that God is here calling His people the apple of His eye, and this figure of speech is most suggestive, teaching us several things.

- I. The Delight we are to Him. We are the Apple of His Eye.
- II. The Blessed Unity Between-the Lord and His Own. He calls you His eye. It is the most prominent part of our appearance. What a close and blessed unity this suggests. Nearer we cannot get, for how near the eye is to the individual!
3. The -Loving Care He Exercises over His Own (Deut. 32. 10; Psa. 17. 8). "He kept him (Israel) as the apple of His eye." Thus declared Moses concerning God's care over His people. You thought you were friendless and helpless, but you have a wonderful Defender, and He exercises a wonderful care over you. See how swiftly and automatically we defend our eyes. Let David's prayer be yours: "Keep me as the apple of

the eye" (Psa. 17.8).

IV. Learn the Special Mission He has for His Own. In the Hebrew the pupil of the eye is called the gate of the eye. because through it enters the light. How appropriate is this. His people is the pupil, the gate through which the light come: to lighten those in darkness.

THE LORD THINKETH UPON US.

"But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon
. me" (Psa. 40. 17).

I. A Confession. It is a confession of poverty. That may be true in a literal sense---poor as far as this world's goods are concerned. But it certainly is true in a spiritual sense. A confession many do not care to make. It is so natural for us to hide the fact of our poverty, whether temporal or spiritual. Some do not make it for they do not know of it. We refer specially to spiritual poverty (Rev. 3. 17).

Don't be afraid. He knows. Don't be afraid to tell Him. Whether you do or no, He knows all about it.

II. An Encouragement.

COMFORTING. How comforting :t is for a poor person to hear that. some wealthy relative is thinking of him. Alas! they often just think, and nothing more!

CERTAIN. One thing is certain, if God thinks of us, all is well. "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us that we perish not."

HOW DO WE KNOW HE THINKS OF US? Because of what He says in His Word. "For I know the thoughts that :6 think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil" (Jer. 29. 11) , Because of what He is constantly doing.

III. The Nature and Character of God's Thinking. Not about, but UPON us. There is a sense of awayness, of distance, in His thinking about us.

When the children are at school, mother thinks about them; but when they are seated at the table she thinks upon them. It might be rendered, "is thoughtful over me." There is a sense of nearness and affection in the expression—"Upon." God's thinking is done whilst bending over us in love, "Jesus now is bending o'er thee, Jesus lowly meek and mild. "

THE MYSTERIOUS YOUNG MAN

MARK 14. 51.

Who was he? The more we ponder on this incident the more we are led to believe it was Mark himself, the writer of this Gospel, and for the following reasons:

1. This way of referring to himself is quite in keeping with the usual manner of personal

references in the Gospels. This was how John spoke of himself in his Gospel.

2. The very triviality of the incident seems to point to Mark as the young man concerned. This incident has little or no bearing on the story. Yet it was not trivial to Mark.

3. The minuteness of the reference inevitably suggests that the Evangelist is giving a bit of his own history.

4. "Having a linen cloth"—having a sindon, a fine and very costly cloth, so called because it was woven at Scinde, India. It was a kind of linen cloth greatly valued, but exceedingly costly, and only the very wealthy could afford it. Now we do know that Mark and his mother were wealthy,

5. In all probability this young man had been a silent, hidden observer of our Lord's agony and prayer in Gethsemane, and that is one reason why, though the three selected disciples were asleep we have so full an account of what really happened..

A STRANGE NESTING PLACE.

"Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest . . .
even Thine altars, O Lord of Hosts" (Psalm 84. 3).

Introduction.

A STRANGE NESTING PLACE. A strange nesting place was chosen by a pair of Birmingham thrushes, under a railway car that four times a day does the journey between Sutton and Birmingham. But here is a stranger—the Temple altar.

CONTEXT. The Psalmist is not hinting that the altars of the Lord had been so neglected and disused that birds had nested there. Unable to attend the services of the sanctuary, his heart yearned for that privilege (verse 2), and he envied the birds that nested there.

THE ALTAR. The lessons are simple and important. The altar speaks of blood-shedding, of sacrifice, and loudly speaks of Cross.

THE CROSS, GOD'S BEST ALTAR.

I. The Weakest can Find Sanctuary In the Altar, Place of Safety. The weak sparrow and swallow found sanctuary in God's house. But the place of blood-shedding was the place of safety. The Cross is your only sanctuary, your only City of Refuge.

II. The Weakest find the Place of Death the Place of Life. The place of blood-shedding was not only the place of safety, but the place of life. When I cling to the Cross I find

1. Pardon.

2. Life for a look.

III. The Most Timid find the Place of Sacrifice a Place of Quietness. In this distracting world it is possible to be quiet and do our work.

"Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of Sin, The blood of Jesus whispers peace within. "

IV. Place of Sacrifice the Starting Point of all True Service. Here the altar was a place for busy service.

SEVEN ASPECTS OF SALVATION.

1. Horn of Salvation—the Power of Salvation, Luke 1.69
2. Rock of Salvation—the Stability of our Salvation, Psalm 95. 1
3. Tower of Salvation —the Security of our Salvation, 2 Sam. 22. 51
4. Helmet of Salvation Preservation of our Salvation, 1 Thess. 5. 8
5. Cup of Salvation—the Joy of our Salvation, Psa. 116. 13
6. Wells of Salvation—the Refreshment in our Salvation, .. . Isaiah 12. 3

THE FIVE RECORDED OCCURRENCES OF OUR LORD PRAYING.

1. At His Baptism, Luke 3. 21
2. On the Mount of Transfiguration,..... . . Luke 9. 28
3. When Choosing His Disciples, Luke 6. 12
4. When the Jews Sought to Kill Him,..... John 12. 27
5. In Gethsemane, Luke 22. 42

AMEN.

"My heart wishes it to be exactly so"
(Chinese Version).

"Amen" Study No.1

Introduction.

- I. No word used more in devotion than this.
 2. And we might add, none more lightly used.
 3. We use it as a fitting finish to our prayers, though its full significance is not so well known.
 4. It is a word capable of many renderings, its precise meaning to be decided by context.
- I. It is Used as a Note of Affirmation. In the Douay Version of Scriptures our Lord's "Verily, Verily" is rendered "Amen! Amen."

II. It is Used as Meaning "True, Faithful, Certain, Steadfast." In Rev. 3. 14, Christ is called "The Amen." Oh, how true is He! How faithless we are!

III. In 2 Cor. 1. 20, All the Promises of God are said to be "Amen in Christ," that is, they are certain and firm to those in Christ.

IV. There is a fourth use and meaning of the word "Amen," the one we often make of it. The use our Lord taught us to make of it: "So be it," or, "So let it be."

V. A friend stated that his sister says it ought to be pronounced "A-men ! ! I" meaning "It shall be ! " Sometimes we feel we are storming Heaven and can then lay full claim.

VI. But the Chinese Characters used for Amen, mean, "My heart wishes it to be exactly so."

a. Is this not a charming definition.

b. Another way of saying: "Lord, this is not the mere expression of my lips, but the language of my heart."

A VERY DESIRABLE "AMEN."

Oh, to leave this world thus with a benediction.

Luke 24. 50-53.

"Amen" Study No, 2.

I. Joy and Praise.

1. No real Christian can but long

a. For more joy (verse 52),

b. And for more of the spirit of praise.

2. To our sorrow we have to confess we lack often these essentials.

3. Now and again we are in this frame of mind.

4. But these were so "continually."

5. Said John Livingstone (1603-1672) : "The capital crime of the Lord's people is barrenness in praises."

6. Rutherford said: "How joyful is my heart that ye write ye are desirous to join with me in praising, for it is charity to help a debtor to pay his debts."

II. Praising and Blessing.

1 . Not interchangeable terms.

2. To praise is to magnify His mercy; to bless is to speak good of His Name.

III. Continually. Some seem to think that this meant "attendance only at stated hours of prayer."

IV. What will Lead Us to this Frame of Mind and Soul ?

1. Be blessed by Him (we must be blessed before we can bless) .

2. Worship Him.

3. Abide in Him (He is our Temple).

4. Then you will praise Him more.

"AMEN" TO JOHN'S STRANGE COMMAND.

1 JOHN 5. 21.

"Amen" Study No. 3.

I. What is an Idol?

1. This "Amen" must be considered as not merely a fitting conclusion to the Epistle, but as a heartfelt desire concerning this last command.

2. We might be inclined to think this has no application to us.

3. There is much idolatry to-day even in England.

a. Of course there is to-day Image worship. We would do as John Knox did, when lying in irons in the French Galley. He was asked to worship an image of the Virgin Mary, but he flung it overboard, declaring it was "but a pented brod"—a painted board.

b. There can be idolatrous systems of worship. The following of any man-made religion is idolatry. "All worshipping, honouring, or service of God invented by the brain of man in the religion of God, without His own express command, is idolatry," said John Knox in later life.

c. Dr. Torrey said: "That which a man thinks most of—that is his god. It may be money, position, or pleasure."

II. Who are the "Little Children?" 1. 1 John 2. 12, 13 and 14 decides.

2. Observe three stages of growth:

a. Spiritual babyhood, or infancy.

b. Spiritual youth.

c. Spiritual maturity.

3. Little children are in particular need of a word about forgiveness (2. 12), victory over sin (2. 1), power of overcoming (4. 4) etc.

III. "Keep yourselves." Let God have His rightful place in your hearts and life.

"AMEN" TO THE CURSES.

DEUT. 27. 15.

"Amen" Study No. 4.

Introduction. This is the most difficult "Amen" of the Bible. It is easy to say "Amen" to the blessings. It is quite natural for the heart to wish for them. But the curses? Ah, that is

difficult. These are instructions concerning a strange ceremony to take place on entrance into Canaan.

Why should it be difficult to say "Amen?" It is comparatively easy to say, "It shall be," one of the definitions of "Amen." For whether we say "Amen" or no, it is bound to take place. But to say, "My heart wishes it to be exactly so"—well, that is the difficulty. And yet that is the position the Lord desires us all to reach. Our hearts should only wish to be and to hear and do what is His wish and will for us.

I. Is it His Will for Us to Tread some Lonely and Tortuous Way? Pray for grace to say "Amen."

II. Is it His Arrangement for you to Bear Many Burdens of Responsibility? Pray for grace to say "Amen."

III. One Thing that will Help us to say "Amen" to the Curses: The presence of the Altar. The altar had to be fixed on the side curses were announced.

IV. If a Curse Rests on Every One that Continued Not in the Book of the Law to Do Them, yet "He was made a curse for us."

"AMEN" TO THE LORD'S COMING.

"Surely I come quickly. Amen" (Rev. 22. 20).

"Amen" Study No. 5.

1. Can we all say this to this Divine intimation?
2. I fear there are many professing Christians who could not.
3. When our friends tell us they intend to call upon us: some day we ask them to send us, a card. so that we might get ready for then.
4. How we wish the Lord would do the same.
5. But He does not. Why ?. He desires us to be always ready.
6. Note the present tense'. "I come " He desires us to live in the expectancy of His Coming.
7. Our Lord's coming is mentioned 318 times in the 260 chapters of the New Testament, and it occupies 1 in every 25 verses from Matthew to Revelation
8. Much, from time to time, has been said about the Eastward position. The Christian position is the upward position, the upward gaze.

HOW TO SAY "AMEN."

REV. 19.4.

"Amen" Study No. 6.

1. We had for our meditation in Study No. 4 one of the most difficult "Amen's" in the Bible.
2. We think we have got on very far in the Spiritual life when we can say "Amen " to all

God's dealings with us.

3. But there is something else required. How do we say "Amen?"

4. So many say "Amen" to God's providences in such a way as though they were martyrs in having to submit to them.

5. Notice in Rev. 19. 4 what the "Amen" is followed by.

6. If it takes a lot of grace to say "Amen," what grace is required to say also "Alleluia!" A lady went to China to undertake missionary work. With a deep love for the Chinese people, she tackled the language. After some months she was asked to remain in the Training Home.

Surprised, and for the moment disappointed, yet she said Amen, but some time passed before she could add Hallelujah.

7. Verse 4 tells us one secret of being able to add, "Praise the Lord ! "

8. When we remember that, notwithstanding all the darkness, and all the unintelligible things, yet God is on the throne, it is then we can say "Alleluia," as well as "Amen."

9. And when He is on the throne of our spirits, crowned Lord of all, then we can say: "My heart would have it so—praise the Lord."

THE APOSTOLIC BLESSING.

2 COR. 13. 14.

"Amen" Study No. 7.

Introduction.

1. This verse is most familiar to us, as it is used universally in the dismissal of congregations.

2. We have all repeated "Amen" after the preacher, and it is good to so respond.

3. But what an "Amen" this is.

4. This "Amen" practically amounts to two things:

I. Our Acceptance of the Trinity.

1. If Jesus is not God the Son, and if the Holy Spirit is not a Personality, it were blasphemous to associate the names thus.

2. It does not mean that we understand the Trinity.

3. But we can accept that Doctrine.

4. It was Henry Ward Beecher who said it was easier for him to believe in the Trinity than the Unity of God.

5. Science has something to say in favour, for in nature the highest organisms are the most complex.

6. Philosophy teaches that love demands love; that Eternal Fatherhood implies Eternal Sonship,

II. Our Wish for Blessings to be Bestowed by the Trinity. What a splendid wish and prayer this is for a congregation about to leave, or for that matter, for all our friends.

1. THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST . . "Be with you."
 - a. Note, not Jesus, but Lord Jesus. How reverently that peerless Name is uttered.
 - b. Not only the blessings that come to us through Jesus.
 - c. Or the blessings that are bestowed by Him.
 - d. But there is a further meaning--the refinement and gracefulness of the Lord Jesus.
 - e. Jesus Christ was always graceful in His deportment and manners.
2. THE LOVE OF GOD ... "Be with you."
 - a. A constant realisation of the love of God.
 - b. His own love constantly dwelling within us.
3. THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY GHOST . . . `Be with you."
 - a. God has only one Vicar on earth—the Holy Spirit.
 - b. He is here now right by our side.
 - c. We can have partnership, oneness, with Him in all His wishes and desires.

Note the ascending scale.

First: Grace.

Second: Love.

Third: Fellowship.

When I get grace I am made to know of the fact that He loves me, and, most marvellous of all, we then can have communion.

TASTING. PSALM 34. 8.

1. This means that Christianity is something to sample as well as something to believe.
2. Conversion is spoken of in 1 Peter 2. 3 as "tasting."
3. Strange, yet true, that those who know nothing experimentally about religion have most to say about it and against it.
4. Why the Psalmist longed for others to "taste." Because his God was a God who
 - a. Answered prayer (verse 4).
 - b. Delivered from fears (verse 4).
 - c. Lightened hearts of those who look to Him (verse 5).
 - d. Saved people out of their 'troubles' (verse 6).
5. What is necessary in order to "taste?"
 - a. Call upon Him.
 - b. Come to Him.
 - c. Take from Him gifts offered.

PRAYER, A MATTER OF THE HEART.

"Therefore hath Thy servant found it in his heart to
pray this prayer unto Thee" (2 Sam. 7, 27).

Prayer Study No. I,

A Find, Note that expression. David had made a find, a great find, an important one. And the find was in his own heart. And the find was a desire for prayer— a heart desire- a love for prayer. Have you a love, a heart affection for prayer?

Highest Form. This is the highest form of prayer. Prayer first begins as a matter of necessity. But it soon ought, and should, become a matter of the heart.

Madam Guyon has defined prayer as "nothing else but the application of the heart to God." In other words, the heart talking to God, and communing with Him.

Independent. "The prayer of the heart," wrote Madame Guyon, "cannot be interrupted by the occupations of the mind."

Nothing can interrupt the prayer of the heart but unruly affections.

Essentials. In order to find prayer in the heart, the following are essentials:

- I. A HEART RIGHT WITH GOD. If the heart is not right with God, communion with God is impossible. An impenitent sinner finds no such thing in his heart. He has no intelligent wish to enjoy God's friendship. The whole atmosphere of prayer is foreign to him.
2. A HEART FILLED WITH HIM. That is a heart in which He is quite at Home, and which He has filled with Himself.
3. A HEART SET ON GOD'S WORD. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." This is a trustingly beautiful prayer by David. Read it carefully and prayerfully. When examined, you will find that David is only talking over and repeating and thanking God for His own Word. This is one secret of blessing and successful prayer seasons and times.

PRAYER: A MATTER OF THE INTELLECT.

"Ye said also, Behold what a weariness is it!"
(Malachi 1. 13).

Prayer Study No. 2.

A Sad Mark of Spiritual Degeneration Is Here. The sacred offices of the sanctuary had become a weariness . Sad, oh so sad, when prayer becomes a weariness! Yet is there a Christian who has not found it so at times?

Indolence. It suggests that there can be weariness and indolence in prayer. Coleridge thought the act of praying to be, in its most perfect form, the very highest energy.

Dead Prayers. We offer many dead prayers through mental indolence. We do not shake ourselves up to think and act.

Matter of Intellect. We noticed in our last study that true prayer is a matter of the heart. It is also a matter of the intellect. We may pray with the intellect without praying with the heart; but I question whether we can pray with the heart without praying with the intellect. We have to serve God as well as love Him, with the mind, as well as heart.

Let your Prayers be:

AFFECTIONATE -. With real heart in them.
INTELLIGENT - With real thought in them.
ENERGETIC - With real energy in them.

1. Old Dr. Chalmers spoke of Dr. Doddridge's prayers as having an "intensely business-like" spirit.
2. An old American preacher, in denouncing indolent prayers, said: "Can we expect that our sins can be washed by a lazy prayer." Think on this.
3. Of course it is the Blood of God's Son that cleanseth from sin, yet prayer for that mercy usually precedes the blessing.
4. The Lord save us from lazy prayers!

THE MIGHTY INFLUENCE OF PRAYER.

"The heartfelt supplication of a righteous man exerts
a mighty influence" (James 5. 16).

Prayer Study No. 3.

F. Rays. We have been startled lately at the discovery by an Italian of what are now known as "F. Rays." These Rays will blow up a ship with its own dynamite at a distance of 20 miles. It is an invisible yet mighty force.

A Mightier Power. But we know of a mightier power. Invisible, too, viz., that of prayer, as James here declares.

James. The tradition concerning James is that his knees were worn hard as a camel's, through his constant habit of prayer. This gives force to his statement concerning prayer, for he lived the prayer life. He practised what he preached, and he preached what he practised. James insisted on the extreme value and power of prayer (see text).

Is this True? The great majority of us have little faith in prayer. Christians often have little faith in prayer as a power in real life. Or though we may say differently with our lips, by our lives we show little faith in prayer.

Heathen Shame Us. Heathen habits of devotion shame us. Heathen prayer, whatever else it is or it is not, is a real belief in the heathen mind.

When Ethelred, the Saxon King of Northumberland, invaded Wales, and was about to give battle to the Britons, he observed near the enemy a host of unarmed men. He inquired who they were, and what they were doing. He was told that they were monks of Bangor praying for the success of their countrymen. "Then," said the heathen prince, "they have begun the fight against us; attack them right away."

Mighty. Remember prayer is a mighty weapon. Use it.

Key. Prayer is a golden key, which, kept bright by constant use, will unlock the treasures of earth and heaven.

THE VALUE OF SILENCE.

"Be silent unto God, and let Him mould thee"
(Luther's Translation, Psa. 37. 7) .

Prayer Study No. 4.

Seeming Injustice.

1. It appears that the Psalmist often noticed the seeming injustice of God's dealings with men as witnessed in the frequent prosperity of the wicked, and the frequent adversity of the righteous. What then?

2. Why, do not fret, and don't be envious, but
- a. Trust in the Lord.
 - b. Delight thyself in the Lord.
 - c. Commit thy way unto the Lord.
 - d. Rest in the Lord.

Luther's Rendering. Luther gave a suggestive rendering and translation of this verse. The margin of our A.V. says, "Be silent to the Lord."

Value of Silence. We are slow at learning the value of silence. It seems one of the most difficult to learn these bustling 20th century days. And that is the reason so many break down in body, and also why there is so little worship.

In Nature. We have an example of the value of silence in the natural world. The silent seasons of life are not inoperative. The winter is the mother of spring; the night is the fountain of physical forces of the day.

So in Grace. The greatest things in our spiritual lives come out of our waiting hours, when all activity is suspended, and the soul learns "to be silent unto God" while He shapes and moulds us for future activities and fruitful years.

Silence—what in? Silence sometimes of our own clamorous needs and petitions. Silence of our own mental doubts and difficulties. Silence of our own plannings and scheming.

Why—what for? To hear His voice. To learn His will. To have His mind—his thoughts imparted to us. To have our characters moulded.

QUIETNESS BEFORE GOD.

PSALM 37. 7, R.V.

Prayer Study No. 5.

Cecil. We were much impressed by a remark of Cecil recorded in his Memoirs: "Quietness before God is one of the most difficult of all Christian graces." This is a remark by one who was wise and understanding in the things of God and in the ways of men.

Recognised. David seems to recognise it as such. See, it is the fifth grace mentioned here:

1. "Fret not" (verse 1).
2. "Trust" (verse 3).
3. "Delight" (verse 4).
4. "Commit" (Roll thy way upon the Lord, R.V.). (5).
5. "Rest" (be silent to the Lord, R.V.) (7).

How necessary it is to enjoy God and hear His voice.

Higher Degree. Madame Guyon calls a state of quietness before God as one of the higher degrees of prayer.

A Help to This. Madam Guyon says: "It is also necessary that you should go to God, not so much to obtain something from Him as to please Him, and to do His will; for a servant who only serves his master in proportion to the recompense he receives, is unworthy of any remuneration."

THREE STEPS IN THE PRAYER LIFE.

PSALM 5. 1 to 7.

Prayer Study No. 6.

I. The Prayer's Request (verse 1).

1. He hears every word we speak in even ordinary everyday conversation.
2. How often we grieve Him!
3. He hears also our thoughts! Oh, how that startles and humbles us!
4. But the Psalmist has particularly prayer in His mind.
5. He hears our prayers when offered audibly or inaudibly.

II. The Prayer's Determination as self-preservation (verses 2 and 3) .

1. Come what may, "Unto Thee will I pray."
2. And one thing that makes him most determined to pray is the fact of the holiness of God (verse 4).
3. By prayer T receive strength to avoid and gain victory over evil and temptation.

4. And thus live and dwell in His Presence.

5. He determined to pray specially in the morning for "well begun is half done." And after prayer, continue all day to "look up!"

III. The Prayer Attitude (verse 7).

1, He would not approach God on the ground of His own goodness, but rely on His mercy (Note, "multitude of Thy mercy").

2. And he would approach God in reverence. "And in Thy fear.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKERS, OR THOSE IN TROUBLE GETTING ALONE WITH THE LORD.

MARK 6. 31.

Prayer Study No. 7.

Introduction.

1. How familiar are the words of our text.

2. We remember them in times of sickness, when we note with thankfulness that it is "Come," not "Go," suggesting He is there to greet us.

3. But there are two classes suggested by the events of the context.

4. And we particularly remember our text in relation to waiting on God.

I. There is Sorrow, Because of Bereavement or Other Losses.

1. By St. Matthew 14 we learn that these words were said immediately after our Lord heard of John the Baptist's martyrdom.

2. He wanted to get away from the bustling crowd.

3. There is nothing like solitude with God for healing our soul trouble.

4. Strange, often we feel least inclined for Him at such times.

II. Christian Workers. After Public Service, Require Loneliness.

1. The Apostle had returned after a successful missionary and evangelistic campaign.

2. They were jubilant.

3. He calmed them by taking them aside.

4. We will soon get flat if we do not have our times of solitude.

5. And we will soon begin to think unduly of ourselves if we do not seek for solitude.

III. Even as Christians we Need Such Solitude to Regain Lost Brilliancy.

1. An archduchess possessed some of the most magnificent pearls in existence.

2. Having been left unworn for a long time, the gems lost their colour and became, as the authorities declared, sick.

3. Experts declared that the only way to restore their original brilliancy was to submit them to a prolonged immersion in the depths of the sea.

4. At the foot of a cliff, under the windows of a Castle, at a depth of 80 feet below the surface of the Adriatic's clear waters, in a cage fixed by divers, they lay for years.

5. We lose colour and become sick through wear and tear, and lack of solitude with Him.

OUR CHIEF WORK.

"On that day did David make it the chief work to give thanks unto the Lord" (1. Chron 16., 7, R.V.).

Prayer Study No. 8.

This Psalm is a compilation from three others. Verses .h to 22 consists of first 15 verses of Psalm 105. 23 to 33, quotations from Psalm 116; verses 34 to 36 from Psalm 106.

David drew attention-

1. To Works of God (verses 8, etc.).
2. To Majesty of God (verses 23, etc.).
3. To Mercy of God (verse 34).

This latter is sweetest note of all. The chief work not to pray, but to praise. In everything give thanks. When He took the cup He gave thanks.

AT JESUS' FEET.

1. For Redemption, .. . Luke 7. 38
2. For Adoration on account of mercies received, Luke 8. 35
3. For Instruction, Luke 10. 39
4. For Consolation, .. John 11. 32
5. For Intercession on behalf of others, .. Mark 7. 25
6. For Worship, Matt. 28.9

THE "MUSTS" OF THE SCRIPTURES.

1. The Must concerning the sinner and the putting away of sin (Ezra 10. 12 and Acts 9. 6)
2. The Must concerning Regeneration and all (John 3. 7; Acts 16. 30 and 31) .
3. The Must concerning Propitiation for sin (John 3. 7; and Acts 4. 12) .
4. The Must concerning Worship (John 4. 24).
5. The Must concerning Faith (Hebrews 11. 6).
6. The Must concerning Receiving and Confessing Christ (Luke 19. 5).

PROPHECIES RELATING TO CHRIST.

THE author has several times used this Bible Study with Agnostics, and with others who doubted the full Inspiration of the Bible, and never without, by the blessing of God, making a tremendous impression,, and with remarkable effect. Usually after pointing out these Scriptures existed hundreds of years before Bethlehem and Birth of Christ, he asked: 'How can you account for these exact predict ions ? "

I. His Birth.

1. Mode, Gen. 3. 15
2. Nation, Gen. 12.3
3. Tribe, Gen. 49. 10

4. Family,Isa. 11. 10
5. Mother, Isa. 7. 14
6. Place, Micah 5. 2
7. Forerunner, .. . Isa. 40. 3

II.. His Life and Death.

1. Poverty and Suffering, Ps. 22. 6 to 16
2. Worshipped by Gentiles, Isa. 60. 6
3. How He Entered Jerusalem,... .. Zech. 9. 9.
4. For the Sake of Others, Daniel 9. 26
5. Object of Conspiracy, Psa. 2. 1 to 3
6. Followers Dispersed, Zech. 13. 7-9
7. ILL-treated, Isa. 50. 6
8. Pierced, Zech. 12. 10; 13. 6
9. Vinegar to Drink, Psa. 69. 21
10. Spat upon, Isa. 50. 6
11. Cut off Without Trial, Isa. 53.8; Dan. 9. 26
12. Garments Distributed, Psa. 22. 18
13. No Bones Broken, Psa. 34. 20
14. Rise Again,Psa. 16. 10,
applied in Acts. 2. 27 to 31.

III. His Second Advent.

1. Return to Gather, Dent. 30. 3
2. Rejected-Reigning,.....Psa. 2.; 50. 30; 95. 10 to 13
3. Waiting, Psa. 110. 1
4. Endless Government, Isa. 9. 7
5. Good Government, Jer. 23. 5
6. A Priest-King, Zech. 6. 13
7. Everlasting, Dan. 7. 13, 14

Analysis of Isaiah 52. 13 to 15; and Chapter 53

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Handfuls on Purpose

STANZA	SECTION	SPEAKER	GIST	SUBJECT
First	52. 13 to 15	"MY servant" (13) GOD. 1st To us (13) 2nd To Jesus (14) 3rd To us	His prosperity	God's proclamation, explanation, and vindication of the Sufferer.
Second	53. 1 to 3	Penitent people of God in the present. (1) Query (1) (2) Statement (2) (3) Confession (2 and 3) "our," "we"	Unbelief	Reason for rejection of Him
Third	53. 4 to 6	Penitent people of God in the future. (1) Assumption (4) (2) Confession (4) (3) Declaration (4 to 6)	Substitution	Results of receiving Him
Fourth	53 7 to 9	God	His Innocency	The humility and Innocence of the Sufferer
Fifth	53 10 to 12	The Prophet speaking for God. (1) To us (10) (2) To God (10) (3) To us (11) (4) For God (12)	God's Holy Will	The Surrender of the Sufferer to the Will of God and His triumphant success