



**For:**  
Christian Workers and Bible Students

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

**BOOK 12.**  
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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Leviticus, Numbers,	3.
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**Series 1 - 10 - By Pastor James Smith.**  
**Series 11 and 12 - By Robert Lee.**  
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## HANDFULS ON PURPOSE

### New Testament Studies

#### 1 John

THIS Epistle, written about A.D. 90, was produced for a fourfold purpose, as John himself declares: First, that they might be happy (1. 4) ; second, that they might be holy (2. 1) ; third, that they might be safe (2. 26, R.V. ). Finally, that they might be sure—"know", Its key-words are "know" and "fellowship. "

#### THE JOYFUL LIFE.

##### I JOHN I 4.

"THESE things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

I. The Joy of Forgiveness is the Beginning of Joy. We can know we are forgiven (2. 12). Observe "are" forgiven."

II. The Joy of Fellowship is the Fulness of Joy. John points out that the fulness of joy is the outcome of fellowship with the Father, with the Lord Jesus Christ, and with our fellow-believers. This fulness of joy, because of close and blessed fellowship, follows:

1. Walking in the light.
2. Confession of sin.
3. Forgiveness of sin.
4. Cleansing from sin.

#### THE VICTORIOUS LIFE.

##### I JOHN 2. 1.

"MY little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin."

1. This is a message to "My dear children," to those who had become so through Christ Jesus.

2. Being God's children through faith in Christ Jesus, the victorious life should be their own possession and enjoyment. "I write . . . because ye have overcome the wicked one" (2. 13).

3. Alas, we do sin. For sinners there is an Advocate.

4. "Advocacy is that work of Jesus Christ for sinning saints which He carries on with the Father whereby, because of the eternal efficacy of His Own Sacrifice, He restores them to fellowship" (Scofield) .

5. The late Dr. Griffith Thomas has a nice and helpful word on this subject: "There is a perfect propitiation provided: 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate.' There is no allowance for sin, but a perfect provision in case we do sin: no need to sin, no right to sin,

no compromise with sin, no license, but a provision in case we do. On board ship the provision of life-belts is not associated with any intention to have a shipwreck, but they are there in case of need. When it is said, 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate,' it is the provision in case of need. As you know, there are two Advocates. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Advocate with the Father; and the same word is used of the Holy Spirit in John's Gospel—He is the Advocate within. There is Christ's perfect provision for us, and there is the Holy Spirit's perfect provision in us."

THE SAFE LIFE.  
1 JOHN 2. 26.

"THESE things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you," or, "would lead you astray" (R.V.).

1. Heresy already at work (2. 18, 19). "We know that it is the last hour" is R .V. rendering , These had gone astray doctrinally.
2. Yet believers are safe—guarded by the Holy Anointing (2.20.27),
3. That unction illuminates our minds, conveying knowledge (2. 20) .

THE KNOWING LIFE.  
I JOHN 5. 13.

"THESE things have I written unto you that believe . . . that ye may know." "Know" is one of the key-words of this Epistle. Let us examine some of them.

1. How can we be sure that "we know Him?" "If we keep His commandments" (2. 3, 5).
2. A constantly growing knowledge of God, His ways, and Word, is one sign of spiritual maturity (2. 13).
3. The Holy Spirit so teaches us that "ye know all things" (2. 20).
4. "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him" (3. 2) .
5. We are certain "we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (3. 14).
6. The Holy Spirit with us advises us as to abiding in Him (3. 24; 4. 13).
7. One infallible test of knowledge (4. 1-3).
8. The consciousness that we have eternal life comes through belief in God's Word (5. 13),

LOVE'S FOUR PREPOSITIONS.  
I JOHN 4. 16, 9, 12, 17.

- I. "Toward us "-the Direction of love (4. 9).
- II. "To us"-the Intention of love (4. 16).

III. "In us"--the Habitation of love (2. 15; 3. 17; 4. 12).

IV. "With us"-the Perfection of love (4. 17, margin). "Herein hath love been perfected with us" (A.V., margin). Suggesting a greater measure of the love of God dwelling within us, and a greater realisation, by mind and heart, of the greatness of His love.

#### THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF LOVE.

I JOHN 4. 8, 9, 17; 2. 5.

I. The Essence of His Love-God Himself-"God is Love" (4. 8).

II. The Cause of His Love-not in us. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us" (4. 10).

III, The Activity of His Love—Sending His Son to die for us (4. 8, 9) .

IV. The Manner of His Love. The outcome of that love is our adoption as children (3. 1, 2).

V. The Perfecting of His Love. That is, the increasing discovery on our part of the assurance and perfection of His love. This gives us boldness (4. 17).

VI. The Maturing of His Love. That is, what we must do in order to liberate the love of God shed abroad in our hearts and lives in holy action (2. 5).

#### LOVE.

I JOHN 4.7-9, 11.

I. Love's Home.

1. "Love is of God" (4.7).

2. Love is God, or better: "God is Love" (4. 8).

II. Love's Apprehension. "We have known and believed the love" (4. 16). Knowledge following faith.

III. Love's Manifestation. The proof of God's love was the sending of His Son (4. 9) .

IV. Love's Overflowing. Leads us to love one another (4. 7, 11). Surely 4. 7 teaches that there is no Divine love in the heart of any unregenerate person. Divine love is a far higher thing than mere natural affection,

#### WHY BELIEVERS SHOULD LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

I JOHN 4. 19.

1. Because He First Loved Us (4. 19, R.V.). In the R.V. it reads: "We love because He first loved us." This dropped word means that we love not only God, but also one

another.

II, Because He Still Loves Us (4. 11).

III. Because He Commands Us (3. 23).

IV. Because He has Coyne to Dwell Within Us (4. 12).

V. Because We have Passed from Death to Life (3. 14).

VI. Because We are no Longer Children of the Devil as Formerly (3. 10).

#### GOD.

JOHN 4. 24; 1 JOHN 1. 5; 4. 8, 16.

How simple is the language of the Book. Some of the greatest possible Biblical truths God has written in monosyllables. The simplicity of Holy Writ is so appealing and satisfying. On the mysteries connected with the Being of God we have three profound monosyllables. These contain more information about God than all the sacred books of the East put together.

I. "God is a Spirit." The Spirituality of His Being (John 4. 24) .

1 . This is one of the most sublime revelations in the Bible of the nature of God.

2. It really could be written: "God is Spirit," not a, nor the, but Spirit.

II. "God is Light." The Brilliancy of His Being (1 john 1.5).

1. Not a light, nor even the light, but Light.

2. Strictly speaking, white is no colour, but combination of all colours. When the Apostle wrote, "God is Light," he meant that God is not a hue, nor a colour, not a tone, nor a shade. He is the combination of all colours, all shades, all hues.

III. "God is Love." The Warmth and Attractiveness of His Being (1 John 4. 8, 16).

1. Not "God loves," though of course He does. Not that He shows love, but that He is love.

2. We usually say that Love is one of the Divine attributes. Strictly speaking, this is hardly correct. He is Love. Love is His very Being.

3. He is Love to us because He is essentially and eternally Love in Himself.

#### SIN.

I JOHN.

I. Its Definition. John gives two of the seven definitions of sin in the Bible, viz:

I. TRANSGRESSION. Stepping over the Law., i.e., lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness, i.e.,

the absence of all authority, and the denial of all obligation to God.

2. UNRIGHTEOUSNESS. Not coming up to the Law (3. 4; 5. 17).

II. Its Universality (1. 8, 10). What plain language.

III. Its Destruction. Why the Lord Jesus came? To "take away" sin (2. 2; 3. 5; 4. 10) . This means more than to cover sin—it is putting it away, taking it away, blotting it out.

IV. Its Confession (1. 9).

V. Its Cleansing (1. 7).

VI. Its Victory (2. 1; 3. 8, 9). "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye may not sin" (R.V.) "In order that ye may not sin" (Wey). I John 3. 8 and 9 have troubled many of the Lord's dear children. But observe the following rendering: "He who is habitually guilty of sin is a child of the Devil" (W.). "Whosoever is born of God doth not practice sin," i.e., doth not continue sinning. It is God's good will that we be daily more than conquerors over sin, over the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

VII. Its Secret. The secret of constant victory over sin is abiding in Christ (3. 6), and "being kept" (5. 18, R.V.).

## THE NEW BIRTH: ITS EVIDENCES AND RESULTS. I JOHN.

THE Apostle John does not point out in this Epistle how regeneration can take place, because that he had already done in his Gospel, particularly John 1. 12 and 13, and the whole of chapter 3. Here in his Epistle he points out the proofs whereby we may know we are born from above.

I. Faith is both the condition and the proof of regeneration. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (5. 1) .

II. Love. "Every one that loveth is born of God" (4. 7).

III. Life. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit (margin, "practice") sin; or as W., "No one who is a child of God is habitually guilty of sin" (3. 9). This is to say, one of the clearest proofs of the new birth is to be found in the fact that a new life is begun. Not a life of sin as before, but a life of victory—there may be, there usually is, especially in the early days, lapses into sin, but not a life of sin. By and by we learn the secret of full victory.

IV. Overcomes. "For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world" (5. 4) .

V. Kept. "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but He that was begotten of God (i.e., the Lord Jesus) keepeth him" (5. 18, R.V.). The begotten one is kept by the

only Begotten of the Father. And the result ?

VI. Holiness. Personal holiness. "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him" (2. 29).

### ABIDING IN CHRIST. I JOHN.

I. Conditions.

1. Abiding in Christ follows the Word of God abiding in us (2. 14, 24).
2. Abiding in Christ follows the anointing of the Holy Spirit (2. 27).
3. Abiding in Christ follows obedience to Christ (3. 24).

II. Knowledge. We know that He abides in us and we in Him "by the Spirit which He bath given us" (3. 24).

III. Results.

1. Walk becomes wonderfully different (2. 6).
2. We love others (2. 10).
3. Fearlessness in the day of the Lord's Coming, when we shall be ushered before Him (2. 28).
4. A life of victory (3. 6) .

### ETERNAL LIFE. I JOHN.

I. Its Definition. Eternal Life is a living relationship to a living Personality (5. 11, 12) .

II. Its Location. "This life is in His Son" (5. 11).

III. Its Personification. At the Incarnation the life was manifested. It is personified in Christ (1. 1, 2). Note. We only live; He is the Life.

IV. Its Pre-eminence. "He that hath the Son hath the life" (5. 12, R.V.). There are lives and lives. But this is the life of all lives.

V. Its Possession.

1. NEGATIVE.

- a. Those who have not the Son have not life (5. 12).
- b. We are by nature dead. "We pass from death unto life" (3. 14). Wondrous journey
- c. One who hates his brethren hath not Eternal Life (3. 16) .

2. POSITIVE.

- a. Eternal Life is a promise to be prized (2. 25).
- b. Eternal Life is a gift to be received (5. 11).
- c. In receiving the Lord Jesus we receive Eternal Life (5. 11, 12).

- d. We may know for a fact when we have Eternal Life (5. 13) .
- e. Faith leads to possession of Eternal Life (5. 10, 11).

MANIFESTED.  
I JOHN.

THIS is a great word. The Apostle John seems fond of it. Never a word so rich in meaning. "It condenses in a vocable the history of the long descent" of Jesus from the Glory, to the manger, the cross, and from the sepulchre to the Throne. The Dictionary states that "to manifest" means to make plain to sight or understanding; and that "a manifest" is an invoice of a cargo for customhouse purposes. In and through Him is manifested:

- I. Life Manifested (1. 2) . Life resides in the Lord Jesus, and by His Incarnation "was manifested unto us."
- II. Love Manifested (4. 9) . By His Incarnation God's love was manifested and is being manifested to-day by the Holy Spirit, and through the lives of redeemed men and women.
- III. Salvation: Purpose of His Manifestation (3. 5) . "To take away our sins." Wonderful fact! This is more than covering sin. The latter was all that could be done in the Old Testament.
- IV. Reformation, or Sanctification. The result of His manifestation (3. 8). "The devil sinneth from the beginning," i.e., Satan is the original sinner. He was created perfect, but deliberately rebelled against God. Thus through him sin came into the world, and all its woe. But the Lord Jesus "was manifested that He might destroy (undo) the works of the Devil." This means in the long run, not only a new man, but a new Heaven and a new earth.

FEAR.  
I JOHN 4. 18.

- 1. When, by God's gracious Holy Spirit, the love of God is made personal to me, and when that love comes sweeping into my heart by the Spirit, it casts out the fear that bath torments, but deepens reverence!
- 2. "Godly fear is not a shrinking apprehension; it is love upon its knees" (late Dr. Moule).

"LIETH IN THE WICKED ONE."  
I JOHN 5. 19 (R.V.).

IN this passage there are two startling statements.

- I. The Word "In." This is the same word used of the believer when he is said to be in

Christ, as branches in the Vine. This is a staggering word. It teaches us that just as believers in Christ are united to Christ, drawing from Him life and blessing, so the ungodly are united to Satan, and are being energised by him.

II. The Word "Lieth." Literally `Lieth asleep," depicting a state of unconsciousness. The saved are in the Father's hand, and have beneath them the Everlasting Arms; but the great mass of humanity is in the arms of Satan, and by his subtlety lulled to sleep, therefore unconscious of their dread position.

THE FIRM FOUNDATION UPON WHICH  
RESTS THE DIVINE FORGIVENESS.

I JOHN 1.9.

Introduction.

One of Wesley's preachers, who had seven children dependent upon him, was thrust into prison. One of his persecutors said in Court: "The man is well enough in other things, but the gentlemen cannot stand his impudence. Why, sirs, he says he knows that his sins are forgiven him!" What was considered impertinence in this case is our great privilege and birthright. It is our joy not only to ask for His forgiveness, but to enjoy the consciousness of His pardoning grace. With the Psalmist we may look up into His face and say, "With Thee there is forgiveness" (Psa. 130. 4), and "Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Psa. 32. 5).

This is a word for all—the old saint as well as the young believer, because forgiveness is the grace to which more than all others, we have continually to appeal. Day by day we need to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses."

IS THERE ANY DANGER OF ITS WITHDRAWAL? That God forgives is recognised. But is there any conceivable reason for its withdrawal? A woman had a long and bitter quarrel with a sister Christian. For months they had not spoken to each other. The injured woman was laid low by serious illness. She thought she was dying, and the thought of the estrangement through the quarrel made her afraid to die. She sent for her friend, and they sought each other's forgiveness, following which they had a pleasant time together.

Just as she was passing out of the room, the sick woman called her friend back, saying, "I have truly forgiven you, because I feel it is my duty to do so, and I could not die in peace otherwise. I do not expect to get well; but in case I should, I want it distinctly understood that this old matter remains just as it was before I sent for you."

When God forgives, is there any danger of its withdrawal? We feel for our peace we need the constant assurance of God's loving mercy to us all through our lives, and indeed right through Eternity.

Blessed be His Name, there is no fickleness or changeableness in Him. He has left on record in His blessed Book abundant assurance of his lasting forgiveness.

His forgiveness rests upon a threefold, impregnable, immovable basis.

I, Divine Justice. His forgiveness rests on a foundation of Divine justice.

A very young girl came one day, and throwing herself at the feet of Napoleon, exclaimed: "Mercy, sire; have mercy on my father ! "

"Who is your father, my child?" the Emperor asked, graciously. "He is in prison," she replied; "he has been condemned to death." When Napoleon got from her an account of the crime, he said, "Poor child, this is the third time your father has conspired against the State. I must do justice! " "Ah , sir, O know it ! But it is not justice I demand, but mercy!" The lips of Napoleon trembled, and grasping the hands of the young girl, he said: "Rise up; I pardon your father for your sake!"

This story has often been quoted as an ideal one for us to copy in our approaches to God, and we have been asked and urged to ask Him for mercy, and not for justice. Yet the amazing and marvellous fact about the Divine forgiveness of sin is this, whilst it is granted for the sake of Another, the Lord Jesus, and in compassion, too, for it is written, "He being full of compassion forgave their iniquity" (Psa. 78. 38), yet it is also granted on the solid foundation of Divine Justice! Observe, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

There is such a thing as a forgiveness arising out of mere paternal love or a good natured indifference to sin. If God's forgiveness was of this nature, what would happen? Suppose that He should, without requisite satisfaction, pass over my offences, and forgive me for what my own conscience condemns me, what would be the consequences of this clemency? I could no longer reverence or esteem Him. Ceasing to be just (for remember the poet Cowper's phrase, "A God all mercy were a God unjust"), He would cease to be God in my eyes. The only kind of forgiveness that satisfies is one that proceeds not from love alone, but from law, not from pity alone, but from holiness and justice.

The Cross has made this seemingly impossible benefit gloriously simple. Because the penalty of sins had already been borne, to punish the penitent would be to punish a second time; to do that would be a breach of faith with the vicarious Sufferer, and an injustice to the sinner himself, who, in the person of his Substitute has met the penalty of the broken law—death. That God will never do, for He is just. "Faithful and JUST to forgive us our sins." Glory be to His Name!

II. Divine Faithfulness. His forgiveness rests also on a foundation of Divine faithfulness. "Faithful and just to forgive us our sins." In the annals of warfare we have heard of a promise of pardon offered only to catch the offenders in hiding. Not so with the Lord. He means what He says. God is faithful to His promises, and to His covenant engagements.

III. Divine Supervision. His forgiveness rests also upon the foundation of Divine supervision.

What we mean by this sentence can best be explained by an incident from the life of Richard I, the favourite king of our childhood days. Coeur-de-Lion was not only a brave

man, but was generous and able to forgive wrongs.

When he had reigned ten years, one of his French vassals rebelled. Richard at once marched his army and besieged the rebel in his castle. During the last and successful attack, a young man, Bertrand de Gurden, shot an arrow, which mortally wounded the king! The castle fell, and Bertrand was brought before the dying monarch. To the chagrin of his men, Richard said, "Youth, I forgive you my death," and turning to his officers commanded, "Let him go free, and give him a hundred shillings." Richard died, and Bertrand, having been recaptured, was executed. Richard was unable to see that his commands were carried out. The Lord Jesus died to set us free, and to enrich us. But He lives to see that His wishes and commands and covenant agreements are carried out. If He forgives, it is for ever. The proof of forgiveness is seen in a cleansed life: "And to cleanse us." Forgiveness and cleansing are inseparable. Sin is in the soul in two forms—in guilt, which requires forgiveness; and in pollution, which requires cleansing.

"If." The whole verse turns on this first word. There can be no forgiveness without confession. And confession implies forsaking (Prov. 28. 13).

#### PARDON AND FORGIVENESS.

OUR English word Pardon is never found in the New Testament. In its place is its equivalent, the word Forgiveness. This is in perfect harmony with one of the chief messages of the New Testament. Pardon is the act of a Sovereign; Forgiveness is the act of the Father. The Fatherhood of God is one of the principal truths in the New Testament. An unsaved, yet penitent, sinner must, as a rebel, ask for pardon. When pardoned and regenerated, then he needs daily to ask of his Father in Christ, forgiveness.

I. God Alone can Pardon. Luke 5. 21; Dan. 9. 9.

II. God Loves to Pardon.. For He is "a God of pardons" (Neh. 9. 17, margin).

III. God Pardons Gloriously. "Ready to pardon" (Neh. 9. 17). "He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55. 7).

IV. God Only Pardons:

1. On Confession (Psa. 25. 11) .

2. On Believing (Acts 10. 43).

3. On Receiving. Pardon, is a gift to be received (Acts 5. 31).

#### 2 JOHN

Tars is a private personal letter from the aged Apostle John, addressed to an unknown Christian woman, and her pious family. This is the only Epistle in the New Testament addressed exclusively to a lady. There is a tradition that the lady addressed was Martha of Bethany. "The Greek Hyria (Lady, verse 1), answers to the Hebrew Martha, " wrote

Bengel. If this be true, the "sister" referred to in verse 13 would be Mary. It was written specifically to warn this lady and her family of some false teachers (verse 10).

LOVE AND TRUTH.  
2 JOHN 1, 2.

THE word "truth" is met with five times in this short Epistle of but thirteen verses, and forms its key-word.

I. The Source of Love. Truth. Most versions print truth with a capital "T," Truth. Certainly this is one of the Lord's Names, and He is the source of all true love.

II. The Reality of Love. That is, the nature of love commended here is trite love, love that is no mere pretence of make-believe.

III. The Breadth of Love. Love cannot be confined to one. The Elder (John must have been about 90 years old when he wrote this Epistle) not only loved "The elect lady," but also "her children," and this pious family was not only loved by the aged apostle, but also by "all they that have known the truth."

IV. The Realisation of Love. R. gives "understand" for "known" in verse 1. This is to say, those who have realised truth and the love of God in Christ to themselves love others.

V. The Inwardness of Love. "Which dwelleth in us," God's love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Is it truth or love that is meant here? Well, He is both Truth and Love, and as both dwells within us and with us.

GRACE, MERCY, PEACE.  
2 JOHN 3.

This is a very unusual form of the apostolic salutation in the New Testament, only found in the Pastoral Epistles and here (1 Tim. 1. 2; 2 Tim. 1. 2; Titus 1. 4). You will observe that "Mercy" is added to the usual salutation, "Grace—Peace." What is the significance, and what is the teaching?

Well, read Luke 10. 37 with Gen. 39. 21. Who showed mercy? The Good Samaritan. What is showing mercy? Binding up wounds and bruises, etc. But what had "mercy" to do with Joseph in prison? Ah, there are more dangerous wounds than those of the body—there are wounds and bruises of the spirit. Joseph's reputation had been challenged; he had been cast into prison on a false charge. His spirit was bruised and bleeding. But the Good Samaritan came when all doors were shut, barred, and bolted, and ministered comfort and consolation to the distressed one. The Lord's servants frequently require the Lord's gracious Good Samaritan ministry.

TRUTH.  
2 JOHN 4.

1. Is given to walk in (verse 4), not merely to admire.
2. This is one proof of our love to God (verse (3), for love manifests itself in ready obedience.

THE TEST OF TRUTH.  
2 JOHN 7, 11.

FALSE teachers were travelling (verses 7 to 11) amongst the churches, and John warns this lady against even entertaining them (verses 10 to 11), much less their false doctrines. Then the aged Apostle gives an infallible test of truth.

1. The reality of the humanity of our Lord in His earthly life. "That Jesus Christ is come in the flesh."
2. The reality of the humanity of our Lord in His second advent. "Cometh in the flesh" (R.V.).

Apply this test to some popular religious movements of our day, and the result is startling. Christian Science, Spiritism, Russellism, and other similar movements are unmasked, and shown to be against Christ, and utterly wrong—of the Devil.

3 JOHN

THIS is another sample of the Apostle John's private correspondence. This letter was written to a generous and warm-hearted friend called Gaius, noted for loving hospitality, urging him to continue entertaining the travelling preachers, in spite of the bitter opposition of an autocratic and blustering Church official called Diotrephes.

INTERESTING QUESTIONS.  
3 JOHN 2,4,5,11.

1. Was Gaius ill? (2).
2. Was Gaius one of Paul's converts? Note: "My children" (4) .
3. Did Paul love Gaius very ardently? The word "Beloved" is repeated in this short letter, indicating ardent affection (1, 2, 5, 11).
4. Was Gaius prospering spiritually in the things of God? (2) .

VARIOUS ASPECTS OF TRUTH.  
3 JOHN 1,3,4,8

As in his previous writings, John has much to say about Truth. Note the various aspects of Truth.

- I. An Indwelling. Truth is first regarded as being in the man. "The truth that is in thee" (3).

II. A Road. Truth is then viewed as a road on which, and within whose limits, the man walks. "Even as thou walkest in the truth" (3).

III. An Atmosphere. Truth is now considered as an atmosphere in which the man moves. "Walk in truth" (4).

IV. A Soil, in which love is rooted (1) . "I love in the truth."

V. A Weapon (8). "Fellow-workers with truth" (R.V.). Suggesting truth as their powerful weapon in Christian Service.

VI. A Companion. "Fellow-helpers to the truth" (8), suggesting that in our pilgrimage we should make truth our companion.

VII. Referee. Giving testimony in favour of these who walk in truth. "Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself."

## JUDE

Luca James, Jude was not an apostle, but just an ordinary disciple. James, his brother, had been martyred a few years before Jude wrote this letter. He laid himself out to write a great treatise on (verse 3), Salvation, but abandoned it under the constraint of the Holy Spirit, to write a half-page letter giving a history of Apostasy, from the very-beginning, and to warn his readers of that peril.

## KEPT (JUDE.)

THE words "keep" and "kept" are mentioned five times, and form a helpful study.

I. The Lord's People are Kept Ones. Kept by God from sin for the Lord Jesus. "Preserved in Jesus Christ" (1) is the R.V.

"Kept for Jesus Christ."

II. Some Angels "Kept Not their First Estate" (6), so are "kept" (R.V., instead of Reserved) in chains.

III. We Must Keep Ourselves in the full constant assurance that God loves us (21) .

IV. He is Able to Keep Us, not merely from "falling," but as R.V., from "stumbling," for it is stumbling which precedes falling (24) .

## ETERNAL THINGS

(JUDE 6, 7, 21) .

1. Life (21) . 2. Chains (6) . 3. Fire (7) .

## COMMON SALVATION (JUDE 3) .

SALVATION is called "common," not because it is cheap and worth little, but because:

I. It comes from a Common Source—God, the Love of God.

II. It is Offered to All Classes. "Commons" are open spaces belonging to the public, and held by Corporations or Councils for all to share and enjoy alike. So salvation is for all.

III. It Supplies a Common or General Need.

IV. It is the Common Theme of all the sacred writers.

The Revelation
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A WELL-KNOWN Methodist minister and Cliff College Principal, the late Samuel Chadwick, confessed that in his early ministerial days the Revelation was an enigma to him. He then set himself to solve it by reading the book through AT A SITTING, EVERY DAY for a month. No wonder the book began to sing and preach to him, and that he discovered it to be I. precious treasure-house of instruction, and a sanctuary for worship.

We neglect this book at our great loss and peril. Even in the dark days it acts as a comforter. Someone has remarked that "without tears the Revelation was not written, neither without tears can it be understood" (Rev. 5. 4).

As aids to its right understanding note:

1st. We should come to this book primarily to find out what it says about the Lord Jesus, and not what it has to say about the future. Its key-phrase is its first five words, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ. " It unveils the Lord Jesus. It is simply full of Him. No less than twenty-six times do we find in it Christ's sacrificial title, "Lamb. "

2nd. After the end of Chapter 3 the Church is never represented as on the earth. Between chapters 3 and 4 the removal of the Church must have taken place.

3rd. Chapter 4 and onward have to do with the Tribulation and last things.

Chapter 1, verse 19, gives its correct threefold division, the last again falling into three sub-sections.

### THE UNIQUENESS OF THIS BOOK. REVELATION 1. 1-9, 19.

I. The Unique Character of the Book (1-3).

1. WHAT IS IT? A "revelation," i.e., unveiling of Jesus Christ—not a mystery. If the book is a mystery to you, that is a proof that you are reading it wrongly.
2. WHENCE CAME IT? By revelation. Given by God to His Son (1), the Son gave it to His angel (note, His Angel—an angel specially set apart to look after Jesus—probably the one who ministered to him in Gethsemane), the Angel giving it to John (22. 16) .
3. WHY WAS IT GIVEN? To show them things that were to come to pass.
4. FOR WHOM WAS IT GIVEN? His servant, therefore specially for workers.
5. WHAT DOES IT CONTAIN? (2) . Christ's testimony, i.e., either testimony concerning Him, or which comes from Him.
6. WHY SHOULD IT BE REA)) ? (3) .
7. WHEN SHOULD IT BE READ? Now, for the time is at hand.
8. SPECIAL BLESSING to readers, hearers, lovers of the book ("lay to heart," W.), mediators ("keep in mind," Bullinger) , obedient (keep) .

## II. The Unique Order in the Book (1. 19).

1. "The things which thou hast seen." THE LORD JESUS AS THE GLORIFIED ONE (1) .
  2. "The things which are." THE LORD JESUS AS HEAD OVER THE CHURCH (2 and 3).
  3. "The things which shall be hereafter." THE LORD JESUS AS THE TRIUMPHANT ONE (4 to 22).
1. 4-11. 18. 2. 11.19-16. 3. 17-22.

## III. The Unique Introduction to the Book (4 to 9) .

1. SALUTATION (4). John alone was left of the Apostles.
2. BENEDICTION (4). Grace first then peace.
3. DOXOLOGY (5, 6).
4. ANTICIPATION (7).
5. SELF-REVELATION (8). The voice of the Son of God. 6. EXPLANATION (9) . He writes as a brother, not as a lord over God's heritage.

Note. "Seven Spirits," or Sevenfold Spirit. Not so much the Spirit viewed in His individual personality, as the Spirit in the manifestation of His operation in the Church. Seven is the Bible number for perfection, therefore the Holy Spirit in His sevenfold completeness.

OUR GLORIFIED LORD.  
REV. 19 to 20.

## A GLOWING WORD-PICTURE OF OUR GLORIFIED LORD.

### Introduction.

#### 1, SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS VISION.

- a. Before John could be the messenger to others of the unveiling of Jesus Christ, he himself must look on the Lord in His glory.
- b. Before he could see God the Father (4) he must see God the Son.
- c. The Holy Spirit revealed the Lord Jesus (10).
- d. This vision given to him in loneliness. One of the Lord's blessed compensations.
- e. And to one who was suffering for Christ's sake. Life is full of compensations.

#### 2. JOHN HEART BEFORE HE SAW—the value of the Word of God. What right have we to ask God to reveal Himself if we neglect the Bible?

##### 1. The Lord (1. 9-18).

#### 1. WHAT WE KNOW OF THE LORD THROUGH THIS VISION. The Lord shown in kingly and priestly dignity:

- a. 'Voice (10, 15), clearness; musical; significant of great majesty.
- b. Priestly garb.
- c. Girded. Active service; breast, not loins. Royal repose and priestly calm.
- d. Girdle. Golden. Kingly dignity.
- e. Head and hairs (14). Eternity and Divinity (see Dan. 7. 9). Sometimes white hair is one result of great sorrows. None ever suffered as He.
- f. Eyes. Searching, penetrating.
- g. Feet. Hot to burn, heavy to tread.
- h. Hand (16), mouth. Power of His Word.

#### 2. WHAT WE KNOW OF THE LORD THROUGH HIS TITLES.

- a. He is Jehovah (4) . The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New.
- b. Faithful witness (5). Oh, so faithful!
- c.. "First begotten" (5) . A title of dignity and honour.
- d. Prince (5) .
- e. Alpha and Omega (8, 11, 17).
- f. Almighty (8)
- Son of Man (13) .
- h. The Living One (18).

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#### 3. WHAT WE KNOW OF THE LORD THROUGH HIS ACTION.

This grand vision gives us indeed the Lord Jesus clothed with majesty, and wielding supreme power, but it also shows us the old love and tenderness (17) , the very same Jesus.

#### II. The Church (12) .

1. GOLDEN. MATCHLESS VALUE. Cannot rust.
2. LAMPSTANDS. No light in themselves. How dependent upon Him.
3. SEVEN.

- a. Emblem of a unity not formal, but real.
- b. Not uniformity, but oneness in diversity.
- c. Oneness not by any external connection.

#### 4. LORD IN THE MIDST.

- a. Not indifferent.
- b. Not forsaking his unfaithful Church.

### III. The Officials (16). STARS.

1. SYMBOL OF AUTHORITY.
2. SYMBOL OF TALENT. Having star.-like gifts.
3. STARS ARE FOR THE DARKNESS. Stars, like men, are for the dark days.
4. HELD IN THE HAND OF CHRIST. Prominence in Christian work exposes to special temptation, but special privilege is granted. He holds us up.

#### Notes.

ALPHA AND OMEGA. In 1893 Moody conducted a great Gospel Campaign at the Chicago Exhibition. Dr. A. J. Gordon lodged in the same house as Rabinowitz of Russia, who one day said: " Do you know what questionings and controversies the Jews have kept up over Zech..12. 10? 'They shall look upon Me (Aleph-Tev in the Hebrew) whom they have pierced ' They will not admit that it. is Jehovah whom they pierced. Hence the dispute about the Whom. But do you notice that this word is simply the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. . Do you wonder, then that I was filled with awe and astonishment when I opened Rev. 1, 7 and 8, and read these words of Zechariah, now quoted by John. Jesus seemed to say to me `Do you doubt who it is whom you have pierced? "' I, Jesus am Aleph-Tev, the Alpha Omega, Jehovah Almighty."

THREEFOLD PORTRAIT OF JESUS. In Rev. I we have a threefold portrait of Jesus:

1st. Prophet. His prediction (1. 1).

2nd. Priest. His garment down to foot (1. 13). 3rd. King. His golden girdle (1. 13).

"FELL AT His FEET AS DEAD" (17). Any drawing near to God which does not bring us down to the earth in deepest abasement and self-emptying must be mere imagination.

## THE MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES. REVELATION 2 and 3.

#### Introduction,

Angel means Messenger. The Angel of the Church is a title borrowed from the Jewish Synagogue, and was the name given to the prominent official there. The Angel of the Church was the one in charge. In addressing in the first instance the Angel of the Church, we have the Lord's wonderful courtesy to the responsible official.

I. Ephesus. The Serving Church (2. 1-7). Fault: Decaying love.

1. INTRODUCTION (1).
2. RECOGNITION (2, 3). Their service, character and doctrine seemed right. Good discipline and loyalty.
3. WARNING (4, 5). Language of wounded friendship. He finds a servant where He looks for a bride.
4. COMMENDATION (6) .
5. PROMISE (7).

II. Smyrna. The Suffering Church (2. 8-11) . No fault; all praise.

1. The briefest of these addresses is to Smyrna.
2. Proud of their antiquity, He declared He was of greater antiquity: "First and last" (8).
3. They were suffering, but He had plumbed to the depths of suffering: "Was dead, and is alive" (8).
4. He was the All-knowing One (9) .
5. He was One whose standards of valuation differed from that of the world's: "Thou art rich" (9).
6. He warns of worse times to follow (10).
7. He encourages to loyalty, even to death (10).

III. Pergamos. The Compromising Church (2. 12-17). Tolerating evil in their midst.

1. Introduced Himself in His Judicial character (12).
2. He recognised their special sinful environment (13). Pergamos was a special centre of Heathen Worship.
3. He praised them for their loyalty (13).
4. He warned them of the presence of sinful men in their midst (14, 15).
5. He urges to repentance (16), warning of the result of non-repentance.
6. He promises:
  - a. Special sustenance, and
  - b. Special friendship (17).
7. Sharp Sword. At Pergamos dwelt the Roman Governor of that province, who alone had the right of wielding the sword. But Jesus has a unique sword (16).

IV. Thyatira. The Church in Peril (2. 18-29). Permitted a false teacher to occupy an honoured position. At Thyatira we find a Church which, along with much faithfulness and energy of service, is most seriously affected with false teaching. And one of these false teachers was allowed to occupy an important official position in the Church.

1. Place of little importance.
2. To this obscure and unimportant. Church the Risen Lord describes Himself in terms of the most exalted majesty, and conveys a promise of the most exalted power.
3. "Thy wife, Jezebel" (R.V.).
4. Only letter in which a woman is mentioned.
5. And in which the Lord declares so clearly His Sonship.
  - a. The Introduction (18).

- b. The Commendation (19). "You have toiled harder than you did at first" (Weymouth).
- c. The Warning (20-23) .
  - i. Identity of false teaching.
  - ii. Judgment on false teaching.
- d. Admonition (24, 25).
- e. Blessings for overcomers (26-29).

V. Sardis. The Church In Death (3. 1 to 6) . Fault: Lost their hold of Christ.

1. Sad condition (1).
2. Steps that led to that sad condition:
  - a. Defiled garments (4).
  - b. Fell asleep. "Waken up!"
  - c. Dead minister.
3. Penalty on such (3) .
4. Steps to Recovery:
  - a. Rouse yourselves.
  - b. Look after the dying things.
  - c. Remember.
  - d. There is a Spirit.
  - e. Glorious reward (5) .
    - i. Not blot out.
    - ii. Name confessed. Mentioned in Dispatches.
    - iii. Walk with Him in white.

VI. Philadelphia. The Church of the One Talent (3. 7-13). Characteristic: Faithfulness to God's Word. There were only two of the seven Churches which received no censure or rebuke from the Lord—Smyrna and Phila-delphia. The former receives but little praise, though much sympathy; the latter stands alone in the abundance and unalloyed character of the eulogium which Christ passes upon it.

- (1) Not that they were perfect; only "a little strength" (8).
- (2) Not that they were beyond need of warning.

1. THE EULOGISER (7) .
  - a. Character. Perfect holiness and perfect truth.
  - b. Authority. Keys of David.
2. THE EULOGISED. WHY?
  - a. A little strength (8).
  - b. Guarded and loved His Word (8, 10).
  - c. Confessed name (8).
3. THE PROMISE.
  - a. Opened door.
  - b. Respect of others.

c. Kept.

VII. Laodicea. The Lukewarm Church (3. 14-22). Characteristic: Self-centred and self-satisfied.

Note. Remarkable that the first and last Church suffered from the same disease of spiritual declension, only the former was in the germ, and the latter fully developed.

1. The Lord's Character (14). Amen. Witness. Originator.
2. The Lord's Diagnosis (15, 17).
3. The Lord's Preference (15).
4. The Lord's Threat (16).
5. The Lord's Counsel (18).
6. The Lord's Appeal (19).
7. The Lord's Attitude (20).
8. The Lord's Reward (20, 21) .

#### THE HEAVENLY COURT OF THE KING OF KINGS. REVELATION 4.

Introduction.

1. THE FACT OF CHRIST'S SOVEREIGNTY AND POWER a great comfort. This is revealed here.

a. Dr. Dale mentions in one of his works that, in a time of great bodily weakness and depression, when suffering from a serious illness, he sought to stay his soul on Scripture promises that reminded him of our Lord's love and tenderness, but they failed to comfort him.

b. Then, trying to dwell on the fact of Christ's Power and Sovereignty, he found a strange support on which he could rest.

c. When the Boxer Riots broke out in China, and the leaders of the China Inland Mission came to their office one morning, dreading at any moment to receive tidings of disaster, some one discovered that the day text on the wall was a promise based on the fact that the Lord is King. The words brought the needed sense of reassurance and strength, and they were able to turn to their usual work, sure that all would be overruled for good.

d. The fact of the Divine Sovereignty steadies.

e. That is the view Revelation gives of the Lord.

f. This is the thought we need for dark days.

g. Also the assurance of the ultimate victory of good over evil.

2. Also in this section of Revelation (4 to end) we have the assurance of the ultimate victory of good—God.

3. This chapter begins the third great section of Revelation.

4. The scene shifts from earth to Heaven.

5. We are introduced to the glorious Audience Chamber of the Great King.
6. Everything speaks of Royalty.

#### I. The Opened Heaven (1) .

##### 1. THERE ARE FIVE OPENINGS mentioned in Bible: An opened Heaven:

- a. In Judgment (Gen. 7. 11) .
- b. In Blessing (Mal. 3. 10)
- c. For the Holy Spirit (Luke 3. 21) .
- d. For a sight of Jesus (Acts 7. 56) .
- e. Lord as Conqueror (Rev. 4. 1; 19. 11) .

2. "COME Up." We cannot apprehend the highest truth if we live on a low plane of thought and conduct.

II. The One on the Throne (2, 3). "He saw the Almighty high and lifted up, throned above all worlds, veiled in light unapproachable, yet known, His presence scintillating with the brilliance of the diamond, glowing like a cornelian, with the concentrated redness of a furnace, and yet over-arched with fresh and living green, as of an emerald. Blinding brilliancy; the glow of a consuming fire; the soft radiance of rainbow promise; these were the contrasted elements in the impression made upon the seer by the vision of Him who sat upon the throne."

#### NOTE

1. "Rapt in the Spirit" (M.).
- 2, The two opposites in Him.
  - a. He who was Sardine under the Law has ended as Jasper by the Revelation of His Son.
  - b. Holiness and wrath.
  - c. Sardine as well as Jasper. Never know all of Him,
3. Rainbow:
  - a, Complete circle.- Covenant sign
  - b. Green.

#### III.. The Ones Before the "Throne (4.8) .

1. The ELDERS (4, 5) , heads of angelic ranks.
2. The LIVING: ONES, (6-8)
  - a. A sea of sea of crystal, not water,. No cleansing in Heaven.
  - b. A combination of Seraphim and Cherubim combining:
    - i. Royalty and boldness of lion
    - ii. Usefulness of calf.
    - iii. intelligence of man
    - iv. Spirituality and soaring quality of eagle.

#### IV. The Song of Creation (8-11). 1 . The Holiness of God

2. The Sovereignty of God.

3. The Almightyness of God.
4. The Timelessness of God.

THE LAMB AND THE BOOK.  
Revelation 5.

I. The Book (1-4). Note

- a. Not the book of life--that is already the Lamb's.
- b. It is the Book of Judgment—the book of the secret acts of God.
- c. Note.

1. IT IS A SEALED BOOK. Its secrets known only to God.

- a. IN Daniel 12. 1-3 we read of the Great Tribulation. But Daniel is not permitted to do more than make known that fact, not the particulars. Hence Dan. 12. 4.
- b. The Book is about to be unsealed and particulars made known.
- c. But even John is not allowed to reveal all he saw (Rev. 11). 4).

2. IT IS A COMPLETED, FILLED UP BOOK.

- a. It was written on both sides.
- b. Therefore no space for further writing.
- c. It contained the whole counsel of God.
- d. The designs and methods of God during the Great Tribulation are fixed and made a matter of record, and this record is known to none but Himself.

3. IT IS A BOOK TO BE ONLY OPENED BY ONE WORTHY.

- a. The possession of God's secrets is a privilege conditional on personal worthiness.
- b. No one was found worthy either in Heaven or earth.
- c. Does the fact of the unworthiness of man cause us to weep?

4. THE BOOK

- a. Of Life. A register of names (Rev. 3. 5).
- b. Of Works. A register of works (Rev. 20. 12).
- c. Of God's Judgments. A register of God's punishments (Rev. 5.).

II. The Lamb (5, 6) .

1. The SUPREMACY of the Lord Jesus. "In midst."
2. The PRE-EMINENCE of the Lord Jesus.
3. The POWER of the Lord Jesus.
4. The WISDOM of the Lord Jesus.  
Seven Horns. Completeness of strength. Seven Eyes. Completeness of wisdom.
5. The MINISTRY of the Lord Jesus.
6. The KINGLINESS of the Lord Jesus.
7. The UNIQUENESS of the Lord Jesus.  
"Root of David" (a son father of his father).
8. The WORSHIP of the Lord Jesus.

### III. The New Song. Sing of Redemption.

- I. PRICE . Blood.
2. OBJECTS. "Men of every," etc.
3. PURPOSE. "For God."
4. RESULT. Kings and priests.
5. GLORY, Only to Lord.

### THE RAINBOW IN HEAVEN. REVELATION 4. 3.

#### Introduction.

1. Murray M'Cheyne, but a while after he began his ministry, had a most serious illness. When convalescent he wrote: "Ah, there is nothing like a calm look into the Eternal World to teach us the emptiness of self-seeking and vain-glory, to teach us the preciousness of Christ who is called the Tried Stone."
2. Many can bear similar testimony. The world, with all its pomp, ambition, strife, pride, and vain-glory, has never been the same to you, indeed has lost its charm since that serious illness when you had a near look into the Eternal.
3. We believe it to be the Lord's mind that, assisted by God's Word here and God's Spirit, we should have a calm look into the opened Heaven.
4. It seems out of fashion to meditate about Heaven. But we are quite willing for the time being, to be out of the fashion. For some years Heaven Seems very near and very real. For we could say with Samuel Rutherford: "Christ hath come and run away to Heaven with my heart and my love, so that neither heart nor love is mine." One by one our best treasures are being taken there.
5. What a thrilling description does John give here. He has had an interview with the Son of God; now the Seer is introduced to the Audience Chamber of the Great King. He saw the Heavenly Court of the King of kings, in the centre the Almighty, "high and lifted up, throned above all worlds, veiled in light unapproachable yet known, His Presence scintillating with the brilliance of the diamond, glowing like a cornelian, with the concentrated redness of a furnace, and yet overarched with fresh and living green as of an emerald. Blinding brilliancy, the glow of a consuming fire, the soft radiance of rainbow promise, these were the contrasted elements in the impression made upon the Seer by the vision of 'Him who sat upon the Throne
6. As we gaze at that marvellous scene so realistically portrayed to us, let our eyes rest for a moment on the rainbow. Have you ever seen the like?
7. The rainbow we are familiar with is indeed one of the most beautiful things in nature. It usually appears when a storm of rain is about to cease, and is caused by drops of water in a cloud breaking up the rays of light.

8. We were at sea. On every side save one, naught was to be seen save sea and sky meeting in loving embrace. On our left could just be discerned in dim outline some of the Welsh mountains. Suddenly the sky became black and lowering and rain fell copiously. But all at once from the dark bosom of the thundercloud a rainbow--that Heavenly flower of light, opened its seven leaves of coloured light. It was a ravishing sight.

9., Rut whilst our eyes were fastened on that lovely thing, this text came into mind. Ad, no earthly rainbow in spite of all its glory, was ever arrayed like this.

10. Note some of the distinguishing points of difference.

11. But, before doing so, let us look:

1st. At the Rainbow in Genesis--in sky, on earth (Gen. 9. 9 to 17).

2nd. At the Rainbow in Ezekiel--in wilderness (Ezek. 1.26 to 28).

3rd. At the Rainbow in Revelation--in Heaven (Rev. 4. 3).

I. It Appears in Heaven as a Prelude to the Storm.

1. Not so the rainbow we are familiar with. That appeared for the first time after the awful deluge, as a token or pledge of the promise of God never again to drown all the earth by a flood of water.

2. By a study of God's Word we see that there is an awful time ahead, a time of fiery judgment. The prophets refer to it with bated breath as that great and dreadful day of the Lord,

"Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Rev. 1. 7). "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1. 7-9).

3.. Well might we cry in trumpet tones: "Flee from the wrath to come."

II. In Heaven the Rainbow is Green.

1. Ours consists of the seven prismatic colours, but in Heaven all colours are blended into one, its emerald greenness absorbing, or at least throwing into shade, its other and varied hues.

2. Yes, all the colours are blended into one, and that the softest and most refreshing of all hues to the eyes. For there is in green something on which the eye does not fear but loves to rest.

3. You have been hard at work all day, your eyes are weary, and your brain tired, and you take a short walk in the park. As your eyes rest upon the green grass and foliage they are rested and renewed and refreshed.

4. And so, as the eyes of the believer rests upon the Throne of God he finds rest and comfort there, for though it be a Throne of Judgment, it is arched by the emerald rainbow, a pledge that God in judgment will remember His covenant promise.

5. In the first chapter of his book, Ezekiel describes to us a vision he had of the Throne of God. He, too, saw a rainbow encircling that Throne, but it was of a fiery blood-red colour. And why? God was angry with His people.

6. What colour is the rainbow around the Throne to you ?

a. If you cannot say, "Though Thou wast angry with me," it will be blood-red—a thing of terror, of awful dread and fear.

b. But if, like John, you know the Lord, then your eyes will fall with delight on the sight, you will find rest there, your spirit will be refreshed. For you will remember if Noah's rainbow is a sign of the great world covenant, telling its that God is a faithful Creator, this speaks to me of a Faithful Redeemer

7. Besides that, the August Person on the Throne is, through Christ, my Father,

III. In Heaven the Rainbow is a Full Circle.

1. On earth it is only half a circle—sometimes not that—at the best it is imperfect and incomplete. Indeed everything down here is imperfect and incomplete. Read Ecclesiastes to see the result of the most diligent and painstaking search after happiness and rest in things down here ever prosecuted. Result—weariness and disappointment.

2. But in Heaven everything is complete and perfect. The rainbow is full circle. Everything is perfect. Heaven meets all our needs. Whatever be the longings of your soul, Heaven will meet.

a. A fisherwoman, who had lost her husband and two sons at sea, was asked what she most liked to think about when she thought about the land beyond, and she said: "And there shall be no more sea."

b. Ask the mourners what they like to think about concerning Heaven: "And there shall be no more death;" that sufferer racked with pain:

c. "Neither shall there be any more pain ;" to that one struggling with poverty: "They shall hunger no more;" to the lover of nature: "Eternal Spring." There, everlasting spring abides, and never withering flowers.

IV. In Heaven it Endures.

1. On earth it is only fleeting, a sign of a changing state of things.

2. But in Heaven it abides, remains.
3. We smile when a tradesman declares that a cloth or garment "is everlasting wear." This rainbow abides.

#### V. Final Word.

1. Please note, "after this." After what? After vision of Son, vision of Father.
2. John met with Christ on earth, and then saw the Father on the Throne.
3. God out of Christ is a consuming fire.

### SEVERE JUDGMENTS ON THE EARTH. REVELATION 6.

#### Introduction.

1. Our warships sometimes sail under sealed orders. Only in midst of ocean have the seals to be broken. The Roll of Judgment containing the deep secret purposes of God is sealed with seven seals, i.e., perfectly sealed.
2. It is the Lamb who opens the Sealed Book containing the deep, hidden, and sealed purposes of God. The key of the future is in the hands of Christ. 3. The Day of Tribulation begins with the opening of the First Seal.
4. The judgments increase in intensity and severity as they proceed.
  - I. First Seal: Invasion—by Antichrist (1, 2) .
    1. "A bow," but no arrows, hinting at bloodless victories.
    2. A great conqueror, and a great conquest.
  - II. Second Seal: Civil War (3, 4).
  - III. Third Seal: Famine. Food 16 times more costly than ordinarily. In the reign of Tragan one penny bought twenty measures.
  - IV. Fourth Seal: Pestilence and Death. (7, 8). "Death appears mounted on a horse, not on a throne; he arrives, he passes by" (C. G. Rossetti).
  - V. Fifth Seal: Jewish Martyrs (9-11). This fifth seal is marked off and separated from all the others.
    - I. THEIR IDENTITY.
    2. THEIR LOYALTY to God's Word.
    3. THEIR PRAYERS.
    4. THE DEPARTED:
      - a. Are not non-existent.
      - b. Are not unconscious.
      - c. Retain a consciousness of their former life on earth.
      - d. Retain the power of prayer.

- e. Are capable of receiving knowledge.
- f. Are capable of receiving additional comfort and glory.
- g. These were impatient for the hour of justice and recompense to strike.

VI. Sixth Seal: Signs in Heaven Above and in Earth Beneath (12-17).

- 1. A great earthquake.
- 2. A great hiding.
- 3. They wanted to be hidden from the face of the Lord. We mourn when He hides His face.
- 4. Question. in verse 17: "Who shall be able to stand," is answered in Rev. 7. 9.
- 5. "Moved out of their places" (verse 14) foretold Matthew 24. 35; Isaiah 34. 4; 13. 6-13).

THE SEALED ISRAELITES AND THE  
REDEEMED GENTILES.  
REVELATION 7.

Note.

- 1. This is the first of several parenthesis in Revelation.
- 2. It is given to show us that a great work of grace will be wrought during the Great Tribulation.
- I. The Sealing (1-8).

1. PREPARATION.

- a. Verse 1. No influence from East, West, North, or South, can be allowed to hinder what God is now about to do.
- b. Verse 2. They are marked as God's, not by a man out of the City, as in Ezek. 9, but by an angel. (You will note that the Beast, too, has his seal for his followers. See Rev. 13. 16 to 18; 14. 9 to 11; 16.2; 19.20;20.4).
- c. Verse 3. A visible sealing. The Romans marked their soldiers on their hands, but their slaves on their foreheads.

2. SUBJECTS.

- a. A change of Dispensation. Israel now taken up.
- b. Note: Levi included, but Dan omitted. Why? (See Deut. 29. 18-21).

c. LESSONS:

- i. By association with the Lord Jesus we shall be exalted.
- ii. "Be sure your sin will find you out."
- iii. The preserving character of present-day sealing.
- iv. We do not know what this seal will be.
- v. Success of this sealing (Rev. 14. 1-5).

II. The Great Multitude (9-17) .

- 1. COMFORTING. To distressed workers and tried Christians.
- 2. WHO ARE THEY?

- a. Not the Church. They have been translated.
- b. Not the Bride, for she is in, not before the Throne.
- c. Redeemed ones who have passed through "The Great Tribulation."

### 3. THEIR POSITION.

- a. Before the Throne.
- b. Serve Him constantly.
- c. Indwelt by God.
- d. No more hunger, etc.
- e. No more tears.

## SILENCE IN HEAVEN. REVELATION 8., 9.

### I. Silence (8. 1 to 6) .

- 1. Strange that silence should be the first result of the opening of the Seventh Seal.
- 2. The need of silence in our own spiritual lives.
- 3. This is the silence before the storm.
- 4. It is a silence that prayer might be heard.
- 5. How our prayers are offered (3, 4) .
- 6. The direct result of the offering of the prayers was awful judgment.
- 7. The prayers in 6. 10 are presented (3, 4) and answered (5).

### II. The Trumpet Judgments (8. 7-9, 21) .

- a. This Seventh Seal is remarkable as that which discloses the judgment of deepest woe.
- h. These plagues correspond very closely with the plagues of Egypt, only these are universal and horrible.

1. JUDGMENT WHICH AFFECTED LAND (8. 7). Trees well-known symbol of human greatness (Dan. 4. 4-27).

2. JUDGMENT ON SEA. One-third of fish and shipping destroyed. (8. 8, 9). A mountain in Scripture language represents a kingdom (Isa. 11.9; Zech. 4. 7; Jer. 51.25).

3. JUDGMENT AFFECTING DRINKING WATER (8. 10-11). Note, not a mountain, but like one, "as it were."

4. JUDGMENT OBSCURING SUN, MOON, AND STARS (8. 12, 13).

5. STRANGE LOCUST JUDGMENT (9. 1-12) . Locusts have no king (Prov. 30. 27), but these have, and his name is given (11) .

(a) Opened Heaven in 4. 1; now opened Hell (2).

(b) The Star fallen from Heaven--the Prince of the Power of the Air.

a. Hellish origin of this plague.

d. Not to kill, but torment (5).

e. Not able to die (6).

- f. The locust army is a symbolical representation of judgment of a superhuman kind.
6. AN ARMY OF CAVALRY, Two HUNDRED MILLION IN NUMBER (9. 13-21).
- a. The Sixth Trumpet summons a swift overwhelming, and destructive host from the East to stay men of the Western Empire.
  - b. Dreadful picture of human perversity (20, 21).

VICTORY AT LAST.  
REVELATION 10. 1-11 and II. 1 to 18.

Note,

1. Instead of the Seventh Trumpet sounding, we have another parenthesis. Why? It is that we may turn from these scenes of terror to get another glimpse of the Lord.

2.:Before the Seventh Seal was opened a sealing took place (see 7); before the Seventh Trumpet is sounded we have another sealing (10. 4).

3. We come to the close of the first section of this third great division (4. 1-11. 18).

1. The Angel (10. 1 to 7). (The Lord Jesus). He comes down from Heaven as the great Antagonist of the " Angel of the Abyss," who comes yip from. blow, and is enveloped in the cloud of the smoke of the Pit.

- 1. His Might.
- 2. His Descent..
- 3. His Majesty. Clothed with a cloud. Special sign of Jehovah's majesty (Isa. 19. 1). The drapery of the sky floats upon His shoulders; the rainbow forms His diadem.
- 4. His Act of Possession.
- 5. His Shout of Victory (3).
- 6. His Declaration ("Delay no longer," 6).

"The description of this Angel has been admired by every classical scholar. Considered merely as a literary production, it stands unrivalled by anything we meet with in all the pages of Grecian and Roman literature."

II. The Little Book (10. 8-11).

- 1. There are many things sweet to know, but bitter to realise.
- 2. It is sweet to be in the service of the Lord, yet there is bitterness also.
- 3. The servant of the Lord, to be a true witness, must first assimilate the message.

III. The Measuring (11. 1, 2) .

- 1. The Temple is to be rebuilt (see 2 Thess. 2. 4).
- 2. The Lord taking under His special care:
  - a. Holy Place.
  - b. Brazen Altar.

c.. The Worshipers.

IV. The Two Witnesses (11. 3-12).

1. Who are they? Are they Enoch and Elijah? Or Elijah and Moses? (See Mal. 4. 5, 6; Matt. 11. 14).

2. Note, they:

a. Are empowered by the .Lord (3) .

b. Preach 31 years.

c. Exercise their ministry on Old Testament lines (5, 6).

a. Killed when work is finished (7, 8).

e, Their dead bodies maltreated (8).

j. rejoicing of enemies cut short by their resurrection and glorification 11, 121.

3. Note the first mention of the Beast (11. 7).

V. The Great Earthquake (11. 13, 14).

VI. The Seventh Trumpet of Victory (11. 15).

VII. The Song of the Messiah (11. 16-18).

This is the fourth great song in the Book.

1st, was the Song of Creation (4. 9-11).

2nd, was the Song of Redemption (5. 9-14).

3rd, was the Song of Victory (7. 9-12) .

4th, was the Song of Messiah (11. 17, 18).

#### SATANIC POWERS.

REVELATION 11. 19 to verse 18 of chap. 13.

#### THE SATANIC POWERS OPERATING DURING THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

Introduction.

1. We begin a study of the 2nd Section of this 3rd Division of the Book of the Revelation.

2. The former division (4. 1 to verse 18 of chap. 11) had more do do with secular wickedness, and its standpoint is the Throne; this division has more to do with religious wickedness, and its standpoint is the Temple.

3. The other section began with Christ glorified (4. 5) and ended with Christ triumphant (10. 11) ; this section takes us further back still, to the Birth of Christ, and back to events further still, giving us many additional details.

4. We get in this section the inner view of events, the mighty evil personalities behind all the terrible apostasy and wickedness of the last days.

5. Note: Sign (12. 1, margin).

I. The Woman (12. 1, 2) .

1. Not Christ; nor Church; not Mrs. Baker Eddy (as Christian Scientists declare); nor Virgin Mary (as some Roman Catholics assert).

2. The Woman is Israel, whose glory is described with unimaginable splendour.
3. Note, might and borrowed light under her feet.

#### II. The Dragon (12.3.4).

1. Another wonder, not a great wonder.
2. Only ten horns.
3. "The tail "--meaning hip, influence. He led to ruin many of the Heavenly beings.

#### III. The Man Child (12. 5).

1. No difficulty in recognising who is meant by Man Child, when verse 5 is compared with Psalm 2. 9. It is Christ.
2. His life and death passed over, as this is emphasised elsewhere.

#### IV. The War in Heaven (12.7-9, 12).

1. At present Satan is "prince of the power of the air."
2. He has yet to be cast from thence by Michael the Archangel.

#### V. The Wilderness (12. 6).

1. Dragon is first described as the enemy of the Child, but presently becomes the enemy of the woman.
2. He has always persecuted the true Israel.
3. Israel under Moses spent 40 years in the wilderness; they are yet to spend 3j years there.

#### VI. The Dragon Standing on a Sea-shore (13. 1, R.V.). Significance of calling them Beasts.

##### 1. THE FIRST BEAST (1-10).

- a. This is not only the Imperial system of Rome revived, a great political power, but a person-Antichrist.
- b. A caricature of the resurrection (13. 3).
- c. His work (5-10).

##### 2. THE SECOND BEAST (13. 11-18).

- a. Coming up "out of the earth" is out of a settled order of things.
- b. He is the False Prophet (16. 13; 19. 20; 20. 10). A great ecclesiastical power.
- c. Our Lord spoke of false prophets as well as false Christ's (Matt. 24.5 , 11, 24; Mark 13. 22) .
- d. His speech betrayed him (13, verse 11).

#### Finis. Three great requisites for these times (13. 10).

1. Flight (Matt. -24. 15-28; Mark 13. 14-23; Rev. 12. 14).
2. Patience (Rev. 1 . 9; 2. 19; 3. 10; 14.9. 12).
3. Faith (Rev. 2. 10, 13, 17; 17. 14).

### THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN. REVELATION 14. 1-16. 21.

## Introduction.

1. The last chapter (13) is the darkest chapter in this Book.
2. What a relief to turn away from the awesome sight of the dread Trinity of Evil to get another glimpse of the Lord.
3. In last chapter we saw the Devil and his associates busy; but what is God doing with and for His own? In this study we see the result of the Lord's working.

### I. The Lamb and the Sealed (14. 1-5).

1. Mount Zion, Jerusalem—there to take possession of the city (1) .
2. Lamb standing, not sitting.
3. With Him are those who were sealed in chapter 7, only since then they have passed through the Tribulation.
4. Their appearance on Mount Sion with the Lamb is the occasion of great rejoicing among their brethren, the martyred saints of the Tribulation, now risen and in Heaven (2)

### 5. THE CHARACTER OF THE SEALED AND REDEEMED.

- a. Purity (4). Free from the awful moral impurity associated with idolatry; free from spiritual impurities in worship and practice. (Newman erroneously took this as eulogizing celibacy).
- b. Obedience and Discipleship. "Follow the Lamb" (4).
- c. Truthfulness (5). "The lie."
- d. Blamelessness (5).

### II. The Preaching of the Everlasting Gospel (14.6, 7).

1. Not the Gospel preached to-day.
2. Note:
  - a. No sound of mercy nor story of love. No mention of the Name of Jesus.
  - b. It speaks of fearing God: of Judgment.
  - c. It is the Gospel of God as Creator.

III. A Terrible Picture of Fate of Ungodly (14. 8.13). Most terrible picture of the fate of ungodly to be found in Scripture. The eye shrinks from the spectacle. It is given as a warning against worshipping the Beast.

### 1. FOUR POURINGS OUT.

- a. Blood (Lev. 4. 7).
- b. Blessing (Mal. 3. 10) .
- c. Holy Spirit (Acts 2. 17, 18).
- d. Wrath (Rev. 14. 10).

### 2. No REST-For

- a. The Redeemed (Rev. 4. 8; 14. 13).
- b. The Ungodly (Rev. 14. 11).

Rest from works, but not rest from worship.

IV. Christ as Judge Coming in the Clouds of Heaven (14. 14-20). "White cloud"-symbol of the Divine Presence.

V. The Completion of God's Wrath (15. 1-16, 21).

1. Seven angels with the seven last plagues (15. 1).
2. The victorious martyred company of Judah (15.2-4) .
3. The ministers of God's wrath equipped for judgment (15. 5 , 6) .
4. The Plagues (16. 1-21).

Conclusion.

Note two statements concerning the Head of the Son of •Man. First time His Head referred to in New Testament, Luke 9. 58. Last time His Head referred to in New Testament. Rev. 14. 14.

## BABYLON THE GREAT. REVELATION

17. 1 to 19. 16.

Introduction.

**LAW OF RECURRENCE.** This law is seen in operation in connection with Babylon. It was mentioned in Revelation for the first time in 14. 8, and again in 16. 19. The writer returns to this subject to give additional particulars.

**NOTABLE FACT.** Here is a most notable fact, that no event, save the death of the Lord Jesus, has been so much made of in the Word of God as giving such intense satisfaction, as the fall of Babylon. Why is this?

**HISTORY OF BABYLON.** Satan is an imitator. God's Holy City is Jerusalem. God having His City, Satan must have one, too and Babylon is Satan's capital. It was founded by the Lord's opponent (Gen. 10, 9). It was built as is recorded in Gen. 11. This eleventh chapter of Genesis records two facts, the building of Babel and call of Abraham, that is, man's attempt to establish himself upon the earth, and God calling a man out of it, to find his portion and home in Heaven.

**WHAT IS MEANT BY BABYLON?** Is this Babylon or Rome? There is Babylon mystical and Babylon literal (see 17. 18).

**THE WOMAN.**

1. We have read of a woman before (see chapter 12) .
2. But there are striking differences.
  - a. The other clothed with light—all the adorning of this one is counterfeit (for "decked" read "gilded.").
  - b. The sun-clothed woman had no name—this one has (3, 5).
  - c. The first one stood on the moon; this one is seen sitting on a beast (3), i.e., upheld by Satan and Antichrist.

**WHO IS THIS WOMAN?**

1. Roman Catholics say the woman was Pagan Rome.

2. Protestants say it is Papal Rome. The officials of the Roman Catholic Church array themselves in those colours .
3. A City? Yes (18). It is both. It is a City, the Seat of a false religious system, supported by Antichrist.

#### I. The Vision (17. 1-6).

1. One of the Seven Vial angels.
2. "The Great Whore"---City (verse 18) .
3. Scarlet Coloured Beast—Papal Rome.
4. Seven Heads--Forms of Government.
5. Ten Horns—Royal • personages.
6. Names of Blasphemy---Many and varied forms of self-will and rebellion against God.
7. "Decked"—Having a wondrous and attractive idolatrous system full of abominations.
8. Drunken with Blood-Guilty of many death.

#### II.. The Interpretation (17. 7-18) .

1. "Was"--Past; "is not;" at present; "shall ascend," that-is, shall be resurrected (verse 8).
2. "Seven Mountains"---The Seven Hilled City of Rome .
3. Make War with the Lamb.

#### III. The Fulfilment (18. 1-24).

1. Habitat ion of devils"-Headquarters of Spiritism. mall to separation (4)
3. Her wickedness (5).
4. The merchandise.
5. "In one hour " "In one day" (8, 10, 17. 19).

#### IV. The Rejoicing (19. 1-16). The Amens. 1 . Amen !o the Curses (Dent. 27. 15).

2. Amen to St. John's strange command (I John 5. 21).
3. Amen to His Presence (Matt. 28. 20).
4. Amen to the Lord's Working (Mark 16. 20).
5. Amen to His Coming (Rev. 22. 20).
6. Amen with the Alleluia (Rev. 19. 4).

### SOME OF THE LAST THINGS.

#### REVELATION 19. 1 to 20. 15.

How significant are the words of our Lord in Matthew 26. 63 and 64. On the right hand of power He has been sitting ever since His Ascension, while He has gathered His beloved Church to Himself, Now the second part of the statement is to be fulfilled, "Coming in the clouds of Heaven."

#### I. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb (19. 1-10) .

1. Note the Four Hallelujahs (19. 1 to 6).
2. This is the first occurrence of this word in the New Testament.
3. The first occurrence of this word, Alleluia, in the Old Testament corresponds in a marked manner with its first occurrence in the New Testament . We first find it in Psalm

104. 35. What the people of the world lament over ("woe" or "alas", 18. 9, 10), these say, Alleluia)

4. On verse 3, Tennyson the poet, wrote: "Magnificent conception, darkness and fire rolling together for ever and ever."

5. Then in verses 7-10 we have the Marriage of the Lamb. The Bride is the Church. Blessed are they who are "called" (9), yet more blessed are they who call—the Bride. Note the folly of the adoration of angels and saints (10).

## II. The Great Supper of God (19. 11-21).

1. The Second Advent of the Word of God (19. 11-16). Heaven opened, not a door in Heaven as formerly (14). Observe the Lord's three names (12, 13, 16) . Note, an army without weapons.

2. The Battle of Armageddon (19. 17-21). This will be the last battle. "War against Him." Who? The Lord. Observe, "Cast alive."

## III. The Millennium (20. 1-6).

1. Observe: Chains that can bind spirits (3) . There are chains that can bind flesh and blood, and there are chains that can bind spirits. Thrones (4).

2. "Laid hold on the dragon" (2). He who has planned all and used 'all for the accomplishment of his own sinful purposes, must now be dealt with.

3. The first Resurrection we have recorded in verses 5 and 6.

## IV. After the Thousand Years (20. 7-15) .

1. After the Millennium Satan must be loosed (7). Observe the "must" of Divine necessity in verse 3.

2. Satan's going out himself to deceive (8) .So here he does not leave this to others. His special tool at this time will be God, prince of Rosh, Mesech, and Tubal.

3. Gog and Magog. Gog and Magog denote the nations as a whole. Magog is mentioned in Gen. 10. 2, as the first son of Japhet . Josephus renders the word Magog, scythians. The two words combine the nations North and East of Palestine. The word Magog is found only in Gen. 10.2, as a son of Japhet ; in Ezekiel where it means a land or country of which Gog is the prince; and in Rev. 30. 8, where Gog and Magog appears to be an inclusive term for the Gentile nations. Ezekiel 38 and 39 must be distinguished from Rev. 20. Ezekiel records the war referred to in Rev. 16. 14; 17. 4; 19. 17-21, which takes place before the Millennium, while Rev. 20 takes place after it.

4. "Compassed the camp of the saints" (9). Ezek. 38. 18-22. So terrific will be the slaughter, that it will take seven months to bury the dead, and for seven years the children of Israel will have fuel enough for their use from the wood of the weapons left behind upon the field.

5. "Great White Throne" (11) .

Note.

- a. "Great," indicating the greatness of the occasion.
- b. "White"—purity, holiness, righteousness.
- c. No name and no rainbow given, no form described—only an awful mysterious presence.
- d. "Small and great"—all classes.
- e. "Stand"—past kneeling, past praying.
- f. "Books"—vouchers for the Book of Life.
- g. "According to their works."

THE HOLY CITY.  
REVELATION 21. 1 to 22. 5.

Introduction.

I. THREE JERUSALEM'S:

- a. Present City now existing.
- b. Heavenly City—a literal City in Heaven.
- c. Mystical City—both a people and a city here in Revelation.

2. IS THE CITY OF VERSE 2 SAME AS VERSE 10?

a. Walter Scott says: "The 'coming down' in verse 2 is a thousand years after the 'coming down' of verse 10. The former is in Eternity, the latter is at the commencement of the Millennial Age; the former the Church comes down to the eternal earth, in the latter she rests over the Millennial earth."

1. The Law of Recurrence explains.

3. This chapter and next deal with eternal events.

The Eternal times and events are described more fully in the first eight verses of 21, than in any other portion of the inspired Word.

1. New Heaven and a New Earth (21. 1) .

1. The Divine declaration in verse 5 (present tense).

2. The Fulfillment (1).

3. The Agent—First (2 Pet. 3. 10) .

(Holy Land given to Israel for an everlasting possession).

NOTE.

1. A "new earth" does not necessarily mean another earth,

2. To make all things new is different to making new things, e.g., make a new garment out of an old one.

3. Two words translated "new" in New Testament: a. That which has recently been brought into existence. h. A fresh aspect, given to what has previously existed, but being outward. The latter is the meaning here.

4. No MORE SEA.
  - a. Literally true then.
  - b. Spiritually true, too. No more mystery, lawlessness, unrest.
5. Everlasting distinction even in Heaven of earthly and heavenly people.

## II. The New Jerusalem (21. 2 to 22. 5) .

1 . WHAT WAS NECESSARY BEFORE JOHN SAW (2, 9, 10) . John was led into the wilderness that he might see Babylon (17. 1), the false Church and City; he must be placed on high ground that he might see the true Church and City.

2. WHAT HE SAW. A city and a people (2, 9).

3. THE CITY:

- a. Expected. Looked for (Heb. 11. 13-16).
- b. Origin. Like Jesus and Holy Spirit, it descended out of heaven (2-10).
- c. Character. Holy (2, 10). A Holy City must come from above.

4. BEAUTY (2, 11, 18-21) .

- a. Glory of God. Not like Babylon, glory of man.
- b. Pure gold, yet transparent (18).
- c. Authorities in precious stones marvel at the amazing skill here displayed in the harmonizing and arrangements of the colours.

5. ITS LACK. No Temple (22). Therefore far beyond the Millennium.

6. ITS SIZE. Greatness, 1500 miles in length, breadth, and height (16).

7. ITS AMPLE PROTECTION.

- a. Strong City surrounded by a wall (12) 216 feet high.
- b. See verse 27.

8. ITS POPULARITY (24).

9. ITS LIGHT (23) .

10. ITS LIFE (22. 1).

11. ITS GLORIOUS INHABITANTS (21. 3, 22) .

12. A SPLENDID ARRAY OF NEGATIVES. Tears (22. 3).

13. THREE ELEMENTS of the Perfect State of Man:

- a. Service.
  - b. Contemplative.
  - c. Likeness.
14. FREELY (21. 6).

## THE COMING OF CHRIST. REVELATION 22. 6-21.

### Introduction.

1. AFFIRMATIONS concerning the truth of the Book of the Revelation.
  - a. By God Himself (21. 5).

- b, An an Angel (22. 6) .
- c. By the Lord Jesus (22. 16, 18, 19).

## 2. THE IMMINENCE of His Second Advent.

- a. By Angel ((3, 10).
- b. By Lord Jesus (7, 12, 20).
- 3. Reaffirmed blessing for readers and keepers of this book (7). "He," not "they," as in 1.3.
- 4. The second time John failed in the presence of these glorious scenes (8, 9) . "Worship God" (note John 5. 23) .
- 5. Obedience to commands is not the ground on which Eternal Life is bestowed (14. Note R.V. and John 5. 24).
- 6. Daniel has to "seal the Book" (Dan. 12, 4) for the time of the end was far off; here "Seal not the sayings . . . for the time is at hand."
- 7. In eternity no further offer of mercy (11, 15).
- 8. Note the significance of verse 16. Source, yet offshoot of David.
- 9. The last of the "Gospel 'Comes' of the Bible" (17).
- 10. Old Testament ends with a "curse" (Mal. 4. 6) ; New Testament ends with a blessing (21).
- I . Imminent. Can you say, "Even so Come ? "

## II. Significance of Current Movements.

III. Why is the Second Advent Never Mentioned• in New Testament except in a casual kind of way ? Because the primitive believers were so well-instructed in Second Advent truth.

## IV. The Most Prominent Theme in the Bible,

## V. The Progress of the Divine Revelation concerning the Lord's Coming in the Bible.

## VI . The Lord's Promise (John 14.3) .

## VII. Each Apostle Emphasises a Different Phase • of the Lord's Return.

- 1. With James it was JUSTICE (James 5.1-7).
- 2. With Jude it was JUDGMENT (Jude 14,15) ,
- 3. With Peter It was MAJESTY (2 Pet. 1.16).
- 4. With Paul it was RAPTURE (1 Thess. 4.13 and 14).
- 5. With Hebrews it was FULFILMENT (Heb. 9.28),
- 6. With John it was PURITY (1 John 3.3).,

## VIII. The Lord's Coming.

- 1. TESTIMONY OF THE ANGELS (Act I.9 to 11).
- a. Certainty. "Shall."
- b. Identity. This same Jesus."
- c. Manner. "So come."

- d. Pre-millennial.
- e Time
- f. Fruit.

## 2. TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES.

- a. Why observe Lord's Supper (1 Cor.11.26).
- b. We shall not all die (1 Cor.15. 51 and 52). C. Of Paul when Old (Titus 2.11.14).

### d. Three Appearances.

- i. Past (Heb. 9. 26) .
- ii . Present (Heb. 9. 24) ,
- iii . Future (Heb. 9. 28) .

### e. Three Shepherds.

- i. Good (John 10. 11).
- ii. Great (Heb .13.20) .
- iii. Chief (1 Pet. 5.4).

### J. Three Comings.

- i. He came first to die.
- ii. Next time He will come for His own (1 Thess. 4.17).
- iii. Finally He will come with His own (2 Thess. 1. 7).

## IX. General Outline of Events at and succeeding His Coming. The Four Judgments.

1. Judgment at the Reward Seat (2 Cor. 5. 10) . In the air. (Immediately.)
2. Judgment of Living Nations, on the earth (Matt. 25. 31). (Seven years afterwards.)
- S. Judgment of the Unconverted Dead at the Great White Throne (1000 years after) . (Rev. 20. 11, 12) .
4. Judgment of Angels (2 Pet. 2. 4; Jude 6; 1 Cor. 6.3).

## X. To be More than a Mere Doctrine. "Love." (2 Tim. 4. 8).

### FIVE METAPHORS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

2 TIM. 4.6 to 8.

Paul-

I. Speaks as a Sacrifice. "Ready to be offered," likening the end of life as an offering to God. Years before he had accepted Christ's offering for his sins, then offered himself as a living sacrifice. All his Christian life had been sacrificial. Now he was literally to be offered—as a martyr for the faith.

II. Speaks as a Sailor. "Time of my departure," likening the end of life to the loosening of cable.

III. Speaks as a Soldier. "I have fought," likening life to a fight.

IV. Speaks as an Athlete. "I have finished my course," likening life to a race.

V. Speaks as a Trustee. "I have kept the faith," likening life to a sacred trust.

Scripture Couplets  
SALVATION BEFORE HELP.

"Lord, save me" (Matt. 14. 30). "Lord, help me" (Matt.15. 25).

Two important, earnest, and impressive prayers. But please observe their order in the sacred narrative. Peter's cry, "Lord, save me," comes before the Syro-Phoenician's plea, "Lord, help me." Before the request for his assistance comes the call for his salvation. This is highly significant, and conveys a much needed and vitally important lesson.

"But I do ask God to help me," is often the reply of men and women when dealt with about their souls. There is hardly a Christian worker but has heard this statement many a time. And one cannot but feel that self-righteousness prompts that reply. No doubt it is true, for instinctively the most careless and depraved cry out for the help of the Almighty in times of distress and disaster. But it is not according to the Divine order I must cry, "Lord, save me," before I cry, "lord, help me." Before I have any right to ask for His assistance I must ask for His salvation. In fact, I have no claim on His willingness to help unless I have received His grace and mercy. This order is recognised in other portions of the Holy Book.

For instance, the Gibeonites in a time of sore and desperate need sent an urgent message to Joshua, saying, "Save us and help us." (Joshua 10. 6) ; and the saint in the grand old 46th Psalm boldly exclaims: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Note the order—"save" then "help"; a "refuge," then a "present help"—yea, "a very present help."

It is all very well to say: "I do ask God to help me," but is that prayer answered? Ah, that is another thing. The heart -moving plea of the woman of Canaan in Matthew 15 was unheeded by the Saviour yea, though the disciples begged Him to grant it in order to get rid of her (for undoubtedly that is the full significance of their conduct as indicated in verse 23) . And it was all because she had not recognised and observed the Divine order. She had, as a matter of fact, taken up an entirely false position, making a claim on Jesus as the "Son of David," a title she as a Gentile had no right to plead. It was only when she had taken her rightful place at His feet that her request for His help was granted. Oh, the blessedness of lying low at His feet in penitence and confession! Then, having become my Divine refuge from sin, He becomes my daily helper and strengthener. Having cried, Lord, save me," I have a humble right to cry daily, "Lord, help me."

I. "Lord, save me"—It was the Prayer of Sinking Peter for Himself, after attempting to do as Jesus did. Impetuous Peter asked the Lord for His invitation, and the Son of God could not do otherwise than invite him. And for a moment or two all seemed well. Peter, too, began to do the impossible, as all who trust the Saviour accomplish; but taking his eyes off the Master, he began to sink, and cried, "Lord, save me." This was a perfect prayer. It

was short, direct, definite, earnest, and received an immediate reply. It does not take the Lord long to save us. Let the cry of penitence rise from a broken and a contrite heart and immediately He saves. Oh, sinking, soul, why do you not cry out to Him?

II. "Lord, help me." It was the Prayer of One for Another, the clamorous cry of a mother for her child, the expression of a desperate need that would not take "No" for an answer, the request of one prepared to take any lowly position provided she could secure the boon she coveted. And that prayer, too, was ultimately granted. What else could the Lord do? The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. What a rebuke this mother's desperate plea is to many of our prayers for others! We will stir ourselves up, and lay hold on God, and then He will not deny the help we crave.

#### THE FACE OF THE LORD.

"Hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the Throne" (Rev. 6. 16).

"My heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek" (Psa. 27. 8).

WHAT a startling contrast have we here in these two Scriptures! The first depicts a scene of unparalleled horror. There is nothing more awful in Holy Writ or in any other literature. Men and women crying out in terror for nature to hide them "from the face of Him that sitteth on the Throne," and crying in vain. But the second introduces us to a scene of peace and bliss. The blackness and the darkness have given way to the light of a bright summer morn. Instead of the anguishing cry of fear and dread, there is the wooing and soothing notes of worship. The same face to one company an unspeakable horror, but to the other an exquisite delight; the one fleeing from that holy countenance, the other seeking the same with wholehearted and earnest endeavour. What a startling contrast! How is it?

"No man can see Me (My face) and live" (Exod. 33. 20). Such was the Lord's word to Moses. This certainly does not mean that He desires to hide himself from us. Away with such a thought. Why, He bids us seek His face! It simply means that the face of Jehovah, as involving the full blaze of His manifested glory, no mortal could hear, as the sight would-overpower and shatter his frame. We have known instances of the sudden and unexpected sight of the long-lost, face of son or daughter to so fill with joy the invalid parent that the transport shattered the feeble frame, and death intervened. For this reason in cases of this nature we speak of the wisdom of "breaking the news." Such a preparatory work is needed concerning the sight of the Lord's face. This is forcibly illustrated in the two Scriptures before us. The fact that they shall see His face" (Rev. 22. 4), by and by, is counted by believers as an inexpressible privilege, because they are passing through the preparatory stages down here; whereas the mass of the mere worldlings are terrified at the prospect of beholding Him, because they are consciously unfit and unprepared. The best preparation for beholding His face by and by is to gaze into it here and now. How is this possible?

The first and most important preparatory step is the one Moses took, viz., the step to the Cleft Rock (Exod. 33. 22). There is another Rock, riven by a more awful storm, a Rock

cleft by a thunderbolt of Divine justice—it is the Rock of Ages, that Rock which is Christ.

HOW TO SECURE SPIRITUAL IMMOBILITY "I shall not be GREATLY moved."  
"I shall NOT be moved" (Psalm 62. 2, 6)

HOW TO SECURE SPIRITUAL IMMOBILITY "I shall not be GREATLY moved." "I shall NOT be moved" (Psalm 62. 2, 6). REFERRING to the physical sufferings of one of his missionary brethren, Dan. Crawford suggestively writes that the burden "may have only looked to outsiders like a tombstone hung round his neck, whereas in reality it was only a weight necessary to keep down the diver while he was collecting pearls." This is a telling simile. Verily afflictions are weights. Yet they are not sent to crush us, but only to enable us to gather the precious pearls of living truth, and to add to our rich stores of Christian experience.

This was pre-eminently true of David the Psalmist. He was a man of affliction. Often the waves and billows went over him. But what precious lessons he learned and has passed on to us in his writings. This is seen in the Psalm from which we have taken our two scriptures. When David wrote it he was evidently in great difficulties. He was surrounded by enemies, conspirators, and false friends. The Psalm is in four divisions. He first speaks to his enemies (1 to 4), then to himself (5 to 7), to his friends (8 to 11), and finally to the Lord (12). As he contemplates his foes he did not feel very sure of himself, so he exclaimed, "I shall not be moved."

Both these verses are alike, but not for one word. Why the change? What had it brought about? Was it because in the first he was addressing his enemies, and consequently must be cautious in his statements, whilst in the second he was addressing himself, and was trying to brace himself up? No, not exactly. The agreeable change was the result of giving his fears an airing. There is nothing like it. The microbe of unbelief cannot stand the clear light of day. Fears flourish in the dark. Drag them out into the light of His presence ; tell Him all about them: tell some trusted Christian soul, too, and, lo, they vanish away. Then, after mournfully exclaiming, "I shall not be greatly moved," i.e., "I am bound to be moved a little," he began to think of the Lord, and that sure ground of confidence. Ah, HE makes all the difference. Have you any fears? What a plague they are! But do not hide them any longer in your bosom. Just tell Him all; think a little more of Him, and, lo, they will disappear. And then, like David, you will boldly exclaim "[ shall not be moved."

But moved by what, by whom? It is left indefinite for a purpose. You can just put in your own trouble and difficulty. But let us notice four powers that seek to move us.

I. Satan Seeks to Move Us (2 Sam. 24. 1) . There is no doubt as to the identity of the person referred to as "he." 1 Chron. 21. 1 shows it was Satan. David was instigated by Satan to do this thing. And, alas, the enemy's tactics succeeded only too well. He was

greatly moved, and terrible were the results. The devil is constantly seeking to move us to do wrong, endeavouring to lead us to either go before or follow a long way behind, and even forsake our Master, and is perpetually plotting our overthrow. And how skilful he is. What chance have we against this old campaigner? Here is our safety: "For the king trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved."

II. Sin Seeks to Move Us. In Acts 7. 9 we are informed that the reason the patriarchs sold their brother Joseph was that they were "moved with envy." Sin, in all its varied forms, seek to move us to do wrong. And, mark you, it is not only a temptation from without, but, more trying and dangerous still, it is one from within. Sin is a mighty enemy entrenched within us. But, thank God, if the Christian has an indwelling enemy he has an indwelling Friend. "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved." The secret of overcoming and of spiritual immobility is the presence of the Indwelling One.

III. Afflictions Seek to Move Us. The reason why Paul sent Timothy to visit the Thessalonians was lest any one of them "Should be moved by . . . afflictions" (1 Thess. 3. 3). They were evidently having a very rough time, and there was the great danger of becoming unsettled by these surging sorrows. But the antidote is this: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Those who cast their burdens upon the Lord, and perpetually confide in Him, will find themselves immovable.

IV. Friends Sometimes Seek to Move Us. Paul, believing himself to be in the will of God, was on his way to Jerusalem, but friends tried to dissuade him, yet lie declared, "But none of these things move me" (Acts 20. 24). The only security from even well-intentioned but mistaken friends is this: "I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved." It was this that helped Athanasius. He stood alone as the champion for the true and proper Deity of our Lord. "Do you know " said one to him, "that all the world is against you?" "Then," replied the brave defender, "I am against all the world."

## TWO COVERINGS FOR SIN.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper" (Prov. 28. 13) "Love covereth a multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4. 8. R.V.).

IN an interview with a famous Gospel preacher the reviewer said: "His first words to me were, 'Things are very different now from what they were 25 or 30 years ago. It was easy to work for God then, compared with what it is now. There was then a sense of sin, but where there is no sense of sin you have no fulcrum for your lever.'" Alas. how true are these words in our own time

But if the sense of sin has been lost, the fact of sin remains. In the two verses before us two coverings for sin are given. In the one, covering of sins is denounced; in the other, commended. By bringing these texts together we note the contrast. There is a covering of sin allowable, if only the sin be another's and not our own. But we reverse the order, hiding our own, and uncovering the sins of others.

I. The Covering of Sins Commended. There is a covering of sins which is not only allowable, but commended, the sin which is not my own but that of another. Human nature persists in reversing the order. Yea, alas, alas, so many make traffic with the sins of another!

This does not mean that we view sin differently in others than in ourselves. Sin is ever the same hideous monster wherever it be. I must never condone or excuse sin in either myself or in another. This just means that I must never make merchandise of the sins, faults, or failings of another fellow-mortal. It means that I will uncover the sins of others only to the Lord when alone with Him. It was said of one after she had gone, that "she was never known to speak ill of an absent friend." Could that be said of me, and of you?

Why should I cover the sins of others? 1st: On the common ground of the Golden Rule, doing to others as we would be done by. Sins have a strange way of coming home to roost. 2nd: But the Christian has a higher and a nobler reason for covering the sins of others—to cover sin is God-like, What He has done for me for Christ's sake, I must do to others for His dear sake. Observe, there is no limit to this operation. "A multitude of sins."

II. The Covering of Sin Denounced. If love leads me to cover my neighbour's sin, pride prompts me to cover my own. For the sinner naturally wishes to be thought better than he really is.

To uncover my sins does not mean (1) that I have to Parade then before the Public gaze. God forbid that we should ever gloat over our past, or refer to it in a spirit of bravado! Nor does it mean (2) that I have to uncover my sins to man, if the sin has just been between God and my soul. "I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord," was the Psalmist's declaration (Psa. 32).

THE DIVINE COVERING. If I uncover my sin to the Lord, He will, by His Precious Blood, blot it out, and that is better than covering. In the Old Testament sins could only be covered; in the New Testament sins are put away, blotted out.

#### REST GIVEN AND FOUND.

"Come ... and I will give you rest." "Take ... and ye shall find rest"  
(Matt. 11. 28 to 30).

IT is safe to say that this is the best known and most beloved of all the sayings of our Lord Jesus. No human being can possibly estimate the multitudes who have been led into the Kingdom of His grace by the means of those precious words. Yet whilst so well known, few have noticed that there are two distinct Rests referred to. Those who can read the Greek declare there are two distinct words rendered in our English Bibles by the one word "rest." The first is a verb, the second a noun. The first signifies a temporary rest, one with the view of going on in the journey; the second stands for a more durable and lasting one. The first is a rest to the conscience; the second a rest to the soul. The first is a

gift; the second a discovery.

This is recognised in the Book of Common Prayer, where in the Communion Service we have, "Come unto Me, all ye that travail and are heavy Laden, and I will refresh you," i.e., a refreshing with a view to going on to a more permanent blessing. Oh, what a pity that so many seem to be content with the first, instead of pressing on to possess the second. In other words, mistaking the starting point for the goal.

I. The Rest that is Given.. "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28) .

Come! is one of the sweetest words in the Bible. The first come in the Bible (Gen. 7. 1), is one of salvation, and so is the last one (Rev. 22. 17). The blessing to be had for the coming is a precious one indeed, one of universal need. All do not hanker after pleasure, or crave intellectual treats, yet all are in need of rest.

He gives rest to the guilty conscience by His precious Blood.

II. The Rest that is Found. "Take My yoke upon you . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11.30).

Whatever this means it is for those who have received the first, the temporary rest with a view to going on to the permanent one. This second word signifies a deep, abiding, permanent repose that is undisturbed in the turmoils of life. Israel had temporary rests all the way to Egypt, but they did not receive the permanent one until they reached the Land of Promise.

This rest is only found by wearing Christ's yoke. The yoke in the Old Testament was a symbol of slavery. We read of the "yoke of the King of Babylon." Passing under the yoke meant good-bye to personal liberty. Christ demands an absolute submission, a full and complete surrender. And the first act of that submission we call consecration.

#### THE PURPOSE AND RESULT OF THE COMING OF CHRIST.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace" (Luke 2. 14) .

"I came not to send peace but a sword" (Matt. 10. 34) .

How glaringly contradictory do these statements seem to be! The first agrees with all our ideas of the purpose of His coming, and harmonises admirably with many other Scriptures; whilst the second is exactly the opposite. Some might be inclined to ask: Which is correct? Which have I to accept ?

Which have we to accept? Why, both, for the two are correct, though they do seem to differ entirely. This view may seem illogical, but life proves many a proposition true that logic would readily demonstrate as false.

The first tells of His purpose in coming; the second the actual result of that coming. This phraseology is peculiar to the Bible where, sometimes, a person is declared to do only that which he permits.

This does not mean that our Lord's purposes have been finally thwarted, that He came to bestow peace, but lo! His purposes are not, and will not be realised. What He has set out to do will assuredly be accomplished sooner or later.

But is there not another view of this matter—in order to establish peace, or in establishing peace, the sword of the Spirit is required ? There are two pictures of our Lord Jesus in the Bible. The most familiar one is that of the Lord bearing the Olive Branch. He came to make peace by the Blood of His Cross, and to preach peace.

But there is another picture, and one not so well known, that of the Lord with a drawn sword in His hand. Joshua saw the Lord, "over against him with His sword drawn in His hand" (Joshua 5. 13) . Christ as the Man of War.

In Revelation 1, 16, John saw- the Lord, when "out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword," teaching the mighty power of His Word. The Saviour we have to deal with is tender and compassionate. Yet One who can slay by a word.

I. Before Christ can establish His Peace in my heart He has to unsheath His Sword---In other words, before I can know Him as Peace Bringer, I must know Him as Peace Breaker. The unsaved soul is, by nature, wrapped up in a deep, deep peace, the peace of spiritual slumber and of death. A peace that is the herald of the awful storm of Judgment. A sleep from which there is no awakening if left to ourselves. He comes to disturb that false and awful peace.

Arctic explorers speak of the soul-subduing silences of the Arctic region. A strange peace reigns supreme. No life, nothing but a dreary chilling desolation. Everything is wrapped in the cold embrace of winter. Before the beautiful and refreshing peace of Spring time can visit that region there must be a great disturbance. The sun shines with its gladdening rays of warmth, the great ice field melts, and the result—an awful tearing and grinding, shrieking and rending, with explosions as of dynamite. So when the Sun of Righteousness shines upon souls wrapped up in the cold embrace of spiritual death, there is a disturbance, a breaking up of the stillness of spiritual death. To change the metaphor, the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God begins its cutting and thrusting. But after conviction comes conversion, after repentance comes peace through the Blood of His Cross.

II. The establishment of His Peace in the individual soul often means the unsheathing of the sword of persecution at home, in workshop, or elsewhere. Of the truth of this every Christian can fully vouch. Here is a worldly home, wrapped in carnal peace. One member of the family is converted. At once family peace departs, and persecution enters. The fact of the presence of Christ in that one life becomes a disturbance, making all uncomfortable. We have sometimes wondered why a veil was drawn over our Lord's life at Nazareth. Perhaps it is a mercy that it was so. \k as our Lord here speaking from personal experience? Was there strife and contention because of the presence of that PURE ONE ? "There are several significant facts in the New Testament.

His kinsmen thought Him mad (Mark 3. 21). Even His mother and brethren shared the same view. And in John 7. 5 we are informed His brethren did not believe Him.

But thank God, He gives peace to the persecuted ones,

III. It is also true to say that every saved soul is sent forth with a sword to make war upon the hosts of sin.

Christ not only puts peace in my heart, but a sword in my hand. The note of warfare rings right through the New Testament Epistles. There are hosts of sin and wickedness to be attacked, and the word of God is the weapon. He puts into our hands. There is a call for volunteers. Who will step out on the Lord's side!

IV. Peace of God--A Peace within. This peace baffles all description. It surpasses all thought. It is that holy calm which rests in God alone, and which He is willing to communicate to us.

There are three steps to its enjoyment.

1. It becomes mine when I realise my standing in Christ, when I discovered I have peace with God on the ground of the shed blood of Christ.
2. It deepens and increases as I grow in grace. It is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5. 22), comes to us by the aid of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14. 17), and is the result of a deepened knowledge of God (2 Peter I . 2), and of increased spirituality (Rom. 8. 6) .
3. It follows the cultivation of the prayer-habit, as Phil. 4. 7 clearly shows.

#### THE DIVINE ALCHEMIST,

"Instead of which (shields of gold) King Rehoboam made shields of brass"  
(2 Chron. 12. 9, 10). "For brass I will bring gold" (Isa. 60. 17) .

THE old alchemists spent their lives in seeking to discover a substance which would change the baser metals into those of value. But all their efforts only met with failure. What would they have given to be able to transform brass into gold! There is a heavenly Alchemist who can do this. What a contrast there, is between these two Scriptures! In the one brass is substituted for gold, and in the other gold for brass. The contrast is so great because one is the act of man, whilst the other is the act of God. Man, if left to himself, always substitutes the lower for the higher. Yet side by side with this degeneration we see the Divine Alchemist at work in regenerating, transforming and transfiguring.

Five years had passed since Solomon's death, and they had been sad years of retrogression. During these decadent years the great split in the nation--the revolt of the nine and a half tribes--had taken place. Then, worse than all this Judah "forsook the law of the Lord." In this time of sin, and schism their old enemy, the King of Egypt, found an easy entrance into the land. Though the king and people humbled themselves and sought the Lord, God.

permitted Shishak to spoil Jerusalem, to appropriate the treasures of the Temple and of the king's house, wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. Note the irony of the situation—Israel, when led by God out of Egypt, spoiled the Egyptians. Now the Egyptians, six hundred years afterwards, spoiled them, getting their own back with usury. Among the booty were three hundred solid gold shields, worth £7500 each, used on special state occasions. Oh, how short lived is the glory which depends on the faithfulness of man! The Temple built by Solomon is robbed in the days of his son; and instead of the shields of gold which Shishak looted, Rehoboam made shields of brass. Yet, thank God, the Divine Alchemist is at work for His people. He is coming back again. And when He comes, He will bring back glory to Israel. Then, literally, as well as spiritually, for brass He will bring gold. "Even so, come, Lord .Jesus."

But there is a message in all this for the backslider. When Rehoboam lost the pure gold what did he do? By all means he must keep up appearances. If he cannot afford golden shields, he must have something which resembles that precious metal-brass. And to avoid too close scrutiny by the people, he had them doubly guarded.

Is there a single Christian who has not at one time or another substituted brass for gold? Through unfaithfulness and sin we lose the pure gold of heart purity and communion with the Lord, of spiritual hunger and thirst after Divine things. And for all this gold, brass is substituted. All the outward acts of devotion and piety are kept up, and we look just the same as ever in the eyes of men. Scientists tell us of ice, and stone, and bronze ages. In religious experience we have these different periods. The ice stage is our state by nature the golden age is our state by grace. But, alas, there is sometimes the bronze age of mere externalism, when, though we have lost our first love, we keep up our round of Christian duties and perform all the outward acts of piety. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have riot charity ('lave), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.' Brass instead of gold. The appearance without the reality "I bless, His name, that I wax not

pale, neither have I lost the colour of gold, wrote Samuel Rutherford, during a time of great testing. Can you say this? If not, pray put yourself into the hands of the Divine Alchemist • who can give gold for brass. Then you will be able to joyfully testify: "He restoreth my soul." Are you burdened by a sense of unworthiness? Then listen once again to Rutherford: "Often He makes gold of dross." Splendid! What cannot the Divine Alchemist do with us, if we will but surrender ourselves to Him?

#### WHITE, THEN WHITER THAN SNOW.

"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as while as snow" (Isa. 1. 18).

"Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psa. 51, 7) .

"WHITE as snow," "Whiter than snow." These are not synonymous terms. They differ in many respects. One was the Word of the Lord, whilst the other was the cry of a king. Three hundred years separate the two utterances. Both Scriptures point to clear and distinct truths. The first is the Lord's promise, the second a penitent's plea; the former describes the work of God when He forgives sill, the latter is a deep inward work of grace done afterward; the one is a righteousness imputed, the other a righteousness imparted.

And, mark you, this order is always observed—I must be-made white as snow, then whiter than snow.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord," This is a command none can afford to treat lightly, for it is a word of authority, being a "Thus saith the Lord." What is behind a command is of extreme importance. 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." The law of the land is behind the man in blue. This is a word with all heaven behind it. Then notice, it is an appeal to reason: "Let us reason together." God appeals to mind as well as heart, to reason as well as to affections. And pray notice, it is a word, an importunate and imperative word, for the immediate present: "Come now"---not to-morrow, or the day after.

This is a word for the double-dyed sinner. Those who understand well the original language say that the word translated "scarlet" here really means the double-dyed, or twice-dipped. The scarlet colour in ancient times was the result of two dippings. What a word of hope is this then, for the vilest! None need despair, for Christ has died. Yet even the respectable sinners are included here, for, after all, are we not all double-dyed sinners, having been dipped in the vile pool of original corruption, and in the bath of actual transgression? Verily, we are sinners twice over, by choice as well as by birth. "Scarlet." This word teaches the permanency of sin, for it is a fast colour. It has been said that there is no power in chemistry that can take the scarlet colour out without destroying the fabric. But what is impossible in chemistry is possible in grace. The red blood of the Son of God obliterates our scarlet sins, and the white robe of the spotless righteousness of God is thrown over the penitent one. Praise God for that word of hope: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." May it be so, dear reader, in your experience.

It is reported that 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 one of the Arctic Expeditions lies buried. A large stone covers the dead, and, on a copper tablet at the head of the grave, our 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. But, whiter than snow—surely David made a mistake. Can anything become whiter than snow? Ah, even the snowflake is not pure. It seems that nothing can touch this sin-cursed earth without becoming contaminated. Elements of earthliness are wrapped up in the bosom of every snowflake that falls upon the earth. It has been calculated that a slight fall of snow carries to the surface of the county of London alone 343 tons of solids. Even on the high pinnacle of the Alps it is not pure. Professor Tyndale took a sample of snow from the top of a high mountain, and found bits of steel filings and coal dust. Therefore you see this is the cry of the Psalmist for a deep purity, for a deeper and richer experience. It is the request of one who has known the joy of being made white as snow. Such a longing is the proof that the first has taken place. In fact, this is the very purpose God has in view in covering us with the white robe. He counts us white in order to make us what He counts us to be. Indeed, in nature this is so. Snow first hides all the vileness and blackness, and then whilst doing so has a bleaching effect. How white the paving stones and flags seem after snow has

rested some time upon them. Will you not apprehend that for which also He apprehended you? Make David's prayer yours. Thank God, He can answer it.

#### BEND OR BREAK—WHICH?

"The voice of the Lord b1eaketh the cedars" (Psa. 29. 5.)

"A bruised reed shall He not break" (Isa. 42. 3),

"BEND us, O Lord!" was the prayer of Evan Roberts, frequently offered during the great Welsh Revival, when facing congregations gathered together in the chapels and churches of Wales. God graciously answered that prayer hundreds of times, for we know His mighty Presence was manifested, and multitudes were bent before the heavenly breeze. It would be well if that prayer were offered more frequently by us, for without that holy, awful Presence meetings are powerless and fruitless. It is His presence that produces conviction of sin. May God grant us more and more in our gatherings an overwhelming sense of His presence!

But even in that sanctuary where the heavenly gales are blowing, there are some who refuse to bend. And what then? They who refuse to bend in grace will be broken in judgment. Frequently we have heard the phrase: "If he won't bend, then he must be broken," by which is meant that if the gentler methods do not accomplish the desired purpose, harsher measures must be adopted. This is the teaching of our two texts. Those who bend like the bruised reeds will not be broken; those who refuse to bend, like the cedars, must be broken. Better, infinitely better, be a reed, shaken, bent, by the wind of God, than the proud cedar tree, erect and defiant, to be hurled down, without any possibility of recovery, by the fiery indignation of God.

I. He Breaks Not the Bruised Reed. How comforting this has been to countless thousands. The R.V. margin gives "dimly burning wick!" This is the condition of many. Instead of burning brightly, they are only smouldering and smudging, and in consequence more of a nuisance than a help. Such deserve to be extinguished. But our Blessed Lord does not possess an extinguisher. If He so bears with us, should we not bear with one another?

This is not only a word for the sickly Christian, but in the figure of the bruised reed we have a comforting word for the convicted sinner. For wounds and bruises are to be found in the service of sin. What bruises that traveller from Jerusalem to Jericho received when he fell among thieves. Remember, they who break the law of God are bruised in the act. But the fact is, we are all weak as bruised reeds. How frail is the bruised reed! Alas, the unsaved so often think themselves as strong as cedars when in reality they are as weak as bruised reeds. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." And why not break the, reed? Because the bruised reed bends submissively to Him in lowly penitence. He was broken in its stead.

Though He breaks not the bruised reed-

II. He Breaks the Cedars. In the 29th Psalm we have a vivid description of a thunderstorm. The pealing of heaven's artillery has often roused poetical imagination. The inspired poet here sees in thunder an emblem of the voice of God.

The cedars of Lebanon have ever been famous. Wood for the Temple was procured from thence, One who has visited the forest of Lebanon writes: "As we stand beneath the giant arms of those old patriarchs of a hundred generations, there comes a solemn hush upon the soul as if by enchantment. The girth of the largest is more than 41 feet, the height of the highest may be 100. Some of them are supposed to be quite 3500 years old. Thus, at this rate of increase, they must have been growing ever since the flood. But they are not all erect. Some are struck clown by lightning, broken by enormous loads of snow, or torn to fragments by tempest."

Note that word "Yea !" Even such mighty cedars as these of Lebanon find no escape. And why? They do not bend. There they stand, gripping the earth firmly, lifting their proud heads haughtily to the skies as if defying the living God. For this the cedar trees are not to blame. Not so men and women. Do you think it is a light thing to live a life of defiance to God? Listen to this parable. The reed advised the cedar to bow to the coming storm; but the cedar haughtily scorned the advice; so the mighty wind flouted it, broke it, blasted it, tore it up by the roots, and tossed it aside in its anger, whilst it passed over the weak bending reed unharmed. Remember there is the world of difference between being humbled and humiliated. They who humble themselves shall be exalted; but they who refuse to humble themselves shall most certainly be humiliated. "He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

#### THE TWO IMPORTANT LOOKS.

"Look unto Me, and be ye saved" (Isa. 45. 22). "Look to yourselves, that we lose not" (2 John 8).

A LADY journalist in America consulted an oculist with regard to a trouble in her eyes. After a careful examination the specialist said: "Your eyes are tired; you must rest them. Have you any wide views from your house?" "Oh, yes," she replied. "From the front porch I can see the noble peaks of the Blue Ridge, and from the rear windows I can look out upon the glorious Allegheny Foot Hills." "Very well," said he, "that is just what you need. When your eyes feel tired, look steadily at your mountains for ten minutes—twenty minutes would be better; the far away look will rest them." Just so. And there is a deep spiritual lesson here. For this is a world with weary, tired eyes. Oh, how weary is the world! But there is a cure. There is a glorious far away look that rests and refreshes, a look not merely to the hills, but away and beyond to the God of the hills. "Shall I lift up mine eyes to the hills? Whence should my help come? My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth" (see margin of Psalm 121. 12). This is the look that brings rest and refreshment to mind and heart when burdened by work or distracted with care. And this faraway look also brings comfort to sad and sorrowful souls. But the pity is that so few have learned its value and tasted of its joys. Friend, try the far-away look !

"Look unto Me, and be ye saved." This is a message direct from the Lord Himself. And important are its issues. Salvation is dependent upon it. The look that saves is a look backward—a look to the Cross. Such a look brings rest to the weary soul and to the troubled conscience. There is life for such a look, The look that saves is also a look

upward. Note the Psalmist's determination in Psalm 5. 3. Look and live was the first message he needed; live looking is the second. "Looking unto Jesus." The look that saves is also a look into. Scholars tell us that in the Greek the word translated "unto" means not only "at," but "into." Thus the verse could read, "looking into Jesus." Not only looking at His works, His miracles, His beautiful life, but looking right into Him and reach His heart. The look that saves is also a look forward.. "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Thus is readily seen how important is looking to the Lord. According to a famous preacher, in Isaiah 45. 22, we have the greatest possible blessing.--"salvation"--offered to the largest possible number—"all the ends of the earth"---on the simplest possible terms-"Look unto me "- on the highest possible security- "for I am God."

But there are some who object to the simplicity of these conditions, "How paltry and mean to make my salvation and happiness dependent upon a look," they say. But really, looking is not the vain and useless thing that it might appear to be'. As has well been said: "Almost all knowledge comes from looking. We look at the physical world, and are taught what nature has to teach us. We look at books, and we learn what printing has to teach us.

We look at men—their faces, their acts, their characters—and we discover what mankind has to teach us. Not to look is to shut ourselves off from almost all sources of information. Our eyes are more than organs of discernment; they are channels of reception. Our visions become our possessions."

How blessedly simple is all this. Why, looking is the simplest thing in the world, something even weak invalids and weak wailing bairns can do! How good of our God to make salvation dependent upon something we all can do. But possibly there may be some who are saying: "I cannot really do even this, for mine iniquities have taken hold of me, so that I am not able to look up" (Psa. 40. 12). The publican was like this, yet he cried to the Lord for His forgiveness, and he went down to his house justified.

"Look unto Me," "Look to yourselves." What is the meaning of these two apparently contradictory Scriptures? Just this: whilst the first is necessary for our salvation, the second is essential for the reception of a full reward, and is only another way of saying, "Beware of pickpockets." It is a solemn fact that many of God's dear children will not receive a reward. Saved souls, but lost lives. This is the teaching of 1.Cor. 3. 14, 15. Beware! Look to yourself. Don't let the enemy rob you of the fruits of your walk and service. A careful examination of 2 John 8 shows that what was in the mind of John was loss; though the reception of false teaching. How applicable this is to our own times, for error is to be met with on every hand. Be on your guard! But don't forget that for every look to yourself let there be ten looks to thy Lord. "Ten to one," let that be your motto.

#### THE SECRET OF A GREAT CHANGE.

"Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone" (Hosea 4. 17).  
"Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?  
I have heard Him, and observed Him"  
(Hosea 14. 8).

concerning the dire consequences of such conduct, whilst the second Scripture depicts a nation--the same stubborn and wilful people of Israel—throwing away these very selfsame idols. Naturally we are interested in tracing the reason for swift and sudden decisions, especially if they are those of a strong-willed and stubborn folk, and we are not left in ignorance of the secret. We might remark that the discovery of the secret of such a change is not merely interesting, it is a vital matter, affecting our own moral and spiritual condition, for herein is disclosed God's way of weaning us from the world, and from vice and sin and self.

First, we are introduced to a nation wedded to its idols. Those were sad, sad days in the history of God's chosen people. Prophet after prophet had been sent with messages of love to a backsliding people, but all to no purpose, for they persisted in their evil courses. And now comes the Divine verdict: "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone." To be left alone was just what they desired, yet no worse thing could possibly have happened to them. Sometimes when men and women of the world are pressed by earnest Christians to become concerned about their souls, and so seek the Lord in repentance and faith, they exclaim: "Why do you trouble me? Leave me alone." We are told that travellers in Arctic regions are sometimes so overcome with the cold that, sinking down exhausted upon the snow, they beg of their companions as a special favour, to be left to rest and sleep for a wee while. But that request is never granted. How false and cruel would be these fellow travellers if they did not shake the drowsy one, compelling him to keep on the move, for to be left alone means death. "Let us alone" (Luke 4. 34), was the sinner's ignorant cry of the Saviour. Nay, more than that, it was a cry inspired by the evil one. May God never grant that request of any reader of this page!

"Hugging idols—I make no pretence to godliness, but I am not doing that," is that what you say? Pray remember this, that what a man thinks most of—money, position, pleasure, appetite, applause—that is his god. Frankly now, answer this question: "What comes first in your life? Who, what, is your first thought in the morning, and your last thought at night?" Can you say:

I think of my blessed Redeemer, I think of Him all the day long."

Not one unsaved soul can answer in the affirmative. And, please remember, whatever comes first in your life is your god. Hugging sins and pleasures. Is that true of you? Perhaps, alas! some would sorrowfully confess that it is not so much they hugging their sins as their sins hugging them in a dreadful embrace. Oh! He loves you too much to leave you alone just yet. If in Hosea 4. 17 He says "Let him alone," in 11. 8, He exclaims, "How shall I give you up, Ephraim?"

The sequel is seen in our second Scripture, where we have a nation throwing away its idols. But how was, or rather, how will this be brought about? This stupendous change is the result of the expulsive power of a new affection, brought about by personal contact with the Lord, by hearing Him and observing Him. This is a prophecy that will be fulfilled by and by in the history of the Jews. But it may be fulfilled in every experience here and now. Wedded to idols and idols wedded to you, yet there is deliverance through Him. To know Him is life eternal, with all its accompanying blessing. "I have heard

Him"--why, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. "I have observed Him"—that is how affection springs.

It is reported that a great sculptor spent eight years in producing the face of the Lord Jesus, and at last wrought one in which the emotions of love and sorrow were so perfectly blended that beholders wept as they looked upon it. Subsequently being solicited to employ his great talent on a statue of Venus, he replied: "After gazing so long into the face of Christ, think you I can now turn my attention to a heathen goddess?" And he spurned the offer. Here is the secret of weanedness from idols:

"I have heard the voice of Jesus,  
Tell me not of aught beside;  
I have seen the face of Jesus.  
All my soul is satisfied. "

YE ARE COMPLETE, THEREFORE BECOME SO.

"Ye are complete in Him" (Col. 2. 10). "Labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand . . . complete" (Col. 4. 12) .

ANYONE could be excused if, after reading these two texts, they exclaimed: "Really now, which of these have I to believe?" Here in the first, the great Apostle assures the Colossian Christians that they are complete in Christ, and yet by the second text I see that their dear friend Epaphras, was agonising in prayer for them, in order that they might become complete. Now, which is right?" "Which have you to believe?" Why, both, to be sure, for they are equally correct. The one refers to our standing, whilst the other refers to our state. In other words, Paul says:- You are complete, therefore you must become so.

Of course, it goes without saying that this is not in accordance with the usual method of human reasoning; but then we must ever remind ourselves that God's thoughts are often different to ours. Who would dream of exhorting Christians to seek maturity, to become complete because they were complete? Reason says: "Become complete in order to be complete." God says: "Ye are complete, therefore strive to become so." Reason says: "I must become a saint by doing saintly things." God says: "You are a saint, therefore become one." (Note "To be" in Rom. 1. 7, are in italics, showing that they are not in the original; therefore it reads, "Called saints." See also 1 Cor. 1. 2.) . Well might it be said that man is constantly making a goal of what God views as a starting point. Such a blunder competitors in earthly races would never dream of making.

But let us illustrate our first Scripture. There are two shops in the same line of business in the same busy thoroughfare. Though both are owned by industrious tradesmen, having equal chances of success, how differently they have fared! One is well stocked with goods, which are shown to the best advantage by a shop-front and fittings of the latest and most expensive pattern; whilst the other is but a poor affair, with a scanty stock and a wretched old-fashioned shop-front. It is surely evident that whilst one finds business a pleasure and a delight, to the other it is but a dreary and a doleful task. Let us go to the

less fortunate tradesman and solicit an explanation. "Ah!" says he, that is easily given. The other man over the way began where I can only hope to end. His father is wealthy and gave him a splendid capital to begin his business career; such a sum of money I can only hope to have at the end of years and years of strenuous toil."

There are many in the great business of Christian living who can only hope to end where so many others begin. They begin to read the Bible and pray, try to live good lives, knock off this evil habit and that sin, and attend the services of the sanctuary, hoping at the end to gain God's favour and everlasting bliss. But their life is a miserable struggle, and all their efforts are doomed to utter failure. The true believer begins where these vainly hope to end. He begins with a splendid capital.. He commences his career by being counted righteous before God, by possessing, through Christ, the favour and wealth of God. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Brother, you, too, can begin the business of Christian living by a glorious capital. "Of His fulness have we all received" can become your testimony.

"Ye are complete in Him." How emphatic this is "Ye are," not "Ye shall be." And how inclusive, too—"Ye." The weakest saint is included in that "Ye." Observe, "in Him," not "in myself." Thus it is not a matter of attainment, but of faith. What comfort there is in beginning housekeeping with a house completely furnished; not to do so often means years of scraping and weary struggle. But there is this difference: a completely furnished house depends upon £ s.d., whereas a completely furnished soul is dependent upon faith. How glorious this is!

"That ye may stand complete." We usually confine our prayers to the unsaved; not so the early Christians, They prayed earnestly that the Lord's people might live holily and unblameably, for they recognised that the greatest hindrance to the evangelization of the world is the worldly lives of Christians. Our second text preaches that, although counted complete, I am experimentally incomplete. But the Lord desires that I should make true in myself what is already true for me in Christ, or as it has been put, to turn a fact of doctrine into a fact of experience and attainment. (Note Lev. 14. 7, 8. Though pronounced clean, the leper had a work to accomplish in Order to be clean.) Then pray remember that the Lord counts the trusting soul complete in order to make it so. Oh! He desires to make me what He has already counted me to be! And He will place no obstacle in his way.

THE ARM OF THE LORD IS TOWARD,  
OR UNDER YOU—WHICH?

"He saith, all day long I have stretched forth My hands" (Rom. 10. 21) .

"Underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33. 27).

THE eternal God is thy refuge." The word translated "refuge" is a very strong one, and is not often met with in the Bible. It means infinitely more than a temporary place of safety, a mere shelter. It is, as the R.V. points out, a dwelling place, a habitation, a home. You are caught in a sudden storm whilst in a public park, and with all speed you make for the shelter provided by the authorities—it is a refuge, and very acceptable—but it is not

home. You are attempting to cross one of the main thoroughfares in a busy city, and finding yourself in danger fly to the refuge in the centre of the road. That little oasis in the midst of surging traffic is very welcome—but it is not home. Now, God in Christ is all this to the trusting soul—and very much more—for He is a home. After all, what is it that makes home? Is it not the loving arms of father and mother? Do you feel quite at home with God? If you feel uneasy at the thought of God's presence, if there is a lack of homeliness in God for you, let Him throw His arms around and underneath you, and He will chase every fear away.

What a contrast is this expression to that quoted by Paul in Rom. 10. 21: "All days long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Certainly if the everlasting arms are not beneath you, they must be stretched forth in earnest pleading. The luxury of resting in the everlasting arms is known only by those who have responded to His loving invitation. But note, "all day long." What an example of patience and intense earnestness! God is depicted as stretching forth His hand for an entire day. How trying is the holding forth of the hands only for a little while. Here He waits long and patiently. How much longer will you keep Him in that uncomfortable attitude ?

The arm of God is a symbol of power, therefore there is a thought of might in this figure. But there is also a thought of affection and love in the metaphor. Isaiah in his prophecy has much to say about the arm of the Lord, but Moses is concerned about the arms—not might only, but also love. The Bride in Solomon's Song could say: "His left arm is under my heart, His right hand doth embrace me." Thank G2d! Though the Almighty's right hand is stretched out to defend us from all perils and dangers. His left hand binds us to His great heart of love.

But there is another important thought. He holds out His arms not only to rescue us from danger, but to satisfy His great heart of love. Men and women hunger for the love of little children, and never seem so happy as when they are folding the little ones to their bosoms. It is thus the hunger of their hearts is met. And is this not so with our God ? Oh, if not for your own sake, yet for God's sake come to 1-urn. And He will rest in His love.

#### BEHIND THY BACK.

"Thou hast cast Me behind Thy back" (1 Kings 14. 9).

"Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back" (Isaiah 38. 17).

WHAT an amazing contrast! In the first God is speaking to a King, in the second a king, is speaking to God. In the former a sinner is seen casting God behind his back, whilst in the latter God is seen casting, not the sinner, but the sinner's sin behind His back. Again we remark, what an amazing contrast! How magnanimous of the Lord to deal so mercifully with the repentant soul! But then, it is just like Him.

Some Scripture texts need a great deal of explanation, but these two are as clear as noonday, and require no interpretation. Yet, though they may be read clearly afar off, we may see additional beauty in them by closer inspection. Note first:

I. The Sinner Casting God Behind his Back. Our first Scripture formed part of a message addressed by God to Jeroboam, first king of the ten tribes. There are reasons for believing that, before his elevation to the throne, he was a humble follower of Jehovah, for when his eldest son was born he gave him the name of Abijah, which means, "Jehovah is my father," or "Jehovah is my desire." However, no sooner did he become king than he made the blunder of his life—erected golden calves for his subjects to worship. Merely worldly policy dictated such a step. He took counsel with himself and not with the Lord (see 1 Kings 12. 26) . Now his sin seems more heinous when we note that he knew that it was for this very sin God had permitted the revolt (see I Kings 11. 33). Warnings were sent to him, but to no purpose, and now God permits his eldest son to be smitten with an incurable malady. Anxious about his beloved son, the king bethought himself of the despised and neglected prophet of God; hut, not willing to face him himself, like a coward, sent his wife, bidding her to disguise herself, and take only the present of an almost destitute person. But her efforts to disguise herself were all to no purpose, and the Lord gave the prophet this stern message to send to the king by his wife.

Now could there be a more serious and damning charge? 'fo cast behind the back is any act expressive of utter disregard and contempt . It signifies that God had been treated as of no value, and of no consequence, as worthless and useless.

But let us come a little closer. Cannot God lay such a charge at the door of every one of us? "Truthfully can He say to thee, dear reader, "Thou cast Me behind thy back." Do you deny it? tell, now, can you Say, "I have set the Lord always before me?" That is to say, you have always made Him your model and ideal, have ever kept Him in mind, recognising His presence with you? If you cannot—and who dare say that he has—if He is not before you He must be behind you! And what about God's law? In the prayer of penitence offered in Neh. 9. 26, Israel confessed that their fathers had "cast Thy law behind their backs." Have you always loved and kept His laws? The fact is, we were born with our backs to God. And whilst some deliberately and wilfully cast Him behind their backs, the vast majority do it unthinkingly and carelessly, yet nevertheless it is done just as certainly.

What a relief it is to turn to our second Scripture.

II. God Casting the Sinner's Sin Behind His Back. This is part of good King Hezekiah's outburst of praise to God on his recovery from a most serious illness. He remembered, and placed on record, that, though in common with his fellows, he had cast God behind his back, yet, on confessing his sin, and seeking mercy, God had cast his sin behind His back. And there are thousands to-day who can, and do, give the same glad and joyous testimony. This is not according to our deserts. If we received our due, He would treat us as we have treated Him. And does He act thus because He thinks lightly of sin ? For answer to that question go to Calvary. Jesus, our Lord, suffered in our stead. It is because God cast His beloved Son behind His back that He can now cast the repentant sinner's sin behind His back.

"My sin is ever before me," moaned another king in heartbroken sorrow. Ah! that is it;

when the sinner sets his sins before his own face and confesses them to the Lord, then it is that the merciful Lord sets them behind His back. Alleluia!

#### SPIRITUAL UNCONSCIOUSNESS.

"And he wist not that the lord was departed from him" (Judges. 16. 20).

"Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone" (Exod. 34. 29).

It seems almost sacrilege to place Samson and Moses side by side, seeing the former was the slave of passion whereas the latter was the slave of God, yet we do so for a specific purpose, viz., to place the two in contrast, and that we might emulate Moses.

There is nothing new or strange in unconscious acts. There are many things in life which we do quite unconsciously, through sheer force of habit. For instance, the accomplished pianist or organist does not think about the notes he has to strike. It is easy to see what a merciful provision this is which saves our feeble consciousness from being burdened with the heavy daily load. Had we to think how we were to manage every step we take, how we were to masticate our food, how to act or speak, or any other action which we now automatically perform, the mind would be crowded to distraction with these competing elements, reason would snap under the intolerable strain, and the world would be turned into a raving Bedlam.

It is when the unconsciousness has to do with the spiritual realm we need to be on our guard.

There are two kinds of unconsciousness. Samson was unconscious of spiritual loss, whereas Moses was unconscious of spiritual gain. The first was tragic; the second was blessed; the first was fatal to service; the latter was one important bit of service, and increased his usefulness.

I. Unconscious Spiritual Decline. One cannot help pitying Samson, fool though he was. "He wist not that the Lord was departed from him," but he ought to have known that his evil living would lead to this loss. Reading the life of Samson, we have the same feeling of grief as when reading the life of Burns, the Scottish poet—it is the what might have been which oppresses us. There were great possibilities for Samson, yet they were never fully realised. It is a very solemn and awful thing to hinder God's purposes for us.

God did not forsake him immediately. He bore long with him—at least a score of years did He suffer him, giving deliverance upon deliverance.

The phrase "departed from him" had only reference to service, not to salvation. Though he had played fast and loose with sin, he was still; in the Heavenly family. "Departed" meant powerlessness in service for God.

It is an awful thing to know that the Lord may depart from us, so far as power in service is concerned, and yet we be unconscious of it. It means that we can get so hardened by the deceitfulness of sin that we are not as sensitive as formerly.

II. Unconscious Spiritual Gain. For forty days and forty nights Moses had been alone with God. Beholding the glory of the Lord, he had been changed into the same image. And if we were more often alone with the Lord our countenances too would be oftener radiant.

Unconsciousness is the invariable sign of true holiness.

#### ON OR UNDER--WHICH?

"I bare you on eagles' wings" (Exod. 19. 4).  
Gathered you under My wings (Matt. 23. 37).

WHAT a contrast have we here. We certainly have in the first a noble and majestic figure of speech. All the might of God bearing Israel up. What a wonderful relationship is here shown between God and His redeemed people. That was what God was to His people in grace under the Old Covenant.

But which is the safer of the two—"on " or "under" ? In the New Testament, under the New Covenant, God bides us under His wings. Even the Psalmist knew of this, as we see in Psalm 91: "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust." No position so near to the heart of God, and no position so warm and comfortable, as well as safe.

#### DRAWN OR DRIVEN—WHICH?

"Draw me, we will run after Thee" (Song of Solomon 1 . 4) .  
"So He drove out the man" (Gen. 3.24).

ONE is always interested in the utterances of Spirit-filled and much-used men of God. Early in the Welsh Revival, Evan Roberts said: "There is no driving in anything which pertains to God; it is Satan that drives; God persuades, draws." And then, lifting up his voice, cried: "Draw us, Lord; draw us by thy Holy Spirit."

Meditating much on this statement, and searching the Word, we find that God does both, as above Scriptures show. But with this difference—references to His drawing are usually in connection with salvation, whereas His driving is usually in connection with judgment. So there is placed before us the choice: Whether we shall be amongst the drawn ones or the driven! God loves to draw, but hates to drive. Blessed are they who are drawn; woe to those who are driven.

#### I. The Sinner Drawn.

##### 1. A PERSONAL PLEA.

a. It is a personal plea—"Draw me."

b. This is the language of an awakened soul, conscious of being away from God.

2. A CONFESSION OF WEAKNESS. This is the language of conscious weakness Away from God, and unable to run in the way of His commandments. If He will only draw, then "we will run."

3. LANGUAGE OF HELPLESSNESS. This is the language of one who longs to follow the Lord Jesus, but is conscious of the alluring and awful fascination of sin.

4. CONFESSION PROMPTED BY A SENSE OF UNWORTHINESS. The language of one who feels he deserves to be driven rather than drawn.

5. REQUEST GRANTED "The King hath brought me." God loves to draw. This is seen in nature. The tides are caused by the drawing power of the moon. Evaporation, and in consequence the fertilizing showers, is the result of the drawing power of the sun. The growth and position of plants, trees, and flowers, depend upon the alluring and attracting power of the sun. But what about the world of men and women? Ali, no one offers this prayer in vain.

6. How DOES HE DRAW.

a. The Ancients declared that the god Jupiter had a chain of gold which he could at any time let down from Heaven, and by it draw the earth and all its inhabitants to himself. Only a fable, yet there is a suggestion in it. It is true that our God, the only true God, has a golden chain, which in the "fulness of time" He let down from Heaven to earth to draw His erring creatures to Himself and the Golden Chain is the Lord Jesus Christ, for is it not written: "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be," and did He not Himself say: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me?" (John 12. 32) . God draws through the Atoning Death of His Beloved Son.

b. He draws also by His sympathy and love. As we read the sacred records we discover His loving sympathy with all.

7. THE RESULT. In our text there are three blessed results of His drawing.

a. Run after the Lord. Only the drawn ones can follow after the Lord in the way of loving obedience. Observe, RUN, not crawl. And note the power of influence—"We," not merely the suppliant; so others are influenced.

There is said to be a hill in Ayrshire up which cyclists are able to free-wheel, but have to pedal hard to get down. There is a vein of metallic ore in the hill which sets up a magnetic current up the hill. We do know that the Christian runs up the Hill Difficulty because drawn by the Lord.

b. Communion. "The King hath brought me up unto His chambers."

c. Joy and Delight. "We will be glad and rejoice in Thee."

II. The Sinner Driven.

1. AFTER THE SAD FALL, sinful man driven out of the garden (Gen. 3. 24), yet not driven out in judgment until the promise was given of a Saviour, and provision made for a covering.

2. AFTER HIS ATROCIOUS DEED, "Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear, behold Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from Thy face shall I be hid" (Gen. 4. 13 and 14).  
These are awful words.

WARNING. If not drawn to God by the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atoning Death, we shall, by and by, be driven to the Great White Throne .

### THE TWOFOLD PEACE.

"Peace with God " (Rom. 5.1). `Peace of God" (Phil. 4.7).

Introduction.

When the great Atlantic Cable was laid, the first message flashed across it was one by Queen Victoria to the President of America: "Peace- on earth , good-will toward men." This is the first great need of mankind. The time is coming when peace will be universal on the earth. In the meantime peace can become the individual possession of each one. Indeed, this is really essential to universal peace.

What a vast difference there is in the two texts at the head of this meditation. "With God" and "of God" refer to a twofold peace vital to human happiness. We may have the first without the second, though we can never have the second without the first . The first peace is dependent on faith; the second is dependent on prayer. The first is a peace outside of me; the second is a peace within me. If the first describes a state between God and myself, the second describes a condition within my being.

"Peace with God "--A Peace Outside of Myself. Peace is difficult to define. It may be understood as harmony, unity, concord. Romans 5. 1, implies a previous state of enmity, of warfare between.

"We have peace," not we make peace. "Peace with God" can never be ours without personal surrender to God on our part, yet it is the fruit of the personal surrender of the sinner's Saviour, and not of the sinner. Formerly sinners were asked if they had made their peace with God. Though the questioner meant well, it was wrong. A better phrase is : Have you found peace .

In Ephesians 2, three facts concerning peace are given.

1. HE MADE PEACE (verse 15) . How did He make it? Not by declaring it--that He did later. He made it by shedding His Blood (see Col. 1.20). "Peace with honour," Lord Beaconsfield's familiar phrase, describes the peace Christ made. All the attributes of God go to making up the Atonement, Thus this peace honours the Law of God, Every attribute

of God is in perfect accord . By His death He satisfied all His righteous requirements and liberated His mercy and love.

2. HE PREACHED PEACE (verse 17). \hen did our Lord first proclaim peace? We have no record that He ever preached peace before His atoning death. The first time He preached peace is recorded in John 20. 19 to 31. If an ambassador were to go to a rebellious people carrying tidings of peace, after proclaiming it he would produce his authority. Jesus stands in the midst saying, "Peace," and when He had said so, He showed them His hands and His side--His authority, for His hands and side bore the marks of His passion.

3. HE IS OUR PEACE. (verse 14). The peace which Christ preached has its security in the person of Christ He is the security and guarantee of peace with God.

#### SIX BRIEF WATCHWORDS.

I TIM.6.11 to 19.

- I. "Flee" (verse 11) . An honourable Flight.
- II. "Follow" (verse 11) . A Glorious Pursuit.
- III. "Fight" (verse 12) . A Perpetual Conflict.
- IV. "Lay Hold" (verses 12 and 19) . A Treasure to Grasp.
- V. "Keep" (verses 13 to 16, and 20). A Treasure to Guard.
- VI. "Charge" (verses 17 to 19). A Warning to Give.

Some "Fear Nots " of the Bible  
A PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE.

BIBLE "FEAR NOTS," No. 1,

"For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying  
unto thee, Fear not: I will help thee" (Isa. 41. 13).

A TENDER-HEARTED surgeon was walking through the large ward of a big hospital when he saw a little one, with bandaged eyes, in distress and waving her hand about. He went up to her and grasped that outstretched hand. Instantly there was a change---the little one was comforted and became restful and contented. And that child, may be, is a picture of some reader of this chapter---in a spiritual darkness that may be felt, with a sense of loneliness and desolation, and yearning, oh, so much, for the touch of a vanished hand, and full of fear and dread concerning the future. Just hold out your hand to the dear Lord,  
and he will welcome and grasp it , "saying unto thee, Fear not-, I will help thee."

"Noa then, lad, iha mun howd on I"

In a small village near Manchester, where I was conducting some evangelistic services, a quarryman lay dying. He was an Atheist . A farmer, the head of the local body of Free-thinkers, hearing of his friend's serious condition, and fearful lest at the approach of death he would send for the minister and turn religious, had hastened to his side and urged him to die game. But the dying man replied, "It's a' reet axin. me to howd on, but, mon, aw've nowt ta howd on tee!" Once again Atheism was weighed in the balance of human need and experience and found wanting. When you come to death valley will you have " nowt ta howd on tee?" Would you not rather be amongst the redeemed ones who, having washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb, have something solid and enduring to hold on to? Yes, better still, have Someone holding on to them, for it is written: "I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee."

An engine-driver of the old L. B. & S. C. R. lay in the Mildmay Hospital at Bethnal Green, London, awaiting an operation for appendicitis. Though a Christian man, as he thought of the ordeal awaiting him, he naturally shrank in fear and was troubled in soul. This, of course, we can quite understand. He was made ready for the operation, and, as he was about to be carried into the operating theatre, the nurse, observing his timidity and fear, said, "When you are put on the operating table, look at the wall and you will find there a message from God for you." He did so, and he found painted on the wall, "I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee." "Praise God," said he to me afterwards, "that was just the word I wanted, and I was rested and comforted."

The "Fear Nots" of the Bible are many and varied, and form a wonderful study.

Observe, before He speaks He grasps. He first grasps that outstretched hand, and then speaks the assuring word. He does not only sit upon His throne in the heavens dictating and forwarding messages of comfort to our souls, but He comes at the call of dire need right to us and grants direct and personal contact. "No distant God have we, Who loves afar to be! Made flesh for me, He cannot rest until He rests in me."

And what does His grasp mean? Seven mercies and blessings:

1. Salvation. "He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters" (Psalm 18. 16). What a graphic picture we have here of man's utter helplessness. Sinking amidst the swirling waters, battered and bruised by the buffeting waves, with no firm standing ground, is there no help? Yes, if there comes that petrine cry, "Lord, save me!" The help comes from without and from above. He sent from ABOVE, He took me, He drew me out." "And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him," and he was saved from death.

2. Security. "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.' (John 10. 28) . What a glorious security is ours when He grasps the hand.

3. Friendship. As a pledge of love, the hand is held in a vice-like grip: "I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand." Becoming my Saviour, I am in a position to learn and know Him as Friend.
4. Confidence. The little one is full of fear and trembling, and you say, "Give me your hand," and that means good-bye to fear. So is it between the Lord and the soul. An abiding confidence is ours as a result of His hold of our hands.
5. Assistance. The hand is offered to assist: "I will help thee."
6. Strength. "The arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob" (Gen. 49. 24). With His firm grasp there comes the impartation of strength Divine.
7. Submission. This is to be willing to be put anywhere, and to be used anyhow. That is not so difficult as it sounds. What matters where we go and what we have to do if only His hand leadeth!

PROMISED HELP.  
BIBLE 'FEAR NOTS," No. 2.

"Be strong, fear not : behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; He will come and save you " (Isaiah 35. 4) .

SURELY this is one of the strangest "Fear nots" of the Bible! We have to strengthen the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees, and establish the faint-hearted by the declaration of His sure and imminent coming to wreak vengeance! And this thought is by no means confined to the Old Testament Scriptures, for it is to be found in the New Testament: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God., and that obey not the Gospel o our Lord Jesus Christ."

Bible "Fear Note" 95

I. For the Oppressed . It is a message to the downtrodden and oppressed, to those writhing under cruel wrong, smarting from oppression, indignant through some gross injustice. Brooding over the wrongs they suffer people are tempted to take vengeance into their own hands, and, moved by hasty and unrighteous impulses, make mistakes over which they will long mourn. "Avenge riot thyself," is the Divine command. "Vengeance is Mine: I will repay, saith the Lord." Justice will be meted out some day to those oppressors by the God of Righteousness, hence be patient, and fret not thyself because of evildoers. Let not the wrongs you have suffered sour you. There comes to mind a tragic instance and illustration of this. A young woman who should have benefited largely under her father's will, was cruelly defrauded of most of her money by a solicitor who had to do with the estate, and from a position of affluence she sank into a state of extreme poverty. She so brooded over the cruel wrong she had suffered, that her whole life was ruined thereby. She cherished hard thoughts of God, questioning His justice, cultivated a spirit of suspicion toward all mankind, and allowed herself to be so overwhelmed by

bitterness that she became a bugbear to all her fellows, and this was so pronounced as old age crept on, that she was avoided by all. Remember, persecuted, defrauded, or oppressed one, that the eyes of God are upon you; He knows all. He will now bind up your broken heart, soothe your bruised and troubled spirit, granting ample compensations even in this life, and will most certainly, sooner or later, mete out justice to the oppressors, eye for eye, tooth for a tooth.

II. For the Sympathetic. This is also a message to those who, though not smarting under wrong done to themselves, are appalled at the sight of cruel oppression and wrong inflicted on others. There are many tenderly sympathetic souls who suffer more from the wrongs inflicted on others than if they personally were the aggrieved ones. Noting how these oppressors seem to flourish, and how slow the wheels of God grind, they are liable to become "hasty of heart" (A.V. margin for "fearful"), rush to rash conclusions, even going to the length of denying either the existence or the power of God. A sympathetic naturalist so brooded over the present conditions of the world—the work of nature, red in tooth and claw, and the world of men at strife and enmity one with another—that he was so moved with indignation as to exclaim that, if he had been the Creator of the world, the patent facts would break his heart. He spoke truer than he thought, for the Creator of the world died of a broken heart on account of the sin of the world. No, no, we must not lose heart or patience. God still observes, and will most certainly rectify wrong, and mete out punishment to the oppressors sooner or later. Therefore "Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance."

III. For the Jew, This is a message particularly for the Jew. Many members of this people of the "wandering foot" have so brooded over the wrongs Israel has suffered now for two millenniums, that they have thrown overboard their faith, and have become rank atheists. Certainly no nation has suffered such cruel oppression and wrong. But if we read prophecy aright, Israel has yet a far more awful ordeal to pass through, "the time of Jacob's trouble." But the Lord is neither forgetful nor unobservant of His people. He is quietly noting everything. Even now, blessed are those who bless, Israel, and cursed are they who curse. But "behold your God will come." And His coming will mean salvation for Israel, vengeance on the enemies of Israel, and recompense for the friends of Israel.

#### DIVINE ASSURANCE.

#### BIBLE "FEAR NOTS," No. 3.

"Fear not, I have called thee by thy name" (Isaiah 43. 1).

IN a great prison an amazing scene took place. By the intervention and intercession of a man of influence, a free pardon was secured for a riotous criminal who had spent a long time in that gaol. The Governor of the prison intimated to the prisoners assembled that he held in his hand a free pardon for one of them, and after a few remarks, called out the name of the fortunate individual. But the man moved not; he could not believe the pardon was for him, but for another who may be bearing the same name; and it was only with the utmost difficulty that he could be persuaded that it was really for him. Those who witnessed the occurrence said it was an unforgettable and amazing scene.

True is it that the Lord is Redeemer. But is it for me ? Can I have a share in that redemption? It may be for others; but, oh, has it anything to do with me? Surely this message settles that difficulty: "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." He called me! And He came to assure me that it is a call for and to me. He calls me by my name.

The more one ponders over this "Fear not," the more pregnant it seems with meaning:

1. He Lives. "I have called thee." It surely declares that He lives. He died. That death was redemption's price. But death did not permanently hush that voice. He still speaks; therefore, He still lives.

2. He is Near Me. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart." It surely declares that He is near. He calls—not shrieks or shouts. "He shall not strive (lit., squabble) nor cry (scream)" (Matt. 12. 19). He is quite near, and therefore gently and lovingly calls.

3. He Remembers Me. It surely declares that I am not forgotten: "I have called thee." "How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord," cried the Psalmist. Ah, He never forgets. And I'm not lost in the crowd either. He knows my name.

4. He Longs for Me. It surely declares that He asks for my friendship. To call me by my name speaks volumes. We never call strangers or casual acquaintances by their names; that is the sole prerogative of friendship. Being my Saviour, He desires to become my friend and adviser. Connect verse 1 with verse 7: "I have called thee by thy name," "Even every one that is called by My name." He calls me by my name in order that He might put His Name upon me.

A middle-aged woman was so wrought on by the Spirit of God at a Lancashire cottage meeting I once conducted, that she interrupted the service by kneeling down, and crying for mercy. She sought the Lord earnestly and perseveringly. But was redemption for her? That was the trouble. It seemed too good to be true. And so she spent several days strangely incredulous. Calling one day, she inquired if there was such a text in the Bible as "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee," as it had flashed into her mind that morning whilst she had been troubling over the matter of her soul's salvation, and she could not remember having seen it before. I was glad to point her to Isaiah 43. 1, assuring her it was without doubt the Lord's own message to meet her present need. This she recognised, and immediately began to bless and praise the Lord, and lived in full assurance of faith the rest of her days.

#### THE LAME PRINCE.

#### BIBLE "FEAR NOTS, No. 4.

" And David said unto him, Fear not, for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake" (2 Sam. 9. 7).

How welcome this royal "Fear not" must have been to the trembling and fearful prince, Mephibosheth! How unexpected it was! What a surprise it was to him, being altogether

different to what he really expected.

The King's "Fear not" would fall on his ears as a peal of silvery bells. But who was this Prince Mephibosheth? He was Jonathan's son, the last survivor of the royal house of Saul. When news of the death of King Saul and his sons on the fatal battlefield of Gilboa reached the royal palace, the nurse, snatching up in her arms this infant son of Jonathan, fled with him to Lo-debar. In the hurry she let him fall, when his feet were permanently injured. Sixteen years had passed when, upon David inquiring, "Is there any that is left of the house of Saul that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" and hearing of the survival of this lame prince, sent and had him brought into his royal presence. Tremblingly must Mephibosheth have made that journey, arid, at last, ushered into the king's presence, must have expected his death. When nothing but grace was meted out to him.

It is a lovely picture of salvation. Convicted of sin, and aware of your lost and ruined condition, do you feel you dare not entertain any hope of securing His grace and favour? Then listen and take to heart this story.

I. He was the King's Enemy, owing to his relation to Saul, though, thank God, the king was not an enemy of the poor trembling prince. We are by nature at enmity with God, though God is not at enmity with us, and is ever beseeching us to be reconciled to Him.

II. He was Lame Through a Fall. And so is it with us. What moral and spiritual weakness and sickness and infirmities are ours by the Fall.

III. He was in a Far Country, away from the king. Far, far away from Jerusalem, the place of blessing, of peace and worship, at Lo-debar, "the place of no bread." We, too, are by nature in the far country, away, far away, from God.

IV. He was Sought Out by the King. No, it was not a matter of Mephibosheth seeking the king, but the king seeking him. Wherein do you think our Christian faith differs from all other faiths that have ever been or are? In this, and this alone, all other faiths represent man, in the first instance, seeking God (which is not true, for man, left to himself, does not want God), but the Christian faith represents God as seeking man, which alone is true to fact. Man is indifferent to God; but God is not indifferent to him.

V. He was Received in his Deformity, just as he was, without any attempt to improve himself. Ah, that we must remember:

"Just as I am without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee:

O Lamb of God, I come. "

VI. He was Received for Another's Sake, for the sake of Jonathan. And we are received for Another's sake, for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Accepted in the Beloved."

VII. He Learned to Estimate Himself Aright, but only after he came to David When

Mephibosheth said, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?" he may have simply indulged in an Eastern's habit of self-depreciation in the presence of his superior. Yet it may have been a genuine and sincere expression of his deepest feelings. But, pray note, he only expressed this view after he came to David. It is only after we come to the Lord Jesus that we take low and truer views of ourselves, and get to see sin in the light of Heaven.

VIII. He Got in David More than he had Lost. What he had lost lie regained, plus David's friendship and fellowship. We gain more in Christ than we lost in Adam.

IX. He Dwelt with the King in the royal palace, and upon royal fare: "For he did eat continually at the king's table." Oh, what blessed news! And we, too, may leave the pit and the dunghill and dwell in the holiest of all by the Blood of Jesus. Poor conscience-stricken sinner, fearful of just and deserved judgment, listen to our blessed Lord's "Fear not, for I will surely show thee kindness for Jesus' sake." Dare, therefore, to entertain hope of finding mercy, and cling to the Rock of Ages.

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE FEARFUL.  
BIBLE FEAR NOTS , " No. 5

"But now thus saith the Lord that created thee,  
Fear not, for I have redeemed thee" (Isaiah 43. 1).

Strange fears possess the souls of many Even some great ones of the earth have not been free from them. Dr. Johnson, with all his philosophy, was very careful not to enter a room with his left foot foremost. If by any chance he did so, he would immediately step back and re-enter with his right foot foremost. He was terribly afraid of death, too, and would not suffer it to be mentioned in his presence. Julius Caesar, to whom the shouts of thousands of the enemy were but sweet music, was mortally afraid of the sound of thunder, and always wanted to get underground to escape the dreadful noise. Marshal Saxe, who loved to look upon the ranks of opposing armies, fled and screamed in terror at the sight of a cat. Peter the Great could scarcely be persuaded to cross a bridge, and whenever he placed his foot on one he would cry out with fear. The number thirteen is considered by some an unlucky number, and the breaking of crockery, but particularly glassware, is a harbinger of misfortune. Some fishermen on their way to their boats return home and will not sail that day should they meet either a woman or a cat. These are superstitious fears, with no foundation in fact, and sensible folk, but especially Christian people, ought to get rid of them. The Lord says to such: "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, Fear not." Suffer not such fears any longer to enthrall you.

Other fears possess the mind at times. Strange fears of impending disaster, or coming sorrow, of threatening calamity; fears sometimes that remain inarticulate, but which weigh like a load of lead upon the spirit. These sometimes spring from an overwrought nervous system, from a deranged physical constitution, from a diseased or weakened body. One evangelist, well known to the writer, had periodical fits of depression and despair, when strange fears-took a grip of him, and when he thought the Lord was angry and displeased and had turned His face from him. But his friends knew very well that he

was then troubled with his liver, and when he had emerged from a bad bilious attack, all was well—the Lord's smile had again been gained, and the Lord again presented Himself. But, as a matter of fact, the Lord had been with him all the time; only his deranged physical system had called up phantoms of fear and despair. The Lord loves to speak to such, saying, "Fear not." And He will come and quieten and soothe the nerves and give rest and quietness. A friend who occasionally suffers from a restless and fearful spirit, gained great comfort and help from the words: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures," and trusted the Lord to exercise the sweet compulsions of His grace, making him restful and quiet, "He maketh me."

But there is another fear that is the common possession of man, a fear that springs from superstition or a fear of God and of the future. We are going to say that this fear is natural to man, but we would check ourselves and say that it is unnatural--this fear was born when sin came into the world, and death by sin "I was afraid .. and I hid myself," confessed the first man Adam, to a Holy God, after he had sinned Ah, this fear is not groundless, but rests upon a fact; for as sinners we have every reason for fear. But to be redeemed means three things in the Sacred Records. In Exodus 13 13 it means:

I. Deliverance from Death. This is a solemn thought indeed. But the Divine One exclaims: "Fear not, oh sinner, for I have paid the price of thy redemption from certain and awful eternal death." He tasted death that we might drink the cup of salvation. In Exodus 6. 6 redemption is spoken of in relation to

II. Deliverance from Bondage, the awful Egyptian bondage. Israel were not only to be saved from death by the destroying angel because of the sprinkling of blood on the lintels and doorposts, but taken right out of galling bondage. Many, alas, who know something of the value of the sprinkled Blood, are yet in bondage to the world. But He assures such, "Fear not, oh sin-bound believer, I will snap thy chains, and lead you into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." In the Book of Ruth redemption is spoken of as

III. Deliverance from Penury. Ruth by marriage was related to Boaz, and he had to do the kinsman's part, and that meant buying back the inheritance and- marrying the widow. Redemption meant for Ruth and Naomi good-bye to poverty. And our Heavenly Kinsman says, "Fear not, oh bankrupt soul, I have redeemed thee; I will unite Myself with thee, and thou shalt share My wealth.

#### IN TIMES OF DARKNESS.

#### BIBLE "FEAR NOTS," No 6.

"The Lord hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness" (2 Chron. 6. 1) .

"Lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him (Abraham) , and He (the Lord) said unto Abraham." (Gen. 15. 12 and 15). "Fear thou not, for I am with thee" (Isaiah 41. 10)

WALKING through the conservatory of a friend one day, my attention was drawn to a small plant completely covered by a flower-pot. "Do you know why I have put this slip in

darkness?" he inquired. "It is because I want it to strike a deeper root." Evidently darkness was necessary, however unpleasant, for the striking of a deeper root.

How puzzled young Christians are with experiences they never anticipated. When they first sought the Lord, and received from Him pardon, justification and life, what joy fell to their lot. "O happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away," they sang and shouted exultingly. Their sun shone with great intensity, and the Lord was near. But sometimes the joy departs, their sun goes down, the face of the Lord is hidden, and darkness is their lot. Why the darkness? Sometimes sin is the cause—and quick confession will restore the gladness; sometimes a weak and ailing body is the cause of such soul-travail—when rest, suitable food, or medical attention will cause the sunshine to break forth once again; often, yes, very often, none of these reasons explain, but this—the darkness was thought necessary by the Divine Husbandman for the young convert to strike a deeper root, and get a firmer hold of God. But whatever the cause, we beseech of you to cling to the fact that "the Lord hath said that He would dwell in the thick darkness." He is with you in the darkness saying, "Fear not, for I am with thee."

A lady was endeavouring to assist a young Christian in a similar experience many years ago, when they met Sir Arthur Blackwood, who gave a message that was just the Lord's own word. "I remember meeting him (Sir Arthur Blackwood) one day, when C. T., who was with me, and was then a young Christian, was in low spirits, from which I could not raise her. As we went round the railings of the Parish Church we suddenly came face to face with him; and seeing our downcast faces, he said to us, 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.'" (Isaiah 50. 10). It was just the word for them.

How bewildered newly consecrated souls are with experiences they never anticipated! After they had fully surrendered to their beloved Lord and Master, and laid themselves upon the altar of sacrifice, they expected, and indeed received through the incoming of the Holy Spirit, a changed heart, and consequent deliverance from all the power of the enemy, they were conscious of a profound inward peace, and a very lively sense of the presence of the Father. Joy was full, communion deepened and uninterrupted, and a new delight experienced in prayer and the study of the Sacred Scriptures. So far, everything had happened just as they were led to expect. But by and by a change took place—all deep emotional experiences ceased, and, while still conscious of an inward calm, the soul seems shrouded in darkness.

Some of the darkness of the dreary past can well be understood. Then it was either the outcome of repeated failures in the daily walk and conversation, and the consequent upbraidings of a self-condemning heart, or it may have been caused by a tired and jaded body. But not so in this case. Now, unconscious of anything done to grieve their Lord, in the possession of a conscience void of offence toward God and man, and a body in good health, the cry is raised in agonising tones: "Why this darkness?"

May not the solution to this difficult problem be found in the story recorded above? May not His purpose in the darkness be the striking of a deeper root, a firmer hold of Himself,

a deeper and grander knowledge of the Divine? Verily this is so. The darkness sometimes is but the Father's loving method of weaning His child away from everything else, to find in Him his or her all. He sees the subtle temptation to be taken up with mere emotional experiences, and not with the Lord Himself; to rest in the blessings of the deeper life, and not alone in the Blessor. And, as He can never be satisfied until our whole undivided attention has been gained, He has by darkness shut us in unto Himself, until we are able to say:

"Once it was a blessing, now it is the Lord; Once it was the feelings, now it is His Word; Once His gifts I wanted, now the Giver own; Once I sought for healing, now Himself alone.

But what must we do when passing through such dark experiences? What can we do but sink into the arms of Infinite love? Pray remember, He-has not forsaken thee, for "the Lord hath said that He would dwell in the thick darkness." Oh, never, when in the darkness, harbour a doubt of the Divine presence! This was the most fruitful source of Israel's murmurings, for it is written: "They tempted the Lord saying, Is the Lord amongst us or not?" (Exod. 17. 7) .

The Husbandman is never so near the vine as when he is Pruning it. A short while ago a journey was made by rail. In the same compartment were other two passengers, a mother and her little girl. The wee one was very busily engaged with some toys upon the seat. By and by a long dark tunnel was entered, and one wondered that no cry of fear had escaped from the lips of the frightened child. Emerging into the light of day, the mystery was solved: the child had forsaken her toys and was clinging with her little arms around her mother's neck. Canst thou not do likewise? Rejoice in that He has counted thee worthy of dwelling with Him in the darkness, thank Him that though "a horror of great darkness" has fallen upon you, He speaks a comforting word, and in so doing thou shalt have "songs in the night."

#### THE PROMISED PRESENCE

BIBLE "FEAR Nots," No. 7.

"My Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not"  
(Haggai 2. 5) .

THE two strong foes of Christian service are depression and discouragement. These two enemies have ever worked sad havoc, but never more so than at the present moment. We are entering upon the spiritual harvest-time of the Christian year. Whilst the Christian worker must sow beside all waters, labouring and reaping in season and out of season, the season of greatest opportunity is now on us. And never was there greater need for Christian witness than at the present. But when the Christian warrior should be buckling on his armour for the fray, and when the sower and reaper should be girding up their loins preparatory to labouring in God's great field, depression and discouragement are paralysing the Lord's servants, or causing the hands to hang down, and the knees to be enfeebled.

Of course there are sufficient causes for depression and discouragement to-day. As we look around us and note worldliness and vice at full flood, and the deadness and fruitfulness of much Christian ministry, with the apathy and indifference concerning the perishing multitude on the part of many of the Lord's people, and the steady decline in Church membership and Sunday School attendance, we feel our hearts and spirits drooping, are tempted to hang our harps on the willows, and thrust our sword into its scabbard. It was so in the days of Haggai. By Divine intervention and the clemency of Cyrus, King of Persia, a remnant of Israel had returned from the Babylonian captivity, and with zeal had commenced the work of national restoration. But political intrigues had stopped the rebuilding of the Temple, and the enthusiasm of the first return had died away in the face of the prolonged difficulties. The two brave leaders, Zerubbabel and Joshua, still survived, and kept alive their own zeal; but the mass of the people, dismayed by past events, were now more concerned about their comforts than about the restoration of the House of the Lord. Depression and discouragement had paralysed all godly effort, and the work of the Lord had ceased.

The Lord's people were in great need of a tonic, and the Lord sent His prophet Haggai to administer it, which he did most effectively. "Fear ye not," was one of his messages. When such a word fell upon their ears they might have replied: "Fear ye not! Why, look at our feebleness, our defencelessness, our adversaries, and our sad condition; we cannot but fear if we open our eyes!" But there are two antidotes in (1) the Lord's promise, and (2) the Lord's presence. His gracious promise—"According to the Word that I covenanted with you"—is indeed a grand encouragement, and His presence—"My Spirit remaineth among you"—is indeed the great source of cheer and strength.

Observe the duty of strength; "be strong," twice repeated. But how can the feeble be strong? Note the fountain of strength—the Lord's presence and Spirit. The purpose of strength certainly is work: "Be strong ... and work."

Christian worker, despondent because of the present serious decline in Assemblies and diminution in Christian service, remember the Lord's own word, -My Spirit remaineth among you, fear ye not." He is with you as your ally, partner and, enduement. Remember that following Paul's sad prophecy concerning the "perilous times" and Clark days in 2 Timothy 3, comes his urgent appeal to redouble Christian service: "Preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. ... Do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4. 2 and 5).

It seems fully clear by Acts 18. 5, and a study of 2 Corinthians 1. 8; 2. 1, 4, 13; 4. 8, 9; 6. 10; 7. 5, 6, that Paul was at that moment suffering depression.

"Grief beset the spirit of Pawl," is the Arabic version of Acts 18. 5. Reasons for discouragement and depression can easily be seen. He was alone in a strange city, and solitude was a hard trial to Sc' sensitive a nature; he had no money, and had to engage himself to a tent manufacturer; he was not well, was overworked and persecuted, and failure seemed to dog his steps. Yet he did not allow this mood to silence his voice in Christian testimony, or paralyse Christian effort, for "he testified" boldly for his Master.

Fellow-pilgrim, are you mourning over some besetting sin, and smarting under a sense of failure and shortcoming, and feel it is no use trying to live the Christian life any longer? Just take heed to his own Word to you: "My Spirit remaineth among you, fear ye not." And in that indwelling Spirit you have all you need for victory over sin and holy living. Just let Him have his own way with you, and all will be well. He will then tread down the enemies within and lead you to victory.

Unsaved one, if His Spirit no longer remains with you, then you would have every cause for fear. But He is with you. The very existence of good desire within you, and regret over the unsatisfactory past are so many proofs that the Spirit of God is striving with you. Let the Holy Spirit lead you to Christ, and to the precious Blood, then He will become in you the source of purity and power.

#### WHEN DANGERS ASSAIL.

#### BIBLE "FEAR NOTS" No. 8.

"Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kings 6. 16) .

This is a "Fear not" for those overawed at the magnitude of the forces arrayed against them. It was truly an appalling sight that Elisha's man-servant saw. Dothan, their residence just then, lay on an isolated hill in a wide plain. Rising up early one morning to perform his accustomed tasks ere his master arose, he saw a great host of the enemy surrounding the town, and they were utterly undefended and apparently at the mercy of the besiegers. No, we are not at all surprised at the man's alarm and dismay. It verily was a fearsome sight.

The King of Syria was at war with Israel. His method of warfare was not by a regular continued invasion, but by dashes across the border on undefended places. But he found himself forestalled at every point. Whatever place they decided to attack they found their plans were known, and the carefully planned surprises were defeated. No wonder he suspected treachery, and, calling his servants together, challenged them on the matter. Their prompt answer implied that Elisha's intervention was well known by them. They declared that Jehovah revealed those carefully made plans of theirs to Elisha, who instructed the King of Israel. Therefore the Syrian king determined to send an expedition for the capture of Elisha, never dreaming that this servant of the Lord, who knew all his former schemes, might know of this one for,

No: we are not at all surprised at the servant's fear. And there is no wonder that we, too, are appalled as we remember the forces arrayed against us. Worse foes ring its round than those whose armour glittered in the morning sunshine at Dothan. A recently retired business man, in a letter, said: "These are terrible times we are living in, and it seems as if Satan is allowed to put forth tremendous powers in these last dark days." How true are these words. Al! the Satanic forces seem to have united in one desperate onslaught upon the forces of righteousness and truth, and against the Lord's own people. Of the reality of those mighty enemies and of their bitter and fierce attacks, the Lord's people are not

ignorant.

Are we not as helpless to cope with them as this servant was? Then why should not we fear? Ah, this incident teaches us that we are not alone and deserted even when we seem most to be. And that, like Elisha, it is our duty, not so much to pray that the Lord and His host might be with us, as to recognise their presence. Elisha did not pray that the Heavenly guards might come, for they were there already. The manifestation was the miracle. God's messengers are ever near us,. Let us remember this, and thus, ever recognising their presence, and, above all, the presence of the mighty Lord, be delivered from all fear. For "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

WHEN TEMPTED TO FEEL LONELY.

BIBLE "FEAR NOTS," No. 9.

"Fear thou not, for I am with thee" (Isaiah 41. 10).

The children had been some time in bed. All was quiet in the home, with the mother alone in the kitchen sewing. Suddenly a wee voice was heard at the top of the stairs: "Are you there, mamma?" One of the little ones could not sleep, and, troubled at the quietness; below, feared they were alone. On assured that mother was indeed present the little one went off again to bed and was soon fast asleep.

You doubt the existence of God. Is there any wonder, when you have never taken the trouble go to the top of the stairs and inquire, "Are you there?" You have read, and meditated, and considered with others on this matter, airing your rusty old views, but you have never seriously inquired directly of Him. Shame on you! If you will but seek Him He will assuredly manifest Himself to you. Or may be you are a true Christian. For long He has been a blessed reality. But there has not been much traffic between Heaven and your soul of late, and He seems to have withdrawn His presence, and there is a strange and ominous silence. "Are you there, Lord?" Is that your heart-broken inquiry? Here is His answer: "Fear thou not: for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee: yea I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." Oh the blessedness of that gracious presence!

This is one of the most familiar of texts; this is one of the most familiar of truths. But do we live up to it. Ah, that is quite another matter. If I am truly born of His Spirit, and a member of the family of faith, having my sins pardoned, and justified by faith, am a partaker of the Divine nature, then He is with me. This is a fact, whether I have the enjoyment of that presence or no. We must depend less on moods and more on facts. Moods are transient whilst facts remain. And the enjoyment of the fact depends very largely on its clear and persistent recognition. You feel the Lord has forsaken you, and you are greatly troubled. But what saith the Lord? Listen, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" "Fear not, for I am with thee." It is wonderful to think that He is within call. It is glorious to think that I can go to the foot or head of the stairs, and in response to my inquiry, "Are you there, Lord," hear His voice saying, "Fear thou not." But this message for the lonely one means infinitely more than that he is within call; its full

significance is that He is by my side. And He is with me to "strengthen," to impart strength, to "help"—to do practical service, to "uphold," to accompany and support us daily in the heavenly pilgrimage.

This was the Lord's most repeated message to His people. For it was not only what they needed most, but also what they needed to be reminded most of.

This was His message to a backslidden people. Israel had been carried away captive. The Lord had been compelled to so chastise them. But it He had felt it necessary to send them into captivity, He had gone with them into the foreign land, and was sharing their hardships and heartbreaks. And all the while they were unaware of that gracious presence. Having forsaken Him, they thought they were forsaken of Him. But they were mistaken. He was sharing the strokes He had been compelled to lay so heavily upon them. He had gone with them into captivity, and was near enough to not only hear, but help.

This was His message to faint-hearted and fearful Israel at Kadesh Barnea (Num. 14. 9). And the recognition of this was the secret of their own unfaltering confidence. They passed the message on, but it was unheeded, hence the judgment of the forty years wanderings in the desert.

This was His message to a Christian worker about to undertake serious responsibilities (Deut. 31. 8). What a stupendous task awaited Joshua Not merely was the task huge owing to the fact that he had to lead three millions of people, but because he had to succeed one so great as Moses. But the Lord's presence was His sufficiency.

This was His message to a peace-maker, who felt his loneliness in the midst of enemies (Gen. 26. 24). What a splendid peace-maker Isaac was, to be sure, but, what need there was just then of a cheery word from his Lord.

Yes; His presence with us is a fact. Do we live up to that fact ? If we did, for one thing there would be freedom from anxiety. How often we quote Phil. 4. 5 to 7: "Be careful for nothing," or, as R.V., "In nothing be anxious." This freedom from carking care seems impossible. But read on: "The Lord is at hand," i.e., "The Lord is close by you," a reference not only to His imminent advent, but to His present nearness. A sea captain, who had just arrived from a voyage, said: "We had a terrible storm coming up channel. I was on the bridge continually ; but when the pilot came 'n hoard I went straight to bed, and in two minutes I was sound asleep." Precisely. The presence of the pilot made all the difference in the world. But, if believers, our Heavenly Pilot is already on board. Shall we not recognise that gracious presence and find relief from overwhelming care?

#### ENCOURAGEMENT FOR INTERCESSORS.

BIBLE "FEAR NOTS," No. 10.

"Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand and to humble thyself before thy God, thy words were heard: and I am come for thy word's sake" (Dan. 10. 12, R.V.).

THERE is much that is strange and mysterious about this incident in the life of Daniel that great statesman, saint, and prophet. He was now an old man of eighty-nine. Seventy-three years had passed since his deportation from his beloved land of Judah. Two years had gone since the imperial monarch, Cyrus, had permitted the faithful remnant of Israel to return to Jerusalem. For some reason or other Daniel began a season of special prayer. What particular petition he offered we know not. Maybe he was praying for the remnant on receiving a report concerning the difficulties they were meeting in the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the restoration of their national life, and probably he desired to know what would befall his people in the future (see verse 14). He had been engaged in earnest and persevering prayer for three weeks before an answer came. Though no doubt puzzled and bewildered at this long delay, the aged prophet continued his supplications. Then a vision was granted. "A Man" appeared. Comparing Daniel's description of the appearance of this august Person with that given by John in Revelation 1, we are bound to conclude that it was the Lord. Daniel's servants that were with him "Saw not the vision, but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves," leaving their master alone. The effect upon God's aged servant was overwhelming. "And I Daniel alone saw the vision . . . and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." But in his fear and distress the Lord spake this most comforting and cheering "Fear not," which is bound to be an inspiration to all the Lord's praying people.

I. Prayer is Heard at Once in Heaven, though the sensible answer may seem to be delayed. That is, of course, prayer offered from a humble and trustful heart. How significant is the phrase, "Set thine heart," not only to "understand," but also to "chasten," i.e., humble, "thyself before thy God." Our S.O.S. signals are always noted, and an account of the same kept before the Lord. Never for one moment allow the enemy to persuade you that your cry has gone unheeded. No; a thousand times, no. "For from the first day . . . thy words were heard."

II. Delays in Answering Prayer are Not Always Due to God. Some delays are due either to unpreparedness or unfitness on the part of the suppliant or the petition. But not all delays. Delays do not always mean denials. The Lord in the vision explained to the aged intercessor how it happened that he had received no visible answer to a prayer that had been offered with success three weeks previously. And the explanation was that there had been a conflict between the powers of light and darkness, betwixt the invisible powers which rule and influence nations and peoples. Strangely fascinating is this subject, yet how little we know or can know of it. The veil hiding the invisible is here slightly withdrawn, revealing titanic opposition to the performance of the commands of the Lord. As to the ultimate success of the powers of light there can be no doubt, for Satanic powers are not omnipotent; but the delays through opposition are trying and testing times to the eager and anxious souls. In Daniel's experience a suitable explanation was given him for the delay, but the Lord is not able to explain to all of His servants. And what then? Well, surely we can trust even when we cannot trace. And we can persevere in our entreaties until our prayers are answered. Daniel persevered in prayer three weeks; let us persevere for three, thirty, or three hundred weeks. Pray through. Never give up, however sorely tried you may be with Heaven's silence. Prayer conflict is an experience not to be

trusted to all the Lord's people, but only to the ripened and mature saint. Jacob's determined reply to the Lord, "I will not let thee go except Thou bless me," is to be commended. Many a lost battle would have been won if perseverance had been practised a little longer on the part of the combatants.

"Excepts" of the Bible  
CONCERNING YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.  
BIBLE "EXCEPTS," NO. 1.

"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall  
exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees  
ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom"

(Matt. 5. 20) .

IN other words, except you are better men and women than those whom you consider to be the very cream of your society, you will not enter the Kingdom. Then what kind of men were these referred to by our Lord? The general idea is that they were hypocrites; but this is a mistake. Without doubt there were some who merited that designation; yet not all. "Pharisee" meant one "separated," and described those who had severed themselves from all wrong and questionable things. They were great religious teachers and leaders of that day, and therefore they must be taken as types of the highest conformity with the Law which the Old Testament affords. Luke 18. 11 and 12 gives us a good description of them. By this we learn that they were punctual in attendance at Divine worship, believed in and practised public and private prayer, were temperate in eating and drinking, were generous and benevolent, supported the house of prayer, and read and studied the Sacred Scriptures. What more could be desired of them? And yet our Blessed Lord declares that there is no hope for us unless we are better than they!

"No, I cannot say that I am a Christian; but I am doing my best." Are you? Do you pray three times a day, read and study the Word of God, frequent as often as possible the meeting place, and support well its honoured institutions? "No!" Then cease talking about "doing your best." But granted that you are. Here was a large class of individuals who really were doing their best, and yet our Lord said that that was not sufficient. If you reflect for a little upon this, you will be compelled to exclaim: This is staggering." Surely this word of the Lord's ought to bring despair to the hearts of all who are honestly doing their best. Why, He states in another place (Isa. 64. 6) that, in His pure eyes, even our best is as filthy rags! Then if that is His estimation of man's best, what must His opinion be of man's worst?

Verily, our Lord's words would be terrible if they stood alone, but, thank God, they do not. Just before He made this astounding statement, He declared that He had not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. That is to say, He has perfectly fulfilled all God's righteous claims. Thank God for that! If my best is not sufficient, God's best is more than enough; if my righteousness will not pass muster, there is another righteousness that will see me through There is an excellent righteousness—the righteousness of the Lord's own providing—which becomes ours through faith.

Let us trace the great contrast between man's righteousness and God's righteousness.

I. The Former is Prospective, whilst the Latter is Possessive. "The righteous man under the law became righteous by doing righteously ; under grace he does righteously because he has been made righteous." What an amazing difference! The one hopes to gain God's favour by becoming righteous through desperate struggles, whilst the other begins working after gaining God's favour in Christ. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Far, far better, to enter into present possession of God's righteousness than vainly strive to work out one of your own.

II. One is Only External, whilst the Other is Both. This is described for us in Matthew 23. 28. Man's righteousness is confined entirely to the life that is seen by man, but the righteousness of God is both concerned with the external and the internal, because it is both imputed and imparted.

III. Whilst the Former is Ceremonial, the Latter is Spiritual. The Scribes and Pharisees had made the observance of ceremonies the be-all, and end-all, of religion. Now ceremonies are all right in their place, yet vital godliness is not a series of ceremonies, but a deep inward spiritual reality.

IV. One is One-Sided, whilst the Other Is Full-Orbed. Righteousness is not only a state of being right with man, the fulfilling of every relation in which we stand to others, but also a state of being right with God, the fulfilling of every relation in which we stand to God—not only a character man approves of, but a character God approves of, too. This the Pharisees lost sight of, for they narrowed their conception of righteousness to man, and left God out of the reckoning, and this was fatal.

V. One was, and Is, an "It," whilst the Other Is "He." Ah, this is the crux of the whole matter: "The Lord our righteousness" (Jer. 23. 6). It is what the Lord is for me, and within me. This is a Living Righteousness. And what the Lord is in Himself, He proposes to make us, if we will but trust and rest in Him. When He becomes my righteousness (which far, far exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees), this will see me through. Blessed be His Name for ever and ever!

#### NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE.

BIBLE "EXCERPTS," No. 2.

"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"

(Luke 13 3 and 5) .

IN Scotland there is a ruined tower known as the Tower of Repentance. A sceptic passed by it one day, and seeing a shepherd-boy reading his Bible, scoffingly asked: "Can you tell me the way to Heaven ? " Instantly the lad replied, "By way of yonder Tower!" It was the right answer. The boy had certainly read the Book of books to profit. Repentance was our Lord's first message on commencing His short earthly ministry, and it is His first word to all sinners. What He asks first of us is not our appreciation, but our repentance.

"Do you mean to tell me that there is no chance of me getting to Heaven unless I weep and wail; this is quite ridiculous."

We quite agree with you.

"How can you? You have just said that my repentance is essential, and is not repentance being sorry, mourning, and weeping?"

By no means. Our definitions are often woefully astray. To repent is to be sorry for our sins, is often said. It is nothing of the kind. It is quite distinct from it: "Ye sorrowed to repentance" (2 Cor. 7. 9). Here sorrow is spoken of as something quite apart from repentance, though leading up to it. Mere sorrow is not repentance. If so, then what about Esau? "He found no place for repentance, though he sought it (the blessing) carefully with tears." Judas, the betrayer of our Lord, was filled with sorrow and remorse on accomplishing his dastardly work, yet he went out and hanged himself. Don't forget the lesson of Acts 2.

Under the mighty preaching of Peter at Pentecost, the people were pricked to the heart, and cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" There was most certainly real and genuine sorrow, yet the preacher replied, "Repent." There can be sorrow without repentance, yet no repentance without genuine and heartfelt sorrow.

The events which gave rise to this pronouncement are unrecorded. Who these Galileans were is uncertain. They were fiery and turbulent people, often in rebellion. Probably many of them came: to observe one of the feasts at Jerusalem, and Pilate, who had long desired to arrest some of them, surprised them whilst they were offering sacrifices, and slew them. The Tower in Siloam incident is unknown. It is evident that the people foolishly sat in judgment upon these unfortunate individuals who had so suddenly lost their lives, riving that they must have been wicked to have merited such fate, and self-righteously imagined that they were much better because they had not so suffered.

This statement of our Lord's proven to be prophecy. and was literally fulfilled thirty-five years afterwards in the siege of Jerusalem, when over one million perished. Multitudes of the priests, who were going on with the sacrifices, were slain, and their blood mingled with the blood of their victims; and multitudes were buried under the ruins of walls, houses, and temple.

But this word is for all, dear reader. "Except ye repent, ye shall . perish." Awful word, dreadful in its significance! It is unfathomable. Twice over our blessed Lord repeated this "Except," and the repetition is impressive, emphasising its importance.

Repentance simply means "a change of mind." This was the first great truth that Luther discovered, and from which the Reformation came. It means a change of mind leading to a change of heart and purpose. First, a change of mind about myself, about my spiritual state, and the right object in life. I discover that instead of being all right I am all wrong. This will most assuredly lead to great sorrow; and if my eyes do not weep, my heart will.

Second, there will be a radical change of mind about sin. Sin, that seemed so light a matter before, is seen as a hateful thing, something to be detested and dreaded. Then there will be a change of mind about God. I shall see God as an outraged Being: a Divine One of infinite love and compassion.

It is, of course, a change of mind leading to a change of conduct. Some years ago we were much impressed with the statement of a cultured Jew, who said that "the chief difference between Jewish ethical books and Christian devotional writings is that in the former repentance does not mean weep but return." Of course, he was labouring under the erroneous definition so many give of repentance. Return to God; that is the fruit of repentance. There is often a return, but not to God: "They return, but not to the Most High" (Hosea 7. 16) . This may be a return to some duties or spiritual exercises; but these, instead of a return to God will be of no avail.

And what is the producing cause of repentance? The goodness of God as manifested in the Cross (Rom. 2. 4). This is well illustrated in the account of Dr. Pentecost's conversion. Impressed by some revival services, he tried, but in vain, to produce what he imagined to be repentance. In a despairing mood he went again to church, but at the close of the sermon he was so devoid of feeling as not to recollect the subject. But as he stepped into the aisle, the dying love of Jesus was made real to him. In a moment he saw that Jesus died for him. Justification by faith, which at that time he had never heard stated, was as clear as it had been over since. Darkness was gone, and all deadness of heart. He was not thinking of himself, but of the work of redemption wrought out by the Redeemer. He knew that he was saved, not through his efforts, or resolves, not even on account of faith, but because Jesus had put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Said he to himself: "If God is satisfied with what Christ has done for me, I ought to be, and I am." With a glad, peaceful heart he went forward; and so may we.

COMING TO CHRIST. BIBLE "EXCEPTS, " No. 3.  
"No man can come to Me, except the Father.. .draw him"  
(John 6. 44).

IF that is so, why urge me to come to Jesus if I do not feel the drawing power of the Father? Why bother me about coming at all if all who are drawn do come? You see, I will come if I am drawn, for I won't be able to do anything else. And why should I be condemned for not coming if I am not drawn? Where does moral responsibility come in? And where would the justice of God come in if He punishes me for not doing what I 'could not possibly do?

These are by no means imaginary difficulties, put up simply for the sake of demolishing them: for ages souls have encountered and wrestled with these fears and doubts and difficulties, and many a sore combat have they had with these giants of imagination and reason.

We have often remarked that many spiritual spectres exist solely through lack of Bible knowledge, and through careless reading of the Holy Book. Here we have a striking proof

of this failing. To all who are the victims of the doubts and views we have just expressed above, we would say, "READ ON!" The text printed at the head of this paper was not the whole of our Lord's utterance at that time. Read verse 45- "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God." In other words, God draws men through teaching ! That at once simplifies matters. There is no mystery about that. God is seeking to draw men by the teaching of His Son, and of His gracious Spirit, through the sacred Scriptures, and the ministry of His redeemed ones. Thus it resolves itself into whether men will listen or not.

In our Lord's discourse He had spoken of bread from Heaven which Jehovah would give, and they then asked for that wondrous Bread of which He spoke. He offered Himself as that Bread. But this offended them. How could He be that Bread from Heaven, seeing they knew (or imagined they did) all there was to know about Him! Our Lord's reply was not a defence of Himself, but a revelation of the reason of their blindness. In verse 44 He declares man's utter helplessness; He then produced a prophecy from Isaiah, remarking that God was now teaching men, and seeking through that teaching to draw them. But that teaching of God was not (done personally by Him, but through His Son who had seen the Father. The Jews were not to expect the Father would teach them personally, for none had seen the Father but His beloved Son; they must expect to be taught by His Word, and by His Spirit, and by His ministers.

"Draw," it is a beautiful term, denoting the secret work of Divine love upon hearts and minds of men. God loves to draw. And His method of drawing men by teaching is.

I. In Harmony with His Movements in Nature. The tides are caused by the drawing power of the moon; evaporation, and in consequence the fertilising shower, is the result of the drawing power of the sun; the growth and position of plants and trees and flowers depend upon the alluring and attracting power of the same sun; all nature proclaims that God loves to draw. As in nature, so in grace. Of course His method of drawing in grace differs from His method of drawing in nature. And that leads to our next thought, viz., that God's method of drawing men by teaching

II. Honours and Ennobles Man. If He draws by teaching, then It proves that man is not a block of wood or stone. A block of wood or stone cannot take in knowledge. But man is a rational creature, possessing amazing mental and moral powers and reasoning capabilities. This the Lord recognises in this method of drawing, and thus He honours and ennobles man. You have lost the key of a box or drawer—if you think little of the box or drawer you will prise it open; but if you value it you will not damage it by using force, but try the gentle art of persuasion or send for a locksmith. God will not force, but draw; not compel, but persuade; all out of respect to man.

Then again, this method of drawing men

III. Honours and Uplifts His Word. Archbishop Leighton said: "The outward means of drawing is by the Word; it is the sound of that harp that brings the stones of this spiritual building together." Building by music and melody? Yes; the music and melody of the

Word. The Scriptures thus become the instrument and agent of the drawing of the Lord. What an honour is thus conferred upon the Word !

This method of drawing men also

IV. Honours and Exalts the Son. The Ancients declared that their god Jupiter had a chain of gold which he could at any time let down from Heaven, and by it draw the earth and all its inhabitants to himself. Only a fable, yet it is true that our God, the only wise and true God, has a Golden Chain, the Lord Jesus Christ, which, in the fulness of time, He let down from Heaven to earth to draw His erring creatures to Himself, Did He not say of Himself: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." The lifting and drawing power of the Word of God is the story of the Cross it declares and proclaims. It is that, and only that, that wins men and women.

This method of drawing men also

V. Honours and Glorifies God. We have said that the Lord draws by the Word, but it was He who caused all Holy Scripture to be written; we have also stated that He draws by His Son—but He gave His Son; we say that He appeals to intellect—but He gave man his reasoning faculties. There is only one conclusion possible, that God's method of drawing men and women through teaching honours and glorifies Himself.

All these facts impose a serious responsibility upon man. Bishop Hooper wrote: "God draweth with His Word, and the Holy Ghost, but man's duty is to hear and learn; that is to say, to receive the grace offered." "If a man cannot come without being drawn, and the drawing consists in being taught of God, we come to the root of the difficulty, when we raise the question: Why cannot men be taught of God? Why do they not receive His instruction? Plainly not for want of mental capacity. 'Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life,' tells the simple and the whole truth in the case. Learning comes before coming: but you have learned of Him—will you not come? Remember it is written: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

#### CONVERSION.

##### BIBLE "EXCEPTS," No. 4.

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 18. 3).

AFTER a long and dreary voyage, a ship, battered and torn by many a storm, was nearing home. Suddenly the captain discovered by the chart that the steersman was heading the vessel straight for some hidden rocks. What do you think he did? Set the men to the pumps, scrub the decks, tend the sails, or paint the woodwork? Verily no. Of course, these things are good and necessary enough in their place, but if the ship is to be saved the course must be changed, the helm must be altered.

We are all on the ocean of life, sailing one way or the other. If unconverted, then the frail barque of life is heading for destruction. This fact can be discovered by consulting the chart—the Book of Books, the Bible. If the course is wrong, what must be done? Try

self-improvement, casting evil habits overboard, and cultivate the good? All this is right and proper in its place, but, if the soul is to be saved from shipwreck, the course must be altered—you must turn! That is precisely what the above text declares. Remember this, that if you do not turn, you will never reach the happy goal. Conversion is thus an absolute necessity.

"But I have tried to turn, and though succeeding for a while, I find I'm soon back again in the old way." That may be so; but it proves that you have not yet learned the all-important secret. If the helm will swing back into its original position, then there must be two at the wheel. That has to be done in many a storm at sea. One at the wheel cannot keep the vessel heading in the right direction. Aft, that is why so many fail in the spiritual voyage of life—they have never felt the need of the pierced Hand. And have never invited the Pilot to come on board!

The fact is, a mere turning is not sufficient. There is what is called "Turning over a new leaf," but that is not conversion. The word "Convert" is a Latin word in English dress—"vert," to turn, "con," together; that is to say, a turning, not alone and unaided, but in company with another. Acts 3. 26 illustrates beautifully this point. "God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." There is the truth of conversion—He will do the turning with your consent; He will put His hand on the helm of your life, and not only turn you into the right course, but keep you there, and that is the blessing needed. Like the prodigal, you are in a far country; unlike him, you are not left to find your way back to the Father alone, for the Lord Jesus is there, anxious to accompany you back. "Wilt thou go with this Man?". That is the all-important question. Look again at the text at the head of this page: "Except ye be converted." That signifies the work of another. And that Another is none other than the Lord. Henry Martyn declared that the conversion of a Hindu is a greater miracle than the raising of the dead. But then every conversion is a miracle, and a miracle the Lord alone can accomplish. Thus is clearly shown the true nature of conversion.

If converted, then the fact will be shown in many ways. A Chinese farmer, who spoke of his faith in Christ, was asked to give some real concrete proof of that conversion. After a moment's reflection, he said: "I believe I have a little proof. When I used to clear the stones off my fields, because it was more convenient, I just tossed them over into my neighbour's fields; but I don't do that now. I carry them and throw them into a gully or some other place, where they will not harm anybody." That was indeed a most convincing proof of conversion, and it would be well if more could give a similar testimony. Be that as it may, there will always be some convincing proof of the reality of conversion in all genuine believers.

But pray notice that something else besides conversion is heeded: "And become as little children." Our Lord not only speaks of the necessity of conversion, but also of childlikeness. May we not take this childlike spirit as one fruit of conversion? This was our Lord's reply concerning greatness in the Kingdom. There was nothing wrong in the mere asking of this question or the desire to get on; the error lay in the spirit which actuated th<sup>o</sup> query. Our Lord's answer must have appeared to the questioners as a dash of

cold water. Before you become concerned as to the greatness in the Kingdom, make sure first that you have entered into that Kingdom.

How strange our Lord's reply seems: to become great you must become little--in fact, you become great by becoming little. This must have startled His disciples. This was certainly the very first time that a teacher had ever dared to lift up such an ideal. But it is true. The motto of the kingdom of this world is to be found in Genesis 3. 5; the motto of the Kingdom of Heaven is our text. To see them in their true light just put them together: "Ye shall be as gods." "Become as little children." Satan declared that the path to happiness and blessedness is by becoming great; the Lord said that the path not only to blessedness and happiness, but also to true greatness, is by becoming little. Which is true? You have only to look at the exponents of these two views to find in their lives and destiny the truth or falseness of their claims. The Lord was, and is, the greatest Preacher and pattern of humility, and Satan was, and is, the greatest preacher and pattern of pride. "The one great ambition of Satan was to become a god, and he became a devil; one of the supreme acts of the Son of God was to become a child, 'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name.' So in our case. Seeking to become gods, men became devils; seeking to become as little children, they become Divine, the partakers of Divine nature."

In cases of serious illness, how glad are we when the doctor can say, "He has got the change for the better." As the Great Physician considers your case, dear reader, can He say that you have had the change for the better? have you been converted yet? If not, <sup>3</sup>!1st put yourself into his hands, and He will pull you through.

SEEING AND BELIEVING,  
BIBLE "EXCEPTS" No. 5.

"Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders,  
ye will not believe" (John 4. 4).

This does seem a strange way of treating a wealthy man who had travelled twenty-five miles to seek healing for his son! Fancy, hastening all that distance in an effort to secure the aid of the Healer and then to meet with such a rebuff

It was a nobleman that was in distress, —the rich have afflictions as well as the poor it was a boy who was sick unto death—illness is no respecter of persons, coming to young and old alike; it was a father in dead earnest about bringing the Saviour and his son into touch with one another. Oh, that all parents; were as anxious and determined to do the same.

Yes, we must admit that there does seem a certain amount of severity in our Lord's reply. But there was a need for such conduct. What was wrong with the nobleman? Some think the gentle Saviour was severe because He came to the Lord nor for the Lord's sake, but for his son's sake, driven there by the strong constraint of an outward need, rather than drawn by the desire of the soul. No doubt there is a little truth in this explanation, yet it does not fully meet the difficulty. The satisfying answer is our Lord's anxiety to purify

and strengthen faith. The rich man possessed faith in the Lord Jesus, but only a faith in His presence, and not in His Word; it was a faith which rested only on the miraculous. The Lord was seeking to show His pupil that His word was as effectual as His presence, and to lead him into the deep meaning of the Old Testament utterance, "He sent His Word and healed them." Thus our Lord's conduct was designed, not to extinguish that little spark of faith, but to blow it into a fierce flame; and the method adopted had the desired result.

"If God wants me to believe, why does He not put a sign in the sky?" That is how some speak and think. Our Lord's treatment of this nobleman is the answer. True faith is a matter of the heart, and not merely of the head; and real faith is called into being not by any miraculous sign but by the Word of the Lord. Besides, as a very eminent writer so forcibly points out: "If belief was to depend upon a visible sign in the sky, a standing miracle would have to be worked in each generation to give that generation a fair chance with the others—a supposition which is contrary to all of God's ways of working. It is, further, extremely doubtful whether such a sign would accomplish its object. 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' We can imagine without much effort, the brilliant article in the next magazine, which would prove that it was a comet; and even if the explanation did not satisfy the intellect, such a mere 'nine days' wonder' would have no effect upon the heart."

How precious then is faith in the estimation of the Lord, and what pains He takes to produce, purify, and strengthen it. That may be one explanation of many of His strange dealings with the sons of men. His great longing is to lead us deeper into the life of faith.

"But what is faith?" Strange that, though folk exercise faith every day of their lives, yet they are frequently making this inquiry, The first occurrence of the word "Believe" is in Genesis 15. 6. Abraham "Believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." According to a competent authority, the word "believed" literally means "to steady oneself by leaning on something or someone." This gives a vivid illustration of what faith really is—"as a man lays his trembling hand on a staff, so we lay our weak and changeable selves on God's strength."

Pray notice (1) that true faith has God for its origin and object. "Abraham believed God." In John 6 the Lord calls it a "work of God," hinting at a deep thought that it is God who gives the true inclination of mind to trust. Then (2) notice that faith is an act and not a mere sentiment. It is not something that comes to a man apart from himself, and outside of himself, without reference to him. There is a very close connection between faith and the will. In the strictest sense of the word faith is the exercise of our most inmost nature—it is an effort of the will.

Three stages may be discerned in faith, for faith is a progressive act or series of acts. The first stage is a belief in Him, a mere acceptance of His revelation. But there is no saving element in it. It is possible for a person to have this kind of faith and yet be lost "True faith is something more than this. It is imperative that the next stage be reached, viz., a belief on Him. This is where the saving element comes in. If I am weary and tired and

believe that the chair is able to bear my weight, merely believing that will not rest me, I must believe on it, let it take my weight. And what then? There is a third stage, believing into the Lord. I may believe on a chair or staff, and be rested, but the chair and staff and I remain separated and distinct. Not so with Christ and the soul. Believing on Him will lead to believing into Him, becoming one with Him, united to him by ties of life and love. What a blessed union is this Words cannot describe it fully. Let us pray:

"My faith looks up to Thee,  
Thou Lamb of Calvary,  
Saviour Divine "

EATING HIS FLESH .  
BIBLE "EXCEPTS," No. 6.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man,  
and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6. 53).

"THIS marking is terribly one-sided—why, the most important text of all is not marked; may I mark it?"

By special request, one day I called to see a blacksmith who had just returned from the London Brompton Hospital for Diseases of the Chest. I was delighted to find him deeply concerned about spiritual things, arid anxiously inquiring his way to Zion, with his face thitherward. What had awakened him was a printed text of Scripture attached to a bouquet of flowers a Christian lady visitor had given him: "By grace are we saved ... not of works." I found him ripe for the Lord, and soon had the joy of leading him to the Saviour. What a change could be at once noticed in him—he was rejoicing in a present and eternal salvation. Seeing that he had not a light and handy New Testament, and as all spiritual babes must have food I gave him a marked copy of the Book of books.

A day or so after, I again called on him—but what a change! I had left him bright and rejoicing, but now he was sad and bewildered. On asking the reason for this change, he replied: "Just after you left the other day, Sister (referring to a High Church worker) called. I told her you had just been and showed her my new treasure. Upon examining it, she exclaimed: This marking is terribly one-sided. Why, the most important text of all is not marked; may I mark it?' Of course I assented, and taking out her fountain pen she deeply underlined, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.' She then explained it to mean that unless I partook of the blessed sacrament I would not be saved. Now, which of you is correct?" No wonder the poor fellow was puzzled, and in doubt and distress. But I was soon able to satisfy him, and never again did he doubt his safe and

*Some thoughts in this and the next article form a chapter in the Author's 'Outlined Galatians,' yet, to complete the study of the "excerpts," the whole article is here printed.*

secure standing in Christ through faith. On this lady's finding, we are meditating on "the most important text of all."

As is well known, this sacramental view of the Lord's Supper is held tenaciously by adherents of both the Romish and High Church. According to their belief, everything depends upon the eating and drinking of the sacred elements. Suppose they are correct, see in what a most serious position they place themselves. If their view is the correct one, and this is to be understood literally, then all the Roman Catholic laity, and some High Church members, too, are lost, for only the priests drink the wine!

This is a startling and sobering thought, but it is one all who view this Scripture statement sacramentally should seriously consider. Besides, how could our Lord mean the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, seeing it was not instituted till quite a year after this! No; this passage does not refer to the Lord's Supper at all.

What scattered the doubts and difficulties in the mind and heart of the blacksmith referred to, was a quotation from that devout and loyal churchman, Bishop Ryle; and it may not be out of place to give it here. He says: "Few passages have been so painfully wrested and perverted as this. The eating and drinking referred to here do not mean any literal eating and drinking. Above all, the words were not spoken with any reference to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It means that reception of Christ's sacrifice which takes place when a man believes on Christ crucified for salvation. It is an inward and spiritual act of the heart . . . whenever a man, feeling his own guilt and sinfulness, lays hold of Christ, and trusts in the atonement made for him by Christ's death, at once he eats the flesh of the Son of Man and drinks His-blood. Faith in Christ's atonement is a thing of absolute necessity to salvation."

A very poor and illiterate woman lay dying. She was so ill and weak that the doctor forbade visitors. But a ritualistic curate managed to make his way into the sick room. You are very ill, Mrs. , would you like to partake of the holy sacrament? You see you cannot be saved unless you do, for the words of our Lord in St. John 6. 53 are sufficiently clear on that point. Besides, it will help you to die happy." The poor soul was almost too ill to speak or listen, but as she had given herself to the Lord a good while before this at a Mission Hall with which I was connected, she knew better. "I hope you will excuse me, sir. I am a very ignorant woman, and cannot tell where it is, but somewhere in the Bible it says, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,' and 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life,' and that's enough for me." Armed by the Word of God, she was more than a match for the astute theologian, and he left her as a bad case. Oh, the importance of clinging to the Word of God in all its simplicity!

#### DRINKING HIS BLOOD.

#### BIBLE "EXCEPTS" No. 7.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6. 53).

THESE words formed part of our Lord's great discourse, following the miracle of feeding a multitude with but five barley loaves and two small fishes. There was a pause in our Lord's teaching, and the Jews, mystified with our Lord's remarks, took advantage of this

pause to dispute among themselves. In answer to a fresh question, our Lord introduced a new statement, which we have in the Scripture at the head of this study. The figure is made repulsive on purpose, in order to provoke thought. It is sometimes difficult to make people think. But attention is at once arrested by some unusual remark. So in this case. The thought of drinking blood was more repulsive to the Jew than to us. He had a religious horror of touching or tasting anything in which blood was; in fact, they were forbidden to touch blood, much less drink it.

This statement proved too much for many of His disciples (verse 66) and they left Him. They made the blunder so many are making to-day, in taking what He said literally. What He meant was a spiritual eating and drinking. This they ought to have clearly seen. The fact that He said they had no life in them unless they did eat and drink should have shown them this. They had natural animal life, but no spiritual. Ralph Erskine once said: "Christ is the food of my life; I would die if He did not feed me with His flesh and blood." He well understood the meaning of our Master's words. Let us carefully trace the meaning and force of our Lord's strange statement.

I. Spiritual Life begins by Drinking in the Meaning of the Blood-Shedding. That was the comment of a Scotch minister on John 6. 53, over one hundred years ago, and is suggestive. Drink, drink, drink again and again of the great ocean of truth connected with the Lord's atoning sacrifice. To hear some people talk one would think there was but a trickling stream of truth they had long ago exhausted. Ah, no: the ocean of blood-shedding truth is vast and deep, and we can never say the last word on that subject. If we keep on drinking in the meaning of the blood-shedding, we must also keep on eating—appropriating—the meaning of the broken body. Yes; oh, so true! Spiritual life does commence in the soul of man as soon he begins, by faith, to drink in the meaning of the blood-shedding,

II. Spiritual Life can only Come to Men through the Atoning Death. The figure used by our Lord is suggestive of a way into life only through death and sacrifice. His flesh and blood could only be available by death. Only by His vicarious sacrifice alone can eternal life be obtained. Bread can only become bread by crushing and the furnace, so that when our Lord likened Himself to bread He was in effect emphasising the necessity of His atoning death.

III. Spiritual Life can only be Received by a Definite Appropriation of Faith. This is implied in the figure of speech used, in the reference to eating and drinking. These acts are definite and clear; and, moreover, they are simple. We do not wait until we understand all the mysteries of digestion before we satisfy the craving appetite: nor should we postpone acceptance of Christ until we are able to fathom the mysteries of redemption. '1,~, no, even a child of tender years is-able to eat and drink. Oh, how important is this thought! So many are postponing decision until they are able to understand Divine things clearer. They fail to note that the mere natural man cannot understand the things of God, for they are only to be spiritual discerned. We beseech thee, friend, lay hold of Christ—stretch forth the hand of faith and take Him—eat and drink of Him, and all will be well.

IV. Spiritual Life can only be Sustained by Dwelling in His Presence. Drummond well says. "A person who abides in the presence of Jesus Christ in some mysterious way appropriates, unconsciously and unavoidably, the life and character of Jesus Christ, so that he is built up like Him." This is a fine thought.

Here is a true story I have read somewhere. A soldier was given up to die. On his parents being notified, his old father hastened from a long distance to his bedside in the hospital, carrying with him a bundle-handkerchief with something wrapped in it. The poor soldier lay half conscious, and nothing that father or attendants said could rouse him, until the father exclaimed: "Here is a loaf of your mother's bread which I have brought you." "Bread from home," said the dying man. "Bread from home! Give me some;" and from that hour he began to improve, to the surprise of all. Oh, dying soul, we have to offer you bread from home, bread from Heaven—Won't you say, "Give me some?" If you do, and you thus eat His flesh and drink His blood, life, Eternal Life, will be yours.

#### THE NEW BIRTH.

BIBLE "EXCERPTS, " No. 8.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3. 3 and 5).

IF one "except" and one "verily" be impressive, what shall we say of two "excepts" and four "verilys"?

Thus our attention is drawn to something of tremendous importance. And truly this has to do with vital realities. In the third chapter of Genesis we read how man lost life; in the third chapter of John we discover how man can get it back again.

There is no narrative in the New Testament better known than this, and yet none so misunderstood. Of course the doctrine it proclaims is misunderstood—indeed, unless one has experienced in their own lives the sublime truth it enunciates it cannot possibly be understood. But even the plain facts of the story are misunderstood. Poor Nicodemus could bring most of us up for libel. True, he came to Jesus by night, yet that does not make him a coward. Surely caution is not cowardice. Perhaps he came at night because he knew it was the only time he was sure to find Jesus at leisure for a quiet hour's talk. All who brand him a coward should remember that it was Passover time, and the bright Passover moon would be shining, making the streets ,almost as light as they would have been by day.

The reply of our Lord to the greeting of Nicodemus is most significant, and ought to have our closest attention. The repetition of the words, "Verily, verily," amongst Jewish writers was considered of equal import with the most solemn oath. Here are some great lessons from our Lord's reply to Nicodemus.

I. It is not Mere Direction but Disposition, not Teaching but Life, that man Needs. "We know that Thou art a Teacher come from God." Nicodemus thought that all that Israel and the world required to elevate them was a teacher, and teaching, but our Lord's reply shattered that idea. The deepest need of man is not to know, but to be helped to do. It has

been well said that the worst man knows more than the best man practises. It is life man needs, and this is his first need.

II. Until Man has this Position through the Gift of Life, he cannot Understand, much less Follow the Directions. Regeneration is essential to a true understanding of the things of God. Except a man be born again he cannot see."

III. Regeneration is a Universal Need. "Except a MAN," not a Jew or a Gentile. ALL need this stupendous change. And please note the nature of the change. In the Reptile House at the Zoo we notice the snakes at certain times of the year cast off their skin. Yet notwithstanding this change, they remain snakes. Men may change the form and habit of their lives without having a change within, and be a sinner still. Our Lord• insisted upon a radical change from within.

IV. Baptism with Water alone is Not Sufficient to Bring About this Great Change. "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit." The former was the only new birth the Rabbi knew anything of. Those converted to the Jewish faith were baptised, and were known as those who had been born again. Cranmer, in 1553, significantly wrote: "All that be washed with water, be not washed with the Holy Spirit." You have been baptised with water; have you been born of the Spirit ?

V. The New Birth takes Place at the Cross. There are two "musts" in this chapter, both imperative. In verse 7 we have the "must" for the sinner, and in verse 14 the "must" for the Saviour. There is indeed a very close connection between Regeneration and the Atonement. The Cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the true birthplace of the soul.

As is well known, the greatest obstacle to the progress of the Gospel in India is the caste system. Individuals cannot marry, eat, or work only within their own caste. The Brahman is the highest caste. As a rule, there is no way of entering this caste. The Rajahs of Travancore belong to one of the lower castes, but that he might be admitted to the sacred caste, a most extraordinary ceremony has been invented. The cow throughout India is a sacred animal. To be born of a cow in a future state is considered a high honour and privilege. A golden cow, made of gold according to the weight of the Rajah is made; in it is put the five products of that animal (milk, curd, butter, urine, dung), and in this mixture His Highness bathes, remaining for the prescribed period, and when the ceremony has been performed the prince is regarded as being born again. One ceremony cost £25,000. What a vain attempt to invent a royal road to regeneration. Ah, there is only one way, and that is God's way. And that way is pointed out so clearly in John 1. 11 and 12: "As many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God." Thus regeneration follows, and is the result of a definite acceptance of the Lord Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Will not you receive Him here and now!

#### FRUITFULNESS.

##### BIBLE "EXCEPTS." No. 9.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12. 24).

ALL nature each Autumn sounds a loud Amen to the declaration of the sweet singer of Israel—"Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness." The fields, orchards, and gardens are laden with fruit. The Lord's crown of goodness then lies gloriously heavy on the brow of nature. The fruit, and much fruit, gladden both the heart of God and man. But in the rejoicing of the "harvest home" let us not forget the important "except" of fruitfulness. One of the most familiar facts in nature is that, in plants and seeds, life comes by death. The principal event which renders the seed corn valuable to man is its death. There could not possibly have been fields laden with golden grain had there not previously taken place in secret a great surrender, and a dying to self. This is a great principal in the moral as well as in the natural realm, "And there were certain Greeks among them." I wonder if they had been amongst those who had welcomed Jesus as King of Jerusalem? If so, they were not satisfied by admiring the Lord Jesus, but longed to come into a more personal knowledge of Him. Would that all the Lord's admirers would do likewise! There are so many who imagine that the good opinions they entertain of the King of Glory will prove a sufficient passport to eternal bliss. What a vain hope is this! No, No, nothing can take the place of personal faith and vital contact with the Lord Himself. Let all mere admirers pray, "We would see Jesus. "

Why these Greeks should seek Philip's mediation we know not. We do notice that Philip's name is more purely Greek than any of the other disciples. Does not this indicate that probably he had Greek relatives and connections? "Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus." How blessed it is when Christian brethren unite in bringing others to the Lord Jesus.

Undoubtedly the Lord had Himself in mind when He gave expression to this great fact of nature. Their request was as a narrow window through which Jesus' yearning spirit saw a great expanse, nothing less than the coming to Him of myriads of Gentiles, the "much" fruit of which He speaks. But before that could take place death on the Cross must be His.

There are several words in this verse pregnant with meaning. "It abideth alone." Here we have one reason why the Lord came down to be a man and die—He could not bear to be alone in the glory, alone with the Father and the holy angels. Without the sons of men, He felt He would be alone. And He desired us to share His glory. Oh, verily this is the language of love!

"Except a corn of wheat fall." Ah, that is a familiar word, is it not? Man has fallen, and to lift him up the Corn of Wheat, the Lord Himself, must fall, die and fall into the ground.

"And die." Man died at Eden. The Son of Man must die to give man life. Here is the great fundamental principle of the Gospel. Christ's death was and is the source of spiritual life of the world. He fell to the ground in His incarnation, and seemed buried alive in the world, so much was His glory veiled. He died; this immortal Seed submitted to the laws

of mortality. And He lay in the grave like the seed under the clods. But He arose; and from His Cross and Passion sprang up a mighty harvest of benefit to mankind. The first fruits were seen at His resurrection. "Christ died alone; He arose again with many," so wrote the venerable Bede.

But there is an important lesson here for all who have received life through that atoning death. What was true in respect to the Saviour is equally true respecting His own dear children. If we are to be fruitful in life and service we, too, must die to self as well as to sin. One has very forcibly pointed out that the key to the application of the words of the Saviour is the Greek present. "For five centuries the Greeks had marched at the head of humanity. The whole world gathered round the torch of Greek genius. Yet they failed to regenerate society. Why? Their master words were self-culture and self-enjoyment. This was, according to the Greeks, the chief good of human life, the supreme aim. The gods of Olympus were represented as beings who lived only to enjoy themselves. When they came to earth they came only for the sake of pleasant adventure, or selfish amusement, caring nothing for the sorrows and sins of humanity. And the character of the gods was reflected in the worshippers. But Christ calls upon them to substitute self-oblation for self-culture, self-sacrifice, for self-gratification. In other words, He asks them to reverse the whole bent of their thought and conduct." How startled they must have been when they heard this great principle enunciated. They were well aware of its force in nature, but they never dreamt it ought to be applied to their own lives. We now know differently. But do we act up to our knowledge? Remember, if we live for self we live in vain.

#### SUFFERING.

##### BIBLE "EXCEPTS." No. 10.

"And except that the Lord had shortened those days,  
no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake,  
whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days"  
(Mark 13. 20) .

THAT is to say, however dark the days might be, and however heavy the weight of sorrow pressing upon us and the bitterness of the cup of suffering we are drinking, things not only might be, but would be, worse, were it not for the controlling hand of an almighty and loving Heavenly Father. God's people are always the special object of His care. "But for the elect's sake"—"but for the sake of God's own people those days will be cut short" (Weymouth Version). Ah, yes! there is always an "except" in suffering. There is a Hand on the affairs of this world, controlling the events of life, working, scheming, and planning on behalf of His people. The Lord's own are never left to the mercy of the enemy of souls, or to circumstances. The days of darkness and of sorrow have been shortened for our sakes. This will be actually the experience of all who will be called to pass through the awful Tribulation days; it is the present-day experience of all the Lord's own, for it is through much tribulation we enter the kingdom. Let us illustrate this from real life.

Bending over the suffering man of God, just then in the grip of a paroxysm of pain, the

doctor, though inured to the sight of suffering, was strangely moved, and exclaimed, "Surely Hell cannot be worse than what you are suffering!" "There is no wrath in this," was the calm reply of the suffering one. Splendid! Not only did the sick one recognise that, through Christ, he had been saved from the wrath to come, but he was assured that for some all-wise purpose the Lord had permitted the affliction. He kissed the Hand that was smiting him. He did not rack his soul by questions of, "What have I done that I should suffer like this?" and the like. He rested on the fact that there was love and not wrath in his cup of suffering. Here was the "except."

A worker had just lost his only daughter, a sweet, winsome maid of seventeen summers, the very light of his eyes. Only a wee while before the mother, too, had passed away to the Home beyond. Desiring to speak a word of comfort, a fellow-worker remarked to the bereaved one: "My brother, you have indeed been called to pass under a heavy cloud, and to drink a bitter cup of suffering." "Thank you for your sympathy," was the reply; "there is suffering----true; but, thank God, there is no cloud." Praise the Lord! This is what grace does. There was an "except" in that sorrow: suffering, but no cloud. There was a blessed consciousness of the Master's presence in the valley of suffering, so much so that he could say:

"Days of darkness still come o'er me;—  
Sorrow's paths I often tread;  
But the Saviour still is with me,  
By His hand I'm safely led"

The street in which the house stood was temporarily softened to secure quiet, and the sick room was darkened. Bending over the patient, the visitor asked: "What do you do when the paroxysm is coming on?" The reply was: "I ABANDON MYSELF TO PAIN AND—TO CHRIST." Why that suffering was allowed was a mystery. But there was an "Except" in it, for it is written: "In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His Presence saved them;" and again, "I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee."

It was indeed a bewildering case. After a lifetime of holy and devoted service for God and the people, to be cut down by cancer! and the hearts of many were filled with strange questionings. But not so the sufferer—she was calm and quiet in soul and buoyant in spirit, and to visit her was a real means of grace. Someone had sent her a leaflet, and she handed it to me, assuring me it was indeed her own experience. It was called "PILLOWS OF COMFORT," and was as follows: "An aged sufferer dying from cancer, had been made more comfortable by three pillows being placed under his head. A friend, calling and inquiring, 'How are you to-day?' he replied, 'Very comfortable indeed. See ! I lie on three pillows. They remind me of three pillows on which my soul is resting.' Putting his hand on the undermost one, he said, 'This is the pillow of God's Infinite Wisdom; the second is the pillow of God's Infinite Power; and the third and top one is the pillow of God's Infinite Love.'" What a glorious "Except" this was in the valley of sorrow and suffering.

He was an out-and-out Christian, and an enthusiastic worker, delighting in deeds of love and mercy, but consumption had laid him low. There he lay upon his bed, weak in body, and though generally bright and cheerful to-day he had a drooping and disconsolate spirit. "You see, it's just like this," said he, "here I am, though quite a young man, yet, so far as service for God is concerned, just a useless log. It does seem hard that I should be denied the privilege of serving God, and doing something for the One Who has done, and is doing, so much for me." And this was spoken in such a mournful tone. "But, my friend, yea, and all who make similar laments, are making a great mistake," I replied. "True, you are shut in by your illness, but, thank God, not shut out from service. The fact is, we must reconsider and reconstruct our conceptions of what constitutes true service. Have you not heard Milton's famous lines concerning service, 'Those also serve who only stand and wait.' How true this is! A servant serves her mistress just as much when silently standing in her presence awaiting her pleasure as when bustling about the house. She also serves though she only stands and waits. The time has been when you were able to hurry here and there in happy service for your King; but now He is bidding you to quieter service. Have you not heard of the talent of silence? In past days you exercised other talents; now He is calling you to trade with this. It is now your inexpressible privilege to wait upon your God in a happy, listening silence. Then another branch of service is open to you. In Luke 2. 37, we read of one woman, though of a great age, and consequently unable to buzz about in busy service, yet 'served God with fastings and prayers night and day.' Perhaps you never thought that praying, for others was real and valued service, yet such is indeed the case." Ah! this sad soul found there was an "Except" in his cup of suffering, and, though he had to spend his days lying on his back, discovered that he, too, could render important service.

#### DEPENDENCE.

#### BIBLE "EXCERPTS," No. 11

"Thou couldest have no power at all.....  
except it were given thee from above" (1 John 19, 11).

A Retired merchant, who formerly lived in Southport, hit upon an ingenious plan of keeping himself humble and ever in remembrance of his indebtedness to, and dependence upon, God. Amongst the many elaborately furnished rooms in his costly mansion was one furnished in simple style--sanded floor, old fashioned hearth-rug, settle, fender, and chairs—just a copy of the humble cottage home he first had when he began married life as a labourer. In this room he frequently sat just to remind himself of his once lowly position, and to keep himself humble and lowly before the Lord, Who had so wondrously blessed his commercial labours with such conspicuous success.

We all need to be kept lowly respecting our mental, physical, and spiritual attainments. It is good for the Lord's people to frequently sit before Him, and recall to mind their once loathsome and degraded condition, giving all glory to the One Who alone has made them different to others. It would be well if we, as a nation, would sit in reflective mood; and, remembering our once uncivilized and degraded condition, and how, through the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and all its attendant blessings, we have so been lifted up that now we form an empire on which the sun never sets, and have also become

one of the dominant nations of the world and then give all the glory to Him. The study of national history is one method of cultivating the humble and lowly spirit. Think for a moment of the prevalent popular watchword in connection with the late lamentable war, viz., that all we required for the successful prosecution of the war were men, money, and munitions. As we saw this placard everywhere, we asked ourselves the question, "What about God? Is He not needed?" Oh, in our eagerness after the material forces required by our beloved King and country for the successful completion of the war, we were in grave danger of forgetting the one real essential--God, GOD.

Pilate boastfully spoke to our Lord of his power and might, when the Master broke silence by a sudden flash of bold rebuke to remind the proud and arrogant Roman governor and all his tribe in all lands and all ages, of man's utter dependence upon God. "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above." And it seems as if this bold reminder that all power is derived from God, and that its exercise should be guarded and guided by His will and used for His purpose, sobered and somewhat subdued the haughty Roman. Ah, it does not do to forget this "Except" of dependence upon the Lord!

Are you, in the enjoyment of physical power, revelling in bodily health and vigour? Pray remember it was God Who gave you your being and Who sustains you in health daily. The very breath you breathe is a gift from Him. One gentle snap of the silver cord by that Divine Hand and you cease to live. Pray forget not that thou couldest have no bodily strength and vigour at all except it were given thee from above.

Perhaps you possess great mental powers, and have, or are, acquiring vast stores of knowledge hidden to others. Problems that baffle those of lesser mental caliber form no difficulty to you. Whence has come these great receptive powers? Here is the Divine declaration to you through His Word: Thou couldest have no mental power except it were given thee from above. Surely you will bow before Him in humble acknowledgment of this fact?

Maybe you hold some position of trust and responsibility, having others under you; you may be either a manager, magistrate, or ruler of some sort, or an employer of labour. Pray, what think you, is the meaning of this Scripture: "Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south." Then where does it come from? "From above." Thou couldest have no governmental power except it were given thee from above. It was the Lord Who raised you to your present position.

This is applicable to the Lord's people. Perhaps you are a Christian and rejoice in the fact that you are not living in the shallows as so many are, but that you are living the deeper life, and possess a knowledge of the Word and of Divine things hidden to many. Give Him the glory.

To sum up: Success, promotion, knowledge, authority, growth of influence, are all gifts which God keeps entirely in His own keeping. Have you recognised that "every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above?"

DELIVERANCE.  
BIBLE "EXCEPTS," No. 12.

"How can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house" (Matt. 12. 29).

As my Aunt Matilda Jane said when the doctor told her she had a nasal catarrh: 'It is a common cold in the head. and I haven't sent for you to christen it, but to cure it.' In the moral and spiritual world there is far too much christening and too little curing. Of course the christening is all right and good in its place. A satisfactory christening is really the first step to curing. A doctor cannot prescribe for a patient until he has made a right diagnosis. But it is quite one thing to christen, and another thing to cure, as thousands sorrowfully know. In dealing with the sins and ills of mankind, our adorable Lord makes at the same time a perfect diagnosis, and proposes to make a perfect cure. In this "Except" we have a clear illustration of this. The trouble with the unregenerate is that the mighty evil one is strongly entrenched in the citadel of the natural heart, and the only hope is in the coming of a stronger than he to put him to flight. That One has come, and is ready to deliver all who come to Him in repentance and faith.

This "Except" is really a simple little parable. Here is a house or palace tenanted by a strong man armed; before possession can be secured, and his goods cleared out, the strong man must first be overcome and expelled. A poor man, blind and dumb, was brought to the Lord Jesus. He was in this deplorable state through demon possession. The Lord cast the evil one out and the dumb spake. Our Lord's enemies had to admit that a miracle had indeed taken place, but they tried to explain it away by an absurd and preposterous statement. In reply, our Lord pointed out the folly of division (verse 25), how unlikely that Satan would blunder thus (verse 26), and that, instead of co-operating with sinners, he was arrayed against them (verse 29) . Our Lord's heart overflows in pity for these reckless slanderers who made so hideous a charge, and He warns them that they are coming near the edge of a precipice—that their blindness is hurrying them towards a sin which hath never forgiveness (verse 31).

In this declaration our Lord throws a dim light into the dark world of supernatural evil, and by thus lifting the curtain a little we see the dark beings at work. The strong man is Satan; the stronger than he the Lord Himself; the house, both this world and also the unregenerate heart.

I. The World is the Strong Man's House. We usually say that Satan resides in Hell; by Ephesians 6. 11 and 12, we see that the earth and the air form his present abode. Satan got possession of this world at Adam's fall. In Adam's fall Satan gained the crown God had placed on Adam's brow. And our Lord did not deny the usurper's claim to have the right to give all the kingdoms of the world (see Luke 4. 5-8) . How can he be ejected? Our "Except" is the answer. Satan suffered an awful defeat at the Cross (John 12. 31). The sentence upon the enemy has been pronounced and made known, and by and by, when the Lord Jesus comes again, will be executed. The final victory is certain. The Stronger is coming again, and will bind and expel him (see Rev. 20). May that day be hastened!

II. The Human Heart is the Strong Man's House. In our "Except" we have a solemn view of the condition of unredeemed man. The sinful soul is a palace, though in ruins (Luke 11. 21). Mankind through sin has become the very home and dwelling place of Satan. Why, the presence of his goods proclaim the fact of his presence. Have you ever pondered over I John 5. 17, R .V .: The whole world lieth in the evil one." The word "Ix" is the same word used elsewhere of Christians when they are said to be "In Christ." Just as the Christian is united to Christ, so the natural man is united and possessed by Satan. Then note the word "lieth." It could be rendered "lieth asleep." It is a condition of unconsciousness. The saved ones are in the Lord's everlasting arms, whilst the great mass of unsaved humanity is in the arms of Satan, lulled to a false sense of security. Is not Ephesians 2. 1 and 2 very impressive: The spirit that now worketh an the children of disobedience?" "Thus Satan imparts his wisdom and strength to the unbelieving in the same manner as the power of God is imparted to the believer by the Holy Spirit. This impartation of energizing power from Satan is not toward a limited few who might be said, because of some strange conduct, to be possessed of a demon; but is the common condition of all who are yet unsaved."

#### DELIVERED IN THREE TENSES.

IN a prayer meeting one with fervour prayed: "Lord, make us grammatical Christians!" when he really meant "genuine." No sooner was this petition presented than another prayed: "O God, Thou hast blessed us in th past tense; Thou art doing us good in the present tense, and in the future tense Thou wilt save us to the end." All who really trust the Lord Jesus become "grammatical" Christians by being saved in three tenses.

I. Threefold Deliverance in Relation to sin.

1. Our PAST. Deliverance from guilt of sin, through Christ's atoning death.
2. Our PRESENT. Deliverance from power of sin, through His intercessory life in the Glory.
3. Our FUTURE. Deliverance from the presence of sin, when He comes for us.

II. Threefold Deliverance in Relation to Trouble. As Paul, so are we, often in trouble of various kinds. Yet He delivers in all three tenses.

The Great Salvation.

#### The Great Salvation. SAVED WITH DIFFICULTY.

And if the righteous scarcely (with difficulty) be saved. where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear" (1 Peter 4. 18).

It has been thought that, as Peter wrote his first epistle ten years before the destruction of Jerusalem, the above was a prophecy. We do know that when Cestus Gallus came against that city, many of the Lord's people were shut in it; when strangely he raised the siege for a little while, the Christians immediately departed to Pella, in the dominion of King Agrippa, an ally of Rome, and there they were in safety. They had barely time to leave

the city when the Roman army returned under the command of Titus, and never left the place till they had destroyed the temple, razed the city to the ground, and slew upwards of a million of its wretched inhabitants. This may be so, yet we are quite sure that the verse has a much deeper application than the one just referred to. It has a reference to the subject of salvation, and points out that we are saved with difficulty.

"Scarcely" does not mean that there is the least degree of uncertainty about our salvation. The believer's salvation is assured in Christ; he is in present enjoyment of salvation, and is as sure of reaching the home beyond as if he was already there. Neither does it mean that though our ultimate salvation is assured, we shall just to say get there, as a shipwrecked mariner scarcely gains the shore on a plank. No doubt that will be the character of the home-going of many, but it is not God's ideal for s. Read 2 Peter 1 . 11. He desires that we should have an abundant entrance--to go sweeping through the gate, not crawling through. As one has well said, if there are any back seats in Heaven, they were all taken up long, long ago. The word "scarcely" really means "with difficulty." That is the rendering in the Scofield Bible. "If a good man is only saved with difficulty" (20th Cent.). "And if it is difficult even for a righteous man to be saved" (Weymouth version) . The word "scarcely" is used in Acts 14. 18 and Acts 27. 7 in the sense of something only done with difficulty. And there are three difficulties we may mention.

I. Attributes. God had a difficulty about our salvation with Himself, on account of His attributes. In the Lard's parable of the wicked husbandmen there is a single sentence pregnant with meaning: "What shall I do?" Here God is portrayed as in a dilemma. We often speak of the simple plan of salvation, and thank God, it is simple and plain, But there is a danger of thinking slightly of it on that account, a danger of forgetting in the thought of the simplicity the difficulty of salvation. Simple things often cost a great deal. It takes a genius to produce a simple commodity that becomes a boon and blessing to mankind. The simple plan of salvation was only wrought out after much trouble. The difficulty lay within Himself. He had no difficulty in loving us, neither had He any difficulty in inducing Himself to lay bare His arm on our behalf. The trouble lay with His attributes, particularly those of Mercy and 'truth. Mercy clamoured for man's salvation, whilst Truth and Justice demanded man's condemnation\_ In Psalm 85. 10 we are told of the meeting of Mercy and Truth: "Mercy and Truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." This is a prophecy that was fulfilled at the Cross. In the parable we have already referred to, that of the Wicked Husbandmen, the problem was solved by the sending of the Son. Oh, the wisdom of God! Well might Paul in Ephesians 1. 7, 8, magnify the prudence of the Lord in the evolving of the scheme of redemption. So wise and prudent has He been in solving this great difficulty that Heaven marvels and Hell quakes. Even the Devil cannot find a flaw in the Divine programme of redemption. Every Divine attribute is now at work for man's salvation.

II, Stubbornness. God solved the great difficulty concerning His attributes, only to be confronted by another, the difficulty with the unrighteous owing to their stubbornness. He desires the salvation of man, but man, left to himself, desires it not, though in desperate need of t. And pray remember our Lord's delicacy. He never forced Himself upon any man. "About the fourth watch of the night He cometh unto them, walking upon the sea,

and would have passed by them (Mark (. 48). And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went, and He made as though He would have gone further" (Luke 24. 28) . Yes, He would not force Himself upon them, but waited their invitation. But the difficulty with man's stubbornness He has solved in the case of multitudes to-day, thank God. By His Holy Spirit and by His mighty Word, and by His servants, He lays siege to the city of Mansoul. Have you surrendered yet to His love?

III. Waywardness. God has also a difficulty with the righteous, owing to their waywardness. If the stubbornness of the unrighteous presents a formidable difficulty to the Lord, what shall we say of the difficulty owing to the waywardness of the Lord's own saved people? Lot vexed his righteous soil] through living in Sodom, but was also a sore trial to his Lord, and only with difficulty could be rescued from the doomed city. And what a trouble the Lord had with wayward Peter: and what a lot of trouble He has with all of us, too. The statement in the Scripture at the head of this article settles, once for all, the question of salvation beyond this life. If God finds the salvation of the individual so difficult a matter now, with the Holy Spirit's co-operation, and the aid of the Holy Book and good men, what hope can there be of salvation in Hell, where there are noru' of these aids?

#### SAVED THROUGH FAITH.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16. 31) .

"Because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20. 29).

How often the words of Mrs. Luke's children's hymn, "I think when I read that sweet story of old," are on our minds and hearts, Especially have we lingered on the sentence:

"I wish that His hands had been placed on my head,  
That His arms had been thrown around me;  
And that I might have seen His kind look when He said,  
'Let the little ones come unto me.'"

Under the influence of the thought that the contemporaries of the Man, Jesus Christ, were more fortunate in seeing and hearing Him than we of the present day, with a sigh of regret, feeling that though the highest blessedness cannot be ours, the second-best may be, we say:

"Yet still to His footstool in prayer I may go,  
And ask for a share in His love. "

But are we right? Listen to the Lord's own declaration: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." This surely demolishes the common and prevailing notion. Christ counted all those then living who had not seen Him and yet had believed as more blessed than the others who believed because they had seen. Thomas saw and was blessed, for every one who believes is blessed. Yet this was not the supreme blessedness.

The highest blessedness of all is reserved for those who cannot see Him with the eyes of flesh. And for reasons we shall presently notice.

Before considering the nature of the blessedness, shall we not put in a good word for Thomas, for surely he has been hardly dealt with. His name is now synonymous for doubt and for unbelief. Pray, remember, that when he said, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe," he was only asking for the same evidence the others had received. They had seen the Lord and the tragic marks of His passion, and believed, and he desired the same evidence. Instead of scolding him, we ought to pity him. By absenting himself from the gathering of disciples, he missed the sight of the Lord: and, unable to accept their testimony, for eight days he was sad and sorrowful whilst the others were rejoicing. Sometimes we wonder what had kept him away from that gathering. Being of a pessimistic turn of mind, perhaps he was away nursing his grief and disappointment over the capture and death of the Lord. What a mistake is this ! Yet how many absent themselves from the meeting for prayer or worship for the very same reason. It is well to notice that he did not get relief from his crushing sorrow until he gathered together with his fellow-believers. Irregular attenders at the house of prayer—listen ; Christ did not appear to Thomas until he was in the company of his fellow-disciples! We must attend the place of assembly even when we feel least inclined to do; and most certainly we shall not return to our homes empty, for the Lord will meet with us and speak the comforting and delivering word. This incident is of great dispensational interest. For Israel, as a nation, stands now precisely where Thomas stood. Though many Gentiles and individual Jews have believed and are believing in Him Whom they have not seen; yet Israel, as a nation, Thomas-like, will only believe when they see. This is the teaching of Zech. 12. 10.14 and Rev. 1. 7. But theirs will not be the highest blessedness. That is ours.

Those who see not, yet believe, are most blessed, because

1. Their faith is the real and genuine article. A faith which exists by seeing is not of the most robust nature.
2. It is a faith which honours Christ, because it is satisfied with the evidence of his resurrection and being which He counts as quite sufficient.
3. It is a faith which honours the Word. We sometimes say that the world hangs upon nothing. True. And yet it is better to say that the world hangs upon the Word of God, for "He upholdeth all things by the Word of His power" (Heb. 1. 31).
4. It is a faith which leads to sight, to spiritual vision. Thomas considered sight as an aid to faith; he was mistaken, for faith is an aid to sight. Some speak of "a blind faith," but this is wrong, for real genuine faith has eyes to see, hands to grapple with, and feet to run by. How suggestive are the words of the Psalmist: "I had fainted unless I had believed to see." Seeing is not believing. The believer sees more on his knees than the non-believer of keenest intellect can discern by standing on tiptoe.

5. It is by faith which leads to the blessed state of justification and salvation.

#### SAVED BY GAZING.

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten,  
when he looketh upon it, shall live" (Num. 21. 8).

LIFE for a look. True; but what kind of a look? Remember, sight is a gift, but seeing is an act. There is a great difference between a glance and a gaze. Your attention is drawn to something in which you have no interest; you look and turning away, immediately forget what you have seen. That was a mere glance. You are walking in a picture gallery. A friend draws your attention to some notable work of art. You glance at it, then taking a seat, gaze upon it, and your gaze discovers what is entirely hidden to a mere glance. The bitten Israelite received life not for a glance, but for a gaze. According to Dr. Young, the word in the original translated "beheld" in verse 9, is very strong and definite, and could be rendered ".when he beheld attentively." No; the Lord has promised life- not merely for, but in a look. This Dr. Watts recognised. When did he say the Cross became wondrous to him, and for which he counted gains of losses? When he had surveyed it.

"When I survey the wondrous Cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died.

You know what it is to survey. You have seen men with measuring lines and rods, and delicate instruments on tripods, measuring and surveying every inch of the ground, and noting every hill and dale. Have you ever surveyed the Cross? You have, of course, given it a passing thought; but have you ever, after reading the account of our Lord's passion recorded by the four evangelists, closed the book, and shutting your eyes, given one hour to gazing at it with the eyes of the mind? If so then let me tell you what first happens—you will be bitten, for

I. There Is a Bite for a Gaze, the bite of an awakened conscience. In the case of the Israelites, only bitten ones looked; in our case, we are bitten by looking, bitten by an awakened conscience, by the Word of God, and by the Spirit of God. It is at the Cross all true penitence begins. It is when we see the goodness of God as revealed in the Cross, that we are led to genuine repentance. It is strange but true, that we need, for our soul's awakening, to see our sins, not in ourselves, but in another. Let us illustrate. Here is a young- man, who has never realised his sins, though he has often suffered from them, and has often been reprimanded by his parents. But one day, whilst sitting at the fireside, he notices a look in his mother's face, sees the lines of care about the mouth and brow, and the truth flashes upon him: That is what my sin has done; she is suffering because of my sin. And his heart is broken. Have you ever asked why He went to the Cross? Not for His own sin ; not because He could not avoid that bitter experience. Gazing at that marred visage, has not the truth flashed into your mind: "That is what my sin has done." It is as we gaze at the Cross that a sword pierces our very soul, and we know for the first time what is true penitence.

II. There is also a Death for a Gaze. We sometimes say, "He died that we might live." Quite correct. Yet it is equally true to say that He died that we might die. It is finely expressed in that verse:

"Once I was (lead in sin, and hope within me died;  
But now I'm dead to sin, with Jesus crucified. "

Cowper wrote a haunting sentence: "The Cross once seen is death to every vice." The young fellow referred to who saw what his sin was doing in his loved mother would surely have done with sin. Repentance is not mere sorrow for sin, but being sorry enough to quit it. It is at the Cross we loathe our sins and turn from them to God.

III. There is Life for a Gaze. "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when lie looketh upon it, shall live." It did come to pass in the experience of multitudes that day; and it still comes to pass in the experience of all who similarly look to the Cross to-day, for our Lord claims this as a picture of the salvation we find in Him. Looking is the simplest thing in the world. Almost all knowledge comes through looking. We look at the physical world, and are taught what nature has to teach; we look at books, and learn what printing has to teach us; we look at the Cross, and by gazing upon it there is life, life eternal. Therefore we are bidden to do What all can easily do.

"There is life for a look at the Crucified One,  
There is life at this moment for thee;  
Then look, sinner, look unto Him and be saved,  
Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.

Look! Look! Look and live!  
There is life for a look at the Crucified One,  
There is life at this moment for thee. "

#### SAVED AND JUSTIFIED.

"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4. 3).

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16. 31).

A LARGE tenement house was on fire some years ago. It was thought that all had been saved, when, to the horror of the rescuers and spectators, two children appeared at the topmost window. The staircase was a roaring furnace, and all means of egress was thus cut off. What could be done? Quickly strong men got hold of a stout blanket, and holding it taut to break their fall, shouted to the children to jump. But all that the bairns did was to look out with frightened eyes. Meanwhile the fire was hissing and roaring, and leaping from floor to floor, until it seemed to clasp the entire fabric in its fiery embrace. "Jump! Jump!! Jump!!!" yelled the people until they were hoarse, but all to no purpose. Just then a man came round the corner. In a moment he took in the whole situation. Stepping quickly forward he cried, "Jump!" and the children instantly obeyed, and they were

saved. Going up to him, the would-be rescuers asked how it was that the children had jumped directly he gave the command, whilst all their entreaties were useless, "I'm their father," he said.

What was it that saved the children? Blankets? Hardly. Obedience? Not altogether. It was faith in their father that led them to trust his word. It was through faith they were saved. Believing in their father they were enabled to believe on him. The faith that saves is the faith that believes on and not merely in: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." In the Gospel specially written in order that men might believe, viz., John, in the R.V. in every instance but one (John 14. 1) the confidence we are exhorted to place in Him is faith on Him. Many say they believe in the Lord Jesus, but they have never yet believed on Him. This is the one vital step.

How subtle is the enemy. In the biography of Dr. Andrew Bonar, is this confession: "I resolved to enter upon the study of Divinity. My chief motive was the indistinct hope and belief that thereby I should be more likely to find salvation." He soon found out his mistake and saw that faith was necessary. He was then tempted to trust his own faith. "He showed me I was resting my hope upon my belief, not upon the Object of that belief, and not drawing joy from that Object."

"That whosoever believeth, may in Him have eternal life" (John 3. 16, R V.). I have sometimes been inclined to think that faith is greater than love. Love is sometimes given to the unworthy, but that is never true of trust. As soon as trust finds that it has been misplaced it dies. The prodigal son or daughter is loved by the suffering parents though they may not be able to trust them. But 1 Cor. 13. 13 is decisive. Yet faith has the precedence. An Irish class loader, in the middle of last century, called three times on a poor woman, and on his third visit she said: "Oh, sir, I do not love God." "What have you to do with loving God," he replied. "He requires it not in your present state, but to fear Him. How can you love until you apprehend His love to you? This you cannot do until you believe. It is folly to think of loving God before you obtain pardon and get the virtue of the covenant blood to wash away sin." She said: "Sir, I never understood it before." Like many others, she thought it was necessary to love God before she could trust Him; whereas faith must precede love to God.

Have you ever noticed the value of the conjunction "and" in relation to faith. The first blessed result of faith is shuddering. "The devils also believe and (literally) shudder" (James 2. 19). Salvation begins with a shudder. When the sinner trembles at the thought of personal sin and uncleanness, and the goodness and holiness of outraged Deity, there is great hope. The second blessed result of faith is justification. Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4. 3). The third blessed result of faith is salvation. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Many have a difficulty about faith. So had Frank Crossley, that great engineer and philanthropist, of Manchester. A great sorrow led him to pray, and, says his biographer, "through the Praying there came believing." And soon he was rejoicing in the Saviour.

SAVED BY HOPE.

"For we are saved by hope" (Rom. 8. 24).

Is this correct? I thought we were saved by faith! To say the least, one cannot help being startled when first this statement is read and noticed. What a man Paul was for gripping the attention of his hearers and readers! There is nothing commonplace in his writings. And it is good thus to have our attention arrested, and our thoughts ripped. Remember, this is the statement of one to whom the doctrine of Justification by Faith was no mere doctrine, but a blessed personal experience. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," was his word to the Philippian jailer. Salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus was so preached by the apostle that none have ever excelled him. Not only is this a statement by one loyal to the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, but it is a message to those already in a justified state, as its position in the Epistle indicates. Thus are we introduced by St. Paul to the sweet and loving ministry of hope. Hope is the great lever that lifts the world. Rob a person of hope, and at once you paralyse the mainspring of action. Let us definitely hope. Hope has to do with the unseen future. It is a God-given assurance concerning the future. "Faith appropriates, but hope anticipates; faith looks backward and upward; hope looks onward. Faith accepts, but hope expects." Hope has been called "the balm and lifeblood of the soul," 4o vital is it. The various renderings give three tenses. "For we are saved by hope" (A.V.).

"For by hope we were saved" (R.V.). "It is in hope that we have been saved" (Wey.). "For our salvation lies in hope" (C. & H). "In this hope we were saved" (20th Cent.). Thus we have the three tense';, past, present, and future. All are right, though what harmonises with the context is the ministry of hope concerning the future.

I. What Hope has Done in the Past. "For by hope were we saved." Hope has a very great deal to do in our salvation. The apostle does not say "we hope we are saved," but "we are saved by hope," which is an altogether different thing. There is no such vagueness concerning the salvation Paul referred to--he speaks of a salvation already received and enjoyed. "Saved" is a medical phrase; to save means to make or to keep sound. The first condition of recovery is hope in its possibility. Despair often renders the skill of the best physician unavailing. Faith has no chance of doing us any good if hope has not visited us beforehand. Like the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, the sinner lies battered and bruised by the highway of life, despairing of ever being healed and saved. But hope comes as a ministering angel whispering words of encouragement, pointing out the glorious possibilities. Then, when the angel of hope has kindled hope in the breast, faith comes along and easily leads the once hopeless one to the Saviour. Most sinners corm to Christ supported on one side by faith :end on the other by hope. Praise God,

None need perish.  
All may live, for Christ has died."

Now note, what hope has to say about the future: "For our salvation lies in hope.-Hope, having led the sinner to Christ, does not have him, but speaks constantly of a glorious future, declaring that though our salvation has not yet been fully realised here, it will be in the great time to come. In God's great scheme of redemption there is not only a new

heart for us (which all His people have now), but a new body. We possess; much, but there is more to follow both here and in the great future. It is always "more to follow."

II. What Hope Does in the Present. "For we are saved by hope," i.e., Kept saved by hope. To be saved means not only to be made, but to be kept, sound. "For we are saved by hope," that is to say, kept, preserved, sustained in our trials by hope. Richard Baxter, the Puritan preacher and writer, suffered all his life with a weak and ailing body. Often he was tempted to wish he had never been born. What kept him from it? Listen to his testimony: "What should support and comfort me under my bodily languishing and pains, my weary hours, and daily experience of the vanity and vexation of all things under the sun, had I not a prospect of the comfortable end of all? I, that have lived in the midst of great and precious mercies, have all my life had something to do to overcome the temptations of wishing that I had never been born; and had never overcome it, but by the belief of a blessed life, hereafter." Richard Baxter was saved by hope. So will it be with the Lord's people. They have to meet many storms and suffer many hardships, but are cheered at the bright prospect ahead:

"Hope, like the gleaming taper's light,  
Adorns and cheers our way;  
And still as darker grows the night,  
Emits a brighter ray. "

#### SAVED BY REGENERATION.

"According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration,  
and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3. 5).

IT was indeed a pitiful case. There the young woman lay in the great hospital apparently dead to all around her. She had a loving husband and comfortable home, but the life and strength seemed ebbing away. At last the doctor decided that the only remedy left was transfusion of blood. But who would submit to this weakening operation? Her husband, a strong, healthy man, out of love to his wife, willingly offers himself. Warm, rich, vigorous blood was taken from him and infused into the almost lifeless form of the patient, and she recovered—saved by transfusion of life.

Something like that was in the mind of the writer of Titus 3. 5. By nature ours is a pitiful case. Unlike the poor woman referred to, we have not even a spark of spiritual life in us; we are dead through trespasses and sins. Not only are we "without strength," but we are also exposed to the righteous wrath of an outraged God. We have seen how to be saved from the sword of Divine Justice. It is the Blood of Christ that maketh atonement for the soul. Saved by His out-poured life, we need to be saved by His in-poured life. "Men's lives have been prolonged by the transfusion of blood from vigorous frames. The value of the blood of Jesus Christ thus passes into our veins. The Church chose for one of its ancient emblems of the Saviour the pelican, which fed its young, according to the fable, with blood from its own breast. So Christ vitalizes us. He in us is our life." For recovery of the soul He not only has poured out His life for us, but in regeneration, He pours His

life into us, making us partakers of the Divine nature. We, too, require to be saved by transfusion of life. We have faint illustrations of this in nature. As by infusion of new life by the grafting process, the crab-apple tree is saved from its bitterness and uselessness, and the common dog-rose made a thing of beauty, so the soul and life is by the life of God made sweet and beautiful and useful.

Pray observe that this is not "the regeneration of washing," but "the washing of regeneration." The words in each sentence are the same, but in different order, and order here is a vital matter. By way of emphasis, let us repeat that sentence; not "the regeneration of washing," a fiction man is so prone to idolize, but the "washing of regeneration," i.e., the cleansing which we get when we are regenerated, or born again, the cleansing that the new life gives, a life which is given on the ground of the shed Blood. All the baptisms of water in the world cannot cleanse the soul; it is the washing of the Spirit which alone is effectual.

It is important to notice that there must be the application of the precious Blood of Christ before we can receive the life of God. In the Tabernacle and Temple this truth was zealously guarded. Restore the great Laver was reached the brazen altar of sacrifice must first be approached. There is no doubt whatever that the Altar was the first thing encountered. In Lev. 4. 7, it is called "the altar at the door."

Why are the instructions respecting the Laver not given after the altar in Exod. 27, but reserved until chapter 30. 18? To guard the great doctrine of Atonement. Atonement must come before cleansing; the cleansing of the blood before the cleansing of regeneration.

He saves not only by regeneration, but also by renewal. What is meant by renewal? In the words of T. Binney: "By regeneration we understand the commencement of the life of God in the soul of man, the beginning of that which had not an existence before; by renewal the invigoration of that which has been begun; the sustenance of a life already possessed."

Nature in Spring undergoes a mighty renewal. The long, cold, trying winter has gone, and at the call of spring the naked trees put on their garb of glory and beauty, and life in its freshness and attractiveness is peeping through the scarred surface of the ground. Nature is having its periodical renewal. And does not the Christian soul need renewal? Verily, that need is great. Let us seek for an outpouring of His grace, and then we shall be able from experience to say and sing:

"There is Springtime in my soul to-day,  
For when the Lord is near,  
The dove of peace -sings in my heart,  
The flowers of grace appear.

#### SAVING BY LOSING.

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life,  
for My sake, shall find it" (Matt. 16. 25).

IN other words, if we are to save either soul or life we must lose them. What, save my life by losing it! This does, indeed sound strange! Who would have thought this? Every one of the evangelists record this utterance, and this is both a proof of its importance and of the effect it had upon them. Verily, God's way of salvation is altogether different to man's. Here a great principle is enunciated: What I keep I lose; what I lose I retain.

"But how can this be?" you exclaim. We would like to associate John 12. 24 with this Scripture: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Here is a farmer who has a good store of precious grain. He desires to save it, but in order to save it he must lose it. What the farmer sows he keeps; what he keeps in his barn deteriorates by keeping, or is eaten by vermin. If a corn of wheat be not cast into the ground it will for a time abide alone, and then presently cease to exist. The only way of saving, the corn of wheat is by losing it. As in the vegetable world, so in the moral and spiritual world. In Luke 17. 33 our Lord applies this principle to the subject of our salvation, and in Matt. 10. 39 to the subject of Christian service.

I. To Save my Soul I Must Lose It. No one seems to know where the word "soul" came from. Some think it to be an Icelandic word for the sea, meaning that, like the sea, it is mighty, mysterious, unfathomable, and perhaps, billowy. Others say it is from the verb "to see," suggesting that it is the part of our being that thinks, reasons, loves. The soul is that immortal and eternal part of my being; it is "my think;" it is myself.

In the old days of the pirates, when pursued by those sea-pests, to save gold, silver, and valuables, the captain and passengers threw them overboard, where they would be able to find them again; they lost them in order to save them. In times of danger, precious treasures are deposited in banks, and diamonds in transit are put into the captain's care for safety; lost, in order to be saved. Friend, have you yet discovered that you possess a Jewel. of immense value? That jewel is your soul. Many treat their souls as the people of the transvaal formerly treated diamonds, when, not knowing their value, they gave them to their children to play with, and even built them into the mud walls of their farmsteads. The soul is a precious jewel, indeed, and or safety must be lost in God. As the farmer, in order to save his corn, commits it to the keeping of God by placing it in the earth, so we, in order to save our souls, must in the words of Peter, "Commit the keeping of their souls to Him as unto a faithful Creator."

Of course we commit our souls to God, not to be lost in Him in the sense that the Buddhists and Pantheists believe, viz., to be entirely absorbed in Deity, for we ever retain our personality and identity.

Many things lost are never found; not so with our souls. But they are not found as they were lost. The lost seed is found in a glorious harvest. This is also true in respect to our bodies. If the Lord tarries, we may have to lose them in the grave, but on the Resurrection morn we shall have a glorious find (see I Cor. 15. 42-44). But quite as great a change now takes place in the soul hidden in God. Pearls, when they have lost their lustre, regain their brilliancy by being buried in the sea. When we are hidden in God, the lustre of whiteness and purity is regained, by His grace.

II. To Save my Life I Must Lose It. There is the dread possibility of a saved soul and a lost life. That was the case with the dying thief--his soul was saved, but his life had been wasted in the service of sin, and was therefore irretrievably lost. What a grand thing it is for young lives to surrender to the Lord Jesus, and to be lived in His blessed service for His glory! Yet many who turn to the Lord in their youth lose their lives because that, though their souls are saved, their lives have not been fully yielded up to God. Do you know the difference between a piece of coal and a costly diamond? The latter receives the light and then gives it forth, whereas the former takes in and absorbs all the light, and gives none. Our Lord said that John was a "burning and a shining light." We cannot shine without burning, that is, without losing. Samson's wife, in order to save herself and family from burning, betrayed her husband, but the very evil she wished to avoid overtook her. And so, in His application of this principle to service, the Lord, in effect says: "If to follow Me seems to you, as it is, very dangerous, and you decide in order to save your life, not to deny self and take up the Cross and follow Me, the very evil you wish to avoid will overtake you."

#### SAVED BY HIS LIFE.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5. 10).

WHAT, saved by His life? I thought we were saved by His death! This is indeed a startling statement. Saved by His life—which life? The life He lived before the Cross, the life poured out on the Cross, or the life He is now living since the Cross? The answer to these questions gives the message of this study.

If you will carefully scrutinize the text and context you will see that this is a message to reconciled ones, to those who have already been saved by His death. Let this be very clearly understood: the apostle is not referring to the life our Lord Jesus lived before the Cross. That is how some view this text. Many teach that in studying the life of Christ, and seeking to imitate and copy it, we shall be saved. It sounds rather philosophical and attractive to the generality of men, but it will not work in actual experience. As a matter of fact, contemplation of that life, instead of saving, only condemns. All honest endeavourers have to confess:

"Dear Master, in Whose life I see,  
All that I would, but fail to be. "

Contemplation of His life always leads to shame, and is powerless to help. It is also quite clear that the apostle is not referring here to either salvation through the poured-out life, or the poured-in life, though these are glorious truths. This is a message to those who have already been saved by his death, and by infusion of His life.

Rightly understood, this is a sample of Paul's close, clear, and keen reasoning. Look at the Lord Jesus on the Cross, so weak and frail; see what a mighty work He did for us in

that weakness. But lie lives. If He accomplished so much for us in that weakness, what can He not do for us in His untiring energy and unlimited and Almighty strength! You see the apostle is drawing attention to the work the lords. Jesus is now doing for us in the Glory. We do not think as much as we ought of the life He is now living for us. He died to save us; He lives to keep us saved. Let us illustrate this in various ways:

I. As a Patient is Saved by the Life of his Doctor. On the death of a friend or relative, have you never heard the remark that., humanly speaking, if only the old family doctor had been alive, the deceased would have been saved from physical dissolution. And there is a great deal of truth in the assertion. Here is the doctor who has known us all our lives, has attended and pulled us through serious illness, and therefore understands our physical frame as no one else can.

What a desperate state we were in when we first called the Great Physician in We proved indeed that His touch has still its ancient power, for He healed us of our spiritual disorders. But remember that He still lives to keeps us well. Verily His own are saved by His ceaseless skill and care.

II. As a Child is Saved by the Life of the Mother. Humanly speaking, many a motherless child dies prematurely through lack of a mother's loving care. The only sister of a young man known to the writer passed away at the age of sixteen. The mother died eleven years before. She had been grossly overworked and neglected, and he constantly affirms that had his beloved only sister known a mother's care she would have been alive to-day. Praise God, He Who saved us when we first trusted Him ever lives to keep us saved. We are ever the objects of His tender regard. Constantly He is mothering those who trust Him.

III. As an Absent Official is Saved by the Life of a Friend at Court. In Eastern countries enemies plot the disgrace and ruin of an absent official, and happy is he who has a friend at court to defend his interests. Satan is well called the accuser of the brethren, and job 1. 6 hints at the possibility of his admission to the court of Heaven. The adversary could do us immense injury there, but for the fact that we have a Friend at Court.

"There for me the Saviour stands,  
Shows His wounds, and spreads His hands,"

He ever liveth to make intercession for us, and we are saved by His life of intercession from dismissal and disgrace. Ah, thank God, we have indeed a Friend at Court!

IV. As an Army is Saved by the Life of its Commander. History records many a battle lost, and many an army defeated and annihilated, when the General fell mortally wounded. But no shaft of death can ever harm our ever-living Commander. He has passed through the gates of death to immortality; and, as earthly Generals usually select a hill from which to watch the tactics of the enemy, and send reinforcements to and section over-pressed and in danger, so our General is now seated on Mount Zion with His eye

upon us, to succour us in times of danger and pressing need. Saved by His ceaseless vigilance.

"Hold the Fort, for I am coming,  
Jesus signals still;  
Wave the answer back to Heaven,  
By Thy grace we will. "

A man in delirium complained he was deserted, unloved, and uncared for, and all the while his loving wife and the skilful nurse were anticipating every wish, and crying because of his ravings! "But," you say, "the poor fellow was in delirium, and not responsible for his ravings. " Yet there are thousands of poor sinners guilty of the same folly. "No one cares for me," they moan when the Lord died for them, and is now seeking to save, Yea, worse still, sometimes the Lord's own people in despondent moods take up the same complaint when ill the time, he knows, and loves, and cares, and is living His ascended and glorified life specially on their behalf.

NOT SAVED.

"The harvest is passed, the summer is ended,  
and we are not saved" (Jer. 8. 20)

A DEVONSHIRE farmer, reporting to the writer the condition of his crops in his part of the country. said : "Round my way the grass is saved, and the cats and wheat are saved." We thought the suggestion suggestive

Surely no one from Devonshire can wonder what it means to be saved! For the crops to be saved means that they have been severed from the earth and carried to a place of safety for future use; not to be saved means to be left rooted in the ground, left out at the mercy of wind and weather, to die, and to rot.

To be saved by the Lord means that you have been separated from the world, having ceased to draw nourishment from that quarter, and are housed in God's precious barn—Christ—for safety and for service. "The harvest is passed, the summer is ended," and then we hold our harvest thanksgiving services throughout the country because "the crops have been safely garnered and are saved," and we do well in thus acknowledging the goodness of the Lord in this time of the nation's need; but is it possible that any reader, whilst thanking God for the saving of the harvest, has to confess, "Yet I am not saved I" More concerned about the salvation of the crops than the salvation of an immortal soul! Alas, alas, that is only too true in many cases! When shall we place first things first ?

Jerusalem was besieged. The inhabitants, pressed beyond measure, had waited: deliverance, but in vain. They expected the Egyptians to come to their relief, and that in the dry summer season when travelling was easy; but the golden opportunity has passed, and immediate destruction now stared them in the face. "The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved," was therefore the wail of these disappointed inhabitants of Jerusalem. And they merited such disappointment, for they had no right to

seek the help of Egypt; and they had done so in spite of all the prophet Jeremiah's warning. But this will also be the experience of all who do not look to the right place for salvation, for none but the Lord Jesus can do helpless sinners good

Where are you looking for salvation? It is sad to see the look on some people's faces when you ask them that personal and important question, "Are you saved?" There is often: not a look of concern, but of contempt, which is often accompanied by a sneer and mocking laughter. There may be sometimes a look of pity; but it is a pity that you should demean yourself by troubling over such matters. Two evangelists had conducted a successful mission in a country town, and many had received Jesus Christ, and were rejoicing in their new found rest and peace. Two companions out for a walk encountered some converts, and one said sneeringly: "These people say they are saved!" "Oh, indeed," said the other, "I wonder if they got a special revelation?"

More truth is said in jest than some imagine. They had received a special revelation of themselves and the Cross, and also had the threefold witness of the Word, the Spirit, and their changed lives. Ah, that word "saved," once the subject of jest, is now sweet and precious to many of us.

It is sad to think that many a harvest time has come with its golden opportunities, but in many cases the confession yet is, "Not saved." Special evangelistic missions have been held, bringing golden opportunities for deliverance, the harvest time of opportunity had come, a time of ingathering had arrived, yet it passed, and finds you still as you were. Less than twenty years ago a farmer herded a handful of sheep on the golden soil of the Colorado district in the loneliness of a mountain wilderness, and the whole district might have been his almost for the asking. But there he lolled and dreamed away his days, neglectful of the riches over which he trod. Others came to find there one of the richest goldfields known to man, for the gold seems inexhaustible. It is reported that the farmer still lives. He lost his opportunity. "What a foolish man!" you say. Yet there are many greater. Within your reach now is Christ and His unsearchable riches, aye yet you go on in your spiritually impoverished and destitute condition!

But one more golden opportunity has come. If we accept Christ now we will be able to say: "The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, the crops are saved; and I, too, am saved, thank God!"

#### LOOKING (Heb. 12.2).

1. To Christ, for Salvation---A definite ACT.
2. AT Christ, for sanctification—a definite HABIT.
3. FOR Christ, for glorification---a definite Hope.

#### SOME OLD PARABLES THE PEARL OF ALL PARABLES.

Part 1. Luke 15.

IN this series of re-studies of the parables of our Lord, first place must be given to what has been called "The Pearl of all Parables," found in Luke 15.

At first we hesitated to use this title, for, as all parables are equally inspired of God, each separate parable is a pearl. There is a danger in attempting to exalt one portion of Holy Scripture above another. Even the portions of Holy Writ that have not made any special appeal to us individually, are as precious as those that have spoken loudly. The whole of the Divine Library is one big priceless pearl. Yet it hath pleased the Lord to use Luke 15 in Gospel ministry more than other portions, save perhaps John 3. 16. Where is the evangelist who has not found this earthly story with a heavenly meaning of tremendous service in winning the lost. The stammering beginner in Christian service finds it to be the simplest of all subjects to take; the well-seasoned Gospel warrior finds it to be the most profound of all narratives; for in it there is a simplicity of application that appeals to the babe in Christ; and yet, at the same time, there is a whole world of truth that provides thought for the philosopher.

A few general observations are necessary before placing our microscope upon it. Please observe, in Luke 15, we have but one parable in three sections: "And He spake this parable unto them" (verse 3) . Pray note, our Lord called it a parable, not parables. This is important. Even if there were no doctrinal significance, it is wise to follow closely the exact words of Scripture. But there is an important truth at stake. It is one parable in three sections, each portraying the work of one of the Three Persons in the Blessed Trinity. In the story of the Lost Sheep we have a picture of the work of God the Son; in the story of the Lost Coin we have a picture of the work of God the Holy Spirit; and in the story of the Lost Son we have a picture of the work of God the Father.

"Very well," you say, "but should not God the Father come first? Should we not rearrange the sections, putting the lost son first, the lost sheep second, and the lost coin last?"

The way you have presented the question appeals to us, for God the Father should always come first, as is so in the great Apostles' Creed. Yet we must not tamper with the order in which our Divine Lord Jesus related the incidents, even if we do not appreciate the significance. As a matter of fact, there is a deep and vital truth in the order. For in actual experience the sinner's first concern should be the work of the Son, our Divine Saviour; then the Person and glorious offices and ministries of the Holy Spirit; and, finally, the revelation of the Father. Why, our Saviour Himself declared that He was, and is, the way to the Father, and that "no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

This threefold parable has been much misunderstood. Our Lord's object in relating it was not to show who is, or is not, a child of God, but how willing God is to receive all who come to Him; not to show the basis of true forgiveness, but the readiness of God to pardon and receive the most unworthy if truly penitent. To say that this parable declares that every human being is a child of God, and that He is ready to forgive without any atonement, is to put into the chapter what the Lord never intended, and to be guilty of the sin of both adding to, and subtracting from, the Word of the Lord. To read into this

parable what our Lord never intended is simply shocking, and imperils the souls of men.

The immediate object of the parable was to justify Christ's conduct in associating with outcasts. "Then drew near all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him" (verse 1). These Jewish pariahs recognised in the new Teacher a new Friend; they detected in His discourses a new note of sympathy and interest. There was freshness, and power in His utterances. Instinctively they were attracted. "And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying: This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (verse 2). Wondrous statement! He not only received them, but He ate with them. That is to say, He not only desires to save me from my sins, but to save me to His friendship. To receive me and speak the word of forgiveness is amazing grace; but that is but the beginning of the disposal of the riches of His grace; for He desires my friendship and fellowship. To eat bread with anyone means a very great deal in Eastern lands. It is a pledge of friendship; a covenant sign full of significance.

Now in these three sections our Lord pointed out to His objectors how they ought to have acted. as the shepherd sought the strayed and lost one, as the woman sought and rejoiced in the recovery of the lost coin, as the father welcomed and received the prodigal; so ought they to have rejoiced over the return of the publicans and sinners. But instead, they had acted as the elder brother; our Lord Jesus was holding up a mirror so that they might behold themselves.

By the way, here is the rightful point to stress most in this threefold parable. The interest in the parable has mainly centred upon the lost sheep and the lost son, whereas it is clear our Lord meant us to place the emphasis upon the elder brother. But this point must be left for a future study.

A wee girl had parents who never frequented public worship, but insisted upon her attendance, and, moreover, bringing home the preacher's text. One morning she rushed home exclaiming: "Oh, mama, my name is in the Bible!" "But that cannot be," expostulated her parents. "But it is! Why, the preacher announced it. 'This Man receiveth sinners, and Edith with them.'" Only a faulty pronunciation? Ah, more. Can you put your name there? "This Man receiveth sinners, and with them."

## THE PEARL OF PARABLES.

### PART II.

#### Only One Lost. Luke 15.

"WHAT man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness?" (Luke 15. 4), so begins our Lord's matchless story of the lost sheep, the first portion of the Pearl of all Parables.

But why make all that fuss about one, seeing he had ninety-nine left? If he only possessed two sheep, and had lost one, we could have excused his concern and trouble over the lost. But to lose one out of an hundred seems an insignificant loss. Yes, that is how we sometimes reason, but it is false.

The immediate occasion of this Parable was to vindicate our Lord's conduct in associating with outcasts! The Scribes and Pharisees were the unfriendly critics, and the parable was spoken "unto them." He reminded them how the shepherds invariably acted, and that is precisely what I am doing, He said, in receiving, pardoning, and restoring the wanderers.

In likening wayward men and women to sheep, our Lord was using a suggestive and tender figure. For no sheep goes intentionally astray. It just wanders thoughtlessly on and on. In the story of the Prodigal Son, we have the aspect of wilfulness. Whilst there are some who deliberately go astray, the major portion just ramble on. Absorption in the quest for food is one of the causes. With head down, and seldom a look up, the creature wanders on and on, far, far away from the safety of the fold. Absorbed in-the quest after pleasure or gold, the majority of mankind just wander through life, hopelessly lost.

We must return to the question: "Why make all that fuss about one? There were ninety-nine left!" Behind such a question is a devastating thought. We hear of some parents who have lost a little child, one of a large family, and we remark: "Ah, well, they have quite a number of children left, and the loss cannot be as great as if they had only one." In other words, the greater the family, the less the value of the individual. Is that so? If it is, then the thought saddens and disturbs, for I shall begin to think that, because the human family is so great, ~ne can easily be missed; that I am like a needle in a haystack.

But that is a false philosophy. The size of God's family does not effect the preciousness of the individual. That is so in daily life. However large the family, father and mother love and care for each one just as if they were their all. What a comforting thought this is. Though God has millions of human beings under His providential care, He cares for each individual as if that individual was the only one in the world. God's love is not only general, but particular, not only does He love and care for a world, but it is possible for each one to be able to say: "Who loved ME, and gave Himself for ME." Ah, the shepherd missed the one, and went after it.

And this leads to another thought: What is the distinguishing peculiarity of our Christian faith? Not the Incarnation, for other religions have taught that their gods became manifest in the flesh, though there is actually a world of difference between what they term incarnation and that of our Gospel. Not sacrifice, for other religions have their sacrifices. Not worship or Sacred Literature, for worship is common to all religions, and other faiths have their sacred books.

Here is one of the great outstanding peculiarities of our Christian faith—it is the only religion among men that has ever represented God as seeking man. Other faiths represent man as seeking God, which is not true. It is tragic yet true, that "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3. 11). Man apart from grace, does not desire God, so that, when we find within us longings for God, it is a proof that the Spirit of God is at work. In the parable, it was not the sheep that sought the shepherd, but the shepherd who went after the sheep.

How utterly helpless is the wandering sheep. For the sheep differs from all animals in this respect, that when once it has wandered from the flock, it can never find its way back. And our Lord likens man to a sheep. What a suggestive simile. Man, apart from Divine aid, can never find his way back to God. Ah, but the Good Shepherd went after the solitary lost one "until He find it." Oh, what patience and perseverance! "And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing"-what wondrous truth we have here. The shoulder is the strongest part of man, teaching that all the strength of Omnipotence is exerted on behalf of every found one, and that until "He cometh home," until He bears us safe over to the other shore, to the Land of never-ending spring and gladness.

THE PEARL OF PARABLES.  
PART III.  
Lost in the House.

The piece of silver was lost in the house. "Well," say you, "there is nothing remarkable about that, for it is no unusual happening for things to be lost in the home." Quite so; yet when you recognise what the House signifies, you will be startled: in the Church, in the Assembly, and yet lost! That is one startling part of the second portion of the Pearl of Parables (Luke 15. 8-10).

This charming threefold parable was our Lord's apology for loving and receiving the sinful and erring ones. The duty and joy of seeking and finding, He proves three times over to be universal. Now it was most unusual for our Lord to multiply references at one time. This He did, not only to convey the thought that such joy was universal, but for another purpose which we must specify.

One of the most striking features of our Lord's teaching and work on earth was His vindication before men of the worth of man. In those days the value of a man as man had sunk very low. Human life was of so little value that it was thought fitting for men to die by the score in the Coliseum at Rome and elsewhere, simply to amuse a holiday crowd. Those were the days when slavery in its worst form flourished. How cheap was human life? THIS PARABLE THREE TIMES OVER DECLARES THE VALUE OF ONE SOUL, and wherever the Bible is loved and taught, and wherever the God of the Bible is trusted and loved, human life begins to rise in value.

Now it was not merely the Pagan and the Heathen who undervalued human life. The Scribes and Pharisees of Israel esteemed a Publican and others of the despised classes, as of less value than one sheep!. Consequently the first- portion of this parable would have no weight with them. Quite true, they would remark, that a shepherd would be justified in going after one wandering member of his flock, but that does not justify your association with publicans and sinners, for we esteem one sheep as worth far more than one publican or sinner. Very well, our Lord said in effect, but surely you will admit that a small silver coin worth 71d. is fitting to represent the value of one publican? "What woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends

and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost

But what a fuss to make over a lost sixpence! Fancy, being so concerned over its loss that a spring cleaning was set in operation in order to its recovery, and when eventually found, calling her friends and neighbours to celebrate its recovery' is there a woman to-day who would make such a turmoil over a lost coin?

Yes; if that lost piece of silver was to her as to the woman in the parable. In those days at marriage, instead of a gold ring as to-day, the bridegroom presented the bride with a necklace of ten silver coins. To lose even one of those pieces was considered as equal to, or suggestive of, unfaithfulness. Then no wonder the poor woman in the parable became troubled when she discovered her loss, and no wonder her neighbours shared her concern, and no wonder that great exertions were made to discover the lost piece.

Now, the lost coin represents the lost sinner.

I. Lost through Severance. In some way or other, it became disconnected and lost. The union existing between God and man ceased when sin came into the world. Sin cut man from God.

II. Lost, though Still Bearing the King's Image The King's image and superscription makes the coin of value. Man is precious because he bears the image of his Maker\_ He bears and possesses the spiritual attributes of thought and will and moral consciousness, by which he resembles God. The image is worn, marred and almost obliterated by the Fall, yet still there. Though lost, man still bears the image of God.

III. Lost, though in the Home. The sheep was lost through straying away from the fold ; the coin was lost in the fold. That is the one startling feature of this second portion of the Pearl of all Parables. It points out the dread possibility of being a member of a Christian Church, or attending the meeting place, and yet being lost. Lost, yet in the House !

IV. Lost, yet of Real Value to the Former Owner. The great mother-heart of God yearns and longs after His lost ones. And the Holy Spirit is busy seeking the lost, through the candle of God's Word, and by the ministry of up-setting and disturbing Providences.

V. Lost, yet Can be Found in the House. All the holy ministries of the House of Prayer are bent to achieve this purpose.

## THE PEARL OF PARABLES.

### PART IV.

#### The Lost Son.

WE must ever remember in the reading of the Sacred Book that it has an Eastern background. For example, if in our country a younger son came to his father with the

request that he should now receive "the portion of goods that falleth to him" under the terms of his Will, strong words would be spoken and harsh measures taken. In our day division of the paternal estate only takes place on the death of the testator. But in the East, the younger son's request would be considered as -quite a proper thing. "A certain man had two sons : and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country" (Luke 15. 11-13) .

Nothing wrong in leaving home ! Seldom does a youth leave home simply because he has tired of it ; still more rarely because he wishes to lead a life of mere self-indulgence. More frequently It is an honourable purpose. Some leave home for school or college; others to learn a trade in another town, or for marriage. But this young man left home with a wrong motive; he wished to get away from all its wholesome restraints and holy examples. His leaving home was:

I. The Fruit of his Wish to be his Own Master. He wanted to be:  
"Lord of himself—that heritage of woe. "

II. It was Prompted by an Erroneous Conception of Life. He imagined true life to consist in a round of pleasure-seeking, in throwing away of life.

III. It was Prompted by Youthful Rashness and Inexperience. Experience is a hard master, and his fees are heavy.

IV. It Led to the "Far Country" and to Beggary.

"But," you say, "I am not guilty of prodigality or profligacy; I am not eaten up with vice. I am not bankrupt in money or character; I am not it 'waster.' This can have no application to me!" Not so fast, dear friend, have you ever pondered on Augustine's definition of the Far Country? "The far country is forgetfulness of God." This is startling! We may be decent, yet there is a forgetfulness which is the certain proof of spiritual estrangement. Forgetfulness of God is a common malady and a proof we are far from God. "I remembered God and was troubled," was the confession of the Psalmist.

But "he came to himself." What a strange journey! It means, surely, that he had been away from himself; in other words, beside himself—mad. "At last he came to his senses" (20th Century New Testament). In his years of riot he was not himself. It was not the prodigal who was the real man: the real man was the penitent. His coming to himself was followed by coming to his father.

"But while he was holding afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running fell upon his neck, and tenderly kissed him" is Rotherham's rendering of verse 20. He started back home quickly, and allowed no grass to grow under his feet until he drew near the old home, when he hesitated, and came to a standstill—"holding afar off." Why? He had squandered his father's gift, had disgraced himself, and was clothed in

rags. Then there was the harsh elder brother. But let us ever remember that whilst we have sinned in departing from God, we sin more by remaining away from Him. The great sin is departure from the living, loving, merciful God, and this never ceases until we return.

What were the father's gifts to the returned prodigal? Remember He is not satisfied by merely pardoning. God's giving begins and always follows His forgiving. The first gift was the kiss of reconciliation; literally, "He kissed him again and again." Kissing in the East is a pledge of reconciliation and peace. The father gave the kiss before the prodigal uttered a word. Of course his very return was a confession. The father gave the kiss to the prodigal just as he was, in all his rags and filth. He did not postpone the kiss until he had made himself more presentable; no, just as he was he was welcomed. But that was not the end, but the beginning of the gift. The second gift was the best robe. That glorious New Testament expression: "Grace reigning through righteousness" is exemplified here. To forgive him in his rags was grace. But the father could not in righteousness have the prodigal at his table in his rags; he must be clad and decked in a manner suited to that blessed position.

The prodigal was quite prepared to be merely "a hired servant," so unworthy did he feel. But the two following gifts, the ring and the shoes, proved conclusively that he was to be treated as a son. No servant wore a ring, or entered the presence of master or mistress clad in shoes. The slave went unshod and without a ring. Captives had their shoes taken from them (Isa. 20. 2). When captives were restored to freedom their shoes were restored (2 Chron. 28. 15) .

There is further significance in these two last gifts. The ring surely speaks to us of assurance and delegated authority (Gen. 41. 42; 1 Kings 21.8; Esther 8. 10, Dan. 6. 17; James 2. 2), and the shoes of equipment for the walk of life. Truly the forgiven one must walk as becometh the children of God.

Observe, these gifts were all bestowed at the same time and when a prodigal returns to God now, he receives as much the first day as ever afterwards. His "afterwards" will be spent in more and more discovering the wealth already bestowed, and living in accordance with that wealth.

## THE PEARL OF PARABLES.

### PART V.

#### The Elder Brother.

Who is the Elder Brother? This was a question raised at a Ministers' Fraternal. Like many questions—not so easily settled. Mark you, the question is "Who is?" not "Who was?" There is no doubt whatever regarding what was in our Lord's mind. Luke 15. 2 and 3 is quite sufficient: "And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured ... and He spake this parable unto them." Our Lord had the Pharisees and Scribes in mind when He related this pearl of all parables. No; the question is not "who was" intended, but "who is." We have come to the conclusion that in this story we believers have a warning signal. There is a dread

possibility of believers becoming like the Elder Brother. He represents the carnal Christian.

With most, the interest in the parable is mainly centred in the Prodigal. When you think of Luke 15, what first comes to your mind? I think most would say, "The story of the Prodigal Son." We are sure that our Lord meant the emphasis to be placed upon the elder son. In the first two portions of the parable our Lord showed the Scribes and Pharisees how they ought to have acted; in the elder brother he holds the mirror up to them in order that they might see themselves, for as he acted so had they. To-day, the elder brother stands before us as a representative of carnal believers.

Who is the Elder Brother? The self-righteous sinner? No. He was a son: "Son, thou art ever with me." "I know him, I met him yesterday," declared an old minister at the Ministers' Fraternal, and on his ministerial brethren earnestly urging him to disclose his identity, exclaimed, "I myself," and he then explained that on the previous day, hearing that a very ill-conditioned person had received a gracious visitation of God's goodness, he had felt not a little envy and irritation. Dear fellow-believer, how do you feel when you hear of other brethren, not so well-educated as you, yet their ministry seems more acceptable and much more fruitful than yours? How do you feel, dear fellow-believer, when you learn of another sister's husband making a bigger success in life than yours? What is your feeling, fellow-Christian, when you hear of some notorious Prodigal Son coming to God? Let us answer these questions as in the searching light of God's presence.

The elder brother's spirit is very manifest. "Who is the elder brother?" The carnally-minded believer, not living up to his privileges, and who has lost his first love and his passion for souls. Observe, the elder brother in the story was a member of the family and a servant of his father; and yet what saddens one is his utter joylessness, and he seems scandalized at the gladness shown by others over the returning prodigal. And note the price he had to pay. Such people are shunned. Observe how long the younger brother had returned before the elder brother came in from the field. How long does the killing, dressing, and cooking of a calf take? A few hours must have passed, and yet not a single servant thought it worth their while to go out and inform the elder brother of the return of the wandering one.

#### I. What are the Symptoms of the Disease and Malady of Carnality?

1. A LOST SENSE OF INDEBTEDNESS. "Neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment." Is it possible for a boy to grow up into manhood, without ever being guilty of a single act of disobedience to his father? Never. He forgot he was a pardoned rebel. He had lost all consciousness of transgression. He was sedate and prudent, very correct and proper, yet self-centred and self-satisfied, he had lost the enjoyment of the Divine forgiveness, and had become a stranger to its thrilling joy. What a sad condition he was in! This exactly is the condition of some believers now in our day.

2. A FALSE COMPLACENCY. The elder brother seemingly lived a straight life, but was

self-centred. There was a silly, smug satisfaction with himself, in which no one else shared. This is a feature only too common in our day.

3. THE FOOLISH FORGETFULNESS OF HIS POSSESSIONS. "Thou never gayest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends." Had he any friends? Such gloomy, morose individuals are shunned. "Thou never gayest me a kid." Why, he had two-thirds of his father's kids, and two-thirds of all his father's property. Pray remember that when the younger brother asked for his portion of goods we read, "And he divided unto THEM his living," that means that whilst the younger brother got one-third of his father's possessions the elder received two-thirds. How easily carnal believers forget the infinite resources of Cod's grace, and in consequence live poverty-stricken lives.

4. THE LOSS OF SYMPATHY FOR THE FALLEN. Losing a sense of indebtedness he had no patience with the fallen, and therefore no sympathy. Observe how coarse he had become. In the Divine record of the younger brother's waywardness we read, "And there wasted his substance with riotous living;" but the elder son must be coarse and cruel, and declared to his father, "This thy son—which bath devoured thy living with harlots." Oh, the coarseness! Why are many believers out of sympathy with special evangelistic missions, and out of place in the warm atmosphere of a Revival? They are carnal.

5. THE LACK AND LOSS OF FILIAL LOVE. In this elder brother of the parable the dreadful feature of his character is the apparent lack of affection on his part towards his aged parent. He therefore failed to understand his father. He was a loveless creature. Self-excommunicated; self-punished.

6. A STRANGER TO THE JOY OF LOVING SERVICE. Have you ever noticed the word he used for service? Said he to his father, "Lo, these many years do I SLAVE for thee," as it could be rendered. In Weymouth it reads, "I have been slaving for you." He served most diligently, but only as a slave. His obedience and service all along had been servile, prompted by fear and dread. It was neither filial love nor filial service; it was all irksome, tiresome duty. What a picture of heaps of carnal believers.

II.. And What is the Cure? How did the father in the parable seek to overwhelm and win back his stern, hard, elder son ?

1 . HE REMINDS HIM OF HIS SONSHIP. "Son." Oh, what a world of meaning the father put into that one word! May believers never lose the sense of wonderment in their sonship in Christ, and never forget that they are members of the family of Faith. Don't forget the very high honour He has conferred upon you. Oh, carnal believers, grubbing in the dust of the world, hear the Heavenly Father's reminder--"Son !"

2. HE REMINDS HIM OF HIS PERSONAL LOVE. "Son, thou." He loves all; He loves the world; but He particularly loves you. His love is individual in character.

3.. HE REMINDS HIM OF HIS ABIDING PRESENCE. "Son, thou are ever with me."

4. HE REMINDS HIM OF THE BLESSED ENRICHMENT. "And all that I have is thine. "

5. HE REMINDS HIM OF THE EXISTING RELATIONSHIP, for in answer to the elder brother's, "This thy son," the father replies, "Thy brother."

III. And What shall be my Reply? Should it not be, "Father, Thou art ever with me and all that I have is Thine, for ever and for ever."

#### WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

QUESTIONS Concerning the future are of perennial interest. It is a favourite newspaper stunt in the quiet season, when on account of the lack of tragic happenings, circulation of newspapers seem to be declining. When in correspondence on such a question as at the head of this page is raised, at once letters pour in and the circulation increases. There is no question more popular and more appealing to even "the man in the street."

Some imagine that the Bible has little or nothing to say about the future. What a sad mistake. Why go to so-called Spiritualism for knowledge on these matters? Let us turn to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, found in Luke 16: 19-31.

But is this a parable? Our Lord begins: "There was a certain rich man." Is He not giving history? It seems like it. But though the story may be true, yet it has a lesson for us to-day. Let us note that our Lord does not rebuke possession of wealth, but its heartless, selfish use. Dore, the great artist, most assuredly made a mistake when in seeking to depict this scene he placed a whip in the hands of the rich man. No, there is no hint of cruelty in the story on the part of the rich man towards Lazarus, but of callous indifference. He did not treat the poor man inhumanly, he simply ignored him. In fact the dogs were more sympathetic than he.

The story is soon told. "There was a certain rich man." There is no doubt whatever about his wealth, for he was able to clothe himself with the most costly of garments. "He fared sumptuously every day." "And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus." That name is significant. It is a contraction of "Eliezer," which signifies the help or assistance of God, and declares that this poor man had faith in God. He was not only poor but diseased. "And it came to pass that the beggar died." He died first. No wonder, when we remember his privations and disease. Then the rich man died. There is no account of any burial for the poor man, for probably he was just cast out on the city rubbish heap, but the rich man "was buried." No doubt a very elegant funeral. And that is the end of things? No, that was only the beginning.

It is very striking that although our Lord Jesus knew all about the unseen as no one else did, yet He was silent save for two or three references. In this parable He is most definite. Let us approach the parable with questions and seek for an answer from the narrative.

I. Is there Another Life ? Do we survive after death ? Man revolts at the idea of being dead and done with. He knows there is another life; the knowledge of that being part and

parcel of his make-up. What does this story contribute towards this question? Both the dead bodies were left on this earth, but they themselves, the real individuals, were found in another life They survived after death. They were living, throbbing personalities.

II. What Happens at Death? The godly are carried by the angels into the presence of Christ. The angels are most solicitous for our welfare during life, as Hebrews I . 14 declares, but they take special care of us at the hour of death, ushering us into the Divine Presence.

III. Are we Conscious in the Other Life? In this story they were very conscious. Neither of them were asleep; the rich man painfully conscious of his sufferings, and the poor blissfully conscious of his enjoyment. All the Scriptures have to say about sleep only his application to the body, and not to the soul. The Holy Book declares here consciousness to all, and that immediately following death.

IV. Is there any Difference in the Abodes of the Departed ? Most certainly! This story teaches that there are two places; a place where the dead out of Christ go, and a place where the dead in Christ are found. Abraham's bosom was a Jewish phrase for Paradise. Now we know that Paradise is in the third Heaven, and not as in this story, in the heart of the earth. Study Matthew 12. 40; 2 Cor. 12. 2-4. Without a doubt the transference of Paradise from the heart of the earth to the immediate presence of God took place at our Lord's resurrection, as is shown in Ephesians 4. 8-10.

V. Will we Know One Another in the Other Life? A clergyman's wife asked her husband this question, to which he at once replied: "Why, dear, we know one another down here, and do you for one moment imagine that we shall be bigger fools up there than we are here?" The rich man knew Lazarus. The three disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration recognised Moses and Elijah as the companions of our Lord in that wondrous scene, though Moses had been dead hundreds of years, and hundreds of years had passed since Elijah's translation. Most certainly we shall know one another in the other life. Though the rich man had left his body down on this earth he had eyes with which to see, and a mouth with which to speak.

VI. Any Hope of a Second Chance? There are many who teach that a second chance of salvation will be given after death. What do we learn from this story? That the rich man in Hell did not desire salvation for himself, nor ask for a single spiritual mercy, yet he did desire spiritual mercies for his relatives. There seemed to be no desire whatever in him for any spiritual grace: "As the tree falls, so shall it lie."

VII. Can the Dead Communicate with Us? How can they? Pray read that graphic sentence: "And beside all this between us and you there is a great gulf fixed : so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot: neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." That states no hope of a second chance and no thought of the dead communicating with us. What takes place in Spiritist Séances is not the communication of departed ones with their friends, still in the flesh, but demons who impersonate the

departed and deceive mankind.

VIII. Would an angel or a resurrected person sent back to this earth lead to the conversion of others? The idea that the answer should be in the affirmative is very common, but our Lord put into the mouth of Abraham a very definite word on this matter: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." How the Word of God is honoured here! Oh, the importance of hearkening to the Word of God. How the Bible is exalted in this parable.

IX. In conclusion, will you please notice that the rich man:

1. Awakened to eternal verities, BUT TOO LATE!
2. He saw his own danger, BUT TOO LATE!
3. He prayed, BUT TOO LATE !
4. He became concerned about the salvation of his relatives, BUT TOO LATE!

PRUDENCE.  
LUKE 16. 1-9.

THE problem parable is that found in Luke 16. 1 to 9. It is the most difficult of all the Lord's parables. Few can agree regarding its interpretation. It seems to commend a piece of deliberate roguery as a pattern for Christian people to copy. Hundreds of explanations have been offered, few of which give complete satisfaction. Many have given up in despair all hope of solving the problem, declaring a solution to be impossible. Is there a single thoughtful Christian man or woman who has not sought to puzzle out some sort of solution to this problem? What is the parable? An unnamed rich man had a steward. Eastern stewards have almost unlimited power, because full authority is delegated to them. This master received such convincing proof of his steward's faithlessness that he determined on his dismissal, without the formality of a trial, and intimated this to him. By silence the steward admitted his guilt. This dismissal greatly agitated the steward, and he debated with himself as to "What shall I do?" Apparently his defalcations had not benefited him one bit; by it he had not a nest egg, nor had he feathered his own nest, having probably dissipated it in riotous living. "I cannot dig," he sadly reflected, either having developed his brain at the expense of his muscles, or his intemperance had weakened his body. "To beg, I am ashamed"—but not ashamed to defraud. False shame leads him to prefer fraud to poverty. Now at last his mind was made up. Calling his master's debtors to- tether, in order to curry their favour, bade them reduce their debts by half in one case, one-fifth in another, and so on. "And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

Now it is in this commendation that the problem is created. Surely our blessed Lord does not desire us to act unjustly and dishonestly to those without and within? Never!

WHO COMMENDED THE UNJUST STEWARD ? That is no unimportant question. It was the steward's master, not the Lord Jesus. You will observe the word lord in verse 8 is spelt with a small l. When the rich man heard of his servant's cuteness and cleverness it amused him greatly, and he admired the prudence and cleverness of the rogue. We admit that our Lord related the parable in such a way as to show there is something in the story He commends for our imitation. Yet we must press the point that the one who commends is the earthly master, not the heavenly.

I. Was he deducting over-charges when the steward bade his master's debtors to reduce the accounts owing?" That is how many Eastern people view it. It is wise to remember that it is an Eastern story. In that fact may lie an easy solution. The fifty measures of oil, and the eighty measures of wheat to which the steward reduced the amounts formed the actual debts, the rest being simply over-charges with which the steward himself had cruelly and fraudulently burdened them. In that case the expedient to which he resorted in the emergency was not an act of trickery and dishonesty, but the first signs of real repentance, and an act of justice.

If this is the correct view, it is no wonder that he was commended by his master, for by robbing by over-charges his master's debtors, he had impoverished them, and so had indirectly injured his master by rendering them less able to pay their debts.

II. Was he deducting his commission In order to get back their favour? We know that in the East large commissions for sales is the order of the day. Stewards, cooks, or servants in responsible positions are thus bribed by tradesmen to take to them the orders of their master or mistress. This is an explanation worth pondering over.

III. Have we not here a Parable of Prudence? After all we have said, let us look again at the story for another explanation. What is praised is not the dishonesty, but the realisation of the facts of the case, and the immediate action taken. The world can teach believers many lessons. Our Lord Jesus points to the wisdom of this knave as an example we should copy, only we should apply it to a higher purpose. Observe in this steward certain characteristics worth emulating. He certainly was a

1 . MAN OF RESOURCE. If not a man of muscle, he was a man of brains, and he used them. He was in a dilemma, but he quickly reasoned the thing out. There is a place for resourcefulness in the service of the Lord. Observe, he was-

2. A MAN OF PROMPTITUDE. He not only made up his mind quickly, but he acted promptly. There are many who purpose altering their methods, or of adopting some new stratagem in the Lord's service, but they procrastinate until the golden opportunity has gone for ever. Now he was-

3. A MAN of AUDACITY. There was something like genius in the cool daring of this steward. Instantly he called his master's debtors before him, and in each others presence openly reduced their debts. It was not done in a private room, each apart from the other, but openly. Is there not room for a little more cheek and audacity in the Lord's service?

We are so shy and proper and reticent. Oh, for more holy boldness in His blessed service!

There remains the application found in verses 9 to 13. Verse 9 has puzzled many. The Weymouth version has been a help to many. "But I charge you, so to use the wealth which is ever tempting to dishonesty as to win friends who, when it fails, shall welcome you to the tents that never perish." That is, those who have wealth are urged to use it aright so as not to rouse the envy, or embitter the less favoured, and if that wealth should take to itself wings, and fly away, as has happened so often the last few years, they will not be left friendless. How often those who have made a parade of their wealth when the evil day comes, find themselves without a friend.

Bengel has drawn attention to the fact that Luke 16 follows Luke 15. That obvious fact has not been noted as it should. Luke 15 tells of the returned, welcomed, and feasted prodigal. But life cannot be spent in music and feasting. We (the pardoned and justified) are stewards to whom our Master has entrusted the talents of time, money, gifts, and a glorious Gospel message. Are we being faithful to the trust He has committed to us? We shall have to give an account sooner or later of our stewardship. God grant that we may merit His "Well done, good and faithful servant."

A SELF-CONFESSED MATERIALIST.  
LUKE 12. 13-21.

ONE of the greatest thinkers of a past generation has remarked that "A single thought of thankfulness to Heaven is the most perfect prayer." Whilst there are few of us who would go quite so far as that, yet there is a great deal in the statement. Ingratitude is most assuredly a crime. Old Testament legislation is proof of the high value the Lord placed on thanksgiving. In the parable of the Rich Farmer found in Luke 12. 13 to 21, we have an illustration of this. In your study of this narrative what do you most miss? A single expression of indebtedness to the Most High!

"I think," said an old gentleman toward the close of his busy and successful career, "there are three questions that will be put to us in the Day of Judgment: 'Did you rake all you could? How did you make it? What use did you make of it?'" The rich man in the parable could easily answer the first two. He was a success, a very great success, and had most certainly made all he could. And he assuredly had made his money honestly. There is not a single hint to the contrary. He was not a bad, vicious man; there was no glaring vice or evil in him. But the third question unmasked him. Here he had failed. For he had lived utterly for himself, and the riches God had given him he proposed to continue to lavish upon his own miserable self.

By the way, have you ever observed here an unmannerly interruption? Take up the Scripture. Our Lord had been discoursing on deep and solemn truths. A re-reading of Luke 12 will be sufficient to show its profundity. And all the while, this man was so absorbed in his own little petty concerns that he never heard a word, and at a pause in the conversation blurted out his concern. Of course he did right in referring this injustice—imaginary or real—to the Lord, but he was wrong in allowing the thought of the injustice

to deafen him to religious instruction.

It is almost unbelievable, and yet it is a fact, that a man sat for years under the silver-toned preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, listening to those mighty Gospel discourses, and yet on his death-bed discovered that he had never accepted the message for himself. It is very urgent that all our hearing should be mixed with faith as is urged in Hebrews.

Going back to the self-confessed materialistic farmer, what was wrong with him? And why do we all unite in condemning him in spite of his honesty, industry, and prosperity?

I. He was taken up with the gifts but forgot the Giver. Look carefully at the Scripture record again, and you will be struck by the absence of any reference to God. There was a selfish and arrogant sense of possession by right, and not by grace. This is particularly inexcusable in farming, for no occupation is so dependent upon the faithfulness of the Creator, yet he made not a single expression of gratitude to God, and there is no hint at all of any consultation with the Most High as to what he should do. But what about the writer and the reader? What an amazing number of gifts we have received from God--health; loving partners in life; children; homes; friends, success; are we absorbed with these to the exclusion of our great Heavenly Benefactor? Alas! alas! in so many cases it is so.

II. He failed to distinguish between the soul and the body. As proof, observe that he put the wrong address on the envelope, for he said: "Soul--thou hast much goods laid up for many years"--soul; goods--you cannot benefit nor satisfy the soul with material things. "Soul," why, he meant his body. The soul is myself, and my body is only the material part of my nature. What a blunder!. And yet it is a common one. Alas, that it should be so.

III . In thinking and planning for this life he forgot the next. "Laid up for many years," and the verdict fell, "this night." In thinking of time, he forgot Eternity. In thinking of the future he failed to remember his mortality.

IV. In thinking of himself he forgot his neighbour. Observe the personal pronoun: "My! My!! My! ! ! " but never once "my neighbour." If his barns were bursting, there were many other barns empty. Yes, there were other barns waiting, without pulling down his own--the bosoms of the needy, the houses of the widows, the mouths of orphans and of infants . There were empty purses of less fortunate fellow-mortals..

It is very striking to see that he was condemned not for what he had done, but for what he thought of doing.

Observe, "He thought within himself." Thus "we are here admitted into the inner council chamber of a worldling." What should he have said? If he had been a wise man he would have exclaimed: "Soul, thou hast been long neglected ! The time has come when thou and I \*oust attend to the needs that make for thy peace." But he did not. Instead, as one has remarked, he went to learn in Eternity what he had not learned in time, that he was a self-

made pauper. But, thank God, we are still spared. We may learn in time so as to benefit throughout Eternity.

RENT DEFAULTERS.  
LUKE 20 9-18.

BEFORE the Great War we frequently heard of "moonlight (litters"--families so deeply in debt, and so hopeless so far as payment of debts was concerned, that some night they removed their goods, quietly and secretively, to another town or entirely strange neighbourhood, beginning life afresh. So scarce have houses been since the war, that insolvent householders have had to resort to other stratagems. In Luke 20. 9 to 18, we have rent defaulters, who resorted to murder as a way out of debt.

The householder in the parable was more than owner of this vineyard, for he had planted it, and thus stood in a close and personal association to it. In the East there is no property so valuable, nor which yields returns so large, as vineyards. This man planted the vineyard, protected it by a wall, ornamented it by a tower, then let it out to husbandmen on the understanding that part of its proceeds would be handed over as rent.

For three years the fruit was, according to ancient custom, ungathered; in the fourth year it was all holy unto the Lord; in the fifth year the tenants and owners could eat and begin to benefit by its growth (Lev. 19. 23 to 25).

During that long period the husbandmen contrived to forget that they were tenants. and not owners. And when the owner sent his servants for his just due, ill-treated them driving them empty away. The patience of the owner is wonderful—a representation of the wonderful and infinite patience and longsuffering of God. At last we have his dilemma, enshrined in those four simple words, "What shall I do ? " But even his beloved son was rejected, and his murder decided upon.

The history of Israel is summed up in this dark picture. The One who planted the vineyard was God; the vineyard, the land of Israel; the husbandman, Israel, particularly the leaders of the nations; the servants, the prophets; the son, the Lord Jesus-Christ.

But there is an application of this parable to you and inc. What we have belongs to—God—our very life, possessions, time, friends, all. There is no time when God does not demand of us His rightful dues. He sends us His servants—more, His Son, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Have we sent them empty away? Be warned, there is a limit to His patience, when judgment will fall.

THE PARABLE OF UNLIKENESS.  
LUKE 18. 1-8.

How will the parable known as that of the unmerciful judge in Luke 18. 1 to 8, look re-christened? suppose we call it the parable of unlikeness! At any rate that brings out the principal lesson it conveys.

We are informed as to why our Lord related it. There are lots of things we ought to do, and here is one: "Men ought always to pray and not to faint."

The judge in this parable was a reckless and desperate character. For he had no respect for God or the opinions of his fellows. This combination is rare. Even the worst have usually some regard for the opinions of their fellow-mortals. Not so this official. A widow is in the case. The exceeding desolation of widowhood in the East has often been noticed. Yet the Bible has a tender regard for them. God has been pleased to reveal Himself as "Father to the fatherless, and Judge of the widows," and Jeremiah 49. 11 has been a comfort to many a dying husband and father. Being weak, she could not compel the judge to do her justice; and being poor, with no bribe to offer which should induce him to brave, for her sake, the resentment of formidable adversaries—what a helpless condition was she in to be sure. The self-pleasing indolence of the judge, and the helpless yet desperate condition of the suppliant—what a contrast!

Is that Judge a picture of our God? Is that why our Lord related it? Never. There is only one answer to that question, an emphatic "No!" Blessings are not to be dragged out of Him. He is not unwilling to come to our aid. We have not to "Wear me out" (as R.V.) before gaining our requests.

The strength of the parable lies in the unlikeness of this judge to the Judge of all the earth. There may be, and indeed are, times in the experience of the very best of us, when God seems to be deaf to the earnest pleadings of His people. Certainly the Lord's people usually expect a speedier deliverance than the Master vouchsafes to give. Yet we can trust.

The great point in the parable is this: If a bad man will yield to the mere force of the importunity which he hates, how much more certainly will a righteous God be prevailed on by the faithful and believing prayers which He loves. Yes, verily, this is the Parable of Unlikeness!

<p>TRUE NEIGHBOURLINESS. LUKE 10. 25-37.</p>
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"I WOULD dedicate the nation to the policy of the Good Samaritan," was a statement of President Roosevelt, of the U.S.A., in his inaugural address, so much had the parable of the Good Samaritan (in Luke 10. 9-5 to 37) impressed him. Regarding a good man of God, his biographer remarked concerning his philanthropies, "He never stopped to ask, Who is my neighbour." precisely; real love to God and man never does. Unmeasured service to all, the outcome of true love, is the order of the day to a real man or woman of God in following the example of the Good Samaritan., our Lord Jesus Christ.

And by the way, note how wonderfully, by this glowing parable, our Lord has rescued from reproach the word, Samaritan. It was the name given in derision to the mixed folk who colonized Samaria after the deportation of the nine and a half tribes to Babylon, and was never repeated by a Jew but in scorn and hatred. To be called a Samaritan was

considered a great insult. But our Saviour, by this charming parable, has rescued that word from the pillory.

Another good service has our Lord accomplished by this famous story. The good people of that day had divorced worship from practical service. By this parable our blessed Master united again in holy wedlock, these two branches of Christian conduct, so that we now never conceive them as apart, but the one united with the other.

Who is my neighbour? The rabbis of that day taught that Jews were to "love thy neighbour—in the Law," three words that meant all the difference in the world. By this matchless parable the Lord Jesus taught that every needy one whom we can help, is my neighbour; that neighbourly responsibility has nothing to do with race, church, creed, and social status; that neighbourhood is not a matter of geography, for we can live in close proximity to other folk without being neighbourly. Truly, sorrow, need, sympathy, and help, are of no nationality. This parable forbids all limitations to mercy.

#### I. The Case.

1. "HE WENT DOWN." This is geographically correct, for Jericho is six hundred feet below the Mediterranean.
2. HE WAS STRIPPED BEFORE BEING WOUNDED. This would never happen in our country. The one attacked would be felled, then robbed. But there is no mistake here. The bandits did not want the garments damaged, as they formed an important part of the spoil. How true to Eastern life. This road was so dangerous that it came to be called "The Red Road"
3. THE SILENT ELOQUENCE OF THE BATTERED AND BLEEDING BODY.
4. THE PRIEST would be on his way back from exercising his priestly office in the Temple at Jerusalem. Twelve thousand priests resided at Jericho. Why did he pass by? Was he so eager to reach his home after his absence? Was he unwilling, to be ceremonially defiled, as he may have been? Or was he looking after the safety of No. 1, deciding that the robbers, who had maltreated so seriously this poor fellow, would be lurking behind some of the local rocks, ready to pounce upon any one dismounting to render first aid?
5. THE LEVITE. This is the only mention of the Levites in the Gospels. He did go up to the poor fellow, looked, and then passed by, thus he was guilty of aggravated cruelty.
6. "By CHANCE." The only time in the Gospels that our Lord used the word, indeed the only occurrence in the New Testament of the word. Our Lord seems to use it with a touch of irony. Really, it was a loving ordering of God. There is no chance in the Christian vocabulary.
7. THE SAMARITAN. The genius of true love is shown in his acts. He ignored the

possible lurking robbers; he was swift, cool, deft in his actions; he was ready to spend and be spent; he cheerfully sacrificed the use of his beast; the care for the patient at the end of the journey is touching, and we all admire his prudence in not leaving a great sum of money in the host's hand, and his wise hint that he would await his account on his way back. What a combination of compassion blended with shrewdness.

II. The Application. Ah, there is no problem in the story. Even a child can understand it. The poor man is—well, you and me; and the Good Samaritan is none other than the Lord Jesus. Man has gone down, left the City of Peace for the City of the Curse, turned his back on the Temple and on God, and stripped of holiness and goodness, left lifeless. The Law, symbolized by the priest, cannot help; and ceremony, in the person of the Levite, is of no avail. But our Good Samaritan has come to the rescue. "What daring intelligence would ever have suggested that the Lord Jesus Christ should find 'His neighbour' in a fallen world? Who would ever have thought that God would have chosen us to be His 'neighbour?' That He should come where we are, that He should Lend over us with a heart glowing with love, and pour into our wounds the sweet solace of His own anointing oil, or breathe into our lifeless being the supernatural energy of His own eternal life. Not less than this, Divine love has actually effected."

THE CROSS AND THE INDIVIDUAL. WHAT fierce attacks have been made for centuries upon that great fundamental fact of our Christian faith, the substitutionary aspect of the death of Christ. The enemies of our faith know full well, that with the fall, or even the obscuring of that aspect of His atoning death, our Christianity will collapse. But, thank God, the Cross it standeth fast, Alleluia! Yet we cannot hide the fact that the silence of our college professors, and our present-day preachers, is giving us very great concern. When, think you, did you last hear a discourse in your Assembly Chapel, or Church, on the atoning death of our Saviour? But further, you who minister the Word, what is the date of your last discourse on the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? The replies in many cases will be disconcerting. Verily, the fall of the Cross will mean the fall of England, or of any other professedly Christian country.

The same is true of each individual. We, too, shall either stand or fall according to our relation to the Cross. Yea, we are already either still unsaved fallen creatures, if we have not yet realised and received Christ and His atoning death.

This is clearly seen in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, found in Luke 18, 9-14; the difference in these two men is in their relations to the Cross, or rather to the truth that the Cross stands for. In the first, whilst there is much to admire, we note the utter absence of all consciousness of sin, and of feeling the need of the Atonement, and he was and remained an unsaved person. In the other, there was a plea for mercy through the atonement—God's way of salvation. This is clearly seen by consulting the Revised Version where, instead of merely, "God be merciful to me a sinner," we find, "God be propitiated to me, the sinner," or as a reliable Greek authority has pointed out, it could be very literally rendered, "God show mercy through sacrifice to me, the sinner." This we shall develop.

Please observe that this is not a parable about prayer, but about justification. The parable of prayer is in the first few verses of this chapter. To whom was this parable addressed?

(1) Those who "trust in themselves"—not the Lord.

(2) To those who despise others, not because of a hatred of sin, but because of an imagined moral superiority over others. The late Mark Guy Pearse told of visiting a home, where the Lather and husband, a man of culture and education, sat drunk and acting like a fool. As he was leaving the house, the wife with tears exclaimed, "Oh, pray to God for me, that I may be kept from despising him!" It was not this kind of despising, our Lord had in mind; it was what spiritual pride prompts one to think, and act, and say.

Prayer reveals character. True character always comes out in this way. Let us see how the characters of these two men were revealed by their prayers.

### I. The Pharisee.

1. HE WAS A GOOD MAN. He could say that he was not as other men." Somehow the, very name of Pharisee is suggestive to us of hypocrisy, but that is a mistake. A hypocrite is an actor—one who pretends to be something he isn't, and knows it. A good many profess to be what they are not, and they are quite unaware of the fact that they are not what they profess to be. Such are self-deceived, but certainly are not hypocrites. So with the Pharisee. This Pharisee really thought he was a good magi, and he was, according to mere earthly standards.

2. HE WAS AN HONEST MAN. He was "not an extortioner." That he could truthfully say. Now the Publicans (the name in the Bible for the tax-collectors) were notorious for this. The late Professor Henry Drummond considered that "dishonesty is as great a sin as drunkenness," but this Pharisee was an honest man.

3. HE WAS A JUST MAN. He could say he was "not unjust," that is to say, he was fair in his dealings with his fellows. The Golden Rule he admired and practised. He did unto others as he wished to be done to.

4. HE WAS A VIRTUOUS MAN. He could say that he was not "an adulterer," for he had full control over his passions, and not only respected but obeyed the law.

5. He WAS A TEMPERATE MAN, because he could say that he "fasted twice in the week." Moses only appointed one fast in the year, in connection with the great Day of Atonement, but this man improved upon the Mosaic instructions, and had such wonderful control over his own healthy legitimate appetites that he was able to fast twice in every week!

6. HE WAS A BENEVOLENT MAN. "I give tithes of all that I possess." Now Moses only enjoined the tithing of the fruits of the earth and the increase of the cattle, and therefore the Israelites was not commanded to tithe all; but you will observe that the Pharisee could say truthfully that he gave tithes of all that he possessed.

7. HE WAS A GRATEFUL MAN. "I thank Thee," and he had much to be thankful for. By careful training, and by the wholesome restraint of the law and society, he had been saved from much outward sin. There are thousands of young people associated with our assemblies, mission halls, churches, and chapels, who have similarly been preserved from outward sinful excesses, who have never done as much as the Pharisee, for they have never yet thanked God for this wholesome and blessed restraint.

Having said all this, the reader might express astonishment and say, "Surely the Pharisee was a model citizen, and what more could be expected of him?" Ah, there was an utter absence of any consciousness of sin or of personal unworthiness. His prayer was weighted with pride, and did not rise any higher than himself. You will observe that whilst he was grateful, he presented no request for grace, and he received none. This unfortunate state of mind and soul was undoubtedly brought about by a wrong idea of sin, and a wrong idea of religion. He evidently knew sin simply as transgression, whereas that is only one aspect of it, for it is written, not only that "sin is the transgression of the Law," but also that "All unrighteousness is sin." Then his idea of religion was a mere round of duties to be observed and practised. Take care there is no latent Pharisee in any of us.

II. The Publican. Seven is the perfect number, and it is to be observed that in our Authorised Version his prayer consists of only seven words; yet the Authorised Version rather clouds and hides several important truths. The late Bishop Daniel Wilson of Calcutta directed in his will that on a tablet to his memory in the Cathedral, should be engraved these words in Greek as so much more emphatic than the English. The Revised Version marginal rendering is to be commended, "God be propitiated to me, the sinner." What do we learn from this prayer?

1. HE ACCOUNTED HIMSELF UNWORTHY OF APPROACH To GOD. "He stood afar off"---in the Court of the Gentiles. Though a Jew, he dare not venture any further than the Court of the Gentiles. He was conscious that his sins had distanced him from God. But, blessed be the Lord, though the Publican stood afar from God in conscious unworthiness, God did not stand afar from him. He is nigh unto all that are of a broken and contrite spirit

2. HE CONFESSED HIMSELF TO BE THE WORST OF SINNERS. Not "a sinner" as in the Authorised Version, but "the sinner," as in the Revised Version. He recognised the heinousness of sin, and his cry was that of a soul terrified by the horror of sin, and a sense of punishment.

3. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE ONLY CHANNEL OF MERCY TO BE THE ATONEMENT OF GOD. Without doubt he had brought his sin offering, and after it had been killed, was being offered up on the altar, and he prayed in effect that God would show mercy through that substitute already being offered, to him a sacrifice that prefigured the great one our Lord was to offer.

Might we suggest to all respectable sinners that both ,these prayers be united. Gratefully thanking Him for all the restraints with which He has surrounded you, and for so mercifully preserving you from sowing the wild oats, then cry for His pardoning and justifying mercy through the atoning death of Jesus Christ. "God be propitiated, through sacrifice, to me, the sinner."

#### RECEIVING!

ONE has splendidly pointed out that:

- I. To LOOK is receiving with the eyes.
2. To HEAR is receiving with the ears.
3. To TAKE is receiving with the hands.
4. To TASTE is receiving with the mouth.
5. To COME is receiving with the feet.
6. To TRUST is receiving with the heart.
7. To CHOOSE is receiving with the will.

#### GOSPEL STUDIES THREE IMPORTANT POSITIONS. MARK 3. 3; 1 KINGS 17. 1; PHIL. 4. 1.

"CAN YOUR HORSE RUN FAST?" was a question addressed to a boy by a gentleman as the former was holding the horse's head in a busy London street. He replied, "No, sir; he cannot run fast, but he can stand fast"; a great quality to be admired and commended in a horse. Yes, and in men and women. For these are difficult days, and there are many temptations to turn us from the paths that are right and good.

How can we stand fast in times of trial and temptation is an important question. For our comfort, let us notice that this is not the first position we should take. There are two prior ones, as follows:

1. Stand Forth" (Mark 3. 3). This is the sinner's position. The man in the story here was only conscious of shortcomings, and not moral leprosy, yet he needed the healing touch of the Saviour just as much as the leper. This is a lesson all very respectable sinners should take to heart. Yet, whether conscious of moral leprosy or not, we all need the Saviour. To receive His blessed healing ministries we must take the definite step to Him, standing forth even in the midst (see marginal note), that is, a public confession of our sinnership.

II.. Stand Before (1 Kings 17. 1). This is the position of the believer. Elijah was known as

the man who stood before God. This position is suggestive of fellowship as well as service. We are saved that we might, yea, should, might we not say must stand before God ; that is to say, that we might enter into blessed friendship with Him, and such a friendship bearing the fruit of happy and successful service.

III. Stand Fast (Phil. 4. 1) . This is the position of the loyal friend, loyal to all the interests of the Lord. This follows naturally the other two; in fact, the prior positions fit us for this one. Oh, to be true to Him at all times under all circumstances, and at all costs!

#### THE POWER OF THE DIVINE TOUCH.

I. The Power of His Touch in Nature (Psa. 144. 5) .

II. The Ministry of His Touch in Grace:

1. Awakening, .. .. I Kings 19. 5
2. Healing, .. .. Matt. 8. 3
3. Cleansing, .. .. Isa. 6. 7
4. Shrivelling the self-life, .. .. Gen. 32. 25
5. Bestowing Holiness, .. .. Exod. 29. 37
6. Giving a willingness to serve, .. .. 1 Sam. 10. 26
7. Bestowing power to speak, .. .. Jer. 1. 9
8. Suffering, .. .. Job 19. 21

#### PAYMENT OF VOWS.

PSALM 66. 13, 14.

Introduction.

#### RETURNING EMIGRANT.

A ship on its voyage home was caught in a terrific storm, and it was feared she might founder.

One of the passengers who was returning to his native land with a fortune, was full of terror, and, kneeling before a statue of St. Christopher, kept loudly calling upon the saint in prayer, promising, if he would only interfere, and bring him safe to land, a wax taper the size of his statue in Paris.

"Look out what you promise," said a bystander; „although you sell off all your property, you can't pay for it."

"Hold your tongue, you fool," said the other; then lowering his voice, lest the saint should hear, said: "Do you suppose I mean what I say? If once I get to land, I won't give him a tallow candle."

Thus his vow was insincere and untruthful, made with no intention of being kept.

WHAT ABOUT YOU? We are prepared to condemn severely such meanness and deceit. We cannot find words to express adequately one's abhorrence of such conduct. But what about you? Have you any unpaid vows?

NOT DECEIT, BUT FORGETFULNESS. We can hardly think we all could answer "No." We do not think any of us are guilty of such deceit. When we made our vows we meant to keep them. But, alas, we so easily forget. You remember what vows you made to the Lord in that time of severe trial and sickness. Is it true that the debt is not yet paid, though years have passed away? If so, thank God you are still here in the body, and we trust you will say with David: "I will pay my vows unto the Lord NOW in the presence of all His people."

#### MILLENNIAL PSALM.

1. This is one of the Millennial Psalms, and is worthy of notice. It is prophetic as well as commemorative.

2. He calls upon all to praise God.

3. He then foretells that they shall do so.

4. And having stirred up all people, and all God's people in particular, he stirs up himself.  
A CLUE.

I. Verse 2 gives us a clue to a great difficulty.

2. How is it that, after Christ's glorious Millennial reign, there can possibly be found men so evil as to combine in one last terrible revolt?

3. Here you have the clue—it is, as A.V. margin, only "a feigned obedience" rendered by many in the Millennium.

4. "Mighty power" alone changes not the enemy, and only causes him to yield feigned obedience.

5. It is only the greatness of His love that can change enemies into friends, and prompt unfeigned obedience.

#### COMMEMORATIVE.

1. From verses 1 to 7 ALL people are invited to praise Him.

2. But from verse 8 there is a difference—for here God's people are invited so do so—"O bless OUR God" (verse 8).

3. The Psalmist remembers some national and personal deliverance.

4. It was David's own experience; and he failed not to keep his promise.

5. And may you and I emulate him in that virtue.

6. In dealing with this subject will you please first notice.

I. When the Vow was Made.

1. The vow was made when "I was in trouble."

2. This was no ordinary trouble. R.V. renders it as "distress."

3. There had been a grievous trouble—something that had greatly distressed him.

4. Whatever we have to say about the wisdom of making vows, we naturally incline to make them when in distress.

5. Making vows was a general habit in the Old Testament

6. And in the New Testament, too, for did not Paul go to Jerusalem under a vow.

WHY?

1. I fear the motives which prompts the making of vows are not always commendable.
2. Too often a vow is made as a bribe to purchase His interference and assistance.
3. Instead of as a thank-offering.
4. Oh, friends, let us take care of our motives!

II. Why Our Vows Should be Kept.

1. SELF-RESPECT.

- a. My first reason why we should keep our vows is self-respect.
- b. This is, of course, the lowest ground to take, but it is good to begin low.
- c. As persons of honour, we should scorn to make a solemn promise when in dire need, and then when the danger has passed forget all about it.

d. Take a lesson from Carthage—the great Carthaginian, General Hamilcar, had a little son named Hannibal. When the boy was nine years old he begged very hard that his father should take him to battle with him. Hamilcar consented, but before they went, he made Hannibal place his hand on the altar of his idol god, and swear that he would make perpetual war with the Romans. Hannibal kept his word. He spent 36 years fighting them, and at the end of a life of 70 years he had not forgot ten his vow.

2. RESPECT FOR GOD.

- a. This should be our second reason.
- b. We would not think so lightly of our vows if we really understood the view God takes of such.
- c. Do you know that God thought so seriously of vows that He devoted a whole chapter, and that the last one in the book of Leviticus, to that question.
- d. Jacob made a vow, the morning following the first night he spent as a fugitive from home. Twenty-one years afterward He appeared unto him, saying, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto Me" (Gen. 31. 13).
- e. For 21 years God had treasured that vow.
- f. And all this so impressed the Jews that they considered a vow as a very sacred thing.

3. FEAR OF GOD.

- a. This is our third reason.
- b. Look at the view the Psalmist gives of God (Verses 5,3,5 of Psalm 66).
- c. He did not think God was a being to be played with.
- d. He did not dream that he could treat God lightly.
- e. Do you wonder that the son of one who held such majestic views of God should write: "Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay" (Eccles. 5. 4, 5).

## II. How we May Keep our Vows.

WHAT IS EASY. The giving of gifts, i.e., money, etc. is quite easy. But usually our bows are concerning betterment of life. And that is difficult.

DR. JOHNSON in his "Prayers and Meditations" wrote: "I have now spent 55 years in resolving, having from the earliest time almost that I can remember, been forming schemes of a better life. I have done nothing. The need of doing therefore is pressing, since the time of doing is short. O God, grant me to resolve aright, and to keep my resolutions, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

Conclusion-A Warning.

HARDEST ICE. In connection, let us remind you of a fact in natural science which conveys a very solemn lesson: The hardest ice is that which freezes after a thaw.

THE THAW.

1. You know something of a thaw in your experience.
2. Your indifference to God and Divine things melted away when you were in trouble, when you were face to face with death, or disaster, or some terrible catastrophe.
3. And you would then give yourself to Him and your service.
4. Take care of freezing!

MOST DIFFICULT. The most difficult people to deal with are those who once laboured under deep spiritual concern, but have quenched all tender and yearning feelings for God.

WHAT IS EXPECTED.

1. Remember Murray McCheyne's saying that "spared fig trees should bear much fruit."
2. Let your prayer be:  
"Saviour, Thy dying love. Thou gayest me,  
Nor should I ought withhold, my Lord, from Thee; In love my soul would bow, my heart fulfil its vow; Some offering bring Thee now, something for Thee.
3. And you remember the Divine order, as pointed out by St. Paul in 2 Cor. 8. 5.
4. The Macedonian Christians gave liberally, but said he, they "first gave their own selves to the Lord."
5. This was what the Psalmist did, and so must we.

ROPES AND SACKCLOTH;  
OR, HOW TO MEET GOD.  
1 KINGS 20. 32,

KING EDWARD III, in 1327, besieged Calais, and when it was in extremity agreed to spare the place on condition that six of its principal citizens came out, clothed in sackcloth and halters round their necks. They were spared death only through the intercession of his wife, Queen Adelaide. We wonder if Edward III got his idea from the Bible? For there is a similar scene in I Kings 20.

During the life of the Prophet Elijah, 5 years after Carmel, Benhadad, King of Syria, assisted by 32 Kings, came against Israel. Ahab was frightened, and agreed to pay an indemnity to save himself and people. But Benhadad went too far, and God delivered him into the hand of Ahab, a great slaughter following. Now without an army, in a strange land, he was in a dreadful position. Then his advisers spake.

"We have heard that the Kings of Israel are merciful Kings," said they, and they decided to throw themselves on his mercy. Clothing themselves with sackcloth, and with ropes around their necks, a deputation thus waited upon the King, and succeeded in securing life and liberty.

On the lonely Isle of Patmos, which is only 15 miles in circumference, lived a hermit. Asked why he was living in such seclusion, he replied: "Some day I have to meet God. I am preparing for that day."

His desire for readiness is commendable, but not the mode of preparation. The best preparation to meet God up in the Better Land is to meet Him clown here. "There will I meet with you," said God to Moses, referring to the Ark with its blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat. God has His meeting-place, and that is the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Reading this story, note:

I. Their Peril. They were enemies, and had taken up arms against Israel. We are rebels to God both by birth and choice. "He that is not with Me, is against Me," is the Word of the Lord.

II. Their Hope. They heard of the mercy of Israel, whom they had come up to fight. Is not our God merciful Mercy is one of His moral attributes. We have a merciful God.

III., Their Action.

1. Clothed themselves with sackcloth—emblem of sorrow--our grief on account of our sins.
2. Put ropes around their necks--their confession by deed that they were worthy of death.
3. Their confession by word of mouth, and plea for mercy.

IV. Their Salvation.

1. PARDON. "Come up into the chariot."
2. FRIENDSHIP. Treated as friends and not as enemies.
3. RESTORATION. Restored him back to his house and friends and to his former possessions We gain in Christ more than we lost in Adam.
4. COVENANT. See Hebrews 8. 10 to 13.

THE NEED OF THOUGHT.  
ISAIAH 1.3.

Thoughtfulness.

1. How true are the words of Hood, the poet I "But evil is wrought by want of thought as well as want of heart."

2. Parents know how true this is. Much of the pain and sorrow they suffer through the actions of their children is not for want of heart, so much as want of thought.

3. "So-and-so is most inconsiderate," we often say. It is sheer thoughtlessness which is the cause of much of life's heartaches and pains.

4. Note God's plaintive lament in Isaiah 1, 3. Even the ox and ass were more considerate than Israel. God had fed and cared for Israel, yet they did not love and care for Him, and all this was the result of thoughtlessness. Even the very animals are more grateful to us for what we give than we are to God for what He gives.

5. Oh, we sometimes say, "Oh, if people would only think!" Note God's appeal for thought in connection with the forgiveness of sins in verse 18.

6. This is not a thinking age.

7. But what must I consider? Five things.

I. "When I consider Thy Heavens" (Psa. 8. 3).

1. The study of the Heavens was the favourite occupation of the Eastern shepherds.

2. It was in the East the science of Astronomy had its origin.

3. Do you ever consider the Heavens? Let us look up a little oftener.

4. David, the writer of this Psalm, had been a shepherd, and often as he kept his father's sheep he considered the Heavens. What was the result of his meditation? a. Their greatness makes man look so small and mean. And yet nowhere is God stated to love the stars, but man. Man is of more value than many stars or suns.

h. The calmness of their revolutions shame the fussiness and passion of men. It is Longfellow who speaks of a star as:

"So still and saint like, No fret and worry, aid anger and wrath.

c. Their order shames our disorder. They obey the command of God. Here there is nought but strife, discord, disobedience. Thus I get little encouragement from that study.

II. "Consider the Lilies of the Field" (Matt. 6. 28).

1. An old man called flowers "God's smiles." How often He smiles then! The stars are the

flowers of the skies, and flowers are the stars of the earth.

2. As I consider the lilies, I notice their purity and beauty, but that only condemns my impurity and ugliness.

III. "Consider the Ravens." God feedeth them (Luke 12. 24).

1. REMEMBER THEY ARE UNCLEAN. Surely God will do

naught for them! Oh, wonder of wonders, He cares for ravens!

2. A PLACE WAS FOUND FOR THE RAVENS, EVEN IN THE ARK, and God used them as His servants to feed Elijah.

I am like a raven—unclean—but God has a thought for me, and has made provision for the supplying of my complex needs.

IV. "For Consider Him" (Heb. 12. 3).

1. What a subject for study! You can never exhaust this subject.

2. His greatness, calmness, obedience, purity, beauty, entrance me. The beauty and order and greatness of the stars and hills fade into insignificance.

3. But as I consider His death, I find it is life to me.

V. Let us consider one Another to Provoke (Heb. 10. 24).

1. Oh, yes, we are worth considering. There is something to admire.

2. But why ? To provoke one another—to arouse one another to love and good works.

"BUT THOU."

PSALM 3. 3.

"But Thou."

1. Ah, that makes all the difference 1

2. It reminds one of a gloomy day—leaden sky, nothing but a dreary drab.

3. All of a sudden there is a rift in the dull, heavy clouds, a patch of blue sky is seen and the sun streams through.

4. What a sullen sky spread itself over the Psalmist. All was darkness.

5. "But Thou." Ah, that made all the difference. It was that fact that altered the whole situation.

6. Oh, let us never forget that, whoever we lose, and whoever leaves us, we still have God.

7. We do not wonder that this Psalm was used by the French Protestants during persecution times as a signal for the stationing of sentinels to keep watch against sudden attack.

8. It not only acted as a signal, but a wholesome reminder of their Divine Protector and Protection. Results of Remembrance of the Lord.

1. Earnest and successful prayer (verse 4).

2. Restfulness (verse 5) .
3. Hopefulness (verse 6) and courage.
4. Importunity.

THE VALUE OF AWE.  
PSALM 4. 4.

Strange.

1. What a strange exhortation to come immediately after the exulting claim to be the Lord's own.
2. "Awe!" Not fear or reverence. Awe is a holy dread, a reverential fear.
3. But there is a most fruitful connection between the two.

The World and Awe.

1. Verse 2, lying and falsehood, are two fruits of a lack of awe
2. What strikes one more than anything else when looking at the mass of men and women of to-day is the utter absence of awe.
  - a. There is no awe of life. Life is not treated with solemnity and reverence. There is levity and frivolity.
  - b. There is no awe of death. Jesus came to take away the fear, but not awe of death, e.g., How lightly people take their own lives.
  - c. There is no awe of God. If John 3. 16 takes away the awful fear, it ought to make all the inhabitants of the earth stand in awe of Him. We should not be afraid of God; we should be in awe of Him.

The Church and Awe.

1. But we must not dream that awe is lost only in the thought and life of the worldling.
2. There is an absence of awe even amongst Christians.
3. Why, it is never or seldom spoken of in our pulpits!
4. What a loss that means.

One has said that the world that has banished awe has banished wholesome laughter. The ages that have known most of religious awe are the ages from which have come the most lyrical notes of Christian joy. The older ages lived and breathed and rejoiced in God amidst their dark theologies. Bernard had stern stupendous ideas of the Deity, and yet it was he who sang, "Jesus, the very thought of Thee." Samuel Rutherford was clasped in all the rigours of a Calvinism which touches the very springs of awe in the human breast, and yet from him came the love letters of Christianity.

Note the connection of Verses 3 and 4.

1. Though I am His possession, I must not take liberties with Him; I must be respectful and reverential.

2. And it means, too, that such a fact of God setting sinners apart for Himself is awe-inspiring.

Why this Strange Union of Awe and Sin?

1. Awe is not everything.
2. The Hindus treat cruelly the cattle they worship.
3. And there is One who can keep us from sin.

ONLY GOOD, THE LIGHT OF THIS  
COURTENANCE.  
PSALM 4. 6.

The clamour of many is after the supreme good. Here we have the many asking an important question. It is the voice of the worldling. Many replies have been given and tried, but all to no purpose. What about the Lord's own dear children? They, too, sometimes ask the same question, only in the very next breath they own up to the real source of all good: "Lift Thou up upon us a banner as the light of Thy countenance" (Edersheim). What is the meaning of this? It means that the Psalmist was riot so much seeking for good as the Good One; not good in the abstract, but good in the Person; and this is only another way of saying, as he does elsewhere: "I have no good beyond Thee" (Psa. 16. 2., R.V.). That is to say, our Heaven is the consciousness of His smile.

"The light of his countenance," meaning the Lord's smile and benediction. The Lord taught Israel it was the best thing Aaron and the priests could ask for Israel (Num. 6. 26). This means:

I. Life. For "In the light of the King's countenance is life" (Prov. 16. 15) .

II. Joy. For "Thou hast made me exceeding glad with Thy countenance" (Psa. 21. 6). Quoted "Full of joy" in Acts 2. 28.

III. Good. All good. What a word is Good! All that that word stands for, and more, we have in Christ.

OVERTAKEN BY BLESSINGS.  
DEUTERONOMY 28. 2.

WHAT a great difference there is between blessings following and overtaking us! It is one thing to follow a person, but quite another to catch up with them. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me." Yes, that is good, but will they overtake me? The Psalmist knew what it was to be overtaken with blessings, for he could say: "Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with blessings." The chariot of God's gracious benevolence had

daily caught up with him, discharging its blessings.

If His blessings are to overtake us, studying this verse and context, we note that certain conditions must be kept.

I. Redeemed Ones only are overtaken with blessings. Israel were in that happy position and condition, being the redeemed of the Lord. If we have not yet come under the shadow of the Cross of Christ, and under the safety of the Sprinkling of Blood, the Avenger of Blood is after us; we are bidden to flee to our Refuge "lest the avenger of blood overtake the slayer" (Deut. 19. 6). Remember that later on in this chapter we read of curses following and overtaking the sinner. Dread, dread business!

II. Learners. Only those who hearken diligently to the Lord and His message are overtaken with blessings. Hearken to the Voice of the Lord as we have it in the Word of God, for the Holy Spirit will make the Written Word a living Voice in our hearts.

III. Obedient Ones. The overtaken ones must be "observers of the law of God." You know what an observer is? Take a walk in an Art Gallery, and watch the art expert gazing at the works of art, and you will learn what observing is. Watch a mother looking at her firstborn sleeping in his cradle, and you learn what observation really is.

IV. Serving Ones. Only they who "do" are overtaken by blessings. It is not sufficient to become acquainted with His will; we must

Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus, than to trust and obey."

In another place the Psalmist could say, "My soul followeth hard after Thee." Is that your attitude? Then you will catch up with Him, for He will suddenly reveal Himself to you.

#### THE VALUE OF SOLILOQUY,, PSALM 4. 4.

Most Unusual.

- I. This is a most unusual exhortation.
2. It is advice to practice the art of soliloquy.
- 3, Generally the Bible urges us to commune with the Lord.
4. One reason why we do not talk to ourselves much is because we do not live lonely lives.  
To the Worldling.

- I. Perhaps it was addressed to the worldling
2. The sinner must commune with his own heart before he can hope to commune with the Lord.

To Christian.

1. It is a similar exhortation to that in 2 Cor. 13. 5.
2. Here we who profess to be Christians are exhorted to examine, criticise ourselves, and not another.

To Workers. Cecil, in his "Advice to Ministers," said to a young minister: "A man who talks to himself will find out what suits the heart of man."

To Those who have a Grievance.

1. Strange alternative rendering in margin of R.V., viz., "Be ye angry, and sin not."
2. It is so rendered in the Septuagint, and quoted as such in Ephesians 4. 26.
3. There is a sinless anger, because it is an anger against nothing but what is sin.
4. It is an anger created by the Holy Ghost.
5. An anger that is not hasty.
6. An anger that is not a mere emotion, but a conviction.
7. An anger that can stand being slept upon.
8. Really it is a word against, rashness.

#### DESIRING AND SEEKING. PSALM 27. 4.

Introduction.

1. Luther remarked that the Bible has hands to grip, eyes to see, feet to run.
  2. Not so fanciful as some suppose.
  3. The Bible not only was, but is, inspired.
  4. Many a text starts forth and grips us.
- I. Longing. The greatness of our desires is one proof of our greatness.
- 1 • The animals are creatures of but few desires.
  2. The desires the Psalmist. refers to were concerning the Lord.

II.. Seeking. It is not sufficient to desire without seeking. "That will I seek after."  
iii. Expecting. Too often we seek for things and do not expect them. R.V , 'One thing have I asked of the Lord."

IV. Remembering. One reason why we do not look out for answers is because we ask for so many things that we forget what we have asked. He could -,ay, "One thing have I desired of the Lord

V. Right Desire. What one thing did he desire To abide in the house of the Lord constantly. Do we love the sanctuary as much as that?

VI. Reason. Why he wished to abide constantly in God's House.

1. To behold the beauty of the Lord.
2. To commune with the Lord.
3. To inquire of the Lord.

"Inquire"—ask Him to explain the difficult things of His Word and Providence.

Conclusion.

1. We can abide in His Presence, without abiding constantly in any earthly house or building.

2. We can behold the beauty of the Lord. "Unto you that believe He is precious."

3. We can commune and inquire of the Lord.

#### A DIVINE BED-MAKER.

#### PSALM 41.3.

A poor young Christian girl, an invalid through the drunken habits of father, mother, and brother, was very much neglected. Sometimes her bed was not made for six weeks. One day her brother came home almost sober, when she prevailed upon him to make her bed. This he did so unskilfully that she was placed at great discomfort. She sorrowfully picked up her "Daily Light," and was much comforted by reading, "Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." She thus was assured that the Lord knew all about her, and she was rested.

The wonder and beauty of the Bible is that it conveys to us, in simple yet suitable language, its wonderfully deep teaching. This figure of speech conveys several suggestive lessons.

I. What a mercy that we have a bed to make ! Let us not forget this as one of our mercies for which to thank God. 'HE had not where to lay His head.'

II. He is with us, else how could He make our bed? Satan is a master of strategy, and knows when and how to attack us. When we are weak and ill, he simply swoops down upon us, and one of his master strikes is to try and persuade us that the Lord has forgotten and forsaken us. But how can He? He has promised never to leave us. And He always keeps His word. How could He make our bed unless He is with us?

III. He is with us for a purpose. Not merely to while away the time, but to do something very definite for us. His visits to this earth were always for very specific reasons and missions. He came not merely to sympathise, but to relieve us.

IV. He is with us to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. How weak and helpless are we when ill, and how unable to make our bed. How weak and helpless we are by nature, and how utterly unable to save ourselves. But He is our Saviour, and will accomplish for us what we cannot do; and how tenderly, graciously, and skilfully He will make our bed.

V. He will do for us what we do not deserve. Sometimes good turns are done to and for us because we have rendered good service to our kind friend. But what have we done for Him? We are, by nature, His enemies by wicked works.

VI. He will make us comfortable and happy, for that surely is the thought conveyed by this statement concerning His bed-making. He will give us rest from an accusing conscience through the Precious Blood and from corroding care. Dr. Payson when racked with pain, exclaimed, "I have great pain; yet I have great peace." There are seven blessings in this Psalm for those who trust in the Lord :

- 1st, Deliverance in trouble (verse 5) ;
- 2nd, Preservation;
- 3rd, Length of days;
- 4th, Deliverance for body;
- 5th, Prosperity;
- 6th , Strength when most needed;
- 7th , Bed, comfort in time of sickness.

### THE SECRET OF LIFE AND BEAUTY. NUMBERS 17. 8.

THIS Scripture is one of the Old Testament portions for Church services. It is a strange chapter, yet yields helpful lessons . It points out the secret of spring in our souls. Whilst Israel were in the wilderness, owing to jealousy, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram raised insurrection . In spite of awful judgment it was not quelled. God resorted to a method that proved successful, the placing and testing of rods.

Lesson : When in trouble, you do as Moses did . Leave the difficulty in His hand, and He will settle the matter.

The rods were, of course, the Eastern walking sticks. What a miracle ! you say. Yes, but such a miracle takes place in every Christian soul. See God's will for Aaron's rod.. But it has no life.

1. Lifeless. My soul is like that rod : dead and lifeless owing to severance from God by the knife of sin.

- I . Though not at all objectionable.
- 2. Though stripped of all unpleasant evidences of death.
- 3. Though had been used to do great things.

II. Living. My soul can become like Aaron's 'rod, provided I place myself where God can work. The place of life-giving was the place where there was evidence of life given, i.e., before the Ark, and on its lid, known as Mercy Seat, blood was sprinkled. Oh, get down before the Cross of Jesus ! Don't speculate as to how the Spirit of God will work, but lay yourself down at His feet. And just place yourself as you are, as Moses placed the rods, With this difference, ALL, not one in twelve, who put themselves down at His feet will have life given to them . Almond tree flowers in January and bears fruit in April. This did all in one night.

III . Fruitbearing . My soul can become as this rod, not only having life, but also beauty

and fruit. All true Christians have life. All have not beauty of character and fruitfulness of service. "Glorious in holiness." "The beauty of holiness."

IV. Honoured. Solemn fact--only the rod that had brought forth buds, blossom and fruit, was honoured by having a permanent place before His presence. Fruit decides character, and character decides destiny.

"THY WORDS WERE FOUND."  
JEREMIAH 15. 16.

OBSERVE that in this verse we have both "words" and "Word," In words most certainly we have the written Word, which we now know as the Bible; but surely in Word we have the Living Word, the Lord Jesus. The Living Word, the Lord Jesus, is found in the Written Word, the Bible. Note what we find in this verse:

- I. Inspiration—"Thy Words."
- II. Searching—"Found."
- III. Satisfaction—"Eat them."
- IV. Rejoicing—"The Joy."
- V. Privilege—"I am called."
- VI. Separation—"I sat not" (verse 17).
- VII. Testimony—"I sat alone" (verse 17).

LED BY THE LORD.  
PSALM 5. 8.

HERE we have the Psalmist's prayer for guidance. This is a familiar expression in the Psalms. As a man of affairs, he was only too conscious of the fact that it is not in man to direct successfully his own steps. Pondering on this request for guidance, four questions suggest themselves.

I. Why?

1. BECAUSE OF THE ENEMY. Like the Psalmist, we are surrounded by the enemies of the King of kings. Of those there are-

- a. "Those which observe me" (A.V., margin), a very large class indeed. Then there are:
- b. "Them that lie in wait for me," as is suggested by the margin of the R.V.

2. BECAUSE OF MY IGNORANCE AND HELPLESSNESS. We are just as weak and helpless as a child; and just as silly as sheep.

3. BECAUSE OF His REPUTATION. "For Thy Name's sake lead me and guide me" (Psalm 31. 3).

#### II. How?

1. He leads us Himself, and does not leave us merely to angels.
2. He does it by His Word and His Spirit: "O send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me" (Psa. 43. 3).

#### III. Where?

1. "LEAD ME TO THE ROCK that is higher than I" (Psa. 61. 2). We must first be led to Himself, who is the Rock here referred to.
2. "HE LEADETH ME BESIDE THE STILL WATERS," that is, the waters of quietness (Psalm 23). He gives quietness and rest.
3. "SO HE LED THEM THROUGH THE DEPTHS" (Psalm 106. 9).
4. "TO HIM WHICH LED HIS PEOPLE THROUGH THE WILDERNESS," thanks must be given (Psa. 136. 16). S. IN THE PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (Psa. 23).

#### IV. When?

1. IN DAY TIME AND NIGHT. "In the day time also He led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire" (Psa. 78. 14).
2. WHEREVER I GO ON SEA OR LAND. "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Psa. 139. 8 and 9).

"HE LEADETH ME."  
PSALM 23. 2.

Introduction.

DOING WITHOUT.

The three words of our text were brought to mind by a little scene witnessed.

A little child was trying to walk, the mother was tenderly watching, and held out her hand, but the child wanted to walk alone, and waved her aside. Said the mother: "She thinks she can do without me."

Independence is good in some things. It was right and proper that the wee girlie should try to walk alone.

But independence in spiritual things is disastrous. He Himself says: "Without Me ye can do nothing." What disasters often fall upon Alpine climbers who attempt to scale the heights without a guide, and without safe company. God has a large family, yet none able

to walk alone.

VALUE OF A GUIDE. To have a guide means not only to make sure of life, but to make the best of life. We see more of London in a week than many do in a month if we have with us a friend thoroughly acquainted with it. "HE"--"ME."

1. What a blessed companionship!

2. He, the Good Shepherd, not only gave His life for the sheep, but He gives His life to His sheep, and lives His life for His sheep.

3. "He leadeth me." Have you discovered your need of a Guide as well as Saviour?

BUT WHERE? Where does He lead?

I. He Leads to Repentance. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Romans 2. 4) .

II. He Leads to Life. "Narrow is the way that leadeth to life" (Matt. 7. 14).

III. He Leadeth to Transfiguration (Mark 9. 2).

1. "After six days Jesus taketh with Him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and He was transfigured before them."

2. Jesus was transfigured.

3. And they were never the same afterwards.

4. He is made real to us, and we behold His beauty, we are spoiled for the world.

IV. He Leads to Hidden Truths and Pleasant Surprises (Isaiah 42. 16). Three thoughts here.

1. He will guide through difficult paths. He will

2. Guide to fresh discovery of truths. And He will

3. Guide to pleasant surprises.

SEVEN CLASSES IN THE DISCIPLES'  
PRAYER.  
MATTHEW 6. 9-15.

I. As Children, when we say, "Our Father."

II. As Worshippers, when we say, "Hallowed be Thy Name."

III. As Subjects, when we say, "Thy kingdom come."

IV. As Servants, when we say, "Thy will be done."

V. As Suppliants, when we say, "Give us this day," etc.

VI. As Confessors, when we say, "Forgive us," etc.

VII. As Dependents, when we say, "Deliver us," etc.

Or, as some one has put it:

I. Our Position, a son adopted, "Our Father."

II. Our Fitness, a worshipper sanctified, "Hallowed."

III. Our Allegiance, a citizen, "Thy kingdom."

IV. Our Usefulness, a servant employed, "Thy will be done."

V. Our Provision, a beggar fed, "Give us this day."

VI. Our Pardon, a sinner absolved, "Forgive us our debts."

VII. Our Safety, a pilgrim guided, "Lead us not into temptation."

VIII. Our Victory, a soldier succoured, "Deliver us from all evil."

#### "THEY LEFT HIM AND WENT THEIR WAY"

MARK 12. 12.

"IF the cap fits put it on," we say. Yes, we generally do, but the question is, how do we put it on? The Scribes and Pharisees felt our Lord's message was for them; they put the cap on, and sought to slay our Lord. But they were unable to lay hold on Him, and then we read, "They left Him and went their way." Mark, "their way," not the Lord's way. There is much in the Word of God about ways. There are but two ways—we are either on one or the other.

1. Own Way (Isaiah 53. 6) .

1. IT IS A BROAD WAY (Matt. 7. 13). In the cities the broad road is generally the best. Not so in the things of the soul. This appears to be the best, but it leads to ruin.

2. IT IS A HARD WAY (Prov. 13. 15). "The way of transgressors is hard." No doubt easy for a time, but "hard " further on.

3. IT IS A DECEPTIVE WAY (Prov. 16, 25). Paul says in Romans 3. 16: "Destruction and misery are in their ways." Yes, in theirs, but not in God's way.

II. God's Way. "Expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18. 26), was the mission of Aquila and Priscilla, so far as Apollos was concerned.

1. IT IS THE WAY OF SALVATION (Acts 16. 17).
2. IT IS THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (Matt. 21. 32). "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness" (Psa. 23).
3. IT IS THE WAY OF PEACE (Luke 1. 79) . "My foot hath held his steps."

Application.

Can you say with Job, "His way have I kept and not declined" (Job 23. 11)? If not, will you say Isaiah 2. 3: "Come . . . and He will teach us of His ways." To walk in "His way" we must "Come to Him." The reason they "went their ways" was because they left Him. Cling to Him at all costs.

#### CLEANNESS.

Job 17. 9.

A VERY remarkable thing took place in a home some time ago. The youngest child, a boy of ten years, suddenly became solicitous about the cleanness of his hands. Each time he entered the house, he made a bee-line for the tap. The family noticed that he was not anxious about the cleanness of his neck and face, but only his hands, for the "tide-mark" on his neck remained. His elder brother inquired of him the reason for this unusual behaviour, to which he replied: "I want to be strong." 'But what has the tap and the washing of your hands to do with strength ? " he further inquired. "Well, it's in the Bible," said the boy, and then he quoted the above verse. He had to be told that there was much else beside hands and bodies that required cleansing. That the Bible speaks of:

I. A Clean Conscience. "Purge your conscience" (Heb. 9. 14).

II . A Clean Heart. "Create in me a clean heart, O God" (Psalm 51. 10).

III. A Clean Mouth. For when God saves a person He captures the tongue, cleansing the mouth from obscenity and blasphemy, from filthy speaking, and improper jesting. Study the following Scriptures: Eph.. 5. 4; James 5. 12.

A question is: "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" (Job 14. 4). No one, but the Lord Jesus. He can.

#### STANDING IN THE WAY OF SINNERS.

PSALM 1. 1.

WE clearly see the reason why we should not walk in the counsel of the ungodly by a study of the context. But we must go further. Here we are told not to stand in the way of sinners.

I. Standing in the Way with Sinners. Some do this to get them to Christ, and that is right. But the idea here is that of making acquaintances and friends and confidants of the ungodly. Walking out with them. This we must not do. Instead, make friends with God's children.

II. Standing in the Sinner's Way and Not God's Way. This is a further thought. We should not travel in the way of the ungodly. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but---" That is not the way we must go.

III. Standing in the Way of Sinners Coming to Christ. Hindering sinners coming to Christ. What a tragedy! How can we be hindrances ? We can do so by being very bad samples. Bad samples do not commend the goods. No commercial traveller would ever be guilty of such conduct. Don't be thankful for new light and not walk in it. What a hindrance is an inconsistent life.

### SITTING IN THE SEAT OF THE SCORNFUL PSALM 1. 1.

This is the last step in wickedness.

Sin is Progressive. I begin by walking in the counsel of the ungodly. Then I am found in the way of sinners. At last I am sitting in seat of scornful.

The Three Degrees of Sinfulness.

1. Simply ungodly--not godlike--sin by not doing.
2. Then sinners—those who step over--sin by action.
3. Then scornful—the contemplation—sin by ridiculing.

The Last State is Worst. That one who turns sacred things into ridicule has got as low as he can possibly get. He is a murderer. George McDonald says: "Contempt is murder committed by the intellect, as hatred is murder committed by the heart."

The Seat of the Joker in Holy Things is as bad as the seat of the scornful. Never use the Word of God irreverently.

See the Connection of Scornful with the delight in the Word of God. Note Jer. 15. 17. Who was this one who sat not in the assembly of mockers? One who finds God's Word the joy and rejoicing of his heart.

Questions.

1. Do you delight in the Word of God?
2. Do you meditate upon it day and night?
3. Is it the joy and rejoicing of your heart?

### A TONIC FOR THE FEARFUL. PSALM 2. 4.

I. Rightly considered, these verses form a tonic for the fearful.

II. How concerned we get when Divine Truth is attacked.

1. See how the Lord takes it, also Psalms 37. 13 and 59. 8.

2. Laughs at these efforts, as father laughs at the efforts of his little son to get something out of a closed hand.
3. The inspired interpretation of this is Acts 4. 25 to 28, which asserts its fulfilment in the crucifixion.
4. It will be true of the efforts during the dark days to come prior to the ushering in of the Millennium.

III How fearful we become when we hear of wars and rumours of wars. But listen to Luke 21. 28. Don't hang your head down, but d.; as the Lord bids.

### LIFE AS A STORY. PSALM 90. 9.

THIS is the oldest Psalm in the Bible, and was composed by Moses during the forty years' wandering in the wilderness. There is much that we could with profit dwell upon, but at the moment fix your attention upon verse 9, as above. Life is likened to a tale that is told, not read. Those were the days when reading matter was not as common or plentiful as to-day. Consequently there were quite a number of men who were professional storytellers. These were always welcomed in military camps and in towns and villages. The metaphor is a simple yet suggestive one.

I. There are long tales and short ones, so there are long lives and there are very short ones. Of course we cannot always measure life by years, as we can measure a story by pages or inches. It is what we put into life that counts. We must look upon life as a measure to be filled and not as a goblet to be drained. It is what we put into our days and into our years that will decide the value of the life lived.

II. There are dull tales, and there are very interesting ones, so there are lives that are very hum-drum, very sober and unattractive; whereas there are lives full of change and very exciting. Of course tastes differ, and what seems drab and uninteresting to some is considered as quite opposite by others.

III. There are bad tales and there are good ones, so there are lives that are really bad, exerting a baneful influence, whereas there are lives that are boons and blessings to all. Only one life to live, and how most of us long to be as useful and helpful as possible.

IV. There are tales that have a glorious mission, whereas there are others that are constantly producing nothing but evil; so there are lives just like that. We can think of books that have produced great and beneficial results, such as "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which contributed very largely to opening the eyes of the world to the awfulness of slavery, etc., etc.

V. How can my life be as a good and beneficial tale? There are three conditions.

1. **MUST HAVE THE RIGHT AUTHOR.** It takes a genius to produce a really great tale, one that will live on and on for generations. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can produce a life

that is as a good, useful, and helpful tale. We must be His workmanship. We cannot do this ourselves. We must resign ourselves to His gracious and marvellous creative skill.

2. MUST HAVE THE RIGHT HERO. The quality of the hook can be decided, and indeed hangs upon the quality of its hero. If Christ is the pivot and centre of our lives then all is well.

3. MUST HAVE THE RIGHT OBJECT. A book without an object is likely to be a weak and watery one, a very flat and dull one. What is the object of your life? Are you doing everything for the glory of God? Remember the famous snippet from a great Catechism: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." What a great object is this! What kind of a tale is your life telling?

#### THE THREE B's.

I. Bag. FOR MY SINS (Job 14. 17). When reading this verse there came into mind a practice at sea-side towns of putting dogs and cats that have been condemned, into a bag, with weights, tied, and then cast into the river or sea. This the Lord does, in figure, with sins.

II. Book. FOR MY NAME (Psa. 139. 16; (Psa. 4. 3). What a great privilege to love our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

III. Bottle. FOR OUR TEARS (Psa. 56. 8). It was an Egyptian custom at funerals for mourners to have handed to them a sponge or cloth to wipe their tears, which were wrung out into a tear bottle, and this was placed in the tomb. God takes notice of all our tears.

He knows, He loves. He cares  
Nothing this truth can dim

#### ONE THING.

I. One Thing Lacking: The inclusiveness of the Lord's claims (Mark 10. 21) .

II. One Thing Needful. The blessedness of giving the Lord our trust, love and attention (Luke 10. 42) .

III. One Thing Done. The value of definiteness and concentration upon the things of God (Phil. 3. 13).

#### BENJAMIN: AN OLD TESTAMENT PICTURE OF SALVATION. GENESIS 43 and 44.

1 Object of his father's special love. God loves us.

2. Bore unconsciously on his journey the evidence of his guilt. Our fallen nature, which we bear, is evidence of our fallen and guilty condition (Gen. 44. 2).

3. The evidence of his guilt not placed there by himself. We inherit ours.

4. Separated temporarily from his father, but in danger of that separation becoming permanent. That is our dreadful condition.

5. A Surety provided before the need arose (Gen. 43. 9). So with us.

6. That surety was bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. A picture of the reality and oneness of the Lord Jesus Christ with us in our humanity.

7. Was delivered through the intercession of that surety (Gen. 44. 16 to 34) .

8. The delivered one cleaves to the deliverer, for the tribe of Benjamin ever clave to Judah. A picture of the eternal gratitude of the delivered to their Deliverer.

NOTE. "Ye shall not see my face except," etc. (43. 3). We cannot see the face of God and live, if out of Christ. God out of Christ is unintelligible, and a fear and dread. God out of Christ is a consuming fire.

#### TWO ESTIMATES OF THE ONE LIFE.

GENESIS 47. 9; 48. 15.

These two estimates differ greatly. The first is doleful. There is a spirit of melancholy about it. It is a complaint. How illogical! If the days were evil, was it not a good thing they were but few? The secret is just this, in the former there is nothing about God. It is all Jacob. In the latter we notice a great deal more about God than about Jacob.

I. All Jacob (Genesis 47. 9) . God left out.

1. Doleful.
2. Complaining.
3. Unreasonable.
4. Illogical.

II. All God (Genesis 48. 15). "The God who pastured me... . the Angel which hath redeemed me" (R.V.).

1. Triumphant.
2. Grateful.
3. Sensible.
4. Logical.

#### THE PLAN OF SALVATION, SHOWING THE TRINITY OF DIVINE LOVE IN ACTION.

God is  
A JUST GOD Who cannot clear the Who cannot associate with  
A HOLY GOD Who cannot associate with the impure.

But we are  
GUILTY. - IMPURE.

Therefore to Stand  
IN THE JUDGMENT - IN THE PRESENCE CHAMBER.

We need to be  
JUSTIFIED. SANCTIFIED.  
i.e., pronounced innocent. i.e., made holy.

This Can only be done by  
THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST IMPUTED TO US.  
THE HOLINESS OF CHRIST IMPARTED TO US.

Which is  
CHRIST'S WORK FOR US. Passive and Active. - Suffering and Serving.  
CHRIST'S WORK IN US By the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

1. The originating cause is the love of God the Father.
2. The Procuring cause is the merit of Christ the Son.
3. The efficient cause is the operation of the Holy Ghost.
4. The instrumental cause is the Word of God. S. The receptive cause is the faith of man.

The Result.

We are

JUSTIFIED SANCTIFIED

1. From all guilt. 1. In the whole man.
2. One act. 2. A progressive act.
3. Perfect on believing. 3. Perfect only above. Amen.

By an unknown author. (Copied from the Latin by the late Canon Stuart, of Canterbury.  
Preserved by the author of this volume in his pocket Bible for thirty years) .

THREE TREES,

- I. The Tree of Knowledge. Reminding us of man's sin and ruin (Gen. 2. 17).
- II. The Tree of Calvary. Telling us of man's re-demption (Acts 10. 39; Acts 5. 30; 1 Peter 2. 24).
- III . The Tree of Life. Speaking to us of man's full regeneration (Gen. 2.9; Rev, 2. 7; 22. 2).

FOUR ACTIONS AND POSITIONS CONNECTED  
WITH TREES.

- I. Adam Behind the Tree. RUIN. (Gen. 3. 8).

- II. Jesus on a Tree. Substitution (Acts 10. 39).
- III. Nathaniel Under a Tree. Discovery (John 1. 48).
- IV. Zacchaeus up a Tree. Appropriation (Luke 19. 4).

#### WALKING

- I. Before God: Divine Inspection (Gen. 17., 1).
  - II. With God: Divine Companionship (Gen. 5. 22).
  - III. After God: Divine Leadership (Deut. 13. 4).
  - IV. In God: Divine Indwelling (Col. 2. 6).
- And the last includes all the others.

#### THE MAGNET

Tim labour-saving devices in works and workshops are simply amazing. What specially took my fancy when visiting Iron and Steel Works at Iny, native town after years of absence was the Magnetic crane. It was just then engaged in unloading and removing a truck-load of scrap. Formerly this all had to be done by hand, a slow and laborious job. Now it was done quickly and expeditiously by this Magnetic Crane. Lowering u1 arm like a big stump, or as another has likened it, as resembling an elephant's foot, the current was switched on, when the metal at once clung to it, Drawing it up, the crane removed itself to the desired place, whereupon the current was switched off, when clown fell the metal scraps. It was done so quickly, and in such a wholesale fashion that one simply marvelled.

Our magnet is the Lord: "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49. 10). A study of the word "draw" in the Word enables us to see the varied aspects of His attractiveness, and the various methods and results He has in drawing us.

I. By Teaching (John 12. 32). "No man can come to Me except the Father ... draw him." But do not pause; go on reading. Never separate verses 44 and 45. The significance of verse 45 is that it shows how the Father is seeking to draw men to His Son, viz., by the teaching of the prophetic books and other books of the Bible, and by the ministry of the Word to-day.

II. By Sacrifice (John 12. 32). Observe that the drawing follows the lifting up. The great attractiveness in the New Testament story is the story of the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The great magnet is not only the Cross, nor the Gospel story, but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself on and through the Cross and in the Gospel story,

1. Suffering always appeals to our hearts.
2. Suffering for the sake of others particularly moves us.
3. Personal testimony of the effect of the story of the Cross upon us always moves us.

III. By His Beauty (Song of Sol. 1. 4). The Bride is taken up with the beauty of the Bridegroom. And she finds in it a great source of attraction. Observe the change from the singular to the plural. "Draw 7ne . . . we will run after Thee." That means that when He draws me to Himself, others benefit, others are influenced for good through me.

IV. By His Kind and Loving Providences (Jer. 31.3) .

V. By and Through His Own Dear Children and Disciples. One of the interesting incidents of days long since past, was to persuade some workman in connection with the electric generating plant at the Iron Works to take an ordinary pocket knife and have it magnetized, so that it became, at anyrate for a time, a magnet. Just ordinary bits of metal, but what a change f And how this has come to ones mind as we have thought of methods the Lord has in drawing men and women to Himself. He can so fill us with Himself that we, though humble folk, both on account of His life in uz, and the wonderful story of His grace we have to tell, become magnets for Him. Oh, Christian workers, ever lift Christ up! Speak of His death, and not merely of His life. You demagnetize Christianity, as all history shows, if you strike out the atoning death on the Cross.

VI. By a Shout (1 Thess. 4. 1G,. This is quite future. Dr. Pettingill in the American Sunday School Times, recently described an experience with a magnetic crane which greatly interested me, as I had also seen the crane. "Turn on your current, and move slowly, keeping near the ground." were the orders given to the crane driver. When this was done, I saw bits of scrap which had been lying about the ground, leap up to the magnets, cleaving to them. And more than that, I actually saw the ground itself moving, and out of the very dust came the scrap that had been mingled with it and buried beneath its surface. Out came the pieces, flying straight toward the magnet , and sticking to it together with the other pieces from the ground." Thank God, the time is coming when all His own that are in the graves, and those then alive on the earth, will together be caught up by and to the Lord. Even the buried saints will come out of their graves.

Only iron and steel scraps rose to the magnets from that Rolling Mill yard. Only those metals were caught up that partook of the same nature as the magnet. Precisely so in that Great Day coming. Only those who have become partakers of His own Divine nature through regeneration, will be caught up. The rest must wait until the Great White Throne has been set. But blessed and holy are they who shall take part in this first and glorious resurrection.

SOAP AND SODA. JEREMIAH 2 22.
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Fancy soap and soda in the Bible. Why not? These are everyday essentials for bodily health and comfort. But what about the soul Have we performed our full duty, to God and society we have made our bodies presentable ? Verily no. There are urgent spiritual necessities. (Nitre is soda..)

This verse in Jeremiah points out the inadequacy of mere reformation of life and manners. What about the record against us up on High? "Thine iniquity is marked before Me," saith the Lord. Only the precious Blood of Christ can avail for that dire need.

#### THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST.

## ROMANS 5. 19.

Napoleon's Kindness. During one of the wars of Napoleon Bonaparte, after a day of fierce fighting, as night drew on, sentinels were chosen to be placed at different points of the camp to guard against surprise. They were charged, on pain of death, to keep awake and do their duty. About midnight the Emperor arose, and walked around, to find one of the sentinels asleep, his gun lying beside him. Worn out by the terrible struggle of the previous day, on being left alone, he had fallen asleep. What must be done? The sentinel's duty must be done or he must die. Silently the Emperor picked up the gun, and, putting it to his shoulder, acted as sentinel till (lawn of day.

When the soldier awoke, he was filled with alarm. But Napoleon simply handed him back his gun, bidding him be more careful in future.

You are prepared to applaud this humane act. We wish to draw attention -o Another who has done much more for us. Our text refers to Him---the Lord Jesus.

I. Man's Commission. As each soul is marched into the arena of life, God gives a commission (see Deut. 10. 12; Micah 6. 8). Is there a single soul who can say they have executed that commission ?

II. Man's Disobedience. "I wish I could mind my God as my little dog minds me," said a little boy. That statement revealed man's depravity.

Everything obeys the Lord.

1. ORBS OF LIGHT (josh. 10. 12 to 14). Sun stood still.

2. MIGHTY OCEAN (Hiatt. 8. 27). "Even the winds and seas obey Him."

3. EVIL SPIRITS (?lark 1. 27). "With authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits."

4. BIRDS OF AIR (1 Kings 17. 4). "I have commanded the ravens to feed thee."

Did we say "Everything?" Ah, there is one exception—man. What will be the end of the disobedient ones? Joshua 5. 6 tells us, Israel "were consumed because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord."

III. He Took our Place. The Lord Jesus

1. Not only lived a perfectly obedient life, filling up the full measure of righteousness,

2. But atoned for our disobedience.

3. Not only did what Napoleon did, but more, for He suffered for our disobedience.

4. By Napoleon's obedience this man's life was saved.

5. By Jesus' obedience (obedient unto death, even death on Cross) we are saved.

IV. You art' now commanded to obey the Gospel, And if you will do this, and come to

Jesus, He will give you the Holy Spirit, who will enable you to live the Holy life.

#### THE FIVE PRECIOUS THINGS OF THE BIBLE.

1. His Word and Thoughts, .. .. Psa. 139. 17
2. His Redemption, ,.. .. Psa. 49. 8
3. The Life of the Believer, .. Psa. 72. 14
4. The Lips of the Well-informed, .. Prov. 20, 15
- 5 The Death of His People, .. .. Psa. 116. 15

#### IN HIS PRESENCE

Here and now is

1. Sadness (His presence is a trouble when everything is not right), .. .. Neh. 2. 1
2. Joy, .. .. Psa. 16. 11
3. Power for Service for God and our fellows, .. .. Neh. 2.6

#### WHAT CONSTITUTES TRUE GREATNESS.

"He shall be great in the sight of the Lord" (Luke 1. 15).

Introduction.

#### HEAVEN'S STANDARD.

1. "In the sight of the Lord," not in the sight of men.
2. There is the world's estimate of greatness, and there is God's estimate.
3. The one greatly differs from the other.
4. The former is false and fanciful, the latter true and eternal.
5. John's greatness was according to the standard of Heaven. In the Lord's estimation he was a great man.

#### USEFUL NOT GREAT.

1. Some are born great, others have greatness thrust upon them.
2. Most, if not all of us, have no aspiration for earthly greatness.
3. We have not the slightest expectation of ever becoming great in a worldly sense.
4. But that is not the reason why we desire it not.
5. We sympathise much with the poet who wrote:  
' Pay not thy praise to lofty things alone, The plains are everlasting as the hills.'
6. The plains are as necessary as the hills.
7. What should we do if all the globe was but a collection of hills and mountains?
8. We have no ambition for earthly greatness.
9. For one thing, greatness fills the pillow with thorns.
10. We desire rather to be useful than great.

#### USEFUL BECAUSE GREAT.

- I. And we can be useful without earthly greatness.
2. But that is not so with respect to spiritual greatness. Note little word "and", verse 17.

3. Goodness and highest usefulness is conditioned on being "great in the sight of the Lord."
4. John was good and useful because he was great in the Lord's sight.  
Four results of greatness: (1) Parents rejoice; (2) Fellows benefit; (3) Fulness of blessing; (4) Usefulness in service.

#### A Longing.

1. Do you not long that your parents might thank God you were ever given to them ?
2. And that others of your fellows should thank God you were ever born ?
3. Surely we all long for that privilege I
4. Well, all this is the outcome of becoming great in His sight.
5. Note that little word "for" and previous verse.

#### How to Get Power of Spirit.

1. Further, how we long to be filled with the Spirit.
2. How we long to have power in service.
3. How we long to be the instrument of the conversion of many.
4. Here you see all this is fruit of being great in His sight.
5. Do you not think there is some connection between
  - a. Being great in the sight of the Lord,
  - b. Being filled with the Holy Spirit,
  - c. And turning many to righteousness?

#### PROPHECY THAT CAME TO PASS.

1. This was the prophecy of the angel who announced His birth.
2. Did the prophecy come to full fruition?
3. How many lives of promise become tragic failures?
4. Yes, listen to the words of Jesus. Looking back on the career of this man, the Lord Jesus endorsed the prophecy, declaring that it had become a fact. "Among those that are born of women there is none greater."

#### ELEMENTS or TRUE GREATNESS.

1. If we want to know the elements of true greatness, the greatness God recognises, we do well if we turn to the life of this man.
2. Lives of great men like John remind us, we (or rather God) may make our lives sublime.
3. What was there about John worthy of such noble comment?
4. We have seven facts to bring to your notice.
5. And we make bold to declare that all the principles of John's life, character, and service might become ours.

#### I. He was a Man of Noble Birth (Luke 1.5).

##### DESCENDANT OF AARON.

1. He was a descendant of Aaron, belonging to the priestly family.
2. What a very great honour this was!
3. He was a noble man of noble birth.

4. Well begun is half done.

#### DISCOURAGED.

1. Ah, at that word you discourage me.
2. I am but of humble and lowly origin.
3. I am but one of the common folk.
4. No need now to proceed any further. But listen !

#### GREAT SOUL.

1. It was said of one that, he was "a man of mean estate" yet "his soul was great."
2. So you can have a great soul.

#### MORE NOBLE BIRTH.

1. But you can be of far nobler birth than John.
2. You can have the very life of the Creator in your soul.
3. The life of the King of kings within you.
4. "Partakers of Divine nature." Can you have anything greater than that ?

#### GREATER THAN HE.

1. If you think we are romancing, listen to the Saviour (Luke 7.28).
2. The greatness referred to here is not that of character, but that of position.
3. The contrast is drawn between being within and being without the kingdom.
4. John the Baptist only stood upon the threshold, we go right in.
5. "He that is least within the Kingdom is greater than the greatest without."

#### YOU CAN BECOME A RELATIVE

1. John was a relative to Jesus.
2. You, too, can become related to Him.

II. He was an Unworldly Man (Luke 1. 80). "A man clothed in soft raiment?" No.

This is seen in different ways:

- a. His love of solitude.
- b. His plain dress.
- c. His plain food.

#### DIFFERENT TYPE.

1. Of course we know our type of holiness is different to that of John.
2. Concerning the dark middle ages, an historian writes: "In those days John the Baptist's life seems to have been the ideal of holiness far more than that of the Son of Man; to renounce the common food and the common joys of humanity was deemed far nobler than to turn earth's daily bread to Divine uses."
3. Yet according to his light, he was right.
4. He was a man who lived above the world.

III. He was a Man who had Control over his Appetites.

IV. He was a Man Filled with the Holy Spirit.

V. He was a Man with a Mission.

BORN FOR A PURPOSE.

1. He was born in order to do a specific work.
2. He did not go aimlessly through life.
3. So with us.
4. Every man's life is a plan of God.

ANSWERED. He answered the purpose of his existence in

1. Introducing Jesus, and acting as
2. Fore-runner of Jesus.

SO WE:

1. Can we not make it easy for some to come to Jesus.
2. Can we not introduce others to Jesus?

VI. He was a Man Obedient to the Call.

NOT ONLY KNEW.

1. He would be told by his parents the circumstances surrounding his birth.
2. And he obeyed the call.

ABRAHAM.

1. The call came to Abraham and the Lord said that if he would leave his home and obey the call, "I will bless thee and make thy name great."
  2. Obedience, then blessing, then greatness. "Whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 5. 19)
- Mark, do and teach—obedience before teaching.

VII. He was a Man of Unwavering Firmness and Courage. Not "a reed shaken with the wind."

COURAGE.

1. In rebuking sin, even that of King Herod.
2. He laid down his life.

Elizabeth Fry.

1. Elizabeth Fry, as a girl (born in 1780), "was of pleasing person, gentle in look and manner, loving, obedient, and possessed of an exquisite voice."
2. Yet she was timid and obstinate.
3. Yet it is said of her that "her natural timidity in after years, under Divine Grace, was transformed into a chastened courage, and her childish obstinacy, became a finely-tempered decision of character." All the result of the Holy Spirit's presence in her life.

VIII. He was a Man on Fire for God

## IN HIS PRESENCE.

1. Salvation, . . . . Ps. 42. 5, marg. -
2. Rest, . . . . . Exod. 33. 14 -
3. Joy, . . . . ., Ps. 16. 11
4. Safety, . . . . ., Ps. 31.20 -
5. Highest Communion, Ps. 140. 13; Cant. 2.41

## WHAT THE LORD DOES FOR US. PSALM 34.

1. Redeems, . . . , . . . Verse 22
2. Saves, ,, 18
3. Hears, .. 4
4. Delivers, . . . . 4
5. Preserves, 7
6. Deeply Interested In Us, . . . is
7. Is Near, 18

## IN THE LORD THERE IS DELIVERANCE

### FROM

1. Fear, . . . . . Ps. 34. 4
2. Danger, . . . . . Ps. 34. 7
3. Trouble, . . . . . Ps. 34. 7
4. Afflictions, . . . . . Ps. 34. 19
5. Death, . . . . . 2 Cor. 1. 10
6. World, . . . . . \_ Gal. 1.4
7. Darkness, . . . . . Col. 1. 13
8. Wrath,, . . . . . I Thess. 1. 10

## OUR INHERENT GREATNESS.

"He hath made everything beautiful in His time, also He hath set the world (eternity) in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end" (Eccles. 3. 11).

Introduction.

### PUZZLING.

1. What a puzzling and bewildering sentence is, "He bath set the world in their heart.
2. It has been a trouble to many thoughtful Christians.
3. How is it possible to believe that God is responsible for the love of the world within our hearts?
4. The fact is that the word translated "world," does not mean this material world but duration; not place, but time.

5. R.V. margin clears away the difficulty, where it
  - a. Refers not to space,
  - b. But to duration of time.

#### DIFFICULTY.

1. It is not only a difficult phrase, but difficult to understand what precise meaning is to be attached to these words, and connection with context.
2. Ecclesiastes is the autobiography of a backslider, and therefore we need not wonder at its haziness. Get away from God and you will soon get hazy views, soon be in a fog, in a spiritual fog of your own creating, and floundering about.

#### NOT TRANSIENT.

1. He has been speaking of the change and decay he saw in all around.
2. He was gloomily meditating on the transitory character of all earthly things.
3. But it was then he declared that man is not a transient creature, for he has eternity in his heart, i.e., is eternal, and is conscious of the fact,
4. He is an immortal being, or better, an endless being.

#### INHERENT GREATNESS.

1. We were reminded of these verses when reading Carlyle on "Greatness:" "Man's unhappiness, as I construe, comes of his greatness: it is because there is an Infinite in him, which, with all his cunning, he cannot quite bury under the Finite" (Sartor Resartus).
2. That is to say, man is naturally great—there is eternity within him.
3. In a former study we were thinking of greatness in His sight (Luke 1. 15) .
4. That was a greatness made possible through Redemption .
5. We are now thinking of our inherent greatness.
6. This side is often neglected.
7. We generally leave it to the Materialists and Rationalists to declare.
8. But we must rescue it from such sordid surroundings and place it in its rightful evangelical setting.

THE BEAUTIFUL WORLD. The sense of beauty is one of the things that allies us to God. God must be glad when one loves His world so much.

#### THREE THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY TEXT.

1. The world in the heart---a sad and woeful fact.  
238 Handfuls on Purpose
2. Eternity in the heart—a glorious and blessed fact.
3. The Eternal One in the heart—a marvellous possibility for all.

ANOTHER WAY OF PUTTING IT. But in order to bring out the fact of man's greatness, let me put it another way.

I. Man's Greatness Proved beyond Doubt by the Fact that, though the World is in his Heart, he is not Satisfied.

#### A SAD FACT.

1. The world is in our hearts by nature, by our natural birth; not only are we in the world, but the world is in us.
2. Of that we are only too conscious; even Christians sometimes discover this to be so.
3. We are so occupied with the world that many have no time for Divine things.
4. We are so taken up with thoughts and cares of worldly things, and so exercised concerning them, that many have little heart for eternal things.

#### BLACKWOOD.

1. Sir Arthur Blackwood discovered this.
2. During the Crimea War he became serious and decided for God.
3. But on his return home he found it very difficult to keep on in the good way in the whirl of social life.
4. Under date April and May, in 1856, he writes: "Troublous times—undecided—world in my heart—God in my conscience."
5. Take those four sharp, finely cut sentences—what a portrait of many a one.
  - a. Troublous times. First experience of one who faces the current.
  - b. Undecided. Halting between two opinions.
  - c. World in my heart. Ah, that's the tragic fact; the magnet is there !
  - d. God in my conscience. A troubled conscience.

#### WHO PUT IT THERE?

1. Not God.
2. "An enemy hath done this."

#### RESULT.

1. Does the world in the heart satisfy it ? No!
2. "Man's unhappiness comes of his greatness."
3. Great though the world is, man is too great for it to satisfy him.
4. He has a hunger for eternal things.
5. Only eternal things can satisfy him.
6. The worldling tries to satisfy the craving of his being for eternal things by the material, yet is like the prodigal at the swine trough.

#### SOLOMON.

1. Solomon is an illustration.
2. Getting away from God, he sought satisfaction in wisdom, learning, letters, science, wealth, etc.
3. But "vanity of vanities, all is vanity," was his verdict.
11. Man's Greatness is Proved beyond Question in that Though in the World . he has Deeply Rooted in him the Thought and Fact of Eternity.

#### REVISED VERSION.

- 1 . That is the teaching of the rendering of the R.V. 2. It suggests four thoughts: (1) Consciousness; (2) Fact; (3) Longing; and (3) Dread of Eternity.

#### EVERLASTING PROBLEM.

1. "If a man die shall he live again," is the question in Job.
2. This is the everlasting problem.
3. "He thinks he was not made to die." Ah, how sure!

#### SOLUTION.

1. Revelation and reason give incontestable proofs of immortality.
2. But there is another—intuition.
3. God not only has made man immortal, but He has put the consciousness of immortality within our hearts.
4. He made us eternal, and put within us the consciousness of that fact.

#### ONLY BEINGS.

1. "We are the only beings on earth who can speak the Word or think the thought of eternity." Ponder on that phrase .
2. God has put the consciousness of eternity in our hearts.
3. And now the Gospel has cleared away all mists. "Life and immortality has been brought to light through the Gospel."

#### BURNS.

1. James Drummond Burns was in poor health for 20 years.
2. His last words were: "I have been dying for 20 years; now I am going to live."

#### SHELL FROM THE SEA-SHORE.

1. Man, so small, so tiny, that from a hill-top he appears but as a speck in the valley below, yet within him the roar of the infinite sea of eternity is forever sounding.
2. Just as a man will pick up a shell from the sea-shore and carry it 3000 miles inland, and listening, he hears the beating music of the waves that made it so.
3. O man, no matter how far thou hast wandered from God, in thy heart is the passion of Deity, the sounding of the billows of eternity!
4. The whirl and noise of day may silence that music, but in the silence of the night there comes back the call of the infinite. It is a call that surges through him.

III. Man's Greatness Proved by the Fact that though in the World, he has a Heart that the Eternal One Claims and can Fill.

#### HAS MAN THE CAPACITY?

1. Has he the capacity of becoming the Sanctuary of the Lord?
2. Those who know anything about the Bible know such is its teaching.
3. And those who know anything of the human heart know this is so.

HOW TO GET RID OF WORLD. The only way of getting rid of the world in the heart is by letting the heart's rightful Guest in.

#### HOW TO GET PEACE.

- 1, If God is in your conscience—troubling you. The precious Blood of Christ and
2. God in the heart will bring peace.

Too BIG FOR WORLD. We are too big for the world. The world cannot fill our hearts and lives.

#### A MISSIONARY'S EQUIPMENT.

2 KINGS 4. 10.

This woman, great in soul, and probably in wealth, suggested to her husband sacrificing the most cherished part of the Eastern home for the comfort of the prophet Elisha. Her husband seconded the handsome proposition, and it was carried into effect. It is interesting to note the articles of furniture she considered necessary for the prophet's comfort. In what they remind us of we have the essentials for home and foreign missionary work. Unless we possess what these articles stand for, we cannot be useful workers for the Lord.

I. Bed. Which speaks to us of rest. This is the first necessity. In fact, if we do not enjoy rest from the burden of guilt and an uneasy conscience, we cannot be workers. Only Christ can give rest. Does He not say, "Come unto Me ... and I will give you rest?"

II. Table. Which speaks to us of communion. Communion with Christ should follow receiving from Him rest. Pray note, not the table first, and then rest. No; that would never do. And yet there are many who teach that this is the proper order. Such say, "Unless we partake of the Sacrament we cannot be saved." Neither the Lord Jesus nor any of the apostles taught this! We refuse to re-arrange these articles to please anyone. God's order must be observed. At the same time, may we not urge upon those who have rest, the necessity of the table of the Lord! It is our duty and privilege to go to the Lord's Table to remember the Lord's death till He come.

Then again, now that rest is your enjoyment, do not forget that He desires you to have communion and blessed fellowship with Him day by day; that is, the table to follow the bed. Do not come short of His purposes, nor be satisfied with anything less than His best.

III. Stool. This comes third, and speaks to us of discipleship. How important it is that we should frequently sit at His feet to be taught of Him. What about the daily devotional study of the Scriptures? Then what about the daily closer study of some portion of the Holy Book? Ah, the discipleship position is important. This will fit us for the fourth.

IV. Candlestick. This speaks to us of witness-bearing, shining for Jesus in the dark and gloomy places, where our light is most needed.

#### KISSING.

"Kiss the Son" (Psa. 2. 12).

Introduction. Kissing in Oriental countries has a much greater significance than in the West. On that account, reference to that act in the Bible deserve a closer study than is usually given.

**THE POWER OF A Kiss.** A woman prisoner was being taken from one prison to another loaded with chains, because she was so rebellious that nothing seemingly could be done with her. The matron of the prison she had been sent to refused to receive the new charge unless the chains were removed. This was done, whereupon the matron kissed the female prisoner, who broke completely down at this unexpected and undeserved welcome, and led to her complete transformation, so much so, that later she became a successful Christian worker. The Divine goodness is designed to lead us to repentance.

**THE COST OF A Kiss.** When the Princess Alice died, it fell to the lot of Gladstone to move in the House of Commons a vote of sympathy. In doing so, he told how she came to her end. Her little child was ill with diphtheria. The doctor told her that, on no account must she kiss the child. In a paroxysm of pain, she picked her little one up in her arms. She became conscious, and said, "Mamma, kiss me!" What could a mother do in the face of such an appeal from a loved suffering one? She knew what it might mean, but could not do otherwise, and gave the loving kiss.

Does not this remind us of Christ's great act of love. He thought not of the cost. He knew that, coming into contact with a sin-diseased world meant death. And He died, and in dying for us took away our sin. But that great act of His love was not in vain, for us, as was Princess Alice's loving act. It has meant for millions, as it has meant for many a believer to-day, health and salvation.

I. The Kiss of Subjection (Psa 2. 12) , This is one of the many Messianic Psalms, and is full of Christ. Here is inspired good advice: "Kiss the Son." It is the kiss of subjection that is meant here, the kind of kiss given by a subject to a prince, or by a captive to his captor, and what a sinner should give to the Saviour. It signifies the surrender of the will, a vital condition of salvation, and indeed of every spiritual blessing. Did we say, inspired good advice? Rather, an inspired command. It is imperative. And why? "Lest He be angry." Yes, that is true, for there is not only the love of the Lamb, and the Blood of the Lamb, but also the wrath of the Lamb. Our God and Saviour knows what wrath is, because He is Love. Kiss the Son lest ye perish!

II. The Kiss of Pardon (Luke 15. 20). This follows the kiss of subjection, and indeed is the beginning of all good. It could be rendered, "He kissed him again and again." What a surprising gift was this! Note:

- I. It followed the return, which was the sign and proof of real genuine repentance.
2. It was given .before the prodigal could say a word. Though he had prepared a speech, not a syllable was uttered until the Father kissed the returned prodigal. Wondrous grace!
3. It was bestowed on the prodigal whilst yet in his rags and dirt. Therefore entirely unmerited. He was not asked first to make himself presentable ere the kiss could be given.

4. It was followed by the bestowal of other gifts, and never stands alone. This, the first blessing, is always followed by other mercies and blessings.

III. The Kiss of Affection and Communion. (Song of Solomon 1. 2). Only returned ones, who are pardoned and clothed and restored to friendship, can be expected to love. And they alone can be admitted into friendship and fellowship with God and His Christ.

**THE SATISFIED LIFE.**  
"Full of years" (Gen. 25. 8).

This is a choice and suggestive phrase. It is not synonymous for longevity. Abraham lived to be 175; Isaiah, 180; Job, 140; David, 0; Jehoida, 130 (2 Chron. 24. 15; yet same expression is used for all. Read "satisfied" for "full"—really its meaning---and you have the true meaning of the term. And Ire acted like a satisfied man. No desperate clinging to life, no unwillingness to go. He was like one who, having had enough at the table, blesses the Giver of the feast, pushes back his chair, gets up, and goes away without a struggle, or with out the least resistance---SATISFIED

What had he got ? He went out of Mesopotamia expecting a country and a nation, But he ,lies with no possession save a grave, and with no further right of posterity than his sore Isaac, and his two grandsons, who were fifteen years old when he died. Then why was Abraham satisfied and not sickened with life? He lived the following life—a life:

I. Filled with God (Psa. 105. 40; 107. 9).

2. He lived in enjoyment of the unmerited favour of God. "Satisfied with favour" (Deut. 33. 23). His faith was counted for righteousness.
3. He daily received the mercies of God (Psa. 90. 14).
4. He lived a life of trust in God. Is noted for his faith.
5. He lived a life of communion with God, in spite of many hindrances.
6. He lived a life of busy service for God.
7. And he lived in the full certainty of going to God. Ponder over the phrase, "Gathered to his people."

**WE MUST DELIGHT OURSELVES**

1. In God Himself, .. .. Psa. 37. 4
2. In His Word, .. .. Psa. 1. 2; 119. 24
3. in His Service, .. .. Psa.40.8
4. In Prayer, .. .. Isa. 58. 2 Th^n what a joy to learn that God will delight in us (Pea. 37. 23; Prov. 11. 20; 12. 22'.

**WALKING OUT WITH HIM.**  
"Can two walk together except they be agreed?"  
(Amos 3. 3) .

## Introduction.

Have you ever grasped the significance of this statement ? In one part of the North of England, it is customary when announcing the courtship of a couple to say: "So-and-so are walking out together." That is the very phrase used here, as descriptive of a wonderful possibility for man. It is a sublime conception of the Christian life. To be a Christian means more than to accept a Creed, or even to accept a living Christ, it means to walk out with God day by day and all our days. Walking out with Him ! Oh, the sublimity of this figure of speech.

But there are essentials. Prior to walking out with Him we must agree regarding certain facts. There must be four prior agreements.

I. Agreement as to Place. That is the place of meeting. He has made an appointment for sinners, and that is that they should meet Him in grace at the Cross of our Lord Jesus. That is the place of meeting. Will you keep the appointment? If not, another appointment will be made—at the Great White Throne, in Judgment.

II.. Agreement as to Goal. Agreeing that the glory of God be the aim, and motive of life; and. by-and-by, Heaven.

III. Agreement as to Pace. Keeping step with the Master, neither lagging behind nor going on ahead. Walking at the same pace. Ask Him to take your hand, and then you will walk together.

IV. Agreement as to Cost. A walk with God is costly. It means many a persecution, many a sorrow, many a tear, but very much joy, and His smile.

Is such a life possible? Enoch lived that life, without the wonderful helps that are ours in Christ Jesus, and for three hundred years, too, till God took him.

"Do the converts stand?" inquired someone of Gipsy Smith. At once he replied, "No, they don't stand—they walk I They keep going ! " For they walk with Him

### BROUGHT

1. Low, .. . . . Psa. 116. 6
2. Up, .. . . . Psa. 40.2
3. Out, .. . . . Psa. 107. 14
4. Into, .. . . . Psa 18.19
5. On..... 2Cor.I.16

### SLITHERING THROUGH LIFE.

"Then Jacob lift up his feel" (Gen. 29. 1, margin).

"SLITHERING" is quite a North Country word. You see a person going along dragging his feet—that is slithering. Some do this out of sheer habit—certainly a very bad habit.

Such soon wear their boots out, and other people's patience too. Some drag their feet because of sad and sorrowful spirits. Much had just happened to Jacob to make his feet heavy as lead. He had deceived his father, robbed his twin brother, and had been compelled to flee for his life. All this is recorded in Gen. 28. It is a sad chapter. Was Jacob to go "slithering" through life? No. God took measures to save him from that dread disaster.

Jacob "went out" (Gen. 28. 10) of the home and encampment. No doubt he would go out alone, unattended, so as not to arouse his brother's suspicions. After travelling about forty miles of mountainous country, he reached a rocky valley, with stones piled up like a huge stone staircase. As he lay down and slept, it seemed as if the stones of the valley were being builded together, by unseen hands, into a stair, till it reached the deep blue-spangled sky. He saw the angels of God ascending and descending, and there by his side (see R.V.) the Lord. Jacob had been so full of his own activities, plannings, and schemings, that the only time God could get his attention was when he was asleep. What did this vision do for Jacob?

1. It Banished Mere Earthliness. "Top ... reached to Heaven."

#### WORM.

1. It is not likely that Jacob would be cherishing any lofty thoughts for he was a fugitive.
2. He had been grovelling like a worm on earth with but few thoughts beyond; this vision lifts his eyes from the low level.
3. There had been little traffic between his soul and heaven; the vision shows him a path from his very side right into its depths. He calls it "gate of Heaven." The gate is the busiest place of a city, not only the entrance but the gathering place.
4. "Fear not thou worm Jacob." "Too often he was like the worm grovelling in the earth when he ought to have been like the butterfly, flitting through sunlit gardens.

#### STAIRCASE.

1. What that ladder was to Jacob, Jesus is to us.
- 2., Indeed in John 11 51 He declares it was a type of Himself.
3. Jesus is

- a. Our connecting link with Heaven.
- b. All blessings come to us along that way.
- c. Every child of man has the ladder right at his feet.

II. It Banished Loneliness. "Angels of God ascending and descending."

- 1 . He thought himself alone, but the vision peoples the wilderness.
2. Note, "ascending and descending," not descending and ascending, teaching earth was their home.
3. Solitary, far away from his beloved mother, he found himself cared for by angels.

III.. It Banished Spiritual Forlornness. He thought he was forlorn, but, lo, he found he was not alone. Don't

slop at angels!

I He saw "angels." Yes, but he saw Someone else--Lord.

2. Oh, never allow angels to shut out the Lord!

#### WHERE WAS THE LORD?

1. Not "above it," as A.V., but "beside him" (NV. margr.) .

2. Perhaps he thought he had left God in father's encampment .

3. Or that God had forsaken h=.m because of his sin.

4. Oh, the blessed thought of 9 he nearness of the Lord S. How God comports the lonely and forsaken. i;. He is by your side, oh sad and lonely one

#### IV. It Banished Helplessness .

1. He had felt himself defenceless in that wild and dangerous region

2. The vision musters armies for his Safety.

3, Yea better still, the God of armies (verse 15).

#### V. It Banished Aimlessness.

1. God took him into partnership with Himself (verses 13 to 15).

2. He would realise that he was partner with God in the fulfilment of the Divine purpose.

3. He now had an object in life.

#### VI. It Banished Ignorance (verse 17) .

1. It revealed to him his sin.

2. It is an eloquent testimony of man's consciousness of sin, that whenever a present God becomes a reality to a worldly man he trembles.

#### VII. It Banished Homelessness (verse 17).

1. He was driven away from his father's house, but he got to know of God's house.

2. Jacob loved home more than Esau. He was a lover of home.

3. This vision taught him that earth, "which we are too apt to make a workshop or a mere garden of pleasure, is a Bethel—a house of God."

4. Note:

a. Luz. Separation from the world.

b. Bethel. Adoption into God's house, God's family, House of God.

c. Bethel. Fellowship and knowledge of God. Face of God.

5. Oh, the horrid bargaining Jacob indulged in. We won't end there.

#### VIII. It Banished Sluggishness (chap. 29. 1).

1. Margin, "Lift up his feet."

2. Not drag his feet.

3. How our feet drag when our hearts are sad and heavy.

4. Blessed by contact, abiding contact with God, he resumed his way with a light heart and elastic step.

5. There is a spirit of cheerfulness about it.

6. Sq, may we go through life.

7. And those who, by Divine grace refuse to slither through life become the means of blessings to others.

Bible Readings.  
FIVE SHARP WATCHWORDS.

Introduction.

1. Gossner, in, bidding good-bye to the missionaries he had trained, was accustomed to say to them in parting: "Believe, Love, Hope, Pray, Burn."

2. He considered that that is the way to help the world in its woe.

3. Surely we could not have five better watchwords for guidance, and for inspiration. That is the way to become a real help. Let us examine them.

I. Believe.

1. First act of the individual expected. The first act of all true working is faith.

2. First step downward was lack of trust, hence the Fall. The first step upward is faith.

3. Shortest chapter in Bible is Psalm 117.

4. But verses 8 and 9 of next Psalm are, numerically, the centre of the whole Bible.

5. Faith should be the centre of our lives.

6. The first act leading to salvation should become the habit of our lives.

7. Faith required for our work, as well as for our soul.

II. Love. Ah, here is the warmth. The Pharisaical spirit kills—we require more love. Love (1) begets love; (2) constrains us; (3) wins. Love never reckons sacrifices made for God or others. All real work done for God means sacrifice, yet we won't reckon up such sacrifice.

III. Hope. In keeping of other two graces. Faith, hope, love. Hope is in the care of faith and love. Various Bible hopes, for ourselves. Yet we require not only hope for ourselves, but hope concerning others. Cultivate a sanguine temperament.

IV. Pray. Ah, this is the one thing lacking in modern

1. Church life. Prayer meetings, alas, have in many cases died out,

2. Individual life. How long do you pray?

Prayer is service. There are mysteries in its philosophy. But, He knows, He loves, He cares., etc., we cling to this fact and find it helps.

V. Burn. "Stir into flame the gift that is in thee." "He was a burning and a shining light." Shining means burning. That means sacrifice. The way of the Cross:

1. Leads Home.

2. Leads to burning.

3. Leads to shining.

## "YES, LORD."

### Introduction.

1. There is in our language one wee word of great import— "Yes.'
2. No word so frequently used.
3. It is a word we learn to say before, "Thank you."
4. No word falls upon the ear of the fond mother with greater joy than this word "Yes."
5. Seven times in the Book of God do we find these words. Five times the Greek Nai Kurie is translated "Yes, Lord." Twice it is "Even so, Lord."

"Thy wonderful grand will, my God,  
With triumph now, I make it mine;  
And faith shall cry a joyous 'Yes, "  
To every dear command of Thine.

6. "Yes" to the Lord is the secret of salvation, holiness, hopefulness, helpfulness, happiness.

#### I. Lowliness. The ' Yes" of lowliness, of deep humility in presence of great need (Mark 7. 28) .

- 1.. The first "Yes" comes from the lips of a poor Gentile heathen.
2. She was in deep distress on account of another—her child.
3. Parents are wise when they take their dear ones to the Lord.
4. The disciples made a great mistake. She was not crying after "us," but Him.
5. Why the Lord's silence? Until she took her rightful place.
6. He spoke to His disciples, not to her; or rather, spoke to them so that she could hear.
7. She took the lowly place. If she was a dog, she was only a wee puppy dog, allowed to enter the home and pick up the crumbs.
8. This is the secret of:
  - a. Salvation. Have you acknowledged your sinner-ship?
  - b. Success in prayer life.

#### II.. Trust. The "Yes" of trust, in presence of blindness (Matt. 9. 28).

1. Two blind men. Though blind, they saw the value of following Jesus even in the dark.
2. He invited them to consider His power, and they confidently replied "Yes."
3. This was a challenge to their faith.
4. The secret :
  - a. Of salvation.
  - b. Of success in dealing with difficult cases.

#### III. Acceptance. The "Yes" of acceptance of His Word (Matt. 13. 51).

1. But did they really understand?
2. He had been giving them wonderful parables.
3. He throws down this challenge.
4. Ask this question of yourself as you read His Word.
5. Whilst the Spirit of Inspiration is no longer with us, the Spirit of Illumination is.

IV. Appreciation. The "Yes" of a growing appreciation and appropriation (John 11. 25-27).

1. The Lord had declared to Martha wonderful things.
2. Did she really grasp the full significance of His words ?
3. The question is not , "Believest thou that I am able to do," but, "I am." Not a question of ability, but what He is Himself.
4. This is the secret of comfort.

V. Abandonment. The "Yes" of abandonment to the Divine searching (John 21. 15).

1. After feasting with the Lord.
2. The "Yes" of love.
3. The secret of communion.

VI. Submission. The "Yes" of loyal submission (Rev. 16. 7) .

1. Many mysteries happening to-day.
2. Here is the response of conviction.

VII. Expectation. The "Yes" of bridal expectation (Rev. 22. 20) .

"Yes, Lord—O breathe the answer soft and low,  
The one unchanging answer love can know.  
Amen I Thy will be done on earth below  
Alleluia!

"Yes—if across our path the shadows fall;  
Yes, blessed Master, though Thy clarion call  
Bids us to follow Thee, forsaking all  
Alleluia

"Yes, when the Spirit's prompting voice is heard;  
Yes, to each ancient promise of the Word;  
Yes, though fulfilment seem so long deferred  
Alleluia!

"Yes, though a thousand bid us answer "No;"  
Faith cleaves a passage through the ambushed foe;  
We rest on Thee, and in Thy Name we go.  
Alleluia !

BANNER.

Introduction.

1. Banners were very common in olden times.
2. They then had a significance they seem to have lost in these more prosaic days.
3. "There's a royal banner given for display to the soldiers of the King. As an ensign fair we lift it up to-day, while as ransomed ones we sing."
4. Let us look at some of the banners mentioned in the Scriptures.

I. Open Witness of Salvation. "We will rejoice in Thy salvation, and in the Name of our God we will set up our banners" (Isa. 20. 5).

1. Saved. God's salvation received.
2. Then rejoicing, of course, "in Thy salvation."
3. Setting up the banner here surely means open witness for God.
4. Let us bare a bold witness for God.

II. Open Testimony Concerning Love: Communion. Bride speaks: "He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love" (Song of Solomon 2. 4).

1. Bride. The true believer speaks here.
2. Here we have communion.
3. In India those to be honoured are garlanded with flowers, in Palestine there were banners.

III. Open Result of Goodness: Holiness . Bridegroom speaks: "Thou art beautiful, comely, terrible as an army with banners" (Song of Solomon 6. 4).

1. Don't you think the conjunction of beauty, comely, and terrible, strange?
2. A sanctified and holy people are both an attraction and a terror.
3. Mere pretenders cannot tolerate the Holy.

IV. Warfare. "Lift ye up a banner" (Isa. 13. 2). 1 . Warfare. Life is a fight

2. Judgment of Lord upon Babylon.
3. Warfare on sin.
4. Not ashamed of our faith. Open declaration, by our banner, or by following the banner.

#### THE WORD "UTTERMOST" IN DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE.

The word "uttermost" is found in quite a number of places in the Holy Book. We shall consider some of them.

I. The Uttermost of Need (Matt. 5. 26). No escape until all is paid--even to the uttermost farthing. What about God's righteous claims? The Law of God arrests us. Our condition is a perilous one.

II. The Uttermost of Salvation (Heb. 7. 25). The Lord has come to our need. He has paid for us the uttermost farthing of all rightful claims by Divine Justice upon us. His salvation is an uttermost one, reaching down to the gutter, and lifting up to the Heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

III. The Uttermost of Witness (Acts 1. 8). After the reception of His wonderful salvation, followed by the fulness of His Holy Spirit, comes witness even to the uttermost parts of the earth.

IV. The Uttermost of Prayers (Psa. 2. 8). Here is God's challenge for our prayers to the uttermost.

V. The Uttermost of Success (Matt. 12. 42). So successful can we be in prayer and service that sinners can come to the One greater than Solomon from even the uttermost parts of the earth.

### GIDEON'S MIGHT. WHAT WAS IT? JUDGES 6. 11-24.

Introduction.

There are striking and startling utterances in these verses. Particularly note verses 12 to 14. "Go in this thy might." Might? Where was the might? See, he was hiding from the Midianites. There are nine elements in that might.

I. A Definite Personal Experience (12). Ours should be a religion of personal pronouns. Unless the would-be worker has had a definite personal experience of salvation no work for the Lord should be attempted. First, "Go hide thyself," before "Go show thyself" (I Kings 17, 3; 18. 1). First hiding in the "Rock of Ages cleft for me," then going forth to do service for Him.

II. The Divine Complacency. "The Lord looked upon him" (verse 14) , with the smile that meant so much to him. His smile is a wonderful help and power.

2. It is a help in the troublous voyage of life.

3. It is a help in the thorny path of Christian work. "I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance," was the Psalmist's hopeful report and assurance.

III. A Healthy Discontent. "Why then is all this befallen us? (13).

1. Never let us be content with the existence of the social and moral evils of the world.

2. Never let us lose our horror of vice through deadening familiarity.

IV. A Befitting Humility. "I am the least" (15).

1. And he meant it.

2. There is such a thing as mock humility.

3. Oh, the power of humility! (The branch which bears the most fruit hangs the lowest.)

V. The Divine Companionship (12 and 16).

- 1 . Never go out alone. See that He is always with you.
2. In one sense we are never alone, for He is the Omnipresent One.
3. But don't presume; don't take things for granted.

VI. A Wonderful Unselfishness (12 and 13).

- 1 . The Lord said "Thee," not Israel; but Gideon lost himself in his people.
2. The Lord's answer to Moses, and all his servants is, "I am with you."
3. The Lord's "surely."
4. His presence makes us mighty.

VII. Prevailing Intercession.

1. The power of prayer in Christian service has often been stressed.
2. Go over the points of your sermons and addresses on your knees.
3. Pray more in your Christian work.

VIII. Loyalty and Belief in God's Word. He believed and went forth counting on God's Word.

IX. A Definite Commission. "Have not I sent thee?" (14).

THE APPALLING HARSHNESS OF HUMAN  
JUDGMENT.  
GENESIS 38.

SOMETIMES the Bible is charged with being an immoral book, because of chapters like Gen. 38 But what are the results of the reading of the Book? By their fruits ye shall know them." This book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from it. If there were not records of this nature it would not be a true record of humanity. How does it speak of uncleanness? In such a way as to make us hate such deeds. Certainly there are things in the Bible riot fit to read in public. There are many such passages in our medical books. Shall a woman be permitted to read in her were: chamber what she would tremble to hear at her domestic board? Most assuredly. The Bible is a mirror revealing the character and soul of man, and what an awful sight is given us here.

Some think this chapter to be chronologically right should follow chapter 33. At the time of Jacob's journey into Egypt to meet his son Joseph, Pharez, the son of Judah, whose birth is narrated in this chapter, had two sons. Though Judah and his brother strenuously opposed the marriage of their sister Dinah with a Canaanite, he married one. He believed what was wrong for his sister to do was right for him. Judah might sin, and nothing to be thought of it, but directly the woman, who had been the partner of his sin, was detected, he cries, "Let her be burnt " (24 and 25).

Why is this chapter found in the Rook of Genesis just at this juncture?

1. Without it, we could not have the human genealogy of Jesus.
2. By it we see that God's choice of Judah as the Royal tribe, and as the ancestor of Jesus,

was of grace and not of merit.

3. By it we see that the worth and worthiness of the Lord Jesus are derived, not from his ancestors.
4. By it we see demolished the proud boast of Jews: "We be not born of fornication" (John 8. 41).
5. Judah's marriage with a Canaanite and the horrid, sinful vices practised by Judah's two sons reveal to us the danger Jacob and his family were in, in being merged and smirched through marriage, and inter-marriage and companionship with the inhabitants of Canaan, and the absolute need of the long sojourn in Egypt, amongst the then most exclusive people of the world.

#### ISAIAH'S VISION. ISAIAH 6.

1. Contemplation. ".....I saw," verse 1
2. Conviction..... "Woe is me, .. .. verse 5
3. Confession. .... "I am a man," etc., verse 5
4. Cleansing , .. ..... verses 6 and 7
5. Consecration, .....verse 8
6. Commission, ..... verse 9

#### JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN. GENESIS 42.

##### WHY JOSEPH DEALT SO HARDLY WITH HIS BRETHREN.

- I. To discover welfare of father and family.
2. To produce or reveal genuine repentance (21).
3. As a test of character.

Notes.

NOT TOOTHsome. An old Puritan divine wrote: "Truth is not toothsome, but it is wholesome." The shakings and testings Joseph gave his brethren were not pleasant, but they worked wonders.

"CORN." (verse 1). He would see by the loads of corn carried by passing caravans from Egypt. What a picture of hopelessness and despair we have in, "Why do ye look one upon another?" The fact that there is no mention of servants, and the use of asses and not camels, leads one to wonder if Jacob was now in reduced circumstances owing to the famine. They went to "buy." Joseph gave. You cannot buy the bread of life.

WHY WAS JOSEPH so HARSH? Not because he knew them not (verse 8) , nor because of any lack of love (24) , or spirit of revenge. It was to discover news, and whether they were repentant, and to discover any change in their characters.

BINDING OF SIMEON. The Rabbins say that it was Simeon who bound Joseph. He was made to feel what he had inflicted upon others.

THE MERCIES OF THE LORD.  
PSALM 103.

1. The Quality of His Mercies. Tender (verse 4).
2. The Measure of those Mercies. Plenteous (verse 8).
3. The Extent of His Mercies (verse 11) .
4. The Duration of His Mercies (verse 17).
5. The Receivers of those Mercies (verse 11), viz., "On them that fear Him."
6. The Freeness of His Mercies. They are to be received, and not earned (2 Cor. 4. 1) .
7. The Place to receive His Mercies is at the Throne of Grace (Heb. 4. 16).

THE BIBLE CRIES.  
EXODUS 12. 29-36.

Introduction.

GRENFELL ON FAITH. "I am determined, God helping me, that no man shall rob me of my faith. I won't hide it away. I'll keep it right around with me. I will see it gets exercise. I will feed it all I can, so that it shall not starve. I won't force it, if I can avoid it, and make it weedy and weakling. When in real danger, if I can, I will go to some one stronger than I, to help to keep it safe. But when that necessity arises to whom shall I look for help? Surely directly to Ilini Who I believe gave it to me" (Sir W. T. Grenfell, M.D.).

It is good when we are so determined. Some have a faith easily lost.

THIS CHAPTER A TEST. This portion, and many another, is a test of faith. It is an awful section.

"ROSE UP" (30). One could play upon this sentence. This Pharaoh had ascended the throne through the death of the firstborn--his two elder brethren. "His firstborn"

- 1 . Had achieved notable victories.
2. He himself was a weak monarch.
3. His brave and valiant son shared the throne with him.
4. But he died young.

DARKNESS (chap. 10. 21 , 22). To understand the awfulness of this visitation, let us note that the cause of the cry took place at the end of three days of darkness. The fourth day began in the dark-sunset of the third day.

SHRIEK when one died, was that the whole family set up a litter cry of distress, rushed out into. the street with loud and frantic cries, and others joined in.

HARSH AND CRUEL. Does the stroke seem harsh and cruel? It will if you begin here.

There were other cries.

1. The Cry of Sin (Gen. 18. 20 and 19. 13).

TWICE, . Twice over is this cry spoken of. Once to Abraham and once to Lot.

SIN'S VOICE. Voter. Sin has a voice that God can hear. The greater sin the more clamorous the voice.

ILLS Men Do. It is possible to think of the ills men suffer, and not of the sins men do..

THE SINS OF THE EGYPTIANS. Think of Egypt's sin to God! What a voice! Oh, yes! there was another cry besides theirs.

II. The Cry of Injustice (Neh. 5. 1).

NEGLECTED. So much time had been given to public duty that husbandry had been neglected. The poor Jews then were taken advantage of by their wealthier compatriots.

INJUSTICE'S CRY. Injustice has a voice that God can hear.

SAD.. It is sad when brethren impose on brethren. EGYPT'S INJUSTICE.

1. Israel only came to sojourn in Egypt.

2. Came as invited guests.

3. Note how unjust Egypt was to them.

III. The Cry of the Oppressed (Exod. 2. 23;3.7,9). LITERAL. Two different Hebrew words are here rendered by the one word "cry." First is literally "Loud Cry," second "Great Cry."

ISRAEL . If all the Egyptians cried out under the heavy hand of Israel's God, Israel, yea, all Israel, had for many years—not one midnight hour only--cried out as the result of the Egyptian's severe rule.

IV. The Cry of Blood (Exod. 12. 13; Heb. 12. 24).

VOICE. Blood has a voice that God can hear. Every drop of blood on Israel's doorsteps cried for protection.

EVERY HOME. Death entered every home, in substitute or reality. The blood outside was the proof of a dead body within.

EGYPTIANS. We have no doubt that if any of the Egyptians had come under the shadow of blood they would be saved.

SERVANT (Exod. 12. 31). Only blood-protected beings became the servants of God.

BLESS (Exod. 12. 32) . Only those blessed by sprinkling of blood like Moase, are able to bless others.

V. The Cry of the Oppressor (Exod. 12. 30) .

ALL. All were on equality--prince or peasant. Pharaoh's son who received Divine honours, and serfs.

WHY DOUBLY BITTER. All this misery was crowned by their keen reflection that it might have been prevented.

NOT A CRY OF PENITENCE.

I. This was only a cry of terror.

2. It was a cry of sorrow, but sorrow is not repentance. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance" (2 Cor. 7. 10).

3. Bunyan : "The first string that the musician touches is the bass. God also plays upon this string first, when he sets the soul in tune for Him." When God tunes a soul lie commonly begins with the lowest. note.

VI. The Cry of the Substitute (Matt. 27. 46; Mark 15. 37). The cry of the Forsaken One. The cry of a broken heart.

VII. The Cry of Adoption (Rohr. 8. 15).

VIII. The Advent Cry (Matt. 25. 6).

MIDNIGHT. Another Midnight cry.

OUR LORD'S RETURN IN 7ImEE ASPECTS, seen in Matthew 25:

- 1 . As testing profession (Virgin) (1 to 13).
2. As testing service (Talents) (14 to 30).
3. As testing Gentile nation (31, etc.).

#### SEVEN EVILS TO BE DELIVERED FROM.

DISCIPLES saw Jesus praying, and noticed the great difference between His prayers and theirs, so they requested to be taught how to pray. He alone can deliver us from evil. Said he to Moses: "I am come down to deliver them," i.e., Israel. So deeply sunk are we in the mire of sin that only He can lift us out. "Deliver us from evil." What evils? There are seven to be delivered from:

I. Evil Conscience. By Blood of Christ (Heb. 10. 22).

II. Evil Heart of Unbelief. By Regeneration (Heb. 3. 12) .

III. Evil Speaking. By filling our hearts with such love that will lead us to cover other people's sins (Eph. 4.31).

IV. Evil Communications. By setting a watch before our mouths, and keeping the door of our lips (I Cor. 15. 33).

V. Every Evil Work, every evil intention, and plot of the devil and his emissaries (2 Tim. 4. 18), by God's loving Providence.

VI. All Appearance of Evil. By a spirit of great carefulness (1 Thess. 5. 22). Observe, not merely evil, but that which may not be evil to us, yet would appear to be so to others.

VII. Present Evil World. When He comes for us (Gal. 1 . 4), He will save us now from the world, by taking the world out of our hearts. By and by He will take us out of the world to the glorious Home on High.

#### THE PERIL OF MERE SUPPOSITION. ACTS 27. 13.

Introduction.

Supposing. This is a word common enough in everyday language. "Well, now, let us suppose, for the sake of argument," we say.

LEGITIMATELY NECESSARY. It may be legitimately necessary in some branches of philosophy and science. An example: In one of the latest books on the existence of God, the hypothetical argument is proclaimed as the only satisfactory proof. Supposing there is a God, we find that works.

DANGEROUS. In matters concerning daily life it is dangerous.

1. Moses' supposition meant forty years' exile (Acts 7. 25).
2. The supposition of the Military and seamen led to loss of ship, cargo, and property (Acts 27. 13).

FATAL. In matters concerning Christ and our personal salvation supposition is fatal.

I. Supposing Him to be a Mere Man (Luke 3. 23).

1. That was THEN an excusable blunder, for He came so lowly.
2. It is Now, in view of the discovery of His compatriots, and in view of the full revelation of His Word, and the history of the past two thousand years, inexcusable.
3. To make this mistake means:

- a. You have not a Saviour.
- b. You are yet in your sins, for He is dead.

II. Supposing Him to be Where He was Not (Luke 2.44).

1. Excusable then, remembering the social custom of the time.
2. It is a tragic mistake if made to-day.
3. Do you "suppose" He is
  - a. In your heart as Saviour and Lord?
  - b. With you as Friend and Guide?
4. Oh, see that "supposition" is changed into certainty!

### III. Supposing Him to be Less than He really Was. (John 20. 15).

1. Excusable to poor Mary, blinded by grief.
2. But fatal to holiness and fellowship to-day.
3. "A Gardener"—yes—but more than that!
4. Don't imagine He
  - a. Loves to bury your hopes. and that He is
  - b. Saviour only to soul and not Lord of life.

### HEAVEN'S WEALTH.

"For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have" (Luke 8. 18).

#### Introduction.

PLEASANT TASK. The task before us is a pleasant one—inform you how to secure wealth—Heaven's wealth, which is the truest and best.

SURPRISING STATEMENT. What a surprising statement we have here! Should it not have read: "For whosoever hath not." What! Does the Bible declare that to get you must have? One would hardly expect to find such a statement in the Bible. Some social reformer would remark: "This is just what I object to, and am out to remedy. I'm for those who have not."

OLD EASTERN PROVERB. This verse was a well-known Eastern proverb in our Lord's day. In the East the wealthy became rulers and judges. To secure their favour presents are required. Thus "whosoever hath to him shall be given." On the contrary, the poor have little influence. Seldom do they ever rise to positions of importance. And, naturally, presents were not given to them. Indeed, they were often defrauded of the little they had. It seems to have been a favourite of our Lord's. Used here and in Matt. 13. 12; 25. 29, and other Gospels.

SOMETHING IN MY HAND I BRING? Did our Lord mean that when I come to the judge of all the earth I must bring a gift to secure His mercy and interference? I thought it was:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy Cross I cling."

Have I to bring something? No, and yes. You have not to bring something, but Someone.

PUT Him IN. You must bring Someone, not something. Put the Lord's Name into the text and the difficulty disappears. For whosoever hath Him, to him shall be given. Here is the secret how to possess heaven's wealth. To his brethren Joseph said, "Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you" (Gen. 43. 3).

"He that spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things" (Rom. 8. 32).

A rich American died intestate, his wife and only son having predeceased him. An old nurse, formerly in his service, and who had left to get married, at the sale of the furniture bought, at a low figure the departed son's oil painting, for she had nursed the boy. Behind the picture she found the Will, in which the gentleman stated that he had decided to leave his wealth to the one who showed sufficient interest in his boy as to buy his picture. God leaves all with His Son (Rom. 8. 32).

If you have received Him you already possess:

1. THE TITLE TO WEALTH. A beggar one day found a neatly printed slip of paper by the road, and though he could not read it, he thought it might be worth putting away in his bundle. Days and weeks of hunger followed; sickness came, and for want of food and care he died. The authorities were about to consign his bundle to the fire, when the printed slip fell out, and lo it was a fifty pound note ! In his grasp he had the means of food, and care, and comfort; but he knew it not. How many a poor Christian, all unmindful of its value, is carrying the great talisman of God, the Name of Jesus Christ, and that wonderful cheque book, the Word of God! Sick, long-faced, disheartened, and poor, when in the bank of infinite resource he has unlimited credit. Do we believe it? Why not? Here is the Book filled with promises to pay; there is the treasure; and the Banker's Voice comes down to us: "If ye shall ask anything in My Name, I will do it." "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

2. THE VERY WEALTH ITSELF. There was a poor Transvaal farmer eking out a poor living by tending a few sheep. He died poor. After his death prospectors found diamonds there, and gave the widow a fortune for the place. The wealth was there all the time, yet they knew it not.

We came across this quotation the late Bishop Moule makes in one of his articles: "Christ for us is all our peace before a Holy God; and Christ in us is all our strength in an unholy world." What have we in Him?

1. Divine Truth. By nature I am in mental and moral darkness. With Him there is given knowledge of Divine Truth (Matt. 13. 11, 12) .

1. See the close connection between verses 11 and 12.
2. Unto you is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom. Why? Because you have life!
3. How foolish to delay decision until we know more.
4. Believe us, with the reception of Him comes knowledge. See that you have abundance—a growing knowledge.
5. Is it not written in 1 Cor. 1. 30: "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom."

II. Divine Righteousness. I am unrighteous. Even what I consider righteousness is as filthy rags. With Him I have righteousness. "Christ Jesus ... is made unto us righteousness."

III. Divine Regeneration. I am dead, without life. With Him there is regeneration (John 1. 11, 12).

1. This informs me that the new birth is dependent and follows possessing Him.
2. Without Him there is no regeneration.
3. "He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5. 12).

IV. Divine Peace. I am a stranger to peace. With Him I have peace (Eph. 2. 14).

1. He is our peace.
2. Three things about peace.
  - a. Peace "made" (Eph. 2. 15).
  - b. Security of peace (Eph. 2. 14).
  - c. Peace preached (Eph. 2. 17).
3. Peace by Blood (Col. 1. 20) and government (Isa. 9.7).
4. God's peace-terms for the world: Accept Christ.
5. Without Him there is no peace.

V. Redemption. I am under bondage. With Him there is redemption (Col. 1. 14) .

1. "In Whom we have redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
2. The Bible represents man as:
  - a. In present bondage to sin, and
  - b. Under sentence of death.
3. With Him there is redemption. He has paid the price of our freedom, and provides not only for our deliverance from death, but also from bondage.
4. Because I have Him !
  - a. Have redemption. He is made unto us redemption, and
  - b. With Him there is liberty (Gal. 2. 4).

VI. Sanctification. I am unholy. With Him there is sanctification.

1. "He is made unto us... Sanctification."
2. "Christ is in the Past (day of our believing) our righteousness. In the present He is our sanctification; in the future our redemption" (Evan Hopkins).

PROVISION. "Among the many mistakes that prevail as to the nature of practical holiness, there is not a more fruitful source of misconception than the idea, that while justification stands wholly in Christ, our sanctification stands in ourselves. This notion arises from the habit of thinking whenever the word sanctification is used of the process wrought in us, rather than of the provision God has made for us" (Evan Hopkins).

### 3. SOLEMN WARNING.

- a. The latter part of the text is the most difficult.
- b. The clue is "that which he seemeth to have," or as R.V., "That which he thinks he has."
- c. It is a warning against a piety and a goodness which have not their roots in Christ.

## A PINAFORE RELIGION. EPHESIANS 3. 17.

THE late Captain Dawson, in relating his experience and impressions during a visit to Italy, referred to a Pinafore Religion, with special application to Romanism.

There is much Pinafore Religion to-day even in Protestant countries, as well as in Roman Catholic countries. Many Protestants have only a Pinafore Religion. That is:

I. Outward, not Inward. A religion that is merely outward, and not inward. True religion is of the heart, and is not Christ and me, but Christ in me. "It is God that worketh in you."

II. Intermittent. A religion that can be put on and off at a moment's notice. Merely formal and mechanical. Real religion becomes part and parcel of us, part of our very being.

III. External. A religion that makes no difference inwardly. Pinafores do not fill hungry bellies.

IV. Childish. A Pinafore Religion is a religion for the child, and not for the grown up. The hankering after elaborate form and ceremony is a bad sign. The Epistle to the Hebrews points out that it is a going back to Judaism, which was the religion of childhood, whereas in the New Testament we have the religion for the mature.

V. Occasional. A Pinafore Religion is a religion for special occasions, like best pinafores. Whereas the real religion is for all times.

## THREE GREAT WORDS.

I. "Come ." Approach (Matt . 11. 28) . This is one of the sweetest words in our language . It is a word full of music. To those who come, He will give rest.

II. "Become." Sonship (John 1. 11, 12). Those who come to Him and receive Him, become what they were not the children of God.

III. "Overcome." Victory (1 John 2 13). I-how much we value that word. What need there is of overcoming grace. Alas, too often we are overcome, instead of overcoming. But just as the last two words are the first, only with a different prefix, so we cannot "Become" and "Over come" unless we "Come."

### THREE S's. DEUTERONOMY 33.

I. Saved (29). Israel stood alone, of all nations, as being the nation saved by the Lord. They had been saved from Egyptian bondage, and from death in the wilderness. Because saved, they were happy.

II. Separated (16). From the first Joseph was separated from his brethren. From the very first day of our Christian life we should recognise that now we must live the separated life. Separated from the world and from sin, unto God.

III. Satisfied (23). Satisfied—why? Because full with the blessing of the Lord,

#### FORGIVENESS.

Tins should lie at the foundation of our Christian life. Without this doctrine, "theology would be a Heaven without a sun, an arch without a keystone, a compass without a needle, a clock without springs or weight, a lamp without oil."

1. Its Author—God (Eph. 4. 32) .
2. Its Channel—Christ (Eph. 4. 32; Acts 13. 38).
3. Its Foundation—Blood (Eph. 1. 7) .
4. Its Completeness—"All" (Psa. 103. 3) .
5. Its Proclamation—"Preached" (Acts 13. 38).
6. Its Dispenser—Lord (Acts 5. 3).
7. Its Reception—Repentance (Acts 5. 31), Faith, (Acts 13. 39, Confession (Psa. 32. 5).

### STUDIES FOR BELIEVERS IN THE DARKNESS.

"Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God" (Isaiah 50. 10).

IN Sir Arthur Blackwood's life in "The Recollections of a Friend," we find this: "I remember meeting him one day, when C. T., who was with me, and was then a young

Christian, was in low spirits, from which I could not raise him. As we went round the railings of the Parish Church, we suddenly came face to face with him; and seeing our downcast faces, he said to us: 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.'

Many have never noticed this text, and only with difficulty find it.

UNEXPECTED. Just fancy, in spite of,

(1) a reverence for the Lord,

(2) and obedience, yet

(3) walking in darkness.

This is altogether against our notions. Especially is this a surprise to young converts.

WHAT To Do IN THE DARKNESS.

1 . Trust in the Name (reputation and character) of the Lord. He has a reputation to live up to.

2. "Stay upon his God." Lean upon God.

3. Grasp a strong hand in the darkness. It is said of Pastor Hsi that circumstances around him were often black as night. But he grasped a strong hand in the darkness, and learned to trust the voice that said: "Look not around thee, for I am thy God."

4. Run to the Lord. Sir .A A. Blackwood, writing to one in darkness, said: "I believe the only remedy, so far as we are concerned, is, in such trials of soul to be content with a believing look unto ,Jesus---just taking refuge as we are in His work, and Word, and love, as I read the other day, ' If a dog barks at a very little child, it does not try to fight with it, but instantly runs to its mother.' And that's our safest way, instantly to resort to Him, in spite of unbelief and coldness, and morbid feelings, and everything, saying, 'Unto the Lord will I lift up mine eyes. '"

Little folks sometimes see things that are hidden from the eyes of those older.

One moonlight night, after the house-lights had all been put out, a little four-year-old girl, afraid of the dark, asked her widowed mother: "Mamma, is the moon God's light?" "Yes, Ethel," her mother answered, "the moon and the stars are all God's lights."

Then came the next question from the little girl: "Will God blow out His light and go to sleep, too?" "No, my child," the mother replied, "His lights are always burning." Then the timid little girl gave utterance to a sentiment that thrilled the mother's heart and led her to a more complete trust in her God: "Well, mamma, while God's awake, I'm not afraid,"

The beautiful thought which came to this little girl is one with which we are all familiar, but we need to be reminded of it many times. "Behold He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psa. 121. 4).

Here is a lovely poem on this subject

"God never would send you the darkness  
If he felt you could bear the light:  
But you would not cling to His guiding hand  
If the way were always bright;  
And you would not care to walk by faith  
Could you always walk by sight.

"'Tis true He has many an anguish  
For your sorrowful heart to bear,  
And many a cruel thorn - crown  
For your tired head to wear:  
He knows how few would reach heaven at all  
If pain did not guide them there.

"So he send: you the blinding darkness,  
And the furnace of sevenfold heat;  
'Tis the only way, believe in,  
To keep you close to His feet:  
For 'tis always so easy to wander  
When our lives are glad and sweet.

"Then nestle your hand in your Father's,  
And sing, if you can, as you go;  
Your song may cheer some one behind you  
Whose courage is sinking low;  
And, well, if your lips do quiver—  
God will love you better so. "

#### THE VALLEY OF WEeping.

"Passing through the Valley of Baca (i.e., weeping) ,  
make it a well" (Psa. 84. 6).

Where?

No one knows where this Valley of Baca was.

Baca means weeping, thus it stands for this world. What weeping there is in this world!

Not all weeping, of course, for there is much joy.

But at times we are impressed with the very great sorrows of the world.

Only "Passing Through."

1. Thank God we are not abiding here.

2. "Who passing through."

and sorrow won't last for ever. Cheer up, sufferer, pass on.

The Effect of their Presence whilst Passing Through.

1. If they had to pass through a valley of weeping they did not leave it as they found it.
2. They make it a well.
3. Water is very precious in the East, and he who provides a well is a public benefactor.

What this Means.

1. A well means refreshment.
2. A well leads to rejoicing.
3. A well means habitation—people will settle there.

But Who Works such Wonders?

1. They who love God's House (verse 4).
2. They who receive strength from God (verse 5).
3. They who have hearts right (verse 5).

#### SEVEN POINTS CONCERNING GOD AND JEREMIAH. JEREMIAH I.

- 1 . Knew him. "I knew thee," .. .. verse 5
2. Sanctified him. "I sanctified thee," .. ,, 5
3. Ordained him. "I ordained thee," .. ,, 5
4. Sent him. "I shall send," .. .. ,, 7
5. Commanded him. "I command," ,, 7
6. Encouraged him. 'Be not afraid," .. ,, 8
7. Speak through him. "I have put," .. ,, 9

#### GLORIFYING GOD IN THE FIRES.

"Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires" (Isa. 24. 15).

Introduction.

That is a unique mode of expressing an elementary lesson on religious experience. Isaiah abounds in original expressions.

CONTEXT.

1. The context is packed with literary and poetical gems.
2. A time of Judgment:
  - a. Graphic descriptions (E).
  - b. Might of the Lord (1).
  - c. Universality of judgment (2).
  - d. The reason (4 to 6) .
  - e. Silence (7 to 12).
3. Result.
  - a. Great quaking (12 and 13).
  - b. Praise (14).
  - c. Our exhortation.

## APPLICATION.

1. Israel in their then trouble.
2. Israel in their coming trouble.
3. God's spiritual Israel her and now, that is, you and me.

### I. The Fires.

1. So far as Israel and we are concerned
2. We all have to go into the fire (sec I Peter 4. 12).
  - a. Of merited judgment
  - b. Of fiery trial.
  - c. Of fiery persecution.

II. The Danger. There is a danger of not glorifying Him in the fires, by manifesting a wrong spirit in the fires:

1. Selfishness. Being taken up with our suffering.
2. Rebellion. Flying up into the face of the Smiter, of Divine Providence.
3. Indolence. Allowing suffering to make us sluggish.

4. Don't Care. Allowing suffering to make us indifferent and careless and fatalistic.

III. How to Glorify Him. Steps pointed out.

1. By lifting up our voices in prayer (14).
2. By singing in the fires (14).
3. By walking with Him in the fires, as the three Hebrew children in Daniel.
4. By leaving without the smell of fire, without bearing in or on ourselves any ill effect of the ordeal.

IV. Why Should We?

1. Because others do.
2. Because of His Majesty.

## GLADNESS.

"Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased" (Psa. 4. 7) .

Introduction.

1. Gladness! What a charm that word has for us.
2. Gladness! This is the craving of humanity.
3. Gladness! This is their great search.
4. And this the Psalmist had.
5. And it proved a splendid "night-cap." Put him to sleep (verse 8).
6. And the Psalmist was a pious, godly man.
7. The world does not generally associate gladness with godliness.
8. Therefore David's gladness is worth analyzing. I. It was Not Dependent on Worldly Prosperity.
  1. It was probable that David was in sore straits.

2. Was this written during David's flight before Saul or Absalom?
3. His corn and wine were not increasing, yet he had more joy than in those who were in that prosperous position.

II. It was a Gladness of Heart, and not merely of Mind. "Gladness in my heart."

1. Not mere surface gladness.
2. A gladness, like the ocean depths, that cannot be ruffled by a passing breeze

III. It was a Gladness whose Author and Source was God. "Thou hast put." See also Psalm 30. 11.

IV. How God puts Gladness in our Hearts.

1. Fruit of pardon: "Make me to hear joy and gladness" (Psa.51.8).
2. Fruit of holy living: "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart" (Psa. 97. 11).
  - a. "Sown" for them. We reap more than is sown.
  - b. Sure of a speedy and prolific growth.
  - c. A gladness constantly appearing in fresh forms.
3. Given as answer to prayer. Even the forgiven and sanctified need gladness at times. How sad our heart was one morning, but when this came into our mind when before the Lord, and pleading it, gladness was given.

#### WHY BLESSING IS DESIRED.

"That Thy way may be known upon earth,  
Thy saving health among all nations" (Psa. 67. 2).

Missionary.

1. This is a short but very bright missionary Psalm.
2. Verse 2 is the pivot of the Psalm.

Threefold Blessing.

1. It begins by invoking the threefold blessing.
2. Note the important progression of Divine blessing.
  - a. Mercy, We are sinners, and we need mercy.
  - b. Bless. Not only forgive, but bless with all spiritual blessings.
  - c. Shine. Give us consciousness of His favour, a sensible enjoyment of His love.

But Why?

1. Not for our mere personal enjoyment.
2. Not that we might luxuriate in Divine blessing.
3. It is that being thus blessed and brightened we may cause "That Thy way may be known" (verse 2).

Result.

1. Praise. Full of the spirit that praises God.

2. From all the earth.

Result of Praise.

1. When men no longer seek to destroy each other, and each other's property, and praise God by lip and life.
2. Then the earth will yield her increase.

### THREE RENDERINGS.

"Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens" (Isa. 64. 1).

LONGING. This intense longing takes possession of men and women. The unsaved are only too conscious of a shut Heaven; they begin to long for traffic with Heaven. It is also the language of God's people. Have we not all found ourselves offering this petition.

HE ALONE. Note, prophet recognises that God alone can do this. And He will. But everything in its own order.

I. Rent Heart (Joel 2. 13). This is a call to repentance. Easy to rend garments.

II. Rent Veil (Matt. 27. 51) . This followed the rent heart of our Saviour. When your heart is rent, in virtue of the rent heart of the Saviour you will have access.

III. Rent Heaven (Mark 1. 10, R.V.). He had come up out of Waters of Repentance. Rent Heaven in Pentecostal blessing.

### THREE SOUL EXPERIENCES.

PSALM 63. 1, 5, 8.

Introduction.

THREE CLAUSES. These three clauses constitute the three pivots on which the Psalm revolves; or "the three bends in the stream of its thought and emotion."

THREE STATEMENTS ABOUT HIS SOUL.

1. A Thirsty Soul (verse 1)

THIRSTY MAN. "The Psalmist draws a picture of himself as a thirsty man in a waterless land. It is a vivid picture.

CONSCIOUS. He was not only conscious of soul thirst, but he knew what he wanted, and that is far different to many.

The difference between the animal and spiritual appetites is that we know what the bodily appetite craves for, but we are not as quick in discerning for what our souls thirst.

DETERMINATION. He was determined to seek the Lord. And to seek Him "earnestly" (R.V., margin, for early).

II. A Satisfied Soul (verse 5) .

FUTURE. Note, when the Psalmist said he would be satisfied. "Shall be."

REMEMBER. It is "when I remember Thee" and "meditate on Thee." Our soul satisfied by way of our brains, that is, by thinking; and putting thought into action.

III. A Craving Soul (verse 8) .

SURPRISE. You would not expect to find this.

NEVER SICK. "The man who follows after other good than God, has at the end to say, 'I am sick and tired of it, and it has lost all power to draw me.'" But the more you have of God the more you want, and the more you crave for.

NOT ABSENT. But you will note it is not the craving to know better an absent One. "Thy right hand upholdeth me." He is present.

### THREE STAGES IN CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. PSALM 27. 5.

Introduction.

TIME OF TROUBLE. This message is for a time of trouble. Surely there never was such a time of trouble as in our day.

EASTERN CUSTOM.

1. This verse has always been beloved, but more so since understanding the Eastern custom behind it.
2. Sheik of a tribe has a position of importance.
3. On deciding to camp, the first care of tribe is to secure a suitable site to pitch the Chief's tent. They desire a wee mound or hillock, but if not, will make one by horse or camel saddles.
4. His tent would be pitched on the mound over the rock, and a pavilion erected outside, and leading up to the tent.
5. Any in distress would approach the Chief's tent.
  - a. Lift the curtain and enter the pavilion.
  - b. If favoured and invited, passed into the tent, i.e., tabernacle.
  - c. If chief desired to specially honour, would invite to take the rock, the seat of honour, his own seat.

I. God First. God's Desire.

1. You see their first concern was for their chief.
2. Ah, God comes second, or even last, in the thoughts of many.
3. Striking. The Jews on returning from Babylon, their first act was to erect the Altar

before they troubled to erect their own dwellings.

## II. God's Magnanimity.

1. Some only seek the Lord when trouble comes.
2. Trouble compels them to think and seek Him.
3. It does seem mean to use the Lord like an umbrella—make use of Him only for rainy days.
4. But see how graciously He treats such when they come to Him.
5. He not only receives, but is prepared to honour, as the Psalmist points out.

## III. Three Stages In Christian Experience.

### 1. PAVILION CHRISTIANS.

- a. Safe from pursuers and from danger.
- b. Place of feasting (I Kings 20. 12 and 16).
- c. But "go on." Do not make a goal of the starting point.
- d. You can press on to the Holy Place from the Court.

### 2. TABERNACLE CHRISTIANS.

- a. A stage further.
- b. A closer intimacy.
- c. Treated as one of the family.

### 3. ROCK CHRISTIANS.

- a. Promise for the overcomers.
- b. He will make you an overcomer now.
- c. It is not only the seat of honour, but of victory.

## IV. Purpose of Sorrow.

1. Every fresh sorrow should lead us to a fresh discovery of God.
2. And to spiritual advancement.

V. Why Psalmist not only Was a Follower of the Lord, but Sought a Richer Experience.  
"You." See previous verse.

## CROWNING THE YEAR.

"Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness" (Psa. 65. 11).

Introduction.

### A LOVELY THOUGHT.

1. A coronation is a great national event.
2. The whole nation makes holiday and rejoices.
3. Harvest is declared to be the coronation of the earth.
4. That is, the great event of the year.

### A STRANGE MIXTURE.

- a. Praise. Silent; like servants, waiting (verse 1).
- b. Vow. "Unto Thee shall the vow be performed."
- c. Access. Verse 4.
- d. Sin. Verse 3.
- e. Blessed. Verse 4.
- f. A strange mixture of goodness and severity. Verse 5. In salvation there is a mixture of the terrible and the gracious. We see a God so terrible, so angry against sin, that to save men He loves, He will not put up the sword of justice. Not until it was sheathed in the Body of our Substitute. Light rejoicing, i.e., to sing (verse 8). The Hebrew means "to give forth a tremulous sound as the voice in vibration to sing."
- g. Blessed results of God's visit to the earth. Verses 9 to 13.

#### A CONTRAST.

- 1. God crowns the earth with goodness.
- 2. But He crowns man with:
  - a. Glory and honour (Psa. 8. 5), and
  - b. Loving kindness. Love in kindness (Psa. 103. 4).

#### GOD'S GOODNESS.

- 1. What a subject.
- 2. There is the goodness of God:
  - a. In Nature.
  - b. In Providence. "Behind a frowning providence."
  - c. In Grace. Cross.

THANKFULNESS. As we approach the end of the harvest we find ourselves in a mood of humble thankfulness for all the mercies and loving kindness of the Lord.

#### I. An Encircling Goodness.

- 1. "Thou encirclest," as with a diadem (A. Clarke).
- 2. A most elegant expression to show the progress of the sun in the heavens producing the seasons.
- 3. A more beautiful image could not have been chosen.
- 4. No astronomical blunder in the Bible.

#### II. An Annual Goodness.

- 1. A full and plentiful harvest is the crown of the year.
- 2. This is earth's diadem. Some years heavier than others.
- 3. Harvest thanksgiving is the coronation rejoicing.
- 4. The Crowning. In ancient time fruit of toil and result of victory.

#### III. An Overwhelming Goodness.

- 1. "Thou crownest a year of Thy goodness" is R.V. and A.V. margin.
- 2. The year otherwise marked by Thy goodness. God had made a year which was naturally prosperous, still more so, granting an unusually plentiful harvest.
- 3. To compass the earth on every side as the head is compassed with a crown.

Application. Contemplation of His goodness (1) In Cross; (2) in Believers); (3) in Nature, should lead:

1. To REPENTANCE.
  - a. his goodness in contrast to our base ingratitude.
  - b. His goodness in contrast to our vileness.
2. To PRAISE.

"ROOTED"  
COLOSSIANS 2. 7.

Introduction.

1. At Harvest Thanksgiving time we are, as a rule, taken up with fruit , forgetting the importance of the root.
2. We have lost sight of it, because it is hidden.
3. In Eph. 3. 17 we read of being "rooted in love;" in Col. 2. 7, of being rooted in Christ: "Be like trees fast-rooted."
4. Have you the root of the matter within you?
5. One of the saddest fruits of the Great War was the discovery by so many that they had no real root of godli ness in them.
6. Pray, note, Harvest follows a good rootage.

I. Its Necessity. It is essential for

I. LIFE.

- a. No life without root.
- b. What is fruit but the overflowing of the life of tree.

2. REST.

- a. No roving about.
- b. Fixity of character, result of being rooted. More even in temper, in mood, in disposition.

3. ENDURANCE. A well-rooted tree stands the fiercest storm

III.. How to be Rooted.

1. SEPARATION. Curt off from the world, i.e., parent stem.
  - a. The Gardener must do this.
  - b. The plant is unable to do this for itself.
2. LIFE RECEIVED . "Received comes first ". Would a walking stick planted take root? No. Why? No life. We are dead, and must first receive life from Him.
3. PLANTED. In Christ. Christ in the soul.
4. HEAT. 'the bent of the Holy Spirit causing us to grow.
5. MOISTURE. The dew of His grace.
6. DARKNESS. Darkness of trial and sorrow will cause us to strike a deeper root
7. PROTECTION from worm and from frost. He will keep us.

SAINTS IN CAESAR'S HOUSEHOLD,  
PHILIPPIANS 4, 2.

Introduction

1. Paul is sending a letter to the Church at Philippi.
2. He sits in all the rude discomforts of an Eastern prison, writing amidst much difficulty, secured by a coupling chain to a soldier
3. Here are his closing words.

I. Their Name. The New Testament has several names for believers, each of which expresses some great truth.

1. BELIEVERS (Acts 5. 14; 1 Tim. 4. 12). The central bond which bound them. Bond of faith.

2. BRETHREN (Matt. 12. 48; Matt. 23.8; Matt. 28. 10).

- a. This is a name by which they were known.
- b. It spoke of their common relation to a Father.
- c. And pledged them to the sweetness and blessedness of a family.

3. CHRISTIANS (Acts 11. 26). The sarcastic wits of Antioch called them Christians. Name suggesting not only adherents of some founder of a school or party, but followers of Christ.

4. DISCIPLES (Matt. 27. 57) .

- a. Their humble attitude of learning.
- b. Their Lord's authority acknowledged.

5. SAINT (1 Cor. 1. 2).

- a. A prophecy of personal character.
- b. What God expects us to be.

II. Their Abode.

1. Who was this Caesar? Nero, a monster of iniquity, a man who has been described as "half beast and half devil." He was a clown, a sensualist, and a murderer.

2. His presence had poisoned the very atmosphere of the Imperial Palace, making it a sty of filth.

3. And yet there were shining saints living there day by day.

III. Their Danger.

1. MORAL.

- a. A strange place to find saints.
- b. Let no man say it is impossible to live a pure life in any circumstance.

2. SPIRITUAL. It was a materialistic atmosphere.

3. PHYSICAL.

- a. Life was cheap.
- b. On the least pretext people were executed.

#### IV. Our Danger.

1. Our Nero has changed.

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2. It is not a persecuting world that is now our greatest foe, but a tempting world.

3. To stand against the sword of the world is difficult. To stand against its sneers is more so. But to stand against its allurements is more difficult still.

#### PAUL'S THREE READIES.

"READY" was one of Paul's favourite words. He was one of God's "handy men,  
" for he was always ready. Note three of his readies.

I. Ready for Service (Rom. 1. 15). Paul longed to preach at Rome to discharge a debt. He was ever ready:

1. To every good work (Titus 3. 1) .

2. To distribute (1 Tim. 6. 18) .

3. To sympathize (1 Tim. 6. 18, R.V.).

4. And, like Peter, to give a reason for his Christian hope and faith (I Peter 3. 15) .

II. Ready for Suffering (Acts 21. 13) . Paul was quite ready to suffer in the path of obedience.

III. Ready for Sacrifice (2 Tim. 4. 6). There seemed no possibility of escape for the Apostle. He was quite ready for sacrifice.

ONLY A SPOON!

"One spoon of ten shekels of gold, full of incense"  
(Num. 7. 14).

QUEEN VICTORIA, when quite a little girl, was asked by Queen Adelaide, who was paying her a visit, what would be the greatest treat she could desire for her day's enjoyment, and to every one's astonishment she said she would like to clean the windows. In other words, she desired to be useful.

In that long chapter in Numbers (chapter 7) giving an account of the gifts of the tribal representatives at the dedication of the Altar, brought apparently of their own free will, twelve times over we read that amongst the gifts dedication of the Tabernacle, brought apparently of their own free will, twelve times over we read that amongst the gifts were one golden spoon, full of incense.

"Only a spoon." "I'm only a poor, humble follower of the Lord, weak, without much ability--of what service can I be to my Lord!" Much, every way. Only a spoon! Yet spoons were, and are needed. Spoons are required "to stir" one another up, "by putting you in remembrance" (2 Peter 1. 13). If you are only a spoon, you can be:

I. A Presented One. Handed over to the Lord, to be at His disposal.

II. A Golden One. That is real, thorough, reliable, serviceable, valuable. In ourselves we

are worthless; in him we are golden--with the gold of imputed and imparted righteousness, the gold of the Divine nature communicated by the Holy Spirit in Regeneration.

III. A Full One. Filled with the Holy Spirit, and in consequence filled with incense---of prayer and communion

WOBBLING.

"We also . . . do not cease to pray for you . that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing" (Col. 1. 9 and 10) .

ONE of the strangest prayers I have ever heard was one offered solemnly and earnestly by a Lancashire collier in a glorious prayer meeting.. "Lord aw've yer'd there's two kinds o Christians—Duck-footed Christians, and Hen-footed Christians. Lord, mak' me a Hen-footed Christian!" The petition seemed ludicrous, yet was offered so seriously one could not, indeed, dare not, laugh. He had noticed the uneven gait of the duck as it tried to walk, first one side and then another, whilst the hen moved splendidly. Thus he prayed that the Lord might save him from a wobbling life

We must confess that the wobbling malady is far too prevalent these days.

I. Doubt Respecting our Standing in Christ will lead to an up-and-down experience. It is our privilege to know we are saved, forgiven, justified, and on our happy way to Heaven. Read John .s First Epistle.

II. Ignorance of our Glorious Privileges in Christ of Victory and Fellowship will lead to wobbling. We can be saved from sin's power as well as sin's guilt. There is for us daily overcoming grace. We can live in daily fellowship with Christ.

III. Neglect of Daily Devotional Bible Reading will Lead to Wobbling. Indeed, this is a very fruitful cause. Give the Word of God its proper place in your daily lives.

GOD'S GENTLE FOLK.  
2 CORINTHIANS 10. 1.

THERE were two law lords, judges, who were dining with some other men one (lay. One was the son of a very rich man, Westbury. The other, St. Leonards, was the son of a poor man. During dinner, Westbury, who had the knack of saying bitter things, said, "Oh, by-the by, St. Leonards, what was your father?" "Well, my father was a barber." "A pity he didn't make you one." A few minutes later, St. Leonard., turned to him and said, "What was your father, by-the-way?" "My father was a gentleman." "Ah, a pity he didn't make you one." Not every one who is rich and high-born is necessarily a gentleman, nor if he is well dressed.

Our Heavenly Father can make every one of His children His good gentlemen and gentlewomen. Andrew Marvell had a fine saying: "Jesus Christ was the first true

gentleman that ever lived." And when that true Gentleman comes to dwell in our hearts, what a wonderful change He accomplishes. Tennyson, of his friend Hallam, wrote:

'He bore without abuse  
The grand old name of gentleman."

The Lord Jesus can make us true gentlemen and gentlewomen.

ENLARGEMENT IN AND THROUGH SORROWS.  
PSALM 4. 1

I. Freedom. Blessed Liberty when in Sorrow.

1. "Thou hast set me at large when I was in distress" (R.V.).
2. He is with us in our sorrows, and gives wonderful compensations.
3. He gives a sense of glorious enlargement in soul and spirit.
4. The sick room has not the ceiling and walls for an horizon. The soul mounts upward, still upward. II. Enlargement through Distresses.

I. An enlarged heart. Room for others.

2. An enlarged sympathy. Thought for others.
3. Enlarged prayers. Prayers for others.
4. Enlargement of gratitude. Our songs of praise for personal deliverances increase in volume and sweetness.

A MISTAKE DAVID MADE.

"And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and have rest" (Psalm 55. 6). Introduction.

1. And we, too, have often said the same.
2. David was but human, and often made mistakes. The mistakes were not inspired of God, though he recorded them by inspiration of God.
3. We have often thought that the mistakes of Bible characters would form a fruitful series of studies.
4. For we also make the same mistakes.
5. THE mistake of the thought underlying this expression is that

I. Rest is to be found in a place, whereas rest is found in a state, or better still, in a Person. Rest is not found in a change of locality, but in a change of state. Yea, further, rest is found in a Person---in the Lord Jesus (John 16. 32 to 33), who changes our heart, and life, and mind.

II. Rest is found in sorrow, and not in exemption from sorrow. The world can only think of rest by removal of sorrow; Christ promises real rest in sorrow. The greatest sorrow in life for beings like ourselves would be to have no sorrow. One has said: "David should have prayed for the strength of an ox to bear his troubles not for the wings of a dove to fly away from them."

III. Rest is found not by two wings, but by six. We do not belong to the two-winged order. To what order do we belong? The six-winged: "Each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet. and with twain he did fly" (Isa. 6. 2) . Service should only take a third of our energy. Six wings—two for adoring wonder, two for humility, two for service.

#### POSSESSION BY FORCE.

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now,  
the Kingdom of Heaven is gotten by force,  
and the violent take it by force" (Matt. 11. 12).

Introduction. At first sight this verse seems somewhat hard to understand. Weymouth renders it, "But from the time of John the Baptist till now, the Kingdom of the Heavens has been suffering violent assault, and the violent have been seizing it by force." If this verse means anything, it means possession by force. But is that correct? "I thought the trustful soul secured by faith the Kingdom?" That is true, but what is faith?

"Faith is a living power from Heaven Which grasps the promise God has given"

This text really eulogises intense earnestness. It is quite true that earnestness without faith cannot secure the Kingdom, yet it is equally true to say that faith and violence are inseparably connected. Indeed, faith is a force to be reckoned with.

I. John's Hearers Became Violent, or intensely earnest. It is quite evident that our Lord by these words is describing the intense earnestness of the hearers of John the Baptist. Aroused by the trumpet-call to repentance, vast multitudes eagerly received John's teaching, and pressed forward to enjoy the benefits. This statement is really our Lord's commendation of the success of John's preaching. No preaching is of real practical value unless it leads the hearers to press forward and take the Kingdom by force.

II. Easy Going Age. This is an easy going age. "Short and easy methods" are the rule of to-day. This modern craze has invaded the religious realm.

Samuel Rutherford has a remark applicable to-day: "Many are blinded in rejoicing in a good cheap conversion that never cost them a sick night." What he objected to was the desire of many for a salvation without a sigh or tear, without a sleepless night. True, "Weeping will not save me," but it proves you are repentant, and a fit subject to be saved. Oh, if we see ourselves as God does, it will rend our hearts. Are we right in denouncing old methods of leading sinners to Christ. Remember, easy got, easy go.

III. A Rewarder of them that Diligently seek Him (Heb. 11. 6). But we would like us first to see that our text conveys a timely message to Christian believers. This is a text one wishes could be ever before us. Are we ever desperate in our prayers, crying with Jacob, "I will not let Thee go until Thou bless me?"

1. SOME OF US DESIRE THE FULNESS OF THE SPIRIT. You

have asked God for His fulness, and you have not received it. Why? Because not half in earnest about it.

2. SOME OF US LAMENT OVER OUR CORRUPTION, and long for more holiness. How much time do you spend on your knees asking for heart purity? Is William Law's statement true in your case? "What made the primitive Christians such eminent instances of piety? If you will here stop, and ask yourselves why you are not as pious as the primitive Christians were, your own heart will tell you, that it is neither through ignorance, nor inability, but purely because you never thoroughly intended it."

3. SOME SAY. "Why, my relatives, my husband, wife, children, scholars are riot converted I cannot understand, for I ask God frequently." Have you ever spent one solid hour with God on this matter?

4. THESE MERCIES GOD WILL NOT GIVE TO US ON THE GROUNDS ONLY OF OUR EARNESTNESS. But the earnestness proves that we feel our lack of these coveted mercies, and that we shall value them aright when given.

5. If our text conveys a timely message to the Christian it certainly speaks loudly to the non-Christian.

STRIVE.  
LUKE 13. 24

Introduction.

The first time He spoke of the Strait Gate was in the Sermon on the Mount. Three years afterwards, when many had forsaken Him and few were pressing forward to the Kingdom, He again spake of the Strait Gate (Matt. 7. 13), but added one little word, "Strive." No stronger word is to be found in Bible; it could be better understood by the word "agonise." Strive, agonise, exert every power of body and soul; strain every nerve; let the salvation of your soul for the time being, be the chief business of your life. And we can say, if sinners saw themselves as God sees they would really realise their need, and would strive.

I. Yours Would be the Violence of the Hungry.

1. It's holiday time, children have gone to the Park, they have forgotten all about the time, and do not arrive for dinner until the middle of afternoon.

2. Ravenously hungry—cannot wait—lay hand on crusts and scraps of food.

3. Hunger of soul leads to violence---to intent earnestness.

II. Yours will be the Violence of the Thirsty.

1. Mungo Park, the one who discovered the Niger, was almost dying of thirst. Rain fell for an hour, and he succeeded in quenching his thirst by soaking his clothes and sucking them dry. He heard a loud croaking of frogs. "A heavenly sound," said he, and lie

discovered a shallow muddy pool.

2. Soul-thirst will lead you to do desperate things.
3. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteous Bess.

### III. You would Know Something of the Violence of the Drowning.

1. Frank Bullen tells of one who fell overboard, who gripped the rope thrown t.> kin so tightly that it was imbedded in the flesh
2. Are you sinking in the water, of conviction? If so, you will require no exhortation to earnestness.

#### A LIFE WITH WINGS.

"A new heart also will I give you" (Ezek. 36. 26).

#### Introduction.

1. There is a very curious fact that most people are surprised to learn, that the hearts of birds are heavier, proportionately, than the hearts of men or other animals.
2. This is explained by the fact that the more the body works, the greater the demand on the heart, upon which falls the duty of driving the blood through the body, hence the heart develops and becomes heavier.
3. Birds are amongst the most hard-working of living creatures.
4. If this is true of the physical realm, is it not equally true of the spiritual realm ?
5. If my life is to be a life with wings
  - a. That is to say, a buoyant life, rising above the mere earthly and sensual
  - b. A lofty life, a life lived in the presence and fellowship of God
  - c. A life with a larger outlook—for loftiness enables one to take a broader outlook on things
6. That -can only be possible by possessing a larger heart than we have by nature.
7. If my life is to be a life with wings, and I am to mount up in soul to God daily and live in the clear atmosphere of God's presence, I must have a larger heart.

I. A Large Heart Required to Live the Christian Life. How can one mount up with a stony heart? And that is the kind of heart we have by nature.

II. A Larger Heart Required to Run as well as Mount Up (1'sa. 119. 32). "I will run in the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart." Unless my heart is enlarged, I shall be unable to obey God perfectly, unable to run in the way—the narrow way

III. The Most Active for God are those with Largest Hearts.

IV. Larger Heart Result of Reflection. In Psalm 90. 12, we see that the need of another heart, to make the best of man's short life, is or ought to be, the outcome of reflection on

the transitions of life.

PRELIMINARIES. Cleansing first (v. 25), then a new heart.

<p>"BUT THOU ART HOLY." PSALM 22. 3.</p>
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This is the Psalm of Psalms, in which Jesus Christ is without doubt set forth crucified among us. When expounding this Psalm, Luther shut himself up for three days and three nights to be alone with its great realities. David is no doubt writing about one of his many sad experiences, yet all the Psalm is far away and beyond the experience of any mere man.

This Psalm has often been the language of God's people throughout the centuries since it was written, when in lack of token of the Master's presence, of the Divine favour, when pressed down or overwhelmed with grief.

In the midst of this bewilderment, and of God's puzzling silence, one fact brought untold comfort—it was the fact of God's holiness, the very last fact that we would have imagined as a means of consolation. Yet there it is. Who would have thought of it? Of course it was only another way of saying that He is too wise to err, too good to be unkind. In the midst of all His bewildering and puzzling providences remember that He is a Holy God. And remember that His Holiness loves to dwell in the praises of His people. Also do not forget past deliverances (verses 4 and 5) .

His Holiness is a Holiness to be trusted at all times, in dark days as well as bright; when everything has gone wrong as well as when all is well.

DOWN IN THE DUMPS.

"Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising."  
(Psa. 139. 2).

This is a marvellous Psalm, describing, as far as human language can, the wonderful omniscience of God. Nothing is hidden from Him—all is open to His gaze. Even when I sit down, and when I rise up, He knows. I cannot so much as take a seat or leave it without that action being known and marked by Him.

Surely this forms a cure for the malady known as "Down in the dumps!" This is a phrase that puzzles some. "Down in the Bumps" is a phrenological expression we could understand. "Down on Dumping" is a political phrase, "Down on Mumps" all mothers are. But what about "Dumps?" "Dumps" is an English word for dullness or gloominess of mind. Really "Dumpish" should be the word. "Down on the Dumps" really is the correct phrase.

It is another word for depression. "Down in the Dumps" is a general complaint, and is very infectious. Others can catch the complaint from us, and that is one of its perils. We

really should put on a cheerful look, even when our hearts be heavy as lead, for the sake of others. Note how the depression of the spies led to Israel's sin of rebellion to the Lord's express commands.

Let this thought grip up: For every doown sitting there may be an uprising! That the tide changes, not only when it is on the flood. but also when at the ebb. Is it ebb tide in your affairs at the present? Well, the tide, by God's blessing, will soon turn in your favour.

#### A HUMBLING CONFESSION.

"I was envious . . . when. I saw the prosperity  
of the wicked" (Psa. 73. 3).

THERE is an ancient Heathen maxim which runs like this: "The prosperity of the wicked is a reproach to the gods." This clearly shows the trend of thought in those days. No wonder, then, that the Psalmist gave expression to the above. Why should the Lord permit the ungodly to prosper? Why should His servants be called upon to suffer great pain, calamity, or disasters, and the ungodly go quite free? That is the problem of the ages. Observe, the Psalmist noticed that the ungodly had (a) Easy deaths (verse 4). (b) They were strong and successful, and the Marginal note seems to suggest that their prosperity was often at the expense of God's people. (c) They were not troubled as others (verse 5) ; they were full of pride, etc., etc. (verses 6 to 10). Surely there is no advantage in worshipping Gen? (verses 10 to 16).

Ah, not so fast! Come, view things from Heaven's standpoint, as the Psalmist did (verse 17), when he beheld their end, and several other facts. Then he was grieved at his own foolishness (verses 21 and 22). He then noted his own personal blessings and privileges:

"I am continually with Thee" (verse 23).

"He was held up by God's hand (verse 23).

He was guided by the Lord's own counsel (verse 24) . The Lord was everything to him (verse 25).

And glory was in store for him.

It is therefore good for us to draw nigh unto the Lord, as the Psalmist did.

#### THE DELIGHTS OF THE LORD.

"Thou shalt make them drink of the river oil by pleasures"  
(Psalm 36. 8).

Introduction.

1. Then the Lord has His Pleasures and delights as well as we
2. He has made everything that is necessary for the maintenance of life a pleasure, as, for example, eating, exercise, sleep, etc.
3. There is more in the Bible about Hi; pleasures than some think. (In this study there is matter for several addresses.)

### WHAT ARE THE PLEASURES OF THE LORD?

1. He has pleasure in the beauties of creation. Rev. 4. 11 teaches us that all things were created for His pleasure -
2. He has no pleasure in the. death of the wicked (Ezek . 18. 32).
3. He has no pleasure in wickedness. "Thou art not a God that bath pleasure in wickedness" (Psa. 5. 4).
- 4, He has pleasure in uprightness: "Thou hast pleasure in uprightness" (I Chron. 29. 17).
5. The Lord has no pleasure in those who break their vows (Eccles. 5. 4)..
6. Takes pleasure in His people (Isa. 47. 11; 149. 4).

### HIS PLEASURES ARE LIKENED TO A RIVER.

- 1, Not a stream that can be dried up speedily.
2. His pleasures are for evermore (Psa. 16)

WHO ARE "THEM " Those who trust Him, and in consequence are abundantly satisfied.

- I. God's Delight in His People. "For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people" (Psa. 149. 4).

### LORD HAS HIS DELIGHTS.

1. We all have our likes and dislikes.
2. So the Lord.
3. What He delights in is pointed out in His Word.
4. See what our text declares.

### PIVOT OF PSALM.

1. This is the pivot of the Psalm.
2. The first three verses lead up to this.
3. This is the reason for praise.
4. Note the force of "for."

### SOLUTION.

1. This explains why He is always thinking and planning for our welfare.
2. And why He has made such tremendous sacrifices for us.

### FATHERHOOD.

1. This is an expression of His Fatherhood.
2. Like as a Father taketh pleasure in His children, so the Lord taketh pleasure in His people.

### IN WHOM?

1. Those who are His by surrender, as well as by creation and redemption.
2. Those who are living obedient lives (Mal. 1. 10).
3. He cannot take pleasure in His enemies, or those out of Christ, nor in His disobedient ones.

PRESENT TENSE. Note "taketh." Note the present tense.

II. God's Delight in Those that Fear Him. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him" (Psa. 147. 11)

NOTHING.

1. "I fear nothing," boastfully exclaim some.
2. It is a high sounding phrase.
3. But it only sounds loud because it is empty.

PSYCHOLOGIST.

1. A great psychologist has said, "Fear is essential to every soul, and is universal."
2. We all fear something or someone.

Two KINDS. There are two kinds of fear—a slavish fear and a reverent fear.

JESUS COMMANDED:

1. Men and women to be terrified of God.
2. Trouble is, "there is no fear of God before their eyes."
3. God does not take pleasure in those who are terrified of Him.
4. Yet it is the first step in salvation.
5. And is a proof of the work of the Spirit within.

PRECIOUS.

1. But from that slavish fear there is deliverance.
2. But if Love casts out fear it deepens reverence.
3. And such a disposition of heart is precious in the sight of God.
4. Let us prayerfully cultivate this lowly fear that gladdens the heart of the King of the Universe.

HOW TO CULTIVATE THIS HOLY REVERENCE.

1. Think of what He is in Character (verse 5). Holiness, purity, beauty of disposition. We feel like casting ourselves in awe and crying, "Depart from me."
2. Think of what He has Done.

- a. A Manufacturer who had retired was shocked to find that his sons had ruined his business. He went back to business, after spending the whole of his fortune in paying their debts.
- b. The scene when he appeared for the first time on Change was amazing. All respected him.
- c. Think what God has done to liquidate our debts.

3. THINK OF WHAT HE IS DOING IN NATURE (vv. 4, 8).

- a. When astronomers calculate the distance of the stars, and remember that God upholds them every one, they are overpowered with awe.
- b. They feel like the saints who stand on the sea of glass and sing in rapturous reverence: "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name, for Thou only art holy?" (Rev.

15. 4) .

4. Think of what He is Doing in Grace (verses 2, 3).

III. God's Delight in Hopefulness. "The Lord taketh pleasure in those that hope in His mercy" (Psa. 147. 11).

1. In our last study we saw that the Lord takes delight in the reverent.

2. In this study we see He takes pleasure in the hopeful.

UNDERSTAND.

1. We can quite understand that, for we do, too!

2. We like the company of the hopeful.

3. We shun the company of the pessimists. CULTIVATE. We ought to cultivate the spirit of hopefulness.

NEGATIVE.

1. This does not mean that He takes pleasure in those who vaguely hope that it will be all right in the end.

2. In those who say, "God is good; He won't condemn me to everlasting punishment." These are presumptuous.

POSITIVE.

1. In those who have a God-given assurance concerning future bliss.

2. In those who, when Providence seems to frown upon them, "wait with hopefulness and trustfulness for the revelation of His loving kindness."

3. In those who dare to believe that, behind a frowning Providence, He hides a smiling face.

4. And who trust through dark and trying times. NATURALLY.

1. Some are naturally of a hopeful disposition.

2. But mere natural hopefulness won't stand the test of time.

3. We need spiritual hope.

CULTIVATION.

1. We cannot cultivate what we haven't got.

2. "Without God and without hope" is the condition of the unsaved.

3. With God, with hope, is the condition of the saved.

HOW TO SECURE.

1. The way to get hope is to secure faith.

2. The three graces are always found in company.

3. What you possess you can cultivate.

IV. God Delights in Uprightness. "Thou hast pleasure in uprightness" (1 Chron. 29. 17).

"Such as are upright ... are His delight" (Prov. 11. 20).

1. OCCASION. David was an old man, He had made generous provision for building of Temple. His example had fired his subjects. And now he offers up this dedication prayer.

2. HIS HOLY BOAST. He declared what the Lord delighted in. And made this holy claim.

3. SOLOMON must have heard this, for he treasured and repeated it.

4. A GREAT NEED.

a. Is there not a need for the upright?

b. For those who will be upright in heart, mind, conduct?

c. Good to be upright in body and walk, but better in soul and conduct.

d. Not only upright to man, but upright to God. Ah! that is the lack, the test!

5. His PLEASURE. God takes pleasure in such. And you can quite understand it.

6. FACTS.

a. "God made man upright" (Eccles. 7. 29).

b. He yet desires man to be (Gen. 17. 1, margin).

c. We cannot deceive God, as David deceived Achish, King of Gath. "Thou hast been upright" (1 Sam. 29. 6).

6. HOW TO BE.

a. Full Salvation. Lev. 26. 13. Not only deliverance from death by Blood, but snapping of the bonds—leading out into liberty.

b. The Lord's Keeping. Psalm 19. 13. Keep me from sinning. Don't let them have dominion over me.

V. God Delights in Our Prayers. "The prayer of the upright is His delight" (Prov. 15. 8).

SUITABLE. We have a most suitable word here in this verse. A word most appropriate for meditation.

NOT ONLY ACCEPTABLE. Mark you, not only acceptable to the Lord, but His delight!

WHAT A CONTRAST! The great sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord. Because the motives are wrong. But the feeblest cry of His own are His delight.

UPRIGHT. Of course "upright" is Solomon's name for God's people. It is a name declaring what God expects us to be.

FATHER. This is just what you might expect from a Father

SOURCE OF STRENGTH. This verse has been a source of strength to many. How poor our prayers often are. "The Lord of lords compassionately listens to our feeble cry and delights in it."

REMEMBER. Your feeble prayers bring delight to Him. And joy to your soul.

HOW TO BE UPRIGHT.

1. Freedom. Lev. 26. 13.
2. Kept. Psalm 19, 13.

VI. God's Delight in Integrity. "A just weight is His delight" (Prov. 11. 1).

#### NOT OVERLOOK.

1. In our study of the Delights of the Lord there is one in Proverbs we must not overlook or pass by.
2. Even though it may appear to apply to so-called secular matters.
3. It is an echo of Deuteronomy 25. 13 to 16.

#### SOLEMN.

1. It is a solemn thought that nothing escapes the eye of God.
2. He marks all the common dealings of life.
3. He takes notice of our buying and selling.

#### REVERSES.

1. This reverses the judgment of men.
2. The world commends the sharp and shrewd fellows who are able to defraud without being found out (Luke 16. 1 to 8.
3. Yet God not only forbids but abominates.
4. And Mark you, He notices with delight those whom the world passes by, the honest and the just.

#### NEED.

1. This exhortation is greatly needed to-day by saints and sinners.
2. It was needed in Corinthian Church (1 Cor. 6. 8).

#### OVER-WEIGHT.

1. This forbids short-weight. Injustice to buyer.
2. And forbids over-weight. Injustice to seller.

#### NO SHORT-WEIGHT TO GOD.

1. We should render full measure of devotion and of service to the Lord.
2. We must receive His full weight of blessings before we can give full weight of devotion.

#### WHAT ABOUT GOD?

1. Are you giving just weight to Him?
2. Many are anxious about justice to their fellows, but have never a thought about God.
3. Are you giving full measure of love and devotion to Him?
4. "Love so amazing, so Divine, demands my life, my soul, my all."
5. You need never fear of giving over-weight to Him. How? We must receive full weight of blessings from Him before we can give full weight of service and devotion.

VII. The Lord's Delight in Our Prosperity. "The Lord ... hath pleasure in the prosperity of His servant" (Psa. 35. 27) .

#### CARICATURE.

1. What caricatures there are of God.
2. God delighting in afflicting His servants? Away with that thought.
3. God delighting in sending disaster? Horrible!
4. No, He delights in the prosperity of His servants.

#### STRANGE PSALM.

1. This is one of those strange Psalms that are a puzzle to many.
2. It is one of judgment—a Psalm of terror I
3. David had enemies who planned and wished his ruin.
4. Called the Lord to his relief (verse I).
5. Then prays that those who favoured him might be exuberantly joyous.
6. And that they might bless God Who desires prosperity to His servants.

#### WHAT KIND OF PROSPERITY?

1. What kind of prosperity does He delight in?
2. Prosperity in earthly things when in conjunction with prosperity in Heavenly things.
3. God's ideal is found in 3 John 2.

#### FATHERHOOD.

1. This is only what you might expect I
2. He is Father! With a Father-heart.

#### CONDITIONS FOR PROSPERITY.

1. Ungodly may prosper without these conditions being fulfilled.
2. But it is not the twofold prosperity.
  - a. Confession of Sin to God. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper" (Prov. 28. 13).
  - b. The Lord's Presence. "The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man" (Gen. 39. 2) .
  - c. Putting the Word of God in its Rightful Place (Josh. 1. 8 ; Psalm 1. 3) .
  - d. Seeking the Lord (2 Chron. 26. 5).

VIII. God's Delight in the Truthful. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but they that deal truly are His delight" (Prov. 12. 22).

#### CHILDREN .

1. We have here a delight of the Lord we usually think only suitable for children.
2. True, children need such an exhortation, but so do adults.

#### To-DAY.

1. No sin so common to-day than the sin of lying.
2. There is a lying spirit abroad.

3. Paul points out this as characteristic of this age.
4. The crowning sin of the age ends in a belief of the lie. EASY.
  1. Nothing so easy as this.
  2. It comes natural to us. Many mothers have wondered who had taught their little ones to lie. Psalm 58. 3 shows it: "They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies."
  - 3 Even Christians need ties exhortation: "Lie not one to another" comes in Col. 3. 9, after marvellous teaching.

WHY HE ABOMINATES. He has a special abhorrence of this sin.

1. Because His great enemy fathers them.
  - a. Satan is distinguished by his title of liar (John 8. 44).
  - b. Jesus called him the "father of lies" who abode not in the truth.
  - c. The wilful liar proves his parentage.
2. It is the exact opposite to His nature (Num. 23. 19; Titus 1 . 2). He is God of truth.
3. Society depends upon Truth. Society cannot hold together without truth, and the confidence of man in man.
4. No liars in Heaven (Rev. 21.8 and 27 ; 22. 15) .

His DESIRE. God wants to be able to say as in Isaiah 63. 8: "Surely they are My people, children that will not lie."

His DELIGHT.

1. He delights in "they that deal truly."
2. Dealing truthfully in speech.

SOMETHING MORE.

1. With the New Testament in mind, something more is required.
2. On 31st May, Wesley says that he "grieved the Spirit of God not only by not watching unto prayer, but likewise by speaking with sharpness instead of tender love of one who was not sound in the faith. immediately God hid His face, and I was troubled and in heaviness until the next morning."

CURE.

1. "take Christ as Saviour, Master, and Ruler.
2. Let His Presence, Who is Truth, keep from all untruth.
3. Daily pray. "Set a watch."

FOUR REASONS FOR REJOICING.

"So shall all those that put their trust in Thee rejoice; they shall ever shout for joy because Thou coverest them: they shall also be joyful in Thee" (Psa: 5. 11).

"So," not "Let." The Lord will not hinder His people rejoicing. He is only too willing and solicitous for their happiness. Let us note four reasons for rejoicing.

- I. Because of His Assured Victory over Evil. The conviction of sinners leads to joy (see

margin for Destroy "Make them guilty," that is, give a vivid sense of sin and guilt). here in this Psalm we have clearly foretold the frustration of time evil counsels of the wicked, and the ultimate victory of the Lord.

II. Because we Have been Led to Trust Him.

III. Because we are Covered by Him. For "Thou defendest," margin of A.V. gives "coverest." He defends us by covering us with Himself.

IV. Because we are in Possession of Him. We can even rejoice when the enemy seems to be triumphant, because we have Him as our very own.

<p>REJOICE WITH TREMBLING. PSALM 2. 11.</p>
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Introduction.

1. What a strange combination of apparent opposites, rejoicing, trembling!
2. There are many such in the Word of God.
3. Note the two apparent contradictions in first part of verse: "Serve the Lord with fear."
4. This simply means that in my service, reverence must find a place, teaching us two things: You serve God when you revere Him, and )cur service must be rendered to Him reverently.
5. So with our text.

I. A Command.

I He bids you do this when your sins are pardoned. "Rejoice because your names are written in Heaven" (Luke 10. 20) .

2. It is one proof of love to I-Iini: "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice," etc. (John 14. 28).
3. lie invites you to rejoice with Him when sinners are saved (Luke. 15. 6) .
4. And the shortest text but one in the Bible bids us "Rejoice evermore."

II.. Tremblingly.

1. That is, be temperate and sober in all your rejoicings. Hold yourselves in. Don't abandon yourself.
2. A mark of childhood is rejoicing without trembling.

A BOUND SACRIFICE.  
PSALM 118.27.

1. Observe, it was not sufficient for the sacrifice to be brought and presented to the priest, it had to be bound to the horns of the altar by cords.

2. And observe, this exhortation follows a recital of God's wondrous interposition on behalf of Israel, and the offering of thanksgiving.

3. Can we reckon up all that God has done for us? Is it not our duty to dedicate ourselves to Him? Not merely His service, but Himself. It is possible to be dedicated to His service, and not to Him. Yet to be dedicated to Him includes service.

4. But when you do so, don't forget the cords.

5. Why people need to re-dedicate themselves—it is because they forget the cords.

6. And what are the cords?

a. Cords of love.

b. Cords of duty.

c. Cords of remembrance.

7. The idea is that even a willing sacrifice needs force to keep it in that position--the force of the will.

#### GOD'S ALCHEMY.

"The Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee,  
because the Lord thy God loved thee" (Deut. 23. 5) .

1. This verse is exceedingly comforting to us.

2. It may be that we have things in our lives that might be counted a curse.

a. In our families.

b. Businesses.

c. Bodies.

3. And we cry to God day and night to take them away, and He does not.

4. But He will do something better—transform them into blessings.

5. He is always doing that, i.e., curse of labour: "Come hither, ye that press your beds of down and sleep not; see him sweating o'er his bread before he eats it. 'Tis the primal curse. But softened into mercy; made the pledge of cheerful days, and nights without a groan" (Cowper) .

6. Look at Paul's thorn! See how God, by grace, made it a blessing to him!

7. Old alchemists could not do this. Why He does this: LOVE.

#### THY WAVES AND BILLOWS.

"All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me" (Psa. 42. 7).

#### Introduction.

1. A father who had one little child, in whom his very soul was bound up, was told that the boy must undergo a serious operation. With his own hands he laid the little fellow on the operating table. The surgeons administered the anesthetic, the father clasping the boy's hand, whilst his heart quivered with agony. The brave little lad whispered as he felt

unconsciousness stealing over him: "It's all right, fader."

2. Often we are called to suffer pain and sorrow. May we at such times look up to God and say with peaceful heart: "It's all right, Father!" "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight ."

3. This is a Psalm of comfort and consolation. It was written either during David's exile from Jerusalem, or during Israel's captivity in Babylon.

4. Our text was the exclamation of one submerged by sorrow.

#### I. No, Not "All

1. "Deep calleth unto deep." The waves of sorrow keep rolling over me; one wave follows another, as if it was beckoned on by its predecessor.
2. Not only waves, but billows. Those huge waves raised by the strong wind, that threaten to overwhelm everything.
3. But surely the Psalmist was exaggerating! Not "ALA. Thy waves and billows."
4. Ah, it does seem as if all sorrow had met to overwhelm us.
5. There was only One who ever could say with truth this statement. It was that One on Whom all our sins were made to meet.
6. Let us never exaggerate—for others, too, are being submerged.

#### II. Thy Waves and Billows.

- I. Even if all are meeting on your head, rejoice in that they are the Lord's: "Thy waves," etc.
2. The surging sorrows of life are ministers of His to do His good pleasure.
3. Even the winds and the waves obey His will.

#### III. But Why?

- a. Ah, that question is often on our lips.
- b. It is not always given for us to see the purpose of suffering.
- c. But may we give one helpful and comforting thought Why does the photographer put his negative in the developer? The picture is laid in the vessel, and the liquid is moved across it, backwards and forwards.
- d. The photographer's negative might exclaim: "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." Why?

#### 1. To BRING OUT THE HIDDEN GRACES.

- a. Every true born-again Christian has hidden within Him Divine graces.
- b. He has the Holy Spirit with all His fruit and graces.
- c. The waves of sorrow are to ripen these graces.
- d. The ripest saints are those who generally suffer greatest sorrows.
- e. "Work out your own salvation." God works in, and to work it out He sends the billows.

#### 2. To DEVELOP AND MAKE CLEARER THE PICTURE.

- a. A Christian bears the image of His Master in his face and character.
- b. To make the image and likeness clearer and more perfect He causes wave after wave of sorrow to pass over you.

3. To MAKE (FASTEN) THE LIKENESS.

- a. If the photographer exposed the negative to the light without "fixing" the picture by the aid of the waves of liquid, it would fly away.
- b. The Lord wants us to bear His likeness at all times,
- c. He does not want it to fade or wash out. Hence the ministry of the waves and billows.

SURE MERCIES (Acts 13. 34).

ONE. has, reminded us that God's mercies are not styled "the swift," but. "the sure mercies." Seldom is there anything of hurry in the procedure of the Lord.

So Sure!