Isaiah - Commentaries by Unknown Author

Correspondence, Correspondence: The Wife of Christ; Isa. 9:6; Zech. 13:6 - Christ or Antichrist? (9:6)

Ques. 21. Is it proper to speak of the Church as being the wife of Christ? W. H.

Ans. it is only when the Church is displayed in glory that the scripture speaks of it as the wife, when the marriage time has come, (Rev. 19:7), and when she is the display of His glory during the reign of Christ on the earth. (Rev. 21:9.)

It is scriptural to speak of the Church as the Body and the Bride of Christ now. (1 Cor. 12:12. 13; Eph. 5:25-33; Rev. 22:17).

We are united to Christ by the Holy Spirit given to us, and are one Spirit with the Lord. (1 Cor. 6:17; 12:12, 13.)

In 2 Cor. 11:2, the apostle says, "I have espoused you unto one Man, to present you a chaste virgin to Christ." God looks upon such an espousal, and so should we as if already one, (Compare Matt. 1:20) one in purpose.

For all eternity the Church will never cease to be the Body and the Bride of Christ, and also the dwelling place of God. (Eph. 3:21.)

May this teach us how dear we are to Him now, and lead us into paths consistent with such a calling.

Ques. 22

Please explain Isa. 9:6. H. R.

Ans. This is a prophecy of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world, but it is His coming as the Messiah or King of Israel. It is the Virgin's child (Isa. 7:14, and Matt. 1:20-23) coming to be King. "The government shall be upon His shoulder." His name unfolds that He is God Himself.

Isa. 9:7, His Kingdom shall he without fail, it shall be established with judgment and justice. The zeal of Jehovah of Hosts shall accomplish this.

He came, was rejected and is now seated on Jehovah's throne, (Psa. 110) till the time when He will come in power and glory and possess the Kingdom.

Mean time during His exaltation the Holy Spirit is gathering out the church-His body and His Bride. We know Him as our Savior, our Lord, our Head, our Bridegroom, our great High Priest, our Advocate. He will come for us when all His members are complete, so that when He comes to judge and reign, we will come with Him and reign with Him.

Ques. 23

Does Zech. 13:6 refer to Christ or to Antichrist? W. H. W.

Ans. Quoting from Synopsis Vol. 2, page 568, the following: “In Zech. 13:5 read, 'I am no prophet, but a husbandman; for man [Adam] has acquired me as a slave from my youth?' That is to say, Christ takes the humble position of One devoted to the service of man, in the circumstances into which Adam was brought by sin (that is, with respect to His position as a man living in this world.) Zech. 13:6 directs our attention to that which befell Him among the Jews, where He was wounded and treated as a malefactor. The true character of His Person, and of His sufferings is then revealed in Zech. 13:7. It is the sword of Jehovah, which awakes against the man who is His companion, His equal. This verse requires no comment. It is most interesting to see that, when Christ is looked at in His humiliation as man, He is treated by the Spirit as the equal of Jehovah in His rights; and when (Psa. 45:7) He is seen upon His throne of divine glory, and addressed as God, those that are His are acknowledged as His companions in glory, sharing His position.”

This clearly shows this prophecy refers to Christ.

Scripture Queries and Answers, Everlasting Father (9:6)

Q.-Will you kindly give some explanation of the title " The Everlasting Father " given to Christ in Isai. ix. 6?

A.-I cannot think that Coverdale, followed as he is by our A.V., has been happy in giving us " The everlastinge Father " for the Hebrew Abbee Gad. Nor indeed does the better rendering of most by " Father of eternity " appear to fall in with the requirements of the context which clearly has Christ's earthly kingdom in view, and not eternity.

If we compare the most ancient versions, we find that the Greek Septuagint reads, according to the Alexandrian and, Sinaitic MSS., πατὴρ τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰωνος; and the Latin Vulgate " pater futuri saeculi," i.e., " father of the age to come." And this is what appears to me the meaning of the original words before us.

The child born, the son given is " The Mighty God." To His people of old He was the " Wonderful " (Judg. 13:18 margin), their " Counselor " (Judg. 20:18; Job 12:13; Isai. 11:2; 28:29, etc.), and the " Mighty God." So also in " the future age," the millennial age of blessedness for this now sin-stricken earth, will He, the " Mighty God " be known as the " Father " of that age-to establish it, to preserve it, to care for it, to be all that a father is to His people, and " the Governor among the nations." " In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth (Psa. 72:7). For He is the " Prince of Peace."

Alliances and Confederations, Alliances and Confederations* (8:9-14)

" Associate yourselves, O ye peoples, and ye shall be broken in pieces.. Take counsel together, and it shall come to naught, speak the word and it shall not stand... Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of Hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear... And He shall be for a sanctuary."-Is. 8:9-14.

Few things can be more important, or distressing in a certain sense, than the widely accepted proposal of the world's reformation by means of the mental and moral cultivation of mankind, as opposed to God's redemption by the blood of His Son.

It is nothing short of this (as an object) which is being attempted through existing institutions, whether established by voluntary efforts, as formerly; or, as now, by legislative enactments and governmental patronage, for they alike contemplate man as a member of this creation.

In addition to these establishments may be discovered, upon a higher level, the religious organizations and co-operative societies of the day, which embrace other objects, it is true, but still recognize man as a citizen of the world.

Even Christian associations, so-called, which rise upon this graduated scale and leave their own mark, stop entirely short of " a new creature in Christ," and "I, crucified to the world." By all such combinations of state-policy and social enterprise, it is hoped and confidently stated by the world's leaders, that the political and natural rights of men will soon be recognized; and that the suffrage may be universally extended, when its populations have been fitted by these educational schemes for its exercise, and all be then led forward, in one encouraging effort of getting good and doing good to the world, where they are.

As a fair consequence, the governments of Europe and the States, may, in their turn, as well expect by some gigantic effort to rise up out of their iron and clay formations and develop themselves in brass or silver, and, by thus working backward, endeavor to reach " the head of gold" (Dan. 2.).

The melancholy interest which one naturally feels about these movements and expectations is deepened, because they are seen to be unscriptural and futile when judged in the light of the word of God. On this account it is that feelings of another kind lay hold on those who remember they were once upon this treadmill for themselves; and thus, the one great absorbing desire now is, the: deliverance of such as are still hard at work in the Egyptian house of bondage.

Another fact weighs heavily upon the spirit of the emancipated ones, namely, that these combined efforts, in all their gigantic forces, are proof of alienation of mind from God, and to the way by which He invites and beseeches men to be reconciled to Himself, by the death of His Son. There is a fellowship which God has thus formed with believers in Christ, and into which in grace He calls; but this is not our present subject.

A confederacy of continental nations, in this our century, sought to reach a " Holy alliance " for themselves (many will remember it) as a ground of universal peace, and this was vauntingly declared to have been formed, but no sooner celebrated by the nations comprised in that alliance, than unholy violated. It has long since passed away from its expected longevity, into the pages of disappointed history. This failure gave place to a further and last attempt to reach a commonwealth of peace and' prosperity by " the balance of power " amongst " the ten toes" of Daniel's prophetic image; but this was a rope of sand, and, following upon "The Holy alliance," only threw each of the ‘great powers into warlike attitude for aggression or self-defense. Nothing else could follow these last abortive efforts to form an international brotherhood but the existing armaments, with 'their ironclads and turret-ships, in a proud defiance of one nation against another, in connection with all the innumerable rifles and chassepots of the ever-training armies which they embrace, in view of a coming and extended war.

But to proceed. It is not intended in this paper to say anything more upon true Christian fellowship, " which is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," on the part of those who, in matchless grace, have been brought " out of darkness into His marvelous light," as it is not its subject. The fact has been already stated; we have now to examine its counterfeits.

Enough has been said of associations, unions, and mutual alliance societies, in their multiplications and varieties, to prove that fellowship in itself is the common want of the world.

An instructed Christian, judging by the light of God's word, must sooner or later admit that the need and call for these formations among men is but the avowal (unintentional it may be) of " the fall," by which mankind has shut itself up to its own inventions, and in wilfulness and wickedness broken loose from God. (cf. Is. 1:11). These are but their own sorry productions, alas, and the fruit of their poor resources, when left to themselves like Cain, who went out from the presence of God, to take his place as a " fugitive and vagabond in the earth." He had reduced himself to himself, and to make terms of agreement with his neighbor, if haply he could, where the old dragon and Satan held his power and seat: I only refer so far back to show, that the primary and common drift, or, to speak morally, the fact of the fall and of original sin, was likewise a falling away from God; and threw man upon his fellow in guilt for sympathy, and in a common confession of departure, if not too far sunk, or else, in sinful confederation, to war against the righteous judgment of God which he could not escape.

But leaving this original ground, and its demands and supplies, we may look into other varieties of modern times, and the forms and fashion's, religious or otherwise, with which we are unavoidably familiar.

Still God acted on behalf of men; He had not forsaken the world, and, by the introduction of Judaism as a grand system of legislation and of external worship, established with them on the earth, He founded a theocracy which was intended as the center of outward peace and prosperity for Israel and the surrounding nations. This enabled the Jehovah of that favored people to lead them into the land of Canaan, and dwell with them according to His promises. The patterns and forms which He gave out in grace (when the true knowledge of God was lost by mankind at large) and by which He opened a way between Himself and Israel for conditional blessing, had been finished and set up in the tabernacle of Moses; and again, with further developments and aids, in the temple and throne of Solomon.

It is very needful and precious to us to bear in mind the facts we are now tracing-that God would neither leave Himself without witness, as to communion and intercourse with His people on earth, nor suffer mankind unrebuked to perish in their alienation of mind and confederacy of will against Him by the formation of their own fellowships as they attempted at Babel. Nevertheless, it is sad to remember, that whatever God in love gave for the true knowledge of Himself in communion with patriarchs or the nation, must most surely turn against them governmentally if not used for His glory in their midst, and become a new measure for their correction in righteous judgment.

Nor is this all: for Satan, the enemy of God and man, catches up anything and everything which has once had the sanction of divine authority; but has been forfeited and spoiled by transgression and abuse. Nothing will suit Satan so well as that which no longer suits God. Whatever is thus put aside as no longer suitable for " the sanctuary of God," becomes the choicest material for the devil's mint and coinage; else, how could he get the whole world at last to worship the beast and his image, and to say, " Who is like unto the beast?" These corruptions of what once came from God, and their forfeiture on the part of those to whose hands they were committed, added to the awful fact that Satan delights to turn them into capital and make these forfeits his new material of currency, bring us on to the consideration of the ecclesiastical and religious fellowships in our own day.

These take their character necessarily from Christianity, and likewise from Christ and the church, mingled it is true with the previous forms and ritualism of judaistic observances. Let us bear in mind that the devil has lastly corrupted Christianity too, and added their to the ill-gotten stores, with which he is trading largely throughout Christendom and the world. As regards Christianity and the professing church likewise (this last, and which should have been the highest, witness of truth on the earth), the Son of man has said, when walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, " I will spue thee out of my mouth;" and so the Apocalypse reveals " the woman as sitting upon a scarlet colored beast." The thing which Christ rejects is, in Satan's hands, become the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth. The heavens, so to speak, have thus emptied on the earth all they had to give in the way of recovering grace, if the hands were competent to retain, or appreciate and use, the means; but alas, all that was bestowed on the ground of man's responsibility to God has dropped out and been forfeited, only to put increasing power into the grasp of Satan. The huge confederacy he has in this way formed against God and Christ, and the alliance he has thus made between mankind and himself, and their fellowships and agreements one with another, is " the mystery of iniquity " in the Revelation, by which the failure of all inward and public testimony closes in judgment upon the world.

Historically and prophetically we may thus look at the origin of these human fellowships and their 'final character and form, under the energetic and guiding enmity of Satan, " the god of this world," and " the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience " (2 Cor. 4: 4; Eph. 2:2).

When this system of confederated greatness and pride has reached its height, then it is that God refuses and judges it, " for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her" (Rev. 18).

Inside, however, and in a measure distinct from the world's fellowships, are those ecclesiastical and religious ones, which are accepted mainly by consciences exercised upon " the good and evil," but not knowing, or refusing, the Christ of God, and Him who has called His people " unto the fellowship of His Son " (1 Cor. 1.).

It is obvious that all external and governmental systems, constituted by regal authority and conducted by parliamentary legislation, would not meet the uneasiness of such consciences upon another and the far deeper question of sin and holiness in the presence of God, much less settle it. Nor was the best thing at Rome which Christendom presented, or its Eastern and Western churches more satisfactory on account of their contradictory creeds and dogmas. The dissatisfaction therefore which arose from a semi-political system, such as Popery on the one hand, with its indulgences and penances, and the uncertainty which national churches produced on the other, reduced the keeping of one's conscience (where there was any) to one's self, and what became individual, or else left an opening as to means and appliances for anything and everything which in time might appear more promising.

Two great systems, however, sprang out of this general dissatisfaction, and have become established-one is the Conventual, and the other the Sacramental, system-and both offer, in their respective ways, to restore man to this broken fellowship with God. Merely social and political unions and their nationalities were declined, on the weighty discovery that God was in question, rather than man and his neighbor.

The Conventual system embraced a religious life within walls to meet this emergency, and separated its votaries from the world by being enclosed out of its sight. The Sacramental system connected itself with a contemplative life, fastings and prayers, hours spent in church, on high days and festivals, but not the confessional and oratory, as with the Conventual.

In either, the body must be all but ignored by fasting or penances, when required to bring it under, that the soul might be kept free from all worldly thought, or affection and desire. Under these restrictions and impositions upon the body, it is supposed the soul would rise into such a state of ecstasy, and perhaps beatitude, as to reach the full manifestation of Christian perfection.

Besides these Conventual and Sacramental systems of to-day, there is yet the Evangelistic movement, and the adoption of the Mosaic law, as " a rule of life," by which the body and its members are sought to be controlled and brought into subjection, in order to possess a fellowship of uncertain character, indeed not beyond the seventh of Romans as to experience, and forced to accept "O wretched man that I am!" as the proper state and condition of this so-called Christian. There are off-shoots of this Evangelistic system which claim from its advocates a self-surrender to God, and a putting the will on His side, accompanied by such a consecration of all the powers and faculties of nature, and the body, as would lead to a " higher Christian life," etc., instead of (a full redemption being known) present union with a risen glorified Christ, maintained by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

It is remarkable, that in all these ecclesiastical and evangelistic movements the human body seems to be viewed and dealt with as the one thing in the way, and the main hindrance to the recovery of a lost fellowship with God: and on this account Conventualism, with its severer measures of penance and privation, or Sacramentalism, with its ritualistic observances, offers to carry the soul beyond the contaminations of the body.

The Monastic system, with its continental pilgrimages and new order of " the Sacred Heart," might have been added to these; but these so-called pilgrimages are properly speaking " excursions by railways " and connected with hotel accommodations and refreshments, under which the body escapes the impositions and privations formerly practiced for its mortification. It is merely passed through the genuflexions and continuous adorations due to the Virgin, alternated by the counting of beads, and the daily lessons and hourly duties of "sisters of mercy," by which it is sought to bring the body back to its original virtues in " holy communion."

Still it is the human body, and a fallen nature, that occupies each and all of these systems, however they may vary in the choice of means for its subjugation, or its voluntary surrender to God, or its fuller consecration to His service.

One of the last of these pilgrimages was to Parai-le-Monial, and " the Sacred Heart," and this (as may be remembered) was arranged for from London, through France, with a well-known excursionist company by return tickets, under the sanction of Rome, and the blessing of the Pope.

In the great outside confederations of the world, and the alliances between man and man, led on by the wiles of the devil, it is quite otherwise, for the body is at a high premium, As might he supposed, man and all his physical energies are taxed to the utmost, in order to their development and display, for Satan knows " that his time is short."

Fire and water, which in an earlier age were viewed chiefly as destructive elements, have now become allied, and by their generative power, are the necessary and hourly appliances for transit and gain. The millions who are thus whirled along in express trains over the globe, still needed a rapidity better suited for the transmission of their overtaxed thoughts and words, and these are flashed along the wires to the world's end, upon poles which support them in the air, or else by sub-marine cables across the channels and the seas. Man has become a cosmopolite, and is a wonder to himself by his inventions and appliances. Or else a fancied, but necessary, brotherhood in misfortune has sprung up, by which he becomes co-operative and international in his largest ideas and undertakings-but without God and without Christ!

And now, what is the result of all these and other fellowships in the church and in the world? Rationalistic, and infidel theories, in opposition to the word of God, abound, and are the palpable but plain answer, as given by philosophers and men of science, who rule the day, and are themselves ruled by " the spit-it of the age." Indifferentism and immorality would number up the rest of the outsiders-such as take things as they come, till their " soul is required " of them, or the impending judgment overtakes them, when " the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven..... in flaming fire taking vengeance, etc. (2 Thes. 1.).

In conclusion, it is obvious that all these systems, religious or otherwise, have still got man in hand as a moral being, and are seeking how to educate him in his generation, so as to develop what is good; or else by confession and penance, or sacraments and prayers, to curb what is bad—for it is the devil's interest to keep up this deceit. It is only at the cross that such matters can be made plain for those who are simple enough to see the end of the first man in the death of Christ. As, regards men and the world, the cross witnesses to the rupture of the last tie. " God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," but the rejection and crucifixion of the Son of His love was the open refusal either to accept His mediation or to suffer His presence in their midst on such a footing. What fellowship can there be with God, in the face of that cross, which is the standing proof of the outburst of the world's enmity against Him and His love, when they nailed Jesus thereon? And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas." So Pilate " released unto them 'hint that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will" (Luke 23.).

The words of our Lord may fitly close this bird's-eye view of existing alliances and ripening confederations: " I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive " (John 5.).

Barabbas instead of Jesus; the dragon instead of God; the antichrist instead of Christ; the false prophet instead of the true one; the beast instead of the Lamb slain; are become the authorities and names by which the devil is suffered to wind up this world's history, and by which he fatally plunges those who are " led captive by him at his will " into the last scenes of the apocalyptic judgments of God. The earth clears itself, by such means, of those who have corrupted it, whether by Satanic or human energies; yet only that hell may open its mouth to receive them. The earth thus cleanses itself from its pollutions by destroying them that destroyed it, " and the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever " (Rev. 20.).

What an unspeakable comfort for our souls, and what a mercy, that we can turn away from the consideration of such fellowships as these, and their issues (and invite others to do so) to speak of another which God has formed for all who are Christ's, and into which He leads us by the Holy Ghost.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, "Behold, the Virgin" (7:14)

Question: Isa. 7:14. “Behold, the virgin,” &c. It is asked, for some young men stumbled by the allegation of a non-Jewish source, what reply should be given. X. Z.

Answer: It was to be expected that Satan would imitate in his lies what God gave as a gracious sign to the incredulous but superstitious and profane Ahaz through the prophet Isaiah. Yet the difference between the true and the false is irresistible, when one weighs the occasion that called forth the original prediction, the character of the alleged sacred books, and the moral aim and effect sought and produced. “What is the chaff to the wheat, saith Jehovah?”

Besides, if it be pretended that a heathen tradition of the kind existed anterior to Isaiah, the believer can point to the first communication, when Adam and Eve sinned in the paradise of Eden. The most obtuse, self-willed, or irrational of rationalists cannot avoid seeing that grace was pleased to give prominence to the “woman,” contrary to all natural thoughts and especially at that moment. Nor was it only that “born of woman” was thus singularly predicated of the coming Messiah. It was no less evident that, while He would thus be man, more fully than Adam who was not born, He must be more than man to reach and crush the great spiritual foe, who used a serpent’s form for his deadly enmity to God and man. “Immanuel” expresses this, God-with-us. The authentic bears the holy imprint of Gods grace and truth; the spurious suits Satan and his seed of lies among men. The time is long come when men turn away their ear from the truth, and turn aside to fables.

The Gospel Messenger: Volume 19, Throne, the Altar, and the Lake., The (6:1-8)

(Read Isaiah 6:1-8; Revelation 20:11-15.)

THE contrast between these two scenes is both striking and solemn. Isaiah saw the throne and the One who sat on it. John saw the throne and Him who sat on it. Isaiah saw something which John did not see—he saw an altar. John saw something that Isaiah did not see—he saw the lake of fire. Isaiah saw a throne and an altar; John saw a throne and a lake of fire. Which do you see, my reader? “Neither,” you say. Which are you going to see? You will see one or the other as sure as you live. You are yet going to see the Lord, and you must see His throne, and while on earth you have to make your choice between the fire of the altar, and the fire of the lake.

Whether your lip will be touched with “a live coal from off the altar,” and your soul brought to know redemption and grace, or whether you will pass into eternity in your sins, and learn the meaning of that expression the “lake of fire,” lies with you to decide. I know, thank God, my destiny. Let me urge you to get the question of your salvation settled now, settled definitely. You have never seen Jesus, but you are going to. The Lord is coming back, and do not forget this, my friend, that “every eye shall see him.” Careless, heedless, godless sinner, you that despise the gospel, and make light of Christ, face the fact that you are going to see Him, you will have to meet Him. You need not be afraid to face Him now; be wise and do so without delay.

Perhaps you will say that you do not believe in these things. Your wisdom does not lie in unbelief, depend upon it. Unbelief will yet be demonstrated to be pare folly. If you were really wise you would be a simple, reverent believer in the Word of God. In the first scripture I have asked you to read, we find the Lord deeply convicting a man, bringing him to a sense of his state before God, then cleansing Mm, and leading him to be a consecrated man—that is what we get in Isaiah 6. What John saw— as recorded in Revelation 20—is the awful doom of the damned.

Dear friend, let me beseech you to hear the Word of God. It is very easy for you to say that you do not believe it, and that you have your doubts regarding it. You surely have no doubts about your sins, no doubts about your guilt. You know perfectly well that you would not like other people to know your whole history, but God does, and, knowing all, He is prepared to pardon you, and just now to blot out your guilt. But if you miss the day of grace I will tell you what will happen—for the twentieth of Revelation describes it—you must stand before a throne where all that guilt is brought out, but too late for remedy, too late for repentance, too late for cleansing, too late for pardon, too late for everything but the sentence of judgment from which you never can emerge.

My friend, do not think these are idle words; they are the words of one who is impressed with the awful realities of eternity. Oh, that you might be affected as Isaiah was. What a wonderful change we see in him as he beholds the throne and the altar. One moment he was crushed with a sense of his guilt and cries, “Woe is me.” What is the next thing? When the Lord wants a messenger he exclaims, “Here am I; send me.” What a change! Let me ask, Have you passed through any experience like this?

Let us dwell for a little on the scene John describes, and do not forget that you have yet to stand before the Lord. I quite admit that Revelation 20 carries you to a point when time is over, and your earthly pathway is gone by. After all, it is very short. Supposing you were to live to the age of Methuselah—969 years—that is not very long when you think of eternity.

Remember, if you die in your sins you will be buried in your sins and enter eternity in them. Possibly even now that ever-successful old Archer may, so to speak, be drawing his bow, and aiming his arrow at your heart, as his target. Who is the Archer? you say. Death is his name, and ere the morning light you may have passed into eternity. Tears will very likely fall upon your shroud, and perhaps upon your coffin, as it is placed in the grave; but they will not wash your sins away, and nothing you have ever done will wash your sins away. You have lived a Christless life, you die a Christless death, you have a Christless shroud, a Christless coffin, a Christless burial, and a Christless long-lie of more than a thousand years. No one will touch you, no one disturb you; but, at length, the voice of the Son of man, which you never listened to in time, will call you out of your grave, and you will stand among the dead at the great white throne.

The books are opened—God’s eye will single out at that moment the book of your life and your history. There may have been ten thousand people of your name since the world began, but there will be no mistake. The book which has the record of your life’s history will be taken down, and then there is another book opened—it is “the book of life.” Your book I might call “the book of death,” because the whole of your history has been one continuity of actions—God calls them sins—which are connected with death. That book reveals simply and truthfully what you have been.

You may not have been a gross sinner, but you have lived in sin, continued in unbelief, and died without the knowledge of the blessed Son of God, hence when you stand there before the throne, although risen from the dead, you are spoken of as still “dead.” Note carefully the language. “I saw the dead, small and great, stand before the throne; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev. 20:12), Why, when guilt is so evident, is the book of life opened? God is never in a hurry to judge; He is often in a hurry to save, blessed be His name. I will show you presently the hurry in which He is to meet an anxious sinner. Oh, the longsuffering of our God!

Although the book is opened with the record of your guilt, still there is a pause—another book is opened, to see, as it were, if there might have been a mistake; but your name is not on its pages, because you have died as you lived, “and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (vs. 15). You say, What is the lake of fire? That which you had better escape. Thank God, I never shall know its terribleness. It is something intensely awful, “where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” Memory will be there, and your sins will be there. You say, Is it material, is it real? When God speaks of “the lake of fire” it is something that is intensely real, but the blessed Son of God died to keep you and me out of it, and thank God, for that very reason, though I deserve it, I know that I am not going there.

You may think that possibly there is hope for those who stand at the great white throne by-and-by. No, the one who stands there inevitably passes into a lost eternity—such is the statement of the Word of God. But the tale of judgment is not the gospel, and sometimes I am told I should not preach “judgment to come.” Quite true, judgment is not gospel, but it is the background of the picture, and if you make light of the gospel it is only right that you should be told what lies ahead of you in eternity. You know you love your sins—do not deny it—and God is holy. Sin and God can only meet for judgment. Man can roll sin, like a sweet morsel, under his tongue; but stop a bit—eternity is before you, and where are you going to spend it?

You need not go to Spiritualism, you need not go to the devil or any of his agents today to get information as to what is going to be in the next world—God tells you. You may say, “I do not like His record of the future.” No, because in the bottom of your soul you know that you are still in your sins, and you do not like the idea of “the lake of fire.” You had better avoid it, by coming to Jesus and getting your sins pardoned, and your soul saved. The Lord Jesus made it perfectly plain that the one who believes in Him shall never come into judgment (see John 5:24), because He Himself has taken the judgment due to the one who believes on Him.

What John saw might well lead every sensible, thoughtful person to say, “Well, if the Spirit of God has written this as a warning, and thus shows us the end of a pathway of sin, by the grace of God I will pull up.” Judgment, I repeat, is like the dark background of a picture. The gospel is the unfolding of the heart of God. It tells that God has sent His beloved Son into this world to die for sinners, and to bring them to Himself. It tells us that God has a deep interest in us. The gospel rises in the heart of God, and comes to us in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is all about Jesus, and all for us. It declares the value of His life and death before God. What is the gospel? The glad tidings of God’s love—righteous love. You would not think much of a painter who did not put a background in his pictures; and if God gives us the lovely picture of the Lord Jesus Christ in all His perfection stooping to die for sinners, to save them from “the lake of fire,” I am not surprised if He say to the painter, “Put in the background,” for that is the eternal fate of the one who makes light of His grace, refuses His Son, and thus misses His gospel, declared now by His Spirit. Where sin and unbelief have reigned in the soul, “the throne” and “the lake of fire” are the inevitable concomitants in a future day.

Let us now turn to Isaiah 6, and dwell on that scene a little. “I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up” (vs. 1). This is exactly what John saw. He was brought into the presence of the Lord. Let me ask, Have you ever got into God’s presence? If not, you had better get there now. There was something else Isaiah saw: “Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered His face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly” (vs. 2). Even those unfallen beings, who celebrate His holiness, were not fit to look upon God. If those seraphims had to cover their faces, if they could not face God, how can you and I face Him? Mark, the seraphims did not see the Lord—Isaiah did. Let these beings speak, and let us listen to their tale—” And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, HOLY, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (vs. 3). Did you never hear that word before? Oh, let this seraphic word arrest you now. Are you holy?

“And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke” (vs. 4). Though the creature is sometimes unmoved by the testimony of God, the very posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried. Let them not rise up against you in judgment as witnesses that you were not moved at the testimony of God’s holiness. God is holy, and He cannot tolerate sin. What is sin? It is the will of the creature exercised against the will of the Creator.

Isaiah was moved as he saw the Lord, and the question arose, Am I fit to be in the Lord’s presence? And then came the piercing testimony, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts,” and Isaiah stood deeply convicted. Hear his next word: “Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone.” In the previous chapter he has been looking at other people in their sins, and six times over says, “Woe to them,” rightly enough. Now he gets right into God’s presence, and what is it? “Woe is me!” Have you ever known anything like this in your soul’s history?

But Isaiah goes further, as he exclaims, “I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (vs. 5). Do you know how he had unclean lips? He had an unclean heart. What was the reason of Isaiah finding all this out? He had got into God’s immediate presence, and what he was is made manifest to him.

We have many similar instances in Scripture of men being thus convicted. Look at Job. What does he say? “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the: ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5, 6). Look at Peter the fisherman in Luke 5. When the glory of Christ shines into his soul he falls down at the Lord’s feet, and says, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” On the occasion we are contemplating it is the same. Isaiah sees Jesus-not Jesus on the cross, but Jesus on the throne, and “Woe is me!” is the outcry of his soul.

But notice now God’s haste to relieve his burdened spirit. “Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips: and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged” (vs. 6). On that altar there had been a sacrifice. There had the fat of the sin-offering been consumed, while the blood of the spotless victim had been put upon the horns of the altar and poured out at its bottom. Atonement had been effected (see Leviticus 4:22-25). And now the seraphim, commissioned by God, flew with a live coal from off the altar and said, “Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged.” What blessed words of comfort to a sin-burdened man!

Notice it was not a dead coal, but a live coal from the fire that had already consumed the sacrifice. I have no doubt the altar and the sacrifice typify the Person and the death on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. This same Isaiah writes afterward of His sufferings and death, and among other things he says, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was

upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5).

Side by side with the wonderful glory of that throne and its spotless holiness there is the altar, the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, which first of all meets all the claims of God's holiness, and then meets the sinner in his sins. It is the way in which God has come out in grace to us, as the fruit of the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Old Testament days, when the victim was put upon the altar, it was consumed, and there was nothing left of the victim. All that the seraphim brought to Isaiah was the live coal which had consumed the victim and then purged his sin. On the cross the blessed Lord Jesus Christ has exhausted the judgment of God-the fire has not consumed the Victim, but the Victim, so to speak, has quenched the fire. Hence the work of atonement all effected, and God glorified about sin, Jesus is risen from the dead, and is now the mighty Victor at God's right hand.

The Spirit of God would now turn your eyes to that living, exalted Man, and as you look at Him you will get peace and pardon, and your heart be filled with a sense of His love. Then you too will understand the meaning of that word, "Thine iniquity is taken away." Who took it away? Jesus, when He died on the cross. He who was the express image of God wrought the work of atonement when forsaken by God, because He bore our sins upon the cross.

I do not here read that the seraphim went with slow and measured pace, and, after a long time, came back with a live coal to relieve the burdened prophet. No, he flew. You do not think God has lunch interest in your salvation. You are immensely mistaken. Thank God for the rapidity of His grace, and for the way in which He hastens to meet needy sinners.

What is the next thing? Isaiah hears the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (vs. 8). God wanted a messenger, and I believe from the glory today His voice is now heard saying, "Whom shall I send?" Mark Isaiah's answer: "Then said I, Here am I; send me." A moment before he was a convicted man, saying, "Woe is me!" But now with iniquity taken away, and sin purged, he knows that he is cleansed, and wishes to devote himself to God's service. Happy man!

Reader, imitate him. First come to Jesus to be saved; then do not be ashamed to own Him; and finally with all your heart say, "Here am I; send me." Enter His service. Which of these two scenes attracts you. I prefer the throne and the altar, to the throne and the lake. Do not forget that one or the other will find its counterpart in your history.

Which shall it be?

W. T. P. W.

Edification: Volume 4, Qualifications for Christian Service. (6:1-9)

An Address to Sunday-school Workers.

IT is taught dearly enough in the verses that we have read (Isa. 6:1-9) that before we can rightly do anything for the Lord, there must be a divine work in our own souls.

Now this is too often forgotten. If we went through the Sunday-schools of the land and had some talk with those who teach, we should find that scores had put their hand to the plough who know nothing of this preliminary work of God.

How can we speak to others of the love of Jesus, if we do not know that love ourselves? how invite them to come to the Saviour, if we have not come? how call on them to flee from impending wrath, if we have not fled? how speak to them of the precious blood of Christ if we are not under its shelter and cleansing power?

There must be, therefore, a work of God in our own souls before we can rightly set heart or hand to the service of the Lord. In the personal experience which the prophet narrates in the opening of this chapter, we notice two points.

First, he realizes by divine teaching his unfitness for the presence of God. "Woe is me! for I am undone." He comes to the conclusion, so to speak, that there is no room in the same place for God and for him.

Having made this heartfelt acknowledgement, he is brought into contact with the altar. The live coal touches his lips, and he learns that his iniquity is taken away and his sin purged.

Is it not evident, then, that before we can serve the Lord we should ourselves know the power of the precious blood of Christ and thus be at home in the presence of God? But are we perfectly at home there? Have we known, first of all, what it is to be unsuitable so as to exclaim with the prophet, "Woe is me!"? Do we so know the cleansing power of the precious blood that we can stand before God's holy throne, where all His glory shines, without misgiving?

No one can serve the Lord with freedom unless there be first that blessed work of God in heart and conscience. I am persuaded that there are not a few who wear smiling faces in the company of their fellow-Christians, whose conscience needs to know the value of the precious blood of Christ which perfects the believer forever, and gives him boldness to enter into the holiest.

An of us here have set our hand to the work of the Lord. Our spheres of service may be different, but all are surely interested even if not actively engaged in this happy work among the young.

There are certain things so necessary to be borne in mind in connection with this and anything that we may seek to do for the Lord.

First, ere we can run, we must get His command to go. As the eyes of the Lord took down on the vast wastes of humanity to whom He would have His salvation sent, lie says, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And the ready answer is, “Send me.” The emphasis is on the “send,” not on the “me.” He is the Lord’s willing servant, ready to take his Master’s message at his Master’s word. But he must be sent.

Secondly, we need to remember what the Lord says in the early part of John 15. “Without Me ye can do nothing.” He was speaking to His own immediate disciples who were about to be entrusted with the most important commission that had ever been committed to men. But ere they went forth the Lord pointed out that no matter what the power they would receive, they were absolutely and entirely dependent upon Him, as the vine branches upon the vine. So with us; we may labor and toil, we may talk and teach, but without Him we can do nothing — nothing that will last. That is the lesson we have to learn. Oh! that God would grant us an adequate sense of our absolute dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ, so that we might never forget those words, “Without Me ye can do nothing.”

Another point, in John 7, we shall do well to bear in mind is that, if living waters are to flow from us on the right hand and on the left, we must go to the Lord Jesus and drink. We must go to Him, not to fill our empty pitchers to satisfy the thirst of others, but for ourselves. What a poor thing it is to search our Bibles simply for other people! We need to read His Word for our own souls’ blessing, and to get it woven into the very texture of our spiritual being. Do you thirst to know more of His love, and of His great salvation? Do you thirst to know more of Jesus in the various offices He fills? Do you thirst so to have the Holy Ghost revealing more of His beauty that out of an overflowing heart you may be able to say, “He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely”? Then do not neglect to come to Him and drink.

Again, “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. 6:9). What a word of encouragement! Surely if anything can be called well doing, it is to gather the young together and speak to them of a Saviour who is so dear to our own hearts.

But we are apt to grow weary. We sow the seed; we pray and watch for it to shoot up. But the earth that covers it is hard, and we see no springing blade. Then perhaps we say, “I have sown the good seed and would water it with tears if I could but I see little or no result.” Dear discouraged worker, be not weary in well doing, for in due season you shall reap, if you faint not. Oh, that your faith may lay hold of that faithful and encouraging word!

Once more, “Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters” (Isa. 32:20). Not simply, blessed is the man that sows beside Sunday-school waters, but beside all waters. How many opportunities of blessed service for Christ do we miss! I often feel sorry to find myself in a railway carriage without some gospel books to give away. “Oh!” says some one, “nothing comes of that.” Don’t be too sure! Only ten days ago I received a letter from an unknown correspondent telling me something of his spiritual history. He had been converted in childhood and made a public profession of religion in his youth. But as years rolled on he wandered far away from God into paths of worldliness and sin. Traveling by train, not so very long ago, there sat in the same compartment a man, evidently in the humbler ranks of life, who was not ashamed of Christ nor afraid to distribute the gospel books he had. That man’s example and fearless consistent ways were instrumental in the restoration of this backslider. Precious fruit for God! What an incentive to sow beside all waters!

Lastly, let us be careful how we live. The apostle Paul, writing to the Philippians, said. “Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ.” What did he mean? Did he mean that since the gospel of Christ had been made a blessing to their souls and had brought them the knowledge of salvation, they had to walk according to it? Although that is true, it is not quite what the verse means. The apostle speaks of himself as having been set for the defense of the gospel. But not the apostle alone. The Philippians stood for its defense likewise. If the apostle was one of the captains in the army of the Lord, they were private soldiers; but whether it was captain or prate soldiers, they all alike stood for the defense and confirmation of the gospel. Now, says the apostle, if you are identified with this glorious testimony which God is sending through the world, see that it receives no damage by an inconsistent life. Oh! let us be careful if we have set our hand to the gospel plough that our individual life shall commend that testimony and cast no blot upon it.

Only a day or two ago I received a letter from someone living miles from here. Words of anguish are in that letter, and the spiritual sky of the writer is black with clouds. How did it come about? Here is the story briefly told. Converted young, brought to know God as his Father, the heart was filled with the joys of God’s salvation. Christian companionships were formed and confidence given to Christian persons. But the individuals in whom this confidence was placed broke down; their life was not as it should have been. Then the devil succeeded in occupying the writer with the failings of other people. Darkness came in between the soul and God. The lips became sealed against prayer and there was no reading of the Bible. Then the devil said, “Give it all up.” “But if I give it up, what will the other dear members of my family say, and what will Jesus think? I cannot do that, but how can I get back? How can the joys of God’s salvation be restored to me?” Do you see, all this began by the inconsistency in the life of another? We have to be watchful over ourselves, that no inconsistency on our part be used by the evil one to the damage of souls and of the testimony of God.

To this exhortation all believers will assuredly do well to give heed. But it applies in a very special way to us who seek to serve the Lord. Many eyes are upon us. God grant that in all our ways we may bring glory to His Name, and Honor to the gospel which we proclaim.

W. B.

Bible Treasury: Volume 18, Eternal Punishment (66:24)

Q. J. H. (Blundellsands) questions the correctness of the BIBLE TREASURY, No. 415 (December 1890), p. 188; as the Lord's words quoted from Isa. 66:24 refer to “carcases”, i. e., (as hell also refers) to the intermediate state between death and resurrection. “Their worm” ceases to be theirs when the victim is consumed or destroyed, and its death then would in no wise weaken the true force of the words. The fire is everlasting and not quenched as was that of Sodom and Gomorrah. It consumes all and is everlasting, inasmuch as there is no recovery or restoration from it.

When the Lamb has literally taken away the sin of the world, every creature, everywhere, (then) will ascribe praise to the Lamb as shown in Rev. 5, which depicts the full eternal results of the redemption work of the Lamb, as chap. 4. the millennial glory of the Creator.

The apostle John (as Moses on the mount) is shown a picture of God's purposes, in time and in eternity respectively; then the succeeding chapters show how it is all going to be accomplished.

A. Our Lord in Mark 9 carefully rises above the letter of the Jewish prophet and gives nothing but eternal consequences for the lost.

Hence He expressly leaves out “carcases”, however important in adding to the horrors which the prophet unveils for those in Jerusalem at that future day. In neither is there a thought that their worm will ever cease to gnaw, or the fire to lack its object. The solemn warning is lost if we imagine the annihilation of the punished. For how is it “their” worm, or why the fire perpetual? We ought not to trifle with God's word and man's doom.

Again, Rev. 5 is wholly misunderstood. The vision of Rev. 4 v. is after the heavenly redeemed are seen above and before they issue thence (Rev. 19), when the Lord appears for the execution of judgment on the quick and dead. The ascriptions of praise in chap. v. are when the Lamb takes the hook before a seal is opened, a trumpet blown, or a vial poured out. The removal of the saints to heaven evidently furnishes the occasion, and the Lamb's taking in hand then to reveal the providential preparations to enforce the power of the kingdom. Verse 13 is therefore necessarily anticipative; just as our Lord, when the seventy reported demons subject to them in His name, could say, “I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:17, 18). Actually it is not accomplished yet, but is to be before the millennium. (Rev. 12) If St. Paul heard in spirit the groans of creation (Rom. 8) longing for its coming deliverance, here similarly St. John heard its joy when the liberated sons of God were translated. “And every creature which is in the heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, To Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb [be] the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, unto the ages of ages.” Demonstrably this is not eternity either that is anticipated, for then will be no sea (Rev. 21); and what a wretchedly low and false assumption that eternity will have such creatures, distinct from angels or the redeemed! Not even men will then be in unchanged bodies. but incorruptible and glorious; whereas the verse in question contemplates the creatures of a lower kind, and all such, birds, beasts, animals that burrow under the earth as well as marine, all delivered from the bondage of corruption, as assuredly must be in the millennial day and only then as a fact.

On the other hand, the overwhelming fact is that Rev. 21 beyond dispute reveals as part of the eternal scene (1-8), that “for the cowardly and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolators, their part [shall be] in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.” Nothing more solemn or sure. The lost wicked are devoted to a punishment without end, if we believe scripture.

This is the fullest picture God gives of eternity which knows no change; and the condemned are then in the lake of fire, as certainly as we see the blessed by grace in a new heaven and a new earth in the most absolute sense. To hope or believe otherwise is rebellion against God and His word. The second death is no more extinction of being than the first. It is the full wages of sin; it is perdition everlasting. Either annihilation or universalism is the foul dishonor of God and the cruelest deception of guilty man. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. And He employed some of the words of Isa. 66 in the unlimited sense of eternity, dropping terms which are to be literally accomplished in the kingdom that precedes, as we see in other N. T. applications of O. T. language. Both are accurately true.

Correspondence, Correspondence: In Eternity; Isa. 65:20; Eph. 4:26; Pleasing Christ; Gen. 9:6 (65:20)

Ques. Kindly say what kind of life the unbeliever will have throughout eternity, and what body he will have.

Ans. We do not know anything more than that he will have a perpetuity of existence in unutterable misery, and that the body will be immortal. Eternal life properly speaking, belongs to the Christian alone, and means much more than existing forever, which latter is equally true of the unbeliever. Only those who are in Christ have eternal life; the others, although existing forever, shall not have this eternal life. (John 3:36.)

Ques. Will you kindly explain Isa. 65:20?

Ans. It means that in the Millennium, man's life will no longer be cut down to three score years and ten, but that it will be so prolonged (through all Christ's glorious reign) that if one die at one hundred years old he is accounted an infant; if through sin he is cut off at that early age, it is a curse from God. What a vista of glory such a thought opens up to us.

Ques. Please explain Eph. 4:26.

Ans. Do not treasure up malice. Do not nurse your wrath, and beware in your anger not to sin, for although you may be righteously angry, it is so easy to become vindictive and revengeful.

Ques. What can one who has recently been converted do to please Christ at school?

Ans. Everything. The Lord Jesus does not so much call you to do something new and special, but to do all the old things from a new motive-all that you did before to please yourself or your instructors, now do to please Him. You may also be able to do some little service for Him, such as speaking a word to any that do not know your Lord and Savior, or writing about Him to your brothers or sisters or friends. This is only occasional, for you cannot be always speaking or writing, but you can always be manifesting Christ. In all your actions try to show what Christ is, not what you are. Display His meekness, not your pride; His patience, not your impatience; His love, not your selfishness-that thus

“The life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." 2 Cor. 4:10.

Ques. Will you kindly explain Gen. 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man"?

Ans. After the flood the government of the earth was put in the hands of men. Noah was the first governor; the executive power was put into his hands, and ever since, in every country, there have been "powers that be.... ordained of God." (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13, 14.)

The Christian is not a citizen of this world. He should not make the laws nor interfere with them, but be subject to them as ordained of God, except where they would come between his conscience and God, being contrary to the Word of God, having to obey God rather than men. (Acts 4:19; 5:29)

Verses 5 and 6 require that a beast or a man that kills a man shall be killed by man.

Capital punishment was thus instituted by God and has not been repealed. It is for Jew, Gentile and Christian alike to be subject, but the Christian, being heavenly, should not interfere with the laws of the land in which he lives.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Isaiah 63:19: D. Martin's Authority for Long Temps and Reasons for Maison (63:19)

Question: A Christian writes from Guernsey as to Isa. 63:19 variously rendered, and asks D. Martin’s authority for “long temps” in that verse; and the reason for “maison” instead of “moisson” in Isa. 8. last verse (or 9:2 or 3 as in others). So it is in Bagster’s reprint of Martin’s version.

Answer: Our correspondent is correct; and Martin, though far closer than Ostervald, is wrong in the first text, and misrepresented as to the second in the London reprint, which seems an erratum. But the former is quite mistranslated in the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate, and consequently in the R. C. versions such as that by le M. de Saci. As the A. V., the French Bible of Jean Diodati (Geneve, 1644) gives “jamais.” The first clause in the A. V. is unwarranted; it interpolates “all thine” and severs the connection. “We are from of old [looking back from the future tribulation before deliverance] over whom thou ruledst not, those not called by thy name.” Alexander comes to the result of the English Bible in supposing Israel to be contrasted with their adversaries— “We are of old: thou hast not ruled over them, thy name has not been called upon them.” Isaac Loeser represents the Jewish preference of “We are become as though we are those over whom thou hast never ruled, over whom thy name hath not been called;” rather paraphrastic but right substantially. Benisch gives more concisely, “We are like those over whom” &c.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Meaning of Recovering of Sight to the Blind Inserted in Luke 4:18, but Not in Isaiah 61:1? (61:1)

Question: Luke 4:18. What lesson is to be learned from the insertion of “recovering of sight to the blind” in Luke 4:18 though absent from Isa. 61:1? E.N.

Answer: It would seem that the Seventy, who translated the O. T. into Greek, added here from elsewhere in the prophet Isaiah, another beneficent fruit of Messiah’s presence and power, the bestowal of sight on the blind. Dean Alford in his note to this text refers to Isa. 58:6. If this be correctly represented, it is hard to discover the link literally or spiritually. It may be more simply and fairly referred to Isa. 35:5, where the sense is the same, though the words differ. Luke cites here and elsewhere from the Septuagint. No other lesson seems intended.

Christian Friend: Volume 13, Isaiah 60:1 (60:1)

At the end of the previous chapter the Redeemer, it is said, shall come to Zion; and it is as based upon that the exhortation is given, “Arise, shine; for thy light” (the Redeemer) “is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” The light now possessed in the person of the Redeemer, dwelling in Zion, is to be displayed. Note, moreover, that this is in contrast to the state of the whole earth. “For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.” Jerusalem, irradiated with the light of the glory of the Lord, shines in the midst of the dense moral darkness around. It was so with the Lord Himself at His first coming. “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” (John 1:4,5) So also with the believer, as the apostle writes: “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, for the shining forth” (as it should be) “of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4: 6)

Another thing may be observed. When the light shines, whether through Jerusalem or through the believer (as indeed it was also through our blessed Lord and Saviour), it is for a testimony—a powerful testimony—to Him who has enkindled it, yea, to Him whose glory is the light. We thus read in our chapter: “And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” (v. 3; compare Rev, 21:23, 24) The Gentiles behold, and are attracted to the glory that has dawned upon the earth; and “the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel,” becomes thus the center of universal blessing, the source of all being indicated in the words, “The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.” (v. 19) In dwelling upon this blessed scene, it is well to remind ourselves that God, in. His grace, has set believers, in anticipation of that day, as lights in, the midst of the darkness; and if this treasure—the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is possessed in earthen vessels, it is that the excellency of the power which causes it to shine forth may be of God, and not of us. Christ in glory is ever the light in the New Testament; and when our light shines it is simply the exhibition of Christ in the life.

E. D.

Words of Faith: Volume 1, Answers to Correspondents: Fig Tree and Vine (5:1)

Q. Why does the Lord use the figure of the fig-tree in Luke 13:6, in speaking of Israel, instead of that of the _ vine, according to Isa. 5:1 and Luke 20:9?-A. B.

A. The vine as a figure stood for the nation in their original standing as the people of God. This at Babylon was exchanged for the Lo-Ammi (not my people) of the prophet. The remnant brought out of Babylon are the " fig-tree planted in the vineyard," to which the Lord came, finding it covered with the leaves of profession, looking for the fruit which should have been their accompaniment. Luke 20:9 speaks of the nation from the beginning; yet, as bringing on their history to the Lord's own time, it speaks only of the vineyard, not of the vine itself. F. W. G.

Christian Treasury: Volume 1, Vine, Some Notes on the: Luke 13:6; Isaiah 5:1; Luke 20:9 (5:1)

The vine as a figure stood for the nation in their original standing as the people of God. This at Babylon was exchanged for the Lo-Ammi (not My people) of the Prophet. The remnant brought out of Babylon is the "fig tree planted in the vineyard," to which the Lord came, finding it covered with the leaves of profession, looking for the fruit which should have been its accompaniment. Luke 20:9 speaks of the nation from the beginning; yet, as bringing on its history to the Lord's own time, it speaks only of the vineyard, not of the vine itself.

The Remembrancer: 1912, My Thoughts (55:8-9)

" My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith The LORD, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

Isa. 55:8-9.

The article " Of Him, and through Him, and to Him—all things," has brought before us a solemn, but much needed, word, in a day of such tremendous' energy and activity on man's part, not only' in the political but also in the religious world; and, " Be still, and know that I am GOD," is almost unheeded. Even the Lord's beloved people are apt to be carried away and affected by what they see and hear around them; such as "0 times are changed and we must adapt ourselves accordingly." What! Is GOD changed? Are His thoughts changed? Let His word answer. " I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." (Mal. 3:6, read also vv. 16-18). " Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." (Heb. 13:8.) Therefore HE who " loved the church, and gave HIMSELF for it " (Eph. 5:25; cf. John 13:1.), loves her now, as much as ever: and wherever there is the obedience of faith to act upon His word in Matt. 18:18,20, they will find that He, is faithful. Again, in the Old Testament, repeated in the New, " The Word of our God shall stand forever." (Isa. 40:8; 1 Peter 1:25.) It is just as true now before God (and to faith) that, " There is One body " as when first written (Eph. 4:4.) for the Other Comforter, the Spirit of truth, the Lord Jesus said would " abide with you forever." (John 14:16,17.) The Holy Spirit in the Word of God speaks of a certain class thus, " the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it," having shortly before given the very solemn warning, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief." (Heb. 3:12; 4:2) And now fellow believer turn with me to a very precious scene in 2 Sam. David had it on his heart to undertake a certain service for the Lord. He tells the prophet, who replies, " Go, do all that is in thy heart," adding, what he had no authority for, "the Lord is with thee." But, "it came to pass that night," He whose thoughts and ways were as much higher than the thoughts and ways of even a David backed up by the prophet Nathan, as the heavens are higher than the earth, sends the latter to the former with a message unfolding His thoughts and ways-read vv. 5-17. Is David disappointed at the thwarting of His plans? Oh no. He goes right in and "sat before the Lord." How sweet! Read Psa. 32:7. But the " hiding place " is not only used in time of trouble, but also when enjoying God's word, see Psa. 119:113,114. Dear reader sit down, before the Lord, and ponder over that exquisite scene in 2 Sam. 7 David had had many experiences of God's goodness, but this seems the climax. Overwhelmed with the unfolding of God's thoughts and God's ways, his heart basking as it were in the warmth and sunshine of God's love and grace, turns away from all that is of man ("Is this the manner of man, O Lord God?") and, lost for words to express himself-" what can David say more unto Thee?" The writer of Psa. 139 (cf. last clause of ver. 20, with that Psalm), linking God's word with His heart, reaches the Source of all blessing, THE HEART OF GOD.

Would that we who are so richly blessed, and at such cost knew more of what it is to go in and "sit before the Lord." There would be a deeper developing of the affections of the heart Godward as we drank in more and more of His thoughts and His ways, and, without any effort, the thoughts and ways of men would have less influence upon us-the whole tenor of our lives would be affected and any service undertaken would savor less of man and man's thoughts (self or other men's) and more of HIM in whose presence we had been sitting:—and when we met together there would be more of what has been already referred to,—Mal. 3:16-18.

Having had before us the Fountain of all our blessing, " THE HEART OF GOD," it will be in keeping with the character of "The Remembrancer " and a fitting close—stirring one another up by putting in " remembrance " to keep in mind The End that God has in view: "That God in all things may be glorified through 'Jesus Christ."

" The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer; and above all things have fervent charity [` love] among yourselves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins, use hospitality one to another without grudging; as every man hath received the gift,

even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:8-11).

Courtesy of BibleTruthPublishers.com. Most likely this text has not been proofread. Any suggestions for spelling or punctuation corrections would be warmly received. Please email them to: BTPmail@bibletruthpublishers.com.

Things New and Old: Volume 17, Hear (55:3)

We have now to dwell for a few moments upon another of those precious gospel monosyllables, so full of the rich grace, mercy, and love of our God.

“Hear, and your soul shall live.” (Isa. 4) There is no more lovely attitude for the soul of a sinner than that of a hearer. “I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.” (Psalm 85) “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10) The sinner is simply called to hear. “The salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it.” Acts 28.

Now, nothing can possibly be simpler than this. We are not asked to do, or to feel, or be, or realize, or give anything. God speaks, and His word conveys life and salvation. There is eternal life and full and free salvation contained in the word which God sends to the ear of faith. “He shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.”

The glad tidings which God sends to the sinner—to every sinner under heaven—contain a message of pardon and peace—a message based upon the finished work of Christ on the cross. This message is full, clear, and distinct. It tells of a finished work, an accomplished atonement—a righteousness complete, and brought so nigh, that it is “to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly.” The sinner is not asked to add aught to this message in order to make it true. It does not depend for its truth upon his belief of it; but his salvation depends upon his belief of its truth. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

It is impossible to conceive anything more expressive of pure, free, and absolute grace than the little word, “Hear.” It proves, beyond all question, that salvation is a divinely-finished thing—an accomplished reality: and all we have to do is to pause and listen, in order that the message may fall, in its own heavenly clearness, upon the ear and upon the heart. The soul that will but listen to God is saved.

But this is precisely what the sinner is not disposed to do. He will listen to anyone and everyone but God. He will hearken to anything and everything but what God the Lord has to say to him. Satan’s lies, man’s nonsense and folly—all will find a wide and ever open entrance through man’s ear into his heart; but when God speaks, man’s ear is closed and turned away. He will not hear the voice of the divine charmer, charming ever so wisely.

The sinner will not hear. God speaks; His message is clear and distinct. It tells of eternal life; perfect remission of sins; divine righteousness; perfect acceptance with God; sonship; eternal glory in the heavens—all these things it tells of, and presents to every soul that will only hearken and hear. It is clear as a sunbeam, free as the air, full as the ocean’s tide flowing from the bosom of God, based on the finished work of Christ, and set forth on the stable authority to the Holy Ghost; but man mill not hear, though solemnly responsible so to do, and exposed to righteous judgment for refusing.

“Hear, and your soul shall live.” Precious word! It has precisely the same stamp, the same moral tone, the same lovely evangelic ring, as those other little words, “come,” and “look” They are all the same, and all set forth the proper attitude of the soul. If the ear is open, the glad tidings of salvation pour themselves in upon the heart. If the eye is open, the rays of divine light pour themselves upon the soul. And in the expressive little word, “come,” is involved the bending of the whole moral being toward that blessed One who speaks in such tender, loving, winning accents to the heart.

And this is life—life eternal; it is full salvation; it is liberty, peace, strength, victory, progress—all; yes, all for time and eternity. There is nothing, from first to last, that is not wrapped up in any one of the three little words, “come!” “look!” “hear!” In each, in all, we learn the same priceless lesson, that all we want as guilty sinners, all we want as needy children, all we want as helpless servants—all is found in the One to whom we come, to whom we look, to whom we listen. All our springs are in Him. We have, as sinners, nothing but our sins; as children nothing but our need; as servants, nothing but our feebleness and ignorance; but in Him we have all, and can get all, by simply coming, looking, and listening.

In short, it is all by faith, from first to last. We come, we look, we listen, in simple faith, and thus we are saved, pardoned, justified; and thus we live, from day to day. It is the obedience of faith. The just shall live by faith, and faith is the free gift of God—free to each—free to all. Not one is excluded. All are freely invited to come—to look—to hear; and all who obey are saved and blessed; all who refuse shall be eternally damned—damned by their own deliberate act and choice.

Oh! beloved reader, let us entreat thee, now, even this very moment, to come—to look—to hear. “Come” and find rest—“look,” and be saved—“hear,” and thy soul shall live.

Things New and Old: Volume 12, Isaiah 55:6 (55:6)

“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon Him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

Echoes of Mercy: Volume 14 (1904), "He's Passed Me by." (55:6)

“Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near.” — Isaiah 55:6.

A CHRISTIAN once sat by the bedside of a dying man, whom he had been requested to visit, and spoke to him both faithfully and earnestly about the welfare of his precious soul. But alas! he seemed hardened and unconcerned. He then read to him from God’s Word the well-known narrative of the blind man, who sat by the wayside begging, and laid great stress upon the fact that he called upon the Lord while He was near, and that, consequently, he received the blessing for which he so earnestly sought, and further mentioned that had he not then seized the opportunity of calling upon Him, as Christ Jesus never passed that way again, he doubtless would never have had another; that he called, not only to the right person, but also at the right time. But the dying man seemed to have no ear for the truth, so his visitor left, praying that God would cause him to know his deep need.

A day or two later he again called upon him, only to find him as indifferent to eternal realities as before, and as he sought to arouse him to a sense of his lost condition, the dying man replied, “Don’t speak to me any more about it, for it makes me troubled.” To which the Christian responded, “My friend, it is far better to be troubled now than to be troubled throughout eternity;” but as he seemed opposed to further conversation, he again left. Shortly afterwards, he heard that he had departed this life, his words, as he passed from time into eternity being, “He’s passed me by, He’s passed me by.”

May the above serve as a warning to you, dear reader, not to trifle with eternal verities, which are more important than all the concerns of this life, for—

Jesus Christ said, “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” God alone knows the inestimable value of your soul, and prizes its redemption so much that He gave His only-begotten Son, who stooped from the highest glory to taste the bitterness of death upon the cross, that sinners might not perish, but have everlasting life.

Hearken, again, to the cry of the dying man, “He’s passed me by,” and beware, lest you miss the passing by of Jesus Christ. He may have passed your way many times, so near that even your boon-companion may have called upon Him, and been delivered from the burden and guilt of his many sins. He will not always call, He will not always be passing, for the day of His grace will not last forever. Therefore avail yourself now of His mercy, for now may be your golden opportunity.

A. G.

Whither Bound?, Guilty, but Pardoned (55:7)

There is in all persons a certain knowledge of good and evil: But we are apt to fix a standard that we think we can meet.

For instance, the drunkard thinks there is no great harm in drinking, but would consider it a great sin to steal. The covetous man, who may be daily practicing some deception “in the way of trade,” satisfies himself by thinking “it is necessary and customary to do so in business, but I do not get drunk as some do.” The upright moral man satisfies himself with doing what he calls his duty, and looks around and pities the open sinners. However, he never considers how many evil thoughts or sinful desires he has cherished, unknown to others. Thus each congratulates himself by comparing himself with someone else who may have done worse.

But there is a true standard of righteousness; and that is the righteousness of God.

God judges the heart, though man looks only at the outward conduct.

When a person’s conscience begins to be awakened to think of sin as God sees it, then he finds himself guilty and ruined; he does not attempt to justify himself by trying to find out some one worse than himself, but frankly owns his guilt, condemns himself, and is anxious to know if God can forgive him.

Yes, it comforts and quiets the depraved heart of man, to find a person worse than himself! He thinks the greater sin of another excuses himself. And, this is not all; for he cannot bear to see God exhibiting grace. Grace — which means the unmerited forgiveness of every sin, without God requiring anything from the one so forgiven — is a principle so opposed to all man’s thoughts, so far above man, that he dislikes it; his own heart often secretly calls it injustice. It is very humbling to be obliged to own that we are dependent upon grace entirely and that nothing we have done, or can do, will make us fit for God; but that our misery, sin and ruin are all we have to commend us to God’s grace.

Adam in the Garden of Eden hid himself from God when he knew that he was guilty. He turned away from his only Friend just when he most needed Him. So it is still. Man is afraid of the only One who “will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:7).

If you, dear reader, desire to have God’s full and free pardon, you must first as a guilty sinner be alone with Jesus, consciously self-condemned, not making resolutions or trying to get better first. You are brought by your very sins to stand before the Person who “died for the ungodly” (Romans 5:6).

“ Everlasting kindness,” hark, my soul! ‘tis He,

Thy Jehovah Jesus speaks this word to thee.

“ Everlasting kindness,” speak that word once more,

O my soul! still listen, trust it and adore!

“ Everlasting kindness,” e’en to such as I,

On whom wrath eternal might in justice He;

But Jehovah Jesus speaks this word so free,

“ Everlasting kindness,” I have shown to thee.

“ Everlasting kindness,” since the world began,

God’s eternal kindness through the ages ran,

Hidden oft in shadows, dim to human sight,

In Jehovah Jesus now it shineth bright.

“ Everlasting kindness,” feasting on that word,

Now my soul is tasting of its fullness, Lord!

But eternal ages, as they roll along,

Never shall exhaust that word so sweet, so strong.

“ Everlasting kindness “ brought the Son of God

From the Father’s bosom, here to shed His blood;

“ Everlasting kindness,” all God’s ways shall crown,

When before our Jesus gladly we fall down.

“ Everlasting kindness” never shall depart,

Well Jehovah Jesus knew my wandering heart,

Knew that loving-kindness, tender, true, and free,

“ Everlasting kindness” only, suited me.

Correspondence, Correspondence: Matt. 3:15; Present Return of the Jews (54)

Ques. Why did the Lord say, "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Matt. 3:15.

Ans. Christ did fulfill the law, and made it honorable. He kept it perfectly, and was the only one who ever did. It was this that in part showed His perfect fitness to ba a ransom for us. He kept the law as being born under it, and not for us as substitute. We are justified through His blood, not by His life before the cross.

Ques. Is the present return of the Jews to the land of Palestine the fulfillment of Isa. 54?

Ans. Isaiah M looks on to Israel's full restoration as a nation to the Lord, and His delight in her (see vs. 3-10), and His future care over her. It is all a beautiful picture of the love of Jehovah, and His forgiving grace, and that in righteousness to the nation of Israel.

When the Lord Jesus was rejected by the Jews and crucified, God raised Him from the dead and crowned Him with glory and honor, and sent His Holy Spirit down into this world to gather out of it those who are to compose the bride of Christ. And ever since the Holy Spirit came down here, all who believe the gospel of God's salvation are sealed by the Holy Ghost, and so are members of the body of Christ.

God's last act toward the Jews was to send His armies to destroy the temple and city of Jerusalem, and to scatter the Jews among all nations. (Matt. 22:7; Luke 21:24). The Jews are not the Lord's people now. Salvation is not national now, but individuals of both Jew and Gentile are now being gathered out.

During the period when the Church is being gathered there are no prophecies concerning Israel and Palestine to be fulfilled. What the Lord gave His disciples to expect personally, is that He is coming to receive them to Himself, and this they were to wait for. Not one line or word of prophecy did He put in to take place first.

He is coming for His people, and 1 Thess. 4:15-17 describes how it is to take place. And at their conversion it is said, they "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven" (Chapter 1). They were not to be shaken from this hope by any reports as if the apostles had taught otherwise. And he beseeches them to keep in mind the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him (2 Thess. 2:1).

The wars and rumors of wars, the pestilences, the famines and the earthquakes that are happening during this time of the Church's sojourn on earth, are not the fulfillment of prophecy.

“He is faithful that hath promised." "He that shall come will come and will not tarry." (Heb. 10:23, 37.)

The only signs that we have to indicate the nearness of the coming of Christ is the state of the professing Church on earth (2 Tim., 2 Peter, Jude, Rev. 2nd and 3rd chaps.). And there we find much to tell us He will soon call us home, just as we find it in 1 Thess. 4:15-18. All who are the Lord's, both dead and living, will be taken to heaven at that time.

After that the Jews will be gathered back to Palestine (Isa. 18), but as unbelievers in Jesus. Some will be converted, but many will remain in unbelief. The Lamb in Rev. 5 will take the book and begin to break the seven seals. Then will be the days of "the beginning of sorrows," and it will deepen down to "the great tribulation," as in Matt. 24. Then the Scripture-wars and rumors of wars, the pestilences, the famines and the earthquakes will begin to take place, and the desperate battle talked of as "Armageddon" will take place; till the Lord will come in flaming fire to judge the living wicked, and to deliver the Jews, and to begin to set up His Kingdom, which will cover a thousand years. The wicked dead will stand before Him at the end of that time, to receive their doom.

The Remembrancer: 1907, Isaiah 53:2, A Meditation on (53:2)

My meditation of Him shall be sweet: will be glad in the Lord." PSALMS. 104:34.

The miracle of a tender sapling growing out of a dry ground was unheeded by man; there was no grandeur, no imposing height, no outstretched branches like the trees in the garden of God (Ezek. 31), no delightful shade by rivers of water, such things as the world seeks after, led on in folly by Satan down to everlasting destruction in the pit. Here, God alone appreciates the wonder, the shoot full of sap, green before Him, that did not draw its vigor from the utter barrenness around, and wanted no moisture to keep it green. Its power was in itself, wholly divine yet perfectly human, a root out of a dry ground growing up in this poor world, a desert indeed as God saw it. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." Man seeks the well-watered Eden, with all its glory, greatness, envy, jealousy, noise and bustle-the world as Satan has made it for man, after he was driven out of God's paradise-the Eden he has made for himself, in which God is to have no right nor portion. But, to see God's beautiful green Tree, ever fresh in its beauty, yet come down to the intelligence of a child, small and tender in all its quiet glory-beside us here, so to speak-we must go into the desert; and surely to know Him, we must live there. What depths of moral instruction for us! How it explains Paul's earthly path in Phil. 2;3, and 2 Cor. 4

It is a solemn question for our souls in connection with Christ: What are we looking at, what seeking for, what interested in? The Eden of Ezek. 31, or the desert ground of Isa. 53:2?

Words of Faith: Volume 2, Answers to Correspondents: Isa. 53:2 (53:2)

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have been thinking of your answer in " Words of Faith " (October) to a question on Isa. 53:2. I cannot conceive how any understand "before him" of any other than Jehovah.

1St, Spiritually, John 12 seems to forbid any other interpretation. Who at all understood the Lord? The disciples certainly did not, and taking " him " of an Israelite, obliges one to give a wrong answer to the prophet's question in verse 1.

2nd, I see nothing in either the Hebrew as it stands, or in the most approved commentaries upon it, that supports what you were told. An English reader, to go no farther, might well ask, What then is meant by the "For " at the beginning of verse 2? Yours affectionately,

E. E. W.

MY DEAR BROTHER, I don't like criticizing, but I was somewhat troubled at your answer, No. 27 in the October " Words of Faith." No other translation of Isa. 53:2 Than the ordinary one is possible, that is to be a translation. For I do not call the twisting of a passage to suit theological views a " translation " at all. The simple antecedent to " him " is " Jehovah," and nothing else. The idea of making it refer to " Who," which is what the contrary interpretation supposes, is simply preposterous, contrary to all grammar and sense. And besides this, does

not Rom. 10:16 prove clearly that the meaning of " Who hath, believed is that "None did believe," as indeed verses 3 to 6 go on to state? " He hath concluded all in unbelief."

The miracle of a tender sapling growing out of a dry ground was unheeded by man; there was no grandeur, no imposing height, no outstretched branches like the trees in the garden of God (Ezek. 31), no delightful shade by rivers of waters, such things as the world seeks after, led on in folly by Satan down to everlasting destruction in the pit. Here, God alone appreciates the wonder, the shoot full of sap, green before Him, that did not draw its vigor from the utter barrenness around, and wanted no moisture to keep it green. Its power was in itself, wholly divine yet perfectly human, a root out of a dry ground growing up in this poor world, a desert indeed as God saw it. " No man knows the Son but the Father." Man seeks the well-watered Eden, with all its glory, greatness, envy, jealousy, noise and bustle-the world as Satan has made it for man, after he was driven out of God's paradise-the Eden he has made for himself, in which God is to have no right nor portion. But, to see God's beautiful green tree, ever fresh in its beauty, yet come down to the intelligence of a child, small and tender in all its quiet glory-beside us here, so to speak-we must go into the desert ' • and surely to know Him, we must live there. What depths of moral instruction for us! How it explains Paul's earthly path in Phil. 2;3, and 2 Cor. 4!

It is a solemn question for our souls in connection with Christ: What are we looking at, what seeking for, what interested in? The Eden of Ezek. 31, or the desert ground of Isa. 53:2? Yours very affectionately,

W. J. L.

DEAR BROTHER,

Kindly allow me a brief remark upon Isa. 53:2, as it

bears upon a paper of mine in your first volume. Delitzsch's competence as a Hebraist will not be doubted. He translates: " And he sprang up like a layer-shoot before him," and adds" The suffix of 'Nth cannot refer to the subject of the interrogative sentence, as Kahn and Hofmann suppose, for the answer to the who' there is no one;' it relates to Jehovah, by which it is immediately preceded."

I only quote this because of the question of Hebrew; but it is really not at all that. The English has never been disputed, I think. And there is no antecedent to " him," but Jehovah.

Affectionately ever,

F. W. G.

A.-Having very slight knowledge ourselves of Hebrew, and therefore not feeling able to give a competent opinion upon the question raised in connection with our answer to the inquiry put to us with reference to Isa. 53:2, we think it best to give the above correspondence without comment, leaving it to our readers to weigh it all before the Lord for themselves. We merely add that on one occasion we put the matter in question before J. N. D., and he carefully examined the Hebrew, and then said that there was nothing in the Hebrew to tell to whom the " him" applied. He remarked he had hitherto applied it to Jehovah, but that the question was worth weighing, and he was not himself prepared to decide it.

C. W.

28. Q.-What is the difference between δεήσις, ἐντεύζις, and προσενχή? J. B. S., Sligo.

A.-δεήσις, derived from δέομαι, meaning "to beg," "to entreat as one in need," is properly supplication, and is thus uniformly rendered in the new translation; it is the presentation of need to God with earnestness. Έντεύξις is address to another in personal confidence, hence presenting petitions and intercessions; Paul enjoins that "intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all men." (1 Tim. 2:1.) προσενχή alone is properly prayer, as that which is exclusively addressed to God-invoking His aid according to His will; thus the temple is called " the house of prayer," οἴκος προσενχῆς. (Matt. 21:13.) Prayer is the fitting attitude of the creature before God as dependent, hence " men ought always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke 18:1.) The three words are grouped together in the passage in 1 Timothy already referred to-" supplications [δεήσεις], prayersr [προσενχάς], intercessions [ἐντεύξεις], and thanksgiving." C. W.

ERRATA.-Vol. I., page 280, 5th line from the bottom, for "but from enemies" read "not from enemies." Last line same page, for " 1880' read " 1877." Vol. II., page 228, 7th line from the bottom, for "rather " read "neither." Page 238, transpose 12Th and 13th lines from the top. The same page, 13th line from the bottom, for " gives us indication " read "gives no indication." Page 257, 14th line from the bottom, for "Father Himself " read " Father and Himself."

Bible Treasury: Volume 16, Fragment: Isaiah 53:11 (53:11)

It may be well to learn that Isa. 53:11 stands faultily in the A. V. The R. V. rightly gives “and (not “for") He shall bear their iniquities.” The error here was due to “justify” in the preceding clause, which means really as in Dan. 12.,” instruct in righteousness” —Christ's service, and atoning death. Here the R. V. is still wrong.

Bible Treasury: Volume 3, Correspondence: Isaiah 53:11 and Daniel 12:3 (53:11)

(To the Editor of the Bible Treasury.)

The writer on Daniel in the Bible Treasury of this month objects, and I think correctly, to the generally received idea that, in Isa. 53:11, “by his knowledge” means, by the knowledge of him.

On consulting the Englishman's Hebrew Concordance, find the precise form of the Hebrew word occurs only in one other place: “By his knowledge the depths,” &e., (Prov. 3:20) clearly by God's knowledge. By his knowledge” (Isa. 53:11,) I take to be Christ's knowledge of God. (Comp. Matt. 11:27; John 1:18; 3:13 -19; 17:3-26; 1 John 5:20, &c.)

The Son is the exponent of the Father. All was an enigma, so to speak, until he came, who uttered things kept secret from the foundation of the world. How that God desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. (Hos. 6:6) He that teacheth man knowledge. (Psa. 94:10.) 1 cannot concur with the writer in altering “shall justify” for “instructing in righteousness.” The word translated “justify” occurs in that precise form of the verb only in Ex. 23:7: “I will not justify the wicked;” i.e., God will not make or pronounce a wicked man a just man. Again, “God forbid that I should justify you;” (Job 27:5:) i.e., acknowledge you to be just in what you have spoken. “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” (Isa. 53:11.)

God is now known as the God that justifieth the ungodly. He is the just God and the Savior, just and the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus; for He gives the ungodly, the poor sinner, a righteousness, and in doing so demonstrates His own righteousness. (Rom. 3:21-26.) Thus grace reigns through righteousness. (Rom. 5:21.)

December. R. S.

If R. S. had more fully weighed the context of the scriptures in question, he would have found the key with far more certainty than the mere occurrence of the word, indicated by a concordance, can afford. Everyone who consults a Hebrew lexicon may see that the usual, regular meaning of קדצ is -'justify;” but this sense, even where it, or something like it, might be given in English, is susceptible of very considerable modification according to the proposition in which it occurs. Hence it is even used for cleansing the Sanctuary in Dan. 8:14. And I find that Gesenius (in voce) takes the word substantially as I do, in the two passages we are discussing. ·'Justum s. probum, pium reddidit aliqueni, exemplo et doctrina. Indeed, R. S.'s admission, that “by his knowledge” means Christ's own knowledge of God, seems to me decisive of the question. He might teach many thereby; but how could knowledge “justify?” This would be strange doctrine. “To instruct in righteousness” restores the balance. Still plainer is Dan. 12. We can understand Christ justifying by His blood, by His obedience, though not by His knowledge; but how human teachers could “justify” anyone, is to me an enigma. Here the Authorized Version is to my mind much nearer the truth; for there “justify” is dropped for “turn to righteousness.” But I have already given reason enough in the “Remarks” for preferring instruct in righteousness. For the object here is “the many,” not many; and this phrase is a standing one in our prophet for the apostate mass in Israel, who may be instructed in, but assuredly are not turned to, righteousness. This, the necessary meaning in Dan. 12, makes an excellent and consistent sense in Isa. 53.

Messages of God's Love: 1960, Colonel's Word Will Stand, The (53:5-6)

“I HAD in my regiment a little bugler named Willie Holt. I had often noticed him as being too delate for the life he had to lead; but he was born in the regiment, and we were bound to make the best of him. His father had been killed in action, and his mother drooped and died six months later.

“As several acts of insubordination had been brought to my notice I determined to make an example of the very next offense by having the culprit flogged.

“One morning it was reported that, during the night, the targets had been thrown down and otherwise mutated. On investigation the rascally act was traced to a man or men in the very tent where Willie Holt was billeted. The whole lot were instantly put under arrest, to be tried by court martial. In vain were they appealed to to produce the men, and at last I spoke:

" ‘If any one of you who slept in No. 4 tent last night will come forward and take his punishment like a man, the rest will get off free; but if not, there remains no alternative but to punish you all—each man in turn to receive ten strokes of the cat.’

“For the space of a couple of minutes dead silence followed; then from the midst of the prisoners, where his slight form had been completely hidden, Willie Holt came forward.

“He advanced to within a couple of yards from where I sat; his face was very pale; a fixed intensity of purpose stamped on every line of it.

" ‘Colonel,’ said he, ‘you have passed your word that if any one of those who slept in No. 4 last night comes forward to take his punishment the rest shall get off scot-free. I am ready, sir; and please may I take it now?’

“For a moment I was speechless, so utterly was I taken by surprise: then in a fury of anger and disgust turned upon the prisoners.

" ‘Is there no man among you worthy of the name? Are you all cowards enough to let this lad suffer for your sins? for that he is guiltless, you know as well as I.’ But sullen and silent they stood, with never a word.

“Never in all my life have I found myself so painfully situated. I knew my word must stand, and the lad knew it too. Sick at heart I gave the order, and he was led away for punishment “Bravely he stood, with back bared, as one—two—three—strokes descended. At the fourth a faint moan escaped his white lips, and ere the fifth fell, a cry burst from the group of prisoners who had been forced to witness the scene, and, with one bound, Jim Sykes, the black sheep of the regiment, seized the cat, as, with choking, gasping utterances he shouted, " ‘Stop it,

Colonel, stop it, and tie me up instead. He didn't do it, I did,' and with convulsed and anguished face he flung his arms around the boy.

"Fainting and almost speechless, Willie lifted his eyes to the man's face and smiled—such a smile.

" 'No, Jim,' he whispered, 'you are safe now; the Colonel's word will stand.' His head fell forward—he had fainted.

"The next day as I was making for the hospital tent where the boy lay I met the doctor.

" 'How is the lad?' I asked.

" 'Sinking, Colonel,' he said quietly. " 'What!' I ejaculated, horrified bond words.

" 'Yes, the shock of yesterday was too much for his feeble strength.'

"The dying lad lay propped up on the pillows and, half-kneeling, half-crouching at his side was Jim Sykes. The change in the boy's face startled me; it was deathly white, but his great eyes were shining with a wonderful light, strangely sweet. He was talking earnestly, but neither of them saw me.

"At that moment the kneeling man lifted his head, and I saw drops of sweat standing on his brow as he muttered brokenly, " 'Why did ye do it, lad? Why did ye do it?'

" 'Because I wanted to take it for you, Jim,' Willie's weak voice answered tenderly. 'I thought if I did it it might help you to understand a little bit why Christ died for you.'

" 'Christ has naught to do with such as me, lad. I'm one of the bad 'uns.'

" 'But He died to save bad ones—just them. He says, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners," and "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow." 'Dear Jim,' the earnest voice pleaded patiently, 'shall the Lord have died in vain? He has poured out His precious life-blood for you. He is knocking at the door of your heart; won't you let Him in?'

"The lad's voice was failing him, but he laid his hand gently on the man's bowed head, as he sang:

thrilling the heart of every man who heard it. Then gradually the weak arms dropped, the light faded from the shining eyes, and the brave spirit of the dear boy had fled to God."

—COLONEL H.

Dear reader, need I add anything to this little story? Do you not see in it a wonderful illustration of what Christ has done?

"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities.... With His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53:5, 6.

"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." 1 Pet. 2:22.

"WHO HIS OWN SELF BARE OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BODY ON THE TREE." 1 Peter 2:24.

ML-01/31/1960

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, His Grave With the Wicked and With the Rich in His Death? (53:9)

Question: Isa. 53:9. How are we to understand "His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death?" R. M.

Answer: The next verse refers, not only to the grave which was appointed to one reckoned with lawless men, but to that honor which God took care should notwithstanding be paid in His burial. As is well known, "the wicked" is plural, whereas "rich" is singular. The simple facts are thus the best comment on the prediction. Man proposed, but God disposed, Who alone could and did set it out long before. Men assigned Him in his thought a grave with the wicked, but He was in fact according to His purpose with a rich man in His death.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Meaning of Isaiah 53:11, Especially By His Knowledge (53:11)

Question: Isa. 53:11. What does this mean? Especially by His knowledge? C. P.

Answer: One important question arises, when it is known that the object of the verb is not "many" as in all known versions but "the many." If to "the many" belongs the technical sense in which Daniel employs it, the meaning would be the mass of Jews that believe not, contrasted with the remnant (chap. 9: 27, 11: 33, 39, 12:3). The article is not affixed in chap. 11:34, 44, 12:4, 10, where it has no such application. So Isa. 52:14, 15, and the latter clause of 53:12, while its first clause has the article. Without doubt this makes the interpretation difficult; which some have tried to meet by comparing the Pauline of οἱ πολλοὶ of Rom. 5:19. But as this is due to τοῦ ἑνὸς in the same clause, how can it be imported with any certainty into Isaiah where there is no such contrast? If then we attach a force in Isaiah similar to the phrase in Daniel, the

meaning of the verb would seem necessarily modified. For the unbelieving mass could not really be justified, but “instructed in righteousness” they might be by the Righteous Servant. In this case also “by His knowledge” would have the unforced sense of what He made known by His teaching. And Dan. 12:3 confirms this sense; for teachers can only instruct “the many” or indeed any in righteousness. They surely can justify none. It is certain that God alone justifies. Confessedly, however, the passage in Isaiah calls for fuller investigation; as there seems to be a grave difficulty not here raised. Any real help would be welcome.

Fragments Gathered Up, Isaiah 53:11 (53:11)

It may be well to learn that Isa. 53:11 stands faultily in the A. V. The R. V. rightly gives “and (not ‘for’) He shall bear their iniquities.” The error here was due to “justify” in the preceding clause, which means really as in Dan. 12., “instruct in righteousness” —Christ’s service, and atoning death. Here the R. V. is still wrong.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Isaiah 53:12 (53:12)

Question: Will you kindly say whether, in your opinion, there is any good reason—critical, exegetical, or other, for preferring the following rendering of Isa. 53:12 to that of the Authorized Version: “I will give him the great for his portion, and he shall divide the strong for a spoil”?

C. J. C.

Answer: This rendering was substantially so given in our first printed English Bible (Coverdale, 1335), as well as previously in the early Wycliffite Manu scripts of the fourteenth century. But these versions were made from the Latin Vulgate, which (as well as the Greek Septuagint) was itself but a translation; so that these English editions were translations of a translation, and not made from the original Hebrew of the Old Testament.

Tyndale had, however, set the way in taking the original languages of the Scriptures as the text from which an English translation of the word of God should be given; and had issued in 1525 his (first printed) version of the New Testament translated from the Greek. He also began an English version of the Old Testament from the Hebrew, but did not live to do much more than the Pentateuch. It was not until the appearance of the Geneva Bible (of 1560 and later) that a direct version from the original tongue of the Old Testament was given in English, and this is how the verse is there rendered— “Therefore will I give him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoyle with the strong”; followed by the Bishops’ revised (1568), “Therefore wil I give him among ye great ones his part, and he shall divide the spoyle with the mightie.”

The distinguished Hebrew scholars (amongst others) appointed in 1607 to give us our excellent King James’ Version were therefore acquainted with these two renderings of the verse, and had to face the consideration of their respective faithfulness to the original. And, as we see, they were led to accept the sense as given in the ancient Syriac Version, and adopted by Pagninus, Leo Judah, Castalio, the Geneva, Bishops’ and Diodati’s (Italian), as the more correct rendering of the Hebrew. Our Revisers of 1884 also have confirmed this conclusion, in which also J.N.D. and W.K. apparently concur, with many others.

All hangs upon the view that is taken of the two Hebrew particles (beth) and (eth) (translated “with” in both clauses of the sentence of our Authorized Version). In support of the rendering submitted by the querist the first particle is assumed by some to be used here pleonastically, rather than as (usually) a preposition. But this treatment of the second letter of the alphabet as a connective with its object of the Hebrew original of the verb “divide” finds no corroboration or countenance from any part of the Old Testament, and would appear therefore to be a philological impropriety.

Also as to the second (eth), Prov. 16:19 (his) and verses 9 (his) and 12 (“with the transgressors”) of our chapter all go to confirm the rendering “with” in the clause we are considering. Hence the majority of the best Hebrew scholars, so far as I know, are in accord with our Authorized and Revised Versions.

How then are we to understand the words? The prophet by the Spirit of God describes in metaphorical language the future triumphs of the earth — despised and suffering Servant of Jehovah (compare chap. 63:1). What are the “great” ones of the earth in the presence of Him to whom Jehovah will divide a portion? He is heir of all things and above all. But if He be thus singled out from all others by Jehovah Himself (“to him will I divide”), yet will He deign to divide the spoil with the strong. He loves to share with others what He has rescued from the power of the enemy. Such is His grace as the reigning Son of man (compare Isa. 11:14; Jeremiah 51:20-23; Zech. 10:3-12).

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Meaning of Isa. 8, Rom. 7:24; 7:25; 8:2, and 2 Tim. 4:8 (53:8)

Question: Would you kindly explain through the Bible Treasury the meaning of

“Who shall declare his generation” (Isa. 8)?

“Who shall deliver me out of this body of death” (Rom. 7:24)?

“So then I myself with the mind serve God’s law” (Rom. 7:25).

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2).

“All them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8). Do not all Christians love His appearing?

R. M.

Answer: (1) Isa. 53:8. Differing interpretations of this clause are by no means wanting. But if the words preceding indicate the wicked travesty of our Lord’s trial before the Roman governor “his judgment was taken away” —so it would appear that the prophet, under the sense of the nation’s overwhelming wickedness in compassing the rejection and death of Jehovah’s Righteous Servant, is led to cry out, “Who shall declare” such a generation as could be so guilty— “for he was cut off out of the land of the living”! (2, 3 and 4). Rom. 7:24, 25; 8:2. The converted or renewed soul—not yet brought into the Christian state of liberty and peace, but nevertheless truly born of God, as were also the Old Testament saints—has a new and holy nature not previously possessed (i.e. when unconverted), and delights in the law of God, yet finding itself powerless for good, because of indwelling sin (ver. 20). To will is present, but to work out the good is not. The body being thus under the power of, and enslaved by this fatal “law of sin and death,” is here called “this body of death,” dead because of sin. Hence the cry, when the soul’s powerlessness is felt and acknowledged, for a deliverer—found in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Looking to self for power has ceased; another is the Object before the soul, and so deliverance is found, and strength. “So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God,” whereas before, as sold under sin, it was no longer “I” but “sin” that dwelleth in me!

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, "Who Shall Declare His Generation?" (53:8)

Question: Isa. 53:8. What is meant by “Who shall declare his generation?” H. D.

Answer: It appears to be as contrary to general usage as to the particular context, that we should here conceive “posterity” (even though of course in a spiritual sense). The meaning is rather His contemporaries. How blind they were, not only to His glory, but to the wondrous work His humiliation was about to achieve by His atoning death on the cross! They in their murderous hatred were but hurrying on that which would give effect, in the grace of God, to taking away the transgression of His people.

Servant and Savior, Servant and Savior Part 2 (53:1-3)

"Who bath believed our report? and to whom is Jehovah's arm revealed? For he groweth up before him as a tender shoot, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and we see him, and there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and forsaken of men; a man of sorrows and welt acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

It is now the testimony of God which is rejected- to One who is, nevertheless, "Jehovah's arm." It has been already said that Jehovah is the title under which God reveals Himself in the book of Exodus, when He undertakes to redeem His people out of Egypt. "And God spake unto Moses and said unto him, I am Jehovah; and I appeared unto Abraham, and unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them ... ..Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am Jehovah: and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments; and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God, and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."

Thus this title speaks of God as the God of salvation. It is not of course that the book of Genesis does not give Him this name, or that the patriarchs did not know that it was His. Unbelief has vainly objected these two things. It is that what this name implies God was now bringing out as it had never been brought out before. This title is essentially the same as "I am:—the One who is: the eternally present and unchangeable God. A blessed name indeed this by which to take up a people from amongst the fallen sons of man, and link Himself with them as their God forever. It is not even yet, alas, that Israel has penetrated the meaning of that name aright. But she shall know it, and be the pillar upon which He will inscribe it forever. Meanwhile it is our privilege to know, under all these titles, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Only He could be indeed Jehovah,—could link abidingly with Himself a company of redeemed sinners. This to our hearts means nothing short of grace, and therefore nothing short of Christ's work, by which alone He can be righteously with us thus. "Jehovah's arm " is thus Christ a Savior: unto us who are called, "the power of God."

But of power in weakness and self-humiliation and sacrifice how many think? Who can see Jehovah's arm in the Man of sorrows? So the prophet goes on to describe this humiliation under which He is veiled to carnal eyes- to faith revealed. "For he groweth up before him as a tender shoot, and as a root out of a dry ground." This He is before God; this He is, too, before man: but He is rejected by man for that for which He is approved of God- "He is despised and forsaken of men."

Let us look first, as we are invited, at the Godward side. He is "a tender shoot, a root out of a dry ground”. This carries us back to the eleventh chapter: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." This points to the cutting down of the royal stock of David which has gone back to what it was in Jesse, or even less. Out of the roots of this felled and prostrate tree comes this tender shoot. It is a new beginning in weakness of what has already suffered defeat and overthrow. Circumstances too, are adverse: the dry ground provides no sustenance to its youth and weakness. But in this also there is more than at first appears. For why is the Davidic monarchy thus overthrown, and why are the circumstances adverse? People may say it is only as it always has been; the law of nature is a law of change; the stamp of death is upon everything. True, but why but because nature is fallen nature? Here was one to whom

God had said: "If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, these children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore." This prostrate tree trunk means then God's covenant profaned, His testimony refused; God in His holiness against it because of sin.

And what of the dry ground? It was out of Israel this house of David sprang, out of Israel that had been God's vineyard, which He had fenced and nurtured and cared for, and which has repaid His care with wild grapes instead of the grapes He looked for. He had said therefore He would take away its hedge, and break down its wall, and lay it waste, not to be pruned or digged; also He would command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. The dry ground, then, was the corrupt and hardened generation unwatered of the Spirit, whom they and their fathers had always resisted. Good reason was there for the circumstances being adverse: truly that was a tender shoot, and out of a dry ground.

But what of this in Jehovah's sight? Was He less the “arm of the Lord,” who, spite of this weak appearance, spite of all by which He was surrounded, grew up, as mastering it all? Surely in His sight this was power that overcame weakness, life that mastered death. He was no creature of circumstances, no product of His surroundings He drew nothing from- was indebted for nothing to- that amidst which He was. There are plants which, by the stores of nourishment they lay up in their own substance, maintain themselves in some measure of independence of the barren soil from which they spring. But these are scarcely more than contrasts to Him who, in the world, not of it, grew up in the sunshine of the divine favor through thirty years of toil and poverty and sorrow, and then to receive the testimony of the Father's voice in perfect unqualified approbation: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

But exactly what made Him the object of divine delight, made Him, and for that reason, the object of man's disfavor. "He hath no form nor comeliness; and we see him, and there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and forsaken of men." He was rejected distinctly and deliberately, as known, not as unknown: "We see Him, and there is no beauty." How false is the thought that ignorance has to do with the rejection of Christ! There is abundant ignorance, but the condemnation is, that "Light is come into the world; and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." This is the terrible reality. Men say they desire heaven; but a Christless heaven does not exist, and Christ they have refused.

No wonder then that He is "a Man of sorrows, and well acquainted with grief."What a world for a heart thoroughly one with God to pass through! bearing upon it all the glory of God, all the burdens under which man groaned! Himself ever with God, this was the shadow cast by that eternal sunshine! With God; and passing through a world which had gone out with Cain out of His presence! He that had seen Him now had seen the Father; and "we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." F. W. G.

Servant and Savior, Servant and Savior Part 4 (53:7-9)

We come now, in the fourth section of this prophecy to see this same blessed Person tested in every possible way by all this through which He passed, and every fresh test only bringing out some fresh perfection.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as to his generation, who considereth that he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken? And they gave him his grave with wicked men, and with a rich man when he was dead: because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

These are the two characters of fallen man- deceit and violence. So the Psalmist speaks of the "bloody and deceitful man." And so the Lord: "All that came before me were thieves and robbers;" the last, the man of violence- the thief, the man of deceit; and yet both one, for he who will take openly if he has the power, will use deception if he be weak. But how had He used the power which was undeniably His? The mockers at His cross declared it: "He saved others." And when power was used unrighteously against Him, "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

But "if any man offend not in word," says the apostle, "the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." Such, then, was His perfection, from whom no pressure of evil could bring aught but good, that overcame it- who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

Yet "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted." In Him was no callousness whatever. Look at that Psa. 22, in which, if anywhere, His innermost soul is told out; and mark how every feature of the scene is before Him. With us one sorrow swallows up another; we have not capacity as He, and can little realize even the more outward of His sorrows.

Isa. 53:8 has been variously translated. I do not doubt that, as to the first clause, the margin is the more correct: "He was taken away by distress"- better, ‘oppression'- "and judgment." The second clause I would read, as others have suggested: "As to his generation, who considereth that he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken?" These are the ingredients of His cup of sorrow: cut off by ‘oppression’, perverting the forms of ‘judgment’, amid a careless and unbelieving ‘generation’, for whose sin He was stricken.'

At the end only is He separated from the malefactors with whom He had been associated, and with whom they had assigned Him a grave; but, his work accomplished, further humiliation was not permitted. We know how, in fact, the rich man interposed to fulfill this prophecy. What He really was began to come out, and to be owned of God. Burial with the rich man was the first only of a series of steps, the last of which placed Him "at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

Servant and Savior, Servant and Savior Part 3 (53:4-6)

We are come now to the central section of the prophecy, and doctrinally, also, the very heart of the whole. We are now to learn the true character of those sufferings once so misconceived. It is Israel's voice that we are listening to, the confession that they will yet make of that fatal unbelief of theirs, when once "He came to his own, and his own received him not." Here, with their old "Priest's Guide-book" in their hands, they are realizing the meaning of those sacrifices so constantly kept before their eyes in their so over-prized, because so under-prized, ritual. They are learning how "sacrifice and offering he would not, "who yet seemed to insist so much upon them—how much it cost Him who stepped forth to take the place of those rejected offerings, to say, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God!"

" Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

The first clause is quoted and applied for us in the Gospel of Matthew. "And when the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils, and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

The application here, then, is to what our Lord did in His life on earth- not on the cross, but in His miraculous healing of those that were diseased, and deliverance of the victims of Satan's power. This is plainly not atonement, though some have strangely argued it to be so. It is not vicarious suffering, but sympathy, manifested practically in the relief of the varied forms of distress around. And these He "bare," not vicariously or sacrificially, as He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree," but entering into them in the tender pity of His heart, feeling every sorrow to which He ministered.

It is not atonement, yet it is the path and spirit of Him who made it, who made it because men were what and where all this declared them, and He was what His word and works declared- "marked out Son of God, with power according to the Spirit of holiness"- but on man's behalf, "by resurrection of the dead." For of all this that had come in as the fruit and shadow of sin, from the lightest prick of the thorn to death itself, there could be no relief but through His crown of thorns and His cross. He who pitied must make a way for His pity, that it might reach the objects of it.

People have asked, Would nothing else suffice? The Lord Himself answers, "The Son of man must be lifted up." And He who gave His Son would not have given Him, had there been any other way to save. Love itself could not have been shown in giving, where there was no absolute necessity to give. Yet, apart from revelation, who could have fathomed the need, or anticipated the way, of divine love in meeting it? Unbelief could thus take up the depth of His humiliation as an argument against His personal claim. The stone lay low enough for them to stumble over it. "Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." It was His glory which had blinded them, as now they own: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."

Here is truly vicarious suffering, and suffering which not only removes wrath, but restores to God those who were afar from Him. The two parts of the verse give these two aspects of the cross. According to the first, our transgressions, our iniquities, have received their punishment in Him. According to the second, His stripes are our moral healing- "the chastisement of our peace."

The last is an expression which needs to be considered. The word for ‘chastisement’ certainly means that, and nothing else. It is translated also in our version, ‘correction’,’discipline’, and so ‘instruction;’ and in none of these senses could it be applied to the Lord. He certainly never needed, and never could have received, chastening or correction; and a moment's thought as to the verse will show us that it is not to the Lord that it is here applied. It is "the chastisement of our peace." That last word is one which includes in its meaning the whole well-being of those as to whom it is used. His stripes are for us the restorative discipline which brings us to spiritual health- our healing, as the last clause plainly says. It is as we find our guilt borne by another, our peace made by, our sin condemned in, the sufferings of God's Holy One, that we realize the disciplinary virtue of "his stripes." Surely nowhere else has the lesson been so taught us, nowhere else is the discipline so real.

Not for peace only must the cross be known. It is the judgment of the world, the defeat of the prince of the world, the annulling of the body of sin. It is the supreme display of divine righteousness, truth, love, all the glory of God, in triumphant goodness in Him who was crucified in weakness there—"the Son of man glorified, and God glorified in him." Oh, to know more the reality of this holy discipline- "the chastisement of our peace!"- to eat more the salutary "bitter herbs" at our passover feast, all leaven put away out of our houses! What power for purification for us, as for Israel, looking upon Him whom they have pierced, and saying, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath made to meet on him the iniquity of us all."

Let us observe here- simple fact as it is- that our "own way" is our ‘iniquity’; it is our misery also, for when was misery far separate from sin? and who but utter orphans have to choose their own path through this world's maze? It is true we are outside Eden, but not even so has God left us to this. He who numbers our hairs, numbers our steps no less; and to walk in our own way is to refuse divine wisdom and love, incessantly occupied with us, and to imagine we can do better for ourselves than these.

But how often is our own way disguised for us by some seeming goodness of it, which can never take off the fatal stamp of a will in independency of God's! "Lo, I come to do thy will" was, as we well know, the characteristic of the pattern proposed to us; and there, where His own will rightly shrank from the dread cup before Him, there it was yet, "not my will, but thine, be done." What a commending of that will to us comes with the knowledge that what was before Him then was, in fact, that "Jehovah" was about to lay "on him the iniquity of us all!" And notice how the covenant name, Jehovah, has here its suited place. "Crucified through weakness," the will-less One was to be "Jehovah's arm” of power.

Servant and Savior, Servant and Savior Part 5 (53:10-12)

We are prepared now, therefore, to see where the path of the perfect Servant terminates. This is the fitting and necessary close of the prophecy, the Deuteronomic ending of this Isaian Pentateuch.

Mediator between God and man, the divine glory and the blessing of man were joined together indissolubly in His heart, as the names of the people were graven on the Urim and Thummim of the high priest's breastplate. For this double purpose He wrought, and its accomplishment was His reward. The "pleasure of Jehovah" in the salvation of His people was the fruit of the "travail of his soul."

"Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when his soul shall make a trespass-offering, he shall see a seed, he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul; he shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant turn many to righteousness, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

It was Jehovah's pleasure he undertook to fulfill, and Jehovah's pleasure was that He should be bruised. But mark well, as the explanation of it, how again comes in the covenant name. God's interest in man it is that requires this- His 'delight' (for delight, that word translated ' pleasure' is in); and was not His "delight" also, who came to fulfill this, "with the sons of men"? Thus, then, His soul bowed itself to make for them a "trespass-offering;" fittingly this aspect of His sacrificial work named here, because the trespass is the restitution offering, which repairs all injury, whether toward God or man. Thus the trespass-offering it is, the blood of which anoints the ear, and hand, and foot of the one but now a leper, to restore him to his place amongst Jehovah's people. It is the governmental offering also, satisfying the requirement of the throne of God, as the sin-offering does that of His nature. Thus He "sees a seed; he prolongs his days," becoming "last Adam," with no conditional tenure of life such as the first had. "He asked life of thee," says the psalmist, " and thou gavest it him, even length of days forever and ever." This, then, His 'seed' share, possessors of eternal life in and with Him.

He then "shall see of the travail of his soul; he shall be satisfied:" blessed satisfaction of a heart like his! His rest, the rest of a perfect love, the rest of the Mediator! What follows as the expression of this? "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant"- there His heart God-ward is seen- "shall my righteous servant turn many to righteousness,1 and he shall bear their iniquities."

Aye, atonement satisfies Him also- Him who makes it. The righteous One could not be satisfied with anything short of this.

And now He comes forth the mighty Conqueror over sin, and death, and all the power of evil, to receive His recompense from God, and enjoy the spoils of His conquest. "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong," that is, as the strong do. But where has this might been shown? and what is the field in which He has been Victor? It is the lesson for eternity, and happy those who begin to learn it now! Power in goodness; victory in suffering; the battle-field a cross: "because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." F. W. G.

Plain Papers on the Second Coming of Christ, Second Coming of Christ, Plain Papers on the: Part 10, What It Is to Him (53:11)

“He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." (Isa. 53:11)

We have dwelt a little on what the coming of Christ will be to us who believe; and what it will be to a rejecting world when He comes in judgment. We will now look a little at what it will be to Him. He has been bruised for us, yes "bruised for our iniquities." "The Lord hath laid on. him the iniquity of us all." Yes, His soul has been made an offering for sin. He bare the sins of many. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." " Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it: that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:25-27.) And all this, not only the love of Christ, precious as that is, but " Having made known unto us the mystery of his will" (the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ) cc according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself." We can thus hear the Son in the counsels of eternity saying, "Lo I come to do thy will." Thus Jesus saith to the Jews, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

Now from these most comforting scriptures, do we not see how deeply interested the Lord Jesus Christ must be in that blessed event, when the first part of the eternal purpose of God the Father shall be accomplished? the presentation of the church glorious, without spot or wrinkle.

In order, however, to enter into this joy of the Lord, the reader must be quite sure that he has come to Christ, as we see here, because given to Him of the Father. If so, He must, and will, take good care that you shall in no wise be cast out. Does He not say so? and is not that enough? Is it possible after the cross, for either His love to cease, or for Him to fail to do the Father's will? And that will is that you should not be lost, but that He should raise you up at the last day. Of that resurrection we will speak shortly. How gracious of the Lord to tell us all this, that the foundation of the blessed hope might be so sure! Do you think Christ has any uncertainty about a single soul given unto Him, whose sins He bare in His own body on the cross? Whether we think of those who have fallen asleep in Him, or those who are now alive on earth in the midst of this scene of temptation and conflict, is He afraid that He will fail to raise all in the glory given to Him? Are you a believer? Then, if you could be lost, of course He would foil to do the Father's will. Is not this impossible? Do you say, My sins come to my remembrance, and I almost sink in despair? Our sins; was He not nailed to the cross to bear them? Oh, see that holy, sinless One nailed there; and there doing the will of God in bearing our sins. Is not our Sin-bearer now crowned with glory? Yes, that same Jesus who was bruised for our iniquities, delivered for our offenses, is now at the right hand of the majesty on. high, having purged our sins; God having raised Him from the dead for

our justification. He did not fail in that vast undertaking. He could say, " I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." There can be no question of this, for God has raised Him from the dead and received Him to glory. Then to believers there can be no uncertainty. Believing God, that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification, we are thus accounted righteous before God. Never can there be a question of this in the heart of Christ. Well does He know that we are accepted in Him, One with Himself.

"What joy this must be to the heart of Christ, knowing the righteousness of His God and Father in justifying us from all things, through His own divinely perfect work! And not only this, blessed as it is, but "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." Though we are justified from all things, accounted righteous, even as He is righteous, yet for the present we have to mourn over and deplore a sinful nature, yea, to abhor ourselves often too in bitter confession. Flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; conflict too with wicked spirits in the heavenlies. And with all, in a world of tribulation, ever proving His tender care and intercession, and never failing to restore our souls.

Now pause, and think of the intense interest He has in that wondrous event so near at hand, when He shall come to receive us to Himself, and when all the present sorrow and conflict shall forever cease. How this thought sustained His heart, even beneath the very shadow of the cross! Let us hear how He speaks of it to us, and how He speaks to the Father. All was divinely certain to Him. He would have us share the same certainty. He says, u Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:1-3.) Yes, fellow believer, there is no doubt about it, He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. Did He die for your sins on the cross? Then He will come and receive you unto Himself, and shall be satisfied. Oh, if one whose sins He bore on the cross could be lost, would He be satisfied? Never, never, never. He was just about to enter that scene of travail of soul for us. Shortly lie entered Gethsemane. Oh, see Him sweating, as it were, great drops of blood! But if the prospect was so terrible, what was the deep untold reality on the cross? He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. Though we are left in this world a little while, He would have us enjoy this blessed certainty with Himself. He could not be satisfied unless all the Father gave to Him were brought to glory.

Do you hear Him thus speaking to you? "I will come again and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also." You do not think He can break His promise? No, lie must see you there, fruit of the travail of His soul. "It is the Father's will that hath sent me, that of all which lie hath given me I should lose nothing." Sweet resting-place of the heart that knows Him; Jesus' love fulfilling the Father's will in coming Himself, to receive us, fruit of the travail of His soul.

Now let us hear the breathing of His love to the Father. (John 17) Is it possible for words to express deeper longings of heart for those whom the Father hath given to Him? "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me; for they are thine." "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one as we are one." "Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." What must that coming moment then be, when these longings of the heart of Christ shall be fulfilled: when He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied? Waiting now in patience until the last soul given to Him of the Father passes from death unto life; yet oh, the joy to Him when He comes as it is written, to receive us to meet Him in the air.

Ah! this was the joy that was set before Him, as He crossed the brook Cedron, as He went into dark Gethsemane, and on to the cross. Be assured He will not fail to receive you at His coming. There is no uncertainty as to this, for "We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Did you ever notice what a change will take place in heaven when the desire of the Lord's heart is thus granted, and He sees the travail of His soul so far answered, when we are caught up to be forever with Him? When the redeemed take their seats, clothed in white raiment, and crowned with gold, as seen under the figure of the four and twenty elders; then behold the Lamb as it had been slain takes His place in the midst of the throne. (Rev. 4; 5) The angelic myriads give place to the redeemed to occupy the inner circle. Yes, the thousands of thousands stand round about the throne and the crowned elders. What a change this is in heaven! Oh, the surpassingness of this grace! Think of this redeemed multitude of thieves, harlots, drunkards, and sinners of deepest dye, washed in the blood of the Lamb, clothed and crowned. Is not this the first time we hear of singing in heaven? Oh, to join that mighty roll of swelling song, that new song of further redemption-glories still to come. And hark! the thousands of thousands of angels around, saying with a loud noise, " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. (Rev. 5:12.) And will He see you there? And will He be satisfied then, but not till then, for the travail His soul endured for you? Now, what a scene this will be for that same Jesus, who bare our sins amid the darkness and the forsaking of God, in judgment on our iniquities on the cross! But oh, how much to follow; and this is the burthen of the new song. Yes, He is worthy of the sealed number of Israel; the number also that no man can number of the vast multitude that shall be saved through millennial days; vast numbers to be saved and washed in the blood of the Lamb after the church has been completed, and forever with the Lord, And all those, too, who shall be slain for the testimony of Jesus during the times of tribulation from the taking of the church to His coming in judgment to reign. (Rev. 6-19) Not one of these shall be lost; "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." Nothing can prevent this blessed event taking place. Even from those scenes of unparalleled wickedness, He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.

And now a word as to the great millennial exhibition, when the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ shall show His workmanship,, u Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife," " and he showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone, most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." This reminds us of a visit to a large gold, and silver, and precious stone establishment on the Continent. The workshops were similar to those where common metals are worked: the melting in the furnace, the rolling, the stamping, and all the various branches. Though these precious metals and stones were of great value, yet they appeared to get rough handling in some parts of the operations. One thing was however striking, the great care, that, of all committed to the workmen, nothing should be lost. And you would not have thought that the value the proprietor set upon one little stone was three hundred pounds. Well, after a time came the exhibition, when every article in our friend's case was pronounced a perfect gem. You would not have thought if you had seen some of these, as they had been dipped in aquafortis, and other

operations which we need not describe, what a pleasure it would be at last to the owner to see them in all their polish and perfection!

What will it be when our blessed Lord shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied! We might look at some of His precious stones now. Few think of the value He sets on that clear soul toiling there at her washing, that one in the cellar, another in the attic, that one passing through sore temptation. And oh, what care, that of all the Father had given to Him, nothing should be lost! Oh, blessed Lord, haste the day of thy great exhibition, when every redeemed saint shall be a perfect gem to thy eternal praise! Let also the new heaven and the new earth appear, then shalt Thou see of the travail of Thy soul, and shall be satisfied. Even so Lord Jesus.—Amen.

Simple Testimony: Volume 20, Beauty of the Lord., The (53:2)

“When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him."—Isa. Eli. 2.

BLINDED by the god of this world, the Sun might shine in all its splendor, we saw it not, nor cared. We turned everyone to his own way, and wandered on in the darkness until God, in His wonderful grace, let a little ray of light in, and opened the blind eyes to show us where we were going, and the awful danger we were in. And then the light did more, it showed us what we were; nothing but a hideous ruin, nothing for God, nothing but evil, incurably bad. We might have been overwhelmed and in despair at such a sight, but the light revealed yet more, it showed us Jesus—it shone in His face, and now to us, who once saw no beauty in Him, "He is the chiefest among ten thousand... yea, He is altogether lovely." Then may we have that purpose of heart expressed in these words:— "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after... to behold the beauty of the Lord.”

(Psa. 27:4.)

Whatever is our object in life, that will characterize us, it will color our thoughts, our words, and our ways. If this is then our object, the one thing we set before us, "to behold the beauty of the Lord," will it not be reflected in us in some small measure?

“Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.”

(Psa. 90:17.)

Just in so much as we are occupied with Christ where He is, "beholding the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). The result will be that others will see it, just as the children of Israel saw the reflection of the partial glory in the face of Moses.

“Thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through My comeliness, which I put upon thee, saith the Lord God.”

(Ezek. 16:14.)

We are left here on earth to show forth the virtues of Him who hath called us (1 Peter 2:9). But how can this be so if we are absorbed with a hundred and one things in which Christ has no place? Oh, may we be occupied with the One who alone can fill and satisfy our hearts, for His own sake; His beauty filling our gaze; the result will come out in us, though we shall not be thinking of that. And then, more wonderful still, God's eye will rest on that which is well pleasing to Him in us.

“So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty.”

(Psa. 45:11.)

Nothing but what is of Christ in us can be acceptable to God. We are in Christ before Him "accepted in the Beloved." And now His desire, expressed by the apostle Paul, is to see "Christ formed in us." Do we want to be here for God? Do we earnestly desire that He should find pleasure in us? Let us remember that nothing but Christ will do. God has found perfect satisfaction in His well-beloved Son, and is going to fill heaven with nothing but what is perfectly like Him. He has predestinated us to be conformed to His image; then may we seek to be more so even now. Gazing more and more upon His beauty, while it ever increases in our sight, we shall find all other sights eclipsed, fading into their worthless, temporal insignificance, while our longing desire will be for the moment when at last we shall see Him face to face, and be with Him and like Him forever.

“Oh, fix our earnest gazeSo wholly, Lord, on Thee,That with Thy beauty occupiedWe elsewhere none may see!"

W.

Echoes of Grace: 1975, Isaiah 53, Verse 6 (53:6)

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Notice that this verse begins with ALL and ends with ALL. An anxious soul (one of thousands) was directed to this verse and found peace with God. Afterward he said, "I bent low down at the first all, I stood up straight and came out at the last."

At the first all he acknowledged his deep need. At the second all he found how fully his need has been met in the cross of Christ.

Are you one of that happy company who has found salvation through the atoning work which took place on the cross of Calvary?

Words of Faith: Volume 1, Servant and Savior: Introduction (52:13-15)

SA 52:13-53:12{The Pentateuch-the object of the enemy's attack in the present day- more and more presents itself to me as the basis of all scripture. Even in its very form I do not doubt it to be so. Take, for instance, the New Testament, its twenty-seven books fall naturally into five divisions, which not only correspond in number with the five books of Moses, but also in a much more noteworthy manner, each to each in matter or line of thought. Thus if Genesis gives the origin and beginning of creation in its present state, the Gospels give us that which the apostle John would recall us to as another "beginning," brighter and better far, of a new creation, in Him who is second Man and last Adam. If Exodus tells the story of redemption from Egyptian bondage, the book of Acts shows us the church brought out from Jewish "bondage, under the elements of the world." If Leviticus unfolds to priests in the sanctuary the power and value of the various sacrifices with which they come to God, the epistles of Paul establish us before God in all the value of that one Sacrifice which, taking the place of all of these, brings us, as they could not, really to Him. If Numbers gives us the order and provision for the camp in the wilderness, and how God brings through, to the glory of His name, a people continually failing under every proof, the other epistles furnish us for that path through the wilderness of this world, of which Israel's journey is but the figure. While, lastly, if Deuteronomy present those governmental ways of God, according to which a blessing or a curse follows the choice of the way which leads to either, the book of Revelation, as a perfect Deuteronomy, traces those ways by which the church or the world reaches the final consummation the end nowhere else in scripture so fully detailed.

This by the way; I cannot dwell upon it now: though I may say that the whole canon of scripture is, as I believe, a Pentateuch of Pentateuchs, four of which therefore belong to the Old Testament: the first consisting of the books of Moses; the second, of the rest of the historical books; the third, of the five psalm-like books, the utterances, under divine inspiration, of the human heart in its exercises, its sorrows, and its joys; the fourth, of the prophetic books, in which God's voice as it were answers man's voice.

I do not dwell upon this further now; and speak of it indeed mainly to emphasize the fact, that here again, in these wonderful words with which we are all familiar, we have still another Pentateuch. The passage begins of course, as I have begun it, with the 13th verse of the 52nd chapter, and goes down to the end of the 53rd, thus embracing fifteen verses, and these divide into five sections of three verses each, stamping the whole of it thus with the significant numbers 3 and 5. All are probably aware (among those who read this) that scripture numbers have significance, and that a uniform significance prevails throughout it. Three is the divine number, the number of the divine fullness-of the Trinity. It is the number which speaks of divine manifestation also; for only as Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) is God fully manifest indeed. Five, on the other hand, the number significant of weakness, as many have well shown, is on that very account the human number, taken it may be from the number of those senses by which man is in relation with the scene in which he is placed. These two numbers then characterize this prophecy as the story of Him in whom bodily all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt, and who in this way alone was fitted to be, what alone HE was,-"God manifest in the flesh."

Again, it is not merely because of its five divisions that I call this a Pentateuch, it is because each of these divisions takes up in some way the theme of one of the books of Moses, and in the same order also. The full proof of this we shall have as we take them up in detail; nevertheless, it may be glanced at here, since this is no mere curious resemblance, but one which gives us the main features of the picture before us; and this is the use indeed of all such matters, to be helps to the spiritual apprehension of what might otherwise escape us. I trust, we shall find this true in a very marked way here.

Take then the first three verses, and you will easily discern the voice of One who, as in creation at first, is the Moulder and Fashioner of all things; and who can thus speak confidently from the beginning of what the end shall be. It is He who speaks here of His Servant, He who decrees the exaltation of the One self-humbled to that unequaled suffering by which His face is so marred more than any man's, and His form more than the sons of men; He who presides, as we may say, at the blessed work of redemption as at that of creation; though the actual Redeemer, as the actual Creator, is the Word now made flesh.

In the second section (Isa. 53:1-3) the speaker changes. It is now the testimony to Him who is the "power" or "arm of Jehovah," and notice that as "the Almighty" is the characteristic divine title in Genesis, so it is in Exodus that God takes up and redeems His people according to the significance of His name Jehovah. "Jehovah's arm " is thus the power of God in redemption, and this is the prophet's special testimony, rejected as he sees, by besotted man

In the third section (Isa. 53:4-6) we come, as in the opening of Leviticus, to the sacrificial character of those sufferings so misreckoned by unbelief. It scarcely needs to insist on the correspondence here.

The fourth section (Isa. 53:7-9) exhibits Him under the pressure of evil, tested by all He passed through as none other ever was: the world to Him a wilderness beyond that of which the book of Numbers gives us the history. But Israel's testing brought out with them the innate evil; with Him it brought out naught but the perfection which is His.

Finally, the last verses (Isa. 53:10-12) give us in perfect Deuteronomic sequence, the way and the end: the end as blessed as the way was full of unexampled sorrow "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.... the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand: He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." Let us now look at these sections more in detail. F. W. G.

(To be continued, the Lord willing.)

The Gospel Messenger: Volume 19, "Who Hath Believed Our Report?" (52:7,13-15)

(Read Isaiah 52:7, 13, 14, 15; 53:1-12.)

THERE was a man once seated in a chariot crossing a sandy desert, and as he went, reading Isaiah 4, he was startled as a voice rang into his ears, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” That was the eunuch of Acts 8, and the man who spoke to him was Philip, the only man that I know of in Scripture who is called an evangelist. I should like to be an evangelist, above all things under the sun, because the Scripture above quoted gives us God’s estimate of an evangelist, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation.”

The seventh verse of Isaiah 52 closes, you notice, with “that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.” We cannot say that yet—the day is not come for Jerusalem to hear the good tidings, and God does not reign in Zion yet. I wonder whether He reigns in your heart. Has the One of whom this wonderful Scripture speaks got the right place in your heart yet? Of whom does it speak you may say. Philip told the eunuch that it was Jesus. This man had gone a thousand miles—all the way from Abyssinia—to the ordered condition of religion at Jerusalem, but he did not find peace there. He found formalism and ritual in abundance, but that did not meet the need of his soul. You too, my reader, will not find rest in creeds, kirks, congregations, or ritual of any kind. Life, rest, peace, and joy are wrapped up in the Person of the living Man, who was once dead, but now is at God’s right hand.

I can quite understand the eunuch saying as he read Isaiah 53, “Of whom speaketh the prophet this of himself, or of some other man?” The Spirit of God opened Philip’s mouth and furnished the answer, as he preached unto him Jesus. Everything is wrapped up in Jesus; if you have not got Him, you may be what you like, bear what name you like, but you are still a sinner on the road to an eternal hell. You say, “That is plain speaking”—yes, and that is what men need today. Am I going to address you as a saint if you are not one? That would be wrong and unkind to you. But indeed I have glad tidings for you. These are lovely words, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.” That is the kind of publishing business I like to be a partner in—publishing salvation, You say, “What do you mean by that?” Telling everybody that there is salvation for them in Christ. If you have not got it, you need it, and thank God, what you need His love furnishes in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now get hold of that, I pray you, for it is only in Him.

This remarkable seventh verse of Isaiah 52 Paul quotes in Romans 10, where he says, “My heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (vs. 1). He then unfolds the way of salvation: “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (vs. 9). God has a way of saving man, and you cannot be saved except in God’s way, i.e., believing in your heart, and confessing with your mouth. Why the heart? Because I get right with God in my heart. Not my mind—no, it is in the affections. And how do I get right with man? With my mouth. If I have not confessed before men it is no use saying I believe, for I am a liar. The apostle puts the two together, and then he goes on to say, “For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (vers. 11-13). You turn to the Lord, and you will be saved. There is only one way of getting saved, and that is by turning to the Lord. And when you have turned to the Lord you will confess Him. People generally do not know that they are lost, and that Christ came to sea and cave the lost. The reason you have not yet known salvation is that you have never cared to hear, been prepared to own, or been driven to the point of owning—I am a downright lost sinner.

Paul says, “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? (You would not call upon a person in whose existence you did not believe.) And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” (vers. 13, 14). God sends the preacher, and what does he preach? Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch; he heard, turned to the Lord, and was saved. I should like you to do the very same just now.

Notice now the quotation: “It is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (vers. 15). Paul applies, in the energy and power of the Spirit of God, this lovely Old Testament scripture. Oh that you, my reader, may receive the application. What does God send to you? Peace. On what ground? Your doings? No; they are deadly, they will bring you into judgment. You may get peace through the life and death of Another. The tale of Jesus and His love, His atoning death and glorious resurrection, are glad tidings and good news for weary, sin-burdened, self-condemned men. The question is, who will believe this news, for Paul adds, “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?” (vers. 16), Now I am going to ask you, Have you believed the report? If not, let me give you the report once more, and if you believe it you will say, like the Queen of Sheba, “The half was not told me:”

What I have found in Jesus is infinitely better than what was told me. The report comes to you in your condition of darkness and distance, as a sinner before God, in which you have lived to this very hour. The report is of Jesus, of His love, His grace, and the atoning efficacy of His death. If that report affects and moves your heart, you will come to His feet, you will get into contact with Him, and you will get what the eunuch got—salvation on the spot. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (vs. 17). I have great faith in God’s Word, hence I love to face a company of people if I can only bring before them God’s Word, for the entrance of His Word brings light, and you will never forget it.

Now look at Isaiah 53, and see the importance of listening to God’s testimony. The end of chapter 53 is intimately connected with chapter 53. I want you to notice that there are two speakers—Jehovah, and the voice of a believing company, a company that have had their eyes opened—Israel really. It is the voice of Jehovah on the one hand, and Israel on the other, but they are both talking of His servant.

The dialog in these beautiful chapters begins with one of the ringing “Beholds” that calls attention—it is God speaking of His blessed Son. “Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high” (52:13). That is what the Holy Ghost is doing today. God has exalted Him, and the Holy Ghost, in the Christians upon earth, is extolling Him. Then God describes what was to take place, “As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.” Why were they astonished? Men could not understand Jesus. There never was anybody in this world who had outwardly so little of the expressed favor of God as He. Born in one man’s stable, nailed to another man’s cross, and buried in a third man’s tomb, He, who made everything, had not a penny to call His own. If it was a question of paying the tribute money He must needs say, “Show me a penny.” Why? Because He did not possess one. The Son of God was a penniless stranger in the world that He had made.

Men were very astonished when they saw Him down here in lowly grace; they shall be yet more astonished when they see Him in glory. The Man that died on Calvary's cross, crowned with thorns, is yet to wield the scepter of the whole world, and from pole to pole shall His name be acknowledged, for to Him shall every knee bow, and every tongue confess. God, speaking in Isaiah 45:23, affirms this of Jesus as God, but what is His due as God shall be rendered to Him as Man, and because He has been the humbled man. "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11). Every knee shall bow to Him, angelic beings, men, and demons shall all, by-and-by, bow at the name of Jesus. Did you hear what Paul said, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved"? If I were you I would anticipate that day, and confess Him now.

Then the Spirit of God leads the prophet to put this question, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (53:1). That is a very serious question. Paul said, "They have not all obeyed the gospel." Are your sins forgiven? If not, you have not obeyed the gospel, for to all believers the arm of the Lord is revealed, and if He gets you in His arm, there is no fear of you. It is an arm of salvation. "Who hath believed our report?" says God's Spirit. Who has doubted it? might also be said. There are plenty of doubters. Perhaps you have been a doubter—religious, but unsaved; respectable, but unpardoned; having a name to live all this time, and yet all the while dead in sins. Unsaved reader, it is high time you were aroused.

"To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" is the second query of the prophet. I will tell you—to the people whose voices are heard in the next five verses of Isaiah 53. These verses reveal the feelings of a certain company of people, who unmistakably are believers. They describe what once was their condition, and how they were delivered from it. "He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (ver. 2). This is the language of those who had been unbelievers in days gone by, and been indifferent to Christ. They are describing what were their thoughts and feelings when they were in darkness. You say, That is rather like me. Yes, the words, "And when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him," describe your past. I have no doubt that a yellow-backed novel has more interest for you than Christ, and if I were to draw near and talk to you about Christ in the middle of your novel, you would feel very uncomfortable, and wish I would leave you alone. The man of the world does not see beauty in Christ. The man that loves money sees beauty in it, but not in Christ. You have only to carry Christ into the world, and you 'will soon find out what it thinks of Him. If you are having a gospel meeting in the open air, you may be asked by a policeman to move to another spot. He does not interfere with the German hand, however. The world likes music, but not Christ. There is no beauty in Jesus to any of us at first, but by-and-by, when God comes and works in your soul, and you see you are a sinner in His sight with a lost eternity before you, things begin to alter, and then you do desire Him.

But our chapter continues: "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (vs. 3). Who can deny it? "A man of sorrows"—that is what Jesus was. Now why and to what end was He such?

Have you a grief? Many, you may reply. Have you learned how to turn to Jesus in them? Have you had the support of His arm, have you learned the love of His heart? Good for you is it if you have. But for long we all "hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not," for then we had not learned that "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." What that exactly means the Spirit of God tells us in the Gospels, where we read:— "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8:16, 17). Notice there is no mention of sins in these verses. He never bore sins in His life— in His earthly pathway—till He was on the cross, and not even then till the sixth hour. It was on the cross He bore our sins, and on the cross He died for sinners, and was cast off by God for sin. During His life He bore the sorrows of others, and their sins in His death. He took up all my sorrows in His life, that He might sympathies; and then in His death He bore all my sins, that He might save me. Blessed Jesus! What a Saviour! Who would not have Him? Who would go on longer without Him? You are never right till you get to Him, and know Him.

So blind and perverse were Israel that they thought the sorrows He carried in His spirit were from God's hand, saying, "Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (vers. 4). No, He was bearing the sorrow of the human heart that He might sympathize with those who were in sorrow; hence now He is able to succor (Heb. 2:18), to sympathize (Heb. 4:15), and to save to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25).

And now the question of sin is touched on as the speakers say: — "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (vs. 5). All this involves sin-bearing. Bid not we hear a moment ago, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him.... that publisheth peace"? How could God send out people to preach peace if peace had not been made? Who made it? Christ! You never could make it, for you cannot meet God's claims. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him," that is how peace with God was made.

"And with his stripes we are healed," not hope to be healed. That may do for you it did not do for Isaiah, or for Peter. Hear what he says as he quotes this very Scripture: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree... by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pet. 2:24). This is not the healing of the body, but the healing of the soul, Matthew speaks of the healing of the body, Peter of the healing of the soul. The terrible wounds sin has made, the blood of Jesus alone can heal. The atoning death of the Saviour, meeting all God's claims, alone can make peace, "and with his stripes we are healed," is the glorious result. How much the Spirit of God makes of Jesus, and how He loves to extol Him. Is He not worthy of your confidence?

And now particularly notice the next allegation beginning with "all," and closing with "all." "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (vs. 6). I remember a man once telling me that after long soul-exercise and difficulty he got deliverance through this verse. Said he, "I got into one end of a verse of Scripture with all my sins on me, and I got out at the other end with them all gone. 'All we like sheep have gone astray,' I saw, took me in with all my sins, and 'the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all,' showed me that Jesus had borne them all and put them all away." That man was simple. You had better imitate him. He took God at His word. "Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," is a wonderful statement. Many souls have been brought into peace by understanding verse 6. May you be another, reader.

The speakers in verse 2 to 6 tell us much about Jesus, and of the blessed effect of the work He did, and in verses 7, 8, and 9 Jehovah again speaks of the One who has done the work. He affirms, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.” That was the verse which arrested the eunuch. Then follows, “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living.” If He be cut off, if He die, who will declare His generation. The Spirit of God has come down and brought light, liberty, and joy to the hearts of countless thousands, and they are busy declaring His generation. He is no more dead, He is alive. “For the transgression of my people was he stricken,” says God, telling us that His death was atoning, and though men “appointed his grave with the wicked, yet he was with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth” (vs. 9) (N.T.). You will remember that when the blessed Lord had died, Joseph begged His body, and buried it in a new tomb, “wherein never man before was laid.” Thus Scripture was fulfilled. I have no doubt the Jews thought they would cast the body of the blessed Lord into the common malefactors’ grave. But God said, No, “He shall be with the rich in his death” and the moment He was dead, the man who had been halfhearted before, one who was a disciple secretly for fear of the Jews, went in boldly and craved the body of Jesus, and put Him in his own new tomb.

God has been very careful to ten us thrice over that His Son was laid in “a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid” (see Matthew 27:60; Luke 23:53; John 19:41), and for this reason. We read in 2 Kings 13 that they were burying a man, when a hand of Moabites came in sight, “and they cast the man into the sepulcher of Elisha; and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha he revived, and stood up on his feet” (vs. 21). That is what happened then, and if God had not arranged and declared that Jesus was put into a “new tomb,” the devil was quite clever enough to have told the Jews to say, when He rose from the dead, that His body had touched the bones of some prophet, and that was nothing new. It was love that rolled a stone to the door of His sepulcher, but it was fear that sealed it and set a guard round it to keep Him in. Vain hope! When they opened it He was gone. Thank God for a risen, victorious Saviour. Christianity is inaugurated by an empty tomb—death annulled, a victory won, and the Victor risen, and ascended to God’s right hand.

In the tenth verse of our chapter Israel’s voice is again heard, saying— “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shit make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed— (yes, there shall be wondrous fruit of all his sorrow) he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.” And then God speaks once more, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant (not “justify many,” but) instruct the many in righteousness.” That was the ministry of His life— He preached righteousness in the great congregation (see Psa. 40:9). The Sermon on the Mount is the expression of this, i.e. instruction in righteousness. “And he shall bear their iniquities.” That was his death. In His life He ministered the truth; and in His death He atoned for our iniquities. Now the Spirit of God has come and told us that the Saviour who thus lived and died is at God’s right hand, after having died for sins and for sinners. Thus we get righteousness proclaimed in His life, and sin put away by His death.

Further we read in verse 12, “He bare the sin of many”—how many? I do not know, but I know I am one of them. Will that “many” let you in? If He does not bear your sin and put it away, you will bear it, and never put it away. If He has not borne those sins of yours He never will do it, because He will not die again. Have you ever in faith stood at the cross, where the Son of God died, crowned with thorns? Can you not detach yourself from the turmoil of the world sufficiently long to listen to His words, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do? “There it was that He” made intercession for the transgressors.” What a Saviour! “who hath believed our report?” Have you? See to it before you put your head on your pillow tonight, that you believe God’s report of His Son. Then will the arm of the Lord be revealed to you, and you will say, “He has saved me.”

W. T. P. W.

Servant and Savior, Servant and Savior Part 1 (52:13-15)

"Behold, my servant shall act wisely: he is exalted, and raised up, and become very high."

The word "servant " is a very characteristic word in this latter part of Isaiah. First it is Israel that is God's servant (Isa. 41:8): "But thou, Israel, art my servant,.... whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away." But while in the purpose of sovereign grace this thought still abides, it is one which Israel as a nation has not yet fulfilled; and in Isa. 49 we find another in this place, called even by this name of Israel, who does not fail, and whose work is owned of God. We do not need to dwell upon this substitution, important as it is in its own place; but His work is there defined "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth."

Thus the Person before us in our present chapter is not introduced here abruptly for the first time. He is the Servant-Savior, the Servant whose work is salvation; but who is in it above all else Jehovah's Servant,—the only one among men who filled perfectly that blessed place. And with this was connected the wisdom He displayed. His was the perfectly clear eye undimmed by any veil of self-interest; the single eye which made the whole body to be full of light. Wisdom is not an attribute of mere intellect. The eyes are in the heart, as Eph. 1:18 really says.

This characterizes His path then: it is the path of true service,—thus of clear-sighted wisdom; a path which ends in exaltation necessarily, because "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." He then "is exalted and raised up, and become very high." It is what Phil. 2 speaks of, admonishing us to have the mind that was in Christ Jesus. What an effectual rebuke to pride and self-seeking this exaltation of the lowliest! And what an incentive for us to the path of obedience which we had forsaken, this free choice of it by Him who owed none! And what a place that glory that awaits us, where the highest are they who realize best the blessedness of service, and highest of all is He who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many!

"As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred, more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men."

The unequaled sorrow is revealed here in its effects, the outward signs which only were before the eyes of beholders. The depths were open to God alone, indicated to faith indeed in one pregnant word, which unbelief would needs misconstrue. Even in the Gospels, which give us the history of those sufferings, the veil of reserve is maintained; and that cry, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" recorded without comment. Faith, taking this up reverently, may be led further to where this cry is the opening of a Davidic psalm, and find here and thus a prophecy of the Spirit of God in which all that may be told is told: while unbelief finds David only, and what is more than he is only rhapsody. It is the same Christ, as we find dumb before His enemies, revealing Himself in the circle of His friends. It is the same as when He spake in parables to those who had not ears to hear. We acquiesce fully in this reserve, which nevertheless invites to intimacy those who desire intimacy. In this same way is (more or less) all scripture written, not that formalists may have an indisputable creed, but "that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

But what sorrow this that could thus mar the human form of the Man of sorrows! Even as He speaks of the astonishment of the beholders, the divine speaker turns, as His heart turns, towards Him who fills this place of humiliation, and breaks the unity of the sentence with an abrupt address to Him -"As many were astonished at thee.” Then He returns to announce to men, who are to receive it, the result of this unparalleled suffering:-

"So shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them they shall see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider."

Strange news, these gospel-news! and with strange power! What all the tomes of philosophers have never done has been accomplished for low and high, for Greek and barbarian, by the simple power of the cross alone. The heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience, the body washed with pure water. That which was lacking in all human wisdom, in Christ, the wisdom of God is found: "even righteousness and sanctification and redemption." Man's need met, his soul satisfied, and satisfied with God, thus in unspeakable love and grace revealed to him in Christ; his heart is cleansed and his life changed. All other greatness bows its head in presence of the cross, and yet shall every tongue confess, as to the Crucified One, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Thus then, in this introductory section, God as sovereign in counsel declares His purpose concerning His elect, that "good pleasure of Jehovah" which was to prosper in the hands to which He could fearlessly commit it, assured of the result. "I have laid help upon one that is mighty," He says, "I know him; I can answer for him." Just so, in the presence of the multitudes at John's baptism, in which He had just pledged Himself to this very work, heaven is opened, and the Father's voice proclaims His Son, the object of His good pleasure; and the descending Spirit hastens to give Him up, after forty days of fasting in a wilderness, to let the devil sift Him as he may. Yes, God can rest all, whether for man's salvation or His own glory, with perfect satisfaction and delight, upon Him.

But where is this mighty One? how is this might displayed? He who in heaven looked as he was bidden for the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," saw in his wonder a "Lamb as it had been slain." In the conflict of good with evil, not force avails but good; and the cross was such a battle-ground, when one "crucified through weakness" becomes the power of God. At the cross power was upon the side of evil: it was as the Lord told the Jews "their hour and the power of darkness." On His part there was none: he who used the sword was only rebuked for it; of the legions of angels He might have had, none stirred on His behalf. The forces of evil are free: He is bound, helpless, unresisting. Then as His disjointed frame hangs on the accursed tree, the night which falls over all proclaims God the Source of light to be withdrawn. He is left alone, unsuccored, in the awful distress of that abandonment, to meet the full flood of evil at its height.

And if the darkness passed, and He were heard "from the horns of the unicorns," crying "with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him out of death," it was, as the apostle says, "for his piety." He was heard winning back life and light- eternal blessedness- out of the jaws of death and hades. It was the victory of goodness, greater immeasurably than of power, here with all power arrayed against it.

This, then, is the divine plan, the counsel of God, which the following sections open out in detail. In the next the speaker changes; and henceforth the prophet speaks in his own person, but connecting himself with the "election of grace" in Israel, the believing remnant of a future-day.

Israel's Future, Israel's Future: No. 2 (51:3)

How strange that we have not more clearly understood the words of God in the prophets. He cannot forget or break His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. "For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places: and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord. (Isa. 2:3.) Thus, when we believe God means just what He says, every chapter and every verse beams with light.

That will be a wonderful moment when His earthly people shall see the wounds in His hands, and discover, to their utter amazement, that He whom they rejected is indeed their Messiah. They will say, " Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. Bat he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." (Isa. 53:4.) Yea, the whole chapter describes the astonishment of Israel, when they see their once crucified Jesus—Savior-Messiah. And this shall be " When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion." (Chap. 59:20.) What a day for Israel will that be; and what a day it is to a sin-burdened soul, when the enemy comes in like a flood, and our sins seem as if they would overwhelm the soul in everlasting despair. To us by faith the Spirit reveals the amazing fact, that He who made the heavens and the earth has been bruised for our iniquities, and raised again for our justification; and this gives peace and rest to our souls by faith. To Israel it will be by sight; they will see the One who bare their sins, the Redeemer come to Zion. What a discovery that will be! You may see what a spirit of grace and supplication God will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced. (See Zech. 12:10.) Do we believe this? The Jews will not believe it, may be, until the very moment they see Him. But is not this as true as that He was crucified for that nation?

If we understand the heavenly calling and hope of the church of God, we shall see that these Old Testament promises must refer to Israel, as they plainly say, and not to the church; and also that they must be yet future. " Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness." The following verses also prove this is literal Israel; for the Lord shall bring them " out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land." (Jer. 23:5-8.)

Surely the future reign of Messiah is as certain as His past death, though Jerusalem shall, as foretold by the Lord, be trodden under foot, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. " Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for 10, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid." (Jer. 30:10.) Yea, the Holy Spirit has been pleased to give chapter after chapter of promises to Israel of unconditional, sovereign blessing. Their very obedience flowed from the sovereign will of God, just as the first covenant was the test of their obedience, and therefore became proof of their guilt.

" Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them saith the Lord; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.....

For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more." (Jer. 31:31-34.) " Behold, I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them.... and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart, and one way," &c. (Chap, 31:37-42.) Thus their future blessing and obedience depends on the faithfulness of God. Precious thought! He can never fail. What marvelous grace, after centuries of unbelief and rejection of Messiah! Do notice the repeated assurances of Jehovah. "I will." "And I will cause the captivity of Judah, and the captivity of Israel, to return.... And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities," &c. (Chap, 33:7-11.) " Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.....In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely." (Chap, 30:14-17.) The Lord? then, enters into the most solemn engagements to fulfill all these promises to Israel. Yet modern tradition—really unbelief -denies it all.

Now read Eze. 36:22-36. How entirely, in every particular, is Israel's future restoration and blessing of God! Almost every sentence expresses the unconditional purpose and assurance of God. "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.....A new heart also will I give you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh..... And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes" &c, &c.

What a revelation of God! What absolute security and assurance of Israel's future blessing; with a new nature, born of God, cleansed by God, and the Holy Spirit given unto them. What a contrast is all this with man under law!

In chapter 37 all seems to be lost, and the nation is described under the figure of a valley full of dry bones. But when God shall put His Holy Spirit in them, they shall live. Just as God now quickens a sinner dead in trespasses and sins, and he lives; so then will God quicken Israel nationally. The explanation of this vision of dry bones is this: " Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms, any more at all." And repeated assurances are given to the end of the chapter. Does it not become us to believe every word that God hath spoken thus by His prophets? If we allow Satan to suggest that God will not faithfully fulfill every word to Israel, how, then, can we be sure of our eternal redemption? Does it not rest solely on what God hath spoken? Often we find this very effect of unbelief—those who deny the certainty of God's promises to Israel, seldom, if ever, enjoy the certainty of their own eternal redemption. We assure you, beloved reader, the word of God becomes another book when we implicitly believe it, because it is God speaking to us. We shall find a very striking subject revealed to us in Eze. 38-39; the coming up and the destruction of the last great enemy of Israel. There can be no question, also, that this enemy brings up the nations now covered by the Russian empire, and indicates others where that empire is spreading. It is also to be remarked that when this prophecy was given, and for many centuries after, there was no empire covering these countries. It has been pointed out by Hebrew scholars that the ancient translation of the Septuagint is correct. a Son of man, set thy face against Gog, and the land of Magog, Rhos, prince of Mesock and Thobel," &c. Thus Rhos, or Russia, in modern language, the prince of Moscow and Tobolsk, with Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya, and all the northern nations under that empire, will come against Israel. They come like a storm, a cloud to cover the land. These vast armies, such as the world probably never saw gathered together before, shall fall, and be destroyed by mutual slaughter on the mountains of Israel. God says, " I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood: and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hail-stones, fire and brimstone." The implements of war will serve seven years for fuel, and seven months will it take Israel to bury the dead. For a full description of the destruction and burial of the vast host, we should have to quote both these entire chapters. Thus the Eastern Question will never be ended until God has gathered Israel from all nations, and destroyed the power of their great enemy—Russia- on the mountains of the land of Israel. All this, however, must not be confounded with the great tribulation during the days foretold of this time of the end, the short period when the terrible Roman empire is restored, as described in the books of Daniel and the Revelation.

There is no thought, in a single text of scripture, that Israel as a nation will be blest and restored by the belief of the gospel. We shall find, in our next paper, that the glorious kingdom of God on earth will be assuredly introduced by terrible judgments. God will save them, not because they have believed, but when altogether shut up in unbelief, in the riches of His grace He will save them as objects of mercy alone. (Rom. 11:32.) " O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

Is it not even so to you, beloved reader, if saved? Has not God taken you up as an object of mercy, even when you were in ignorance and unbelief? Has He not given you the higher—yea, the highest glory, in pure, unspeakable grace? Oh, think of the glory of that Holy One at the

right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. Does He not say, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory"? Nay, even more, He says, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." (John 17) Beloved fellow-believer, is not this unspeakable grace?

Christian Friend: Volume 12, Acceptable Time, An (49:8)

All things which the Lord doeth are known from eternity. (See Acts 15 RV) He is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. If He unfolds to us His way, of which He is the Beginning, in Genesis; He also is shown to be the End of it in Revelation. Moreover, one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. One is led to the remembrance of these scriptures in meditating on such a passage as the one before us. In the first three verses of the chapter, Christ, by the Spirit of prophecy, takes His place as in the midst of Israel, and states what Jehovah's purpose was as to them: "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." But by the same Spirit He declares, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain." This was the result of His seeking fruit on the fig tree of Israel during the three years of His ministry. Nor did the further digging about it and dunging it avail (Luke 13:7,8); for Israel was not gathered, as His words in verse 34 testify: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen cloth gather her brood under her wings, and, ye would not!" Still He could say, "Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my reward" (margin, see also Revised Version) "with my God." And what a reward it was! He will yet, as Jehovah's Servant, raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel; but that—alone were a light thing. He is given for a light to the Gentiles, that He may be Jehovah's salvation unto the end of the earth.

Here we may pause to consider what had to take place ere this could be accomplished. He, the One whom man despiseth, whom the nation abhorreth, must take the place of rejection and death. We learn this from His reply to Philip, when the Greeks came and "desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus." Then the truth is announced: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth mini fruit." Jesus must die and rise again. In the days of His flesh, He offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in. that He feared. But there was a moment when He was not only despised and rejected of men, but forsaken of God; when He could not say, "As for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time" (Psalms 69:13); when His utterance was, "I cry, but thou hearest not." This moment of unutterable woe must be passed through, and it was passed through in atonement for our sins; and then He was heard from the horns of the unicorns. He who in grace gave Himself up to die, and in dying bore the holy judgment of God, could not be delivered from all the sorrow and evil that pressed upon Him until, transfixed upon the cross, that judgment had been endured; then He who was crucified in weakness was raised by the power of God. Hence Jehovah can now say to Him in resurrection, "In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee." Jesus has Himself been heard out of the depths, and succored on the ground of full atonement made. But there is yet more; for Jehovah adds, "I will preserve thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth" (or the land), "and to cause to inherit the desolate heritages." Thus, a flood-tide of blessing will be poured out to the nation that rejected Him. Jesus is preserved, treasured up in the heavens now, awaiting the moment of the in-gathering of Israel.

But let me ask the reader, what is it that comes in between the paragraphs of verse 8—between Christ's being heard in an acceptable time, and then given for a covenant of the people (Israel)? Cannot we tell of the deep purposes of love which lay hidden in the close of the first paragraph, and now which are unfolded in Him who is preserved in the heavens? 2 Corinthians 6:2 tells us that "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Who among Old Testament saints, that read of Messiah's being personally heard in an accepted time and succored in a day of salvation, and dimly saw that Israel's coming forth from the north and west, and from the land of Sini, depended upon it, could have known that there would be a people who would be accepted in His acceptance, who would be saved in His own salvation from out of death and judgment, who would be able to say that by His resurrection they were risen with Him? And not only so; but now that He is treasured in the heavens, they too are kept as in Him. "Because I live, ye shall live also." And again, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." None could have told what was bound up in the first half of this precious verse, had not the Spirit of God, by Paul, made it known to us in beseeching us not to receive the grace of God in vain. "I have heard thee in a time of acceptance" was addressed by Jehovah to Christ personally. The Spirit of God has made us acquainted that we, through grace, are now included in "Thee." The reason is given in chapter 5:21: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." May we heed the exhortation to the Corinthians, not to receive the grace of God in vain.

T. H. R.

Christian Treasury: Volume 3, Scripture Quotation (49:14-16)

"BUT ZION SAID, THE LORD HATH FORSAKEN ME, AND MY LORD HATH FORGOTTEN ME. CAN A WOMAN FORGET HER SUCKING CHILD, THAT SHE SHOULD NOT HAVE COMPASSION ON THE SON OF HER WOMB? YEA, THEY MAY FORGET, YET WILL I NOT FORGET THEE. BEHOLD, I HAVE GRAVEN THEE UPON THE PALMS OF MY HANDS."

Isa. 49:14-16.

Christian Friend: Volume 14, Isaiah 45:23 (45:23)

The light thrown upon this scripture by its citation in the New Testament is remarkable. But before we proceed to this, a glance at the context will be both interesting and profitable. In verse 22, following upon the assertion that, in contrast with idols, Jehovah alone is God, that “there is no God beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me,” we have the universal invitation of grace, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” Then comes the solemn asseveration, enforced by a divine oath, “That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear;” that is, Jehovah, the Creator-God, has thus decreed. Turning now to Philippians 2, we find that these words are applied to the One who humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. There are, moreover, two notable explanations added— explanations which never could have been discovered, had they not thus been divinely given. The first is, that “every knee” applies to all in heaven, to all in earth, and to all under the earth; i.e. to all intelligences, whether in heaven, or in earth, or in hell; all demons, as well as all angels, saints, and men. Secondly, “every tongue shall swear” is seen to mean the confession to the glory of God the Father that Jesus is Lord, all alike owning the exaltation and the given name, which is above every name, of Jesus as Lord, in virtue of His death on the cross. What an unfolding, both of the glory of the person of our blessed Lord, as well’ as of. God’s appreciation of the life and death of Him who was known on earth as Jesus of Nazareth! In Romans 14:10 we find another application. Why, says the apostle, dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.1

For it is written, “As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. (vss. 10-12) In this scripture bowing the knee is referred to our accountability to God in judgment; and we are exhorted, because all alike have before them the prospect of the judgment-seat, to desist from judging one another. (Compare 1 Corinthians 4:3-5) We know from another scripture that the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son; and this fact, taken in connection with the statement of the apostle, brings out again the essential and personal glories of Him who will be the Judge of all. These several scriptures, when combined, contain a remarkable revelation of the purpose of God as to the absolute supremacy of His beloved Son, and also of His will to have that supremacy universally owned. Jesus of Nazareth is already, and one day shall be confessed to be, Lord of all, to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel Light: Volume 3 (1913), Look. (45:22)

HERE we have an expressive little word which embodies much in brief compass, and opens up a wide field of truth before the vision of the soul. We have a lovely instance of the use of this word in Isa. 45 ISA 45"Loop unto me, and he ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else " (v. 22).

In the preceding verse we have a very fine statement of the character of the ONE to whom we are told to look: " Assemble yourselves, and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations; they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me; A JUST GOD AND A SAVIOUR; there is none beside me.”

Here, then, is the ONE to whom we are told to "LOOK." He is "a just God.”

But if this were all, a guilty sinner dare not look to Him for anything hut judgment and 'eternal condemnation. The only possible issue of a meeting between "a just God" and a guilty man is the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

“A just God" must punish sin. He cannot pass over a single speck or stain. It would involve the denial of His nature, and the overthrow of His government, were He td pass over the smallest atom of sin. It cannot possibly be. “He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity.”

Sin, wherever it is found, can only be met by the just judgment of God.

But mark the beauteous and most marvellous combination! Blessed be His name!

We are not called to "LOOK" merely to “a just God." This would be terrible. Yea, it would be inevitable destruction. But when we listen to the other title which grace has linked on to "a just God," all is changed.

He is not only "a just God" but ".A SAVIOUR." Precious fact for us poor sinners! But how can God be "just" and "a Saviour"? The CROSS of Christ yields the glorious answer. There Justice had all its very highest claims answered. There the Majesty of heaven was vindicated. There, sin was thoroughly condemned. There all the demands of the throne were perfectly met.

There all the divine attributes were gloriously harmonized. There the most convincing evidence was afforded to all created intelligence, that God could never let sin into His presence. In one word, then, the cross is the only platform on which we can behold “a just God and a Saviour." There we see how God can be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. The atoning death of Christ forms the righteous ground on which God can “receive back His banished." Christ bore the just judgment of God against sin, in order that, as "a Saviour God," He might receive to His bosom the very vilest sinner that simply LOOKS to Him.

But who are they that are called to LOOK?

Is it some special class? No, thank God, it is not His way to limit His gracious invitation. Theology does this: but God never does. Hear the seraphic words, once more “LOOK unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.”

Such is the wide aspect of God's salvation.

When God spoke as a Law-giver, He addressed Himself to one people; but when He speaks as "a just God and a Saviour," He addresses Himself to “all the ends of the earth.” And may anyone" LOOK "? It is not only that he may, but he ought; not only is he permitted, but commanded. It is a command issued to all the ends of the earth. This includes everyone who hears the message. It includes the reader of these lines. Yes, beloved reader, whoever you are, you are this moment commanded to " LOOK, and be saved." Before you can refuse the application of this word to yourself, you must prove that you do not come within the range of “all the ends of the earth.”

Here we are at issue with theology, because theology is at issue with the heart of God, the grace of God, the Christ of God, the word of God. Theology limits; God does not.

Theology says, "Some"; God says, "All.”

All are commanded to "LOOK.”

True, they will not; but that is their awful responsibility. Theology says, “Man cannot look, and hence it is only deceiving him to tell him to do so.”

Does "a just God" deceive people? Will theology dare to say so? Well, it is God who commands "all the ends of the earth" to “LOOK" unto Him, and be saved.”

Yes, reader, one look at a Saviour God is salvation for thee. Never mind theology, of the puzzling, withering dogmas of theologians. Hearken to God. Remember, He commands you to "LOOK" unto Him, "and be saved." You cannot get over this. You cannot shake off your solemn, personal responsibility to LOOK, this moment, to a Saviour God.

Leave theology and theologians to settle their questions with God; but do you remember that you have a never-dying soul to be saved, and that the ONLY way of salvation is to hearken to the gracious commandment of " A just God and a Saviour "who says to your “LOOK UNTO ME.”

C. H. M.

Correspondence, Correspondence: Spiritual; 2CO 6:8; COL 2:15, 4:6; End of Law; Create Evil? (45:7)

Ques. Is "spiritual" in 1 Cor. 10:3. 4 used in its ordinary signification? If so, what is the meaning of "spiritual meat" and "spiritual drink?”

Ans. The Apostle did not mean that the Israelites did not eat actual meat, and drink actual drink, but that what they did feed on is typical of the spiritual food which is now the sustenance of the believer's new life.

Ques. What is the meaning of "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus?" 2 Cor. 6:8.

Ans. Practically setting the seal of death upon all that was merely human, in order that the life he had received the life of Jesus might be seen in power in all his actions.

Ques. Please explain "made a show of them openly." (Col. 2:15).

Ans. As Christ Himself was made a gazing-stock when lifted up on the Cross, so He, by His glorious work, so overcame the powers of darkness that their defeat became public, and shown, openly everywhere by the preaching of the gospel.

Ques. What does "seasoning with salt" mean? (Col. 4:6). S. P. T.

Ans. Containing not mere love and amiability, but that preservative principle of godliness and truth that renders it truly wholesome. Observe, it is not to be of salt seasoned with grace (too often left out). That is to say, it is to he primarily of the grace that we ourselves have received. Caustic and bitter speeches would not come under this description.

Ques. In what sense is Christ the end of the law for righteousness?

Ans. Because in Christ the righteous requirements of the law, demanding the death of the sinner, are fully met.

Ques. Please explain Isa. 45:7, "I make peace and create evil." G. B.

Ans. Some have sought to explain this by supposing the evil of judgment is meant, and not the evil of sin, but the word used is that generally used for evil and wickedness. There are mysteries in the origin of evil that no human mind can fathom.

Evil is either natural or moral. Natural or physical evil comprehends all the afflictions, adversities, trials, and bereavements which can happen to man in this life, whether in mind, body, or estate. Of this sort of evil the Lord is sometimes said to be the Author. Job, when laboring under the pressure of loss of property, family bereavements, and above all a loathsome and malignant disease, was advised by his wife to curse God and die (by his own hand, I suppose). But he sharply rebuked her, and said, "What! shall we receive good at His hand and not evil?" and in this he did not sin with his lips. Thus Job evidently looked upon God as being the Author of all the calamities which befell him. (Job 2:10.)

In Heb. 12:5 we find chastisement spoken of as coming from the hand of the Lord. Here it is a class of trials from without, but God acts in them; as a father, He chastises us. It may be that they come, as in the case of Job from Satan, but yet the hand and wisdom of God are in them. Thus I may use a rod to correct my son. The rod, however, is but the instrument by which the chastisement is inflicted. My hand limits

the extent of the punishment.

He does not create moral evil: it is temporal evil as contrasted with peace-not with good.

Echoes of Grace: 1947, First Business of Man, The (45:22)

If "man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever," surely man's first business, as lost, guilty, and undone, is to be saved.

"Salvation is of the Lord," says the prophet Jonah; and all that is required for man's salvation was finished on the cross, says the apostle John; therefore the sinner—the chief of sinners—has only to believe the good news and rest and rejoice therein.

"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Isa. 45:22.

Here the invitation approaches the character of a command—of a command to be saved.

"Look unto Me, and be ye saved." It is not by feeling, realizing, or appropriating, that I am saved; but simply in looking to

Jesus as the one who died for me—who died for me just as I am. I am not called to be anything, or to bring anything, or to experience anything; but just what I am, as judged by God, sinful in my nature, and my sins actually committed, innumerable. But,! glorious truth! Jesus died for such—"the Just for the unjust." For me! faith exclaims, and God has accepted the mighty sacrifice in my stead; and faith accepts it too, and I stand complete in Him as risen and glorified. (See Jonah 2:9; John 19:30; Isa. 45:22.)

When man discovers that he is a lost sinner; that his sins bring burning wrath and banishment from God's presence forever and ever; that by no supposed goodness, or good works can he meet His righteous requirements, or satisfy the fair demands of His holy law; he is sure to have hard thoughts of God, and to wish in his heart that there were no God to judge, and no hell to punish. But when he is brought to listen to the gospel of peace, and hears that God so loved the world — a world of lost sinners—that He “gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;” he finds out two things: namely, that the very hopelessness of his condition establishes his title to the love of God and the work of Christ. And what more does he need—or can he need—than the love of God and the work of Christ? God loves him,—Christ died for him. What is its measure? The gift of Jesus, His sufferings and death. He died for the sinner, in the sinner's stead, that the sinner who "believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Christ has met all God's claims and all the sinner's needs. He not only suffered for "sins"; but God in the person of His own dear Son on Calvary's cross has judged, or condemned, sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 10:17; 1 Peter 3:18).

But the young believer, in his musings on the love of God and the work of Christ, must not rest here. Too many content themselves with only half a gospel, and that the human half, or, rather, with the human side of the gospel. It is said, that Christ having died for us, we are pardoned and accepted when we believe, in virtue of His death, and will surely go to heaven when we die. This is true, and precious truth so far as it goes.

But it is not the whole truth, and must come short of perfect peace of mind. When Christ "made an end of sin" on the cross, He did a perfect work which gives the believer the privilege of knowing not only that Christ died for him, but that he, the believer, died in Christ's death—as man, as sinner, as child of the first Adam.

But if he died in Christ's death, he also rose in His resurrection.

"Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Rom. 6:4, 5, 6

This is the only true ground of peace.

There is nothing against the believer. Sin has been judged, and the risen Lord has introduced the believer into a new position in association with Himself; and there he stands complete in Him before God, free from all charge of sin, and free from all fear of judgment.

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Rom. 8:2.

Nothing less meets the need of the sinner, the presence of God, and the glory of the great Workman.

Surely man's first business is to be saved—saved according to the love of God and the work of Christ. Has my reader thought of this, or has he neglected it? No question of equal importance can come before you in this life; nothing can justify your delay; nothing can be admitted as an excuse. All things are ready all—that is required for your salvation is done. You have only to rest in that finished and accepted work. And this should be your first business.

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

Mark 8:36.

Bible Queries, Notes on Former Queries: Vol. 2, 102;142; 153 (43:3)

Q. 102. Is not the present aspect of the kingdom of heaven here lost sight of? The special character of the kingdom of heaven as now existing on earth, professedly owning its absent King, which began as soon as the Lord of it had taken His place above. It is the reign from heaven, and so is not the kingdom of heaven whilst the King is on earth. Later it divides into the Millennial kingdom (the kingdom of the Son) set up in power on Christ's return to the world; and into the kingdom of the Father, when the heavenly saints shine forth in glory. D.T.C.

Q. 142. The force and application of the passage in Isa. 43:3, is consequent upon the circumstances which led up to its quotation in Matt. 12 In the Chapter we see Jesus 'exercising sovereign power in deepest lowliness. Knowing that the Pharisees had conspired against Him He withdrew Himself, and great multitudes following Him He healed them all, charging them " that they should not make it known: that it might be fulfilled." That which follows reveals His character, as the rejected One, put in proverbial form. It is doubtless true that this character is displayed towards those who are as feeble as bruised reeds, or whose love may be but as smoking flax; but this is not the truth brought out in the passage, as the 16th and 17th verses prove conclusively. For notice, He "charged them that they should not make it known: that it might be fulfilled," &c.; here it is the character of the one acting which is brought into prominence and not (so much) the action. Of course this is His character only " till he send forth judgment unto victory." C. F.

Q. 153, p. 122.-We regret to find that some of our readers have gathered from the remarks made under the answer to this query that we intended to bring forward heathen mythology in support of Scripture. Such, however, was in no wise our intention. We are fully persuaded of the all-sufficiency and divine inspiration of the Scriptures, and that they need no support from external evidence. What we intended to convey was, that Scripture gives the true account of the facts upon which heathen mythology has based its fables.

Bible Treasury: Volume 3, Servant, My: Scripture Query and Answer (42:19)

Q. Isa. 42:19. Who is meant by “my servant” here? E.

A. Israel, I believe. The beginning of the chapter refers beyond a doubt, to our Lord—the latter part to the people. The misapplication of verse 19 to Christ arose out of two things—the assumption that “my servant” must have referred to the same in both passages, and the notion that [Greek word] means one who is morally perfect. As to the first, the context need leave no doubt that Israel are referred to, in contrast with the heathen idolaters, Israel called out to be the witness of the true God. To this position of favor and responsibility, as God's friend in the world, (though, alas! unfaithful in it, “deaf” and “blind,") the word meshullam1 applies, not to the absence of sin. The change from Messiah to Israel in chap. xlii. is not nearly so abrupt as the substitution of Messiah for Israel is in chap. xlix. 3, 4.

Faithful Words for Old and Young: Volume 15, There Is Hope for the Worst. (42:3)

WHAT can be more worthless than a bruised reed or weaker than a piece of smoking flax? And yet it is written of Christ: “a bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench” (Isa. 42:3); and how beautifully the Lord illustrated this fact by His death! Not only did He die to put away the sins of sinners, but in the act of dying He saved the dying thief. “Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom,” said the poor outcast, bruised and weak, with his eyes all but glazed in death, dying for his own sin.

“Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise,” was the loving reply.

He did not break the bruised reed, nor quench the dimly burning flax. No; the most perfect and holy Being that ever lived is the most infinitely perfect in His love, tenderness, and sympathy for the ruined and lost. He will not despise nor reject those who are weak under the power of temptation, nor cast out the worst who have been crushed and broken, defiled and made useless by actual sin. To all such He still speaks, and invites them as “weary and heavy laden” to come to Him for deliverance and rest. For such He bled and died, that He might heal and make them whole.

Oh, listen to His words, ye bruised and broken ones. He invites you to come; come and rest upon His blood for cleansing, His death and resurrection for justification, His Spirit to sanctify and make you whole. Come at once; come as you are, in your true character; as sinful, worthless, broken, deserving only hell. Come renouncing all hope in self, and trusting only in Christ for your acceptance with God, and He will save you; your little spark of hope He will fan into a flame of joy through a full and free forgiveness and blessed assurance of interest in His love and work; and where you are most weak, He will by His grace make you most strong to resist and overcome all sin. And oh, ye consciously bruised, doubting and fearing ones, hear the loving word of Christ to you. He says He will not break you; then He will receive and heal you. Be content to come to Him in your true character as bruised and broken, and receive the full and free salvation He invites you to take, and rejoice in His love. Come, then, to Christ just as you are.

B.F.N

Christian Friend: Volume 12, Like a Shepherd (40:11)

H. A. C.

Courtesy of BibleTruthPublishers.com. Most likely this text has not been proofread. Any suggestions for spelling or punctuation corrections would be warmly received. Please email them to: BTPmail@bibletruthpublishers.com.

“NOTHING is more sad than the many nameless graves one sees out there,” said a young Colonial. “I was riding up country one day (in New Zealand) far from any dwelling, when suddenly beside the track, if track it could be called, there was a little grave outlined with white stones. Some settlor’s child, I suppose, who had died going up country. On board ship coming home, a man who had been in South Africa told me the same thing. Out there too are hundreds of such graves, and the impression they leave on one is very saddening—scouts who have fallen in small numbers, spies, single soldiers, lie there unknown to anyone.”

To any one, did he say? “He bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names, by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth” (Isa. 40:26). Lift up your eyes to the starry heavens on a clear night; count the stars that your hand may cover if you can. The Saviour-God knows their number, He has a name for each, not one will lessen its light without His fiat.

“The sheep hear His voice: He calleth His own sheep by name.... I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine” (John 10:3,14). Look at that flock of sheep: could you number them? Would you know if one were missing? The shepherd arrives—he scans the flock, his eye is acquainted with the face of every sheep—ah! one is missing, only ninety and nine are there. He leaves the ninety and nine safely folded, and forth he goes to seek until he find the one that was lost, and then he carries it home on his shoulders rejoicing.

“For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which ALL that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life: and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5). There are multitudes of nameless graves all over this sorrow-stricken earth. Who shall say where lies Abel, the first martyr of the Old Testament—Stephen, the first of the New Testament, and the countless thousands that have been buried between and since then? Where are their graves? Who has recorded their names? By-and-by—very soon—they will hear the voice of the Son of God—to each one it will be audible—and they will come forth from their tombs, known and unknown of every clime.

“Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20). The saints who are sleeping in those “nameless graves” — and by a saint is meant one who has heard while on earth the voice of the Son of God and lived, or who looked forward in faith like Abel to His atoning sacrifice—these saints have had their names recorded in God’s register. Not one is forgotten by Him. Moses was buried—there had been none like him—nevertheless he died and occupied a grave, and “no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day.” Satan would have rifled its precious contents, but was rebuked for his hardihood before the hosts of heaven. God knows where Moses lies, and He knows where to find every saint who has been bought with the price that the Saviour paid. “The dead in Christ shall rise first.” Those who are alive when He comes will see them rise, and then together they will go to meet the Lord in the air. Then they will know as they are known.

More than this—perchance an unbeliever lies in a “nameless grave” that you wot of. He too will come forth; he will hear the voice of the Son of God—all unbelievers will. Ponder it, reader. If you are now away from God in your sins, think how solemn it will be after you are dead to rejoin your resurrected body as a spirit, and to receive judgment at the hands of the One who might have been your Saviour! Don’t imagine you can hide your head like the ostrich in the sand and be unseen—oh no— “ALL that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth... they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” No escape will be possible then. Now it is—and now you may turn to God and find Him gracious and full of compassion, a Saviour-God. Then never mind where you lie—in the torpid zone, amid arctic snows, in your bed at home—in any and every case your sleeping-place will be known to God—moreover, your ear will hear the assembling shout and recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd therein. There are no “nameless graves” to Him or to God, for your name has been “written in heaven,” rehearsed too before the angels, and from thence “we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.”

Lord, haste that day! H. L. H.

A FELLOW-LABORER writes: — We still have encouragement at the Hospital and Union. A little while ago I asked an old rag gatherer who was in the Hospital how he was.

“Why, sir,” he said, “I am right internally, externally, and eternally,” and his face was all aglow with joy. He said, “Some people say, All’s well that ends well, but through mercy I can say it is well with me before the end comes.”

E.D.

Bible Queries, Notes on Former Queries: Vol. 2, 125; 123; 153 (40:2)

Q. 125. Matt. 18:6 tells us that the "little ones" alluded to believe in Me." I cannot think that infants who die young are saved by the death of Christ: without shedding of blood there is no remission, and faith is always the condition of salvation. Your view would absolve me from the necessity of praying for the salvation of my young children. V. C.

[We think that ver. 6 refers to true believers here compared to little children; whereas ver. 10 appears to refer to the literal children in the Savior's arms and ver. 11 to be in connection with it. Observe there is no " seeking" (Luke six. 10) only " saving" in connection with infants. They are saved on the ground that the blood is shed. This view in no way interferes with prayer for all those who are old enough to be personally responsible.-Ed.]

Q. 123. The meaning of " double" in Isa. 40:2. It was a custom amongst the Jews that a man who had been sued for a debt, when he paid received two receipts: one he retained, the other called " the double" was posted in a public place to show his complete acquittal.

J. L.

Q. 153. The Hebrew word translated " giant" in our A. V. is derived from a root meaning to fall down, and the word is literally "fallen ones." That angels are here meant is supported by the Alex. Version of the Septuagint where Gen. 6:2 reads "angels of God." S. C.

Young Christian: Volume 29, 1939, Mount, Run, Walk (40:31)

“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31.

If only we would take more heed unto these exhortations. If we would “die daily” thereby entering more into the enjoyment of Christ. How hard Satan, yes how very hard he seeks to keep us from entering into this enjoyment and surely because he knows that the “joy of the Lord is our strength.” It is only when we enjoy one that we can give up the other.

It is first the mounting up with wings as eagles, viewing the wonderful counsels, purposes, and blessings of the Lord with His own, then the running to obtain the prize, without becoming weary, and then the walking, the routine of our daily life, without fainting or becoming discouraged. Surely it all lies in the mounting up first.

How hard it is for the flesh to “walk.” Just as sure as one becomes occupied with circumstances he becomes discouraged also. O, for patience to learn those much needed lessons. It’s a blessing to know that the One who allows them, never makes any mistake. May we ever praise Him for all His goodness and blessings bestowed upon us.

Bible Treasury: Volume N5, What Have They Seen in Thy House? (39:4)

One of the most solemn truths of the word of God is that the heart of man is “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” It declares itself as such amongst the openly ungodly and profane; and but little trouble is taken to hide it. Revealed truth is opposed, and gracious manifestations are despised. But in the sphere of profession it is different, where dissimulation creeps in, and is adopted. It needs a divine revelation to make it manifest that, after the house is “swept and garnished,” it is more than ever suited for the dwelling-place of Satan, more ready to receive him and rebel against God than before. This is of course as to professors merely; but even where a real work of God is within, the flesh remains unchanged. In some cases of the O. as well as the N. T., the word of the Lord probes and enlightens the conscience, exposing hitherto unsuspected evil underlying the most irreproachable conduct outwardly. The results of such probing are surely set before us in God's word that we may be instructed, and humbled as to the presence of the flesh, although we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit; and accustom ourselves to make this use of the divine word so discerning ourselves that the Lord may have no occasion to judge or chasten us.

The sin of Hezekiah on this occasion was known only to God; it was not a moral breakdown but a sin of the heart, which God alone could see and judge. Had he been a less faithful man, it might not have been charged against him in such a solemn manner; for God's judgment is necessarily most searching in regard of such as are near to, and beloved by, Him. Besides it was only the special favor and goodness shown to him personally which made it possible for him to offend thus. By the subtlety of the enemy he was betrayed into glorying in a fleshly way in the blessing which should have drawn him nearer to God. How often it happens where one has made promises or resolutions as to conduct or service, and failure in regard to such has come in, that God is pleased to bring us up to our own proposal in the beginning! This is mortifying, but to the flesh only: the heart of the saint rejoices in all that is humbling to nature, and finds in the discomfiture of the flesh a way of return to God who works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). The Lord's dealing with Peter in John 21:15-19 illustrates this.

But a few days before the visit of the Babylonian princes, Hezekiah had gone up to the house of Jehovah to pour out his soul in thanksgiving for the mercies received; he had said “I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.” No doubt at the time he meant it; but God put him to the proof as to this, and instead of “going softly” all his days, he rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him for his heart was lifted up. “Therefore was there wrath upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem” (2 Chron. 32:25). “God left him to try him that he might know all that was in his heart.” It was Israel in the wilderness over again (Deut. 8:2). All was known to God; but the object in His ways is to expose everything now, that we may clear ourselves morally, and humble ourselves in His presence. There may be much outward activity, and success too, that is, according to man's judgment; but He who searches the hearts may see that secretly working which, if not now manifested and judged, would lead to ultimate exposure and destruction at the judgment-seat of Christ of all that is built upon it.

It was characteristically the spirit of Babylon which Hezekiah had cherished and which must be cast out. “Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him” (Hab. 2:4): words which God used of the Chaldean conqueror of Jerusalem in the day of Habakkuk, but how applicable now to the failing saint, who was not at the moment living by his faith! The spirit of Babylon had been entertained at Jerusalem, had been received in the house of the king of Judah, and had ensnared the heart of Jehovah's servant. Notice how quickly the proud heart ceases to be upright. Man is properly a weak dependent creature, and finds his strength only in constant reliance upon God. “My just one shall live by his faith,” so that he has nothing whatever in which to glory. “What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” To appropriate the glory of another is unrighteous. God gave power to the king of Babylon, who misused it by casting God's servants into a burning furnace; but his action brought God amongst them as a Deliverer. The spirit of Babylon is far more to be dreaded than its power. It is proud and unrighteous; it flatters and

ensnares the heart, and delights in moral confusion, for then its aims are not easily detected.

The spirit of Babylon was brought into the assembly at Corinth by those who reigned as kings without the apostles. That same spirit was brought in amongst the saints by “Hymenæus and Philetus, who concerning the truth erred, saying that the resurrection is passed already, overthrowing the faith of some.” And faith is the only thing that delivers from this present evil world; for it links us up with God and His beloved Son, and makes us overcomers in this deceived and defiled world. Resurrection is indeed accomplished in a great sense, i.e. for our standing and acceptance before God, as new creatures in Christ Jesus and as saints in our heavenly position and privileges. But as servants and good soldiers of Jesus Christ we must have the sentence of death in ourselves and qualify by suffering for the glorious position which yet awaits us in our resurrection. We must substantiate our title to the crown by bearing the cross and enduring hardness. Without risen life in Christ we should have neither spring nor object in heavenly glory; but it is the cross of Christ and not resurrection-life that determines and characterizes our position and circumstances in this world. Let us say with the devoted apostle, “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.” The spirit of Babylon will not get hold of a heart satisfied with Christ, which holds the cross as an impassable barrier between itself and the world.

Hezekiah had been greatly used of God for cleansing His house and restoring His worship. In extraordinary energy of grace he had traveled beyond the narrow limits of his own kingdom of Judah, and had visited the crushed and scattered fragments of the larger kingdom of Israel, acting on their souls so as to come up to Jerusalem and keep the passover as God's redeemed people. God acknowledged his work of faith and labor of love with much blessing. It was all most acceptable; but God looked that the same character of holiness which had been restored to God's house should pervade the house, the family, and the heart of His servant. In the temple Hezekiah had been seen as a penitent, a suppliant, and a worshipper; but now the question he had to face was, “What have they seen in thy house?” Alas! for man; he had shown them everything, and certainly the display had been for his own glory and not for the glory of God. The wise men of Babylon had taken note of the wonder done in the land, they had come to connect it with God's people and with the son of David. Here was surely an opportunity of testimony to Jehovah. How great His power and His goodness on behalf of His afflicted servant! But the king of Babylon saw only the creature in it; and on the other hand, Hezekiah was glad to show it. Alas! how soon we respond to flattery. When the shadow of death had been upon him, he was cast upon God. Faith shone out brightly, and he confessed that “in all these [difficulties, pain and weakness] is the life of my spirit.” But brought up as it were from the grave, he forgot all the glory was due to God, and by his conduct gave occasion for the most solemn and precise announcement of judgment by the Chaldean that any king of Judah as yet had been required to bow to.

Has not all this a voice for us to-day? Outward reformation there may be. For many years saints have had the comfort and blessing of truth restored or received by the Spirit's ministry through the usual channels. “That which every joint supplieth” is truth which has to do with the body of Christ, the assembly, the house of God, etc. But God is interested in raising questions, which, if answered fairly and truly in His presence, may reveal strange and mournful inconsistencies as to our private life, our home life, and our business life.

“What have they seen in thy HOUSE?”

Things New and Old: Volume 33, Wayfaring Men, Though Fools (35:8)

There is a wonderful lesson for our souls in Isa. 35:8: “An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.” Doubtless it primarily refers to Israel, when the time arrives for God to favor the nation, and bring the people into blessing: but, in principle, it refers to all times.

There has always been a way of holiness: Enoch walked in it, and it was so even under the law, not that man could attain to holiness thereby, but God was in their midst; and the priest had to wear upon the miter a plate of pure gold, on which was graven, like the engraving of a signet, Holiness to the Lord. (Exod. 28:36.) When David brought back the ark of the Lord, he says, “ Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” (1 Chron. 16:29.) The message that God bid Moses convey to the people was, “Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” (Exod. 19:6.) True, comparatively few may have discovered it, and a less number really walked in it; but the failure of the people in no way nullified what God was for His people, and the position He had made for them.

Little need be added to show that God has planned a way of holiness for His people now: “ Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet. 2:5.) “God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.” (1 Thess. 4:7.) “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Heb. 12:14.)

But the point before the writer was more how God’s path is to be found, and who are the people that shall be able to walk therein? We read that the outward acts of God were made known unto the people of Israel; but His ways were made known unto Moses. (Psalm 103:7.) Do we not instinctively place with this, “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth?” (Num. 12:3.) And this so well agrees with the passage, “The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.” (Psalm 25:9.) This then is the spirit in which we should approach God’s word to learn His ways. It is not the high-minded and clever that are named here. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” (Psalm 51:17.)

We also find that none can expect to learn God’s ways, who seek to know them out of curiosity merely, nor those who think that, when they have discovered them, it is left to themselves to walk in them or not, just as they please: for thus saith the Lord, “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” (Isa. 66:2.) Here God graciously classifies the poor, and those of a contrite spirit, with those that tremble at His word.

It is a solemn thing to have to do with God’s truth. “To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas. 4:17.) It is not left to man to pick and to choose, to do or not to do, just as he may think well. It is God that has spoken; who is he that dares to contend with his

Maker? God has now spoken by His Son, and has come forth in grace; but, alas! man abuses the grace, just as he did innocency in the garden, and the law under Moses.

It is to be feared that many of the lost will have to bitterly lament that they did not seek grace to profit by what they knew. Listen to what God says of some: “If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.” (2 Pet. 2:20, 21.) It would have been better for such to have been ignorant, than to have heard the word, and to have had a knowledge of the Lord Jesus, and then to have acted as is pointed out in the true proverb, “The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.” How sad to be compared to the dog and the swine! Oh, that all professors would take solemn warning from God’s holy word!

The warnings of God’s word seem strikingly applicable in the present day, when men are setting up their own wisdom in opposition to God’s word, and hesitate not to refuse what parts they think well, and receive or patronize, after their own fashion, the rest. Do they truly know that they are refusing part of what is really God’s word? Well, perhaps, they do not know this, or are not willing to know it. Thousands admit that, in a sense, the Bible is God’s word, but affirm that such latitude was allowed to the writers, that they often wrote what was incorrect; forgetting that no conscientious author of even a penny book, would allow his thoughts to be thus misrepresented by his amanuensis. Yet this folly is attributed to the omniscient God.

It is mostly the wise and the learned that make such fatal mistakes. They taunt others with not knowing Greek and Hebrew, in which languages the scriptures were written; and how can any judge of what is written, say they, without a knowledge of the originals? It is very striking that our Lord, who surely did know Hebrew, constantly quoted the Septuagint translation in preference to the original, doubtless, because it was the edition that was best known to His hearers. We are not depreciating a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew; but one taught by the Holy Spirit will understand, through a translation, far better what God has caused to be written, than will one who trusts to his learning and his own natural acuteness.

Let us take heed to the passage we started with: “Wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.” And thus we find that many a poor old man or woman, who can just read, knows a great deal more of truth and what God has revealed, than do some of the learned divines, as they are called.

This, indeed, is what our Lord Himself expressed. He rejoiced in spirit, and said, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” (Luke 10:21.) Oh, that the learned, who are sitting in judgment on God’s word and on what He has taught, would quietly weigh this passage. Poor, simple souls gladly receive what God says; they have nothing that leads them to call the scriptures in question, and God blesses their simple, confiding faith; whereas, the learned may have, what they call, advanced views to maintain, and are too often full of high thoughts, and ability to test everything as they think, and are thus not in a right spirit to be taught anything correctly.

Listen again to what our Lord said. He called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, “Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 17:2-4.)

How contrary is this to what we see around us, and to what is the tendency it may be of both writer and reader, who may unintentionally be influenced by the spirit of the age. To be as a little child! to believe, unhesitatingly, everything that God tells us in His word! this is the way to be taught by the Holy Spirit. Oh, to be more like Mary, to sit at the Lord’s feet, and just to drink in all the gracious words that proceed out of His mouth! And then to study all that He has caused to be written, believing it all to be inspired by God, and find it profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that we, as men of God, may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.)

Christian Treasury: Volume 4, Remnant of Israel, The (33:14-15)

The remnant of Israel is distinguished from their apostate brethren in Isa. 33:14, 15. The sinners in Zion have seen the judgment of God on their enemies and are afraid; fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites. They cannot hope to survive the devouring fire or endure the everlasting burnings of the righteous wrath of God. Their question: "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings"? is answered by Jehovah in the following verse, "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly: he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from the holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil." In the latter days the remnant appears, by closed eyes and stopped ears, separated from the mass of the nation.

Identical distinguishing marks appear in the deaf man with a speech impediment, (Mark 7:32-35), and in the blind men of Mark 8:23 and John 9:6. Each, in their own way, depict the yet-future remnant of Israel. As to the deaf man, he is separated from those around him; he cannot hear the evil and the blood shedding, nor the cries of the victims. Neither is he responsive, for he cannot communicate with the apostates. Further, Jesus took him aside from the multitude and put his fingers into his cars, spit, and touched his tongue saying. "Be opened." The spittle was the efficacy of His own person, but in Jewish eyes it was the cause for ostracizing the man for seven days (Num. 12:14).

In Mark 8:23 the blind man, by his blindness, is separated from the mass of the people, and cannot see the evil done in the land. He is led out of the town by the Lord and upon receiving his sight is told not to return to the town (Zech. 14:5). In this case, the Lord spit in his eyes and thereby accomplished a further separation of seven days, denoting spiritual completeness.

A third instance, in John 9:6 depicts the remnant as the work of God and for the glory of God. Jesus spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the blind man, saying unto him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." From this example of the remnant the truth goes further: he is excommunicated from the nation and cast out of the synagogue, but found by Jesus.

The deaf and blind remnant had no sin in respect of that from which their condition separated them (John 9:41). Their first voice was the voice of Jesus; their first sight was of the man Christ Jesus: then saw they all men clearly.

“And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness." Isa. 29:18. "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me. I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained My lips, O Lord, Thou knowest." Psa. 40:7-9.

Psa. 15 gives the character of the remnant, and Psa. 42, their utterance when cast out of Jerusalem (the town) and derided by their apostate brethren with, “Where is thy God?" The Lord went through it all before them, as a reading of the Psalms will show.

W. N. Bothwell.

Christian Treasury: Volume 1, Remnant of Israel, The (33:14-15)

The remnant of Israel is distinguished from their apostate brethren in Isa. 33:14.15. The sinners in Zion have seen the judgment of God on their enemies and are afraid; fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites; they cannot hope to survive the devouring fire or endure the everlasting burnings of the righteous wrath of God. Their question, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" is answered by Jehovah in the following verse, He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil." In the latter days the remnant appears, by closed eyes and stopped ears, separated from the mass of the nation.

Identical distinguishing marks appear in the deaf man with a speech impediment, in Mark 7:32-35, and in the blind men of Mark 8:23 and John 9th. Each, in their own way, depict the yet-future remnant of Israel. As to the deaf man, he is separated from those around him: he cannot hear the evil and the blood shedding, nor the cries of the victims; neither is he responsive, for he cannot communicate with the apostates. Further, Jesus took him aside from the multitude, put His finger into his ears, spit, and touched his tongue saying, "Be opened." The spittle was the efficacy of His own person, but in Jewish eyes, it was cause for ostracizing the man for seven days. (Num. 12:14).

In Mark 8:23 the blind man. by his blindness, is separated from the mass of the people, and cannot see the evil done in the land. He is led out of the town by the Lord and upon receiving his sight, is told not to return to the town. (Zech. 14:5.) In this case also, the Lord spit on his eyes and thereby accomplished a further separation of seven days, denoting spiritual completeness.

A third instance, in John 9:6, depicts the remnant as the work of God and for the glory of God. Jesus spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle, anointed the eyes of the blind man, and said unto him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." From birth he had been separated from the nation by blindness, and in this example of the remnant, the truth goes further: he is excommunicated from the nation and cast out of the synagogue, but found by Jesus.

The deaf and blind remnant had not sin in respect of that to which their condition separated them (John 9:41 a). Their first voice was the voice of Jesus; their first sight was of the man Christ Jesus; then they saw all men clearly.

Psa. 15 gives the character of the remnant, and Psa. 42 the utterance of the remnant cast out of Jerusalem and taunted by their apostate brethren with, "Where is thy God?" The Lord went through it all before them, as a reading of the Psalms will show.W. Bothwell

Christian Truth: Volume 38, Be Still, My Soul (32:17)

"The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness." Isa.32:17.

"Be still, my soul! thy God doth undertake

To guide the future as He has the past.

Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake.

All now mysterious shall be bright at last.

"Be still, my soul! the waves and winds still know

His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.

Be still, my soul! when dearest friends depart,

And all is darkened in the vale of tears;

Then thou shalt better know His love, His heart,

Who comes to soothe thy sorrows and thy fears.

Be still, my soul! the Saviour can repay

From His own fullness, all He takes away."

Prince of Peace, control my will; bid this struggling heart be still;

Bid my fears and doubtings cease; hush my spirit into peace.

The Evangelist: Volume 2 (1868), Jesus Our Hiding place. (32:2)

Isaiah 32:2.

THE perfect humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ is a truth of the most precious import to the believer. Encompassed with difficulties, wants, trials; exposed to dangers of all kinds; he needs One who is not only all-powerful to help, but also most tenderly merciful and able to sympathize with him in his weakness and distress; and such an One he finds in the ever blessed Son of God. Made of the seed of David according to the flesh, the Holy One of God trod this dreary wilderness as one who had not where to lay His head, a stranger and a pilgrim in the world that knew Him not, though He had created all things; and this spewed more than all beside how everything was lapsed and gone from Him—the fact that He, the Blessed One, had no home here. It was indeed a visit to this world the Saviour made, a visit for a season. He is gone. He is not here now; for He is risen—returned to heaven, the heaven from which He came. This makes the world a wilderness for those who know and love Him; for His presence only can give rest and satisfaction to their hearts. As long as I am upon earth I have to say,

“Absent from Him I roam;”

and hence the longing desire of every heaven-born soul to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better. Not that the Scripture does not give a hope of His return. It does. But my hope, as a Christian, is to be in heaven, not earth; and though I shall rejoice-hereafter to see this world brought under the dominion of its rightful Lord, I am only hoping now to leave it, to go to Him who made it, and who lives in heaven as man—the man Christ Jesus. He is the hiding-place. He was the hiding-place for me when, a poor sinner, trembling under the load of guilt and misery that oppressed me, I fled to His cross. I remember it very well. I saw Him dying on the tree for me. I found relief in His presence, in the precious blood which He once shed. He redeemed me thus, scattered the terrors of a guilty conscience by His light, and gave me peace. I have to walk the desert now by confidence in that same Jesus. “A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.” Yes, you say, by-and-by, when a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. I grant it you. I am glad to think so. I weaken not in any measure the blessed hope of the future literal fulfillment of prophecy. But I say the Christ I know has been and is a hiding-place, a covert from the tempest. You say He is not on the cross now, nor in humiliation. I know it. I am glad of it. I know He is in heaven, and looks on me. I know there is not a sharp blast of this wild desert that He cannot check or hide me from; but for all that I would not stay where I am so exposed. I want to go to Him. I say, Lord, take me; come and take me soon. I think sometimes there are things worth waiting for-flowers in the desert that give sweetness, and yield honey too. But ah! the thorn springs up; the brier of the wilderness says, “This is not your rest.” You have no home here. Away! And I look up, and I see that it is so. “Earth is a desert drear,” a dry place, a thirsty land! Whence can refreshment come? From Jesus. He is the fountain of living water. He alone. “As rivers of water in a dry place.” The smitten Rock He once was. The Rock was smitten, and the water flowed. “He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” This was His word on earth. He took the place of the Rock in the wilderness. That Rock was Christ, the apostle tells us. And it never ceased to give its streams as oft as they were wanted. Oh, if Jesus were not living, where would His poor people be? But He is the Living One; and because He lives, they live. They are a feeble flock, a lowly flock. They lie hid in the valleys. Meek and lowly is their character, like His who lived and died for them. As the shadow of a great, a heavy Rock to them is He, the Beloved of their souls. Shelter and shadow is He to them. When the fierce heat would beat upon their heads, He tempers it. When the journey is too great for them, He takes them in His arms and carries them, or bids them lie down to rest. Sometimes He strengthens them with meat convenient for them. Then again He lets them know how weak they are, how little able to conduct themselves, or win a step on the heavenward road. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,” then He says. And is it not so? Surely yes. And must we learn our utter weakness, and His strength? our utter nothingness, and His all-sufficiency? Yes, we must. His grace is all in all, from first to last. His love is perfect, infinite. And it is joy to know, that while we worship Him who is our all, God blessed forever, we know Him as a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land. Thus we know Jesus now, as meeting us in our wilderness needs; but we wait for His coming again to take us out of the wilderness, that we may be forever with Him where He is.

Toledo Conference: 1986, God's Holiness and Love Inseparable (32:17)

These are not attributes of God. This is what He is, His essential being. He is light and He is love. And I was thinking as I listened, as we all did at the reading this morning, we had much said about Grace. And then a good deal said about righteousness, keeping the proper balance and holiness. And I just have a few thoughts to share with you that whenever there is a true manifestation of God who is light and love, there must be both of these elements, both of these characteristics present. Or God is not properly manifested. Look at the Lord Jesus. Look at that Blessed one as he walked through this scene. He was light and he was love. I'll just quickly refer to two incidents, one in John 4, the woman of Samaria, where he draws her heart out. And asks her for a drink. And she wonders why he and you would ask a drink of her, a woman of Samaria. And he says, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink. Thou wouldest have asked of him,

and he would have given thee living water. And there we see the character of God is love. We see the love of his heart going out to this woman. And offering her that living water, which caused her to say, Sir, give me this water that I come not. Here to draw and drink, and then we see that God is light. He says go, call thy husband. Her conscience must be reached if there's going to be blessing. It's not enough to reach the heart and draw it out and make it yearn for the blessing that he did, but the conscience must be reached. The springs of our moral being must be touched, and we must judge ourselves, and we must realize that we're in the presence of him. Who understands us through and through? Who knows our thoughts are far off? Who understands us? Who knows our down sitting and our uprising? The darkness and the light are both alike to Him, for all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. God is light and he knows all about you. He knows what you're thinking. He knows your life, He knows mine. He knows our motives. We have to do with Him who knows us all. And she was so blessed that her testimony was when she went into the city. This outcast, immoral, reprobate woman come see a man that told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ? He had revealed to her that he knew her entire life. He knew how evil it was. He knew that the man with whom she was living was not her husband. That she was living in sin. And yet he that one that knows all about me, he offered me living water. Because God is love, the goodness of the heart of God flowing out to the likes of us. For we're not one bit better than that woman, that woman of Samaria. Then John 8, when these the critical, self-righteous religious Pharisees who would bring the curse and judgment of the law against this woman, bring her one caught in a very active adultery. To the Lord Jesus. Now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned. But what sayest thou? They were in the presence of him who is late, and so he. Answered, He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone. And being convicted in their consciences, from the oldest to the least, they departed. And he who is loved to the said Hath no man condemned thee? No man, Lord, neither do I condemn me. The only one there that had the right to pick up a stone and hurl it at her. He was the only one who was without sin. But he wouldn't and he didn't because God is love. Well, those are two incidents, and it's beautiful to trace in the epistles. Light and love. Light and love, holiness. Truth, righteousness, grace, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, and where you have the one without the other, there seemed to be, there was a that was brought out in the reading this morning. Balancing truth. There must be. We are so inclined to err either on the side of legality or on the side of looseness.

There's a ditch on either side of the road and it's only the. Communion of the Holy Spirit, communion with the Lord that will keep us going down the center, keeping fast hold of both of these truths that God is light and that God is love, and not using them one against the other, as though to press holiness and truth and righteousness negates grace, or to press grace that that means. You're you're just giving up. Truth. No, we are to hold to both. And as we walk in the fellowship with the Lord and in communion, we will hold to both. And I'll turn back with me to one verse in 2nd Corinthians 3, our chapter that we had in the readings, verse 6. Our brother Hey Ho was making some comments about this and he said in his comments that Grace isn't mentioned in the chapter, but in this verse we certainly have it. Also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament. Again, the article isn't there. Testament is more properly translated covenant and it's more literally rendered ministers of the of new covenant or new covenant ministers. Now the Church of God is not in covenant relationship to God. Israel is, and they're going to be brought into blessing on the ground of the new covenant. But Paul says here we are new covenant ministers. Why does he say that? Because when Israel is brought into the blessings of the new covenant, it will be on the ground of pure and sovereign grace because they forfeited everything on the ground of their own responsibility. They forfeited everything. And if they're going to be brought into the blessings of the new covenant, it will be on the ground. Of grace. And so here we have the principle of grace mentioned. Not not the word mentioned, but the principle of it. Paul was a new covenant minister, that is, he was the minister of grace. Now we had in the chapter the administration of righteousness. Not the righteousness that we attain to by the works of the law, but the righteousness which is conferred upon us as a free gift. Christ Himself being our righteousness when we have to deal with difficult problems in our assemblies. Righteousness cannot be set aside or compromised or the truth set aside. It must be according to truth and righteousness and holiness. For He is the holy and the true. But then the Spirit of grace is to characterize us. And there's a verse this new covenant brings before me, and I want to end with that. Leave room for others in Isaiah 32. I share it with you, Isaiah 32. Verse that some verses hear that very precious verse 15. This is looking on to the Millennium, looking on to the time when the Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh, when righteousness and peace will cover the earth. And it says, Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, in the fruitful field be counted for a forest, then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. Now notice this. And the work of righteousness shall be. Peace and the effect of righteousness, Quietness and assurance forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation and ensure dwellings and in quiet resting places. It's been remarked that the do only falls on a quiet night, doesn't fall. During a stormy night, Nadu speaks a blessing. My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation. Jerusalem means that dwelling in peace. Little picture of the Assembly. The first word the blessed Lord, risen from the dead, presented to his own was peace. Peace be unto you. And then he commissioned us to go forth with that message of peace as my Father has sent me, Even so send I you. He brings it to us, and then he commissions us to carry it to others. And the assembly, the epistle of Christ is a dwelling in peace. Now there's such a thing as having peace at the expense of righteousness. They have hurled, they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly saying, peace, peace when there is no peace.

Now, that's not the kind of peace that we have here. Here this piece is the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance forever. And when there's an action or there are actions that are done in this way, and the Lord's glory is maintained and his honor upheld and righteousness manifested, the effect will be peace. And where it isn't, so, where it might be the legality that we were referring to. In our readings in 2nd Corinthians 3, the superior attitude Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou. That kind of thing. Oh, I would never do that. That kind of an attitude. The spirit of superiority, the spirit, the judgmental spirit, which alas, I have to confess to, I have had too much of in the past. Well, the Lord puts us through things, beloved. To teach us that we're not better as Elijah had to learn than our fathers, that we're all made out of the same stuff. And his dear old brother Eric Smith used to say nothing but a bunch of crooked sticks. Poor Jacobs, picked up by the grace of God, trophies of his grace, to manifest that in this scene, the crowning glory. But since that's the crowning glory of the church, grace, the worst perversion, the worst corruption possible, what we read of in Jew turning the grace of God. Into lasciviousness, using grace to palliate and cover up sin. That's the worst evil that there is. And this is the day of grace, and we're living in days when this is commonly practiced, using grace to excuse every form of moral. And spiritual wickedness, because after all, God's the God of grace and he'll forgive it and. To use that. Who say, let us do evil, that good may come? Whom Paul says of those whose judgment is just. No, let us never turn the grace of God into an excuse for doing our own will and for wickedness. Grace the crowning blessing of the Christian. We owe everything to it but righteousness to be upheld and maintained. And when that's so, verse 17, I'll read it again and then close. The work of righteousness. Shall be peace, Is it so when there's been a work and it's been a work of righteousness, the assembly will be at peace. Not unrest, not troubled. Sometimes, as a result of certain actions, the assembly is not at peace. Is that the work of God? Is that what God has promised? I know this is looking on to the millennial day, but the principle applies, doesn't it? The work of righteousness shall be peace. And

the effect of righteousness, quietness. And assurance forever and my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation and ensure dwellings and in quiet resting places.

Bible Queries, Notes on Former Questions: Vol. 1, 430 (32:19-20)

Q. 430. Vol. i. p. 146. The following extract from the Commentary of Delitzsch may throw some light on Isa. 32:19,20. The verses should be translated as follows:-" And it hails as the forest falls, and the city is greatly abased. Blessed are ye who sow by all waters, and let the foot of the ox and ass go free." In verse 19 the two last judgments are referred to, that of the Assyrian who is called the forest (see Isa. 10:34), and that of Jerusalem. Those who survive the time of these judgments are possessors of a land cleared of all enemies. They are free to sow wherever they will, and on account of the fertility of the soil are not obliged to keep away their cattle and asses from the cornfields, as is usually done, but allow them to stray in perfect liberty. For a parallel passage see Isa. 30:23, 24. A. B.

Echoes of Grace: 1951, Isa. 32:2 (32:2)

As the shadow of a great rockIn a weary, weary land;Or as rivers of refreshingFlowing through the desert sand;As a covert from the tempest,As a shelter from the wind,All in all in Thee, Lord Jesus—More than all in Thee I find.

Young Christian: Volume 19, 1929, Sowing the Seed (32:20)

“Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters!” (Isa. 32:20).

“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious Seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” (Psa. 126:6).

Young Christian: Volume 11, 1921, Hiding-Place From the Wind, A (32:2)

Isaiah 32:2.

One windy day, while two little girls were playing together, one said to the other, “I wish He would not send the wind to blow our hoops down.”

“No, Kathleen,” said the other, “He sends the wind to dry the clothes.”

The child’s saying reminds us that faith always puts the best construction on what God does. “He doeth all things well.” So Job thought when “the great wind” (Job 1:19) had done its deadly work. The bereaved one became a worshiper, saying, “Blessed be the name of the Lord.” Thus faith rides in triumph on the waves of adversity. “Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord” (James 5:11). Then was Job seen to be no loser (chap. 42:13), and God was a positive gainer, for His servant fell down and worshiped Him (chap. 1:20). The Creator and Commander of the wind was “a hiding place” for him.

And what but “a great wind” could have produced such marvelous results as those related in the book of Jonah? (Chap. 1). There God is seen to be using even the prophet’s disobedience to further His own purposes, and “the great wind” which He sends out into the sea results not only in the restoration of Jonah, but also in the blessing of all the crew. Who could call that “an ill wind” which brought a ship’s crew of guilty sinners into living contact with Jehovah, and replaced the feet of His erring servant in the path of obedience? “Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man” (Job 33:29).

Alas! some of us are very good fine-weather Christians. We like the south wind to blow softly (Acts 27:13), and even a little storm in our circumstances will fill us with “great fear,” and we are at our “wit’s end.” But even then our hearts need never want for anchorage, while we have such words as these, “God is for us” (Rom. 8:31). Yes, for us, when our friends are against us; when the world hates, when trials press, and when sorrows pierce, it is still true, God is “for us.” Whom He loves He chastens (Heb. 12). “He shall rest in His love,” and invites us to rest there, too. We cannot, dare not, rest in our love to Him; but in the Father’s love to us and for us our hearts may truly find repose, while we call to mind the blessed fact “The love wherewith He loves His Son, Such is His love for us.”

Not only is God for us, but what comfort there is in the Saviour’s words for our hearts, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end.” (Matt. 28:20). Literally it reads, “All the days”; whether they be bright or cloudy, calm or stormy, He is with us in them all. You never went a journey without Him; you never had a trial but He was with you in it. We may fail, He never will. The church may become more like the world; and the Christian, through unfaithfulness, may lose his reward, but the presence of Christ (as well as eternal life) is a thing never to be lost. His promise is an unconditional one, “Lo, I am with you alway.” If we are with Him, He will minister of His abundance to our souls; but if we leave Him, He will follow us (if it be with a rod), in order to bring us back to the place of blessing we had departed from. We often lose the sense of the Lord’s presence, and this accounts for so much of our sorrow, and so many of our fears. The disciples could never have thought of sinking in the deep, had they had a true sense of His presence. It is this which stills us in the storm, “It is I, be not afraid.”

“At all times, in all places, He standeth by my side, He rules the battle’s fury, the tempest and the tide.”

Present Testimony: Volume 2, 1850, Folly of Trusting to Egypt for Help, The (31:1-3)

"Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord."-Isa. 31:1-3.

The importance of Israel's history to the church of God, arises from its peculiar character as a nation, in contrast with the other nations of the world by which it was surrounded, and from which its special glory and privilege was to be separate and distinct.

Israel, as a people, was God's elect nation, of whom He says, " This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise." And, again, " You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." Hence their obedience or failures come to be most instructive to God's people now, because they exhibit the effect of God's principles, either in subjection to them, with all its happy issues; or in departure from them, with all its calamitous results.

This, it will be admitted, is true of their history generally; while, in one special part of it, the Scripture expressly, teaches, that " they were types of us."-" All these things happened to them for ensamples;1 and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

This is the point of importance in Israel's history, that they were a people in connection with God. Their conduct had its main importance in this respect. It had its bearing on their own national welfare, or the reverse; but it had a much higher importance in relation to God, as it exhibited His character and principles before the nations around. " Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord."

The nations of the world were the witnesses of the power and policy of man, and they exhibited the ways and principles of man; but Israel should have been a witness before the nations of that truth. " Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and the sword of thy excellency, and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee."

It is on this ground that Israel and" Egypt" are found, in their national character, so frequently presented in contrast in the Old Testament, just as the church and the world are set in constant opposition in the New. The principles of God had their place in the one, and the principles of man were working in the other, which necessarily placed them in opposition.

But Israel had another character besides that which was stamped on them by their connection with God, They were men, and they had, naturally, all the feelings and propensities of men. Hence, whenever their faith failed, and they were left to their own unrestrained action, they invariably displayed nothing but human tendencies, and sought for help in the natural resources of men.

It required the knowledge of God, and the recognition of the special relations he sustained towards them, and an active trust in His power and protection-in a word, faith in Him as God, and their God-to enable Israel to walk on God's principles, and to act in character before the nations. In like manner, now, it requires faith on the part of the church of God, in all God's blessed relations toward it, and the sense of His presence, in order to walk with Him, and to exhibit a heavenly character before the world. " They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee "! And what wonders of love and grace are wrapped up in the knowledge of that name! "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

But saints are men, as well as Israel of old, and in that character have been schooled and trained in the world, as Israel was trained in Egypt, and in either case the effect is seen, for the certain result of acting on the principles of the world, is to lose the principles of God. The world is a definite sphere, where the principles of man, under the influence of Satan, "the god of this world," are paramount and in action; while the church is the only sphere in which the principles of God are working. "Egypt" had its wisdom, and policy, and power; but Egypt could be only the oppressor or the corrupter of the people of God. Indeed, there is nothing more affecting in Israel's history, than their constant hankering after Egypt, after all that they had suffered there, and after all that God had done to deliver them from it. It only yields, in infatuation, to that which has been manifested in the history of the church, in its turning from the grace and presence of a divine Comforter and Guide, to the miserable shifts and appliances of "this present evil world."

The earliest mention of Egypt, except in Gen. 10, in the division of nations, is as the place whence Abram, the child of faith, sought help from the famine which pressed upon him, when a sojourner in " the land of promise." And, indeed, it was the land of earthly plenty. The comforts of this life were there in abundance; but we learn, in Abram's sojourn there, what a price must be paid by the believer for its " cattle, and silver, and gold," and for the favor of its prince The faith Of the patriarch and his altar belonged not to Egypt, but to the land of Canaan, which he had now left behind..

Egypt was the land of plenty. It was well watered, and the fruitfulness of its river was proverbial. But it did not drink of the "rain of heaven; nor did it enjoy the fertilizing dews from above. It is coupled with Lot's portion in the plain of Jordan; of which it is said, " it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as thou comest unto Zoar." Still its river bore only "the fatness of the earth;" and in this respect it is contrasted with Israel's portion, as chosen by the Lord. " The land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot as a garden of herbs: but the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven."

Accordingly, in after times, when their moral corruption was hastening on the sorrows of the Babylonish captivity, the Lord, by His prophet Jeremiah, expostulates with them thus:-" The children of Noph and Tahapanes have broken the crown of thy head. Hast thou not procured this unto thyself in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God when He led thee by the way? And now what hast thou to do with Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? Or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river?" Israel (had they known how to value it)

had their own "fountain of living waters;" and ought never to have been indebted to the streams of Egypt, or the nations around them.

As to Egypt, Joseph's history may indeed cast a halo of glory over it;-as even the world itself will be changed in its character when the humbled One comes to take His power;2 still its real character is to be found only in the hard and bitter bondage of Israel. For how often is that word repeated in the books of Moses, " Remember ye were bondmen in Egypt! And their redemption is thus characterized in Deut. 4:20, " The Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto Him a people of inheritance as it is this day."

It required the plagues of Egypt, and the blood of the Passover, to put God's captive people and their oppressors, into their true relative position towards each other. And accordingly, God's relation to Israel, in redemption, is thus expressed, " I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of Egypt;" while the confession that was connected with the offering of " the basket of first fruits " was designed to be the constant memorial of this. "Thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish, was my father; and he went down to Egypt to sojourn there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous; and the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage; and when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked upon our affliction, and our labor, and our oppression; and the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs and with wonders; and He hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land that floweth with milk and honey." (Deut. 26)

Still, almost as soon as ever they had reached the wilderness (the place of earthly destitution, and of heavenly supply), Egypt assumes another character in their eyes than the land of their oppression, and the place of God's judgment. "The children of Israel said unto them [Moses and Aaron] would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full." And they were not ashamed to say, "it was well with us in Egypt! " The reason of all this is obvious and instructive. To walk with God in a wilderness requires faith, and that spirit of dependence which nothing but faith can give. But to be satisfied with the supplies of Egypt is a thing which is perfectly understood by sense. Thus, whenever the necessities of their condition demanded the exercise of faith-and faith was not there, they, " in their hearts, turned back again into Egypt." And on one occasion, they said, "were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." Nor was this all: their religion was corrupted by Egypt. The worship of "the calf" was Egyptian idolatry; though Israel knew that the Lord had said, " I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the GODS of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am the Lord." But, alas! Israel had learned to commit fornication in Egypt; and they practiced the lesson in the wilderness, and ever after. For when the Lord presents before them their course, in the days of Ezekiel, in the parable of the two lewd women, He says, " they com- mitted whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth." The infidelities of Judah and Israel were multiplied in their after history; but it was only a fruit of their not having left their whoredoms brought from Egypt."3

On their entrance to the land under the leadership of Joshua, this is noticed though in grace, by the Lord. After the people were circumcised anew, " the Lord said unto Joshua, this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day." And nothing but the power of circumcision can keep the heart of the saint separate from the world now; for if the flesh be allowed, the world at once has an open door.

But, in another form, Egypt still was Israel's snare, after their settlement in the land. Outward weakness was the designed characteristic of Israel's polity by Jehovah; that the people might know that " they got not the land in possession by their own sword; neither did their own arm (at any time) save them; but Thy right hand and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favor toward them." And the song should have been ever heard in their midst, " Thou art my King, O God; command deliverances for Jacob. Through Thee will we push down our enemies; through Thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. But Thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us. In GOD we boast all the day long, and praise Thy name forever."

It was for this intent that they were forbidden to multiply horses, and that three times a year their coasts were to be left entirely unguarded; while all their males were brought together in solemn assembly, to Jerusalem, before the Lord. But Egypt was celebrated for its horses and chariots; and this is noticed in the Lord's prohibition to the king, " he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to the end that he should multiply horses; forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you ye shall henceforth return no more that way." Their redemption from Egypt and all its power should have been final; nor should anything have tempted them to return. But, in the reign of Solomon, we find that horses were one chief article of commerce with Egypt. In 1 Kings 10:28, 29, it is recorded that Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt:-"And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for an hundred and fifty." While in the days of Isaiah, the Lord complains, amongst other tokens of departure from himself, that "their land also is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots." But in the following chapter of the book of Kings, there is opened a still further effect of Solomon's affinity with Egypt. This wisest of men was corrupted by it. "King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh.....For it came to pass when Solomon was old that his wives turned away his heart after other GODS." How near is the neighborhood, and how subtle the connection of " the flesh," the world, and the devil! And how instructive is the lesson, that as to Israel, the first enemy that invaded their land after the death of Solomon was Shishak king of Egypt! " It came to pass in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem; and he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house: he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of silver and gold which Solomon had made." What force do these historical notices give to that statute of the kingdom (already partly quoted) "he shall not multiply wives to himself that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold!" And how full is the illustration of a part of the passage which is the subject of the present comment, "Yet he also is wise and will bring evil, and will not callback his words!"

There may be the silver and the gold, and the "tapestry, and carved work, and fine linen of Egypt "-but it is Egypt still! There may be its wisdom, and policy, and power; its horses and chariots—but still the word of the Lord remains in all its force, " Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses and trust in chariots because they are many; and on horsemen because they are very strong;.... now the Egyptians are men and not God; and their horses flesh and not spirit." And as a ground of trust to Israel, Egypt's character is most accurately given by a heathen man. " Now behold thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go

into his hand, and pierce it; so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to ALL that trust on him." And this judgment is entirely confirmed by the Lord, through Ezekiel, who says, "And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the Lord, because they have been a staff of reed, to the house of Israel. When they took hold of thee by the hand, thou didst break and rend all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou breakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand." Nor should this instructive warning to Israel be allowed to lapse while the saint has this significant note of divine wisdom concerning the world through which he is passing, that it is "the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified! " Heaven-bestowed names and titles are more unchanging, and more significant, than our careless hearts are wont to conceive. But finally, as to Egypt, when God speaks of it in all its glory, he speaks of it only as "the tabernacles of Ham!" lie smote all the first-born of Egypt: the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham!" And it may be said, that the example of Moses gives the only proper action of faith towards it. " By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." He esteemed " the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

All this recorded testimony to Israel about Egypt gives especial pungency to the denunciation of the prophet;-

" Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord! Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down and they all shall fail together" (Isa. 31:1-3).

The special and instructive contrasts here, are "Men" and "God;" and "flesh" and "spirit." Man with his horses, and chariots, and horsemen presenting an array of strength, resistless in the estimation of the natural mind; but " when the LORD shall stretch out his hand both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together." How deep is this infatuation of a people whose privilege and strength is thus presented to the eye of faith, that they should look to Egypt or horses and chariots as their strength!

" There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew, Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." (Deut. 33:26-29).

This was Israel's folly, to turn from God and his Spirit to trust in Egypt and in an arm of flesh, because they walked as men. But what is this to the church's folly that is associated with her head in heaven, and is blessed with the ever-abiding presence of the Holy Ghost on earth; and has God for her, and the infinite treasures of his grace as her resource; and eternal glory before her; when she is found turning to seek the world's friendship, and practically trusts in the flesh and in carnal wisdom for her guidance and help! The Lord teach our hearts more the force of that word, "If ye then be risen with Christ!" And lead us to beware of following the course of "Demas," of whom the apostle says, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." "If GOD be for us who can be against us." There is nothing more certain than this, that every degree of confidence that is reposed in man by a saint or in himself, is so much of his trust withdrawn from " the living God." "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God." But faith alone can use those weapons; and when faith fails, there is always the practical turning to the world and its strength and wisdom for help. This only is the right position of our souls, " to have the sentence of death in ourselves; that we should not trust in ourselves; but in God that raiseth the dead." And again let it be said; " if GOD be for us who can be against us!" " There is no king saved by the multitude of a host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. A horse is a vain thing for safety; neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.... our soul waiteth for the Lord; he is our help and our shield."

D.

The Remembrancer: 1909, "In Returning and Rest Shally Ye Be Saved" (30:15)

Let nothing make thee sad or fretful

Or too regretful,

Be still.

What God hath ordered must be right,

Then find in this thine own delight,

His will.

Why should'st thou fill to-day with sorrow

About to-morrow,

My heart?

One watches all with care most true;

Doubt not that He will give thee too

Thy part.

Only be steadfast: never waver

Nor seek earth's favor;

But rest.

Thou knowest what God's will must be

For all His children, so for thee —

The best.

Christian Friend: Volume 13, Isaiah 29:13-14 (29:13-14)

Three times this scripture; or part of it, is cited in the New Testament—twice by our blessed Lord, and once by the apostle Paul; and it is exceedingly instructive to note the connection in which the different quotations are found. In Matthew 11, after upbraiding the, cities wherein most of His mighty works were clone because they repented not, the Lord turned at this moment of rejection to His Father, and found rest in the sovereign counsels of Him who was Lord of heaven and earth, saying, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes,” &c. (v. 25) Turning back to our scripture, we learn that hiding these things from the wise and prudent was not the action of arbitrary power, but the judicial consequence of formality and hypocrisy in holy things, and of accepting the precepts of men in the place of the word of God. In Matthew 15 the Lord brings forward the first part of the scripture in condemnation of the ritualistic observances of the Jews, making, as they did, the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition. “Ye hypocrites,” He says, “well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” (vv. 7-9) Let the reader observe that the chief sin of the Pharisees; in addition to, their hypocrisy, was teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and that worship so regulated was in vain. The apostle Paul quotes the latter part of the passage to show that the wisdom of this world is brought to naught by God. “The preaching of the cross,” he says, “is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” (1 Corinthians 1:18,19) The reader, if he pursue the study, will soon discover, if led of the Holy Spirit, how various the applications and lessons of the smallest portion of the sacred Word. But “the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God;” and this Spirit we if believers, have received “that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:11,12)

Present Testimony: Volume 4, 1852, Responsibility to God Resulting From Revelation (29:11-14)

"The vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."

One effect of the possession of a divine revelation is to put men's consciences under responsibility to God. Its happiest end is to bring the soul into association with God Himself-the God of goodness-and into a recognition and an approval of His counsels and ways.

That an authoritative communication of the mind of God must needs place those to whom it is given in a position of direct responsibility to Himself, is a truth so simple that it could never be controverted by a mind in which the true ideas of God, and a revelation from God, held their place. Still there is no principle which wrong notions of religion lead men so invariably, in practice at least, to set aside.

The reason of this, one has not far to seek, if his thoughts and inquiries are guided by revelation itself. It lies in that desire for independence arid self-aggrandizement which became the indelible characteristic of man with the fall. His proud efforts to achieve his own happiness may be shown indeed to be abortive as often as he is confronted by death: yet, of universal man, may it be said,-" This their way is their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings."

His necessities may be pleaded as a ground for seeking to subordinate the domain of physical nature to his control; but the lust of domination which seeks to subjugate " the bodies and the souls of men," is the bitter fruit of an ambition which has no place in the universe of God, except as the companion and the consequence of sin.

Leaving aside, however, the path of those who spurn the idea of a revelation; and of those who only quarrel with it when it crosses their pursuits; it may be asserted, that where religion is the avowed business of men, and revelation is nominally received, there is nothing so infrequent as the recognition of the truth, that authority over the minds and consciences of men belongs alone to God.

Wherever religion or a formal Christianity. is maintained, there will, of necessity, be the setting aside of this authority, because other ends are in question besides those of restoring the soul to God and God to the soul. In Popery this is the all-pervading principle, and effectually neutralizes the power of every truth which yet exists in that enormous corruption of Christianity. For while the name and authority of

revelation are used as a sanction of its arrogant assumptions, responsibility directly to God, in accordance with that revelation, is utterly and universally denied.

But apart from this, the walk of faith cannot be: and the liberty of the truth ceases to exist. When " the truth makes free," its characteristic is, that of entire independence of man, in order to absolute subjection to God.

The mischief of the reverse of this can hardly be estimated, since it is essential that God should be removed to a distance, that man may come in and fill up the space.

It is not an object in itself of the spirit of God doubtless to attack evil or to expose the errors of the professed teachers of religion; but in order to guard_ the souls of God's people against yielding to their authority, this is very unsparingly done both by the prophets in the Old Testament, and also in the Gospels by Christ Himself.

It was this which called forth the reprobation of the Lord, in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, of those which sat in " Moses' seat." For while he enjoins upon the multitude and his disciples subjection to them as dispensers of the law (for this is the force of "sitting in Moses' seat"), and thus establishes the authority of God's revelation in whosesoever hands it may be found; He at the same time denounces woe upon woe against these " blind guides;" and deduces, their utter corruption, which he discloses in so many points, from this source; " All their works they do to be seen of men." As, in another place, He had said, "How can ye believe who receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor which cometh from God only?" And also in the fifteenth chapter of Matthew, He charges them, with making the commandment of God of none effect through their tradition: adding, in the words of the prophet, " Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

Now it is not so much the particular errors that were taught, that are aimed at in this passage, as the ground and source from whence all error flows: "Their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men." Or, as it is quoted by the Lord, "Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

Even truth ceases to have the power of truth, when it is taught by the precept of men; though error, in a greater or less degree, necessarily marks the stream that flows from man's authority as its source.

The evil of this principle, which is all but universal in the religious teaching of the present day, is, that it deprives the word of God of its just authority; puts man, in relation to the conscience, in the place of God; and extinguishes, both in the teachers and the taught, the capacity to judge aright of the revelations which the word of God contains. " Their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men; THEREFORE will I proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."

" If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." But if a right aim be not actuating the heart, the word of God cannot be allowed to speak its simple meaning. " The light that is in us becomes darkness;" and then both learning and ignorance must be content to look around for an excuse for not being able to understand what is simple enough to an obedient heart. "The secret of The Lord is with them that fear him." "None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

The difficulties of revelation are not the real stumbling-blocks in the path of the enquirers after truth. Greater difficulties are overcome in the investigations of philosophy and science; because in these cases the bias of the heart offers no barrier to a just conclusion. But as regards the revelation of God, a moral condition of heart is enough to induce men "to turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables."

It was the moral condition of both the teachers and the taught, visited, no doubt, by a judicial blindness, which gave occasion for the application of the words; " The vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this I pray thee; and he saith, I am not learned."

Thus both learning and ignorance have at hand a ready excuse, for not being able to understand what the heart has no disposition to obey. The most opposite grounds are adduced; but this only serves to show, that it is the heart's subterfuge to get rid of a responsibility it is not prepared to own; and its effort to silence a voice, which if listened to, would only condemn.

Learning seldom owns itself at fault, or confesses that there are any arcana which it cannot penetrate, except when it is called to understand or teach the word of God.

And on the other hand, the want of learning is seldom pleaded by the illiterate as a disqualification for not understanding anything but the word of God.

But the authority of revelation being thus disposed of, and religion still pursued-for it is added, " this people draw near to me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me"-there remains only this, to " teach for doctrines the commandments of men."

Now it was against these " commandments of men," or the traditionary teachings of the Scribes and Pharisees, that the Lord directs (Mark 7) the force of this passage of the prophet; declaring that they made the word of God of none effect through their traditions; and even stronger than this, that they rejected the commandment of God that they might keep their own tradition. And he instances a case in confirmation of the charge of so flagrant a character, as to make the sensitive heart recoil from even a momentary allowance of a principle, which might land the soul in so fearful a conclusion: " Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."

But in the parallel passage in Matt. 15, the opposition is even more direct. "GOD commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But YE say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."

Alas! there is no corruption like that which, while it professedly honors God, under the guise of respect for tradition, sets aside the only revelation of his will, and perverts the only standard by which truth and error can be ascertained.

It matters nothing as to the importance or insignificance of the point about which tradition is concerned; its mischief is still the same.

Nothing could be more indifferent in itself than eating bread with washed or unwashed hands;-but it was in this simple matter that the principle lurked which set aside the plainest commands of the word of God, that the authority of man might be established.

The evil of the principle is this, that the teaching being from man, it reaches, and can reach, only to the notions and aims and objects of man. It never can reach, even when it does not seem to oppose, the height of God's thoughts; whether of his holiness or his grace. Consequently it can never have the authority of God by his Spirit, nor the sanction of God by his blessing: while it seems superfluous to add, that to the soul the prime blessing of the death of Christ is lost. For " he suffered for sins once, the just for the unjust, that he might bring-US TO GOD."

As to all apostolic, or successional, or traditional authority, the Apostle declares that he was " an Apostle not of men, nor by men, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead;" and so the character Of all authoritative teaching is the same. It is directly from God, and challenges obedience to God, for which His blessed revelation is the direct and only rule. " They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them!" While in the 2nd of Peter it is said-" No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.' Why? Because "the prophecy came not in old time (or at any time) by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

It is true, both in the prophet and in our Lord's application of this passage, the censure it contains falls mainly on the teachers of these traditions; but it must not be supposed that the responsibility of such a state of things rested with them alone. It is said-"This people draweth nigh unto me," etc. And again (in Jer. 5:30, 31)-" A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so."

It is seldom that error is taught for error's sake. Ff the most part, it is a consequence of a previous state c corruption, in teachers and taught. Aaron, indeed, mad the object of idolatry when he fashioned the golden calf but it was only to meet the idolatrous feelings of Israel before which his heart, through lack of faith, has quailed.

Where faith does not come in to give God, at al costs, His place, as in the three Jews before the golden image in the plains of Dura, there is nothing left but to seek to lower things to a human standard, and then to cover the corruption with the pretended sanction of revelation, whose authority has in reality been destroyed.

O did the children of God but know how much hangs upon it, how would they seek that God and His revelations might remain in their integrity! For here; and here alone, is found the power to bring heaven and heavenly glory to the soul. And here too alone are the springs and power of a life and walk of faith; and here is the only power by which the poor heart of man can be delivered from the mazes of a multiform error, and the wretched trammels of a growing superstition.

But this would be "to put forth the precious from the vile," which God's mouth always does.

But if otherwise, whether the fault be most with the teachers or most with the taught, there is but this melancholy conclusion for each-" If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

The Springing Well: Volume 5 (1902), Illustrative Gleanings: The Corner Stone (28:16)

“Therefore thus saith, the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.” Isa. 28:16.

THIS is what God tells us about the foundation stone of His house.

God says of His foundation stone, it is a tried stone, a precious stone, a sure foundation.

But God does not mean a real stone: nor is there a real building that has taken so long to build.

This verse explains what is meant by “a sure foundation.”

“Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11). God’s foundation stone is the Lord. Jesus: and, because of what He is and has done, God forms this building. He tells us what He thinks about His foundation stone: the Lord Jesus is so precious to God, that, even when He was here in this world, He said of Him, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Where do the stones come from of which this building is composed? First let me ask you, What do you think of God’s foundation stone? “What think ye of Christ?” Do you believe that He is a sure foundation? And is He, oh! is He precious to you?—for all the preciousness is unto you which believe. Do you rest your soul on God’s foundation stone? I hope you do, for then “Ye also, as lively (that is, living) stones, are built up a spiritual house.”

What is the building for? The. Apostle Paul says, “In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:21, 22). This house is God’s habitation—the place where He dwells. We cannot see Him, but His Spirit is here on this earth, and God dwells, by His Spirit, in His house.

Helps by the Way: Volume 1, Hymn of Praise., A (26:3)

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in thee.”— Isaiah 26:3.

—S. T. R.

Hantsport, Canada.

Christian Treasury: Volume 9, All Depends on the Nail (22:23-24)

Quaint John Bunyan used an illustration which is as helpful as it is simple in showing how secure the believer is in Christ.

He takes the simile of Isa. 22:23, 24 where Christ is seen as "a nail in a sure place," and of which it is said, "They shall hang upon Him all the glory of His Father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.”

Everything for God's glory depends upon Christ and His glorious work, and everything for the sinner's salvation and for the believer's security depends upon Him and His glorious work as well.

Bunyan says that there is a nail driven securely into a strong wall, and on that nail hangs a great iron cauldron in perfect safety. That vessel weighs perhaps half a hundred weight. Beside it on the same nail hangs a little tin cup. Both are in perfect safety. They both depend on the same support, but the little tin cup shivers and shakes and wonders if the nail can hold it up. Then he supposes the cauldron saying, "You silly little tin cup, the nail holds me safely, and it can hold a thousand like you.”

The work of redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ upholds all the glory of God: His majesty, His honor, His faithfulness. All is maintained by Christ, and His work holds up safely every believer too. Trust Him fully. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." Heb. 7:25.

Christian Treasury: Volume 3, Nail, The (22:23-24)

There is one Nail fastened in a sure place, and there the flagons hang and the cups too. "Oh." says one of the little cups. "I am so little and so black, suppose I should drop." The flagon says, "I am so heavy, so weighty, suppose I should drop." One cup says, "Oh, if felt like that golden cup. I should never fear falling." And the gold cup answers, "It is not my being a gold cup keeps me, but it is all by the Nail! If the Nail comes down, we all go! The cup may be gold or pewter, but so long as the Nail remains, the cups all hang safely." (See Isa. 22:23, 24.)

The Remembrancer: 1909, "Watchman, What of the Night?" (21:11)

SA 21:11{

Another (and he, the anointed apostle for these last times) sent to us from the risen Son of man (exalted above the night of chaos and of ruin, and seated in the glory of God) cries, " The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." The prophet and the apostle are each right, and in the mind of the Lord, in their respective occupations and seasons, giving out their varied lessons to the people of God.

Isaiah, in the midst of the earthly family, is directing their thoughts: as to the night and morning, in relation to the two centers of the earth, Jerusalem and Babylon. Paul, in the midst of the heavenly family, is instructing the elect Gentiles what to do, and what to be, in these present church ruins, and in the night time of an evil world. Paul writes to those united to the Lord (who has been cast out of it till the morning comes), and the word by this watchman to us is, " Ye are all the children of light, and of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness; therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober," &c. (1 Thess. 5).

Many of those who are instructed in the school of God, know that the ministry of an Old Testament prophet, and his prophesyings, can only find their opportunity and place, when the people to whom he is sent have failed in the original blessing where God had set them; for, as we have said, God never allows even the ruin to pass out of His own hand. The ministry of "an apostle by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead," is of a different order, and reveals the hidden things which were " kept secret from before the foundation of the world, and which God ordained to our glory," with Christ. The blessing of the church in the heavens, by His divine callings and separations in a risen Lord, and the final prosperity of Israel, and the nations on the earth, by their bounds and divisions, together with the deliverance of a

groaning creation, into redemption-light, are alike in the counsels of the living God, and to be manifested in glory. It is equally in His own hands to meet and set aside Babylon and the Gentile nations then, as to establish Jerusalem, and make her a praise in the whole earth, with Christ hereafter.

The watchman said, by Isaiah, " The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come;" and these are the alternations which lie before us for inquiry and examination. Originally everything in creation that God saw was good, and there was no evil; but, as in a moment, all was changed, and everywhere there was evil, and no good. Originally too, the blessing of God that maketh rich rested on every creature, but, as in an instant, the blessing was nowhere, and the curse of God lay heavily on all around. In creation the evening and the morning made each day, but in history with man, it is the morning cometh, and also the night, alas! Still, He has not cast away the heavens and the earth that He created for His own pleasure with the sons of men, nor will He suffer the mighty ruin to pass into the power of the enemy of God and man. But what will He do, in whose hands are the issues of life and of death? Only to think for a moment of God Himself standing in the breach, and acting upon the supremacy of His own goodness, over all the evil and the misery; yea meeting the usurpation of Satan, and the outbreak of sin in the creature, by falling back upon His own sovereign power and electing love! God's only resource was in Himself, nothing could challenge His omnipotence, or escape His omniscience, or go beyond His control. He alone can say, "Hitherto shalt thou go, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." How will He, and how can He, bring down His own immensity and infinitude in grace into the circle of morning and night? How connect them with Himself inside the range of men and things, where all is now in ruins and wretchedness, and when all that was morning has become night, and gone down into darkness?

He who said, Let there be light, and there was light, and who made a firmament in the midst of the waters, to divide the waters from the waters, can bring in a sunrise to form a morning where there is none. In the earliest records of His ways, He did it after this creation-pattern of dividing the one from the other, when He acted as the Possessor of the heavens and the earth. For example, “When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He Separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people (`peoples ') according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. 32:8). When this supremacy of God, by act and deed, in dividing the nations, is anything more to man than an historical fact, it becomes a very wonderful thing. Marvelous indeed to set their bounds; and, further, that God should come out into the midst of mankind, to divide them, and to act upon His own sovereignty in grace-yea, to begin a register, by which to chronicle an earthly family for Himself 'in their generations! This supervision and care makes one understand that some purpose of God, which He has ordained for His own glory, and the blessing of His creatures, is to be ultimately reached in the circle of manhood, notwithstanding the expulsion of Adam from paradise. One only begins to discover what this divine secret can be of dividing a nation from all others, and a race from races of men, when we recall the promise that " the Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." This wonderful registration was therefore strictly maintained till after JESUS, the Immanuel, was born, to whom God pointed, according to the genealogies that went before, and which closed by His incarnation.

It is remarkable, too, that our early progenitors were guided to call their sons by names, not only significant of their own faith in this promise, but that their offspring were the rightful heirs. The two books of Chronicles, which contain the generations of Israel, and their kingly history, maintain these facts in their general character, and prove likewise that God held that elect nation always in His mind, by starting their genealogies from Adam and Seth. The first of these books is in harmony with the dividings and distinctions in the six days' work of creation, and with God's intention of thus bringing out a seed for the accomplishment of His purposes, and the establishment of covenanted blessings in the midst of Israel and the tribes, as “an elect people " on the earth. The second book opens grandly with the record of this accomplishment, in the typical David and his son Solomon, reigning on God's throne in Jerusalem. The king and his kingdom are established in Israel, and divided off from the nations, as the wonder and admiration of the whole world. Consistently with these objects, the first book begins its genealogy of the family, or household of God, in the elect line of Adam, Seth, and then Enoch. It commences thus the history of the elect tribes, in the registry of Jehovah and His people, by going back to the man created in the image of God; and closes their antedeluvial ancestry with the Enoch who walked with God, and was translated that he should not see death. A precious type this of the heavenly family caught up, on the one hand, and an early intimation that Israel will really be connected with them, and in blessing likewise, in the time of their happy millennium.

It is a point of much interest and significance to notice here, that in this Book of Chronicles, where God is writing up His people, or setting Israel as a firmament to divide the nations from the nations, the Spirit refuses to introduce or make any mention of Cain, that wicked one, and his posterity. I judge this was that the earthly family might be rightly identified by descent, and as horn after the flesh, with the promises of Jehovah; and, moreover, distinguished and divided off from all others, as they afterward were, by circumcision. Indeed we may ask, in passing, how could the man who went away out of the presence of God, and became a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, be a link in the chronicles of an elect people? On the contrary, Seth, or the substituted and appointed one (instead of righteous Abel, whom Cain slew), is the man with whom the generations of men and their genealogies begin anew in Gen. 5 "And the days of Adam, after he had begotten Seth, were eight hundred years. And Seth lived, after he begat Enos, eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters." Israel's genealogies, which include the birth of the Messiah and finish with it, are on this account full of interest; nor is there any other ancestry or generation worthy of record, save it be " the dukes of Esau, and the dukes of Edom," which stand apart in an unenviable place of their own, and outside.

Succession in the flesh was thus established by God, and became their pride—yea, everything—to a true Israelite. On this account, as " an elect people," it was their only remaining glory and boast, on coming up out of Babylon, that they could be still reckoned by their genealogies and families, because the promises were made to " the Seed " of their father Abraham. Thus " the Tirshatha " says in Neh. 7, " My God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles and the rulers and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first," which identified them with the city of Jerusalem and the first Book of Chronicles. Morally and prophetically, we may add, as well as by adoption and birth, they were the descendants of an elect seed, to be brought out in due time as the ordained family, and an appointed nation, for the introduction of covenanted blessing upon the earth. This was promised through Abraham, the friend of God, as the heir of the world, and confirmed to David, the man after God's own heart, as the anointed king, whose greater Son is yet to rule and reign over it, from the rising to the setting of the sun.

It may be further observed, that the First Book of Chronicles closes its earthly and typical program with David's charge to Solomon, and with the transfer of all the measurements and patterns which he had received by the Spirit of God, concerning the temple of peace, and rest, and

glory that was to be built. For " the palace," as be says " is not for man, but for the Lord God," who was coming to take up His abode in their midst. Nor can David happily close his eyes upon that day and generation until he, as the head of Israel, unites with the chief of the fathers, and with the princes of their tribes, in offering their gifts of gold, and silver, and precious stones, to make the place of the Lord's feet glorious in that hour of their morning glory. As the sweet psalmist, under the anointing oil, he exceeds them all when he sings or plays upon the harp, touching their bright millennial day: or when, as a worshipper before the ark, he dances on its way to the place of its rest: or as now joyfully making preparations for the temple to receive it. How excellent is he, too, as the leader Of the prayers and praises of the great congregation: " Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.... O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own.... And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads and worshipped the Lord and the King."

The first book of genealogies, and its arrangements of order and service for the throne and the kingdom, together with the magnificent architectural plans and buildings, with its yet costlier gifts and preparations, is in manifest distinction to their accomplishments and construction in the Second Book of Chronicles. Who can measure, for example, the contrariety and the distances between the opening verses in each book? Or who would attempt to fill in the immense gap of time and circumstance between them, by a narration of the historical facts, except as gathered from the word of God? It is like coming up out of the night of chaos into creation again, with a new company, as we open the first book, and read of an " Adam, Seth, and Enoch," who was translated that he should not see death. Nor is this feeling of surprise lessened when we open the Second Book of Chronicles, to read, as in the morning light, " that Solomon, the Son of David, was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly." What a tremendous chaos is thus being filled up by God in history! It is like a new beginning in the midst of other and elect creatures, and of a better creation, so that one scarcely knows where we are in this new genealogy, which has given birth, by the letter and order of the first book, to such a man as this Solomon of the second; and yet a man endowed with wisdom such as never had been, or shall be; and invested with honor and power, by the hand of the living God, such as Adam had not before the fall.

Within the beauty of this enclosure, too" Immanuel's land "-one might ask again, " Watchman, what of the night?" and what has become of the curse on the ground, when all flows with milk and honey? In the presence of this Solomon, inducted into the highest place out of heaven, and invested with royal majesty as a king, before whom all other kings bow and pay tribute, and queens do homage, one may almost think of the fall, and of the man whom God drove out of Eden, as a bygone thing, a dream that is past away with the night, and obliterated in the peace and prosperity of this new center of the world's jubilee. The earth seems to invite the heavens to come out, and hail the new morning that is come, and make merry and be glad with the elect people whom God is leading into His "rest in Zion." Moreover, Jehovah has left the tent and tabernacle, in which He dwelt and journeyed with the twelve tribes of these genealogies in the wilderness, and is ready to accompany them, and the ark of the covenant, out of the First Book of Chronicles into the Second, and to draw out the staves, when its final resting-place in the temple is completed. The Lord will Himself then appear, and fill the whole house with His glory, so that there shall not be room even for the priests to enter in, because God is in His holy temple.

The Second Book of Chronicles introduces us, in its early chapters, to scenes like these, and the whole world is wakened up, on this break of day, to lay bare its treasures, and mines of gold, and all the precious things in the depths of the earth, because God has risen up out of His place, and is coming in with the brightness of the morning into Jerusalem, to make it " the city of the great King." What change—yea, what mighty revolution—in favor of mankind, can have come up before the God of heaven and of earth, that all kings and countries should be tributary to Him on this great occasion of His temple on Mount Moriah? Again, we may say, " Watchman, what of the night?" when Hiram, king of Tire, is a willing servant, and lays the forests of Lebanon at the feet of Solomon, with cedar-trees, fir-trees, and algum-trees in abundance. He provides also a cunning man, endued with understanding, who is skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber. In purple also, and in blue, in fine linen, and in crimson.; for Jehovah was coming forth into this kingdom and its costly temple. " Likewise men to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device that shall be put to them with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father;" for this sun was to rise upon Solomon without a cloud.

What can such mighty changes mean between God and His creatures? What can they betoken, but that " the watchman's morning cometh in " Is the Creator finding out a rest for Himself once more in the works of His own hands? and are men become so good, that He gives out patterns to them, and calls their cunning ones to be master-builders and artificers for Him?

Are the plans and methods of the divine order so enlarging themselves, as that He who built all things above and below should ask men to build Him a house? And such a house! Or, perhaps, wearied in maintaining righteous government in the midst of men upon the earth, is He about to forego the records of the cherubim at the garden-gate? Does He not remember the destructive deluge, when a world that then was perished? or the cities of the plain which were burned with fire and brimstone, because of the exceeding wickedness of its inhabitants? Can He have forgotten Babel, and its city, and its tower; or the day when He confounded men's tongues, and set at naught their speech?

But there is no room for such doubtful inquiries; on the contrary, it is in the full knowledge that Adam and Eve are gone forever, and that an end of flesh in the world before the flood had come before God, and perished, that He has thus divided a nation from the nations, and separated by genealogy a generation from the families of men; that His own purpose of grace by election might surmount the deluge and the flaming sword. He has therefore brought in promises, and a covenant, and a calling-out, and established these in Abraham and his Seed, which is Christ. He has also set up mediation by Moses, and priesthood in Aaron, so that that dark night of ruin might give place to the morning light, and the great day of atonement. God is adding the glory of kingship to these others, in the person of Solomon, whom He now sets upon the throne of his father David, and establishes him over the kingdom of Israel. No, God is not unmindful of His judgments in the earth, but in the midst of them He remembers mercy, and works for His own, glory.

Nor is He come forth to repeat Himself, or to inaugurate another beginning, with His creatures; but He is bringing out and completing in Solomon and a theocracy, all the reserves of wisdom and grace, which God had kept in His own power, and still postpones for manifested blessing, till the second coming of Jesus-Immanuel, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Solomon was responsible (like Adam) for maintaining these treasures which had been put into his hands, and for using them to the glory of God. Jehovah had thus given out all He had to bestow (except, last of all, His Son), and set up these resources before their eyes in Moses, and Aaron, and David, and the times that went over them. Now, " kingship " is to be displayed in Solomon,, and the watchman's cry is heard again, " the morning cometh, and also the night."

And is this what God is doing with the elect king, in the midst of His elect nation? Is He in very deed making one more display of Himself, and one more appeal to them, and this almost the last, before the night, that terrible night, comes again, and He sets the best thing aside that He can do for the welfare of His earthly people? Is all this to share the same fate as Eden, and must God come into it all one day, and profane His sanctuary, and His throne, and His kingdom by casting all down to the ground? Alas He has, done all this, and Jerusalem is " trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." What a lesson does this historical picture present to Judah and Israel, and the civilized world, in their forgetfulness of God, and in this day of their boasted progress and prosperity, whilst they are in a mistaken defiance, making out histories for themselves by their self-sufficiency.

But the judgment of God, by driving out or casting down, plucking up or cutting off, never comes in to take revenge on departure from Himself, and what He creates or bestows, till He can say, " What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" If we repeat the inquiry in the light of this patient consideration of God, and yet of human responsibility, under such accumulated grace and outward prosperity, as marked the ascent of King Solomon to the throne of his glory, the answer must be plain. And what would this answer be but this—that the moment of his grandest elevation was the one of his greatest danger, and the ripest hour of his vast power and dominion was but the precursor of his declension and downfall. And why? Because, though an elect vessel, like the nation was an elect nation, yet was he but a man in the flesh, and still in a sinful nature, outside Christ and the Holy Ghost.

The time was not yet come for them to stand before God, as we now do, upon the ground of accomplished and eternal redemption by the work of Christ upon the cross. Nor could " they reckon themselves, dead unto sin," and to the law, by the body of Christ, and be thus made " free to be married to another, even to Him that is raised from the dead, that they might bring forth fruit unto God." However favored Solomon might be, and was, yet it was by endowment; whilst as the head and king of Israel, he was responsible by his own obedience, in the position he held, for maintaining them in unbroken relationship with Jehovah, their Lord. These great drawbacks, as to his manhood, made him a celebrity by what God had heaped upon him, and not because he had earned them, or was competent to retain them as part of his own being. There is only one—JESUS, the Son of God—of whom 4 can personally be said, " Thou art worthy to receive all wisdom, and glory, and riches, and power," and He had not yet come into this world (though promised) by the mystery of the incarnation. A heavy thousand years had to roll round, weighted by the saddening tale of the decline and fall of a theocracy, in the midst of Israel; and made sadder by their rejection of the marvelous ministry of the prophets (even though accompanied by their lamentations and tears), before the fullness of the time came for God to send forth His Son. The Messiah, their only Savior and Deliverer, will then be the light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

The first man, Adam, in innocency, and in the image of God (before history had begun), was at home in an unspotted creation, with Him who made it; yea, God walked with the creature He had formed for His delight in the cool of that unclouded day. When all this was lost, and marred by Satan and sin, and it repented God that He had made man upon the earth, and the world that then was perished by a flood, God, in His sovereignty, called out one and another to walk with Him, upon promise, and blessing, and future happiness to be established in an elect seed, according to covenant. What else could He do in wisdom and grace, when all present and created good, even a paradise, had been forfeited, and the gates of Eden closed-yea, man driven out; and God had retired into His own place to consider, leaving a curse behind Him, in righteous judgment, upon a groaning creation? Adam's world has been since buried by the waters of a deluge, weighed down, moreover, by the violence and the corruption of the millions who inhabited it. In this world, since the flood (or Noah's world), God formally called out Abraham to begin this new line of His election, as the genealogies of the First Book of Chronicles have taught us. These have given birth to, and perhaps close up, this illustrious line of elect vessels with Solomon, till Matthew and Luke add the generations which bring in the Immanuel.

We have taken this short review of two worlds, in order to give weight, or prominence to Solomon, the man of endowments and attainments, conferred upon Him by God, in contrast with all who ever were before, or shall come after him; and it is with this wonderful Solomon, in whom the expectations of the world culminate, the Second Book of Chronicles begins, with its bright morning in Jerusalem, followed by its dark night of captivity in Babylon. He is before the world, and before the heavens, and all who dwell in them, to stand or fall in the place where never man was seen before, in royal majesty and imperial power. He is responsible for their use to Him who bestowed them; and yet, having this unheard-of opportunity of bringing glory to God, and blessing to the ten thousands of Israel and the nations, by their rightful exercise, what a new era in the history of God and mankind is in view, and depending on the fealty and obedience of the only competent man, too, upon earth, for he has not his fellow! Adam was perfect as a created being, and a creation hung upon his allegiance to the Creator. Solomon is perfect, not as a creature; but set apart as an elect vessel to receive the favor of God, and to be enriched by Him in mind, body and estate; so that, by reason of his endowments and attainments, " he was wiser than all men, and his fame was in all the nations round about." What an unparalleled hour in history! what an opportunity for the wisest of men! what an occasion for the world in its throes, and under the bondage of corruption, if it could be delivered by superhuman wisdom and power!

Nevertheless, in the counsels of the Godhead, this problem had to be wrought out, as to the competency, or incompetency of a fallen man, even when sustained and endowed to the utmost, to hold and to use what was entrusted to his hands for the glory of God, and his own happiness, and the welfare of his fellow-creatures? The great men of successive ages may well be dumb before this greater man of a previous age. The bold men of the twentieth century may stagger and bow their heads before the man " whom God magnified exceedingly " three thousand years ago, and respecting whom He said, there never again should be his like. It was God who brought out this problem before the world (of the insufficiency of the creature), and that it might not be left an open question for generations which should come after, but be settled in the life-time, and by the living ways, of no one less than King Solomon and this most favored nation. If, besides all these endowments, men speak of genius, let them, but they must pale before him who uttered three thousand proverbs, and whose songs were a thousand and five. if they rejoice in the created works around, and think themselves masters of all the eye can see, or the heart desire-let them, but they must give place to him " who withheld not his heart from any joy." He spike of tree, from the cedar in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

Whether one sees him on the throne in government, and exercising justice and judgment; or in the temple, before the altar of the Lord; or upon the scaffold of brass, as an intercessor and a worshipper, between Jehovah and the commonwealth of Israel—all is as complete and exact as the laws of the sanctuary and of the kingdom demanded. Indeed these were the birth-place and great beginnings of a history, and of

a name that rose up in its strength and brightness over the haze and darkness of a vast universal declension-like the sun that dispels the gloom, and drives away the mists, till it mounts into its own supremacy, and rules and makes the day. " Watchman, what of the night? The morning cometh, and also the night." God acknowledged and put His own seal upon all this opening prosperity, by the glory that dwelt in the temple, and filled the land. " And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand which is on the sea-shore."

Who would think of, or dare to repeat, an Adam, sinless and in innocence, with whom God was so close, that there was no room for an intermediate providence, nor any necessity for its exercise? Are God and men still so one as to walk and be together, or have they ever since been separated off by sin in a fallen creation? Nay, not only has He closed up all such direct and immediate intercourse between Himself and the creature, but measured the distance, and maintains it still, as a God superintending all things by His providence. He is sitting in the heavens in His righteousness, and they upon the earth, with the curse and the sweat of the brow upon every child of Adam, and the groaning of a blighted creation all around. Moreover, who would think of, or dare to repeat, a Solomon, not sinless like Adam, but sinful in his nature, as born of the man who fell, yet made illustrious, and made a celebrity, by conferred gifts and endowments which he received of God, and which were commanded in a moment of time to rest upon him, in answer to his prayer?

Men may possess the same faculties, but where and when have any stood forth as he, to be wondered at, not because of their attainments, but some who were not a Solomon for one instant, and became one the next, by having had to do distinctly and directly with God? May it not be said, yea, must it not be admitted, that first-class education, and its necessity in this century, cannot measure the distance, much less do away with the gulf, between those who are under its high pressure, and an endowed Solomon; just as, for other reasons, a kind and merciful Providence maintains a distance now between the Creator and His creatures? Did Solomon become one under tutors and governors, and by the slew and measured steps of examinations, and degrees, and honors, as the hardly-won fruit of collegiate study, which are accepted in the present day as the high road to advancement and preferment, for place or power, in the world as it now is? No; he was the wise man, made such out-of-hand, by God, in a moment, just as truly as when, He breath; ed into Adam's nostrils, and he, became a living soul—the image and representation of God in manhood; but Where and what is he?

In due time Solomon closed up the progressive history of this elect people according to the flesh, in the generations and genealogies of the First Book of Chronicles. But who and what was he in the Second Book? The morning cometh, it is true, but also the night. Alas! " the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared unto him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he kept not that which the Lord commanded." The allegiance which was due from the creature to the Creator, in the creation, but which was violated and broken up by Adam's sin, is come to naught a second time in Solomon, who was seated in glory and power upon the throne of God's government in the earth. The crown has fallen from his head. and the scepter from his hand, and the kingdom from under his feet, and the two staves of beauty and bands has God broken asunder, "for Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites."

An important interval, or dispensation, yet remains to be noticed in the history and ways of God with men, between Adam, without any government, before government (like Providence) could have any place; and Solomon. as the representative and administrator of a theocracy in the city of the Great King, where government in righteousness was indispensable, on account of the holiness of God, as well as of sin and the flesh. Intermediately the law was given by Moses, and proclaimed, yea, established the claims of Jehovah upon the elect nation for the worship and devotion which were His due. Besides this, they were morally responsible for obeying and loving Him for all the goodness and mercy which, as the God of providence and the Jehovah of Israel, they had known, together with their fathers, all the way from the house of bondage to the Canaan of rest, into which He had brought them. At any rate, if this were a problem, it had to be wrought out into proof, like the others; for they had entered into covenant with God, and had returned their answer by Moses, at Sinai, " All that the Lord hath commanded us, we will do." This was, in fact, the time of the world's probation, brought to light, it is true, in a handful of people and a sample nation, but under all the advantages and encouragements to love God, and their neighbor as themselves, which He could introduce by outward prosperity and plenty, and by calling them up to Jerusalem, that they might keep " the feasts of the Lord " with Himself, and find their joy in His presence. But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit, wherefore He was turned against them, and became their enemy; and now, what is become of this highly-favored and select nation, and when are the feasts of Jehovah kept, or with whom? and where is Jerusalem the city of the Great King? Alas! Ichabod is the sole epitaph, and the one record of forfeited blessing, and of departed glory—from the drawn sword in the hand of the cherubim at the garden-gate, to the trodden-down Jerusalem by the feet of the Gentiles.

It is time to ask now, what is the solemn result of these trials and tests of such a distinguished man, and what our lessons by God in this history, and of His ways with a nation, in the brief record of his reign? Or rather, what should be the effect of this great proof in such a king, and of an elect people, when gathered round God Himself, with His glory in the temple, and this endowed man upon His throne, as the guarantee (if there could be one outside Christ) of permanent and universal blessing? Ought not the leaders and great men of modern times to allow such an one to challenge them all by the question, even if they do not like to answer him, " What can the man do that cometh after the king?" (Eccl. 2:12.) Nay, is it not presumption, if not a presumptuous sin, for the men of this period to suppose the problem of what man is, and is worth, in his relation to God, and to his neighbor, and to the world, to be an open question still, and left for them to solve? This, too, in the face of the prophecy which challenges all, " What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done?" (Isa. 5:4.) Do any of them come up to Solomon, or can they excel God? Will the scientists, and the men of mark and renown, say they are at an advantage, because experimenting amongst a non-elect people, instead of an elect one, which was so beloved, and placed under law to God? Will they tell us it is better to begin the problem in the midst of Gentile nations, with whom God does not stand in any relationship of this kind, than with the nation which He chose, and brought to Himself? (Ex. 19:4.)

Do they think it in their favor to make laws of their own, and establish various forms of government, and set up thrones of their devising in their modern cities, rather than to bow their heads, and learn their lesson from the ruins of Jerusalem, and the cast-off people they are treading under their feet? Do they judge it to be in their favor never to have had a Solomon, qualified and endowed as he was, and under the direct guidance of God, that so they may be free of Him, and be left to their own inventions and expediencies, under Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon? If the reigning emperors and kings, with their empires and dynasties, are agitated and perplexed, or sometimes overthrown in the struggle between absolution and democracy, or betwixt imperialism and a republic, do they think this uncertainty an advance upon the theocracy of the God of Israel? They will do well to remember that the divine form and principles of political economy and of jurisprudence

were long ago determined by God, and are indelibly written by His finger in the Pentateuch; as well as the patterns and form of the temple, and its priesthood and worship, in the two books of Chronicles. Neither the throne nor the altar has been overlooked. Be it so, that all this greatness and magnificence have come to naught, with an elect people, who had God in their midst, and as a wall of fire around them; what can those do who come after? Is it better to be without Him, and safer and wiser to take counsel with their own hearts, that their dignity and honor may be publicly, and far more fatally, seen to proceed from themselves?

If it be further said, Yes, but this Second Book of Chronicles ends with the captivity of the people, the carrying away of all the golden vessels into Babylon, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the transfer of governmental power from Israel to the Gentiles, and " the morning cometh, and also the night," is fulfilled in their history; be it so. But what, I repeat, is such a lesson for them “who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise,... and without God in the world " (Eph. 2:12.)—who are non-elect, unendowed, and uncovenanted? Will such come out into history at a premium on their predecessors? We shall see. In the meanwhile the elect nation and her kings are set aside by Jehovah.

If we here close up their two books of Chronicles for another and a brighter day in the millenium of their history, and go with the children of the captivity, it will be only, to see that God abides faithful to His own, and advances Daniel into a new place in this strange country. He becomes the prophet of woe to Babylon. The captive Israelite is the one who is anointed by Jehovah to reveal to the great King Nebuchadnezzar, as the head of the Gentiles, a II the secret of his dynasty, and its destiny and doom. The four grand divisions of the golden image, which troubled the monarch in his night visions, and which include what is now called " the civilized world," but which none of the wise men could divine to their master, are brought to light by this child of the captivity. It is Daniel's hand which thus early writes " Ichabod upon all the grandeur of the king and his kingdoms. So distinguished is this elect vessel in a strange place.

The man who shines brightest among the nobles, and imports a grandeur and a glory into Babylon to which it was a total stranger, is this Israelite; for Daniel stands in a holy luster, be it in the palace, or at the gate of the king, or when in the lions' den. This is the great charm in their opening history, that Daniel eclipses all. The transfer of power from Jerusalem, or rather the use of it when thus committed to Nebuchadnezzar, put the sentence of death upon his palace and his kingdom, and indeed upon himself. It was but taking Jonah into the ship. God was angry with him for his pride, and sent him into the fields to eat straw like an ox, till his nails became as birds' claws. In like manner the transport of the golden vessels from tne temple of Solomon to Babylon, and their profanation at the feast of Belshazzar, brought out the handwriting upon the wall, " Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin," which put the sentence of death into him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed. So, again, when the king of Babylon had set up the idol-image, and the fiery furnace was prepared for any who refused to fall down and worship it, the three elect children of the captivity were thrown therein, but only to be joined by another, and that one like unto the Son of God. The sentence of death was transferred from the three elect ones, who were in the flames, but not burnt, and gave birth to the decree, that whosoever spake anything amiss of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, should be cut in pieces. Alas for Babylon and its great idolatrous king at the commencement of this history, and for his non-elect and unchronicled descendants! Thou art this head of gold, and that crowned head driven out of the palace of the kingdom of Babylon, and debased to the level of a beast!

But perhaps, as an empire, their future is brighter, though he must be a bold man, and something more, who would stop us to raise such a question upon the four beasts, or the ten toes of Daniel's prophetic image, in this century. Such an one must be forgetful of their great iron teeth, devouring much flesh, to which all the newspapers bear witness, and which all the world knows. Only let them look at the future in the records of Daniel, or in the Apocalyptic visions of John, and demand in their turn, " Watchman, what of the night?" as being their two books of Chronicles—and what are they? The hand-writing in detail of that selfsame finger which wrote their history in brief upon the palace-wall of Belshazzar says, their " morning cometh, and also their night." They rise up as a great host of people, " without God," at their beginning in Babylon, and " without hope in the world," at their close. Idolatry, maintained by absolutism, was at the rise of the power, in the hand of the great monarch, at the first, and proved by the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar set up, and commanded all people to worship.

But perhaps, religiously, their future is different, and they may call on the living and true God, and be better at the latter end—nay, vain is any such expectation, for Revelation 13. says, " He had power to give life (breath ') unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Blasphemy and profanity were in the palaces of Babylon at the first, when the finger wrote upon the wall; and at the close, the hand-writing in Rev. 13, declares, " He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." Their last end is even worse than the first.

But perhaps, politically, the history of imperial power in the hands of the four great empires, of gold, silver, brass, and iron, may bring up some correctives; not so either, for these metals, in their fourfold character, prove the deterioration of delegated power, and at the close, a " Stone, cut out without hands, falls upon the ten toes of the image, and it is destroyed—yea, becomes like chaff upon the summer threshing-floor." But yet again, Babylon and its descendants may have " hope in their end?" Not so either, " for the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning " ascending up. " Without God " at the beginning, and " without hope in the world " at the close, embraces these nineteen centuries of Nebuchadnezzar power, or Gentile greatness. Their doom and utter destruction stand out in contrast with the chronicles and prophecies of the elect nation of Israel, " to whom" still " pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God blessed forever " (Rom. 9:4, 5).

If we now turn from these prophecies to their present history, it yet remains to see how Israel and the Gentiles answered God, when He woke the world up once more by the light of " the day-spring from on high," and by the songs of the angelic hosts at the coming in of Christ, the Son of the Father, by the mystery of the incarnation. " Last of all He sent to them His Son." The question is no longer the competency of Adam to retain a paradise upon the sole condition of allegiance to the Creator; nor of the sufficiency of Solomon to govern the elect nation in Jerusalem, with Jehovah in covenant relation to the throne and the temple; nor of the Gentiles, in their use of power for the glory of God, when transferred to Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar; but will they reverence the Son, and welcome Him as the Savior, the King of kings, and Lord of lords? " Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will to men," was the new song given out from the heavens to the earth when JESUS was born. Another morning is come; must another night succeed this? Deliverance and blessing were to issue forth from heaven,

seeing that all hands were incompetent below to keep what God had bestowed, or retain the place of honor and power in which He had set them for His glory. The groan of creation—the captivity of Israel—the idolatry of Babylon—left no hope in the world. The cry of the oppressed once more went up to God, and so the multitude of the heavenly hosts brought in their melodious anthem, and piped unto them of the Child born—would they dance? God had yet one Son, and He so loved the world He had made, and the men in it, that He sent Him forth as the Redeemer of Israel, and the Savior of the world.

The innocent first man—the endowed king—the elect nation, on the one hand; or the head of gold, and the image, in its continuation of silver, brass, iron, and clay on the other; had forfeited their thrones and dominions, their kingdoms, and their scepters and crowns;—can they appreciate deliverance, or will they yet do worse? Yes, far worse than all, for when they saw the Son, they said, " This is the Heir, come, let us kill Him, and seize upon His inheritance. And so they cast Him out of the vineyard " and the world too, vociferating up to God, " we will not have this Man to reign over us," and that Man the Son of the Highest—yea, God manifest in the flesh. The whole world had grown so old in wickedness, that it could not estimate such an intervention in supreme goodness as God sending forth His Son to save the lost and the undone. Not only Herod the king (an Edomite) was troubled at the birth of JESUS, but likewise all Jerusalem (" the city of the great King " Psa. 48:2) with him. (Matt. 2:1, 3.) The high priest, Caiaphas, rent his clothes, and Pilate washed his hands of innocent blood, when his lips had given sentence against Him. The Son of God, she incarnate One, come down to walk with men upon the earth, and to go about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, has been refused, cast out, and crucified. The trial and the test at this time were not, " Thou shalt love the Lord with all thine heart, and thy neighbor as thyself," but will men consent to be loved by Him who has come after them in love? Alas! they refused to be loved by God, and compel even JESUS to say of them, " For my love they are my adversaries."

They take Him out of the manger, and lead Him to the brow of the hill, and then to the cross, where they crucify Him between two thieves; and God has looked down upon all this. Yet the earth moves upon its axis still, and a God in providence makes the sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust. WHAT A GOD HE IS! If mankind ever had the sense of what was righteous and true in His sight, they would have accepted the sentence of death in Adam's transgression, when confirmed by the flaming sword at the garden-gate; and if they carried the sense of grace, they would cling to the promise of deliverance through the Seed of the woman, and shadowed forth by the coats of skin which God made, and wherewith He clothed them. But it was not till four thousand years had told their sad tale to the heavens, and all who dwell therein, of the growing distance and enmity below, that the cross bore witness against the world itself by the rejection of Christ as its king, and of JESUS as the Savior come to seek and save those that are lost. The earth and its inhabitants had long ago broken down, when tried representatively, before the law, and the kingdom of Israel. Then God called it out into His presence, to learn its insufficiency for restoration and reestablishment under such a government as He had set up in Jerusalem. The world itself, and all its pretensions (and at their highest and best too), had suffered collapse, when its representative man and representative nation failed towards God, and wrought no deliverance in the earth.

Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, with the ten toes, may deny this great and summary collapse as conclusive, and expand and inflate themselves and their kingdoms, as they have done, and are still doing, but only to suffer a heavier judgment and doom by their experiment, and break down finally under the responsibility of power in their own hands. Worse than this, far worse; for it was under the power and rule of the fourth beast of the image that Cæsar’s representative acted, and that the Roman soldier pierced the side of JESUS with his spear. Human enmity came forth, instead of love to God, and wickedness had found its Victim at last in the Son of God's grace, and their common outlet at His cross and in His blood. This was the crisis, and a night of darkness. What must the Judge of the earth do now? Can there ever be a morning again? Will He submerge the world by water a second time, in righteous anger? or will He destroy it by fire? God had a remedy after the deluge, and brought in the law, and an economy by Moses, whom He installed as the mediator between God and men. Has He yet a resource? Besides this it was the school-time, when the Levites taught the people, and instructed them in the right ways of the Lord. Israel was at school, and under its school-master. After (or rather with) an elaborate and wondrous system of education in this sample and elect nation, He established government; by a theocracy in the midst of this experimental people. The best that God could do with men as they were, and the choicest sample of mankind too, came to naught, and they were driven out of Canaan. Neither education nor government availed. After Jerusalem came Babylon and the Gentiles, and their one only point of agreement, as determined by Caiaphas and Pilate, was to condemn Christ, and crucify Him. This was the cross, where the whole world, which had broken down morally, rose up in defiance and rebellion against God, and against His Anointed. (Acts 4:24-27.) Wickedness and bate have overstepped themselves, by reason of Him who was their Object and Victim.

A climax has come, and the whole world is in blood-guiltiness before God; but He will not, yea, cannot, determine this new enormity by water, as He once did, nor by melting fire, as He will do at the last day. And why? Because He had His purposes of grace and redemption to bring to light at the. cross, and by means of the precious blood they had shed. That act, which was the outlet of man's hatred of God and Christ, becomes the door for the inlet of His infinite love to sinners. He will not take up the crucifixion of His Son as a murder at His cross, though it be so horrible, nor be ruled by it in vengeance to-day, but use it as a door into the acceptable year of the Lord. By means of the cross God can proclaim forgiveness to the betrayers and murderers, in proof that, high as the world's hate rose, His love was yet higher, and overreached it, even to pardon it, through faith in the atoning blood, which was the very proof of their guilt. In this forbearance and grace the Father and the Son are one: for, as when the woman whom the Pharisees brought to Jesus in her sin—in the very act, as they said—to be stoned, and He would not condemn her, but stooped down, and wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not; so has God, in grace, been acting during this long day of patience and long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. After the blood-guiltiness at the cross God comes out in grace, beginning at Jerusalem; and this is indeed as the light of another morning—" a first day"—and becomes the time of salvation, through the blood and death of Christ, during which God refuses to hear the accusation or enter into judgment upon this sin with mankind. There is an alternative still between God and man at the, cross—salvation or judgment-and herein is wisdom, to be of one mind with Him, and thankfully accept justification by faith in the blood of Christ, and eternal life, through His death and resurrection to the right hand of God as the Head of the new creation. Union, by the Holy Ghost, with the Son of man there, and in the glory (to every believer), is the new position which the gospel of God proclaims and offers even to the chief of sinners. CHRIST IS GONE!

In conclusion, we may and must ask, Is this alternative accepted for " the obedience of faith among all nations? " Are they rejoicing in the glad tidings of God's salvation, and looking for the second coming of Christ, to take all those who believe up to the Father, as redeemed by the blood of His Son, and to be manifested as the heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ? (Rom. 8:16-21; Col. 3:4). The Lord and the glorified saints are the appointed kings and priests unto God, and they will order and put the world all right (Rev. 1:5,6; 1 Cor. 6:2,3.), when He takes

to Himself His great power, and reigns on the throne of

His glory, as the " Greater than Solomon," to establish His interests in righteousness and peace on the earth.

" The morning cometh, and also the night," and it is at the dawn of another and a new dispensation from above, by the coming of the Lord; and in the face of such an administration as this will be, it is that the antagonistic path completes itself, into which " the god of this world " (2 Cor. 4:4) has led the counselors and the great men of these nineteen centuries. Do any inquire, as the watchman bids them, whit the night-time is of this present century? and what is the fatal and final night? The answer is this: " So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." Moreover, she had " in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication " Isaiah's watchman cried out in his day, " If ye will inquire, inquire ye, return, come;" and Daniel the prophet, as well as the Apocalyptic apostle, the two watchmen who chronicle the approaching end of this age to us, cry " The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." " Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear,.... for the time is at hand!" John, who describes the depth of the darkness of this horrible night-time, as well as its coming and closing judgments, cries out, "The ten horns which thou sawest upon [`and'] the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire." Once more, the watchman cries, " And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." (Dan. 2:45; Rev. 1:3; 17:3, 4, 16, 18.)

In the by-gone chronicles of God's actings with men, probation and their education were His own care, till they " changed the truth of God into a lie," and then, judicially, " God gave them over to a reprobate mind, because they did not like to retain Him in their knowledge " (Rom. 1:25,28). These, as well as the theory and establishment of government and rule over the nations, are things of the past, and on the page of history; and yet these are the very subjects which the senates and parliaments have recommenced, and which occupy them in their sessions, as if they were out upon a voyage of discovery. How tedious and disappointing they find it, none knows so well as themselves, as one premier supplants his fellow and forms another cabinet, or dissolves the existing house of assembly and introduces a different policy; nor will we stop to inquire, for pity's sake. Enough for us to know they are in the darkness of the night, and laboring for very vanity. They have the wrong man in hand to make better, and the wrong world to garnish—the Cain, who went out from the presence of God at first; and, lastly, Barrabas instead of JESUS, when they cast Him out and killed Him—the God who came back into it in the Person of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son. Woe be to the world that refused the mystery of the Child born and put Him into a manger, and, when wearied of Him, took Him down from the cross, and offered Him a sepulcher! Life and peace to a world, in which redemption out of its ruins is preached through the death and resurrection of Christ, is God's only remedy, by the Holy Ghost sent down from the Father and the Son in heaven, in the gospel of His grace, and in which world a free pardon is proclaimed through faith in the precious blood of Christ which they shed.

This refusal of God's only resource, as the Judge of the whole earth, is like demanding a new trial (if one may thus speak) at the throne of His Majesty, where the rejected Son is sitting, " till His enemies are made His footstool." This demand is boldly maintained, moreover, by a refusal to accept the humbling fact of the worthlessness of man, as proved by his break-down educationally in the school of Moses, or under the economy in Immanuel's land, when king Solomon reigned over the nations; or, finally, by the enmity and outbreak of the civilized world against God and His Anointed at the cross. In their eyes He is still without form or comeliness, for man and the world and the devil are the same; neither is there any beauty in the Son, or value in His work of redemption, that they should desire Him or it. If any think it may be otherwise now, and that national Christianity, together with the pretentious Congress in eastern and western Europe, may yet float these nations; or give them favor in the sight of God by the mockery of their established but contradictory religions; one only need point any such to the boasted " union " of the Church and State throughout the Roman earth, to falsify every expectation of "a morning without a cloud."

"Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings, be instructed, ye judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in HIM!" (Psa. 2)

Girdle of Truth: Volume 7, Watchman! What of the Night? (21:11-12)

Isa. 21:11,12

Here and there in Scripture we find different minds brought into contact with the same moral perplexity. For instance, the prosperity of the wicked; and we see the different way in which this perplexity was dealt with.

Jeremiah took it at once to God, as a thing too hard for himself. This was dealing rightly and religiously with it. (See Jer. 12)

David was overwhelmed by it, and spoke impatiently under it. His soul, however, was sweetly restored at the last. (See Psa. 73)

Ecclesiastes contemplates the wicked taking advantage of God's long-suffering, or delay, in judging the works of iniquity, leaving man still to prosper in his wickedness. (See 8:11.)

Malachi speaks of a generation who exceed even this, challenging the God of judgment because of this same thing, the prosperity of the wicked. (See 2:27; 3:14, 15.)

These are instances of what I mean; the same moral perplexity differently dealt with by different minds. But this last case from Malachi shows exceeding wickedness. Judgment is scoffed at, the thought of it, as it were, ridiculed, because evil-doers were still prospering -and this naturally introduces us to a meditation on Isa. 21:11,12.

Dumah or Idumea, the land of Esau, was the land of the profane one, the man of the world, the infidel. The voice of the scorner is heard in that land: it challenges one of God's watchmen, asking, " What of the night?"

This tells us, that that watchman had been already talking of the night. And this evidences his faithfulness to his commission; for a part of our testimony, under the Spirit, is to " the night"- the present night-time of man's world, or the coming solemn, dark, night-time of God's judgments. The very challenge of the profane Edomite, I say, evidences that the watchmen had been faithful, that he both understood and discharged his ministry. Prophets and apostles largely tell us of " the night." They speak abundantly of judgment preceding and introducing the kingdom or the age of glory; and the watchman here challenged had been in their company, in " the goodly fellowship of the prophets." And he is not one who has to recall his words. Having already spoken of the night, be still speaks of it; for in answer to the challenge he says, " the morning cometh and also the night." He can talk of " the morning," it is true, but he will not refuse to tell of " the night " also, however the thought of it may be scorned. Glory in the time of the Lord's presence, or in the morning of His appearing, will come; but the dark, solemn season of judgment must go before it, as all the prophets witness.

This is the watchman's faithfulness. He maintains his testimony to " the night," though telling of " the morning" likewise. He declares that judgment is coming, as well as the kingdom in its glory. But there must be grace as well as faithfulness in the watchman's ministry; he therefore has a word for the scorner's conscience. It could not satisfy him to tell of the terrors of judgment without some seasonable word of warning, some " seeking to persuade men," as the apostle says. (2 Cor. 5:11.) Accordingly he adds here, in answer to the Edomite's challenge, " If ye will inquire, inquire ye; return, come." He warns the scoffer to be of another mind: and if he inquire at all, to inquire in a due spirit, a spirit of repentance; to " return" from his mocking of God's servant and his testimony, and to " come " in a believing, worshipping mind to lay his question before the Lord.

All this constitutes something beautiful. This combination of faithfulness and grace gives us a fine sample, though so short and small, of the ministry of all watchmen under the Spirit of God. He insists on the truth of God, and will not qualify it, but seeks likewise to press it on the acceptance of the conscience of sinners.

Now, 2 Peter 3 is called to mind by this short, impressive oracle on Dumah in Isa. 21 For in that chapter we listen to the voice of a scoffer again, and again get the answer of the Spirit of God.

The scoffer challenges the promise of the Lord's coining. And this evidences that such a promise had been part of the previous testimony-just, as I was observing, the challenge of the Edomite in Isa. 21 evidenced that the watchman had been already talking of the night. And the scoffer here would make good his challenge by a fair piece of reasoning, as it is judged to be. " Where is the promise of his coming?" he tauntingly asks; and then he says, " For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." They dispute with the mystery of the Lord's coming on the authority of the general course of nature, and of national events; and all this is in the spirit of "Watchman, what of the night?"

The apostle answers. He lets this scorner know, that things from the beginning of the creation (as the scorner himself had spoken) had taken their course, not by mere force of cause and effect, and established laws and analogies, but that all, in successive ages, had depended on divine good pleasure or the word of God; that by that word, the heavens were of old and the earth also; that by the same word the flood had come; and that by the same word we have now another heaven and earth which waits its doom by fire at the pleasure of the same word of God.

This is a fine answer from this New Testament Watchman to the Edomite of his day. And having done this, he turns to give exhortations to the saints, on the ground of coming judgment and coming glory; that is, on the ground of " the night" and " the morning" of the prophet. And he would fain have them "grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior," and hold to their steadfastness of faith., and hope in the midst of the reasonings of the scoffers. And, further, he would have them able to interpret the delay of this coming which the scoffers were rebuking, and resolve it into the most blessed and gracious of all purposes, " the salvation of God."

I do indeed read this chapter from Peter as a fine New Testament scripture in connection with the oracle of Isaiah over the land of Edom. The scoffer of the last days of Christendom is found in company with the profane Edomite in the days of the kings of Israel. And I ask, is not the present, among other characters which it bears, a day of Edomite profaneness and scorning, and a day when the Lord's watchmen, like Isaiah and like Peter, should know what to do and how to answer? Surely this is so. Who can mistake it? Present times are full of meaning. Political revolutions and christian activities are giving them a character which is far out of the common.

In the Lord's dealings with the it has always been "the night" and " the morning"-the morning of glory or the day of the kingdom, and the night of judgment clearing the way and cleansing the scene.

In. Noah's time this was so-the judgment by the deluge went forth and did its work, and then the new world shone out. The sword of Joshua judged the nations of Canaan, and then the land was divided among the tribes, and the glory seated itself there._ David's victories cleared the way for the throne of Solomon. And so with the world or the earth now. Night is in the prospect, the Apocalyptic night-the judgments, whether under seals, trumpets, or vials, which the Apocalypse discloses. And morning is likewise in the prospect, the Apocalyptic morning-the kingdom where the saints shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years; and the bride in her beauty shall descend, having the glory in her. So that if any inquire, " What of the night?" as far as the future of the earth is concerned, the answer still is," The morning cometh and also the night."

God's Glad Tidings: Volume 1, Watchman, What of the Night? (21:11-12)

“The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye; return, come.”— {vi 18047-18048}Isaiah 21:11, 12.

“Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?” This is the word of the scoffer, the sneer of the unbeliever, not the inquiring word of one desiring to know; and find the counterpart of this scoffing question in the New Testament Scriptures, where Peter says, “There

shall come in the last days scoffers" walking, not in the faith of Christ, not in the hope of the gospel, not in the love of God, not in the light of eternity, not in the light of the judgment day, but walking, like you, who know not Christ, after their own lusts, after their own wills, saying, as you say, "Where is the promise of his coming? It is all very well for you preachers to talk of the coming of Christ, to say He is soon coming; why Paul talked of looking for Him, and the Thessalonians were turned from idols to wait for Him, and 1800 years have rolled round since then, and all things continue just as they were; and you tell us of the Lord's' coming, but it is all a delusion; better spend your time on other subjects." But, ah! though, you may scoff, He is coming: "The morning cometh, and also the night." He may be here ere you lay down this paper. He knows. Everything around only impresses more deeply than ever on my heart the solemn fact— "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh" —gives certainty, overwhelming certainty to the conviction that that day is at hand. These are the last times; you are in the last days, and the very fact of your scoffing does but add to the proof, for the word of God tells us in the last days scoffers shall come. But ere He comes what has an evangelist, what has a preacher of the gospel to bring out now? What must he tell you, but that Jesus, the Holy One and the Just, came down, took that wondrous journey from the throne of God to the cross, to make a way of escape for you from the darkness of the coming night; that He died to make a way of escape for you; that He is willing to receive you, waiting to receive you: "If ye will inquire, inquire ye; return, come."

And, oh, if these lines meet an anxious soul, an inquiring heart, I have "glad tidings" for that anxious one, good news for that inquiring one. "What are the glad tidings? What is the good news?" you ask. Wherever I see an anxious soul, a Christ-seeking soul, I have this to tell them, that the Christ I speak of is a sinner-seeking Christ; a Christ who seeks sinners, a Christ who saves sinners, a Christ who receives, and who pardons, and Who blesses sinners; and, ah, if you are an anxious Christ-seeking soul, I tell you of this sinner-seeking Christ; and who so suited to meet as a sinner-seeking Saviour, and a Saviour-seeking sinner?

They are just the ones suited to each other.

But if you are one of the class that Peter speaks of, a "scoffer," not ready to meet God, not ready to face eternity, unprepared to stand before the judgment seat, my solemn duty, dear reader, is to warn you to beware; to tell you solemnly, faithfully, "The morning cometh, and also the night." "Oh, but," you say, "you have often talked about the coming of the Lord before, and we see no signs of it, things go on exactly the same as ever." Mark what the watchman says.

He says, for the comfort of the saved soul, "The morning comes!" Fellow-believer, there is a morning coming for you, a bright, a sunny morning; a morning without clouds, a morning of unmingled joy, and blessing; a morning when you shall rise to meet your belayed Lord in the air, when you shall gaze upon Him in all His beauty, the One whom you have never yet seen face to face. For the warning of the unsaved, the watchman adds, "and also the night."

There are three distinct classes of people now-a-days. Firstly, people who know and love Christ; secondly, people who profess to know Christ and who do not; and thirdly, people who do not care for Christ, do not want to know Him, and it is to this last class I speak now. To YOU who do not want Christ, I say, Christ wants you! CHRIST WANTS YOU! "I never thought of that" you say. True, for the thoughts of the unconverted are all wrong.

O dear unsaved soul, I want you to be converted to Him. It is your soul I am longing after. I want you to be saved nom. I know how the word of grace meets some hearts and the word of warning meets others, and, oh! I would tell out both to you, for there is a day coming, soon coming, when there shall be no more word of grace, no more word of warning, no more gospel preaching for you; an hour coming when you shall have heard or read the gospel for the last time, and O! tell me, if that hour came this day, where would this last gospel word find you and leave you? I ask you, as you must give account before the judgment seat, how does your soul stand before God? Are YOU ready to meet the Lord if he comes; if he comes tonight? He may come, will you be glad to hear His voice? The heart that knows Him says "Ah, yes, I shall be glad to hear that voice, I know His voice. It will be no strange voice to me. Do you tell me the morning comes? Joyful, happy news! It is the moment of deep, unbounded joy when my eye shall light for the first time on that blessed Saviour."

But, ah! if there is a morning of such unmingled joy to the Christian, what about you who know not Christ? Is there any charm for you in that morning? None whatever? There can be no charm for a worldly, Christless heart in that morning; there can be nothing but terror in that morning for you; for that is the morning when the wicked shall be like ashes under the soles of His feet; when "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings," and "all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble." He will arise with healing in His wings for those who in the long night of His absence have feared His name, have trusted Him, have fled to Him for shelter; but for you, Christless one, what has the Sun of Righteousness to do with you?

Then one of His beams will blind you forever.

The soul that knows not Christ prefers the night, loves the night: "Every one that doeth hateth the light, neither cometh to the light." The darkness suits the sin-loving soul, the dark night of Jesus' absence is the very atmosphere that suits the pleasure-loving soul, the Christless soul; the morning is the atmosphere that suits the soul that knows Christ, that is looking for Him, and waiting for Him and "the morning cometh," but ah! there is something more, "and also the night." He is coming, and coming quickly. He lingers, Peter tells us, because He is "long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." He is not Flack concerning His promise, but He lingers, not willing that You should perish, but the moment is coming when He will delay no longer, when He will rise up and shut to the door, when the day of His grace will be over, the door will be shut, and, oh! what will it be to find yourself shut out then? You, who vainly think you will be a Christian some day; you who think you will go on with the world now, and turn to Christ someday, what will it be to you to find the door shut and youself outside? No more offer of mercy, no more day of grace, no more gospel preaching, no more Christ for you. Oh, the bitter, dark agony! Oh, the terror of that day! to find the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door and you are shut out. You, who meant to go in, but who put it off! O Christless, unsaved soul, I beseech you, in the light of that coming day of judgment, awake, awake, arise, be warned in time, flee this very moment to a living, loving Saviour. "Turn ye, turn ye." "Return, Come." Oh! RETURN, COME.

O scoffing soul, are you determined to go down there, into that awful place, that terrible pit, the abyss of hell? Still the door is open into the Father's house. There are none too hardened for His grace to soften, none too far off for Him to meet, none too bad for Him to justify.

Turn ye, turn ye to Jesus now. Why put it off a moment more? He is saving others, He will save you. He is saving many in these last days, and why? Because the time is near when the doors shall be shut. The Lord is sending out warning notes of grace before that hour comes, before the day of His long-suffering comes to a close. What is the meaning of this great tide of blessing that has rolled on since 1858? “Fourteen years!” you say. Yes, fourteen years the Lord has been working in a very special and marked manner; everywhere He has been stirring up men’s minds; the gospel has been preached, not only by those in the pulpits, but faithful men everywhere have been going forth with the tidings of grace, and the warnings of judgment to come. Men of all ranks, men of high degree and low, have gone about proclaiming the gospel, seeking to win souls. “What is the meaning of this great change, these vagaries?” you ask. Oh, the night comes; the night draws near; and we see already shadows, dark shadows of the coming night, for side by side with this vast tide of blessing what has arisen? Another tide, deep and dark, is rolling its waters also over the world. Rationalism, Ritualism, and Spiritualism combined, are rampant now in a way hitherto unequaled; and all paving the way for the man of sin—antichrist—the false christ—when he shall appear.

From all this I am persuaded tne Lord is at hand. The cry has gone forth “Behold the bridegroom cometh.” A few years ago nothing was heard about the Lord’s coming, it was a subject no one thought of. Now it is spoken of On every hand, and the reason is, that the tithe is fast approaching, God’s testimony of grace too is heard on all hands, and many souls have believed the glad tidings and are saved. It is this urgency of the charity of God and the universality of its manifestation that tell me the Lord is near. Beloved, unsaved reader, listen to me. I know that you are a lost soul— a LOST SOUL, and I know the night cometh. A night that has no morning, a long, long dark, endless night, into which no ray of light shall ever come. Oh! lost, lost soul, YOUR night has NO morning. The night of the Christian is illumined by the love of Jesus, and is terminated by a morning that has no evening, “for there shall be no night there.” Oh, think of that scene, that happy scene, “the city had no need of the sun for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof;” and, “there shall be NO NIGHT there.” But listen, “the morning cometh. but also the night.” Oh! what a night, Christless soul! You pass into eternity without Jesus, and what is it? All night! all night! Is there no morning? No, none! No morning to that fearful night. Oh, I appeal to you, I entreat you; for a few passing hours of pleasure here will you risk that night that has no morning? How very long one single night of sleeplessness and pain seems here! Belike you may have known such a night when you tossed restlessly on your bed. You could not sleep; in vain you tried this side and that, and in every way sought sleep. How long the night seemed, how slowly the minutes seemed to go by! The clock in your room strikes the half-hours, and a year seems to have gone by before the half-hour chimes; a perfect cycle follows, and then the clock strikes the hour; you could not have believed the night could be so long. How you watch for the first approach of morning. How gladly you welcome the first streak of light coming through a crack in the closed shutter, the day is coming at last, there is a morning to this Jong night. But, oh, what will it be to be chained to your bed in hell, in impenetrable gloom, forever. Is there no morning? None, none! No light coming? None! In the terrible darkness of that awful scene, as one has vividly portrayed it, you may hear the fearful ticking of hell’s clock, as its long pendulum sways from side to side, seeming to say only the terrible words, ever, never, ever, never, EVER, NEV-ER EVER NEV-ER, EVER-LASTING, NEVER ENDING, EVER-LASTING, NEVER ENDING!

Oh, tell me, tell me, will you, risk this awful eternity, this never-ending hell? Will you risk it for some bit of pleasure here, some few hours of following your own will and way? Oh, return, return, comet Oh, wandering one, return now, come to Jesus now. THAT NIGHT has not yet come; oh, return, you shall receive a welcome to the arms of that blessed Saviour. The voice of Jesus speaks “Will you not come to me?”

Oh, return, return! There is no guilt so great that the blood of Christ cannot cleanse it, no depth of wickedness that it cannot meet, you cannot be too bad for Christ.

Dear soul, are you arrested on the slippery road to hell? Do you say “I have been trifling with eternity too long, I must turn, I cannot face this Christless eternity, I cannot bear the awful reality of it”? Oh, have you come to yourself, wandering one? Then I have good news for you, there is bread enough and to spare in your Father’s house. Have you said, “I will arise, I will go to God, I cannot bear to meet God in judgment, I cannot bear the thought of the night without a morning.” Lose no time then; the prodigal, in Luke 15, did not say, I will arise another time, but, “I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him; father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” Would you like to follow this prodigal home, and see how he is welcomed?

“When he was yet a great nay off”—that is just where an anxious soul feels itself, “a great way off.” But do you think God does not see the turning in your heart, the desire to be Christ’s? —the father “RAN” to meet the returning prodigal. God, as it were, runs to meet the returning soul. The sinner comes slowly along, saying, “How will He meet me? What will He say? Will He have me?” The father ran. Are you the one returning? The father ran, that is how He meets you. The prodigal comes along sad and slowly; he sees one on the road; “It is my father,” he says; a moment more, “He is coming to meet me” another moment, “He runs;” a few steps farther he is on his neck, he kisses him. The first thing the soul gets is a kiss, the kiss of peace. Oh, that burning kiss, what does it say? It says, God’s heart remains unchanged.

That kiss tells that all is forgotten, that all is forgiven. Is there a hard word? Is there a question, “Why have you been so long? Where have you spent your time and your substance?”

No! The returning soul has judged itself, it has brought the sledge hammer of self-judgment down on itself, “Father, I have sinned.” And does not God like to hear that confession, those softened words? He does! And what is the answer? “Bring forth the best robe,” that is Christ; bring the fatted calf, kept for some great occasion, bring it, kill it, “let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found, AND THEY BEGAN. TO BE MERRY.” This is the grace that meets the returning sinner. Oh, if you have never bowed before, will you not bow to Christ now?

Shall it not be said of you, that the heart that had long fed itself with the husks the world can give, but was empty still, dissatisfied, having no rest, is filled to the brim, satisfied, at rest henceforth?

Oh, when I see Jesus in that bright morning, that coming morning, will You be there? In that blessed home, that scene of joy and rest, oh, tell me, will you be there, and I? I shall. I know that I shall, but will you be there? A little time and the morning comes, no more sorrow then, no more pain for the heart that loves Him, but with Him, and like Him forever.

What a future! We did not deserve it, but He gives it! Will you take from the loving hand of Jesus that free salvation Now? The Lord grant you may, so that in the bright morning when He comes you may be with Him, and with Him forever. W. T. P. W.

Another year of the long-suffering of God has nearly come to a close. "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come." Isa. 21:11, 12.

Let us meditate a little on the year that is passed, a measured portion of "the night," the long, dark night of man's rejection of Christ. God has His own, those whom He has chosen out of the world who are not of it, but given to Christ. But let us not shut our eyes to the awful fact that this world has rejected and killed the Son of God, and still rejects Him. Satan, the great enemy of man, is the god of this world and nowhere does Satan display more enmity against Christ than in the professing Church. Is not Christendom a caricature of the Church of God, as seen in Scripture in the beginning?

How rapidly infidelity is increasing everywhere, and if not infidelity, the grossest idolatry. As a Hindu idolater said to a professed Christian: "We have no idolatry like yours. We worship an idol, as representing God; but you bake a god, worship it as God, and then eat it." Surely this is the lowest depth of dark idolatry. And Satan calls this wickedness "holy communion"! Watchman, what of the night? Is it not getting darker and darker, ripening for the terrible judgment? And what is the state of the world around? Violence and lawlessness, dishonesty publicly defended. There never was a time when Christians needed more to cry to God to preserve the members of the government.

Further Shocks

Yes, the long night of man's rejection of Christ grows darker and darker. Soon men's hearts will fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. Is it not even so now in measure? Are not the powers that be, which are ordained of God, being rudely shaken? Who can say what further shocks may be felt before this year is out?

“Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night." In the watchman's reply there are two facts brought before us, and then he says, "If ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come." Let us at the close of this year of the dark night, return and inquire concerning these two things:

First, "The morning cometh.”

Second, "And also the night.”

Oh, happy morn! the Lord will come,And take His waiting people home,Beyond the reach of care:O morn, too bright for mortal eyes,When all the ransomed Church shall rise,And wing their way to yonder skiesCalled up with Christ to reign.

“The morning cometh." "Behold the Bridegroom." "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

For Jesus says, "Surely I come quickly." This coming morning is our new year of years, our morn of morns, our entire future, our every desire, our hope, our joy! We have read, heard, and thought of that bright morning without a cloud, but now it comes. Oh, bride of the Lamb, awaken; the morning breaks— it comes. Let every child of God awaken. The next event is "The morning cometh." "The night is far spent, the day is at hand.”

What is your real state at the end of another year? Now, we tell you the watchman says, "The morning cometh." We are about to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, but first the dead in Christ will be raised. If you could see those so dear to you—it may be a loved child, or a long-departed parent—raised in glory like the glorified Lord, if you could see those who are alive and remain, in that moment, are changed also into His likeness (for you will see us in the unclouded glory and welcome presence of our blessed Lord,) would you not give worlds rather than be left behind? Is Satan tempting you to refuse the present, great salvation for the pleasures and sins of this evil world? Now look at all that he can give you; it is only for this brief moment before the "morning" comes.

Another year is nearly gone; how have you spent it? Has Satan satisfied your heart? Has sin satisfied you? Are you happy, shutting God out of your thoughts? Can you refuse Christ, and be satisfied with anything under the sun? He waits to be gracious; yes, after all, God still is love. Will you longer put off the concerns of your soul? How can you, how dare you, since the "morning cometh"? The door will soon be shut and it will be forever too late. Do you say, "I long, I thirst to be saved?”

Jesus says to you, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." "And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Oh, precious, infinite grace! Every sinner that reads these lines and thirsts to be saved, is surely welcomed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fellow-Christians, are we longing for the morning that is coming? Does the thought thrill our souls that we are now going to see and be like our risen Lord? Oh, how that morning without a cloud occupies His heart He who loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word is He not waiting for that morning when He shall present it to Himself glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish? Yes, the Holy Spirit says to the waiting Man in the glory, and to us waiting here below, "The morning cometh.”

May the words of the Lord cheer our hearts until we see His face. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3. Sweet, then, the words of the watchman to us, "The morning cometh." But what does he say after this bright and blessed morning? "And also the night." Sad and dark has been the history of this long night of man's rejection of Christ, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. What will that

period of darkness be like when the Church shall have been taken at the morning that is coming? Then comes also the night.

Which of these will be your future—the morning of unclouded joy and ever lasting brightness, or the night of darkness, sorrow, and judgment? What was true of ancient Babylon will then soon be true as to the Babylon of the apostate Church. The watchman answered and said, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods He hath broken unto the ground. O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you." Isa. 21:9, 10.

Boastful, modern Babylon, drunk with the blood of the saints, rejoicing in pride, sits as a queen. What have we heard of the Lord of hosts concerning this great ripening, rich, apostate Christendom? What has He spoken concerning those who have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved? He has said, "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thess. 2:11, 12. The morning comes and also the night. Has He said what He will do with the false, boasting, but lukewarm Christendom, rich and increased in goods? Yes, He will utterly throw it off as a testimony. The Lord has spoken. He said, "I will spew thee out of My mouth."

Has God revealed the character of that dark, dark night that is fast approaching, after the bright morning of the Church? Yes, peace shall be taken from the earth; they shall kill one another.

There shall be famine and pestilence, the sword, hunger, and death; there will be the terrible breakup of all social order, like an earth-quake and men shall flee into dens and caves of the earth. (Rev. 6.) The most terrible, scorching judgments shall fall upon the circumstances, and then on the persons of men. (Rev. 8, 9.) God has revealed these judgments, and they will surely come to pass. "And also the night." Satan will then lead men in open hostility against God. The terrible Roman Empire, in its fearful Satanic, destructive form will suddenly reappear. Men will worship Satan. The malignant passions of devils and men will be let loose in that terrible night of darkness. (Rev. 13.) Then shall the great whore of apostate Christendom appear in all her abominations, until the infidel kingdoms rise up and destroy her. (Rev. 17.)

May the children of God hear His words, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." Yes, that night of tribulation will come, such as never was and never shall be again—closing in the personal coming of the Lord Jesus to judge the wicked, living nations and set up His blessed kingdom on earth.

The watchman then brings these two things before us: "The morning cometh, and also the night." If then, we should close this year on earth, may the watchman's words be our motto: "The morning cometh." May this be the deep, settled hope of our hearts, for "we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." As we shall be like Him then, so may we more and more seek to walk as He walked, until we are forever with and like the Lord. Our Watchman never slumbers; may we also be awake and hear His words. Surely the Holy Spirit speaks to us: "The morning cometh, and also the night."

Things New and Old

The Remembrancer: 1909, "Hear, O Heavens, and Give Ear, O Earth" (1:2)

SA 1:2{

Now God's word carries its own proof of authority with it, as does every testimony from God: this is a fundamental principle. It does not require proof; it furnishes its own proofs of everything to the soul. We do not bring a light to the sun in order to discern it; it enlightens us. The word of God is not judged; it judges. If God speaks, woe unto him that hears what is spoken, and knows not that it is God who speaks. There are those, assuredly, who will not own that it is He. If this refusal to believe be final, they are lost—sentence has already been passed upon them; the light is come, and the darkness comprehends it not. " The word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The word of God, whether spoken or written, has to be received as the word of God (see 1 Thess. 2:13).' he who rejects it does so at his peril. If any remain in ignorance of some of its details-if any are mistaken as to some book, they lose just so much of it: "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.... Moreover by them is Thy servant warned" " The entrance (the one who presumes to judge God's word keeps it outside and will not let it "enter") " of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple " (Psa. 19:7, 11; 119:130) This conviction that the word is its own evidence, is all important; this alone maintains the true character of the word of God, and distinguishes the Bible from every other book. It is written " Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (judgment, as in v. 22); but is passed from death unto life." " He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son (John 5:24; 1 John 5:10). The Lord JESUS, in speaking of " The Scriptures, said " They are they which testify of ME (John 5:30).

Things New and Old: Volume 26, Claims and Pretensions of the Catholic Apostolic Church: No. 1 (1:26)

Beloved Brother,—We have read, and read again, most of the books you sent us. The modern apostles and their church profess to be the only ark of safety from the coming floods of judgment.

It is strange that any truly converted Christian should be misled by these pretensions.

Where is there a single promise or indication that the Lord would restore, or raise up, new apostles at the end of this dispensation, or rather the end of the church’s history on earth? Not a single text can they quote that refers to the church, or to Christendom. The only ones they

attempt to give are such as plainly do not in the least refer to the church, but to the future restoration of Israel. “I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy councilors as at the beginning.” (Isa. 1:26.) All the intellectual reasoning on this is evidently a false application of scripture.

It is absolutely certain there is no scriptural warrant to expect the restoration of apostles. If there is, let it be given. We read of the building “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” (Eph. 2:20.) But we might as well look for another chief corner stone, as for other restored foundation-apostles.

What have these apostles done? Have they given us a single new truth, or inspired revelation? We cannot find in their books a single truth which is not held by thousands of Christians. We will examine briefly whether we do not find the worst errors of Christendom confirmed by this professedly apostolic teaching.

“Redemption.”—In one tract we have some statements as to redemption; but the idea there attached to the word redemption is restoration; so that the use of the very word is quite different from the scripture use. Where is there a thought of restoration in scripture where the truth of redemption is set forth?

Again, in scripture it is the redemption of persons. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” (Eph. 1:7.) With them it is the redemption of human nature: “For man, for Adam’s race, Jesus took part in our nature, and redeemed it.” And, as I have said, with them to redeem means to restore. The uniform teaching of scripture is that believers are redeemed by the blood of Jesus—the one sacrifice of Christ—“the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” “By his own blood he entered in once.... having obtained eternal redemption for us.” And mark, this redemption is never applied in scripture to any but believers; “purchase” is, and “propitiation” is. But it is plain that, since redemption is eternal in scripture, it can only apply to those who are saved.

These new apostles tell us “He offered up Himself to God, without spot—a full, perfect, and all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.” “But,” they say, “something more was necessary for man’s redemption”.... and this also Jesus effected in His own Person as the Redeemer of man. He cleansed the human heart from defilement, and fixed it upon God. He sanctified the thoughts and affections at their source. He regulated the will, and subjected it to “holy obedience,” &c. “Jesus took part in our nature, and redeemed it.” This is strange teaching, that the sacrifice of Christ is not sufficient, though all-sufficient for man’s redemption. This doctrine was most distinctly taught by them at the first, though more hidden by words now.

The insufficiency of the atoning death of Christ is thus spoken of: “The atonement, upon the popular scheme, is made to consist in suffering, and the amount of the suffering is cried up to infinity. Well, let these preachers.... broker-like, cry up their article—it will not do; it is but the sufferings of a perfectly holy man, treated by man, treated by God and by men as if He were a transgressor.” Thus is the great atoning work of the Son of God despised with scorn, and reconciliation of individual sinners by His precious blood denied. “There is no reconciliation of individuals, but a reconciliation of human nature. It is not thine, it is not mine, it is not Christ’s; but it is the common unity of our being.”

If, then, these teachers tell us the sacrifice of Christ was not enough for our redemption, what do they tell us Christ did to reconcile human nature? It is dreadful to tell what they do say. “Manhood, after the fall, broke out into sins of every name and aggravation, corrupt to the very heart’s core, and from the center of its inmost will sending forth streams black as hell. This is the human nature which every man is clothed upon withal, which the Son of man was clothed upon withal, bristling thick and strong with sin, like the hairs upon the porcupine.”.... “I stand forth, and say, that the teeming fountain of the heart’s vileness was opened on Him; and the Augean stable of human wickedness was given Him to cleanse; and the furious wild beasts of human passions were appointed Him to tame. This is the horrible pit and the miry clay out of which He was brought.”

Christ, by this horrible doctrine, is made to say, “Not I, but sin that tempteth me in my flesh.” This is the root-error of the whole system. Reconciliation of human will, sinful nature, to God by the incarnation, Christ taking that sinful nature in His incarnation, and making it acceptable to God! We could not descend so low as to discuss this abominable doctrine.

We look back to that cross on which redemption’s price was fully paid—that one sacrifice, by which He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. We do not behold there a man with a sinful nature like our own, and therefore unfit to be the holy, atoning victim—nay, needing a Savior for Himself; but we see there the Holy, Holy, Holy Lamb of God made sin on that cross for us; delivered for our iniquities; bearing our sins in His body on the tree. There God did not reconcile sinful human nature to Himself, but utterly condemned it. “God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh [reconciled it No!] and for sin [or, by a sacrifice for sin] condemned sin in the flesh.” (Rom. 8:3.) He was ever well pleasing to the Father. It was only when bearing our sins on the cross, in darkness, that He for the first time addressed Him as God. Then did He cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” It was then, when made sin for us, when forsaken of God—then atonement was made: sin, not reconciled, but forever judged. Jesus says. “It is finished.” Surely God has proved it is enough. He is glorified. Sin is judged. And believing God, who showed His acceptance of the sacrifice by raising Him from the dead, we have peace with God.

Now, who sent these apostles, who, whilst quoting these very scriptures, yet deny and neutralize the value of the blood of Christ, by declaring a something more was necessary for man’s redemption: “and that something more, Christ having a vile, sinful nature like our own, which would quite unfit Him to be the Savior! We ask, Are not these soul-destroying, Christ-dishonoring doctrines? May the Lord make Himself, the truth, more increasingly precious to our souls. In our next we hope to examine their doctrine of regeneration.

Bible Witness and Review: Volume 1, Land Shadowing With Wings, The (18:7)

Isa. 18:7.-1. "The land shadowing with wings, which (is) beyond the rivers of Cush," means, I think, a country outside the limits of those nations which up to the prophet's time had menaced Israel; a country beyond Assyria and Babylon, which were contiguous to one of these rivers and beyond Egypt, which lay along the other. For Scripture connects Cush with these two districts, if not with more: an Asiatic as well

as an African Ethiopia. The meaning is, then, a land which should essay to protect the long-oppressed Jew, and that land beyond those rivers which characterized the great powers which hitherto were best known to and had most interfered with Israel.

It was not only a distant but a maritime power (" sending ambassadors by the sea "). " Vessels of bulrushes " looks more like Egypt than anything else in the chapter, but it cannot outweigh the other evidence. Perhaps others may throw light on the phrase. The burden of Egypt follows, and is expressly named in the succeeding chapter. Here the name is withheld.

It is distinguished in the plainest way from the nation in whose behalf it employs its vessels and swift messengers. I cannot therefore but think those commentators far astray who interpret the land in verse 1, and the people to whom the message is sent in verse 2, of Egypt and the Egyptians. Happily here the question depends not on mere verbal criticisms, but on the general bearing of the context, which the English reader is quite capable of judging.

There is no doubt on either side that the same people to whom the messengers are sent are described in the latter part of verse 2, as well as in verse 7. The words which characterize them are certainly open, in their force and translation, to a good deal of dispute. Few, however, will be disposed to accept the notion that מְשׁוּכָה " harnessed in leather," which has not the least support from elsewhere. It is used in Prov. 13:12, of hope prolonged or deferred. Other forms of the same word occur frequently in the Bible, and mean to draw (literally or figuratively), stretch out, continue. Gesenius gives it here the sense of duraturus, robustus, which seems to me not to harmonize with the conjoined word. The English translators may have given the Gesenius gives it here the sense kal participle (poel) means "him that soweth" (marg. draweth forth) seed in Amos 9:13. I rather think the term alludes to the long trials and painful suspense of the Jews, and this seems confirmed by ומֹרָט, "and peeled" or made bare, rather than " shaven;" for, in such an application, the word is used only of cases where the hair was fallen off

(Lev. 13:40,41), or forcibly plucked off (Ezra 9:3; Nehem. 13: 25; Isa. 1: 6). The sense of "peeling" the shoulder occurs in Ezek. 29:19, which would yield the same figurative sense, the latter being taken from the skin as the former from the hair. "Furbished" or polished is the general sense when spoken of the sword, metals, etc., and Gesenius thence derives the tropical meaning which he assigns to the word here, "populus acer h. e. celer, vehemens;" a highly improbable turn in my opinion. The general bearing of the next clause remains undisturbed. What follows is literally "a nation of a line, a line," which Dathe

connected, I presume, with Isa. 28:10, and our translators with chap. 25: 17; 34:11, 17; and Lam. 2: 8. Either of these, and the last particularly, I consider preferable to the far-fetched allusion to land-measuring, which, it will be observed, causes some to change "nation " into the " country ' meted out;" which is the more surprising and inconsistent, because in the sentence before it was justly remarked that it was the people, not the country. The same term יון is used in both cases. I have no doubt whatever that קַוקַוזָ הָמּוּבָמּו describes not their vast strength, trampling down all before it (as Gesenius will have it), but rather their obnoxiousness to every form of hostile appropriation and indignity. (Compare Isa. 22:5;28. 4.) This is confirmed and determined by the last words of the verse, whether we adopt the textual rendering or the margin of the English. Bible, or even Gesenius's theory of "cleaving," which he finds, though to my mind with slight show of evidence, in the word. Still any of these seem to me incomparably better than a fancied allusion to "inundation," which has really nothing to favor it, any more than the fancy that the previous words refer to the practice of sending pigs or goats to tread down the seed under their feet. I hope to be pardoned for considering them both an unlawful importation into this text. All these mistakes flow out of the first great error of treating the people under debate as the Egyptians. To this I may add that רָבַעָמ. ("beyond") is made to mean "on this side," quite untenably, though at first sight there might seem more reason for it, especially in the English Bible. However, there is no space here to trace in what circumstances the word is susceptible of that force. I can only say that "beyond," as it is the natural, so here seems to me the true meaning. It is only in very special cases that we can give the other rendering, and the reason must be shown before it can be assumed.

5. As regards the intervening verses, 3-6, all are summoned to see and hear what befalls the people of the Lord, Israel. He, as it were, retires, and watches. Man is active. The Jews, brought back by human intervention, seem to flourish; but suddenly, " afore the harvest," all is arrested, and disappointment comes. The nations turn once more against the Jews. "They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth." Compare the chapter before, especially verses 9-14.

6. "In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of Hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the Lord of Hosts, the Mount Zion," -Here, waiving the question of. the terms repeated from verse 2, and already discussed, I think the English version is more accurate than most others. For there are in verse 7 not two peoples, but two things taught about Israel; that a present should be made (1) of them, and (2) from them, to Jehovah of Hosts. The Jewish nation should be brought a present, and they should also bring one to the Lord in Mount Zion, after their signal deliverance from the fury of the Gentiles.

Christian Friend: Volume 14, Isaiah 14:10-24 (14:10-24)

Let us retrace the objects of these judgments in their moral order. We have Babylon, the power of organized corruption, when the people of God are captive; the public open enemy of God and His people—the Assyrian; the inward enemy—the Philistine; then Moab, the pride of man. Damascus is that which has been the enemy of God’s people; but allied with the apostate part of that people against the faithful part. From all these the people are delivered. Afterward we find, under judgment, Egypt, or the world in its state of nature, the wisdom of which is lost in confusion; Babylon, now desert in the midst of the nations; Dumah, the liberty, the independence of man; Jerusalem, the professing people; Tire, the glory of the world; and, finally, all that is on the earth, and, to sum up all power, spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. J. N. D.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, "Wicked" Singular or Plural in Isaiah 11:4? (11:4)

Question: Will some of your learned contributors kindly say whether the word “wicked” in the end of verse 4, Isa. 11, is, in the original, singular or plural?

Answer: The word is in the singular, though the preceding words “poor” and “meek” are plural. It occurs many times throughout the Old Testament and in both forms. As is well known the singular may be used in a collective sense as well as individually. And here Robert Lowth (1778) would appear to be right in his rendering— “the wicked one.” This is confirmed by the fuller light of the New Testament; for “no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation.” See 2 Thess. 2:3-8. The Targum of Jonathan singularly paraphrases it “he will slay the wicked Armillus” —the name given by Jewish writers to a future personage to appear in Rome, and who is to kill Messiah, Joseph’s son, but himself to be slain by Messiah, David’s son!—thus understanding it of a particular individual.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Consumption the Same Word in Isaiah 10:22 and 23? (10:22-23)

Question: Will some of your learned contributors kindly say if “consumption” is the same word in verses 22 and 23 of Isa. 10? It is variously translated in the Revised Version.—LEARNER

Answer: The answer to this question has been anticipated in the answer just given— “Idllahyohn” being the word in Isa. 10:22, and the more general word “kahlah” in verse 23.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Consummation in Daniel 9:27 the Same As Consumption in Isaiah 10:22? (10:22)

Question: Will some of your learned contributors kindly say whether the word “consummation” in Dan. 9:27, is the same as “consumption” in Isa. 10:22?

Answer: Our English rendering “consummation” in Dan. 9:27, appears here only; but the Hebrew word “kahlah” occurs 22 times and is variously rendered. Isaiah uses it twice only (10:23; 28:22, “consumption”), and so also Daniel (9:27, “consummation”; 11:16, “which... shall be consumed” lit. “and destruction” in his hand). In Isa. 10:22 the word is not “kahlah” but “killahyohn” (“the consumption”); and Deut. 28:65 (“and failing of”) is the only other instance of its use. Thus the original words are not exactly the same, though both these nouns are from the same verbal root and are closely allied.

clickbible.org