Genesis - Commentaries by Unknown Author

Present Testimony: Volume 1, 1849, Dwelling of God and Man Together, The

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Gen. 9:27 -"And He [the LORD God of Shem, v. 26] shall dwell [or shechinah it] in the tents of Shem." As the LXX. ... . Is there not, here, a noticeable prophetic allusion to the Shechinah of God's manifested presence between the Cherubim in the Tabernacle (con. Ex. 25:8; 29:43-46)? How many are the blessed and gracious thoughts which are connected, in Scripture, with the dwelling of God and man together and how various!

G. W.

Questions and Answers in Christian Treasury, Questions and Answers: Explain Gen. 9:6?

QUESTION: Will you please 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"?

ANSWER: 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 who are 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, he then would have to obey God rather than men. (Acts 4:19; 5:29)

In Gen. 9:5, 6 it is required 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 Capital punishment was thus instituted by God and has not been repealed.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 to that law.

Correspondence, Correspondence: Unbelief; John 3:18; Lev. 7:15-16; Gen. 8:21; Rev 3:14; 1CO 12:28

Ques. Is unbelief the greatest sin? Does John 3:18, Mean that only those are lost who have refused to believe the gospel? B. H.

Ans. It was because man was lost, a sinner in nature, by birth and by practice, that God sent His 'on in love to die. Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. (Matt. 9:13, Luke 19:10.) The Jew, the Gentile and the unconverted professor of Christianity will all be judged for their sins. (See Horn. 2:12; Matt. 22:12.) And read carefully Rom. 9:22; Eph. 5-6; Col. 3:6, which show that the unconverted have fitted themselves for eternal wrath by their wicked works. None will be loss: because that they were born sinners, but all will he judged for their sins that die without Christ. Babes that die before the years of responsibility are saved by the death of Christ. (Matt. 18:10)

Those to whom the gospel is preached, who neglect it or reject it, do indeed add to their sins, the worst one of all, for by so doing they are condemned already. But whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins, full forgiveness. (Acts 10:43; 13:38, 39.)

If they will not believe it, this crowning sin seals their doom, and their judgment will be greater than those who have never heard the gospel. (Luke 12:47, 48.)

All are lost without Christ. "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." (John 14:6.)

Ques. In the law of the peace offering in Lev. 7:15, 16 does it mean that the offerer ate of it, as well as Aaron and his sons? Did it express communion with one another? Does our communion go on to 1 John 1:3, "fellowship with the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ?" And is it the same fellowship in ver. 7?

Ans. In the peace offering (Lev. 3:3, 4) we have Jehovah's portion of the offering, in the inward energies, emotions and feelings of the Lord typified. In the offering priest, type of Christ (verse 33), the right shoulder is for His part, the strength is His. Aaron and his sons, type of Christ and the Church (verse 34), feed on the wave breast and the heave shoulder together. There love and strength are both seen. It is the fellowship of the whole Church of God.

Then the offerer and his associates eat the rest on that day; if it was a thank offering, and if a voluntary offering, the spiritual power continues another day; but after that, the remainder must be consumed with fire. It must always be connected with offering to God. And it was the common enjoyment of all believers if they were clean from defilement. Therefore the directions follow the law of the sin and trespass offering.

In 1 John it is necessarily higher than Lev., for it is the fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. This is Christianity, the knowledge of the Father and of the Son. It is only known and enjoyed since Jesus died and rose again. It is wonderful to have delight in what the Father delights in, in His Son, and with the Son in the knowledge of the Father.

To have such fellowship, we must be in the light, to have communion with each other, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son cleanseth us from all sin. This is a statement of our Christian position, and without it we could not have fellowship with the Father and the Son.

Ques. A. Does Gen. 8:21 imply that the curse of Gen. 3:17 is removed? J. T. G.

Ans. We find in Gen. 8:21, the answer to Lamech's prophecy in Gen. 5:29. "Noah" means "consolation."

On the ground of sacrifice, pointing to the death of Christ, God starts the world again, though man is incorrigibly bad. He gives relief from the curse by cultivation, promising seed time and harvest and all the seasons to run their course without fail Noah fails to govern himself; the first magistrate or ruler was the first victim to drunkenness by cultivating a vineyard. It is on the ground of the propitiation of Christ that God can bear with this present world.

B. When were all things given into the hand of the Son? (John 3:35.)

Ans. In creation, as in redemption, we find the Son doing the Father's will. It is the Father's will, the Son's work, the Holy Spirit's power. He has it by inheritance, but in John's gospel where He has emptied Himself, and taken the servant's place, we find all things put into His hands as a man who has vanquished death and the grave, and all the power of Satan. And who can claim a place for man in heavenly glory. The blessing is obtained in resurrection. And so also is His Messiah ship in Psa. 21: 1 given in resurrection.

Is Rev. 3:14 the beginning of the new creation?

Ans. Yes, and so it is in Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5. But in Col. 1:15. He is the first born of all creation; that is, when He became a babe, He must necessarily be the highest part of it. First born is a title of dignity. Only begotten is the Father's title of affection for the One who ever lay in His bosom.

Is 1 Cor. 12:28 for the body or for the world?

Ans. 1 Cor. 12 shows the functions of the body in its activities in the assembly on the earth, as when the apostle wrote-not for continuance. We may not take the place of evangelists, pastors or teachers, but we may be helps, and if walking with the Lord will be helping to guide the saints in His ways.

"God Is Good!"

Correspondence, Correspondence: Gen. 7:2 Clean/Unclean 7/2; Baptism

Ques. Will you please tell us why in Gen. 7:2, Noah was to take seven of the clean beasts, and two of the not clean beasts into the ark with him? M. J. J.

Ans. Two were to keep seed alive on the face of the earth. But God hack in view that man should worship Him, and this could only be carried out by the animals that are typical of Christ. Noah would know which kind, by the number of animals that came to him. In 8:20 we find him building an altar, and offering of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, burnt offerings unto the Lord. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor, and on the ground of this, though man's heart is always evil, He promised blessing to the earth. Adam and Eve were clothed with skins by the Lord God. Abel offered the firstlings of his flock with the fat thereof. These are all typical of Christ, the one great sacrifice for sin, who has manifested the righteousness and grace of God.

Long afterward (Lev. 11), the difference between the clean and the unclean is unfolded for Israel's guidance, as to what they should eat, and for our instruction. The clean animals chew the cud, and divide the hoof teaching us to meditate on the Word, and to walk it out practically. The fins and scales of the clean fish speak to us of separation from the elements around, and of the power of the Spirit to live above the world's ways. The clean birds teach us that we are children of the day, and that we are to love one another. (Gal. 5:14, 15.) The clean creeping things, with legs above their feet, teach us of the faith that rises over every difficulty to walk with God. (Psa. 18:29.)

The Christian is free to eat what flesh he pleases, if the blood of it shed, and he gives thanks to God for it. (Gen. 9:3, 4; Acts 15:20, 29; Rom. 14:14; 1 Tim. 4:3-5.) "It is sanctified by the Word of God, and by prayer."

Ques. I have been troubled about my baptism. When I was a baby I was sprinkled by a priest. Is this acceptable in God's sight? G. L.

Ans. There are two aspects of what in Scripture is called the Church. The one is the body of Christ, which is formed by the Holy Ghost, and all that are saved are in it; they have that Holy Spirit dwelling in them, which unites to Christ the Head, and to each other. (1 Cor. 12:12, 13; Eph. 4:4.) No unconverted are in that.

The other aspect is the House of God on earth, which is profession. We speak of it as Christendom. All that are baptized to the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are in it. Men build it in that way. (1 Cor. 3:10-17; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:5.) All that are baptized are in it, it includes all profession. God recognizes it in Rev. 2 and 3, which includes Roman Catholic seen in Thyatira, and Protestant as seen in Sardis, which has a name to live but is dead.

When the priest, a professed servant of God, repeated the words over you, "to the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost," you were brought by his act into this profession, and you cannot get out of it, to be brought in again. We do not get the words "sprinkling" or "immersion" in Scripture in connection with baptism. When I baptize any one, I like to dip them in water as it is more after the figure of 'burial used in Rom. 6, and Col. 2, but I would not rebaptize any one if I knew it, because the name, and not the amount of water, is the thing of importance.

Before baptism, you were a "Gentile," after it, you are "Church of God." (1 Cor. 10:32: Gal. 3:28.) When you left the Romish Church, you did not leave the Church of God, but only the sect. It would not be obedience to the word to be baptized over again. It does not say in any place in

Scripture, that it must be "after you believe."

Christian Friend: Volume 8, Purposes and Desires of the Heart, The

The Spirit of God has been pleased to state two grounds upon which God brought the judgment of the flood upon man. First, because of what he had done “The wickedness of man was great in the earth;” and further on we read that this had assumed the twofold form of corruption and violence, those parent sins of Genesis 3 and 4, which will find their full consummation in the day of the Lord, the former in Jerusalem and the antichrist, and the latter in Babylon and the beast. Second, because of what he was “Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;” or, as the margin reads, “The purposes and desires of his heart” were such.

On account of these two things, then, “it repented the Lord that He made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart.” How little are we impressed with the degree to which the heart of God is affected by the sin of His creatures! Now, after the flood, when man was about to get a new start on the earth, after having been sheltered for a hundred and fifty days from judgment, from Satan, and from the world, what does God say? (Genesis 8:21) Has His estimate of man risen? Has His judgment become modified? Not in the least. He utters not a word about man’s conduct, for as yet no space had been given for it to be manifested under His new conditions. But as to the deeper question we read, “The imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” He who “searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts” (1 Chronicles 28:9), needs no waiting for their doings; for He knoweth what is in man, and that He cannot commit Himself to him.

But there is here a, point of deepest interest; viz., that because of what He saw in man, or, if you please, in spite of it (see margin), He declares that He will not again smite the earth any more for man’s sake. And why this comforting word, this assuring promise, as undeserved as it was unsought? The answer is surely obvious to every student of the word; it was simply and solely because of the incoming between Himself and man of all that was signified in the altar and the holocaust of Noah. The first erection on the typically new earth was an altar unto God, probably the earliest ever constructed, and upon this a mighty sacrifice, whole-burnt offering, ascended to Him, definitely referring God’s heart to the excellency and the efficacy of Christ’s person and work. He is met, as it were, on the threshold of the renewed earth by Him who is the beginning of the creation of God!

Thus, as man’s entrance upon the antediluvian world (driven forth from the garden) was as carrying the curse by which he had inaugurated his relations to it when his former relations to God were suspended, so now his entrance upon the typically new creation was marked by restored relations to God, inaugurated by promise and by covenant; so benignant, too, in their character that from that moment to the present his material condition has been substantially and continuously ameliorated. And again we ask, Why was this? Is it not evident that He who saw the end from the beginning so knew, on the one hand, that judgment would work no change in the human heart, and so found, on the other, full and deep satisfaction in what Noah’s altar and sacrifice expressed as denoted by the words, “The Lord smelled a sweet savor, or savor of rest” (margin), that He proclaimed, as it were, an amnesty to man, and retired with profound delight to rest in the Son of His love?

Look we on now to Christianity, and again these thoughts and imaginations of man’s heart come before us (2 Corinthians 10:4,5); for, be it as left alone in lawlessness, or under and after divine judgment, or when brought upon Christian ground, man as man is unchanged, no matter what be his dispensation or the character of his calling. But see how the Spirit of God deals in holy peremptoriness with these hidden activities of man’s heart in the case of believers. Does grace give license to the flesh and its works? By no means. On the contrary, not satisfied with rigorously controlling all that is overt, we have here the deepest springs of fleshly activity torched in the core. The “strongholds” are to be scaled and pulled down; the “imaginations” with every high thing in their train are to be cast down, and “every thought” is to be brought down, “into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

Nothing less than this is what Christianity proposes to effect for the believer; for you, dear reader, and for me. Is it so with us? Has the Spirit of God achieved this noiseless and unseen conquest over what He finds in us, for the glory of Christ, as captives in His train? How far-reaching and how deep-searching is that word “every thought” subjugated to Christ! May His grace lead us into real exercise of soul as to the purposes and desires of our hearts, that His eye may behold those hidden springs, which only He surveys, working with true fidelity to Himself under the ceaseless control of His Spirit unto the joy and delight of His own heart. Says the apostle, “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

W. R. D.

Things New and Old: Volume 33, Correspondence

3. S. ., London. The Hebrew words translated “sons of God” (Gen. 6:2, 4) are never used in the Old Testament to mean the sons of Adam. And from Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7 we learn that these words cannot mean sons of men, or of Adam, but evidently angelic beings. It further seems evident that Peter refers to the same thing (in Gen. 6) 2 Pet. 2:4, 5. Mark this is in connection with the flood. Then Jude 6 speaks also of these fallen angels. The subject is peculiarly awful, and God has thrown a veil of obscurity over it, as much as to say it is not for our profit to dwell on it.

The word “wives” is said by some to be incorrect in Gen. 6. They took all they chose of the daughters of Adam.

Surely all this is very dreadful, and sufficient is named in holy scripture to account for the Titans, &c. of ancient mythology. All mythology may be Satanic perversion of facts before the flood. He who has thrown a veil over all this fearful ‘wickedness has also forewarned us that “As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.”

Already there are, it is said, over twenty millions of Spiritualists, or persons getting more and more under the direct influence of demons or fallen angels. What will it be for those who are left behind when “they that are Christ’s are taken away at His coming.”

Things New and Old: Volume 12, Only Place of Safety, The

When God was about to bring judgment upon the earth He provided a place of safety for those who trusted in Him (Gen. 6:14-18); so now that “God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness,” He has provided full redemption and salvation from the wrath to come for all who believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ. Rom. 1:10; 3:24-26.

In the days of Noah there was but one place of safety, and that was the ark (Gen. 7:23); and now there is but one way of salvation, and that is CHRIST. There was safety in the ark for whoever was in it; and there is salvation in Jesus, that “through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” (Acts 10:43.) None could perish who were in the ark, for “the Lord had shut them in;” so those who are in Christ by faith “shall never perish—shall not come into condemnation, but are passed from death unto life.”

Noah believed that the flood was coming, not because he saw any sign of it, for he saw none; but simply because God declared that it should come: “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.” When the dreadful judgment came, those who believed God were safe in the ark; those who despised the word of God were overtaken and destroyed in the midst of all their thoughtlessness.

Dear reader, to which of these classes do you belong? Are you now taking refuge by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Ark of safety, or are you carelessly enjoying the pleasures of sin? Let me entreat you not to neglect the message of forgiveness through the precious blood of Christ. Take heed that you do not despise this day of His grace, and so the day of His righteous anger come upon you.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, God As Father

Question: In Luke 3:38 Adam is called son of God; in Gen. 6:2 his posterity are called the sons of God. Mal. 2:10, says, “Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us”? Paul, in Eph. 4:6, says “there is one God and Father of all.” Is it therefore lawful to speak of the universal Fatherhood of God? J. H.

Answer: Undoubtedly, as angels are called sons of God in Gen. 6 and Job, so also it is extended to the human race as distinguished from the beasts that perish. Indeed man distinctively was made in God’s image, after His likeness, which is never said of angels. Hence in the third parable of Luke 15 the two are spoken of as sons naturally; and Paul, in preaching to the Athenians, adopts the sentiment that we are His offspring, even the heathen. With this agrees the statement in Eph. 4:6: “one God and Father of all.” So far Dr. Crawford was more scripturally correct than the late Dr. Candlish in their controversy. But this universal Fatherhood of God only makes man’s wickedness and unbelief more inexcusable and ruinous. It has to do with nature only, which is now fallen and sinful, and proved to be God’s enemy by rejecting His Son, sent to save. Salvation therefore is by grace, not nature, and through faith, not works of law or any other creature means. Salvation is in no other than Christ Jesus, His only begotten Son, and our Lord. Then only are we who believe His sons by grace.

Correspondence, Correspondence: Who were the "Sons of God" in Gen. 6:2,4?

Ques. 27. Who were the "Sons of God" in Gen. 6:2, 4? W. M.

Ans. There are three classes of angelic beings mentioned in the scriptures.

1st. Holy and elect angels, Luke 9:26; 1 Tim. 5:21.

2nd. Satan and his host of demons who fell before man's creation. Ezek. 28:13-15.

3rd. Those who sinned or left their first estate, 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6. And are now confined in everlasting chains of darkness awaiting the judgment of the great day.

As the word here translated "Sons of God" is never elsewhere used for men, it is generally accepted that it means this third class of angels.

Things New and Old: Volume 22, End of the Year, The

It is written of Enoch that he walked with God three hundred years. How far have we walked with God during the year that will soon be past? To walk with God is surely to do His will. But in order to do His will, it is evident we must know what that will is: what the present mind of God is. As the apostle says, to all who have been justified by faith, and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, “that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” Now in order to know the present mind of God, we must have spiritual intelligence to understand the dispensation, or period, in which we are found. Many things which were strictly according to the will of God, His very commands during the dispensation of the law, are now spoken of in the inspired word during the period of the church on earth, as “ weak and beggarly elements,” and to return to them would be to act exactly contrary to the will of God. (Gal. 4:9.)

If we read the scriptures, is it not most clear that, for fifteen centuries, Israel, as a nation, occupied the ways of God dispensationally? Now during the period from Pentecost to the coming of the Lord, what is His mind? Is it not “the assembly which is his body?” (Eph. 1:22.) Is it a fact that the present work of God, according to eternal purpose, is the assembly, the one body of Christ? And is not this stupendous fact greatly forgotten?

Well, in keeping with this fact, in order that we “may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God,” in all humility of mind, the Holy Spirit presents the truth of the one body as a formative power of walk, even in the Epistle to the Romans. And we shall find that the spiritual apprehension of this will affect the perceptive instruction that follows. “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” (Rom. 12:4, 5.)

Have we walked with God during the past year according to this foundation truth? Have we regarded all believers on earth as members of the one body of Christ? Have we written, have we spoken and acted as those who believe it? “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” (1 Cor. 12:12.) Have we then been “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”?

Let it also be observed that the full statement of the truth of the assembly, the one body, is that on which precept is founded in the Ephesians. “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” And when the ascended Christ gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; was it not for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ?

Yes, this is the present thought of God—the one body. Through the year that is nearly past, yea, for eighteen hundred years, God’s thought has been the assembly, “the one body,” chosen in Christ before the world began. Oh, think of the love of Christ! “Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.... 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.”

Have our thoughts and ways been in harmony with this blessed fact, That all believers on earth form this one body of Christ? Or have we been forming other bodies, in opposition to the plans and thoughts of God? Take a simple illustration. A certain nobleman gives out an order for the building of a mansion. The architect draws the plans exactly to scale, with its elevations, sections and quantities, &c, as they say. The materials are provided: workmen are employed to carry out the plan of the nobleman, as described and drawn by the architect. The nobleman expects care and attention, for the mansion is for his son. Now the workmen forget the plans of the one mansion, and behold them hard at work building, ten or a hundred houses of their own, each according to his own taste. One says, This is my house, another says, and this is mine; another says, it does not matter what house you are building, all that you see are the materials of the nobleman. How would all this appear in the eyes of the nobleman? Would anyone of these be doing the acceptable will of the nobleman? Surely not. If we go back to the beginning, it could be said of all believers, “and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone: 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. 2:20-22.) The thought here is one building, not many buildings. This was not an invisible building, or an invisible church, or assembly. Oh, let us examine the plans, the eternal design, the drawings of the divine architect, the Holy Ghost, of the one assembly, the one body of Christ. All the material, that is all the redeemed on earth, designed according to the revealed will of God, yea, and baptized into one body! Can we grasp this stupendous fact? It is quite true that every act of man, apart from the guidance of the Spirit, spoils and denies this.

We should expect the architect to inform the “builders that it is one mansion which is designed to be built. This fact would be the very base of all his instructions. In like manner we find, both in Ephesians and in Romans, that there is one body, and this is a foundation statement affecting subsequent instruction and precept. Have we been in fellowship with God in His present special work during the year nearly gone? Have we been remembering that the one assembly, the one body, is to be the bride of the Lamb. It is God’s one great thought and purpose in this world at present. It is the taking out of the bride for His beloved Son! Or, if viewed under the figure of a building, the one temple holy in the Lord; not many buildings, but an habitation of God.

Now if it were utterly wrong for the builders to lay aside the plans of the one mansion, and each build a house to his own liking; can it be right for us to lay aside the distinct instructions of God’s word as to the one body, and be occupied in forming a body of Christians, a party, a sect, each one to his liking? Has the evangelist taught every convert that he belongs to the one body of Christ, and now should show it? Or has he led that convert to one of the bodies of men? Has the pastor’s heart taken in the whole of the one assembly, the one body? or, like the builders, has he forgotten the one mansion, and merely cared for his house, his church as men say? So of the teacher; and so has every act of service been either right or wrong according to God, or contrary to His revealed will. It will be profitable for both writer and reader of this little paper, to examine their course during the past year by the word of God.

To return, and, by the grace of God, to seek to do His will, may involve the giving up of very many cherished plans of our own. No doubt the builders, who had laid aside the nobleman’s plans and instructions, would have to cease building their own houses with his materials. And if we learn our mistakes in building different religious bodies, and thus setting aside both the will of God the Holy Ghost, and the instructions of the word of God, we must certainly “cease to do evil,” and then “learn to do well.”

We can say this has been the desire of our hearts, however feebly accomplished, or however much we may have failed. We have sought to write for the comfort and edification of the whole church of God. We desire in our hearts, in the love of Christ, to embrace every true Christian on earth as a member of the one body of Christ.

It may be said these are difficult times in which to show out the unity of the Spirit. Can it be otherwise in a world where all is against God? Were there ever more difficulties in the way of righteousness and christian holiness in business? or even in ordinary life? Is this any reason why we should give up practical righteousness in all our ways? Far be the thought. “But we have so failed in the past!” Surely past failure should awaken us to more earnest prayer and watchfulness, and more unfeigned dependence on God. For builders so far to have forgotten their instructions as described above, would meet with instant dismissal: not so with our God and Father. He waits to be gracious. But let every man take heed how he buildeth. Is it not a sad thing for a Christian to be building wood, hay and stubble, though he will be saved so as by fire, and all his works burnt up? (1 Cor. 3)

Not only is another year almost gone, but “the night is far spent, the day is at hand.” Yes, the long dark night of man’s self-will, and Satan’s rule in this world is far spent; compared with eternity, it is but a moment, and we shall meet the Lord in the air. This is the blessed hope of all the redeemed. It is the next event. As surely as January succeeds the end of the year; so surely the coming of the Lord succeeds this night now far spent. And whilst we hold most sure and dear to our hearts the perfect acceptance of every believer in Christ, for this is wholly of God,

yet is it not also true that we should labor, that we may be acceptable to Him? For we must all appear (or be manifested) before the judgment-seat of Christ; and though accepted in Him, yea, in Him as the One that died for our sins, and rose again, yet, as to reward or approval, it is “that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (2 Cor. 5:9, 11.)

Beloved reader, how will you, how shall we, meet His face? Can He say, “Well done;” if we are walking contrary to His revealed will? Oh, how much that is highly esteemed among men will be utterly disapproved by Him! Is it not high time to awake? Is it not high time to test everything we are doing by the word of God? There, like the architect’s plans drawn to a correct scale, so the Holy Ghost has revealed the eternal plan, purpose, thought of God: the predestined assembly of God—the one body. Not a body, but the “one body.” Every believer a member of that one body. All the gifts of the ascended Christ for the edification of that one body. (1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4) It is the will of Christ, yea, we hear Him pleading with the Father telling out His desire, that the practical unity of those given to Him should be shown, “That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” (John 17) May He grant that all our ways may be molded by the desires of His own heart. And to Him now, and when we see His face, be all praise! Worthy is the Lamb.

Young Christian: Volume 35, 1945, How and Where Enoch Walked

“And Enoch walked with God.” Genesis 5:22 and 24.

There is an interesting analogy between the time of Enoch, and the times we are passing through. If you reflect on the times in which we find Enoch, and compare them with those in which our lot is cast, you will find a very close similarity. People have often said,

“It is all very well to talk about Enoch ‘walking with God,’ but he had not half the trials, half the difficulties, that saints of God have in these days.”

That is a very superficial view of the history of Enoch’s time. He was surrounded by the world as Cain made it. God made the earth, but He did not make the world, or age, as we see it. No one supposes that the disordered system of things round about us is the production of God’s hand. Satan is the god and prince and head of that. God made the literal earth of course, but this disordered system of things that is round about us, where we see such terrible departure from God—God did not make that, neither is He the author of it. Satan has manufactured that out of the total revolt of man. That is exactly what Cain’s world was, in principle, in Enoch’s days. There were two things that entered into the constitution of it—a religion, and a city.

There is a great fact embraced in those two things. Cain was the founder of a religion that disowned the claims of God in righteousness, seeing that man had fallen from God. He also overlooked the fact of the curse that had come in through that fall.

A few words may not be out of place as to Cain’s sacrifice. He brought to God of the fruit of the ground. It was not that he lacked in energy, or that he wanted in earnestness, or that the man was unruly. Cain toiled on the earth, and though cursed, it yielded its fruit to him, and he brought the fruit of the earth that was cursed, as if there had been no curse at all, and offered it to God. There is a great principle involved in this—the moment that the fall exists as a fact, we can bring nothing acceptable to God except through the death of Christ; and the moment that we attempt such a thing, it may be unwittingly, we have fallen under the power of Cain’s religion in principle. That which characterized and marked what I call the religion of which Cain was the inventor and founder, was bringing to God an offering, and doing it so as to deny the great principle, “without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

The city is exactly what we have all round us at the present moment. There was manufacture, there was the art of man cultivated to its greatest possible extent, ingenuity taxed beyond all conception, to produce something which would make the world, out of which God had been rejected, bearable to man. This was Cain’s world. Herein lay its religious, political, and moral aspects (Read Gen. 4:17-22).

It is a very blessed thing to find God calling out a man in the midst of a scene like this, surrounded as he was on all hands by that which disowned God; and it is a comforting thing, too, to our hearts, to find the Spirit of God giving us a record, such as you have in those verses in Genesis 5. With that state of things on every hand, here is a man that is called forth as a witness to the power of God. He was kept in the midst of all that, “walking with God.” Beloved friends, it is exactly what you and I are called to in these days; we are called to “walk with God.”

I heard a beloved servant of God say that when he left England, and went abroad, he came across many of God’s people who had gone out from England to settle there, and he asked them how it was they came out there. He got one reply from one, and another from another, but not a word that indicated to him in the least that there was anything like an exercise of soul before God as to His pleasure in the matter. And he said to one something like this,

“Well, but I read in Scripture that ‘Enoch walked with God,’ and I also read in Scripture that God says, ‘I will guide thee with Mine eye.’ What do you know of that?”

Well, the only reply he got from several to whom he spoke after that fashion, was simply an evasion of this direct appeal to their conscience.

Now, beloved friends, all this is very serious; and here is the solemn part of it, these very people were not unintelligent people, they had a very good knowledge of dispensational truth; they understood the scripture. They could tell you the bearing of certain parts of Scripture, and so forth; but when it came to this practical question of individually “walking with God,” and communion with God, and guidance by God’s eye, and this principle of faith, they were completely at sea. I say that is very solemn, and I think that you and I have to be on the lookout. We have to take care that our outward intelligence is not in advance of our personal communion with God. Be assured of it, the moment it comes to be so, Satan has materials at hand with which he will make terrible havoc. The outward understanding of the things of God, apart from this blessed question of personal “walk with God,” is a weapon in the devil’s hands.

There is another thing in connection with this “walking with God,” which is exceedingly blessed. We see it in Enoch. He had but one object. You will always find that where there is this simple walking with God, there is this one object. There is the relationship enjoyed; there is the

soul in the sense of this relationship, but besides this, there is an object. You will find it brought out most beautifully in Hebrews 11, in the end of that fifth verse,

“Before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”

That was the one thing that was before him. May I ask you affectionately, is that the one thing before you? Take everything in your life, take every circumstance in your history as a Christian, take everything that your hands are engaged in, your business relationships, your home relationships, your church relationships; is the one thing that is simply before your heart that you want “to please God”? This is very searching.

Before ever he left the world of Cain, with all the hindrances and attractions that were in it, “he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” You see, the eye was entirely off everything but God; there was the one thing that commanded him and controlled every movement of the man, the intense desire “to please God.”

If I have God before me, if I am acting with reference to Him, if I am thinking of pleasing Him, I have the testimony in my conscience that I please Him, and that keeps me up; it is a secret spring of satisfaction and joy in my heart. It is a blessed and wonderful thing, because it separates the affections of the soul from the ten thousand motives and influences that would act upon it.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Ham's Misconduct

Question: Gen. 5:25. Why did Ham’s misconduct entail a curse on a son of his instead of on himself? Why was Canaan the youngest of Ham’s sons singled out? The servitude of negroes is notorious, but the popular notion that they are of Canaan unfounded; and it not being so, perhaps of Cush or whoever may have been the forefather of the negroes.

E. J. T., Elsternwick, Melbourne.

Answer: In the government of the world God does not at all confine Himself to the particular person or generation that has offended. So it was in Jerusalem, and so it will be in Babylon at last: Matt. 23 Rev. 18 Of old we see how the first-born of Egypt was smitten, though Pharaoh and his host were afterward swallowed up in the Red Sea. It was mercy not to punish Ham in all his descendants, but in Canaan. God is sovereign in judgment as in mercy, and altogether righteous. Possibly, if not probably, Canaan may have played part with Ham in the heartless insult and dishonor done to Noah, not only the head of the rescued family, but governor in chief of the renewed earth. But whether so or not, it was mercy, not to involve all in God’s avenging the wrong, but to restrain it within the least bounds. And if God let the blow fall on him that possessed himself of the land promised to Abraham and his seed, and filled it with idolatry and immorality of turpitude not to be named, was it not altogether right that Canaan should be cursed above all, and given up practically to extermination? They were very far from being physically degraded like negroes, or other races such as the aborigines of Australia, but early and highly civilized; which did and may consist with the most shameless sins against God and man.

By W. KELLY.

Bible Treasury: Volume 4, Brother?, Where Is Abel Thy

(Gen. 4:9.)

What was it that constituted the radical difference between the offering of Cain and that of Abel? Why was it that Abel's was a “more excellent sacrifice” than Cain's? The difference between the characters of the two men was great. The one, we are told, was “righteous,” the other appears to have been an ungovernable man with strong passions, though they may not have broken out till Abel's sacrifice drew the evil forth. But why was it that the one had his offering accepted, and the other found a stern refusal? The point is not found in the characters of the men. It is summed up in a most momentous word— “faith.” “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” Bear in mind that I do not for a moment put out of sight the difference in the practical ways of these two men—the bright side of Abel and the dark side of Cain. The moral effects of faith always justify God. It is true that that which faith lays hold of is outside the soul that possesses it; the resting place of faith is entirely without us. But no man can believe in Christ without most blessed effects—not immediate perhaps, nor always rapidly developed; but it is as impossible that there can be faith in Christ without consequences produced in life and walk, as it is that God could in anything put forth His mighty power without proof that such work is of Him.

My present desire is to show how we find the character of Cain brought out in Scripture. It is a very striking proof of the perfectness of the Bible, that there is a great part of the Old Testament which we can only understand in the light of some of the latest books of the New. And in the case of the history of Cain, the mere reading of the narrative in Genesis would not give the clue. But the moment we apply the key, the door, which was previously locked, opens instantly. And the case with which it flies open is no mean proof that the very same hand which made the lock made the key also. In this case one little word applied makes all plain. That word is “faith.” And here is the great searching question for each soul that is here—have you got it? If we read this history, with the light of God shining through us, we shall find it is God Himself speaking to us. Here you have two men—an accepted man and a rejected man. With which of these is your portion now? Can you say that you have by faith “a more excellent sacrifice?” Can you say that you know that God has offered it, and that the Holy Ghost has given you to believe it? Have you taken your stand by Abel? or are you traveling in the way of Cain? How is it that thousands lose their souls? They are kept by Satan in their ruin, in their degradation, by putting off the solemn consideration as to how they stand at this moment before God. They ignore their real condition. And let me entreat you, my readers, to take care that this may not be the case with your own hearts now. Take care, on the contrary, that you are applying the standard of God to your souls. It is an unsparing criterion. It leaves you nothing to stand on as a man, for you are a sinful man; and you may boast of being a man., but who can boast of being a sinner? The truth that God solemnly presses is that sin is come into the world. “So He drove out the man” —drove him out of Paradise.

It was not always so—not so did God make him. But look on the world now, and you have the same great proof of moral ruin as in these two, the offspring of the pair who were originally driven out. They were born in sin. Here they were alike. But in one case there was a believing man, and in the other a man who went on in his enmity to God, still in his ruin. To Cain God's question was, “Where is Abel thy brother?” And did you ever think that God has the same challenge to put to the soul now? There was One who condescended to become a man, to take our nature, and thus become brother of Israel, of man in a certain sense—our brother—though of course holy and guiltless, the only faithful witness. Yet He was smitten—smitten in the house of His friends! But it was not only a Jew who did it. It was man. Do you see, therefore, that this solemn question is one which God is ever pressing on this world? If His blessed Son came and deigned to die, does that relieve us from the awful guilt of having slain Him? Is God indifferent about it? Does any sin rise up against man like that? It was when Adam was put away from Eden that the blessed Lord of glory came into the midst of men who came short of the glory of God. He descended into the midst of suffering. He knew affliction as no other. He was the “man of sorrows.” But that very One—the Son of man—could say, in speaking of Himself, “the Son of man which is in heaven.” It is not only that He is the “only begotten Son “of the Father, but, as it is said, “which is in the bosom of the Father.” And this is not a question of locality, but of the most intimate relationship and of Deity. Even as man He could not be described otherwise than as “the Son of man which is in heaven.” Had He not been God, how could He have so spoken of Himself? But He became a man, a man as truly as one of us. He was not only man, but God; and not only God, but man. And in Him was shown what God was to man—in Him just as truly what man ought to be towards God. Yet the end of all was THE CROSS; and this at the hands of man. And God will make inquisition for that holy blood—I was going to say “innocent” blood. It was that, of course, but it was holy. There was divine power in Him repellent of evil. Adam, even unfallen, could not be called holy; he was faultless, but he had not a particle of holiness. But the Son of God came, and though there was divine power, yet one most wonderful trait in Him was, that He never escaped an atom of suffering by putting forth His own Godhead power. He did not walk in self-sustainment, though he might have done so; but in leaning upon His Father's power, doing the will of Him who sent Him. He looked up, He prayed, He would not speak His own words, and what the Father told Him to do, that He did. He was the obedient One—the perfect servant—bending down to every burden in order to glorify God in it. And all that He got here below was the cross. Now do you believe this? Do you believe what God would do for your soul?

God has given me this perfect pattern of all goodness and dependence; but that is not all. He has given this blessed One to bear my sins, to take them upon Himself, to bear the judgment for them. And do you think that Christ has failed to do it? God is most explicit. He has found a glory in Christ, not merely as His Son, not merely as a man, but as the bearer of sin upon the cross, so much so that He can bring out now a full, immediate pardon. Nay, more; He is justifying, He is giving such a standing before Him as one would not exchange for that of Adam in Paradise. Though sin is around, and the believer may find the effects in his own soul and body of what sin has brought in, and though the believer may have a lot worse in suffering than that of others, as is the normal case; with all that he has got Christ—he has redemption; he has the certainty of eternal life. Is it presumption to allow this? You might better ask; Is it presumption to believe God? If you said, I have abstained from this or that sin, &cc., and therefore can look up with confidence, or at least hope, for the favor of God, that would be presumption. Can I put my obedience by the side of Christ? Can I challenge God to look at it? Men look among themselves to see which is the least defiled. But there is One who is without taint; God has declared it. The whole question is over. The perfectness of Christ, the love of Christ, the love of God in Christ, made the case of man only the more hopeless until redemption came in. Christ magnified God in the cross, and God raised Him from the dead. This is part of God's righteousness. But redemption is the very thing that man always leaves out of the account, because he ignores his own sin. Can you say for yourself, the whole question is settled ? Everyone that believes in Christ ought to be able to answer with boldness. If you were to ask, Have you been faithful? surely it should bring many a blush on the face. There ought to be many a trembling knee where there is honesty, and the only confession would be of utter unfaithfulness. But if God has accomplished redemption, am I honoring Him if I dispute His word, or doubt His love, and put away what He presents to me? It is a terrible thing to talk about redemption and faith without having drawn near to God. That is only trifling about sin.

But if you have gone to God, and confessed to Him what you are, there is nothing but blessing awaits you, though you have to confess that you have outraged Him, that you have lived for yourself without God, that you have thought to approach Him in doing some religious duty—like Cain, who brought an offering of that which his own hands had labored in, thinking he had done his best to bring it in a suitable way to God. It is plain that Cain had never felt his sin. As to natural character, there might have been more in him than in Abel. It might have been said of Abel that he was a quiet, spiritless man, with no energy in him at all. But Cain was such as men can admire. He was a bold man, indeed, for he dared to look up to God and answer Him. For when God said, You shall be a fugitive on the face of the earth, he replies, in effect, No I will build a city. That is what man applauds. And in all that makes man great, there might be some ground, if there was no such thing as sin. But if I have to meet God about my sins.... And meet Him I must, now or hereafter. If I meet Him now, there is nothing but salvation, redemption, and forgiveness of sins; love from God, power with God; because He has given all I need in the death and resurrection of His beloved Son.

But man, away from God, says, True, we are not in Paradise, but we must make an imitation of it; and so he takes advantage of all that science and art have brought in, and tries to make this world a pleasant place to live in. But there is an infinitely more important question, and that is, How is man to stand with God? And all that would better the material condition of human life is but a blind of Satan to hinder men from settling the great question. Where do you find these things first coming in? Among the descendants of Cain. It cannot be denied that the inventions of man are useful—that he who invented a steam-engine conferred a benefit on others; and, of course, it is all right to make use of these things. But it is another thing to live in them, to live for them, as though this world were only a place for man to amuse himself and dwell forever in. We must appear before the tribunal of Christ. What should we think of the depraved moral condition of a criminal, condemned to death, spending his time and thoughts in adorning his cell, which he must leave only for the place of execution? Yet such a state is doubtless true of some who hear me.

Have you met God about your sins? Have you answered His solemn question. Where is thy brother? Why is He not here? He had eternal life. No one—not only no man, but no one—had power to take it away. He laid it down of Himself. His death might seem like the death of any other; but it did differ most essentially from any beside. It was the death of a man who was a divine person. Not all the legions of Rome could have taken it from Him, had He not given it up Himself. He was the willing prisoner, and the willing sacrifice. When the band of armed men came to take Him, after proving with what perfect ease He could baffle His persecutors—for when He said, “I am he,” they went backward and fell to the ground—He gave Himself into their hands. And yet men take advantage of His love to deny His power—take advantage of His humiliation to gainsay His glory! Alas! men refuse to commit their souls without an anxious thought to that precious blood whose virtue is proclaimed in God's own Word. Strange, that in these days of such extensive circulation of the Word of God, there should be so little real belief in its power! The Turk, with his Koran, believes what it tells him, goes through his prayers, ablutions, and forms, and is satisfied that he

is one of the faithful. But those who have God's Word are afraid to trust Him, afraid lest, after all, their sins should rise up against them! But what does God proclaim that blood for? Either the death of Christ is of no value; or no sin of scarlet dye can rise up to make me doubt it is all put away, if I believe God's word about it. No doubt sin ought to humble me. But the one who knows most of himself, while resting on the blood of Christ, will be the most humble. Suppose a man in debt, so deeply that he is afraid even to look into his books to discern the amount. But a friend appears who has unbounded resources, and says, I will pay your debt. No matter what your lack of credit is; the question is, what is my name? will it stand good I will not only pay your debts, but set you up as you never were before. It is precisely so that God works through His beloved Son. And when a man believes, he should not be afraid to look at himself; he can afford to let the light of God shine into his heart, and search out and show him all his motives. And all the discovery of his own evil ought to be only for the discovery of the worth of that which has blotted out all his sins forever. This binds him to Christ with a new hatred of sin that he never knew before. God is exalted as a Savior—God who has come down to me in His Son; not as One who could have no sympathy with me, but in that Blessed Man who thought it not robbery to be equal with God—in Him of whom the prophets spoke, testifying of His glory. And if you believe, the inestimable privilege is yours of being saved by Him, without even a speck of sin left upon you. What a joy! and well may you rejoice, if this portion is yours.

And what a thought it is that something so wonderful is always going on—God thinking of souls; pressing this salvation upon you; telling you of His Son as the Savior! Will you not accept Him for the worth at which God accounts Him? Remember the word of God, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” How many say, “If only I could see the blood!” Does God call you to do this? He sees it. And faith means the soul resting upon the value that God attaches to the blood of His dear Son; so that I can say, My sins, which were scarlet, are washed away; though they were many, they are all forgiven. There may be many important questions; but every question sinks into insignificance in presence of this—the value of Christ and His blood in the presence of God. I am brought to meet God at His judgment-seat now, as it were, in my own conscience; and there I hear His voice saying, The blood of Jesus Christ, my Son, cleanses from all sin. Beloved friends, have you thus come May this be the language of your hearts, “I believe.” What is it that hinders the giving up of self? of the little world, or the great world? If I give up myself and bow before the only worthy one, this exalts God. It is the acknowledgment that He is good to me in my sins. In Israel, God was at a distance, hidden, and they had to approach Him; but now God is going out to sinners. Jesus came “to seek and to save that which was lost.” God was so bent on blessing sinners, that He must become manifest in flesh to die for them. Thus the sum is this: If I prefer myself; I am a lost man; but if I cast myself upon the worthiness of Christ, I can join those who say, “Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Genesis 4:23-24

Question: Gen. 4:23, 24: what do we learn from these verses? M.

Answer: As Cain appears to be no obscure type of the unbelieving Jews who rose up against and slew Him Who deigned to be born of that people, and have since been left wandering over the face of the earth; so Lamech appears, in this song to his two wives, to represent the Jew in the latter day confessing his blood-guiltiness, yet looking to be avenged most amply at the end. Thus we know from the prophets it will be with Israel, when a land is brought forth in one day, and a nation is born at once. For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her sons. Then shall the people, once so guilty yet kept, and henceforth truly penitent at the feet of Messiah, sing, O Jehovah, Thy mercy is forever.

Correspondence, Correspondence: GEN 4:13, 5:16; LUK 12:58-59; Judas; 2CO 13:5; New Earth; More ...

Ques. Does not the marginal reading of Gen. 4:13 suggest the idea that Cain was really sorry for his sin? and yet in 5:16 we read that he "went out from the presence of the Lord.”

E. S. G.

Ans. Whatever inference we might draw from Cain's apparent sorrow when he hears of his punishment, it is evident that the sorrow soon passed away, for only in a few verses lower we find him building his city, and making himself thoroughly comfortable away from God.

Ques. Who are the "judge" and the "adversary" spoken of in Luke 12:58, 59? J. G. S.

Ans. God was then pleading with His people by His Son; but if they refused to hear Him, He would judge them. Hence He is both judge and adversary.

Ques. Are we to understand from John 17:12 that Judas was to be lost from the beginning?

T. H.

Ans. We are to understand that he never was saved, but not that he was lost for the purpose of fulfilling Scripture. "That the Scripture might be fulfilled," should be read in parenthesis.

Ques. How can we examine and prove ourselves whether we be in the faith? (2 Cor. 13:5.) If we believe in Christ, is there any doubt of it?

S. P. T.

Ans. Verse 4 is a parenthesis, and the reason they were to examine themselves is given in the first part of verse 3. There was no doubt at all as to their being in the faith, but inasmuch as they were the seals of the apostle's ministry, their being in the faith would he a proof that God had spoken to them by him. He who knows himself to be saved, does not doubt that the message that reached his soul was of God.

Ques. What will God use the New Earth for?

Ans. It will be the habitat of all who are living on the earth at the close of the 9th verse of Rev. 20. All distinction between Jew and Gentile ceases with the introduction of the new earth. "The tabernacle of God is with men," not Jews or Gentiles.

Ques. Will the Church dwell on the New Earth?

Ans. No. The Church is always a heavenly company (Heb. 3:1; Phil. 3:14; 1 Peter 5:10).

Ques. Will the Church be included in "The tabernacle of God is with men?"

Ans. In my judgment, Yes, though I do not say that the meager reference in Rev. 21:3 definitely settles the point.

Ques. (1) Did Christ create the world? (Col 1:16). (2) Does God, in the Old Testament, mean Father or Son?"

Ans. (1) Yes. In another sense it is also true that God made them by Christ (Heb. 1:2). (2) God, in the Old Testament, means neither Father or Son specially, but the triune God. There is abundant evidence, however, that "LORD," or "Jehovah," means the One whom we know as Christ the Son.

Bible Treasury: Volume 17, Shiloh in Genesis 49:10

It has been said that Shiloh is taken in its local sense as the sanctuary where the young Samuel was trained; and that, if doctrinal perversions did not interfere, hardly any one would doubt this to be the true sense.

What the training of the young Samuel has to do with it I cannot tell: if Shiloh refer to this, it is still a prophecy, but a prophecy very ill interpreted. It seems irrational to suppose that it is a divinely inspired prophecy about the name of the place where the young Samuel was trained, because the tabernacle was there. What is “till Shiloh come"? and yet more “to him shall the gathering (or, “obedience”) of the peoples be”? What has that to do with the place the young Samuel was trained in? It is not “people” (fancy might have spoken of the tabernacle so), but “peoples.”

The truth is that this use of Shiloh for the name of a place is a modern Jewish opposition to the faith of Jesus being the Messiah. All the old Jewish interpreters referred this to Messiah with one consent, though the root of the word be disputed. R. Lipmann first proposed to read it “till they come to Shiloh,” as in 1 Sam. 4:12, where the words are so translated. And this a certain Teller in the last century defended, applying it to the fact in Joshua, that at the close of the war they pitched the tabernacle in Shiloh; and then Judah ceased to take the lead which in Numbers had been given him in the wilderness, Reuben and Gad left, &c. This interpretation has been adopted by the rationalists, as Eichhorn, Ammon, Bleek, Tuch, &c., denying any application to the Messiah.

The soberest and best Hebrew scholars, even rationalists, take it as referring to peace, and see Messiah in it as Prince of Peace, as the scepter shows dominion. They do so on Hebrew grounds, without troubling themselves about prophecy and its fulfillment. It is also translated “till he (Judah) come to rest:” seeing in it the full accomplishment of the promises to Israel when the nations of the earth will be subject, some adding the coming of Shiloh, when the land was distributed as a first installment and turning-point, because Israel got its rest of promise in first provisional fulfillment there.

Now these questions of interpretation we cannot enter into here. The objections of some (as Kurz) to a personal Messiah being as yet the subject of prophecy, are null. The Lord Himself says, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad.” In principle I see nothing to object to in a germinant accomplishment for responsible Israel, to be fully accomplished in their final glory with Messiah. That the prophecy is a pretended prophecy, after the event, has been shown to be absurd on the face of it; for the statements are, in almost every particular, such as no one speaking from the event could have made. You must always bear in mind that these rationalists never search even whether a passage may be a prophecy. They start with the assertion that there can be none, and then seek to show how the passage may have otherwise arisen. In this case the absurdity lies on the surface. Jacob declares that he speaks of the end of days, that this goes on to the full blessing of Israel. The gathering of the nations is therefore the natural interpretation, for those who believe in prophecy and the divine inspiration of scripture.

That there was a provisional inbringing of blessing, and the first proposal of it on Israel's responsibility in the first coming of Christ, is the belief of all Christians, and the express teaching of Peter in Acts 3 (now put off till Israel repent, while the church is being gathered, and yet to be fulfilled), and then to be accomplished by a glorious intervention in the last days, I have no doubt. And Judah is preserved as a tribe (I do not see more necessarily in Shebet” scepter”) for that day. It certainly never will be fulfilled till then. It has had, in the progressive development of Israel's victory, preparatory events. To make it Samuel's training-place is simply nonsense.

It is a question whether the name be not itself given from the fact of Joshua's sitting down there to distribute the conquered land. The point difficult to receive from the words is Israel's coming to Shiloh. Either it is, “until rest come,” or, “until Judah come to Shiloh.” If not, the sentence is broken off, and there is no antecedent to “come.” It is “people,” (as the French on) with no one mentioned before. If the ancient interpretation, Targums, &c., all which take it as Messiah, be not received, it is “till rest come,” or “till Judah come to rest.” The words “to him shall the gathering of the peoples be” are the difficulty then. If it be not translated “till Shiloh come,” the gathering will be to Judah, looked at as representing the people, as Judah did, and specially the stock of the house of David and Christ, in contrast with the ten tribes. That the people first should be the vessel of God's testimony, and Messiah take their place on their failure, and gather the peoples, is the distinct declaration of all prophecy. It is fully developed in Isa. 49, where Messiah declares He has labored in vain, if it be Israel; and then His gathering the remnant of Israel and the nations is fully set forth, going on to the rest and glory of Israel. It is the great subject. of prophecy—Messiah taking up the promise as a faithful servant when Israel had failed. Hence He is the true Vine; as Israel was the old vine, but was fruitless or bore wild grapes.

Echoes of Mercy: Volume 13 (1903), Egypt or Canaan.

A CHRISTIAN man was dying after a long illness. He was tended by his mother-in-law. Near the end, he turned to her and asked: “Mother, are you trusting to Jesus, and ready to go too?” “I am not fit,” was her reply. “Mother, Jesus did not die for fit people, nor for those who can make themselves fit; He died for sinners.” These and other words were the means of leading the mother into the light, and she is now a believer, and ready to go if called.

To those who are approaching the goal like this man, eternity looks very near—earth is fading, and heavenly things assume all the reality God means them to have for us. Do not lightly put aside the words of the dying—you have probably heard many of such.

“When Jacob was a-dying,” he had much to say to his sons; when Joseph was departing, “he gave commandments concerning his bones.” This means more than you perhaps realize. Both had believed God as to the future—surely to them a future for earth—their posterity was to leave Egypt and dwell in Canaan, and neither Jacob nor Joseph wished his bones to be buried out of the land of promise. They believed that Egypt was not always to be the abode of their children, they walked by faith, with their eyes on the future. Their dying words declared this plainly.

Do you believe that this world is not to be our home always? Dying men and women see it plainly for us, and they sometimes seek to warn us, and many of them, we may add, have lived as if they believed it. If we are not to stay here always, will you not prepare for the great change that must surely come?

Would Mr. Chamberlain have started for South Africa without some knowledge of the journey thither? Still more important would he not have deemed it to study the maps of the countries he was visiting, and to have had in his retinue personages who would be useful to him on such an expedition? Surely yes. In like manner had you not better make your preparations if you want an entrance into the heaven we all wish to reach some day?

Yet, wonderful to say, God asks nothing of you, but the acceptance of His preparations and arrangements.

He is a Saviour “ready to save,” and He waits with outstretched arms, hands too that have been pierced for us, to receive sinners. He is like the father who embraced the prodigal son long before he was “fit,” when he was in rags, and who himself, from his own abundance, prided all the fitness the unworthy son required. When you know His love, His compassion for the lost, for you, you will be able to give “commandment concerning your bones” in peace, for you will be sure of an entrance into the Father’s house, and remember, the long (or short) journey of earth may end at any moment!

When you are in a dark tunnel, directly the light at the exit end becomes visible, you feel you are nearing the terminus, and you forget the darkness or dread. So if you have a sure Light ahead, a Saviour awaiting you, you may be like Jacob and Joseph, “ready to depart,” not wishing to live in Egypt always, but “fit” for heaven now. “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet (or fit) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

H. L. H.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Genesis 49:10 Comparted With 2 Chronicles 36:21 and Matthew 2:1

Question: Gen. 49:10, compared with 2 Chron. 36:21, and Matt. 2:1, &c.; how would you deal with them?

Answer: The “scepter” may be no more than the tribal symbol; and if this be the sense, Judah was thus kept till Shiloh, the Prince of Peace, came and was rejected, when in due time the place was lost, till He come again: then, and not before, the gathering or obedience of the peoples shall be unto Him. If it mean one entitled to royal sway in Zion, this is also true. So the line of David through Solomon went on to Jesus, as Matt. 1 shows; and in Him dead, risen, and glorified it abides, to be made good when God’s time comes.

Scripture Queries and Answers, Scripture Queries and Answers: Eternal or Everlasting; Whole World; GEN 49:10, 2CH 36:21, and MAT 2:1, Parables in MAT 13;

Q.-Does the word of God really mean "eternal" or " everlasting " in Matt. 25:46? or only " age-lasting? " T. H. T,

A.-The word is used in Rom. 16:26 of God, in Heb. 9:14 of the Spirit, and in 1 John 1:2 of that life which Christ was and is. Are They merely age-lasting? In 2 Cor. 4:18 the same is contrasted with " temporal," instead of being similar in force, as these false teachers aver. Nay, the verse itself refutes their desire; for even they own that the life of the saints is " everlasting," and the same word in the same sentence is applied to the punishment of the wicked. Hebrew, Greek, English, or any other tongue, makes no difference. The N. T. differs from the Old in the utmost clearness as to this, now that Christ is come; as the o. t. had dwelt chiefly on the present government of God, while pointing here and there to the eternal things which are now unveiled under the gospel.

Q.-Does " the whole world " in Luke 2:1 include Russia, &c., or merely the Roman Empire?

A.-It is clear that a decree of Augustus or any other emperor could not run in its effect outside the empire. But it was the phrase of the day, as we see in Acts 24:5. To a Roman the orbs ruled the orbern terrarum. The world and the empire were the same; all without was of no account. But the apostles had a true and larger view, as we may see in Acts 17:31, Heb. 2:5, Rev. 3; 10, and elsewhere.

Q.-Gen. 49:10, compared with 2 Chron. 36:21, and Matt. 2:1, &c.; how would you deal with them?

A.-The " scepter " may be no more than the tribal symbol; and if this be the sense, Judah was thus kept till Shiloh, the Prince of Peace, came and was rejected, when in due time the place was lost, till He come again: then, and not before, the gathering or obedience of the peoples shall be unto Him. If it mean one entitled to royal sway in Zion, this is also true. So the line of David through Solomon went on to Jesus, as Matt. 1 shows; and in Him dead, risen, and glorified it abides, to be made good when God's time comes.

Q.-Parables of Matt. 13; what do they teach?

W. E.

A.-There is a complete circle of truth: seven, of which the first, though not a likeness of the kingdom of the heavens, shows the Lord sowing the word, with the opposition of the devil, the flesh, and the world. The six after open its mysterious form while He, the King, is rejected and on high. Three were spoken outside to the multitude, three (with the Wheat-and-Tares interpreted) to the disciples within the house: the external and internal views of the kingdom. In the first the crop is spoiled by intermingling of tares, and no remedy till judgment at the Lord's appearing. In the second the little seed rises to a towering tree. In the third the leaven works, over a given space—creedism, not life.

But to the spiritual the Lord shows the treasure, and the field bought to have it; the one pearl of price, the union and beauty of His loved object for which He surrendered all His Jewish glory; and the final severance of the fish taken out of the sea of nations in the net, at the completion of the age.

Christian Treasury: Volume 7, Fruitful Bough by a Well, A

Joseph is a well-known type of Christ, but it is not every reader of the Bible who delights to trace out the application and fulfillment of the type. Take, for example, John 4:6. Why is it mentioned, "Now Jacob's well was there"? Surely it is to arrest our attention in some special way, and in Gen. 49:22 we discover the secret.

“Joseph," we read, "is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall." In this wearied Man, therefore, who sat by the well of Sychar, we see the true Joseph. And even while we gaze upon Him we behold His branches running over the wall of Judaism, and reaching with their goodly fruit to this poor woman of Samaria.

If not actually, yet morally (for this characterizes John's gospel), the archers had sorely grieved Him, and shot at Him, and hated Him. But His bow abode in strength (Gen. 49:23, 24), as is shown by the deliverance He wrought that day for this poor captive of sin.

E. Dennett

Bible Treasury: Volume 3, Scripture Query and Answer: What Ground Is There for the Rhemish Version and Note: Staff or Bed?

A. The difference between the Hebrew copies and the sense given by the Septuagint is simply a question of the points (i.e., between ncp, a staff, and , a bed, both being derived from the root rrca which means to lead as well as to stretch.) There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the “bed” in the Old Testament. The staff was in his hand while he bowed himself upon the bed's head. Aquila and Symmachus gives , while the LXX. have . Indeed, so far there is a difference; the Rhemish is stronger than the authorized in excluding from Gen. 47:31, anything but the absolute and supreme worship of God. “Israel adored God, turning to the bed's head,” whereas the English Bible simply states that he bowed himself, doubtless, in worship, upon the bed's head. This, then, is not the question, which is, whether the Septuagint, or rather Hebrew xi. 21, intimates that Jacob also paid relative honor to Joseph's scepter, as a figure of Christ's royal dignity. Now waiving for the moment the question to whom the rod belonged, it is admitted in the Rhemish note to Gen. 47:31, that “Jacob, leaning on Joseph's rod, adored turning towards the head of his bed.” This shows that the Rhemish translators perfectly understood the real force of kirl avrout How came they to know that Jacob so leaned? The Hebrew does not say so, but the Greek. How came they, then, to understand the same Greek words in Hebrews, quoted from this very passage? The only true answer is, that they sought the appearance of Scripture sanction for their idolatry. But God has caught them in their own craftiness; for the words cited prove that they knew the real meaning of the Greek, justify the authorized version, and retort the charge of corruption on their own heads. The truth is, that the Greek will not bear “worshipped the top,” but “upon the top,” as every version known to me has it, save the Vulgate, or those made from it. As to the meaning, it is clearly leaning on it, as the Rhemish Annotator himself confirms in his note to Gen. 47:31. The reader may compare 1 Kings 1:47, where the Septuagint has ; .] , the Vulgate, adorat in lectulo suo, and the Douay “adored in his bed.” Now, the construction is precisely the same as in Heb. xi. 21.

Another thing seems plain—that if by leaning on the top of the rod is meant that Jacob worshipped the rod, equally so by turning to the bed's head must be meant that he worshipped the bed. But, as in the latter case, (Gen. 48) the Douay version understands that Jacob adored God, turning to the bed's head; so in the former case, (Heb. xi.) they ought to understand that he adored God, [leaning] upon the top of the rod. But it would be intolerable, even to the Romanist, to suppose that Jacob adored the bed. Consistency, however, requires it. The grammatical construction is imperative. Either he adored both rod and bed; or he worshipped God leaning upon the top of the staff and turning towards the bed's head.

It may be added, that there is not the least ground for making the rod or staff to be Joseph's. It was Jacob's. With his staff he had passed over Jordan once a poor outcast, as we are told by himself (Gen. 32:10) when he returned with two companies and feared before Esau. Now, in Egypt, before Joseph and his sons, even though he were next unto Pharaoh, and, leaning upon the staff, which had been the companion of his own weary wanderings, the dying pilgrim worships the God whose faithfulness he had proved all the way through. What more striking than his faith which could bless the children of his now exalted son, seeing the true worth of Egyptian splendor in the light of the glory of the promised, land; and what more affecting than the worship of his happy heart, as he leaned upon the witness of his many toils and sorrows! CONTENTS.

Fragments Gathered Up, When a Pause Is Needed

Jacob had seventeen years in Egypt ere he was called hence; Paul was called up from the midst of his labors. (2 Tim. 4) It is a bad symptom of previous ways when a pause is needed, like that in Egypt to Jacob.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Genesis 46:26 and Acts 7:14

Question: Gen. 46:26, with Acts 7:14: how to be explained? W. E.

Answer: There is no question really of truth, but of object and mode of speech; for the original history speaks of 66 (ver. 26) and 70 (ver. 27). Even in ver. 26 the Hebrew strictly means “belong to,” rather than with “Jacob.” The 70 are his house, including more. The LXX, in their Greek version, which Stephen quotes, include five more though born in Egypt, according to the well understood usage of regarding parent and children as one.

Thoughts on Faith and Skepticism by Thomas

Andrews, F.R.S. London: James Nisbet R Co., 21, Berners Street. 1894.

This little volume devotes part i. to remarks on Christian faith, part ii. to observations on Hyper-Biblical criticism, part iii. to thoughts on modern skepticism, and part iv. to spiritualism and theosophy. There is an appendix also on atheistic teaching in French schools, on auricular confession in certain English schools, on the progress of Romanism and Ritualism in this country, and on the present attitude of the Romish body towards Protestants. May it be used of God to help unwary souls! The need is great and growing.

Gospel Gleanings: Volume 11 (1911), One That Sticketh Closer Than a Brother

THERE is a picture drawn in Genesis 45:1-15 and where God draws a picture that picture is perfect—and how perfect is the image in the type before us, each heart that has tasted anything of We the sweetness of the Antitype can testify. will not look at the previous dealings of Joseph with the consciences of his brethren, nor at the results following, for I want now just to consider for a moment this scene—the revelation of Joseph himself—to these guilty, hateful, and self-condemned me, his brethren, and to consider it in the glorious Person of Him of whom the patriarch arch was but a shadow.

To start with, then, all these beauties emanated directly from the heart of Joseph. Pent up there his deep affection for those who had simply returned hatred for his love had been working and waiting—waiting till the moment when, self-condemned, they stood before him with nothing to plead but their own utter helplessness. Then it was he “could not refrain himself”—the pent up tides no longer could be restrained; out the billows love must roll in its deathless ocean fullness. A faint likeness indeed of those eternal depths that now are overflowing from the heart of the blessed God to the vilest; the torrents of divine love which, unchecked, are pouring themselves on the thirsty ground, since every barrier has been removed by the cross. The moment divine righteousness was satisfied the heart of God removed all hindrances to His presence, the veil was rent by His hand, and the Saviour God came out in the plenitude of His grace to meet the long loved, long lost sinner. And—to meet him alone! So here, no Egyptian official, however dignified, is allowed to intrude into the solitude of that meeting place; no inquisitive eyes may rest on that scene! “There stood no man there” to mar or distract that meeting. Instinctively we feel how out of place another’s presence would have been. No priest needed, no intercessor—no, indeed! Shall we allow any to force their presence into the sacred recesses of the audience chamber of “the great God our Saviour” when called to be alone with Him? He commands them to go out; the secrets of His heart are only for those who are the objects of its affection.

In the verses of our chapter let us notice five things in connection with the Lord Jesus: (1) The person of the Son (ver. 3); (2) He is our kinsman (ver. 4); (3) the guilt of His people; (4) God’s purpose in it; and (5) the glory of Him whom they sold, but whom God sent.

No wonder that the declaration, “I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?” terrified them! Joseph, the father’s son, his delight and beloved one, the one whom they had hated, and now on the throne! But grace has deeper depths to manifest other secrets to unfold; secrets that no “house of Pharaoh” may overhear; and he who “wept aloud” now beckons closer to whisper only to their ears. the remembrance of their guilt. Yet in unfolding it the son reveals their kinsman, it is as one “not making afraid” that he presents himself, “Joseph your brother”! “Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself also took part of the same.” “The Word was made flesh.”

The truth must come out, however unpalatable; grace might hide it from others, but to them the solemn words must be uttered, “Whom ye sold”— yet blessed, thrice-repeated truth, “whom God sent” (vers. 4-8)! Man’s guilt, your guilt, my guilt, is told out in deepest blackness at Calvary, though at the same moment the provision to meet it is presented also. God’s side—He sent, sent the Saviour—to “save” not Egypt merely, but “your lives”—yours who sold Him, yours, who would not have Him!

Oh, gaze and adore! Be not wrapped up of in your guilt, terrible though it be. Behold the Lamb of God. See God’s purposes in Calvary, and know that our very sins that nailed Him to the cross are atoned for by the blood there shed for us who believe! What matchless grace! But more—the God who sent His only begotten Son is the God who, “has made” this same Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ! “It is the exalted One who speaks, with added glories on His brow, God’s answer to Golgotha’s shame and scorning. Wherefore also God hath highly exalted Him.” Not as the Son, which He ever was and ever is, but as the “sent One,” the sold One, the humbled Son of man, these honors deck His brow. We see Him crowned with glory and honor. Many diadems shall crown His head (Rev. 19:12).

In Joseph we read of his threefold honors:(1) “A father to Pharaoh,” words figuratively foretelling the intimacy of relationship with Him who fills the throne. “Therefore doth my Father love me.” (2) “And Lord of all his house.” “Whose house are we.” Are you of it? Is He “thy Lord”?—then “worship thou Him!” (3) “And governor over all Egypt.” Yea! The “Governor among the nations.” However many gods amongst the nations,

“to us there is one God the Father... and one Lord Jesus Christ.”

Blessed unfoldings! Are they yours, my reader? Knowest thou this One, the true Joseph? Then “haste ye and go.” Carry His message to thy home, to thy kindred, to those over whom His heart yearns. Bear His invitation, “Come down” —to be near Him—to be nourished by Him—and “tell of all my glory”! Yea, go! Go with His tears on thy neck, His kiss on thy cheek. Go in the sense of His love lavished thus upon thee; but ere thou goest, open out thy heart to Him who has revealed His as thine—and commune, yea, “talk with Him.”

H. C. T.

Christian Truth: Volume 9, Jacob's Mistake

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

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

Christian Truth: Volume 34, Jacob's Mistake

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

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

Food for the Flock: Volume 3, Satan

EN 3:1-7{WE should be impressed, each of us, as far as the Lord enables us, with what we have to guard against; any part of the truth that has been overlooked anywhere. What we require in a measure to be revived, the Lord- would supply it to us, if we waited on Him. We ought to come to hear with the expectation that He will set. forth to us what we- require. And, in saying this, it is not abstract things that I mean: we are often too abstract; it is Himself that we want; it is everything that we may know what He is. But we are constantly taken unawares; we are unprepared for the character of the thing that is here, because we are not instructed as to it. " Forewarned is forearmed."1

The subject I wish to bring before you, after this preface, is one on which I am not able to say much, but it is one of great importance. It is Satan-his power, and the different ways in which we suffer from his antagonism.

I feel there is a great, and, I trust, a growing desire, to follow the Lord; but- I do not think there is a sufficient sense of the power of evil, and of the character of that evil. The Lord says: " I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." It was a very momentous thought in His mind He does not wish us taken out of it, but He does wish us to be kept from it. I feel that many are not sufficiently acquainted with the character of this evil. I may say, for one, I have not been sufficiently acquainted with his devices.

The first class of opposition comes out in what I have read. Whatever God is set upon, that is what Satan is set against. It is an immense thing for us to get hold of this thought. As far as I am able to take you, the subject will be mostly suggestive; but I think the greatest and the most important teaching in a day like this is suggestive. If you are true in heart before the Lord, you will work it out. It does not produce the same results, I think, when everything is made as plain as a map to us. It may be very pleasant to be able to say: " I see it as plain as A B C; " but it will not be effective teaching when it is. The Lord spoke to the multitude in parables. If Israel had really cared to understand Him, they never would have been satisfied till they had arrived at understanding His thought. The Lord spoke to them in parables, and the very fact of their being satisfied that He should do so, showed that they did not care to know His mind. If a friend of mine speak or write to me in parables, I never rest until I get at his meaning. But the Lord spoke to them in parables, and the multitude were indifferent as to what was meant; and when He was alone with them, He expounded all things to His disciples.

I will touch on two or three places in Scripture where my subject comes out. In the passage I. have read, Satan comes in against what God: was set upon; he comes in to explain away the word. It is the word he assails, not things. When you lose the word you have lost your power. So he does not begin so much by pointing out to the woman the advantages to be gained as by assailing the word. Having got the word- he attempts to pervert it. It is, " Yea, hath God said?" and,," Ye shall not surely die."- He does not yet tempt her to eat.

If you study your own history you will see the way you have been ensnared and rescued; and no one is happy who has not got a history if he do not walk, so to say, historically with God seeing and understanding God's dealings with him. I do not mean by this your keeping a diary,-a diary is a record of your feeling's;. I mean; literally, history, that is, the-events of your life.

An important thing comes out here which marks the difference between a work of the flesh and a work of Satan. It is a point of great interest as to the moment when an act of the flesh becomes a wink of Satan. A simple act of the mean an act of flesh simply-is just doing something that pleases me at the moment; it is simply gratification of the flesh: as we read: " She saw that it was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise." But in Satanic action there is always a design-there is an end farther on to be reached. The action of the flesh is momentary; it is the present moment that is before me; I like it at the moment; there is no forecasting-no issue to be reached. But when there is an evil issue to be reached by it, it is Satanic.

How would it come in? " Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil." When you are in a condition for Satan to help you, he will surely do so. I state the principles in a broad way, and may my doing so give you a deeper sense of what a shelter your heart may find in Christ. If you get the sense of a terrible, never-ceasing foe, on the one hand, it will make you more conscious, on the other, of what it is for you to have the Lord for your shelter as you walk through this evil world.

I just pursue the subject, but not to dwell on every example. I say nothing of Cain, for instance, but pass on to Noah., Noah does not begin with Satan he only plants a vineyard; but that is self-gratification. And, let me warn you, the moment you yield to self-gratification you a are in danger. It is a thing that suits you, and you are allured by it; green fields, no matter what it is, but the allurement comes first. Woe if you yield to it! This was the character of the first temptation 'of the Lord. When He was a hungred, Satan presents the temptation to make stones into bread.

If I look at Noah, I see he is set upon the earth on new terms, and the point was whether he would break down in keeping them. His planting a vineyard was simply self-gratification, but in so doing he failed to keep the word. " Hold fast the form [the outline or scope] of sound words." It was the scope of the things that he lost. It is not, as people so often say, whether you " have a text " or not for a certain action. Noah had no text -nothing had been said to him about a vineyard; but, Noah, if you had understood that God had put you upon the earth to rule, you never would have done anything to imperil your calling? He who cannot rule himself cannot rule others. Satan was meanwhile glorying in the fact that what God had set up in man had failed, and he brings in Canaan, who is the emissary of- Satan, and Canaan is cursed.

I now pass on to Aaron himself. Aaron wanted to please the people, and, through this desire, led away from God, he is soon betrayed into sin by Satan. It is not that he is a bad person, but, thinking he would meet the condition of the people, he was ready to be the tool of Satan. It is the converse of Job's case. He was a good man, who, afflicted by Satan, will not surrender faith. The calf that-Aaron made was the evidence of the Egypt out of which they had come-surrendering the truth Of God for idols.

I have passed over Pharaoh, because he was a wicked man. But whilst doing so I just say, that man is an incompetent creature, so that when he gets into a strait, he must have either God or Satan to help him. Pharaoh went to the magicians. Aaron has been prominent for God, but prominence does not save him Prominence for God here does not save from the activity of Satan. The moment you look out to meet the popular mind, it is man you are trying to meet and not God, and you then readily become the tool of Satan. He supplies a ready invention: he quickly found the gold for Aaron. What a thing is Satan!

You ask, What would be the effect of heeding this counsel? Practically you would have such a sense of what Satan's power is, that you would know that if you are not in Christ nothing can protect you. Education cannot keep Satan out; not all the thoughts of man can do it. One of the greatest crimes I ever heard of has lately been carried out by a roan of education; if he had not had intelligence and education, he could not have constructed his infernal machine.

The terrific nature of Satanic power is that it is unceasing in its hostility against that which God is set on. And who, then, escapes his attacks? Why, those who not are set upon what God is. They escape from suffering; they escape the pain of his opposition.

I pass by the book of Daniel, in which we find more than one instance of his working, and go on to the Lord's own temptation. Nothing astonishes me like this. See what the malice of Satan is-malice in the very essence of it. Here is the Son of God on the earth, and what would Satan do? Satan in effect says, I will turn the Son of God aside first for a bit of bread-that is the necessary food for every man. Second, by offering Him the world in a new way. And, third (God forbid that we should ever fall into it!)' by seeking to. make Himself singular among men by the interposition of God for Him. Thus could Satan seek to upset the very Son of God. Wickedness cannot imagine goodness, any more than a good man can believe in a bad one. Here is God's Son, the Creator, on the earth; and Satan thinks he will turn Him aside for a g bit of bread!

I know how small a way I can take any of you into this, but I have the comfort in my own soul of knowing that the Lord would have you awake up to the gravity of it, and, if you wait upon Him, He will carry you into it far beyond what I can.

We now pass on for a' moment to Matt. 16. where the Lord calls Peter, Satan. He says: " Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that of men." This is a remarkable thing. Here is he, who has just received the greatest revelation that was possible for a man, coming out with that which is Satanic. The Lord had just before said to him: " Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." And now, when the Lord spoke of His death, not as merely saving, but as that through which man should be judicially set aside, "Peter took him and began to rebuke him." Mark, it is not salvation here. Peter never objected to be saved-no one does; but Peter objected to man being set aside.. This shows us what Satan is about. The Lord here brings out what is his great point of attack. It is accompanied with a great revelation; and this person to whom the revelation has been made cannot endure the fact that man is to be set aside-to find his end on the cross. " Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be' unto thee." And the solemn answer is: " Get thee behind me, Satan."

I now travel on to see how this is worked out. But I must first take another thought in connection with this principle, so I just state the fact, in passing, that when the Lord was being crucified, Judas was actually carried off by Satan: " Satan entered into him." But Peter is sheltered.. The Lord says to him: " Satan hath desired to hake you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee." Satan gets round him first by great bravery for his Master; he is carried away by his natural prowess, and cuts off the high priest's servant's ear, and then he will go on to the high priest's house to see the end. It was all quite natural. But just see how he is decoyed on. A friend leads him into the house, and there he warms himself by the fire, for it was cold. Satan never lets you know you are in his toils until he has got you fast, and then he seeks to plunge you into despair. And notice his malice; not satisfied with having got the multitude and the apostate disciple to work his will against the Lord, he will have one of the nearest and dearest of His disciples. Do you understand at all his malice? Are you alive to the fact that, if you have not the arms of Christ around you, you are not safe for a moment from the virulence of this untiring foe?

In Acts 1 find Ananias and Sapphira the tools of Satan; he makes them believe that the Holy Ghost is not in the church. He says to them: You may tell the lie, no one will ever find it out; and you will get an advantage in two ways: you will have the credit of having given all that you possess to the church, and you will also have a good bit of the money for yourselves. The object of Satan here is to disparage and undermine the work of God, and to neutralize His grace. The temptation offered to them was that of eminence in the church of God. That was the bait with which Satan deluded them. It 'is well, when anything is put before you, to ask yourself the simple question: Is this Christ, or is it a bait

Christ is the only measure for everything; can I answer, I have enough in Christ? This is the practical benefit of being in the presence of Christ; I can then say, Having Him I can do without anybody; I am perfectly happy with Christ. Can you do without your family? Well, I say this, that the sense of the presence of Christ consists in being able 'to say: " No bread; " nothing but Christ; nothing for the human side. When I come down to the wilderness I want other things; why, I want a coat, for instance; but up there, in His presence, it is ever " No bread." You may be a very sincere man, but I do maintain that you have lost His presence when you take up your cares.

You say, I have to go to Him about my troubles, surely? and of course you have; I do not mean that; but when you are occupied with Christ in His own sphere you need nothing else. As one has said: " A prayer-meeting is in the wilderness; a. worship-meeting in the holiest." The moment I am in His own sphere He Himself is the satisfying object of my heart; I do not want anything but Himself-no super-additions. Here on earth I want food and raiment and comforts; I cannot get on without things needful to the body. God knows I want things, and He furnishes them too. But I have the sense in my soul that when I have to do with Christ in His own sphere, though I may drop. very soon into the wilderness again, still, as I know Him there, I am in an ecstasy. It is Christ, and not myself, that engrosses me. In " believers' meetings," as they call them, they are looking out for -divine grace acting on themselves, instead of enjoying Christ Himself.

I look now for a little at the 'epistles.' What was their failure at Corinth? It was that they would spare man. It is not that they would not accept Christ for their sins, but they would not accept Christ crucified as their pattern here on earth. There are three things important for the soul to see., First, God in the cross of Christ clears me of everything that stood, between me -and Him. Second, I am united to Christ in glory; I am put where he rules, where his sway is owned. Third, I return now to the cross to, turn out everything in myself that would hinder the outshining of Christ. You admit that you are clear of your sins; if you were not you could not be united to Him in glory; and now you are to resist everything in you that is contrary to Him, that the light may shine out in this vessel that He has redeemed to Himself, and that you may come out here in the strength and grace of Christ. The man must go. And this the Corinthians would not have. The consequence was, that Satan got in. I do not comment on it; but I just point out how that, in the second epistle, they were slow to receive back the offender. They had been unduly lax; now they are unduly severe. Says the Apostle: " I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him, lest Satan get an advantage of us." I mention it to show how he first mars the work of God by introducing terrible laxity among the saints, and then by leading them to go too much the other way.

There is another thing I just turn to in the first epistle of Timothy. In these two epistles to Timothy we get mention of 'f the latter times" and of " the last days." We are now in the latter of these two; and I wish to show you the difference between the Satanic action in the two. It is the same principle here that we have already noticed. In " the latter times " of the first of Timothy, Satan brings in a system with which we are all acquainted-Romanism-which is an exaction on man; hence, of course, it is not supercession. It is just the difference between exaction and supercession. All exaction on the man admits his existence. Satan substitutes a new kind of godliness for the divine- godliness brought before us in the preceding verse, and this consists in exaction on the man: If I say you are not to marry, not to do this and that, I admit that you are alive. Satan will bring in anything to make me admit that I am here. Let Ishmael stay in the house; make a servant of him, if you like; but do give him a corner. No, he is to go out. So Romanism came in to substitute something for God's supercession of man here, and that substitution is exaction.

But in the second of Timothy it is not substitution that he brings in, but imitation. Oh, but is not Romanism still going on with its exactions all around us? I have no doubt that it is; but besides Romanism, another phase of evil has now come in: we read of " having a form of godliness, but denying the power," and of those who are " ever learning; and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." These " resist the truth," as " Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses." It is imitation of the truth, and that not in a person who has never learned it. It is imitation, combined with sickly sentimentality, which the term " little women " expresses; it does not mean literally women, but the effeminacy of character which goes after this imitation. This is the character of the last days.

All I am saying is conveyed in the first sentence I uttered, namely, that Satan is ever set against that which God is set upon.

If you look at Ephesians, you find that Satan is always opposing the saints who faithfully pursue their heavenly calling. It is when we have on the whole armor of God that " we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places." It is there that the warfare is unceasing. There is something exceedingly fearful in the virulence of it. If you are determined to enjoy your rights to heaven, his opposition to you will be unceasing, and therefore it is compared to wrestling—every sinew is strained to the uttermost to upset the-antagonist; and all this because I insist upon my rights. Many a one has proved the severity of the struggle. God will help them; that is enough. But many a one, because he insisted on his rights with not strength enough to maintain him-many a one who has been the brightest, the foremost of all-has been floored by Satan. Their purpose, however, is known to God, and Ile certainly will restore them. They were set on going on to glory, but they did not look for the protection offered them by the way-they had not on their armor-and so they were drawn aside. And' then it is said of them, " Oh, there are your people who said they were heavenly! " And so they are they were right in their purpose, but they have failed in carrying it out; and I warn you, if you do seek to maintain your rights, you must be prepared for the most unrelenting opposition for the, most dire virulence of Satan. If you say, God has given the heaven and I mean to have it. I answer, You must have your armor "on then. And that is character; it, is not prayer-simply. No man can get on against Satan Without character; you never can face, Satan if you have not character.; you may have large conceptions of righteousness, but the question is, Is your own character righteous? With -your armor on you are invulnerable. You can say to Satan,- You cannot' touch me; Lam strong in the Lord. I would have you search your ways and everything about you as to this and then, though Satan may be able to say, I saw you do such and such a thing the other day, you can answer, So I may have, but I am not doing it to day. I stand by the, power of God now, and I am going to resist you.

This is what I call the first class of opposition.

I need not tell you how he opposes in preaching the gospel. I cannot go into the subject, but I may say I do not believe the gospel is e'er preached without his seeking to neutralize it. It is well for those who preach to make up their minds to this. It is not only the hardiness of man's heart that they have to meet but the gospel is never preached without Satan being there to pick it up if it be by the wayside.

As to the way in which Satan deals with individuals, Peter says. he " goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, and he knows you well. He knows what Your peculiar liking is, and finds you in a condition to entertain his suggestions. Judas had the bag before Satan came to him, and he say to him: I know you like money, now I will give you some money if you will do it. To another, who is ambitious, he says, I will

give you power.

It has been a great question with philosophers as to the interval of time that elapses between the conception of a bad act and the execution of it. I will tell you; and not by philosophy, but by Scripture. " Satan entered into "

He put it into his head; and if you entertain the thought he pits before- you, he will enable you to carry it out. Wherever there is consistency, persistency, in an evil course, there is Satan. Man has no power of himself; so I say, you never see a persistent attempt to a certain end for evil that it is not Satanic. When people say, That man has a great will, you May be sure he is supported by Satan.

Paul says, " Satan hindered " me. I do not know how it came to be so, but we find that he was going to preach in a certain place, and that he could not go. ".

How; then, am I to overcome him? Resist him. "Whom resist, steadfast in the faith; '! and, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." The great thing is to stand against him.

There are just one or two more points I should like to touch on. First, the way in which God makes use of Satan. I believe He uses him to correct the saints and to scourge them. In Job's case how terrible for him to know, if he did know it, that he was in the hands of Satan; that it was Satan who had taken -away his sheep, his camels, his oxen, and his sons and daughters. And Satan was glad to do it; and he was glad to be the thorn in the flesh to Paul. Just think of it! I believe it would give us far greater sobriety if we thought more of these things, if we saw that we are never safe from the attacks of Satan but in the hands of the Lord.

And, lastly, we have that most solemn word " Delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme."

May the Lord keep us close to Himself as our great High Priest by the way! He never suffered from the attacks of Satan internally, though He did from outside. And, for that very reason, He is able to carry us through all the virulence and malice of that which is outside us. He makes it all to be but the winds blowing on His garden, " that the spices thereof may flow out." As for ourselves, we have no power at all unless we are depending on the Lord Jesus Christ.

(J. B. S.)

Bible Treasury: Volume 8, Genesis 3 Compared With John 8

The same moral is continually exhibiting itself in the great action of human life. Distance of time makes no difference. The energies at work are still the same. There is the way of God and the way of Satan, the principles of light and of darkness.

It is instructive to mark this—to notice how the most distant scenes of action in the book of God are quickened by the same instincts and energies. Thus in John 8 we find Gen. 3 again; the great opposing elements of the garden of Eden taking their several course, and doing their different work, in the temple at Jerusalem four thousand years after.

The serpent, or the serpent's seed, is in this solemn scene, and exactly in the old character. The serpent had found a pure creature in the garden, and had corrupted and destroyed her, and then did what he could to destroy the one who had undertaken her cause. He had murdered the woman, and conceiving enmity to her Seed was to bruise His heel. After which pattern his seed, in John 8, seeks the full ruin of the poor adulteress, and then also the life of Jesus, because He had taken up her cause, and the cause of all such ruined sinners.1

And, still further, the serpent who entered the garden had worked by a lie; the weapon in his murderous hand was a lie. And so here, the serpent's seed are found utterly destitute of truth. Jesus was speaking the truth, as He tells them again and again (ver. 14, 37, 45, 47), just as the Lord God was speaking it when, in the garden, He told of death upon the eating of the tree. But the Jews do not understand Jesus. They have no faculty to comprehend the language of truth. “Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my words.” So deeply, so thoroughly, so awfully, were they departed from the power of the light and truth of God. Thus do they indeed take the place of the seed of the serpent in his two characters expressed at the beginning, so that the Lord has only to say of them, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him; when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

But, again, in the garden man destroyed himself, and then hid away from the presence of God. The voice of promise, the glad tidings about the woman's Seed, however, draw him forth, and Adam walked again in “the mother of all living,” and receiving from God's own hand the pledge or seal of righteousness by faith. And so in John 8. The poor adulteress is a self-minded sinner. She is detected and sentenced to death. She hides herself and is silent. But she hears, like Adam, the voice of the Son of God, the woman's Seed, and she is at peace, and walks forth again in “the light of life.” That voice had again overthrown the serpent, or the serpent's seed. There was enmity between it and them, between the woman's Seed and the serpent's seed, according to the promise. And, like Adam in the garden, the poor adulteress finds life, where she deserved and might have expected death.2

In this also the scene in the garden of Eden stands revived or reflected in the scene in the temple at Jerusalem. Four thousand years have made no difference. The moral energies, the principles of light and darkness, are the same in the world's infancy or age, in the earth's eastern or western borders.3

These similitudes are very exact; but so also in Jesus, the Son of God, the Seed of the woman: as we read of Him, as we see Him, “the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.”

In Gen. 3, the promised Seed of the woman is evidently from God, for the sinner and against the serpent. And such are most blessedly and most clearly the relationships which the Lord Jesus fills and assumes in all the action and argument of John 8 He is God's provision for dead and ruined sinners, in defiance of all the malice and wrath of the enemy.

And, further, He is this at all personal cost. The serpent was to bruise His heel, according to Gen. 3; and the serpent's seed, according to John 8, was “to lift him up,” the very same thing as bruising His heel. (See ver. 28.)

But, further still, though bruised, He was to get the victory and bruise the head of the serpent, according to Gen. 3 And so in John 8 He lets the Jews know that continued resistance of Him would be their doom and final destruction; that it would prove, as another scripture expresses it, “a kicking against the pricks;” or a bringing of utter ruin on themselves by the very enmity they vented against Him.

And, finally, He was their only hope (see ver. 24); as in the garden fig-leaves were insufficient, and there was no return to life through the sword—all rested on the woman's Seed.4

These similitudes are very marked, and it is interesting to the soul to trace them. But there is another thing suggested to me. The words “I am” ( ) occur three times in John 8. This expression is to be made definite, I judge, according to the force of the context. And it may, therefore, intimate different glories or characters in Christ. It is used in Mark 13:6. “Many shall come in my name,” says the Lord, “saying, I am.” But in this place it is properly defined by the italic word “, Christ,” the context very clearly showing it.

It is used in John 13:19, and there properly defined by the translators, “I am he,” meaning to identify Himself with the One prophesied of in Psa. 41, against whom the companion's heel was to be lifted up.

So in our chapter (in John 8:24, 28) the words are found again, and again correctly defined by the italic word “he.” Because the Lord was teaching the need of their believing now, and the certainty that they should know hereafter that He was the One whom He had been presenting Himself to be.5 But in verse 58 the same words, “I am,” are left as they are found, indefinite. And I judge most correctly so, because at the close of a long and trying conflict with the Jews, the Lord announces His high personal glory as Jehovah; and so they understood Him, because they immediately deal with Him as they would with a blasphemer of the unutterable name.6

All this is very distinct, and very simple too, when, by a little meditation, we get on the right track with the solemn words “I am.”

But, again, in connection with Gen. 3, I ask, who is the “he,” or the “I am” of John 8:24, 28? Plainly, from the whole discourse, “the light of the world,” or the One who had “the light of life” for dead sinners. And then again I ask, who is He that carries “the light of life” for dead sinners, but “the Seed of the woman'?” This we have seen. It was faith in that promised Seed which enabled Adam to walk again as alive from the dead in the divine presence; and it was faith in Jesus, the “light of life,” which enabled the convicted adulteress to do the same.

Girdle of Truth: Volume 8, Gospel of Genesis, The

This gospel published in the first promise in the face of the devil himself, is maintained in these last days by the apostle in the face of men on earth and angels from heaven. (Gal. 1:8.) Whether it be the earliest or the latest preaching of it, this glorious gospel is still the same. It is " the testimony of God which he has testified of his Son." It is the gospel of the bruised and yet victorious Seed of the woman. In the bright and perfect idea of it, man is

silent and passive. Abraham had only to believe and righteousness was imputed to him. Israel had but to stand by and see God's salvation. Joshua, in Zech. 3, the prodigal, the convicted adulteress, are all in like case. And here, at the beginning of our sin, and the beginning of God's gospel, it is just the same. Adam has only to listen, and through hearing to believe and live. The word is nigh us, and we have but to receive it, without working anything in the heights above or in the depths beneath. The activities are God's. The sacrifices are God's. The profoundness of our silence and passiveness in becoming righteousness, is only equaled by the greatness of the divine activity and sacrifice in acquiring righteousness for us. In the sight of such a mystery we may well stand and say, " What has God wrought!" " Simple indeed it is to us," as one once said, " but it cost Him everything."

God's Glad Tidings: Volume 6, "Where Art Thou?"

Genesis 3:9.

THIS question was addressed by the Lord to Adam after his shameful fall. Man had eaten of the tree whereof God had commanded him that he should not eat. Sin had entered and marred God’s fair creation, and the man who before, in innocence, had been happy in the presence of his Maker now seeks to hide from Him.

And why? Because he finds now within himself an accusing conscience. He has lost his garments of innocence and discovers that he is naked—naked before God, and he is afraid.

Reader, have your eyes been opened to this yet—that you are naked before Him; that He discerns the innermost thoughts of your heart, and sees you through and through? “Where art thou?” Have you found that as a child of Adam you are at a distance from God? Sin has separated you from Him, and ere you can meet Him without fear you must know that sin is forever put away.

But Adam did not think thus at first; so he seeks to cover himself with an apron of his own devising, and thus clothed, thinks he may be able to appear before God.

Alas! how many are to be found in this day, who, like him, are sewing together fig-leaves for the same purpose. Multitudes there are in this land alone, who think that if they live moral lives and go to church or chapel on Sundays it will be all right with them in the end. But how solemn is the truth that all such will assuredly find, sooner or later, all their own righteousness to be but as filthy raga in His sight.

Reader, in what are you clothed? Is it the spotless righteousness of God? Be assured that in nothing less than this will you be able to stand before Him. Nothing else will be of any avail. All man’s attempts at improvement, all his efforts to reform the flesh, his religious forms and

ceremonies, his good deeds so-called, all, all will be unavailing in that day. See to it, then, that your righteousness is that which will bear the gaze of His all-seeing eye. Not a speck or taint of sin can pass unnoticed by that Holy One.

Again, then, let us ask, “Where art thou?” Adam was at a distance from God, in a fallen condition; he was lost. And such is the state by nature of every soul born into this world. This is your present condition, unless you have been “born again” of the Spirit of God.

But there is something more in these words, “Where art thou?” They were uttered by a seeking God, a God in grace seeking the sinner. God comes out to bring lost man back to Himself. But man’s sin must be brought home to him, and so the question comes, “Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?” Man must see his helpless condition. Then the promise of a Savior is given. The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head. Adam believed God, and next we read (vs. 21), “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them.” No mention of the fig-leaf aprons. They are worthless. And how could these coats of skins be obtained? Only by the shedding of blood. Precious type of the blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus. Sin must be put away, but “without shedding of blood is no remission.” “It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” That atonement has been made. Christ has died. The barrier which stood between the sinner and God has been removed. The sinner who believes in Jesus is saved. He has a righteousness imputed to him which is not his own. It is the righteousness of God. Thus clothed, boldly will he be able to stand when heaven and earth shall pass away, and neither angel nor devil will be able to lay aught to his charge. He will not be there on the ground of his own works, but on account of the work of another. He will not be arrayed in his own righteousness, but in another’s; and the song he will ring will be “Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” If it were possible for a soul to get to heaven in any other than God’s way, that soul would not be able to join in that song. He would raise a discordant note in that blest abode. But such is impossible, for it is by “grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”

Unsaved reader, still far from God, let this question of the seeking One reach your heart, “Where art thou?” Are you going on carelessly in sin, following the course of this world?

He in mercy yearneth over you, and willeth not that you should perish.

Are you one who up to this present time has been weaving for yourself a garment of morality or religion? Away with it at once. Deceive not yourself. Get off such a sandy foundation.

Christ is preached to you as God’s righteousness—the only foundation.

Of each one, who, like the prodigal, forgetful of the joys of the Father’s house, is wandering in the far-off country, His voice in grace is heard asking “Where art thou?” He has a heart of love to pour out upon each returning one. The kiss, the ring, the best robe—all are waiting. Then

Let each one who reads these lines ask himself, or herself, “Where am I?” Am I still far from God, or have I been brought nigh by the blood of Jesus? Am I saved or unsaved?

G.J.H

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Meaning of "Thy Seed" and "Thy Seed and Her Seed"?

Question: Gen. 3:15. What is the meaning of “thy seed” (the devil’s seed), and of “thy seed and her seed?”

Answer: Can there be conceived a weightier announcement, after sin had entered with death ensuing, than Jehovah Elohim made in pronouncing the curse on the Serpent? “I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel.” While countless souls are by grace associated for all blessing and triumph with the woman’s seed, One is marked out, on Whom all the blessed of similar seed depend, Who should suffer the deepest anguish, yet live (again, as we can add) to crush him who was the liar and the murderer from the beginning, and all who, refusing grace, perpetuate the enmity of Satan.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Does Scripture Determine the Serpent in Gen. 3?

Question: Does scripture determine the serpent in Gen. 3?

Answer: Surely Rev. 12:9, 20:1, with 2 Cor. 11:3, are ample to decide this question. Satan availed himself of that subtle animal, not yet reduced to its humiliating condition.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Cursing of the Ground a Blessing or a Punishment?, The

Question: Gen. 3:17. Did God curse the ground as a blessing to Adam and his seed, or as a just punishment for his sin, as it is said, “for thy sake”? In the two following verses it would seem that there was no work before this; whereas in chap. 2:5 we read, “there was not a man to till the ground,” and again, in verse 15, “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” Was this work or not? That is, was not the first position of “dressing” and “keeping” of the same character as the later one of “tilling the ground from whence he was taken” 23)?

E. T.

Answer: That the ground was cursed because of Adam’s sin is what scripture plainly states, That there was no “work” before his fall is not so stated. Man placed in the garden “to dress it and to keep it” shows that it was not God’s will that His creature should be idle. But there was no

“toil” or “sorrow” connected with such occupation. Now thorns and thistles were to appear, and in the sweat of his face was man to eat bread. Weariness is known, and so also the sweetness of rest after labor. Idleness was one of the iniquities of Sodom (Ezek. 16:49). It had no place in innocency, nor will it be compatible with the millennium (Amos 9:13), when “the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose”; nor—may we not add?—with the eternal state (Rev. 21). Labor here is good for all, and in it there is profit. For out of evil God can and does bring good.

It may be instructive to compare the case of Levi as an instance of God making His judgment an occasion of blessing. Gen. 49:7 says, “I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.” But in Deut. 33:10 we see how their being thus divided and scattered is overruled for more effectually teaching “Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law.” “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

Gospel Light: Volume 7 (1917), Satan's Lie, Man's Conscience, and God's Revelation

READ Gen. 3:7-21. GEN 3:7-21

THERE is a very wide difference between man's conscience and God's revelation, a difference well worthy of my reader's careful consideration. The scripture referred to above unfolds this difference in the fullest manner. Man got his conscience in and by the Fall. This one fact is sufficient to show the real nature of conscience. By the one act of disobedience man became possessed of that thing called conscience, which is simply “the knowledge of good and evil." Previous to that act man knew only good. He moved in the midst of a scene in which God had said that all was "very good." Evil had no place in that fair creation. The traces of “eternal power and Godhead” As. ere visible on all hands.

Every tree, every shrub, every leaf, every flower, every blade of grass, stood in its place, and gave evidence of the goodness of God.

Every bird warbled its Maker's praise. There was not so much as a single element of evil throughout the entire sphere over which man was appointed to rule; and therefore man knew nothing of the difference between "good and evil " until he hearkened to the tempter's voice. In a word, he got his conscience in and by the Fall.

And what was the first effect of conscience?

It told man that he was "naked." He had not known aught of this before. Conscience told him this. It could do nothing more. It could not point him to a covering. It told the one dismal tale of nakedness. It had naught else to tell to Adam, and it never has bad aught else to tell to any one of Adam's guilty race. “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.”

This was all that was gained by hearkening to the voice of the serpent. They had never thought of nakedness before. Conscience was at work. Innocence had fled, never to return; and conscience had come in, with all its startling powers, to make them sensible of their condition, and fill them with guilty fear.

And let my reader remark here that conscience had w do with their actual state. It did not tell them aught about God. It spoke from within. It brought them no glad tidings from without, no cheering accents from a source above and beyond themselves, in which their poor terrified hearts could find comfort.

They had got their conscience by listening to Satan's lie about God; and it was therefore impossible that it could convey a single ray of light to their troubled souls.

It is only needful to see how man got a conscience, to know its effect upon him. Some there are who think that conscience, if left to itself, will assuredly lead a man to God. How could it? Did it do so in Adam's case?

Surely if ever the true effect of conscience could be seen, we should look for it in the third of Genesis. Did it lead Adam to God?

The very reverse! How was it possible that what had its origin in the belief of a lie about God could ever lead a soul into His presence?

It told them of their own state, but could not tell them of God's character. The consciousness of my own state is one thing; the revelation of God's character is quite another.

“They knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God, amongst the trees of the garden." Conscience made them cowards, and drove them away from God. Satan had told them, in effect, that God was not kind in withholding the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In short, he made it appear that God would not give them an apple. He belied God; and man believed his lie. Here is the root of fallen humanity. Here is the old stem from which have shot forth the branches of a corrupted nature. The unregenerate man is formed and fashioned by the serpent's lie.

It is not merely in his ways and words that man proves himself a fallen creature. His secret thoughts concerning God, and his inmost feelings toward Him, are the lamentable proofs of his lost estate.

Reader, allow me to ask you one or two plain questions. What are your secret thoughts about God? Do you think He is a God of wrath? Would you be afraid to find yourself in His presence? Do you regard Him as an angry Judge Who is seeking occasions against you, holding above your head the sword of judgment, and only waiting to cast you into the lake of fire? If such are your thoughts concerning God, let me tell you they were the thoughts which caused Adam and Eve to hide themselves behind the trees of the garden. The serpent had falsified the divine character in their eves; and the result was, they were afraid of God, and fled to hide at the very sound of His voice. “I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." Such was the source of all those dark, gloomy, suspicious thoughts which fill the human mind in reference to the blessed God, the eternal Fountain of all goodness, the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort, the Planner, Revealer, and Perfecter of redemption's wondrous scheme.

Let us now look for a few moments at God's revelation of Himself. No sooner had Satan's lie fallen upon man's heart than the LORD God came down to contradict it. It is well to look closely at this. Let us draw near and hearken diligently to all that passed in the garden.

Let us ponder it deeply. Some would tell us that the LORD God came down to drag man forth from his lurking-place, in order that he might receive his sentence. Where do we find this in the inspired record? Let my reader examine attentively Gen. 3. GEN 3:1-24 and say if he can find any foundation for such an idea.

Alas! it is to be feared that this thought springs from the same source as Adam's fear.

The human mind is sure to interpret everything in such a way as to make against God.

Set the unrenewed mind to expound a text, or to interpret a providence, and it will be sure to do both the one and the other in such a way as to make against the divine character.

Whence came the tendency so to do? From the enemy of God and man. Let there be no mistake about this in my reader's mind. The natural heart hates God. It is governed by Satan's lie.

Go where you will; take up whatever form of human religion you please; contemplate man in whatever condition you can find him, and you will observe a general rule, and that, too, without a single exception: the human heart has hard thoughts about God. “I knew thee, that thou wast an austere man." Such is man's language with respect to God.

Now, when we come to examine closely the scene in the garden, we find that the LORD God really came down to contradict and confound the enemy, and to take up man as an injured being. True, man was a guilty being also; and God had, in the exercise of His moral government, to allow man to reap as he 'had sown. But then we must distinguish between God's government of the world and His grace to the sinner. It is very manifest that the same God Who first appears as man's CREATOR, appears again as man's FRIEND. He appears to interpose on the sinner's behalf, and to pass eternal sentence upon the serpent.

It was the serpent who had done the mischief, and he must have his head bruised. He had injured man, and man must crush him beneath his feet. He had dared to meddle with God's creation, and of that creation he must lick the dust. He had said that God would not give man an apple, and God declares He will give His Son. In a word, " the LORD God," when He" walked in the garden in the cool of the day," appeared only as the sinner's FRIEND. He came to give a full and immediate contradiction to Satan's falsehood. He came to take up the controversy, to make it a question between Himself and the serpent; and from that, as we look down along the stream of time, as we run the eye over the page of inspiration, we find an unbroken series of acts on God's part, calculated to throw back in the enemy's face his foul and blasphemous lie against the divine character, acts on which faith sees inscribed, "in radiant letters, ' GOD IS LOVE.' “Thus it has been in the past; and when we look forward into the future, and see an eternity of glory, all resting on the one foundation, namely, "THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS," we can understand something of the difference between Satan's lie, man's conscience, and God's revelation.

All this leaves entirely untouched the great question of God's government of the world.

The woman, as we know, had to hearken to the solemn declaration, “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Adam, too, had to hear that which applied immediately to himself: “Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hart eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee saving, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

Thus much as to the old creation, and man's condition therein. Labor and sorrow, death and the curse, are the accompaniments of the old creation and of man as a fallen creature.

But there was more than this. There was God's revelation of Himself. It is one thing to gaze with solemn awe upon the “dreadful" wheels of God's moral government, and it is quite another thing to read the deep secrets of His bosom of love. The government of God may ofttimes be wrapped up in a dark cloud of mystery which the finite mind can never penetrate; but His love shines in living luster all around. Now, faith bows the head to the former, while it basks in the light of the latter. We are not called to unravel the mysteries of God's government; but we are privileged to enjoy His love. We are the subjects of the former, but we are the objects of the latter.

My reader should seek a clear understanding of the difference between God in government and God in the gospel. The distinctness is not sufficiently attended to, and hence it is that many minds are confused, many passages of Scripture not understood, and many of the actings of providence entirely misconstrued.

If we only look at God in His government we shall never know Him. It is when we see Him in the cross of Christ that we understand His love, and know Him as “a just God and a Saviour." Precious, saving, life-giving knowledge!

If we could only look forth upon a world of sin and misery, sickness and death, poverty and wretchedness, a world in which we see at times the upright suffering and the wicked successful, how should we ever know God?

Impossible it is “in the face of Jesus Christ " that God has revealed Himself to the sinner's heart. And, oh! who can utter the blessedness of finding oneself in the full blaze of divine revelation, after having groaned beneath the crushing burden of conscious guilt?

For one who has endured the terrors and agonies of conscience to find himself in the embrace of redeeming love is surely heaven begun upon earth. To find God actually taking my part against Satan. Yea, against myself, and opening His bosom of love to my guilty soul, and all this in such a way as to glorify Himself, imparts peace and joy unutterable.

Thus, in Adam's case, we see that CONSCIENCE terrified him, and drove him to hide.

REVELATION gave him confidence, and attracted him forth from his covert. It is so in every case. Conscience could never tell a man what God is. It is the sole province of revelation to do this. Conscience has to do with self: revelation has to do with God.

The former turns the eye inward upon self, the latter turns it outward upon God; that terrifies me by telling me I am not what I ought to be; this tranquillizes me by assuring me of what God is. I am a sinner, and He is a Saviour. He meets me in Jesus, and all is eternally settled. Adam and Eve were not dragged forth by the hand of justice, but, drawn forth by a heart of love. The LORD.

God was the first preacher of the gospel. Adam and Eve were the first hearers, and they were both converted. What a preacher! What an audience! What a result!

And let me here observe that the true 'attitude for a sinner to take, in the presence of divine revelation, is that of a listener. “I will hear what God the LORD will speak" (Psa. 85:8). PSA 85:8 To enter the place of a doer before you have occupied that of a listener is to reverse God's order, and throw everything into confusion. Adam tried this plan and found it a failure. He tried "works." He “sewed fig leaves together," but it was no use. He could not even satisfy his own conscience or remove his guilty fear. He had to listen to the voice of God, to hearken to divine revelation.

And what did that revelation teach him?

That, after all, God was his Friend; that the very One Whom the serpent had represented as unkind was going to provide a Saviour for him, a Bruiser for the serpent's head. No marvel, then, that he was attracted forth from his hiding-place. The love of God gave him, confidence, so that he could speak of Eve as “the mother of all living." Nor was this all.

'" Unto Adam also, and to his 'wife, did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”

Adam got both life and righteousness by simply hearing and believing God's revelation. Could he have got these by the dictates of his own conscience? How could he? Where were they to come from? How was it possible for one dead in trespasses and sins to procure for himself divine life and, divine righteousness? It was wholly out of the question. They could only come from God.

Man could not find them but God revealed them, and faith received the revelation.

May the Lord enable my reader to understand with distinctness the difference between human conscience and divine revelation. May he know the deep blessedness of resting, in child-like simplicity, upon God's eternal word.

C. H. M.

“He that cometh to GOD must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Heb. 11:6.) HEB 11:6

Gospel Light: Volume 3 (1913), Fig Leaves and Coats of Skins

“HOW long have you known the Lord?” said a friend of mine, to an old man in Staffordshire.

“About three weeks, sir; but I have been for forty years sewing fig leaves together.”

There is a good deal expressed in those few words. Thousands are employed in the same profitless work as our poor old Staffordshire friend. Yes; thousands are occupied in the useless business of sewing fig leaves together.

The man who is seeking to save his soul by means of rites and ceremonies, ordinances and sacraments, church-going and chapel-going, is just sewing fig leaves together. So also the man or woman who is building upon prayers, fastings, and almsdeeds, is sewing fig leaves together.

All these things may be, and many of them really are, very good in their right place. But as a ground for the soul to rest upon for pardon and peace, as a title wherewith to draw nigh to a holy and righteous God, as a foundation on which to build for eternity, they are, in very truth, but sewing fig leaves together; and all who trust to them will find them to be so when, alas! it will be too late.

But let us turn, for a moment, to the third chapter of Genesis, and look at the first attempt ever made, in this world, to sew fig leaves together.

"There is nothing new under the sun,”

and we may see in Adam's apron of fig leaves the very earliest figure which Scripture gives us of man's righteousness in every shape and form, the very earliest type and illustration of all human effort to cover the sinner's moral and spiritual nakedness, from the day of man's fall in the garden of Eden, down to the present moment.

No sooner had man eaten the forbidden fruit, than his eves were opened. But, oh! what an opening! What a discovery! He found out that he was naked. He became possessed of a conscience of good and evil, and this self-same conscience made a coward of him. “The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.”

Sad, sad opening! Sad discovery! They had listened to the serpent, and this was the result. Discovered nakedness! A coward conscience! Up to this they had lived in happy innocence, blissful ignorance of evil.

They knew only good. But now all was changed. They had gained the knowledge of their own nakedness, and lost the true knowledge of God.

And what then? How did they seek to meet their new condition? Just like the old Staffordshire man. “They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.”

Reader, mark this: "They sewed." it was their work, not God's. He never set 'a single stitch in the apron. It was man's work from beginning to end. This stamped its character. It was impossible that the work of a ruined creature could ever lift him out of the ruin into which he had plunged himself. He might work in the ruin, but he never could work himself out of it.

Hence we find that the very moment " they heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day, Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden.”

They dared not trust their fig-leaf apron.

It did not even satisfy themselves. How then could it screen them from the searching gaze of a righteous God?, It was " weak and beggarly.”

“And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

Think of this I "I was naked." Had he forgotten the apron? It would seem so. Ah! it was of no use: indeed, he completely ignored it.

Thus it is ever. All human efforts prove valueless when the testing-time, the trial-moment, comes. Nothing will stand but God's own work; and Adam's apron was not that. It was man's work, and not God's; and we may rest assured that nothing will, nothing can, avail; nothing can give peace but that which is of God. There is not, beneath the canopy of heaven this day, a soul possessing true peace who is resting on, or looking to, human efforts of any sort or description. In order to possess true, solid, divine peace, the soul must he resting simply on that which is absolutely and entirely of God.

Now, of this latter we have the earliest figure in the coats of skins which the Lord God made for Adam and his wife. There was this weighty difference between the apron and the coat: that God never set a single stitch in the former'; and man never set a single stitch in the latter. That was wholly of man, and therefore could not avail this was wholly of God, and therefore could not do otherwise.

Oh! that men would but ponder those early lessons of the apron and the coat. They are full of holy instruction for us. We may rest assured that they have a voice for every 'age, and a special voice for the present moment.

Christendom is studded, from one end to the other, with the manufactories of fig-leaf aprons. Millions of hands are employed in the miserable work; and those aprons may do well enough until that moment arrives when the voice of God must be heard, and their utter worthlessness will be found out when it is too late. “I heard Thy voice; and I was afraid; because I was naked.”

What utterances! The voice of God! Fear! Nakedness! Beloved fellow-sinner, we beseech thee to think of those things.

Think of them now. Say, on what art thou leaning? To which art thou trusting? Man's apron or God's coat, which? Oh! which?

Do not put this question aside. Look it straight in the face, this living moment. Come to the point now. Thou hast delayed long enough; delay no longer. Consequences of present and eternal moment hang on thine answer to this great question.

Say, then, dear friend, art thou trusting, in any way, to thine own works? or art thou reposing, in perfect confidence, upon that precious blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin? Examine thy foundations closely and rigidly. Look well to thy title-deeds. It will be unspeakably awful to find out, when too late, that thou hast been building upon human rubbish, instead of building upon the Rock of ages.

Hearken to the following magnificent passage, and may the eternal Spirit interpret and apply it to thy precious soul: “Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not be confounded " (Isa. 28:16; ISA 28:16 1 Peter 2:6) 1PE 2:6

Here is thy ground. God has laid the foundation. He does not ask thee to add to it, but simply to lean upon it, to trust to it, to believe in it. And if thou wilt only believe in Jesus, thou hast the word of Him who cannot lie to assure thee that thou shalt never be confounded, world without end (see John 5:24). JOH 5:24

Responsibility, Responsibility: Part 3, In the State of New Things

Our first parents, as we have seen, stood in Eden (the garden of God's delight); and were both of them naked and were not ashamed; now Satan enters, and "by one disobedience" the eyes of them both were opened and they knew that they were naked; and ashamed they retire among the trees of the garden (for they are no longer fit for God's delight) and immediately undertake to remedy the evil by sewing fig-leaves to cover their shame.

The new state of things is simply this, Adam has willed himself out of Eden, by willing himself into unfitness to remain in Eden, and can never will himself back again.

He has " become wise" to know good and evil. He knew good before. And now he knows evil also, and this has made him wise. He has attained knowledge, and knowledge puffeth up." He has gained a wisdom and knowledge which he can never lose. He has put himself into a state from which he can never recover himself. He cannot take back his lost innocence; he cannot put away his newly acquired knowledge, he cannot put away his sin, he is no longer fit for God's delight. " So He drove out the man." God had fitted him for blessing in His own presence; he has fitted himself for sorrow, misery and wrath, from which he can never recover himself, and what is more and still worse, it appears that he had no heart to recover himself, for when he found that his eyes had been opened by his act of disobedience, instead of turning to God, his only sure resource for help, he uses his newly acquired wisdom and knowledge to provide for himself in his new state.

This, then, is the new ground of his responsibility, not to recover what he had lost, for he had not power to do that,-and more, God had by "a flaming sword " made it forever impossible,-but to acknowledge God and take his place as a sinner, and thus abide his ruin until God should provide a better thing. Two things, then are here presented. For the man is a sinner, and his true resource is God; in the mercy of God; but since he has become wise he finds a resource in himself.

If God can have mercy, it is with respect to sin, and for a sinner He can provide a better thing, not restoration in Eden, for God never repairs a ruin which man has made, but always provides for Himself a better thing. And this he offers to the man as His own blessed remedy.

Meanwhile God provides for the man in his new state, that which is a pledge and a type. of the future blessing. "Unto Adam also and to his wile did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them." Verse 21. It is very blessed to see, and to keep distinctly in mind this fundamental truth, that God alone was the man's resource in innocence, and is none the less so, but all the more, now that man is a sinner.

God was enough, enough, blessedly and forever more, for man in innocence; and is ENOUGH blessedly and forever more for man in sin and ruin. This is a truth everywhere acknowledged in theory, but alas! how sadly ignored in practice.

Man's responsibility in innocence, was, to maintain his place, in proper submission to the Divine will, and thus in absolute acknowledgment of his own dependence on God; and after he has lost that place of innocence, and has brought in an. entirely new state of sin, still God is his only' and absolute resource for blessing; and his responsibility now is, not to recover innocence, nor to recover Eden; but to take his place as a sinner in absolute dependence on God.

It was not a question of what man could do for himself as a sinner:•nor what he could do for God, not in the least; but it' was a question of acknowledging God who could have mercy with' -respect to sin, and do something for a sinner.' In a Word-, man's responsibility as a sinner was not to do for himself, neither' for God, for God had no need of anything from the hands of a sinner; but the sinner-had need of God to do 'something for him, and this is his responsibility, to wait on -God for it, in acknowledgment of his own place as a sinner, and God as the Giver,.

And: this is clear from the fact that no law was given to Adam out of Eden nor to man until twenty-five hundred years after, by Moses to Israel. But this- point will come up again, so we pass it now. Man's responsibility was to take and keep his place as a sinner before God and wait patiently on God for His word and His own appointed deliverance, and this was faith.

And this is very clearly set forth in the next chap., the 4th, in Cain and Abel. The first man "born of the flesh " was also born of " sinful flesh," and yet he does not take his place as such, nor acknowledge it at all.

He desires to acknowledge God; he brings an offering. But the sin-offering was not in it, and God could not ac. knowledge Cain. " Unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect." To reject the offering was to reject the one who offered it. By bringing an offering of the first fruit of the ground, he is willing to acknowledge God in His place, but refuses to identify himself in his own place, and this is clearly the ground on which he was rejected. Verse 7-"if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door," (a sin-offering croucheth at the door) i. e. a sin-offering such as Abel has brought is near at hand, and the way of acceptance is open to you also.

Here, surely, was mercy and forbearance on the part of God towards Cain, but he had no heart for it. There was forgiveness with God; and with Him plenteous redemption; but Cain wanted neither, he was willing to acknowledge God, but he did not want God. Cain may be very devotional, very pleasant in his address, very bland in the presentation of his offering; but it was all of the flesh, which cannot please God; and it was worse than' nothing for sin was there, which he refuses to acknowledge, and thus he insults God's holiness, by presenting the result of his own labor and the fruit of the ground which had been cursed. Thus, in a word, he in self-will presumes to please God with that which had first pleased himself. And this is the spirit of the world. Here is where the world began. 1st John 2:15-17. A willingness to acknowledge God, but an unwillingness to identify itself in its true place and character before God. But the opposite of this we get in Abel, the first man of faith mentioned in the Bible. (Heb. 11:4, Gen. 4:4.) Abel does not bring an offering with a view to please himself, but with a view to please God.

How full of preciousness, to turn away from that which pleases man, to that which pleases God. Hence he comes with the firstling of his flock; and in this we have, first the acknowledgment of God in His place,,(an offering)) second, the firstling of his flock (a sin offering), in this he takes his own place before God; and third, how shall he present it? By the shedding of blood; for " without shedding of blood there is no remission." "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering. But unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect."

Dear reader, do you see the difference between Cain's presumption and Abel's faith? Cain's position was one of self-will, self-righteousness, and lawlessness. Abel's. position is exactly the opposite; no confidence in himself or the flesh, no setting up of his own will or preference, no thought of pleasing himself, but as a simmer under judgment he takes his place; he bows before God in complete acknowledgment of what was due to God's holiness, while he takes that which belongs to himself as a sinner; and this is the place of blessing. Here is where he finds God's heart, and how soon is he ushered into the presence of the One whose heart had found so supreme a satisfaction in the faith which had so fully honored Himself. Abel's offering proved Abel's faith. Cain's offering proved his unbelief, and his murder brought out his lawlessness: From this point we see the two things very clearly set forth in the word of God. First, lawlessness, as exemplified in Cain, which is' the spirit of "this present evil -world" and of Satan as the god of this world, for twenty-five hundred years, until the law. Second, faith as exemplified in Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and others.

C. E. H.

Correspondence, Correspondence: Great Multitudes; Gen. 3:4

Ques. Who are the great multitudes that no man can number? S. R.

Ans. Rev. 7, teaches us that God holds control of everything, and that His purposes of mercy towards His own cannot fail. This chapter is anticipatory, looking on to the Millennial reign, and shows us Israel as a nation saved. Then of all peoples and languages this great multitude comes, saved out of the great tribulation, as it should read. And for their faithfulness to the Lord at that time, they are given a special priestly place before the throne of God, and to serve Him day and night in His temple. That is on earth, an earthly scene.

These are not the Church, nor the heavenly saints. The twenty-four elders represent them. Nor are they the nations themselves that are afterward brought into subjection to Christ as King over all the earth. (See Psalm 72:11.)

They are like Ittai, the Gittite, who with hid company of converted Philistines and Cretans, shared David's rejection, and get a near place to David, (2 Sam. 15:18, 19), and fight for him (18:2). They are led into perfect blessing on earth. (Ver. 16, 17.)

Ques. What did the Serpent mean by saying, "Ye shall not surely die?" Gen. 3:4.

P. B. E.

Ans. God had said to Adam, when He put him in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it, before the woman was made, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

But in chap. 3:1 the Serpent tries to make the woman think that God had withheld something from them that was for their good. The instruction she received was plain; she should not have given her ear to the Serpent, but she hearkened to his lie, and became deceived. When she saw that it was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband, and he did eat, thus they became sinners against God, and hearkened to the enemy, and death entered their veins that day, as God had said. It is the death of the body here that is meant, but the New Testament (Heb. 9) says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment," but God gave witness in Enoch to His power to turn aside this sentence for the believer.

The woman was deceived, so brought in the transgression. Adam willfully transgressed.

"Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." 1 Tim. 2:14.

Ever since we find it easier in this fallen human nature to hearken to the enemy than to obey God. Man, left to himself, follows the lie of the enemy. Truly man became as gods knowing good and evil, but unlike the blessed God, he became a slave to the evil, that he knew. The believer now is by the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells in him, to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. 2 Cor. 10:5.

Bible Treasury: Volume N2, First Records of Thermal Springs

1DR. P. JAMES is right in preferring the Revised to the A. V. of Gen. 36:24. Anah found, not “mules” but, “hot springs” in the wilderness. So the Vulgate rendered the word from early days correctly, followed by Wiclif and the Wiclifite, and in the Douay Bible. The Septuagint makes the word an unmeaning proper name, 'l ('l Aq. et Sym.), having lost the sense; and later Jews were misled by the Talmud, which loved to indulge in fables about “mules,” some of them filthy as in this case. The Samaritan text for yemim has Emim as in Gen. 14:5, which as an appellative means “terrors” or the like. This seems to be the source of “giants” in the Targum of Onkelos; and so the Pseudo-Jonathan.

The word yemim is never used for “mules.” “Mule” in Hebrew is peredi or pirdah). Rechesh is also translated so, and “dromedary” too, as well as “swift beast.” Etymologically Y. is akin to “hot,” and modern philologists agree in the meaning of “hot springs.” Indeed the horse does not seem to have entered Palestine till the days of David, when we first hear also of “mules,” which were probably imported as the law forbade any such mixture (Lev. 19:19). In the N. T. we do not read of the mule, but of the ass used as in ancient times.

But any of our readers who might like to peruse this little treatise of the discovery of Thermal waters will find reliable information in Dr. J.'s pamphlet.

Present Testimony: Volume 1, 1849, Jacob's Recall to Bethel

In the four chief biographies of Genesis, we have unfolded and illustrated four great principles of God's dealing with His people in grace; besides the individuals themselves being in many instances distinct types.

In Abram is presented God's principle of election and grace-" I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," -the foundation of everything in His ways to poor sinners. In Isaac, Sonship and Heirship,-" if Children then Heirs." In Jacob, discipline,-" What Son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" In Joseph, suffering and glory,- " if we suffer we shall also reign with Him." Other truths have their place in each; but this is the leading thought. It is interesting to look at Bethel in connection both with Abraham and Jacob, the man of faith, and the man of experience. Bethel, and the God of Bethel, are the same; but there is an aspect peculiar to each. Bethel was Abram's meeting-place with God, as well as Jacob's, and the place of his altar too (Gen. 12:7,8)-but he had known him as the "God of glory" before this in Ur of the Chaldees; and this was the foundation of the call which the man of faith had obeyed. Faith had brought Abram as a stranger and a pilgrim to Bethel: circumstances first brought Jacob there; and accordingly, after declension in Abram as the man of faith, there is a much speedier restoration to Bethel than Jacob found (Gen. 13:3,4). But Jacob is our subject. In Gen. 28:10,22, we learn the circumstances in which Jacob first became acquainted with Bethel. His subtlety in seeking to obtain the blessing which was his, according to the sure promise of God, " the elder shall serve the younger " (Gen. 25:23), but which his natural character, could not leave in the hands of the Lord to accomplish, had now made him an exile from his father's house, and a fugitive from an injured brother's rage. He was a supplanter; and the natural character in Jacob presented no traits of loveliness, while in Esau there were the characteristics of a generous spirit. But Jacob, with all his obliquities and feebleness of character, was connected with God, while Esau was " a profane man who despised his birthright;" and with every trait of generous frankness, was but the man of sense, and seeking nothing beyond this world.

It was to this " worm Jacob," when he was a homeless pilgrim, a wandering forlorn man, with the heavens only for his canopy, and a staff for his companion, and the stone for his pillow, that the God of Bethel appeared.; and there, from the top of the "ladder that reached to heavers," and on which the " angels of God were ascending and descending," He reveals Himself as the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and enters into an unchangeable relationship and connection with Jacob.

Jacob never had a fuller revelation of God as the God of promise and grace, nor blessings larger and fuller sealed to him, nor a surer pledge of God's watchful care over him, than Bethel presented, and that too when every external circumstance was most contrary. Grace penetrates his

heart, while the vision of it is fresh before him, and he " vowed a vow saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house." But this is not the strong grasp of faith-staggering not at the promise through unbelief, but the feeble hesitancy of the soul, that must, through many sorrows, learn its own weakness, before it will take God only for its strength. But God is the God of Bethel; and under the power of this revelation of himself to Jacob, did he call upon him to walk and act in the scenes that lay before him. His subsequent history, before we hear again of Bethel, is marked by the unprincipled retributive conduct of Laban, and by the hard and unrewarded service with which he made him serve. And it seems that Jacob's bearing under this rigorous service, and changing of wages, was but little in accordance with the suited character of one who had known the revelations and the sure presence with Him, and help of the God of Bethel. But in the midst of this scene of trial, God recalls his mind to Bethel, and the vow he had made there in other days. If Jacob, in the midst of worldly scenes, had forgotten his purpose of faithful profession of Jehovah for his God, and the service he had vowed to render, God had not forgotten the promise of His grace, " Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou guest, and will briny thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." And now He says (Chapter 31:13) "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out of this land and return unto thy kindred."

This fresh call of " the God of Bethel " breaks the link of Jacob's bondage in Padan Aram, and puts the "Syrian [that was], ready to perish," again with his "staff" to recross the Jordan with his " two bands." But, pilgrim as he is again, and on his journey back under the hand of God, there is many an exercise of heart in the presence of God yet lies between him and Bethel. There are the seven days' hot pursuit of Laban, after the man that had " stolen away unawares," though he left at the bidding, and under the protection, of the God of Bethel! But there is God's pillar between Jacob and Laban, as there was afterward between the trembling Israelites and Pharaoh's pursuing hosts. But another trial awaits him, which brings to remembrance the sins of other days, and leads to deeper exercises before the God of Bethel still. "Deliver me" (says the trembling man) " from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he come and smite me, and the mother with the children, And Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good [this was the remembrance of Bethel], and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitudes." And now comes the last effort of his wisdom in his arrangements to meet the trying hour; and then he is "left alone" with God! Apart from every circumstance, and every tie, he [is " left alone" with God. But it is not in the calm worship by the altar of Bethel, but to know a night of wrestling with Him, who, because He meant to bless, must needs resist the ways and cripple the energy that had neither been subdued by the presence of grace, nor subjected to God by the power of faith! " There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint." His flesh was touched 1 [I speak only morally of this scene, and not of its typical bearing on Israel's history in a future day]. " He had power over the angel and prevailed;" but it was with the distress of the wrestler-dreading lest the blessing should escape-" that he wept and made supplication to Him." He had found God and obtained the blessing; but "Peniel" is not " Bethel." The poor crippled man lets us into the secret of his thoughts through that night of weeping and wrestling, when he calls " the " name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved 1" But this is not worshipping by the anointed pillar, under the opened heavens, with the bright visions of glory, and in the sweet confidence of an eternal connection with the God of Bethel. It is God at Peniel; and, in the strength that was given there, he meets his brother Esau, and he finds how God, to whom he cried, had bowed his brother's heart, without the presents that were meant by poor Jacob to bribe his love! " Esau said, I have enough, my brother, keep that thou hast unto thyself." " And Jacob came to Shalem (Gen. 33:18), a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan... And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Timor Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money. And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel." He is now a worshipper of " God the God of Israel;" his " altar," with its inscription, tells whose worshipper lie is. But God in " Shechem " is not God at " Bethel," as Jacob has to learn. Why does he linger here, and purchase the piece of ground, as if he would have a possession among the Canaanites, when God had called him to Bethel, and showed him there his title to all the land as his inheritance? Alas! this fresh attempt of the pilgrim-man to stop a little short. of the place to which God had called him, ministers still further to his experience. But experience is a sad teacher, unless it be when faith points her lessons, and God is the subject of her study. If her father has purchased a possession here, why may not Dinah his daughter " go out to see the daughters of the land?" Alas, her corruption follows, as the fruit of this; and Simeon and Levi's treachery and terrible revenge, soon destroy the poor pilgrim's " green spot in the desert;" and all that he can say in the bitterness of his heart is, " Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land.... and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, and my house. And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?" Small comfort to allay his agony and distress! But God appears (what grace I) -to call him forth again, that from the midst of these circumstances, he should know him fully as the God of Bethel. " And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Beth-el, and DWELL there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. And Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away th strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and f will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hands, and all their ear-rings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob." God made them feel in all the wretched circumstances of this man and his family-though their hatred burned against him-and his own fears could picture nothing but destruction, until God had reminded him again of Beth-el,-that they must not intermeddle with them, because God was in a living connection with them!

But what had Jacob's experience, in all his vicissitudes, taught him of God, beyond what was revealed to his faith-if he had had the faith to receive it-in the very outset of his course at Bethel? It is no fresh revelation of God that now puts him upon seeking a moral conformity to the character and relationship in which he stands toward him. The answer of his heart, when he first met " the God of Beth-el," was, " Jehovah shall be my God; and this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house." But there had been little remembrance of this "vow" at a distance from the scenes in which the wondrous revelations of grace and glory first drew it forth. But God remembered His part, and was with him in all places whither he went (though little regarded), for he had said I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of "! But when Bethel is again reached or journeyed toward under God's last call, after all this trial, then suddenly and for the first time, breaks upon Jacob's thought, that the things of idolatry, and the ornaments of the flesh, that had gathered around him in Padan Aram, must not be associated with a return to Bethel, where as a houseless pilgrim, with nothing but a staff in his hand, " a Syrian ready to perish "-he first found the God of Bethel, in all His grace, and took Him in the gladness of His heart, and in the solemn vow of His lips, to be his God-his full, his blessed, his only portion! The false gods, and the ear-rings, and the filthy garments may remain without rebuke in Syria under Laban's hard service; nay, they may still be untouched, when God at Peniel is striving with us and when we have seen Him face to face and our life

has been preserved; nay, they may be connected with the altar at Shechem; and all the terror of the presence of an adversary that none but God can deliver us from, may fail to lead us to an inquisition for what so divides the confidence of the heart with God, and is so unfit for His presence! But when the God of Bethel-the God of the poor pilgrim-recalls us to the brightness of His grace, and the unchangeable connection in which that grace has set us with Himself, then the " false gods," the gods of the heart, can no longer be retained; " the ear-rings," the ornaments of the flesh which go along with a divided heart, must be put away; and the stained garments of the world can no longer be borne. In the thought of "Bethel," the gods and the earrings must find their place under the oak at Shechem. Perhaps the "purchased field," which promised a little rest and enjoyment at a distance from Bethel, is only used as furnishing a hole of burial for the things that cannot remain a moment in the presence of the grace and the God of Bethel. But Jacob at length is back again in blessed fellowship with Bethel and the God of Bethel; and how freely does the fountain of grace, and love, and faithfulness, pour forth its streams to refresh his weary heart! It is the God of Bethel still, in spite of all his forgetfulness and wanderings. " And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Beth-el."

Such, and so different, is the effect of the truth of God, known and believed, it may be, as a revelation; and the same truth held in living fellowship with God and in moral conformity to him whose revelation it is!

How shall JACOB supplant and become ISRAEL, a Prince with God?

With Saint-for what can human means avail?

His God unowned, resources always fail:

Dependent supplicants alone prevail.-Ed.

Bible Treasury: Volume 2, Jacob at Bethel

THIS is full of beauty and meaning. Pollution cannot be allowed by one that is in the sense and joy of abounding grace. Gods and earrings, idols and vanities, are together buried under an oak of Shechem and left behind. The patriarch rises up with all that was his, and is quickly on the road to Bethel. He had kept the feast of unleavened bread in company with the Passover, as Israel afterward did in Egypt; but, like Israel too, he is at once, with staff in hand and shoe on foot, leaning his Egypt behind him. And the Lord accompanies him, as He did Israel in the day of their Exodus afterward, and accompanies in strength too; for, as the rod of Moses opened the way for Israel in the face of enemies, and He that was in the cloud looked out and troubled the host of Pharaoh, so now, we read of Jacob and his household; “they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.”

This is surely full of beauty and meaning, I may again say. There is mercy and blessing here, but there is humbling also. Israel had lost the power of God's name, and Jacob must now learn that he had lost the honor of his own name. But all shall be given back to him. “God Almighty,” and “Israel,” and “Bethel,” are revealed afresh at this moment of revival.

God must be worshipped as the God of salvation. To be sure He must, in such a world as this. Such worship is the only worship “in truth.” (John 4:23.) In Lev. 17 and in Deut. xii. the divine jealousy touching this is strongly expressed. It is as “Savior” He records His name in a scene of sin and death. As He says by His prophet, “there is no God else beside me, a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me.” (Isa. 45:21.) This is the revelation of Him; and on this, all worship is grounded. In this He records His name, and there is His house of praise. At Bethel, God has thus recorded His name, and there was His house, and there Jacob now brings his sacrifices. He raises his altar, and calls it, El-Bethel. With Jacob, that was the Tabernacle of the wilderness, or the Temple on Oman's threshing-floor. And this was infinitely acceptable, and God gave fervent and immediate witness of such acceptableness, for He appeared to him at once at the altar there and blessed him, and said, “Thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name; and he called his name Israel.

And God said unto him, I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply, a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him.

JACOB IN EGYPT

We find Jacob in his own person and ways, very much the same widowed solitary man in Egypt, as we saw him to have been for years in Canaan ere he came out. Only it was thus, under very strong temptation to be otherwise; for he maintained his stranger-ship, though he now had opportunity to make the earth again the scene of his efforts and expectations. For we like reflected dignity. We know the charms of it full well. If nature were given its way, we would be making the most of our parentage and connections, and set off before others our affiance with that which is honorable in our generation. Jacob, in Egypt, had some of the very best opportunities for indulging his heart in that way. His son was then the pride of that land. Joseph was the second man in the kingdom, and Joseph was Jacob's son. Here was a temptation to Jacob to come forth and show himself to the world. Joseph's father would have been an object. Would not all eyes be upon him? Would not place be given to him and way made for him, whenever or wherever he appeared? Nature would have said, if Jacob had such opportunities, let him show himself to the world. The spirit of the world must have suggested that, as long afterward to a greater than Jacob, who had no reflected glories to exhibit, but all personal glories, “If thou do these things, show thyself to the world.” (See John 7:4.) But, in the spirit of one who, in his way, had overcome the world, Jacob continues a retired man through all his life of seventeen years in Egypt. He was a stranger where every human attraction joined in tempting him to be a citizen.

To me, I own, this is exquisite fruit of a chastened mind, fruit of divine discipline, the witness of a large participation of the holiness of God, the holiness that suited the calling that made Jacob a stranger and pilgrim on the earth. At Shechem he reminded us of Lot in Sodom, but here he reminds us of Abraham in his victory over all the offers of the king of Sodom.

But with this separation from the world, there is nothing of false humility. In the midst of all this practical stranger-ship, he knows and exercises his dignity under God. As he enters, and as he leaves the presence of king Pharaoh, (chap. 47.) he blesses him. This is to be observed. As he stood there in the royal presence, he owned himself a pilgrim on the earth, somewhat poor and weary too; but at his introduction and on his exit he blesses him, as one who knew what he was in the election and grace of God; for “without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.” This is not what old Simeon did when he had the infant of Bethlehem in his arms, but this is what old Jacob now does, when he has the greatest man on the earth before him. He made no requests of the king, though he might reasonably have expected whatever he asked. He was silent as to all that Pharaoh or Egypt would do for him, but he speaks as the better one blessing the less again and again. This was like the chained prisoner of Rome before the dignitaries and officers of Rome. Paul let Agrippa know, he let the Roman governor know, that he, their prisoner, carried and owned the good thing, and that he could wish no better wish for them all, than that they were as he was. And this is faith that glorifies grace—the proper business of faith—precious faith indeed, whether in a prisoner-apostle, or in an exile stranger-patriarch. Rome and Egypt have the wealth and power of the world, such as men will envy and praise, but Paul and Jacob carry a secret with them, that makes them speak another language.

All this shows us another Jacob, than what we once knew him to be. He is now partaker of God's holiness; his mind and character are in consistency with the call of God. He is a stranger with God in the earth, but in sure and certain hope of promised inheritance. This is fruitfulness; I say not that it is service; but it is beautiful fruitfulness in the inner man.

In chapter 48 which follows, we get that one act in his life which is signalized by the Spirit as the act of faith. (See Heb. 11:21.) But the whole chapter is beautiful. All is grace on God's part, and all is faith in the heart of Jacob. For it is the proper business and duty of faith, to accept the decisions of grace, and that is just what Jacob is doing here. Grace adopts the sons of Joseph, who had no title in the flesh, and takes them into the family of Abraham. Grace gives them the place and portion of the firstborn, the double portion, as though they were Reuben and Simeon. Grace sets the younger of them above the elder. And grace gives Joseph, or the adopted first-born, an earnest of his coming inheritance. To all this Jacob bows and is obedient. In faith he accepts the decisions of grace. Nature may resent this; but Jacob is true to the word of grace committed to him. Joseph was moved when Jacob was setting Ephraim above Manasseh Jacob feels for him; but he fulfills the word of God committed to him, let nature be surprised or wounded as it may. He does not listen to nature in his son Joseph, as he had listened to it on a like occasion, years and years ago, in his mother Rebecca.1

Surely this is beautiful; faith thus accepting the decisions of grace. But in this Jacob was also God's oracle. He was not only in faith obedient to the purpose or counsel of grace, but he was used of God as a vessel of His house, used to declare His mind, to represent and act His purposes, in these mysteries of grace, the adoption, the inheritance, and the earnest.

Food for the Flock: Volume 2, World on Christianity, A

EN 32:24-32{THERE are three things, beloved friends, that I have before my mind to say a little upon to you now. One of these is: What does grace make us? what is Christianity? It is very elementary, you may say; but I feel it very important in these days to go back to elementary things to see if we are what we know we are-to find out whether we are in our practice up to our intelligence. It is a sad state of things when the intelligence 'gets beyond the heart. Those whose hearts are beyond their intelligence are the ones God instructs; and, in every ease in Scripture, the ones the Lord uses are those whose hearts are beyond their intelligence. Therefore, though without doubt intelligence is a good thing, yet it is the heart God looks at.

The three things I wish to speak a little on are: First—What Christianity is; Second -What we are coming to-what is the consummation of things; and Third-What is the Lord's thought about us at this present moment. What grace has made us, is the first thing.

If I look at the Lord's walk on earth, everything He did was to consummate the will of God; and He did it. And now what is He thinking of? Not my standing, or state before God, for that has been accomplished by His work in the cross. It is my state here He is thinking of. You may say, But we have to learn our standing first; and I answer, Yes: of course you cannot be in a state in keeping with your standing, without knowing what that standing is; so before we come to this point I will ask you to go over with me a little what Christianity really is.

To put it in the plainest way. When Christ was here upon earth, it was heaven that He was thinking of; now that He is in heaven, it is earth He is thinking of. There are two parts in Christianity—two experiences; and you get them both in the parable of the prodigal son. The first is, that I am cleared of everything that stood between me and God by the blood of Christ. There is no such thing as God imputing sin to you any more. I admit there is often weakness in the heart as to this, but the fact is God does not impute sin any more. But, says one, I know I do sin.-I know you do and will, but you must not lose sight of the fact that God says: " Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more." This is the first experience in Christianity. I know that in the heart of God there is no remembrance of my sins.

Then when you do sin, what do you do? I go into the light, and the light finds it all out. I remember its being pointed out to me once in a show-room, that silver, when placed in 'a full blaze of light, any tarnish there might have been on it was no longer visible so when the soul is brought into the light, all the tarnish upon it is judged, and put away. And this is repentance. Repentance is my putting the flesh that did the crime into the same place in which God put it, that the body of sin might be destroyed, and He has never taken it from thence. I take it away, alas! And repentance is when I go and put it back again there where He put it. The effect of the light is to make me do this. But when a man goes on moping—(I must use plain words), talks of how he falls into this and that failure, why he does not get into the light at all. Such a one spoils the prayer-meetings and the worship-meetings; and all because he will not go into the light. The light would say, I cannot have this tarnish. The light makes manifest the evil, and, having discovered it, it frees me from it. It brings me, by the power of the Holy Ghost, the ashes of the red heifer-the water of purification.

I say to a person, Have you really got into the presence of God about this failure?-He says to me, I am afraid to.—And I do not wonder at it; I really do not object to the reluctance, for I know how many souls have not got quite clear as to this experience. But there is not a single thing in the heart of God against me. God says, I do net remember them, and therefore " if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." What language that is! Has God cleansed me? Where then is the tarnish? But, you say, I have done them.—Yes, He says; and if you come near me, I will take care that 'you shall get rid of them. " Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh "... I do not go on to the rest yet, because it leads to the second experience I spoke of.

I want you just to get down to the lowest point, and I say, Have you really learned the efficacy of that blood in the sight of God? Have you learned that He says, " When I see the blood I will pass over you "? I go to a Pagan and I say, What do you bow under that wheel for?- To appease the Almighty.—All right, I say; but the question is, Can you appease Him? You cannot. I do not object to the word " appease." I think that conscience must have got into a very low state that does not know that God needs appeasing. And, when he acknowledges it, then I preach to him Jesus; I tell him that God has sent His Son-that God is love; that when the sinner could not meet God in righteousness, then God said I will meet the difficulty myself. And what is the effect of this upon my soul? I see that God has done it; that He has set aside that which caused the distance between Him and me, and has removed it according to the sense that He Himself had of it; and, if He does it, I say, He must be perfectly satisfied. A soul that has once got hold of it can never lose the fact that God has thus come forth according to His own sense of what was wanted, and given His Son to pay the ransom-the only One who could pay it; the One " whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."

I do not know what was needed to satisfy God; not a sinner or a saint upon earth ever knew what God required. None ever knew but that one Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, and He answered. to it. These two things prove Him to be the Son of God: First-That He knew the measure of my iniquity; Second-That He knew the love of God. How could you measure God's thoughts of your offense? My answer, to an infidel was: " What value would you set upon your dog's opinion of you? How, then, could you form the slightest conception of God? You cannot even measure the great animals of His creation." God brings before Job animate and inanimate creation, just to prove this to him.

But God is love, and He says: I do not like the distance; you cannot remove it; you cannot even understand it; you cannot measure it; but I will send. the One who can, and He will remove it.

Now a great deal of what is called evangelicalism does not go any farther than this. Indeed, it would be thought a great way to go, to say that you could go into the presence of Gods and find all cleared away, and not a stain of sin remaining. But it is only the first experience of which I have been speaking.

I now come to the second, where there is a great deal of practical exercise for the soul. I will turn to two chapters in the Old Testament, to give you an illustration of it. The first is the twelfth of Exodus. There are literally two experiences here, though they do not exactly come up to what I mean. The seventh verse is the one of which I have spoken. " They shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it." You have got such, a sense of the blood between God and yourself, that you can look up with perfect security. I have got a Savior there. Instead of my fearing to go into the Father's house, I find there is rejoicing about me up there. I am an object of wonderment. I am cleared of everything.

But in the eighth verse I get another experience altogether. " They shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it." Here it is the soul inside feeding upon Christ who has borne the judgment of God. If Christ has borne the judgment of sin, are you feeding upon Him as the One who has borne it? You get the warning here: " Eat not of it raw." If you speak of Him in a merely natural, familiar way,' as if He were a man in the flesh, you are eating it raw. I sometimes hear people say, " Sweet Jesus," " dear Jesus," and the like, and feel it is almost profanity.

'Here is a soul with a sense of being perfectly clear before God, and what now goes on in it? Your whole bearing shows it out; your loins are girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; you are eating the Lord's Passover; you are leaving Egypt. I turn next to I Kings we find the first experience in the fifteenth verse. " She and her house did eat many days," or as the margin has it, " a full year: " a year takes in the whole circle of your life-every season. The prophet comes to the widow, and finds her in the most desolate way: " I have not a cake, but a hand ful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; and behold I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die." Just like the world: they want to make the best of things, and enjoy themselves while they can. But the prophet comes in, and the whole scene is changed. He is to her very much what the Lord was to His disciples when on earth with them. And many a saint has not got beyond this: Christ is a shelter for me, and takes care of me. Souls look for their barrel of meal not to waste, and their cruse of oil not to fail. But is that the whole of Christianity? Is it that Christ comes and dwells with me 365 days-stays with me through every season, and cares for me? I make bold to say it is not. Is it shelter only? No! There is another experience altogether, and that is what I am coming to, and you are mutilating Christianity if you confine it to the first. It is the effort of Satan to divide it thus, and " what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." God says: I have saved you by my own Son, and now another thing must come in you are to live by the One who has saved you; my purpose is that you are to be conformed to His image.

The true character of grace is this. God says: I gave you my -law, but you were never able to keep it. You were tenants, but you were never able to pay your rent; so now I send my Son to say to you: It is useless my looking to you any more for the rent; He will pay all, you owe me, and for the future, instead of having you as my tenants, I make you my children.-Many a man I have seen who does not know what to do with his farm. That is just the seventh of Romans: he never has paid, and never can. But now, says God, I am going to make a model farm of it; and you all know what that is: it is a farm that is carried on at the owner's expense.

It is a great comfort, that whilst we add to what we have learned, in doing so we never lose what we have previously been taught by God. Here in the seventeenth of Kings she does not lose what she has already got. We do not lose Christ as a shelter because we know Him as something more. He is shelter to us; that is the character of His grace; and, believe me, the heart is not happy that does not know Him, like Zaccheus, as a guest in his home. But am I to stop there? Do you think you will lose the first verse of the twenty-third Psalm if you go on to the second? " The first verse is a grand verse," said a poor saint to me once, and I could not get her past it: And truly it is a grand verse-the Lord for my shepherd, my shelter; but it is not all; in the second verse, I " lie clown" -I am satisfied. I could not get her on to that. But the first verse is not enough for the saint; God alone knows what is enough for us. I trust I am speaking to many to whom it has been brought about;

He must bring that home to us which He has done for us in Christ.

So now the widow's son dies. And then it is she says: " Art thou come unto me, to call my sin to remembrance?" After these 365 days of unbroken care, after all this wonderful exhibition of divine love, this is what she says. And so you find it. Souls that have a sense of the perfect care of the Lord for them, when death comes near them are thoroughly disturbed and upset. They have never learned it. You say, Why speak of death?—Because it is the judgment of God for sin. I see the Lord Jesus Christ can raise the dead, but to save me He had to go into death Himself. That same blessed One who raised Lazarus in one chapter, had to go into death Himself in the next chapter; and then it is the Son of man is glorified, though the Son of God was in the eleventh chapter. Be sure of this, that you must face death. People have got hold of truth poetically. They talk of having got hold of Christ in glory. I say, if you have, you will have to learn death here. God must bring it home to you. The moment Paul sets us with Christ in glory, he says, Now it is death down here to the flesh. Glory never put an end to flesh; it is death that does. So her son dies; and then it is she says: " Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance? "

And what does the prophet do? He does exactly what the Lord did: he goes down into death to the child. " He carried him up into a loft where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed." " Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." He went into death to bring us out of it. And thus another thing comes out. There is life, but there was life before; now it is life out of death.

Let me turn for a moment to the twentieth of John. Mark the disciples here. They did not know the Lord in this wonderful way; they had not learned death. When I come to the death of Christ it is " a new and living way." It is not every saint that goes in by the new and living way; the Old Testament saints did not, for the veil was not rent then. I want you to see what this experience of the disciples was. They had had the shelter and comfort of Christ; and you may say, I know the blood was shed for me; but I want you to know what the apostle means when he says: " I am crucified with Christ," and not only 'that, but " the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." This is another thing. I am not only cleared by this blessed One, but I have to live His life. I hope you never have a shadow of a doubt as to being cleared; God has taken all out' of the way, and. now He can come in and dwell with you.

The disciples understood who He was; they had received Him; they knew His shelter and His love; but He is risen from the dead, and what now? Look at the nineteenth verse: " He saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed. unto them his hands and his side." The soul says, How am I to get this peace?-By having to do in spirit with the risen One. I believe it is impossible for you

to be in contact with the risen Christ, and not know the results of His resurrection. Righteousness comes in by resurrection. He comes into the midst of His disciples, says, " Peace be unto you," and shows them His hands and His side. All is cleared away. God's Spirit alone can conduct the soul into such a scene as this. see that One above all the ruin, in the pure light of the holiness of God's presence; I stand with Him upon that level, and I breathe a new atmosphere altogether. So we read: " He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." It was not clearing them from all that was against them, for they were cleared; it was not conversion, for they were converted; but they are on entirely new ground, and they are to taste the fact that they are not only cleared, but that they have the life of this blessed One who has cleared them. I have got life, which is the burden of John's gospel; not only a life that triumphs in death, but " the gift of God," " the well of water springing up unto everlasting life."

To complete this, see how the apostle works it out in Galatians. In that epistle I find the defect of the Christianity of the present day. The apostle is not dwelling on the first experience of the gospel after the first chapter, where he says: " Christ gave himself for our sins; " but he is taking up the fact that they have lost the second. This comes out plainly in the last verse of the epistle, when he winds up by saying: " God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Now, that is a very strong statement. It is not the experience of putting away your sins, but of putting away yourself and the world. If the world be crucified to you in the cross of Christ, and you to the world?-well then, what is left? Nothing but the new creation. I have nothing but Christ.

I am united to Christ in glory, and there is no ground I delight more in pressing; but, the moment I take the place of being connected with Christ there, I cannot dissociate myself from where He is on earth. It is what we find in Hebrews: earth is done with for the saint now; if I am inside the veil " I am " outside the camp." I find that in many minds " outside the camp " means only " outside of system." But that is not at all as I find it in Scripture. Outside the camp is the spot you ought to occupy here: it is where Christ died. Christ having gone to that spot for you, it is the spot you ought to occupy here for Him. And you cannot do this unless you first understand that here you are to live Christ. As the apostle says: " I am crucified with Christ," self is gone; " nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." What a place I am in! and he was laboring for the Galatians that they might know this. " The life I now live: " I am actually living, breathing, enjoying the very life, tasting the very joys, knowing the very relationship, and am in the wonderful position of being on earth in the very place of that blessed One who has delivered me. I have life out of death-His death. " Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts." We are now placed on earth as that blessed One who has placed me in His acceptance in heaven.

But to turn back to Jacob. Jacob, like some of us, after many years of wandering has been brought back to the true ground. But true ground is not power. Christ is power. " There wrestled a man with him." It was not Jacob wrestling with God for blessing, but God wrestling with Jacob to set self aside in him. As soon as God touched the hollow of his thigh, Jacob says, Now bless me. Jacob is come to nothing; he is crippled; so God can come in and bless him The moment I am nothing, that moment I am a reliant person. When I am nothing I turn to God; I am crippled; God must do everything for me. Job prayed for his friends when he lost everything, and immediately God blessed him. As soon as Jacob feels that he is nothing, God comes in. The moment he dropped himself he became a dependent man. He says: I am a crippled man; I have nothing; God must do everything for me. Now, says God, you have come to the right place; you have done the right thing; I will bless you and change your name. You must no more have the disgraceful name of Jacob; you shall be called Israel. He begins a new day; it was at " the breaking of the day."

And has he no exercises after this?-Yes. In the thirty-fifth. chapter he gets the name confirmed when he went to Bethel. I never get the value of Christ's name but in God's presence.

He had one great exercise between these two periods, and I believe this to be especially our snare; it is Shalem. He settled down, lost the pilgrim character, without reaching the house of God—Bethel—the place of worship. And I can do this, as he did, after getting the sense that I am a crucified man, and that Christ is every, thing.

God has to make this true in us, and He brings it about in different ways. You say, But can I not get it without having to go through all that Jacob did? I think you can. Paul did in those three days in which he was blind, and neither ate nor drank; and he felt it was a good thing to have gone through it, and to have got clear about it. If you really enter into what Christ bore for you from the hand of God, you need not go through this severe breaking in your own individual experience. But God must somehow bring you to the moment when you say: I cannot stand flesh. There is a moment historically when the soul says, I am good for nothing. That is what Jacob does. If you were real at the Lord's Supper you would learn it there; you would there learn to shrink from the old man; His death would teach you. There are two ordinances of Christianity that express death, and people relieve their consciences by thus expressing it. One is baptism, which avows that I am cut off from man; the other is the Lord's Supper, which avows that I have reached Christ in His death. I have watched souls, and seen a moment come when He brings in one thing and another to make that soul taste death, and then it gets hold of Christ. He was saved before, but he had never really got hold of Christ.

And that is what God is doing: He is working out in me that which He has accomplished for me. If I am rightly at the Lord's table I shall feel a shrinking to have to do again with that man for whom Christ died. Abraham learned it in the feast that he made for Isaac; he sent Ishmael away then. Are we Abrahams? I fear most of us are Jacobs. God has to break us down by circumstances-sickness, perhaps-it may be even on a death-bed. Saints go on and on, resisting the workings of God's grace, but God will have it out in the end. He says, You must give in. And then the most active man in the company comes out a cripple-insignificant in the eyes of men, but great in the eyes of God.

The Lord lead our hearts to know what Christianity is.

(J. B. S.)

What measures sin is the greatness—the magnitude-of the Being against whom it is leveled.

(H. H. M.)

Christian Friend: Volume 5, Sinew That Shrank, The: Part 2

On the other hand, may we as steadfastly refuse the flesh in all its affections and lusts, and mortify our “members which are upon the earth,” as did the children of Israel by their affinity with Jacob their progenitor. In acknowledgment of the day of his wrestling, and their identification with him as “Israel,” they eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh “unto this day.” Do we perpetuate this refusal of the flesh as they did? Are we faithful according to the judgment of God upon the flesh, which He condemned on the cross? Do we bear about in the body “the dying of the Lord Jesus,” that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body? As a consequence of this “suffering in the flesh,” do we no longer live the rest of our time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God? (See 1 Peter 4:1-2). The Spirit says of us, “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24). Neither Israel nor we eat of the sinew that shrank.

In Genesis 35 the ladder is gone, and with it Jacob in his original character of supplanter and bargainer is gone too; nor do we find any more the activity and strength of the flesh, which lasted up to the break of day in its determination and will. God Himself can come in and take His own place now that the wrestling is over, and has perfected its work. Refreshing it is to the heart that knows anything of itself and of the ways of God to find Him take all out of our meddlesome hands into His own. It is in this way our chapter begins: “God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.” Quite in character with this gracious direction are Jacob’s own proceedings; for it is not only himself who is once more in the presence of God, but, like Abraham, he commands “his household after him” to judge themselves according to what becomes the face of God, whom he saw at Penuel. “Then Jacob said to his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments; and let us arise, and go up to Bethel.”

He gives God the right place now; for even the altar is no longer to be commemorative of Jacob and Bethel, but it is henceforth to bear the name of El-bethel, or the God of Bethel, as its great and distinguishing character. This entire change from the garments they wore, to the altar of their worship, and the stripping themselves of their ornaments, as well as the denial of the strange gods that were in their hands, and their burial “under the oak, which was by Shechem,” stamp another pattern upon Jacob. “Be clean” is now his word, as indeed it was afterward by the priests, and then again by the prophets whom God sent into the midst of His people, until Christ came forth, and did the work which enables God Himself to testify that “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

So “God appeared to Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him; and said, Thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name.” Thus the whole circle widens, and is filled with the light of God’s own presence; and in grace Jacob, and all that his name implied, is buried at Shechem too. The same grace that refused to call him any more Jacob declares henceforth his name to be Israel; and He who loves to roll away every reproach from off His people writes upon Him this new name, sealing it as His own act, for “He called his name Israel.” Here too we may remark that the reserve which was maintained on God’s part whilst the wrestling with the flesh was going on, so that He said to Jacob, “Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after My name?” and declined to give it, has no place or occasion longer. “And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings ... and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee.” All is now as it should be, without let or hindrance; “and God went up from him in the place where He talked with him,” without ladder or angels on His part, and in the absence of all terror and fear about person or the place on Jacob’s, for the distance that produced both is gone. There is an advance also in the character of the faith that followed, now that Jacob is no longer a wrestler, but in the peace and communion of a worshipper and a prince with God. Thus the pillar and the oil poured on its top, which was in keeping with “the vision” of the house of God, and the gate of heaven at the outset, must here, in the reality and enjoyment of “the presence,” have its drink-offering superadded. Jacob can no longer say, “The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not;” for God had come down to him, and changed him into a prevailer “with God and with men.” Moreover, he now stands identified under the name of Israel with all God’s purposes and promises to patriarchs or tribes, and to peoples and nations, whether for their own covenanted blessing or for the glory of all the kingdoms of the world. What could Jacob do in the presence of such grace? He “set up a pillar in the place where God talked with him... and he poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name

of the place where God spake with him Bethel." There is remarkable progress and advancement here, as amongst any in our day, when there is growing "in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Without these elements our worship will be impoverished, and the worshipper be feeble.

When this is not the stand-point of faith before God through Christ, and communion is not maintained upon the fact that we are "clean every whit, and made nigh," there must be again the ladder, or may be the gate of heaven. Perhaps, too, "how dreadful is this place," if conscience be not purged and ruled by the blood of Christ, but is only quick in a deepening sense of what God is in His own holiness, and what Jacob, the supplanter, is likewise in the flesh as in His presence. Nor will any escape out of this moral distance by doing as Jacob did, and taking a part with him as a bargainer with God, or a vow-maker. We must be receivers, and not givers, and abide under the new name of Israel (after the wrestling is finished), for we are dead. Then "the fruit of the Spirit" takes the character which David gave to his offerings and the offerings of the princes, "Of thine own have we given Thee;" for whatever comes from God goes back to Him in the sweet savor of Christ, by whom it is produced in us. This intermediate process must be gone through with Jacob, and the flesh withered in the sinew, where its strength dwells, by taking part, and reckoning by faith that God has entirely done with it by death at the cross. This is indispensable now before the nearness and intimacy of the soul is established with God in unclouded confidence at Bethel, or with El-bethel and its drink-offering. Here it is that Jacob comes out from under the cloud of his crooked policy, and follows on in the pathway of God's own footsteps. And we never walk so securely as then, though it will surely be with sorrow and yet with rejoicings. "They journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed" in birth with her son. In the depth of her trouble, and the hour of her death, "she called his name Ben-oni," (or, the son of my sorrow); "but his father called him Benjamin," (or, the son of my right hand), giving forth the double titles, which by birth belong to Jesus alone as "the Man of sorrows," and yet on the other side of the cross and His sufferings the Son of the Father's right hand, exalted to be "a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance" (in a yet future day) "to Israel, and remission of sins." How blessed thus to have been a link in the chain of God's purposes, quietly and happily following Him in the path by which He accomplishes "the birthright and the blessing" for His own glory and the glory of His "Ben-oni-Benjamin" in that day. Far better, as now, in the perfect revelation He has made of Himself, as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and our God and Father in the Son of His love, by death and resurrection, to wait for His shout, and the church's rapture!

In conclusion, we may notice how "wittingly" Jacob acts in his last days in full accordance with the mind and ways of God, instead of continuing crafty and cunning in his own as at the first. The instance which is narrated in chapter 48 gives us, I think, this proof. "It came to pass... that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim," whom Jacob claimed as his own, saying, "as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine." In the bestowment of the blessing Israel guided his hands wittingly, though Joseph was displeased, putting his right upon Ephraim's head, and his left upon Manasseh. The sovereignty of God "according to election" had been established in the birth of Jacob and Esau; and now the firstborn is to be set aside in the divine order of blessing. So he set Ephraim before Manasseh, saying, "His younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations." All the lessons which Jacob had to learn touching "the birthright," as well as the order of "the blessing" (apart from the venison and the mess of pottage), are now well gone over with God, and learned. He has but to gather all his sons around him, and, as a prophet of the Lord, "tell them all that shall befall them in the last days." He charges them further to bury him with his fathers in Machpelah, in the land of Canaan, that he may stand in his own lot in the resurrection, and be found in the right place till then, in the cave where Abraham buried Sarah, and where they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and where Jacob said, "I buried Leah."

In the bright record of those "who obtained a good report through faith," this last act of the order of the birthright, and of the blessing upon Ephraim and Manasseh, stands out as sufficiently remarkable to memorialize Israel. "By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph" (in the unclouded certainty of the promises of El-elohe-Israel); "and worshipped on the top of his staff." He thus passes away from us as "the heir of promise," and content to be only "a pilgrim and stranger on the earth"—a true worshipper leaning on the top of his staff—till "Ben-oni-Benjamin" comes a second time in His own glory, and the glory of His Father, and the glory of the holy angels. The staff will then give place to the throne and the scepter and the royalties of the kingdom promised to him by the "I am" at Bethel. And many "shall come from the east, and the west, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," and drink wine new with their Messiah, and great shall be the peace of His people.

How happy to accept all our blessings, whether now or hereafter, on our birthright title, and hold them in undisturbed communion with "the Father and the Son," under the anointing and witness of the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in us, till the day of our translation and of the church's rapture comes Rebekah's counsel at the first, and the clever contrivances of Jacob, have been made foolish and contemptible, as all ours will surely be too; for God catcheth the wise in their own craftiness. His new order is, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."

"The birthright" and "the blessing" are ordained of God to us in the Son of His love. May we value them so highly as to walk in true character with Him May we be regardless of the venison in the hunting-field, and Rebekah's savory meat, but keep close to the appointed Heir of all things till He comes to claim possession and take us in as joint-heirs with Himself.

(Continued from page 237)

J. E. B.

Christian Friend: Volume 5, Sinew That Shrank, The: Part 1

There are three parts in the history of God's ways with Jacob which are not only important because of their prophetic character, and still future application in blessing to Israel and the whole world, but on account of the deep moral instruction they convey to us, in the man who was thus called out to walk with God. The first is in Genesis 28, called "Jacob's vision at Bethel;" the next in chapter 32, where "an angel wrestles with him;" and the third in chapter 35, when "Jacob is again summoned to Bethel."

The name of Jacob (supplanter) casts its dark shade upon the man; and, as Esau said at the beginning of his path, "Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing." With such

an one as this God had to walk in all the way by which He led him, but to correct him in grace, and to teach him in the end that human policy and cunning (especially when used in connection with the promises of God) only complicate the path of faith, which finds its sufficiency in the Promiser alone. One great lesson we all have to learn, who have to do with “the living God,” is that the ways and means by which He accomplishes His purposes touching our “birthright,” and also our “blessing,” are as distinctly His own care as the things He promises. Indeed, we may ask, How can it be otherwise, if His own glory lies hidden in the promised blessing? Human contrivance and cautious planning, which are the open faults in Jacob, not only stamp his character, but necessarily create, by their action, a moral distance between himself and the “God of his father Abraham and Isaac,” which must not be allowed.

Communication with Abraham, we may observe, did not begin in the distance of “a vision by night” (though he had a vision), nor was it measured by “a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reaching to heaven”—whatever this may and does mean prophetically. These would have been as much out of place morally in God’s intimacy with His “friend,” and with the head of the family of faith (who bound his only son Isaac upon the altar, in the day when God taught Abraham), as they were consistent and in keeping with Jacob, the supplanter and schemer. His first lessons were when “the sun was set, and he tarried all night in a certain place,” in the day that he fled away from Esau to Laban, at the advice of Rebekah. It seems to me that the ladder, whilst it allows of communication between parties at the top and at the bottom, yet marks as plainly the distance which it maintained. In John’s gospel “the ladder” is done away and gone; for how could there be a ladder when the Word was made flesh? “The angels of God henceforth,” Jesus said, “ascend and descend upon the Son of Man.”

God will not, however, allow anything in the man at the foot of the ladder to interfere with His purposes and objects; on the contrary, the promises are repeated and confirmed to Jacob, without condition or reserve on the part of God; for who or what can withstand Him when He is risen up out of His place? Still, as regards Jacob, when he awaked out of his sleep it was to say, “Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.” Does not this mark his state? and is not the moral distance of the ladder confirmed by what follows? “And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place!” though he adds, “This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” Nevertheless, Jacob does not lose the relation of a worshipper; and this is very precious on the part of the God of Abraham towards the object of His love, for he took the stone pillow, and “set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it,” and changed the name of Luz into Bethel—though he be only at “the gate,” and “the ladder.”

The ruling passion of the supplanter and the bargainer breaks out even in this intercourse with God at Bethel. “And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on; .... then shall the Lord be my God: and I will surely give the tenth [of what He bestows] back to Him.” Nature, which always fears the circumstances it is in, shows itself to be at work under this form of piety, in order to find relief in God; but it does not get beyond their reach by such means. There may be a measure of faith in all this; but the stipulation is for God to be with Jacob in the way that he takes, so that he may come again to his father’s house in peace. How far outside and beyond this little circle of mere human interests and ideas lay the promises of God, which He had just rehearsed to the ear of faith: “Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad.... and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Instead of getting out into liberty by the exercise of faith in the largeness of God’s thoughts about him, which embraced “the whole earth” in ultimate blessing, Jacob would have been content with the measure of his own individual safety, and satisfied if the Lord would have limited Himself to the littleness of the vow that Jacob vowed, immense as this vow may have seemed to the contractedness of flesh and blood. Alas for us, if we see clearly the mote that is in our brother’s eye, and discover not (nor remove) the beam that is in our own eye!

Genesis 32 seems to me the correction of this forwardness of the flesh by the wrestling of the angel which it records. The beginning is significant — “And Jacob went on his way” — which introduces us to his methods and plans for appeasing the wrath of his brother Esau, whom he feared. The faith which strengthens itself, and can be at home only in the revealed purpose of God, and then occupy itself in intercession for those who lie outside, as Abraham did for Lot, is not after this pattern in Jacob. On the contrary, unbelief and carnal policy, carefully wrapped up in their own fears, betray themselves by the very expedients to which they have recourse, as well as by their style of action. The resources which would have commended another man in Jacob’s eyes are the things to which he turns, that he may find grace in the sight of his brother. All this fleshly cunning mixes itself up too with a certain dependence upon God, expressed in his prayer, though he has not confidence enough to be quiet in the hand of God for protection and deliverance. How often the flesh exposes itself to another by the very concealments which it practices upon its owner! So he turns again to the presents and gifts which he designs to employ in order to pacify Esau. He gets no answer to his prayer, and follows his own devisings with his goats and sheep, camels and asses. Nor is this enough; but he delivers them into the hands of his servants, every drove by themselves, with a further charge to “put a space betwixt drove and drove,” and arranges even the form of words for the messengers’ mouths. So far away is the heir of promise from the dignity that attaches to him as appointed by the Lord, that he is lost in the guilt of his own act, by which he supplanted his brother, and cringes before him as a servant in the presence of “my lord Esau.” Lower than this he cannot well go; and at this point it is, when at his wit’s end, that the Lord takes him in hand for gracious discipline: “Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.” The flesh itself is now to be dealt with, which occasioned all this corrupt and deceitful planning between himself and his brother; and the bargaining with God in chapter 28, when lying at the foot of the ladder he was afraid and said, “How dreadful is this place.”

The beginning of a deep lesson was introduced here, when the wrestler prevailed not, but put forth his hand, and “touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.” In later times, and in a more spiritual and personal way (by grace), has the flesh and its actings been put to the proof, and discovered and dealt with summarily. It was when Jesus was on the earth, and had gathered the company of His disciples round about Him day by day in the enjoyment of His love, that “they all forsook Him, and fled.” It was in the weakness of their own flesh and when so intimate with such a One that they broke down, and denied Him in the hour of His own danger and death wrestling even till “the break of day” did not cure Jacob the supplanter, whatever the severer course of the touch, and the sinew that shrank in the hollow of the thigh, may have done with him individually. Nationally, when the law was given through “the disposition of angels” by the hand of Moses, wrestling, if we may so say, was again established with the tribes of Israel; but the effect of this striving was to learn that “the strength of sin is the law,” and they are dispensationally “broken out of their olive tree” as the consequence. It is indeed a long and humbling history of the wrestling, and the sinew that shrank up in the very place of its strength, from Jacob’s day to Peter’s, when the Lord said to him, “Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” The wrestling at Peniel, the law as the schoolmaster, Jesus in the midst of His disciples on earth, or Paul caught up to the third heavens, could not get rid of this “sin in the flesh.” Jacob might “halt upon his thigh” all the days of his life, and Paul might come from paradise with “a thorn in the flesh,” the messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure; but the flesh in each was

flesh still. Severer and final measures, which far exceed the sinew, or the law, or the sieve, or the thorn, thank God, have been adopted at the cross of Christ for our effectual deliverance from its dominion. It is there only it has received its death-blow; for there God has “condemned sin in the flesh,” and set it aside forever between Him and us. In prospect of this it may be, and at “Peniel,” that Jacob learned his early lesson by “the sinew that shrank” under the touch of the angel.

It is well to remember, too, that in this struggle “the name of Jacob,” the supplanter, was refused by the wrestler, and changed; for he said, “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.” Nor is it without meaning that Jacob on his part called the name of the place Penuel. “For I have seen God face to face,” said he, “and my life is preserved.” And yet further we may notice what is pointed out to us, that as Jacob “passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.” Precious combinations were these in the experience of Jacob; and still more so are they to us who commemorate the deeper truth of death at the cross, where we reckon “the old man crucified,” and know in effect that we are “alive unto God through Jesus Christ” (not that life is preserved), and we see God face to face in our risen and ascended Lord: “For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” This is our Penuel; and when we by faith in communion with the Father’s love pass over (like Jacob in his day), our sun, rises upon us, and “we all looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.”

(To be continued)

Bible Treasury: Volume N11, Strength in Weakness

Isaiah 11; Genesis 32; 2 Corinthians 12

It is well when Christians in conscious weakness (for indeed, we are as water spilled upon the ground which cannot be gathered up again) “wait upon the Lord,” for “in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength;” and we are told “he that waiteth upon his Master shall be honored.” At the time Isaiah spoke, all was weakness and confusion in Israel; but although their condition was so sad in the Lord's sight, yet in the riches of God's grace the prophet was given to utter by the Holy Spirit these memorable and reassuring words, “Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.” Thus He recalled them to the inexhaustible source of strength to be found alone in Himself. Their youths and young men, in whom strength and vitality would naturally be looked for, had utterly failed, and everything was in a state of complete prostration. Then came the blessed and definite promise (surely not less for us than for Israel) “they that wait upon Jehovah shall renew, or change their strength. They shall mount up as with the wings of eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” Faintness and weariness are thus overcome, and power given to run in His service, and strength imparted to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, to all those who wait upon the Lord.

In that remarkable scene recorded in Genesis 32 Jacob had to prove by painful experience, as we have, that natural strength availed him nothing, yea, was a positive hindrance to the blessing a divinely sent one desired to confer upon him. Instead of “wrestling Jacob,” as so often he is called, it was quite the contrary up to the moment that the hollow of his thigh was touched. “And there wrestled a man with him, and when he (the man) saw that he prevailed not against him (Jacob), he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him": and it was only when Jacob's flesh had been touched and become shrunk that he could say, “I will not let thee go unless thou bless me"; and the result of Jacob wrestling in weakness was a full blessing in power, for the answer came, “Thou shalt be no more called Jacob, for thou hast power with God, and hast prevailed, and he blessed him there.” And the Spirit desires our attention to another fact that this struggle had made a difference to Jacob's “walk.” May the Lord be pleased to grant in these last days unto His beloved people a like result flowing from our intercourse with and waiting upon Him!

In 2 Cor. 12 we have a very notable example of a believer's weakness and the Lord's mighty power. Paul, the precious and honored servant of the Lord Jesus, lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations to him, was given a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet him. This drove him to the Lord. He waited upon Him about it, and he prayed earnestly. He besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him. The answer came from Him glorified on high, “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” The apostle, in his weakness and powerlessness, had obtained the blessing and victory in waiting upon the Lord. With this blessed assurance from his risen Master and Lord, he no longer asks for the removal of that which made him weak, but his language then was “most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

Our adorable Savior and Holy Lord, in the days of His flesh, in grace knew what it was to be here as the humble and dependent Man, and as such waited upon His Father in prayer; and in that scene of Gethsemane's garden we, with chastened hearts, hear Him praying more earnestly, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done"; and then when He had so prayed, we read, “And there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening him.”

May we each and all desire to be in that condition of realized weakness and dependence before the Lord that He may be pleased to let His strength rest upon us, and thus know more intimately and experimentally what it is to “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,” and to “Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”

H. C. M.

Young Christian: Volume 37, 1947, "Jacob Have I Loved," and "Jacob Was Left Alone"

Genesis 32:24-32

In tracing the history of Jacob, and in contemplating his natural character, we are again and again reminded of the grace expressed in those words, “Jacob have I loved.” The question why God should love such a one, can only receive for an answer the boundless and sovereign grace of Him who sets His love upon objects possessing nothing within them; and who calls things that be not, as though they were; “that no flesh should glory in His presence.” Jacob’s natural character was most unamiable; his name indeed was at once the effusion of what he was, “a supplanter.” He commenced his course in the development of this, his disposition; and until thoroughly crushed, as in these verses, he pursued a course of the merest bargain-making.

On leaving his father’s house Jacob makes a bargain with God. “If God,” says he, “will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God’s house: and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee.” Genesis 28:20-22. Here we find him making a bargain with God Himself, the full evidence of what his real character was. Then again, mark him during the period of his sojourn with Laban; see there what plans, what deep-laid schemes to promote his own ends. How plainly it is seen that self was the grand object before his mind, in all that he put his hand to. So it is in the course of this thirty-second chapter. He is deeply engaged in plans to turn away the dreaded wrath of his more manly, though badly treated, brother Esau.

But there was one circumstance with regard to Jacob in this chapter which deserves attention. He is seen laboring under the painful effects of a bad conscience, with regard to his brother; he knew that he had acted toward him in a way calculated to call out his anger and revenge, and he is therefore ill at ease at the prospect of meeting him. But God had a controversy with Jacob. He had to lead him through a course of education that was to teach him that “all flesh is grass.” Jacob thought only of appeasing Esau by a present. True, he turns aside in this chapter to offer up confession, and prays yet, notwithstanding it is manifest that his heart was engaged about his own arrangements for appeasing Esau, more than anything else. But God was looking at him in all this, and preparing a salutary course of discipline for him, in order to teach him what was in his heart. For this purpose was Jacob left alone. All his company, arranged according to his own plan, had passed on, and he himself was awaiting this much-dreaded interview with Esau.

There is peculiar force in the words, “Jacob was left alone.” Thus is it with all who have been trained in the school of God; they have been brought in the stillness and solitude of the divine presence, there to view themselves and their ways where alone they can be rightly viewed. Had Jacob continued amid the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen, he could not by any means have enjoyed the same calm and sober view of himself and his past course as he was led to in the secret of the presence of God. “Jacob was left alone.” Oh there is no part of a man’s history so important as when he is thus led into the solitude of the divine presence! It is there he understands things which were before dark and inexplicable. There he can judge of men and things in their proper light; there too he can judge of self, and see its proper nothingness and vileness.

In Psalm 73 we find a soul looking abroad upon the world and reasoning upon what he saw there—reasoning to such an extent that he was almost tempted to say it was vain to serve the Lord at all.

In Psalm 77 we find a soul looking inward, and reasoning upon what he saw within—reasoning to such an extent as to question the continuance of God’s grace. What was the remedy in both cases? “The sanctuary.” I went into the sanctuary of God; and then understood. So it was with Jacob; his “sanctuary” was the lonely spot where God wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. The careful reader will find in this passage, when taken as it stands, affords no foundation for the popular idea, namely, that it furnishes an instance of Jacob’s power in prayer. That no such idea is set forth will at once appear from the expression, “There wrestled a man with him”; it is not said that he wrestled with the man, which would give an entirely different aspect to the scene. I believe that, so far from its proving Jacob’s power in prayer, it rather proves the tenacity with which he grasped the flesh and the things thereof. So firmly indeed did he hold fast his “confidence in the flesh,” that all night long the struggle continued. “The supplanter” held out, nor did he yield until the very seat of his strength was touched, and he was made to feel indeed that “all flesh is grass.” Such is the obvious teaching of this very important scripture. Instead of Jacob’s patience and perseverance in prayer, we have God’s patience in dealing with one who needed to have his “old man” crushed to the very dust ere God could make anything of him.

This momentous scene gives us the grand turning-point in the life of this extraordinary man. We are here reminded of Saul’s conversion: Jacob, with the hollow of his thigh touched, like Saul, prostrate in the dust between Jerusalem and Damascus. We observe on the one hand the broken fragments of “a supplanter,” and the elements of God’s mighty “prince”; on the other hand the fragments of a persecutor and injurious one, and the elements of God’s mighty Apostle. And we may ask, what means the expression, “I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me”? What but the utterance of one that had made the wondrous discovery that he was “without strength”? Jacob was let into the secret of human weakness, and therefore felt that it must be a divine struggle or nothing. He thinks no more of his goodly plans and arrangements, his presents to appease “my lord Esau.” No; he stands withered and trembling before the One who had humbled him, and cries, “I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me.” Surely this is the gate of heaven! Jacob had, as it were, arrived at the end of flesh; it is no longer “me,” but “Thee.” He clings to Christ as the poor shipwrecked mariner clings to the rock. All self-confidence is gone, all expectations from self and the world blasted, every chain of self-devised security dissolved like a morning cloud before the beams of the sun. All his bargains availed him nothing at all. How miserable must everything that even he did have seemed to him; yes, even his offer to give a tenth to God, when thus laid in the dust of self-abasement and conscious weakness!

The mighty Wrestler says, “Let Me go, for the day breaketh.” What a striking expression, “Let Me go.” He was determined to make manifest the condition of Jacob’s soul. If Jacob had without delay let go his grasp, he would have proved that his heart was still wrapped up in his worldly plans and schemes; but on the contrary, when he cries out, “I will not let Thee go,” he declares that God alone was the spring of all his soul’s joy and strength; He in effect says, “Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee”; or with the twelve in the sixth chapter of John, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

“I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me.” Such will ever be the happy effect of a thorough acquaintance with our own hearts. Jacob now gets his name changed; he must not be any longer known as “the supplanter,” but as “a prince,” having power with God through the very knowledge of his weakness; for “when I am weak, then am I strong.” We are never so strong as when we feel ourselves weak, even as “water spilt upon the ground, that cannot be gathered up again;” and, on the contrary, we are never so weak as when we fancy ourselves strong. Peter never displayed more lamentable weakness than when he fancied he had uncommon strength: had he felt somewhat of Jacob’s happy condition when his sinew shrank, he would have thought, acted, and spoken differently.

We should not turn from this passage without at least seeing distinctly what it was that gave Jacob “power with God and with man”; it was the full consciousness of his own nothingness. Who that hearkens for a moment to those precious words, “I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me,” and beholds the humbled patriarch clinging closely to the One who had broken him down, can fail to see that Jacob’s “power” consisted in his “weakness”? There is nothing here of Jacob’s power in prayer. No; all we see is, first, Jacob’s strength in the flesh, and God weakening him; then, his weakness in the flesh, and God strengthening him. This is indeed the great moral of the scene. Jacob was satisfied to go “halting” on his journey, seeing he had learned the secret of true strength. He was able to move along, using the words afterward uttered by the Apostle Paul: “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” Yes, “my infirmities” on the one hand, and “the power of Christ” on the other, will be found to constitute the sum total of the life of a Christian.

C. H. M.

Questions and Answers in Christian Treasury, Questions and Answers: Celebrating Christmas/Easter; LUK 18:19; EXO 33:20-23

Ques. 1. is it scriptural for Christians to celebrate Christmas and Easter?

2. If so, why? If not, why not?

Ans. These two questions are answered together. The word translated Easter in Acts 12:4 should be passover. Correctly, in Scripture neither Easter nor Christmas is mentioned. In this day of grace we are told to "stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." Gal. 5:1. The observance of days and months and times and years is called "weak and beggarly elements" in Gal. 4:9 and 10, and the Christian should not be in such bondage. Historically, the origin of Christmas is pagan.

Ques. 3. Why did Christ in Luke 18:19 say, "None is good, save one, that is, God," whereas we know that Christ is the only sinless and perfect man that ever trod the earth?

Ans. Yes, Christ is the only sinless and perfect man and also He is God. Psa. 119:68 says, "Thou art good, and doest good." "The Lord is good.” Nah. 1:7. No mere man was or is good. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Psa. 14:2, 3.

Ques. 4. How do we reconcile Ex. 33:20-23, where it is stated that "there shall no man see Me [God] and live" with the following passages of Scripture? Gen. 32:30; Ex. 33:11; Deut. 5:4.

Ans. We do not reconcile Scripture but, rather, seek God's teaching from it. First, we notice that in Ex. 33:20 it says, "Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live." John 1:18 tells us, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Christ is the Revealer of the Godhead. In Gen. 32:24 it says, "there wrestled a man" with Jacob. It was the Lord Jehovah (who is Christ) revealing God in that way to Jacob and so in Ex. 33:11 and Deut. 5:4. Today Christ reveals the Father. God in His essential being and glory is never seen at any time. All the manifestations of God are in His Son. (1 Tim. 6:13-16.)

Bible Treasury: Volume N2, Sabbath

Q.-Is the Sabbath part of the law to which the Christian (Rom. 7:4-6, Gal. 2:19) died with Christ? or does Gen. 2:3 make it still binding, as being before the law and even sin? R. C.

A.-Undoubtedly the Christian is declared to have died to the law as well as to sin; and to both without qualification. Grace and new creation take us out of Adam's or Israel's relationship. We are in Christ risen and ascended, and are told expressly in Col. 2 that none should judge us in eating or in drinking, or in respect of a feast-day or a new moon or sabbaths. Having died with Christ, we are not, as men living in the world, to subject ourselves to ordinances. This does not hinder but help our enjoying the privilege of assembling on the first day of the week, “the Lord's day” of resurrection, not as in bondage but in liberty, not only for the remembrance of Christ in worship, but for edification also as well as in the outgoing of heart with the gospel to the lost and burdened. Hence we see how the Lord pointedly wrought His works of mercy on the sabbath, breaking through the formality of the self-righteous Pharisee; while the devotedness, to which the resurrection of Christ gave so mighty an impulse deeply offended the rationalism of the easy-going Sadducee. We may notice too how the N.T., while showing our precious place as associated with and expressed by “the first” day, wholly distinct from the sabbath, carefully avoids any reference for it to the law, or even to a fresh commandment. For we are not under law but under grace. Such is Christianity as a whole and essentially.

Q.-1 John 2:2. Was Christ a propitiation “for the sins of the whole world?” Does John 1:29 teach this? Does 1 Peter 2:24 apply alike to all, believers and unbelievers? W. R. W.

A.-It cannot be urged too plainly or often that “the sins of” is an interpolation, not only uncalled for, but an addition which goes beyond the truth and is therefore false, as all exaggerations must be. “For our sins” is in pointed distinction. “For the whole world” is ample ground of encouragement for preaching the gospel to those who are still in unbelief, without warranting the dangerous delusion that the sins of the whole world are gone. This would naturally lead to telling every body that he is forgiven, in open opposition to the general warning of scripture to all the unconverted. Hence it is not just to confound this last member of the sentence with 1 Peter 2:24, which rather coalesces with Christ's being a propitiation for our sins. He was our substitute; when men believe the gospel, we and they can say this of them. But He is a ransom for all, as He is a propitiation for the whole world. John 1:29 goes on to the complete taking away (not “bearing our sins”) of the sin of the world, as will be manifested in the new heavens and new earth, like Heb. 9:26. The sacrifice is already offered and accepted; but all its results are not yet come and enjoyed. It will be applied to the millennial age, and completely in the eternal day. To say that judging “according to works” does not mean “sins” is mere quibbling. The “works” of the unbelievers, of the wicked, are nothing but “sins"; for which, when raised, they will have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone, the second death.

Q.-1 Thess. 5:23: how do you explain sanctification here? M.

A.-It is sanctification in practice, which all Christians admit and urge. The apostle prays that “the God of peace might sanctify them wholly “; and, not content with this general desire, “that their spirit and soul and body might be preserved entire, blamelessly, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The whole man is comprehended, in virtue of the reconciling work on the cross; which awaits redemption in the full sense (Rom. 8:23) at Christ's coming. It is the believing man inwardly and outwardly, the mind of flesh or old man already condemned, and all the rest, inner and outer, animated and directed by the indwelling Spirit of God. The higher faculty of man, his spirit, is named first, and the external instrument, his body, last; the soul, if we distinguish the words, is the seat of individuality, the “I” which uses both. It is a heathen notion, though favored by many moderns, to place the “I” in the spirit; but scripture is distinctly adverse, and the error involves many serious consequences. As to this, Dr. Delitzsch's book is unreliable, though learned and lively.

Q.-1 Peter 1:2: what is meant by sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience?

A.-It is sanctification in principle, a truth of deep importance, ignored everywhere in Christendom, by Protestants as well as Romanists, by Calvinists no less than by Arminians. For by it is meant true living separation to God from the starting-point of faith, when one is “born of water and Spirit,” in a new nature. This cries, as Saul of Tarsus did when converted, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? It is therefore as we see here, “unto obedience"; not only so but to Christ's obedience, not as a Jew under law, but as a child obeying its Father under grace, even though the sprinkling of the blood or justification had yet to be learned, however soon it may follow. Hence we read in 1 Cor. 6:11 “washed, sanctified, justified “: the order of which is inexplicable to such as overlook the absolute setting apart, or personal sanctification, of believers from their first breath of new life as “born of God.” The Washing looks at our previous uncleanness, the sanctification at our separation to God, the justification at our resting on Christ's work of redemption, as the other two precede and go together.

If any one wishes to see the havoc done to scripture by a pious and learned man, through confounding these two senses of sanctification, both equally true and essential to Christian intelligence, let him consider Th. de Bèze's version of 1 Peter 1 and the notes in any of his five folio editions of the Greek Testament; in which he makes -ex! -ad! and -per! It is a total and inexcusable falsification through prejudice. Verses 15 and 16 of the same chapter do exhort to actual day-by-day holiness or sanctification in practice. Popery and Puseyism confound justification with practical sanctification to the loss of the truth as to both. The great value of the truth, so generally found wanting, can hardly be exaggerated, Romish theology being utter confusion and that of the Puritan partial and one-sided. Scripture alone is the truth which co-ordinates, and is worthy of all trust.

Again, the Authorized and the Revised Versions are fairly correct: elect “according to.” But “by” is better than “through “; and “in” is equivalent to “by,” as it here can only mean “by virtue, or in the power, of.” And both agree in rendering “unto” obedience, which is alone right or possible on any sound principle. We are called to obey, as Christ obeyed, filially, and not in the bondage of the law like Israel; whilst instead of having the blood of victims as its sanction threatening death on failure, we have the sprinkling of His blood cleansing us from all sin.

Edification: Volume 8, Church, in Relation to Christ., The

Gen. 2:18, 21-24.

WE have been meditating a good deal on the Gospel and kindred subjects, truths which affect us in our individual Christian life. Now I should like to say a little on the other side; not what the Lord is to us, but what we are to the Lord.

The first things that generally engross Christians, are the blessings they get from Christ, but there is another side, full of blessing for us too, and that is, what Christ will get from us. In our early career as Christians we are very much like babies. When a baby gets hold of anything, it always goes to its mouth, and so the, first thing we do when we get hold of the Word of God is to seize everything for ourselves.

We consider how it fits us, or how it suits our case. But there is another side. There is an objective before God, and that is that we should be brought into association with Christ, not only that we should be saved from hell, which is the initial step.

When Joseph made himself known to his brethren, he began to unfold again to them the wonderful scheme that God had in His mind with regard to them and him. He had indicated it before to them, as God had indicated it to him by dreams, and they scoffed at the whole thing and laughed him to scorn; and worse than that, their hearts were filled with hatred and envy against him. But when we find these men suppliants in the presence of Joseph, with what different ears they listened to the same story that Joseph first indicated when he told them his dreams. Having made himself known to them and set their hearts at rest, they and he were at leisure to open, we may say, the book of God’s purpose with regard to him and them.

The very first thing God does with us is to bring us to Himself. The first operation of the Spirit of God is to awaken needs within us in order to make us appreciate Christ. It is when the Lord Jesus Christ is known as the One that has met our desperate need, when all the needs of the conscience are met, when the soul is saved; when the kiss of reconciliation has been put upon our cheeks, when we find ourselves at home and at rest and at peace with God, then we are at leisure, and He is free to unfold this wonderful scheme that is in His mind with regard to us and our association with Christ. It is a wonderful thing that we should be able to say,

Yet it is more wonderful if we turn it round (with all apologies to the author) and put it in this way,

That Christ in all His greatness and glory should be so much to me, is not nearly so surprising as that I, in spite of all my weakness, defilement and sinfulness, should be so much to Him.

You will have observed no doubt in reading the Song of Solomon, the advance that the bride makes. She first says, “My beloved is mine, and I am his.” Then she goes on to say, “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.” The first thing she appreciates is the thought of what He is to her; the second stage in the growth of her soul is what she is to Him, and then she winds up with the third expression, “I am my beloved’s, and his desire is towards me.” She finds out this fact, that she has become necessary to his joy. Don’t let it take your breath away, my dear

fellow believer; it is enough to do it; but you and I are positively necessary to the joy and glory of Christ.

Nothing could exceed the importance of seeing the unique place that the Church occupies in the thoughts of God in relation to Christ. Angels never stood in that relationship, and never will. It is the peculiar position into which the Church is called., and let me say in passing what I mean by the Church. It is that which is called in the end of Ephesians 1, “the Church which is His body,” and it embraces in its scope every blood-washed and Spirit-sealed believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherever you find a Spirit-begotten, Spirit-sealed believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will find one that forms part of the Church of God. It is the fact of his being born again, of his having trusted in Christ, the fact that he has been indwelt and sealed by the Spirit, that brings him to form part of the Church of God. That is the Church, no matter what the color of your skin, no matter what name you may have labelled yourself, or allowed yourself to be labelled; no matter what your profession, if you are a bona-fide, genuine Christian according to Scripture, you form part of that which is called in Scripture the Church of God, the body of Christ.

I am not talking about your being saved from hell and going to heaven when you die, but I am talking about what has taken place by the Spirit’s work since you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. By the fact of the Holy Spirit sealing you as His, you have not joined the. Church, but the Spirit of God has joined you to the Church, and since you form part of the Church, you could not leave it. That is the only Church that Scripture recognizes, or that I want to know anything about. Any other “church” that you may join is an organization that has no support from The Book. The Church to which the Spirit of God joins you, is the only Church that God recognizes.

That Church is destined to a very wonderful future. It is destined to be the associate of Christ, the companion of Christ throughout the ages of eternity, and as I look into your faces, though you may belong to every denomination in the town, that makes no difference to me, I think of you only as related to Christ in this way. May I say this, that in the Scriptures, the Church comes before us under various names, each name having its own significance. Sometimes it is called the Body of Christ, in ration to Himself as the Head of that Body, which brings before us the thought of unity, the unity of all the members together, and all being governed by one Head. That is the thought of the body of Christ. It is that in which Christ expresses Himself, that in which Christ’s character is to be seen. Sometimes it is called the House of God, sometimes it is called the Temple. All these terms have their own significance.

But there is another title which the Church bears, she is the “bride” of Christ. The Church as the Body of Christ is spoken of as the great mystery, that which was never revealed before. That which was hid from all ages and generations, says the Apostle Paul in the closing verses of Romans, is now made manifest. It does not say it was hidden in the Scriptures. No, it was “hid in God,” and this mystery, which was not made known since the world began, is now made manifest. The first time the Apostle Paul speaks of the Church is in the Epistle to the Romans. Romans is the Gospel epistle, where we have the great foundation truths of the Gospel. The result of the Gospel is that we are brought to partake in that wonderful structure on earth which is known as the Church, and which bears also the character of the Bride.

In point of fact, the Church did not exist until Pentecost. When the Lord Jesus Christ was here, He said, “I will build My Church” (Matt. 16:18), and He began to announce that fact when John the Baptist had been murdered. If His harbinger met such a cruel death, what could He expect? Hence He began to intimate to His disciples that they should no longer speak about Him publicly as the Christ. Why? As Christ, He had the title to the Kingdom; but what was now before Him was the Church. There was another title He was going to be known by— “The Son of the living God.” That is the rock upon which He was going to build His Church. It was not Peter. Peter was not the one upon whom Christ was going to build His Church. No, He was going to build the Church upon that solid, impregnable, invulnerable rock—Himself, as the Son of the living God. He was the living Stone. He was going to be taken by. God out of the ground into which man threw Him, and to be raised up again, the living Stone, and on that, foundation He was going to build His Church, which is His Body. That building began at Pentecost.

In the Old Testament are found wonderful analogies, illustrations and figures of the Church. Genesis, which has been described as the seed plot of the Bible, in its second chapter, gives us an indication of this very truth. It is not a little remarkable that in Genesis where the Spirit of God is using types or figures of the Church, He nearly always uses the figure of the bride. Not the body, not the house, not the temple, but the bride.

In Genesis 2 we have God taking the initiative, in bringing Eve to Adam. It says, “And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him,” that is, a counterpart. There is God taking the initiative.

I need not tell you that Adam the first, was only a figure of Him that was to come—Adam the last, who was alone. There was a time when the One we know and love as Saviour and Lord, was alone. He was alone in the glory He had with the Father before the world was. Then there came a time when He stepped from the glory throne to the earth, and He was yet alone. There was never a man on the face of the earth like Him. He was alone, when every other man was built differently. Every other man was bent on doing his own will, going his own way, doing his own pleasure and gratifying his own wishes. Here was a Man that was bent upon going God’s way and doing God’s will and gratifying God’s wishes and accomplishing God’s pleasure. This Man was the Lord out of heaven; the other was of the earth, earthy. We, as the children of Adam’s race had come one way; He had come another way. He was a Man of an entirely different order, and you find Him here on earth alone.

You remember the Mount of Transfiguration, when it always seems to me that the very glory of God stooped to imprint upon His brow the kiss of Divine satisfaction; there, at the close of His earthly career, the glory came down and He was glorified. Peter, who was with Him, ignorant of what He was saying, said, “Let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses and one for Elias,” that is, let us put them all on a dead level. What happened? A cloud came and Moses and Elias disappeared. And then there came a voice from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, hear Him.” What was that? God the Father, protecting the distinctive glory of God the Son. Peter, in his ignorance, would fain have put him on a level with those two wonderful, servants of God. But God would not have it so. When the cloud was gone and Moses and Elias had gone too, it says, “Jesus was left alone.” If He had gone from that mountain top to heaven’s glory, He would have gone alone.

The Lord Himself said, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.” Had He not died, He would have been alone forever. But He would not be alone. In order that He might have His companion He left the glory Mount for the Mount of suffering. He wended His way straight up to Jerusalem, in order that He might have companions through the ages of a coming Eternity. He did not seek for them in the serried ranks of angels. No. He sought for them amongst the simple of Adam’s fallen race.

I want you to notice that Eve was taken out of Adam. She was not a separate creation. God did not create something new. He did not create a fresh being. No. She formed part of Adam himself. It was out of his rib that God formed the woman. She derived her origin from him. Don't overlook that fact. She had his life and nature, you may say, for she was derived from him. God's purpose with regard to Adam having this bride was one thing, but how this purpose was to be realized was another thing. When we come to the realization of that purpose, we find Adam has to fall into a deep sleep, and out of the side of Adam when he was fallen into this deep sleep, God built this woman, and when he awoke out of his sleep, she was presented to him.

There could not have been any Church of God on earth united to Him had there not been that deep sleep into which He fell—the sleep of death. But He went down into death and the result is, that God is now able to present to Him one, who is destined to be His bride and to share with Him the Father's love, to share with Him His throne, and to share with Him His glory. She is of Him as to origin. She is in Him as having the same life and the same nature. She is united to Him, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, part of Himself.

Hebrews 2 puts it in this way, "Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." John 12 puts it in this way, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" — many grains, but of the same order and character as that which falls into the ground. If you sow wheat, you will not get oats. If you sow wheat, you will get a crop of wheat. We are told in the Epistle to the Ephesians, which speaks of this, "Husbands, love your wives; even as 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 Churchapter" That is the mystery, he says. He was not speaking about man and wife, but of Christ and the Churchapter The close union of the bride and bridegroom is that which God by His Spirit has used to show the union that exists between the Church and Christ.

This is something more than being saved from hell, something more than going to heaven when we die. The full display rains for the future but there is a Bride on earth today and she is in the company of the Holy Ghost for the moment. Christ presents Himself as the Bright and Morning Star. There is a response in the heart of the bride to the Lord Jesus Christ as He is presented to her as the coming Bridegroom, the Bright and Morning Star. "The Spirit and the Bride say, come."

Art. Cutting.

Correspondence, Correspondence: MAT 19:24; "Inn"; 7 Spirits; Saints in REV 13:7; Help Meet

Ques. What is the meaning of the "needle" in Matt. 19:24?

Ans. The needle referred to is the ordinary sewing needle with which everyone is familiar. There is not the slightest ground for the notion that it referred to a small gate in the wall of Jerusalem. Verse 26 would make this clear, as it would by no means be "impossible" for the camel to go through the supposed small gate, even in the judgment of those who advance the "gate" theory. The lesson is that "Salvation is of the Lord." Matthew 27:57 shows that God is able to do the "impossible"; Joseph was rich, yet he was saved. (See Matthew 27:57-60).

Ques. What is the typical meaning of the "inn" in the parable of the Samaritan in Luke 10:34-35?

Ans. The inn being the place in which the delivered man was to be cared for until the return of the "Samaritan," would typify the place where the Lord cares for His own during His absence, and until His return. This would point to the assembly where the Spirit of God operates for the good and blessing of all Christ's members. No doubt, there is the additional, that of the transient character of the church's sojourn; it is an "inn," not a permanent residence as a palace or castle.

Inasmuch as the Samaritan paid but two pence to the innkeeper, we would gather that the Lord intended to teach the brevity of the time until His return.

Ques. What is the meaning of the Seven Spirits in Revelation 4;5, and in other places in the book of Revelation?

Ans. The number "seven" in Scripture suggests completeness, or perfection, either in good or evil. So the "seven Spirits of God" in the book of Revelation would indicate the all-comprehensive, providential workings of that Holy Spirit in God's judgments upon the earth.

Ques. Who are the saints mentioned in Revelation 13:7? Are not the church saints caught up before them?

Ans. These are Jewish saints, who at that time will be carrying out the ceremonial law of God. The "beast" cannot touch the saints who have been caught up at the coming of the Lord. The "beast" will prevent the Jewish remnant from performing their religious observances.

Ques. What is the force of the words "help meet" in Genesis 2:18?

Ans. This is the authorized version's rendering of one word in the original which means "helper." The Greek equivalent of this word is used once in the New Testament in Hebrews 13:6:

"The Lord is my helper."

Leah, Rachel, Jochebed, Miriam: December 2019, Leah's Sons

Israel, who was the betrothed of Jehovah ("Thy Maker is thine husband"; Isa. 54:5), fair through the comeliness that He had put upon her, proves herself barren and without fruit to God, and she is practically set aside. "Lo-ammi" (that is, "not My people") is written upon her. This is typified in Rachel, one of Jacob's wives.

Leah, the hated one — figure of the church in its aspect of being gathered from among the Gentiles — is then brought into blessing and fruitfulness; her reproach is taken away, and she who had not obtained mercy now has obtained mercy, so to speak. The result in the names

of her children tells its own tale of sovereign grace.

Reuben

Her firstborn brings out an entirely new thing in God’s dealings: Reuben — “see” or “behold a son.” The day of bondage is now passed; the servants are no more to possess the house. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (1 John 3:1). The servants slew the heir, and now the Son had come in and given the freedom of the house, with the title and privilege of sons, to all who received Him. We have no longer “the spirit of bondage again to fear,” but “a spirit of adoption” is ours, whereby we cry, “Abba, Father.” This is your place and mine, beloved, for the “fullness of time” has come. God has sent forth His Son, and we are no more servants but sons; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ (Gal. 4:4-7).

Simeon

How sweetly does her next son carry on the story of grace and tell us how we are brought into this privileged place. She bore another son and called his name “Simeon” — “hearing”; so Paul asks, Was it by works of law or by the hearing of faith (Gal. 3:2) that ye received the Spirit? By the “hearing of faith,” surely; so then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by God’s Word (Rom. 10:17). “He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life” (John 5:24). Simeon typifies God’s principle of action in this present dispensation — grace by the hearing of faith — for it is “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us” (Titus 3:5).

Levi

Leah bore another son and called his name “Levi” — “joined” — for she said, “Now... will my husband be joined unto me.” He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit — bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. We are severed from our connections with the first man and united to a risen Christ in glory, made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Old things have passed away; all things have become new. We are of the new creation, vitally and eternally connected with the second Man, the Lord from heaven — a union which is now the portion of all God’s children, to be known and enjoyed as their proper privilege.

Judah

How fitly does her next born son, the fourth (completing the perfect fruit of God’s grace), bear the name of “Judah” — “praise!” It is our joy and privilege, as those who are sons of God by pure, sovereign grace, to offer up “the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15). Yes, it is meet that we should praise the Lord and call upon all that is within us to bless His holy name, since He has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. In seeking worshipers to worship Him in spirit and in truth, He has sought and found us. Let us, then, not forget that this is our holy privileged occupation. If in Levi we get the priesthood, and we are — though after another order — a holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5), still more we are a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:7), and the kingdom is ours in joint heirship with Christ. He that loved us and has washed us from our sins in His own blood has made us a kingdom, even priests unto God and His Father (Rev. 1:5-6).

May we not, then, exclaim, as we enter into the blessed fact that we are sons — and sons by pure grace — in union with a risen Christ, privileged to praise our God as we wait for the kingdom to be manifested: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!... For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:33,36).

Christian Truth, Vol. 5 (adapted)

Thoughts on Jacob, Jacob, Thoughts on: Part 10

“AND Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem, and Jacob set a pillar upon her grave.” From her came forth the son who carried into Egypt, was made ruler there—and thence Jacob's power begins—while the godly remnant mourns, as from the grave of Israel's hope, because her children are not; and the place which should have been the starting-point of every blessing becomes a grave. Thus is Israel's history, as God's witness, bound betwixt two pillars; the first securing to him, unwitting, Laban's gods; the last marking the place where she, who in ignorance and natural religion had hid them—the poor of the flock—passes from connection with Israel forever, until the son called out from Egypt comes up in the power of resurrection, and the son of sorrow becomes the son of the right hand.

Her grave, thus become the occasion of Gentile mercy, is, on the ground of mercy, a house of bread to many nations.

The power of nature fails to uphold anything, it must be by the gift of grace and mercy. Ephratah, Bethlehem, is man's order—fruitfulness before blessing (Gen. 35:19)—blessing, then fruitfulness, Bethlehem-Ephratah (Mic. 5:2) is God's way.

They have now not believed in Gentile mercy, in order that they also may be objects of mercy. The deliverer shall come out from Egypt. He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. Edar, Bethlehem, Zion mark His course, not Bethel, Ephrath, Edar, as Israel's: for unto Edar unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion: thou Bethlehem-Ephratah, out of thee shall He come forth unto me, to be ruler in Israel; and the Redeemer shall come to Zion.

Now draws Israel's sad history towards a close, as responsible in the land. “It came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, and Israel heard it."

The son dishonoureth the father, a man's enemies are the men of his own house. Therefore faith will look unto the Lord, and he who loves God's truth not alone obeys, as Abram, getting out of country, kindred, father's house, but is content to waive all right to that which in God's promise was his inheritance.

Israel understands not the things which are for his peace, the blessing in him and in his seed, and in his heart withholds the birthright, the inheritance, from Reuben, whose right it was; therefore is he a man cast loose, a wanderer, with no tie in all the land. He must go forth to

Egypt, and faith owns the just decree, being ready to go hither, thither, at the word of God, even if it were from off the ground of promise, confiding in the power of God, the God of the living. It flees from place to place, witnessing of a rejected one, counting all things loss for his sake: content to be a little one, with little earthly blessing, that he may be greatest in the kingdom when the heavens rule; a friend of publicans and sinners, that wisdom may be justified of her children. It leaves home, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, and receives in this time an hundredfold with persecution.

“Israel heard it!” Jacob heard, and held his peace when folly had been wrought in Israel. In silence, and unwittingly, had God's claims been denied. In grief and pent-up wrath he disinherits Reuben in his heart. Thus what he would not do by faith, he does in inconsiderate haste. If faith fails to move a man, force goads him to God's goal.

Thus, with wives, twelve sons, and cattle and beasts, and all the substance which he had got in Padan Aram, Jacob came unto Isaac his father, unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned. To him Ephratah-Bethlehem was as Padan Aram: to him Canaan was not God's land; oblivious, like Lot, of the word, “Canaan shall be his servant.” forgetful of the covenant, “I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession;” regardless of the promise, “the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed."

"Israel dwelt in that land,” “the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.” A sad declension! With God's title-deeds he bought peace, and a portion with the Amorites to dwell in, making thereof destruction and a grave; but, worse than this, he turns his father's sepulcher into a dwelling-place.

With all things lost, if he but take the path of one cast out, he may walk therein in fellowship with God. How good it is to know God's present truth, and act upon it! Thus to do would be at least to make requital for the wrong done Esau; and what as a Canaanite he bought in avarice, and got confirmed by fraud with balances of deceit; then seized by force—he loveth to oppress—that might he now in lowly grace give up. But no his eye saw, his hand took, his lust holds, and Esau, in mere grace of nature, profane as he is, takes God's part; for “Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance which he had got in the land of Canaan, and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob; for their riches were more than that they might dwell together: and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle. Thus dwelt Esau in Mount Seir."

In nature's grace, God's providence and faithfulness in seen things, Esau drinks deeply of his blessing—consistent and persistent in his course; pressing forward in his line of things to lay hold of the promise set before him; unconsciously the instrument on Jacob's failure, whereby God's election, purpose, and calling are established.

“The elder shall serve the younger!” serving him by selling him his birthright—a paltry price to pay for such a portion—yet prevailing to procure a blessing, and in the order of God's providence, which answers nature, breaking from off his neck his brother's yoke when, lust unworking, and in the strength of nature's hardihood, he heeds not Canaan's fruitful plains, where from his wealth of wives and children, goods and cattle, had been gathered, but leaves them in the hold of coveting, amassing Jacob, and goes forth to a land of rocks and separation.

Thus dwelt Esau in Mount Seir, and dukes and kings come of him ere there reigns any king over the children of Israel. So, by force and nature's grace regaining, as it were, his birthright on independent grounds, he takes dominion in the cast-off place, breaking his brother's yoke from off his neck.

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Thoughts on Jacob, Jacob, Thoughts on: Part 9

Jacob is cast away, but God will call His son Israel, the new man out of Egypt. As Jacob is passed over, no longer in God's reckoning as holding Canaan in fief, and Israel in faith, God's Israel, is alone in view in this promise, so God went up from him in the place where He talked with him, never more to own him in His record, whilst in the land of Canaan, until by faith he goes out to God's separated man in Egypt. All is now lost for Jacob as such; he may set up a pillar, a pillar of stone, preface his act of worship with an offering of thanksgiving, and call the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel, but it goes for naught; he has no heart, and God no grace, until in Egypt he shall find his forerunner, God's Heir.

Therefore shall they be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away; as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor; and as the smoke out of the chimney. Yet is Jehovah his God; he shall know Him, for there is no Savior but Him.

He had respect to Jacob in a place of stones, a land of drought, and led him into pasture; but with God's provision Jacob filled himself, taking his ease, eating, drinking, and making merry; was not rich towards Him, forgetting Him; therefore was He to them as a lion, a leopard watching by the way, as a bereaved bear, meeting them to rend their heart's caul.

If Israel hath destroyed himself and the Lord's voice crieth, yet in Him is help, and the man of wisdom sees His name, hears the rod, and who hath appointed it. What is the path of faith for those who are the little flock when all things earthly fail? Seek ye the kingdom of God; provide yourselves a treasure in the heavens which faileth not; for God who clothes the grass will keep you; and the Father will give you the kingdom: since He who comes to cast a fire on the earth, and has already kindled it, though haply but a feeble flicker, a Deborah dying, He (a greater than Joseph, though like to Him) is Himself baptized with a baptism of death, a fire of judgment (Jonas being the sign as plainly as a western cloud foretell a shower, or a south wind heat), to deliver from hell those who hear the word of God and keep it. Them will He ransom from the power of the grave, He will redeem them from death. O death! He will be thy plagues. O grave! He will be thy destruction.

And in the new covenant in His blood all shall not only be retrieved, but in Him the last Adam, the second Man, death has been swallowed up in victory; for the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin, the law, but thanks to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

So if it be the assembly which is His body, or those who shall fill up the number of His elect at His coming, or Israel restored, it is through the blood, and in the resurrection life and power of Him who came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and in grace and power will first bring perfectly into possession those who had no promise of an earthly portion, and were not responsible to Him in it, and by the same grace will thereafter introduce as heir of heavenly blessing those who willfully have forfeited their earthly birthright; and not only so, but relinquish it when brought to them in God's title.

"They journeyed from Bethel!" Sad sentence! The climax of their course of pride, the final turning off from mercy; hitherto had grace lingered, now they are cast off forever! The limit of long-suffering is reached and overpassed; no help remains; no longer Canaan, but Egypt is their lot. All lost! forever lost! darkness closes o'er the scene. Woe! woe unalterable is fixed eternally! "Journeyed from Bethel!" A fleeing from the face of God, hiding from Him; a damming out the source of blessing from his soul has marked the course of Jacob from the first; setting a stone, his wives, his herds, a heap, his bands, a stream, a parcel of a field, an altar between his soul and God. And now the end has come; a second time the sentence has gone forth, "journeyed from Bethel." Surely the record of the Spirit states the fact, it may be, with groans that cannot be uttered. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not?"

Jacob, as a witness for Jehovah's name, is blotted out. As priest, and raiser of Jehovah's house, is passed away. As worshipper, to render Him His due, is cast aside.

"Journeyed from Bethel," and Jehovah's soul unsatisfied! "Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage, there is no cluster to eat, my soul desired the first ripe fruit." When helpless, at the first time, in the wilderness, He had found Israel like grapes, as the first ripe in the fig tree; but now the best of them is as a briar, the most upright is sharper than a thorn-hedge. The day of thy visitation cometh, now shall be their perplexity.

"And they journeyed from Bethel, and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath." Israel hath forgotten, but God remembers, not only all their wickedness, so that their own doings have beset them about, and the sorrows of a travailing woman have come upon him, but in divine grace, though the place which should have been the beginning of his fruitfulness and strength, becomes a monument of his affliction, yet He who remembered the barren woman to give her a son, also will remember in that day the faith that counted on Jehovah's boundless power and good-will, saying, "The Lord shall add to me another son."

Thus unconscious faith prophesies of grace, and Jehovah's way in rolling away reproach, by giving in a son life, deliverance, and power.

Jehovah remembers His own counsels, and hearkens to the voice of prayer. He sees the ways of men, and acts accordingly. Faith trusts the Lord, but Rachel has to learn that in resurrection only is there life and power—that for nature must a voice "be heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping" — "weeping for her children, and no comfort, because they are not." Yet, thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for in the power of Him who is in resurrection "shall they come again from the land of the enemy;" and there is hope in the after time.

If Benjamin bear rule, it must be in the power of Joseph, rejected, delivered up, exalted, and he must in the meanwhile be a son of sorrow. The birthright in abeyance, even the promise of inheritance, but the blessing shall be bestowed in the person of the man He sent before them; who was sold for a servant; whose feet they hurt with fetters—he was laid in iron until the time that his word came—the word of the Lord tried him.

Israel must also come into Egypt, and Jacob sojourn in the land of Ham.

Jehovah reckons nothing till Joseph come to Egypt; faith then can follow, and God meet Jacob on the ground of mercy. A son of sorrow on the way to Egypt, yet a Joseph there to be exalted, so that all should bow the knee, and the savior of the world, while Rachel wept; but to be called out of Egypt a son of power, though little, yet a ruler.

But at that time they shall not go from Bethlehem to Edar, but from Edar to Bethlehem (Mic. 4:8; 5:2), and the first dominion shall come to the Tower of the flock, the strength of the daughter of Zion, the daughter of Jerusalem.

Meanwhile the daughter of Zion shall be in pain and labor to bring forth, like a woman in travail; for now shalt than go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go to Babylon, and there shalt thou be delivered, there the Lord shall redeem thee. But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, thou art little! out of thee shall He come forth to me that is to be ruler in Israel.

Therefore the first dominion shall come to Judah's remnant, scattered as a flock without a shepherd, but when gathered, though but few, and shepherded, then shall the horn be iron, and the hoof brass, and they shall beat in pieces many peoples.

When using power falsely, Judah mites the Judge of Israel on the cheek; therefore, till He, the everlasting One, takes up the government, they shall be given up: but when out of their travail He comes forth in manifested power as Head of Israel, the whole nation shall be owned, and all Israel be saved.

Note how self-will and corrupt lusts are identified both in 2 Peter 2 and in Jude. They are a letting out of will. So for good we see the apostle's power over his own will. There also we see despising dignities, and the like; no self-restraint. So, in fact, such a thing as communism lets loose corrupt lusts too.

Thoughts on Jacob, Jacob, Thoughts on: Part 8

And God said unto Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there, and make there an altar unto God that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother." Jacob then was not two bands, but a man with nothing rightly of his own, and him asleep. Brought out from his kindred and his father's house, where God's blessing rested, that he might be set apart by God, fitted for his priest and sent back from Jehovah in new place, and power, and appointment.

To him God comes in all embracing grace, setting him in this, his nothingness, within the glorious flood of the divine purpose and action. This place must he recognize again; no longer nothing in the helplessness of sleep, but nothing in the testing blast of Jehovah's face; not only motionless but moveless.

It was Abraham's faith to come from Mesopotamia and keep in Canaan. It was Jacob's faith to abide at Bethel whilst Jehovah's plans matured, building there an altar as in the van of God's witnesses; if flesh will wander, God covenants to give preserving grace, till from that base in faith, and with God's power, he conquer all the land.

Deplorable indeed is his return! The strange gods which were in their hand, and the earrings which were in their ears, Jacob hides under the oak which was by Shechem, “And they journeyed.” Filled with ill-gotten gains, they go with their flocks and herds to seek the Lord; but they shall not find Him, He having withdrawn Himself from them. They have dealt treacherously against the Lord; for Jacob has forestalled his portion in God's inheritance and lost it, has sacrificed God's rights to propitiate the world, and foolishly earned their hatred, having staked God's covenant in pledge of peace and amity, and it was forfeited.

One spot alone was then left; this deserted, all was lost to Jacob. It was dedicated by him to the Lord if He fulfilled His promise. Hitherto this had been kept, and would be to the end, ever therefore must it be the Lord's.

This is Jehovah's grace, His righteousness. Remember now, O Israel, that you may know it. In this parcel of a field secured eternally by every right of God and man, bound ever and forever unto God, unloseable, God's grace, Jehovah's righteousness gives Jacob an abiding place and portion to possess.

Is this God's strange work? Nay I ever acts He thus; Bethel, Gilgal, Calvary each tell the tale.

At Shalem Jacob mixes himself among the people. God will change their glory into shame; testify the pride of Israel to his face, hanging his dishonor in the light, for He had seen a horrible thing; Israel is defiled and knows it not. This is in grace.

At Shechem flesh is brought by fraud and force to Israel, and God in grace and truth by word and power forces Jacob to depart; blotting out transgression and unpardonable guilt with blood, shed by the cruel hands of lawless men, making thus atonement.

Will Jacob know God's reckoning, and put away all witness of the deed in zeal for Him? Nay! Jacob judges Laban's gods and says, “Be clean and change your garments;” but holds with itching palm unrighteous gains. He may hide the strange gods and their earrings under the oak which was by Shechem: but they go with flocks and herds to seek the Lord.

In grace and righteousness Jehovah will go and return to His place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek His face. Will Jacob take this two days' journey from the place of death to life, and life in resurrection on the third day

See Israel going out to join with flesh at Baalpeor; and Jehovah said to Moses, “Hang them up before the Lord against the sun.” Then Zimri brings flesh in unto his brethren in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation; and Phinehas rose up, and took a javelin, and went into the tent, and thrust both of them through. “He was jealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.” Covering up their sin with blood, and turning away His wrath by atonement.

Gilgal corresponds to Bethel: there Jehovah rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off them—blessed grace—this is His righteousness! Will not Israel trust Jehovah? If a Moses judge, he must hang them up; if a Phinehas, they must be smitten through; but if Jehovah judge, and Israel is in faith, a Joshua circumcises them, and they abide there until they are whole.

Again, if Israel is defiled among the people, and his two sons take up judgment, the defilement must be met by the defiler's blood. If defilement is brought to Jacob, and he has zeal for God, his household must not only put away the strange gods, and be clean, and change their garments, but, as a man responsible to God, he must be swept from off the land. “Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted.” “Thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the Lord."

But grace has one resource still left. Let but Jehovah judge! He will sweep Jacob as such off the scene, but in the new man, Israel, invest him with His title in new standing altogether. “Remember now that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.” “Arise, go up to Bethel, and make THERE an altar unto God that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.” May it not be said that God gives up His portion that Jacob may be blessed? If Jacob in simplicity obeys, all that God promised him at first, may even now be taken up in God's right, if he will go back in heart and mind to that time; but Jehovah's name cannot be made known till God's new man comes upon the scene.

Will Jacob then remember and know the goodness and long-suffering of God? Nay, he comes far short of God's thought and his own blessing, for he says, “I will make there an altar unto God who answered me in the day of my distress.” He owns the God who delivered Jacob and his bands at Peniel, and blessed him there; not alone allowing willingly the biding of Jehovah's name, but alike indifferent to his new name in which the secret of his blessing lay.

When was the day of his distress? Not Luz, but Jabbok. God would recall Bethel to his mind; Jacob's thoughts turn back to Peniel. Jehovah poured out grace at Bethel, but at Peniel Jacob sought for, and by power procured a blessing after his own mind. The God of glory he pares down in thought to such an one who was with him in the way which he went—a crooked way, a transgressing way indeed.

Jacob clings to his experience, not God's word. God cleaves to His word, and is not bound by Jacob's conscience. If, in blind unbelief, flesh wrests the word, yet it fails not. To faith and doubtless deep in Jacob's heart, seen but by God, the knowledge lay, that at Penuel, it was no fleeing from, but going forth, to meet his brother Esau; though swayed by feelings, Jacob says, Peniel was the day of my distress, wherein I fled from Esau's face. But when he builds his altar, calling it El-bethel, God stamps it as the place where he appeared unto him when he fled from the face of his brother. Jacob's thought was on the time of his experience, God's on the place of His appointment.

But once again, now fixed forever, Jacob prevails to have his way; and lo! the place which should have been the house of God becomes an oak of weeping.

All, all had failed, and Jacob's vow was unperformed in any item. In spite of Peniel and Bethel, not one jot of Jacob's word had come to pass. Jehovah was not owned as his God; the stone set for a pillar was not made God's house; and a tenth of God's gifts were not given Him.

Unknown it might be, yet Jehovah was his God, though he may call the place “God, the God of Bethel.” He might build the altar and forget the house, but God had His house, and if a tenth of God's gifts is in question, He will not deny His rights, He will take it.

Jehovah can wait, but who can resist His will? If Jacob will not do, another must; perchance a Moses or a greater still.

And now ere Jacob is definitively fixed in the place of his ultimate attainment, Deborah dies—the proof of Jehovah's faithfulness, the lightest touch of that strong hand which should bereave them of their children, and cast them away because they will not hearken, and make them wanderers among the nations.

They have returned, but not to the Most High: they are like a deceitful bow, it starts aside, and wounds the hand that bends it. They cry, “We know Thee,” but have transgressed against His covenant. Jehovah accepteth them not, now will He remember their iniquity and visit their sins, they shall go into Egypt.

Jehovah's name unknown; His house disregarded; His portion uncared for; His covenant transgressed: can aught remain? Yes, Jacob.

Jehovah's blessing in abeyance—His new name unrevealed.

Abraham's blessing intermittent, God's everlasting covenant,” In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Jacob's blessing spent, “I am with thee and will keep thee, and will bring thee again unto this land; I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Into this land, this very spot, he has returned with what result! To Bethel he has come again, Jehovah he knows not. The stone set up as God's house marks no point for him. To him it is all one with Shalem. So El-bethel is but Allon-bachuth—no gate of heaven, but an oak of weeping.

God's eternal counsels never fail. Driven back by unbelief into Himself while fixing Jacob in his place on earth, as Jacob a supplanter ("Thy name is Jacob"), He hangs His purposes, even as to Jacob's promises—the birthright with a mess of pottage bought—upon the new man Israel: “Thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name, and He called his name Israel.” “Be fruitful and multiply, a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins, and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.” The blessing forfeited forever from Israel; the promise, the birthright only left; but He, the Heir who takes it up, responsible and able to maintain, is He whom God has separated from His brethren that He may be also the depositary of the blessing.

At the outset Jacob had been found as grapes in the wilderness; as the first ripe in the fig tree at her first time, the object of God's redemption and regard. He went to Shalem, separated himself unto that shame, and their abominations were according as they loved. But all their wickedness, the climax and sum total, is in Bethel; there it finds its full fruition. The last resource of God for Jacob fails, and blessing is no longer possible; therefore then He hated them. Bethel should have been a place of blessing, but he found there Jacob still; therefore will He drive them out of His house, He will love them no more, and at Bethel there begins destruction and the curse.

In Col. 2:23 I am very much disposed to read ( ) . , neglecting the body (not in a certain honor) as to satiating the flesh. There was, as to satiating the flesh, harshness towards the body, paying it no honor.

Thoughts on Jacob, Jacob, Thoughts on: Part 7

God's long-suffering leaves him not until the utmost bounds are overstepped. Succoth is in the path of God though its limit. Still can He deal in grace. Jacob is not yet the die cast before the eyes of men, by which the beauty of God's moral ways should be esteemed, therefore He can bless. And “Jacob built him an house, and made booths for his cattle” in peace. A stranger, still unknown of men— “few men in number, yea, very few, and strangers in it” —but holding to the everlasting covenant of God. “Therefore He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, He reproved kings for their sake, saying, Touch not my anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

Man's ways, how low and groveling! God's way is one of grace and faithfulness—glorious in holiness. “He desired mercy and not sacrifice;” but Jacob, like Adam, transgressed the covenant—the everlasting covenant. God said unto Abraham, “I will give unto thee and to thy seed the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession.” To Jacob Jehovah said, “The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed.” If Esau despised his birthright, Jacob bartered God's rights for a portion and peace with the Canaanites,” dealing treachery against the Lord."

Were it possible, he as heir, had cut off the entail forever from himself and seed, since he parted with his right as God's heir, that he might hold in his own right, grounded on the title of the Canaanite.

Thus he passed over from the paths of God into the way of Cain, who loved honor and slew his brother; who, out from the presence of Jehovah, “dwelt in the land of Nod—wandering.... and builded a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch” —dedicated—owning God in independence. So Jacob, moved by a fleshly mind, stands in God's land, not in independence only, but defection, wrapping it up withal under the cover of Israel's God; for when “he bought a parcel of a field.... of the hand of the children of Hamor,” “he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel.” But there was no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God, but soon to be instead, swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery; thus breaking out, and blood touching blood, because they had left off to take heed to the Lord. Jacob is his name, but the Lord will plead with Israel, for He hath a controversy with His people.

Will he not know Jehovah's righteousness? What had He done to him? Brought out of Padan Aram, redeemed from the house of servants; for according to God's reckoning, not Jacob's righteousness, was Laban forced to give him wages (Gen. 30:33; 31:10-13); by His angel brought out, remember now, O Jacob, what the Syrian Laban had consulted, and God had answered him, “Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob

either good or bad!"

Forced thus to take Jehovah's ground, and act in grace, now Laban seeks a string in his own heart which even Jacob's hand can harp upon; self-seeking, rash and wrathful Jacob.

Has Jacob daughters? Laban says, “my daughters.” Children? “My children.” Cattle? “My cattle.” “All that thou seest,” Laban says, “is mine.” This is Jehovah's righteousness. His way of grace He takes His springs of action from Himself, blinding as it were, His eyes to all the object is, He gives a gift and blesses the receiver for the gift's sake, since the gift is of Himself.

Not this alone. He takes the gifted one out from his old place and gives him a new standing where all things are of God.

Jehovah follows him from Mizpah unto Peniel, meets him there, and wrestling, withers him, so that no more Jacob is his name, but Israel; and He blessed him there in the name and place of God's appointment.

See the counterpart of this in Israel's history. Jehovah gives a gift, His presence and a king, when prophet, priest, and handmaid of the Lord had failed, been set aside as instruments of power. Then God uses money-loving, lust-tempting Balaam, to unveil the vision of the Almighty, take up his parable, and declare not only that the righteous rise again, but God, beholding His own gift, sees no iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel.

But more than this, God narrows up His circling glories nearer to Himself. Jacob, placed in kinship with his God, is drawn by every eddying wave of grace closer to the center all things tend to and evolve from. Nothing now against him as Jacob, elect of God, redeemed; all things also for him, as God's new man Israel; washed from the old, and as new set apart for God—His workmanship. But nearer still! rapt into that which is itself divine; sanctified, accepted, graced as a beloved who can give a blessing; once hated as a supplanter, now goodly as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters, blessing those that bless him, because in him is One, a gift of God, who shall come a star out of Jacob, a scepter rising out of Israel.

Thus Esau, moved by sovereign grace, his circumstances being ruled of God that he may act His part, himself unwitting, sets forth God-like grace. His love wells over on the neck of him once hated as a cheat and liar! Why? “I have enough, my brother.” My soul is satisfied, and can run over in a shoreless stream. The glut of blessing is so great that mere relief, a thing on which it may be poured, is in itself a blessing. What odds how deep how wide, nay, bottomless the pit!—a Jacob! So much the better! Its emptiness, its fitness, and the very wages of its worthlessness become a blessing and its means.

This is Jehovah's righteousness, will he not know it?

The fount of love, out-gushing from the depths of God, flows from above, burst up from the fathomless abyss, and in divine all-filling fullness floats frail Jacob, fragrant in its fragrance, back into God Himself,

But there, what is that flood? Water from a Savior's side on Calvary! Water in the word by Jesus used in glory in the Father's house! A sea of glass like crystal before the throne! God is love and light, and all swept onward unto Him by its almighty tide must be thus in it: on earth by faith.

Jacob chosen, wrought of God, and planted; washed, sanctified, and justified; redeemed and graced; knowing Jehovah's righteousness, must judge and cleanse himself and walk in light.

At Peniel God accepted him; at Succoth he built booths, but he remembers not, and therefore knows not Jehovah's righteousness. Slipping clean out of God's paths, giving up God's right, “For Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan.... pitched his tent before the city; and he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent.... and he erected him an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel.

“Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, or bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? While there are yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked!” Jehovah's voice cries, “Shall I count them pure with wicked balances? For they are full of violence, have spoken lies, and in their mouth they have a deceitful tongue."

He is a merchant buying the gifts of God of Luz; at Mahanaim he holds the balances of deceit, at Peniel be loveth to oppress.

How sad! how solemn! Tremble now before the Lord! Do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with thy God! Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy, break up your fallow ground.

Upright with God, unrighteous towards men. The smallest seed of flesh which turns from God's grace, branches one till fruitful with widespread misery. “They covet fields and take by violence, and houses, and take them away; so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage;” the while ye have an altar, El-elohe-Israel.

Now is God's ground of government at stake, and Jacob must be forced to loose his grasp and quit his purchase. “Is the Spirit of Jehovah straitened? Are these His doings? Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? Ye pull off the robe from them that pass by securely as men averse from war. The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses.” “I desired mercy, not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings;” but ye not only smite them that are sore and heal them not, nor restore those that are out of the way, but also cut off from the blessings of the land those in possession, who have God's covenant. Matt. 10:13; 11:7.

The little leaven kneaded with the dough, and left to work unseen; unjudged in the fire of God's light and love, should, but for grace, soon leaven all the lump, end their own heart become an oven, hot and burning as a flaming fire, to devour them all. “Jacob, he hath mixed himself among the people, he is a cake not turned, half Shechemite, half Israelite, half judged, the other half untouched by fire.” He begged for flesh, has got it, kept it for himself. Corrupted is it? Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you. Jacob in the land is seemingly for God, but really in revolt and joined to the usurper. So judgment, not of faith, but from the Lord must come, lest he should be polluted with his rest. “And Dinah.... went out to see the daughters of the land, and Shechem saw her, and took her and defiled here, and his soul clave unto Dinah, he loved the damsel and spake kindly unto the damsel."

You begged to have your blessing in your hand! How have you kept it? You gathered all together, now you dissipate it You join yourselves to the citizens of that country now, as it were, you feed their swine, and, worse than all, you long to fill your belly with the husks the swine are eating.

At Peniel thou saidst, “Give me the share that falls to me.” At Shechem thou dost buy a field, and Dinah is defiled by Shechem; thy sons by deceit, and Simeon and Levi—instruments of cruelty, fierce anger, and cruel wrath—are cursed: and thou dost hold thy peace! Thou art a silly dove without heart!

Woe unto them, for they have fled from me! They have transgressed against me... I will change their glory unto shame! I will punish them for their ways and reward them for their doings!

So at another time, “when Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor Jehovah said unto Moses, “Take all the heads of the people and hang them up before Jehovah against the sun.” “So here was folly wrought in Israel.... which ought not to have been done” —matter of grief and wrath—a horrible thing in Israel. “Israel is defiled and Jacob holds his peace. Wail and howl; go stripped and naked; for the beginning of the sin, the transgressions of Israel were found in thee."

In crafty malice, lust of gain, do Israel's sons give men God's title to possess the land, and he, who counted it so worthless as to found his tenure on another's rights, would little scruple to barter circumcision, the reproach of Christ, separation from the world of the ungodly, the seal of faith, the sign of God's inheritance, for treasure in the world.

Unlike the One who came from God, found in the world a treasure, alienate, sold away through sin, held of right in the usurper's hand, and for the joy of it goes and sells all whatever He has and buys the right to all.

These despise the cross, the reproach of the circumcision, and have to endure the shame. These cat off from grace, thus bringing into judgment, the men averse from war, the women and their children, therefore they shall not dwell in Jehovah's land, but shall return to Egypt. Egypt shall gather them, Memphis shall bury them. The days of visitation, the days of recompense are come! Israel is swallowed up now; but know Jehovah's thought, and understand His counsel. Yet will He bring an heir unto thee, who shall go before them to preserve their souls.

"When they were sore, two of the sons of Jacob Simeon and Levi, pinch's brethren, took each man his sword and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males, and they slew Harrier and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword The sons of Jacob came upon the slain and spoiled the city... they took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, and all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives, and spoiled even all that was in the house,” and Jacob “holds his peace."

Firstly, giving up God's right for gain, he now denies the validity of His title. But this, because he has himself in view. So setting self between his eye and God, it is all as though there were no God. Simeon and Levi say, “Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?” making her honor cover their covetousness. At least is Jacob honest, for he says, “Ye have troubled me to make me to stink.... and I shall be destroyed; I and my house."

Jehovah's name at Peniel, unsaid, unknown, that Jacob may be blessed there. At Shechem, heritage of God, His portion, God's title is ignored. Knowledge is rejected. “He will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to Him.” Though God's name and portion are there set aside, yet He holds His peace, that grace in blessing may go out to Jacob.

One only hope is left in this extremity. All Jacob has is lost in principle; God's title to the whole land set aside, Shechem's right quite blotted out by blood. Jacob holds by force that only which he stands upon, and he but “few in number,” ready to perish.

To Jacob, had the promise been without condition, “The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it.” If Jacob cannot stand where he has striven, will he lie where God has given? Will he take a place of thorough nothingness? At Peniel with a touch God withered up his strength: let faith lie down at Bethel helpless.

A place of stones which Jacob owned as God's, the house of God, the gate of heaven, where the ladder was set up on the earth, and Jehovah stood above, unfolding all his mercy. “To thee and to thy seed.... in thee and in thy seed.... I am with thee, and will keep thee, and will bring thee again into this land.... and Jacob was afraid."

It was in Jehovah's mind to take out Jacob for Himself, in Jacob's to get back to his father's house in peace.

At Bethel all may be retrieved. Impossible with man, with God all things are possible. Let but His right be owned, though to a place to lie on, and a stone set for a house, yet Jehovah can stand above, and, in the name and place of His appointment, have His house, His portion, and a priest.

Will faith triumph and grace be understood? Then Israel shall be the priest, Bethel the house, Praise God's portion.

Thoughts on Jacob, Jacob, Thoughts on: Part 6

Paul, the faithful steward, thrice besought that the thorn for the flesh might depart from him: in this his will be done. The holy servant Jesus prayed intently three times, fearing the cup, “not My will, Thine be done."

Three times Jacob parleys with the Lord. Three times by craft had he procured his ends—ends ordered of the Lord. He takes away his brother's birthright, his blessing, and his uncle's herds, but throughout Jacob's prayer is that his will, not God's, be done.

Thrice had Isaac failed to bestow the blessing in its fullness Therefore the Lord brings Jacob out to a certain place, the sun being set, the stones of that place being for his pillow, and in a vision of the night gives him an unstinted weed of blessing. The promise is first, “To thee will I give the land whereon thou liest, and to thy seed.” Then is the blessing, “In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Thus, comes first the birthright, which is to the heir according to promise, then the blessing which runs in the genealogy; the first

dependent for its enjoyment upon faith and patience; the latter absolute, and inseparable from the stock.

See the perfect fruition of this mere seed sown first in Abraham, Gal. 3:6-14. “In thee all the nations shall be blessed” —blessed with Abraham—his blessing. Here is the blessing first, “justification of life,” the absolute blessing running inalienably in the line of the chosen seed; afterward the promise (Gal. 3:15- 29; 4:1-7), the birthright, the inheritance on the principle of promise made, “to thy seed,” not to “seeds as of many, but as of one, even Christ;” but “ye all are one in Christ Jesus, but if ye are of Christ, then ye are Abraham's aced, heirs according to promise.” Thus the Gentiles being “God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus,” and the Jew “redeemed from under law, that he may receive sonship,” God sends out the Spirit of His Son into their “hearts, crying Abba, Father."

In the passage now before us God gave Jacob the birthright—the inheritance by promise—and the blessing inalienable in the seed, “in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Besides, He says,” I am with thee.” But Jacob is a merchant, lusting after flesh, desiring to lay up treasure to himself, therefore bargains he with God, and vows a vow; but lust of flesh in hidden energy is the active cause, and bursts forth instantly that flesh is seen. “He looked.” What filled his eyes? “A well,” “three flocks,” Rachel and the sheep of Laban. Hitherto flesh-lust had wrought, coveting the unseen things—the birthright and the blessing: now eye-lust is added, though, perhaps, to Jacob's self unknown. Flesh to the full unfills his lust. Leah, Rachel, at Laban's offer, since suiting Jacob's will; then Bilhah, urged by Rachel, just meeting, it may be, his heart's thought. Lastly, Zilpah, Leah's gift, acceptable to him.

Jacob calls it righteousness, just what he ought to have; but, still unsatisfied, he wanders farther in his crooked paths; in conscious craft he works to take his fill of flesh, and having got it, hastens to depart. But knowing that the balances of deceit are in his hand, he carefully puts from him the thought of God, and not “Thy will be done” with, chiding claims from man his rights.

But God's grace does not leave him, though he say, “I am become rich; I have found out substance in all my labors; they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.” Yet his God would have him “dwell in Succoth,” and know no God but Him, for there is “no Savior beside him.” So the angels of God meet him, and He forces Jacob, by dint of fear, to weep, and make supplication to Him. His own will He had done in providing for himself, though God had wrought it; now be has power over the angel, and prevails to have the blessing in his own way—not God's will and way—moved by the lust of his eyes—the things which are seen. The glory of the unseen God is out of his thought. God had shown truth and mercies to what, a servant? Now he pleads “the mother and the children.” Jacob selfish at the bottom! He gets his heart's desire, but is “blessed there.” His course runs in God's way, and yet athwart, who smites him not, but withers up his strength—an utter contrast to the steps of Christ! Jacob says in heart, “My will be done,” and has his flesh: afterward his cry is, “Not thy will” —seemingly to get a blessing, really asking that God's will should be set aside. He grants this prayer, and blesses him, but there.

That for which he asks he has. He got the flesh he lusted for, and now he keeps it.

He has provided for his own house, but his conscience tells him God's house has been quite uncared for; left in far-off Luz, a bare stone; and grudging the needed outlay and supply to raise and keep it, therefore necessarily his prayer must be,” Not thy will be done.” For this end he is willing to give up the cattle, if that the mother and the children may be spared: but at bottom it is Jacob's self he clings to, for there lies lust of flesh, which says, “My will be done.” From thence acts eye-lust, saying, “Not thy will be done."

May we turn aside to see this great sight—a man tempted, and failing not? Also note the perfectness of God's revelation. Matthew sees the beloved Son fulfilling God the Father's will and counsels. God only is set before Him. “My Father, thy will be done.” (Matt. 26:42.) Therefore He is carried by the Spirit, as thus not led nor driven, answering the tempter, who by craft opposes God, by bringing God Himself upon the scene, and His spoken will, “Every word which goes out through God's mouth.” No lust of flesh is in Him, but as man mere dependence on the will of God. “My Father, thy will be done.” Then in order comes trust in God, not flesh working by sight, not hankering to see some acknowledgment from God that He was with Him. His voice and word had been enough—not tempting God, however plausibly, by saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?” (Ex. 17:7.)

The words, “to keep thee” (Luke 6:10), are left out here. They passed His ear unheeded, as this cry filled His soul, “My Father, thy will be done."

In due place the third temptation, pride of life, proceeds. The two last show the evil one unveiled, and Jesus, with the will of God alone in view, is taken by him—thus not led; a very high mountain is the place; the kingdoms of the world and their glory the scene; and these are more looked at as connected with the will of God—more the systems than the men composing them. Filled thus with God's mind, and God's will before Him, instantly the wrath of Jesus flames forth on the foe. “Get thee away, Satan."

Turn now to Mark: all here is active energy. The Spirit drives him out— “Abba, Father, not what I will.” Amazed, oppressed in spirit, and His soul soon fall of grief—one long outlook to the end—one long prayer that His will, good, holy, and acceptable, should not be willed, but God's. Self, divinely perfect, set aside—all touching only self unnoted, He is a servant only: no pride of life.

Luke now claims attention. “Father, not my will, thine be done,” is here His thought; and by the Spirit He is led to meet the unveiled devil with whom He had to cope, who, if departing from him for a time, would come again in the power of darkness, so that the whole land and the sun should be darkened. So the devil Jesus answered, and we find the word of God man's life: man, even the Son of man, on God depending, not on what flesh desires. Nay, even “Not my will.” Therefore follows the further truth, “Father, thy will be done.” No pride of life. Led up as a man into a high mountain, shown the kingdoms of the habitable world in a moment of time; all that could captivate or seduce a man, offered Him then and there, for whom all things were made. In the calmness of His prayer, “Father, thy will be done,” He says, “It is written, Thou shalt do homage to the Lord thy God.” Now, as a man to go forth with the prayer upon His lips, “Father, not my will, thine be done,” He asked not to see aught as proof that God would keep Him. God was with Him of a truth. He will not tempt the Lord. No lust of eyes was in Him.

John gives us the One come from the Father, going to the Father, glorifying Him upon the earth, completing the work given Him to do. Therefore the circumstances falling by the way are unrecorded. The meeting wile, with word at the onset, and power with prayer at its close, have no place. It is the Word who is God, the only-begotten Son, declaring God His Father, giving signs on earth, but eternal life and Spirit for heavenly worshippers.

We have seen the lust of the flesh in Jacob—as a merchant bargaining to get it filled..” If God will, I will.” Also the lust of the eyes, by which flesh acts. He seeks, by holding deceitful balances, to get and keep his gain. “I am become two bands.... deliver me the mother and the

children Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good.” Whether first or last, it is Jacob still, and eye-lust working. “He lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, Esau.” So Jacob acts as guided by his eyes, and settles his surroundings by himself, not the Lord his center; “he put first the handmaid and their children foremost, Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost, and he went first,” and bowed himself to the ground seven times, forgetful of the word of God and the blessing he had schemed to get.

How God delights to own an act of grace! The merest fragment of that work which He had seen was very good and blessed! Would God-manifest-in-flesh illustrate perfectly the grace of God the Father? These very words He chooses to reveal the workings of His heart. “He ran, fell on his neck, and covered him with kisses."

But see the reason why the Spirit draws attention to this scene Where was Esau's action like to God's? or Jacob's as the conscience-stricken sinner born of Adam? Is it not in this that, as the prodigal had thought to win his father's favor by fair words, it was the goings forth of self-born love, long ere, a whisper could have reached his ear of good or ill, that moved the father with compassion, seeing his wretched son a great way off? Thus Jacob, vainly puffed up by a fleshly mind, a man independent, has no understanding of free grace in God nor man, but counts himself a power in himself before God, and able to do something, even though it were only to own Jehovah his God, to make a stone His house, and of what He gave to render back a tenth. As to man, supplanted and deceived, he cannot credit him with grace. Wrong thoughts of God so thoroughly had warped his mind, that nature even he cannot rightly judge. In order to begin aright in heart, or mind, or act, one must be right with God.

Just see how vain are Jacob's plans to buy a pardon with a present! Yet perhaps he claims the honor of the happy issue. Jacob said, “I will appease him with a present."…. “I have sent to tell my lord that I may find grace in thy sight.” But Esau had not even seen the women-servants and men-servants, or flocks, and asses, and oxen, until he had wept upon his brother's neck, and then “he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and children, and said, Who are these?” and as to the droves, he knew not what it meant till Jacob told him, and then he took it not as price of pardon, but as Jacob's blessing.

The same principles are shown, whether in a fragment of nature ruined, yet bearing the stamp of God's creation, or in Godhead manifested, grace, free, full, unbought, unfettered, springing from itself, which works to satisfy itself in blessing others, measuring the blessing by itself, not the object.

We have seen the self-existent Man depending wholly, and the “one” who lived by a life supplied from God unsubject. The One had said, “My Father, thy will be done;” the other, “Give me my wife.” Now we enter on another stage. That One had said, “Abba, Father, not what I will” this one says in heart, “Not what Thou wilt.” The Lord said unto Jacob, “Return unto the land of thy fathers;” and Jacob had even dreamed that God had said, “Return unto the land of thy kindred;” and had he not “risen up to go to Isaac his father;” and to Esau he affirmed, “I ensue unto my lord to Seir.” But what does he? “Jacob came to Shalem and pitched his tent before the city,” and even buys a parcel of a field where he had spread his tent at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred lambs. (See margin.)

Notice here, this was no sepulcher bought for a sum of money; it was Abraham alone did thus. Jacob buys a place to live in, purchasing from man God's gift to him; even as before he got by craft God's gift of grace and Isaac's blessing; giving up the rights of God, indeed denying them, in order to re-purchase for himself.

“Machpelah before Mamre, the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan, and the field and the cave that is therein, did Abraham buy for four hundred shekels of silver for a possession of a burying-place of the sons of Heth;” standing for the rights of God, owning his rights in God; owning indeed the curse and the children of it, and the title they had under it, according to the word, “cursed be Canaan.” As a burying place to Canaan it belonged; for such a purpose a possession must be bought. But if to live in, then the land belongs to Abraham as lord; for so the word by Noah had been spoken, “Canaan shall be his servant.” Abraham buys a place to bury in, and lives in it. Jacob bargains for a parcel of a field to live in, and it becomes a place of judgment, death and burial.

How divinely accurate the scriptures! When Jacob in his faith is looked at, and to faith is standing for the fathers, then it tells how they were “placed in the sepulcher which Abraham bought for a sum of money.” But if the faith of Joseph fix the eye of the believer, then in him the scripture says, “Our fathers were carried over to Sychem.... of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem.” No mention of a sepulcher, nor purchase; for to faith, however many lambs might be the price, “the portion Jacob took out of the hand of the Amorite with his sword and with his bow."

Wondrous are the ways of God! That which man will not do in fellowship with Him, He does perforce; while faith denies man's deed and owns God's work. Gen. 48:22.

Why does God confirm the outcome of an act of fierce anger, cruel wrath, that brings a curse? Because if not, His way in grace might be impugned. Man in nature has no rights, for life and strength are forfeited to God. Blessing flows from grace; right comes by faith to man. If anything is due to him, it is wrath alone: else were grace set aside. So when God's man, Jacob, holds as valid the title of the world, God, that He may bring grace in truth, must own it too. Thence comes the Passover in Egypt, the sprinkling of the blood: the cross of Christ, and the archangel's voice.

Thus is Jacob all things to all men, if by any means he might profit himself; willing enough to return to the land of his kindred, but not to his kindred as God had said; for between him and them stood the place of sacrifice and obedience to God. (Gen. 31:8, 11, 12) Knowing God's will, if told to do whatever He had said. To Esau he replied, “I come to Seir."

Thoughts on Jacob, Jacob, Thoughts on: Part 5

Does Jacob chide in wrath when Laban feels his stuff, and finds not his stolen gods, saying, “Thy rams have I not eaten: that which was torn I bare the loss of it... In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night.... and my sleep departed from my eyes.... and thou hast changed my wages ten times?” So another “I” also will boast as in folly. Another servant! One who served in love, for love, not money; announcing God's glad tidings gratuitously; receiving no hire from man for shepherding the flock; in everything, at every time, keeping

himself from being a burden, to cut off opportunity from false apostles, deceitful workers, transformed ministers of Satan, who sped themselves, ate the fat, and clothed them with the wool, but fed not the flock: but he instead received stripes in excess, from Jews five times the full tale, forty saving one; was thrice scourged, once stoned; three times suffered shipwreck; passed in the deep a night and day; in perils of rivers, of robbers, from his own race and nations; in city, desert, sea, and among false brethren he vent his spell of service; in labor and toil; in watchings oft; in hunger, thirst, and fastings oft; in cold and nakedness. Thus could he chide with them, denying as they did his title to shepherd them, though giving proof of power from God, love to man, and willingness to be spent utterly.

But more than this from man had these things come, and so indeed, that through a window in a basket by the wall was he let down; but such a one was caught up into the third heaven, into paradise; and now was given him a thorn for the flesh, a messenger of Satan, that he might buffet him.

Jacob could say, “Ye know that with all my power I have served your father, and your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times, and Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban.” Paul can say, “Most gladly therefore will I rather boast in my weaknesses. Wherefore I will take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in straits,” but all “for Christ,” not Laban. Not for glory to himself, but for his Lord; not serving for a wife as Jacob, but filling up that which was behind of the tribulations of Christ in his flesh, for His body, the assembly, the bride of Christ. Jealous with a jealousy of God to espouse them unto One Man, to present them a chaste virgin to Christ: not keeping them for himself, not baptizing to perpetuate his own name; herding the flock, but eating not the milk of it; not for a wife, keeping it as Jacob. (Hos. 12:12)

It needed a prophet to bring Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved; but here is more than a prophet, an apostle called of Christ, in whom Christ spoke, proved so in all endurance, signs, and wonders; and works of power. It wanted such a one to bring the flock of Christ from that which was spiritually Sodom and Egypt from Sinai, the place of law. The apostle who brought out the church of God has passed away, but God by His word of grace is able to build up and make wise unto salvation.

Jacob's service led God's flock to Egypt. Moses' message brought them thence, to leave them under law, a sorer bondage; a prophet like to him, a more than Solomon in wisdom, in preaching more than Jonas, stirred up unbelief, to cast aside and crucify the Savior. An apostle from the great Apostle in God's glory, Jesus of Nazareth, was sent to bring God's scattered children into one. The Son had come from the Father, died on the cross, and went to the Father, that they might be gathered. Now He reveals Himself from heaven to Saul; catches him up into the third heaven (whether in the body or out of the body he cannot tell, God knows), there to reveal unutterable things; gives him a thorn in the flesh, and sends him back to earth to effectuate His purpose.

Besought and urged in such a fashion, by such motives do they own the Spirit's unity! Nay, there are strifes. One says, I am this; another, I am of that; until schism, division, heresy is the universal character of Christendom: souls plunged in deeper sorrow, held in more cruel bondage, bound with heavier gyves, or scattered like sheep without a shepherd. Just as though Christ had never lived, and died, and risen again, nor sent from heaven the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel by the mouth of Paul.

Thus in his flesh he bears a thorn, a messenger of Satan—no messenger of God, as Jacob had. For this he thrice besought the Lord that it might depart from him, without avail. Thrice he prayed in trust and faith, the wish ungranted, that the grace of Christ might rest upon him, and His strength be perfected in His servant's weakness, a weakness such as hindered in the flesh His servant's work; so that, for his Master's sake, he earnestly besought it might depart from him, a pricking brier, a grieving thorn, that made him feel that flesh was there. (Num. 33:55.) Nor let remain supinely, but which made him feel he had a will apart from his Lord's mind, one minding to serve God, it might be, still of himself, and powerless for good. He needed, therefore, thorough brokenness, since a conscious acting will in man, whether the purpose be for good or ill, springs from revolt, and man born after Adam's likeness only can be used through self set aside, and reckoned dead.

How instructive is the difference in the Son come to do His Father's will; to raise up a temple, to save the world, to gather worshippers of the Father! His very food it was to do His will; it was His comfort, and the strengthening of His soul: sowing work indeed! unto the spilling of His life-blood upon the ground! yet doing, nothing from Himself, but whatever He sees the Father doing, doing in like manner. No need of brokenness, since able to do nothing of Himself because of perfect oneness with the Father; yet therefore working everything in perfect self-sufficiency and perfect power; but in the Son's obedient perfectness; Having life and judgment in and from Himself, given of the Father; in power over all to give life and deal out judgment.

He sought not His will, but the Father's that had sent Him; surely Himself doing the work, but works given Him of the Father; doing not His own will, but His that sent Him; casting out or losing nothing He had given Him. For this is His Father's will, that everyone who sees the Son, and believes on Him, should have life eternal, and He will raise him up at the last day. Because of the Father He lived: so they who feed on Him should live because of Him.

Thus by His power, through His Father's will, raising up a temple in Himself; giving His flesh for the life of the world, saving every one given Him of the Father; communicating eternal life, and the Holy Spirit, that they may be spiritual worshippers; and raising them up at the last day, an holy temple in the Lord.

Thrice prayed Jesus, in view of the cup He had to drink. Three aspects did it bear to Him as a man having to do with earthly things. The foremost thought was, “My Father, thy will be done.” (Matt. 26:42.) Then came in His will as Son; a will His Father was both able and all-willing should be done, “Abba Father, take away this cup from me.” (Mark 14:36.) The second view it therefore bore for Him was His will set aside. “Not what I will.” But when “in conflict He prayed more intently; and His sweat became as great drops of blood falling down upon the earth” (Luke 22:44), it is because these two desires mingle into one. He prays that His will, be it what it may, should be eschewed, the Father's only done; “Father, not my will, but thine be done.” (Luke 22:42.)

Thrice Paul besought, God's will unknown, it might depart from him, the thorn that found his flesh to rankle in, and made him know that flesh was there—the thorn the object, not the will of God—that which hindered his efficiency, the messenger of Satan sent to buffet him. Thrice Jesus prayed that not His own will, but the Father's, might be done. The cup mixed for others drunk by Him, and taking hold of Him, because it was God's wrath, came in but by the way, though pressed upon Him by the ruler of the world, the wielder of the power of death and darkness. And when, as Son in the Father and the Father in Him, He had poured out the fullness of communion in this oneness, saying, “Those thou hast

given me I have guarded, and not one of them is perished” (John 17:12); and had drunk in spirit to its dregs, and wrung them out, the cup His Father gave Him, then He goes forth, saying, “I am he! If therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way."

Thoughts on Jacob, Jacob, Thoughts on: Part 4

Henceforth Jacob is a withered man, bearing about in the body the marks of God's judgment. If God gets glory men bear no mark; the smell of fire passes not upon them where faith is.

In the place where God's judgment has been expressed nothing there can harm; no wound is felt when withered by God's touch. The fruit is for men to eat, the root for God to judge: but how blessed is he who knows not only that Another has borne the curse due to eating of the fruit of flesh! Yet did He ever bear fruit to God, doing nothing of Himself, but He nevertheless, to fulfill His Father's will, linked Himself with the chosen doomed to everlasting wrath because of sins, standing in their room and stead, answering to their name, going forth to meet the offended majesty of God. And be knows besides that He in willing grace surrendered step by step, as each requirement of God's will and purpose met His ear, till life's breath was yielded up, the fountain of His blood was laid bare by the Roman's spear; and thus in Him, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, has the direful, unchangeable, ineradicable root—sin in the flesh—been judged for them forever. Such is the cross of Christ to faith.

Fruit is first forbidden of the tree of good and evil knowledge; afterward” flesh with the life,” the blood, shall man not eat.

With man in innocence it is God's glory to be the trusted Judge of good and evil: man in willfulness restrained gives God the glory by counting life the Lord's, and not for self, but to be rendered up as forfeited to Him. Now a further thing is taught, that man's life is not only forfeited, but strengthless for God.

It was forfeited to God before, and man was responsible to recognize God's rights, the sign being that man should not eat flesh with the life thereof. Now God has claimed the strength of man in flesh, for, put to test, he proved unable in righteousness to use it. When God made man his brother's keeper, then man slew him. Therefore life is forfeited that grace may work. The God of glory now calls man in separation and life forfeited; how little learned this last lesson scripture shows, for scarcely had the horror of great darkness passed away, the smoking furnace and the burning lamp, than Abram leaves resting on the Most High God for an arm of, flesh (Gen. 15:8, 12, 17; 16:2-4), to be His servant in His sanctuary. (Acts 7:7)

As it was no given law that Cain should be his brother's keeper, so to be Jehovah's servant in His sanctuary is no law, but according to man's conscience. (Compare Acts 7:7 and Gen. 28:21, 22.) This task Jacob undertook in self-strength, and utterly had he failed. God's hand of judgment searches out the spring of mischief, and He finds it in the secret place of Jacob's strength. Thenceforth this is withered. Man eats not of it; urged by his conscience it is set apart for God. The sight of Jacob, from whose loins the twelve tribes of Israel sprang, halting on his thigh, speaks too plainly to be unheeded. So men own the form, but quite deny the power, of the truth, “for the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh.... because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.” The counterpart to this we find in Christendom, in the setting apart of the form of the cross to religious use, but utterly denying the truth of it.

What is the blessed contrast to all this? A man crucified with Christ! Who hung there? Not I, but Christ. He hung upon the tree—the sign of curse, the brand of shame, the mark of perfect evil judged in righteousness—unmingled wrath thoroughly emptied out. The marks of a paid price by which He got right to be Lord of all—by inheritance a more excellent name; in divine title the most excellent. Still, as Son of man He buys Lordship with His blood shed on the cross; and to this the marks of Jesus witness—marks made by the princes of this world, when by the hands of lawless men they crucified and slew Him; but marks, the proof of victory, of the armed strong man overcome, of principalities and powers spoiled—marks that prove Him Lord of living and dead—marks of death and resurrection seen in ascended glory, in the midst of the throne; to be displayed in millennial grace, so that faith which sees shall mourn as though for an only son; and unbelief shall wail because of Him, while enemies are consumed and trampled down, and those who rose against Him made to bow.

What glory to be crucified with Christ! But know that in this cross it was that He became a curse; and the scandal of the cross has not been done away, and brings a curse, a shame, a mock, from those who trust in flesh and persecute because of it. We who glory in the cross may get wounds from men on earth, but before God we bear the brands of Jesus. None can trouble. The withering touch of God's eternal judgment fell on Christ, God gets glory, and the brand to us is one of glory only: no mark of shame, failure, or weakness, of life in flesh forfeited and strengthless, but of life and power, liberty and glory, in the quickening transforming Spirit.

Jacob had a shrunken sinew, for he walked according to flesh, and was blessed there; Paul, the brands of Jesus, walking in the Spirit, and blessed there, for God is glorified in life offered up, and strength in flesh set apart in strengthlessness.

Still the earthen vessel, but the power of God, bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that now and ever the life of Jesus may be manifested in the body; truly also delivered unto death on account of Jesus, that Jesus' life may now be manifested in mortal flesh—blessed, not in flesh, but in spirit. He is, it may be, in endurance, in afflictions, in necessities, straits, stripes, prisons, riots, labors, watchings fastings; but is in the Holy Spirit, the power of God, always rejoicing, enriching many, possessing all things. Thus should he be walking, in flesh truly, but not according to flesh; warring according to God, leading captive every thought into the obedience of the Christ.

Thoughts on Jacob, Jacob, Thoughts on: Part 3

“HE loved righteousness, and hated lawlessness,” though it cost His blood, and the forsaking and bruisings of God. “Therefore God, even his God, anointed him with oil of gladness above his companions."

Gladness follows upon righteousness; blessing comes upon grace; gladness is consequent upon righteousness.

“Grace is poured into thy lips, therefore God hath blessed thee forever.” “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hast hated lawlessness, therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with oil of gladness above thy companions.” Now is a foundation laid for gladness forever-laid in blood, laid in righteousness, for a sanctuary in Zion, a tried stone, a sure foundation, that whosoever believeth in Him should not be ashamed.

In truth did the righteous One own Jehovah as His God when all things went against Him. He witnessed for His righteousness, and truth, and grace, even in the dust of death. Nor this alone. In three days did He raise up a temple of God for Him to dwell in, a sanctuary, in which men who had fled thereto might render His full due, and worship Him acceptably forever. How great the contrast to Jacob, the deceitful servant who in fleshly haste had undertaken to do this very thing.

He took the honor of that priestly place uncalled of God, whereas this One has not glorified Himself to be made high priest, but He who had said, “Thou art my Son,” says also, “Thou art a priest forever."

"Jacob took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God, yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed.” But this man, before He was conceived in the womb, was called Jesus, since, He “should save his people from their sins; was crucified through weakness, that through death he might annul him who has the might of death,” “and was tempted in all things in like manner (sin apart) as we:” with Him power is perfected in weakness, and “through sufferings was he made perfect."

“He, in the days of his flesh, having offered up both supplications and entreaties to him who was able to save him out of death, with strong cryings and tears,” not for Himself, but that He should “become to all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation;” whereas Jacob wept for himself, and made supplication unto Him for himself, saying, “Deliver me, I pray thee,” delivering also into the hand of his servants “every drove by themselves, saying, Pass over before me, and so commanded he the second and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, Say ye Jacob is behind us."... So went the present over before him. And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and sent them over the brook Jabbok, and Jacob was left alone.” Let all things go, if by any means Jacob lives. If ye seek these, let me go my way. Note the contrast! “Jesus, knowing all things that were coming upon him,” went forth, and said,” Whom seek ye?.... If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way."

Jacob at last is found alone, the first time since that night at Luz, when he vowed the vow. If Jacob is not faithful, God is. If Jacob will not keep his word, God must. If Jacob does not bless God, God will bless him. If Jacob owns not God's new name, God calls Jacob by his new name. But first He must find some point of truth. Man cannot partake in any blessing without the required truth for it to rest on. Is it food? He must have the desire; if not, he abhors all manner of meats. If drink, the thirst to slake goes first, or the fountain of living water is deserted, and broken cisterns, which can hold no water, preferred. If clothing, nakedness must first be known and owned. (Gen. 3:7 -21.) So a Savior is for the lost, and cleansing for the filthy, deliverance for the captive, and pardon for the guilty.

If Jehovah is to be revealed and glorified, it can only be in man renewed and redeemed. The proof is that when the old man, Jacob, is brought to a point beyond which God cannot lead him, a pitch of blessing than which a greater cannot be attained, he fails more utterly than ever. Thus God had been with him, fed him, clothed him, kept him, compassed him with a host of angels, and now, wonder of all wonders, has met him face to face; yet Jacob lives, and dares to stand on equal ground with God, and resist Him until the break of day. Is not this ever the course of fleshly man, especially religious man? Was there not “a householder who planted a vineyard, and made a fence round it, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen.... and sent his bondsmen to receive his fruits” —, without avail— “and at last he sent to them his son. . . But the husbandmen, seeing his son, said, This is the heir, come, let us kill him?” Were they not stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, always resisting the Holy Spirit, as their fathers? Thus Jacob fenced off all the strivings of the Lord—in ignorance, surely, and unbelief. The secret place of Jacob's power must be smitten. If hitherto he has prevailed through strength, and boasted in his hands, now be must be taught the Lord's grace suffices, and to boast rather in his weakness, that the power of the Lord may dwell upon him.

Still a merchantman, and bargaining for gain, he seeks blessing only for himself, with mind oblivious of the Lord. But most surely had the time arrived for Jehovah's glory to be considered. “His eternal power and divinity,” His creative glory had been fully and completely manifested when “God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good” (Gen. 1:1-31).; “and God blessed the seventh day."

His glory in irresponsible irrespective grace had been eternally set forth when the Lord God said, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman; between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (Gen. 3:1-24.) Now man had undertaken to manifest God's grace and righteousness combined. Not alone was it needful that His hand of power should be recognized, and His heart of love exhibited, but His righteous character declared. Now was the time for man to do it, in order that the Lord might tabernacle in the land among the children of Israel.

So the Lord wrestles for His glory, and Jacob strives for his gain; eye to eye, hand to hand, foot to foot. Jehovah breaks through all Jacob's devices, gets at him face to face, meets scheme with scheme, and trick with counter-check, devising evil against him who devised iniquity, answering a fool according to his folly, in truest grace, but prevails not. The flocks, the herds, the servants, the sons, the wives are searched, but Jacob's idol is not found, for Jacob is not there, and self is the object of his service, not Jehovah. At last alone he is found, the secret of his strength untouched. Unwittingly he was the thief of Laban's Teraphim, the spirit of whoredom was in the midst, but now his pride testifies in his face; be knows not Jehovah, is a worshipper of self, as yet an empty vine, bringing forth fruit unto himself.

One thing alone is left to do; “he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint."

Is the object gained? Does God get the glory sought? “He said, Let me go, for the day breaketh the supremely critical moment has arrived. Will Jacob answer to it? No! No! What is born of the flesh is flesh, even in death and judgment; and Jacob dares to parley with Jehovah, and to make terms with Him. At the first he had made God's glory to depend upon his blessing, and now he would stake his blessing upon his strength, for he said, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me” —his vow forgotten, Jehovah's name uncared for, His glory unregarded—Jacob first, and last, and altogether.

The truth is out: man has come short of God's glory, and when all is done, Jacob alone is left. He is true to his name, Jacob, a supplanter, whether it be of his brother's birthright, or of Jehovah's glory. There is this truth at least—he does not deny himself, he owns his name, and on this peg of truth the Lord, who cannot deny Himself, can hang the blessing. As yet he own not Jehovah's name, but this truth he has—he owns

his own. “If any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not, he will deliver his soul from going down into the pit.” “Every one whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” So here, at the very darkest moment, when all by man is lost, and, as far as he is concerned, the result is irretrievable ruin, a glint of light from God shines athwart the scene, even as says the prophet: “Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them; he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.

Thus saith the Lord.... therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision, and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine, and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them..... But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.” Just, therefore, so it shall be in the coming time, when, as heretofore, it shall be said, “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.” So, in the narrative before us, when God's loved one (Jacob) has brought himself into the extremity of ruin, having plowed wickedness, and reaped iniquity, eaten the fruit of lies, because he trusted in his way, and in the greatness of his strength; when it might be said, “Loruhamab,” and “Lo-Ammi,” then the valley of Achor becomes a door of hope, for thus He said: “Thy name shall be no more called Jacob, but Israel.” For in the new-coming man (God's Israel) the mighty one has helped the helpless by the Spirit of the Lord; by the strength of his arm scattering haughty ones, putting down rulers, and exalting the lowly; so that the beggar is raised from the dunghill to the throne of glory, and Jehovah is blessed and tabernacles in the earth. Israel, the chosen servant, the seed of Abraham, shall help the worm Jacob, and glorify Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, the King of Israel.

Thus Jacob, as the witness for Jehovah's name, forever quits the scene. Self, in every shape, has been his thought from first to last. He has pleaded for himself even when his strength and springs of life were withered with a touch. He has gained his point; for God, having respect to His righteous servant, the root of another race, has reserved His glory till another time. “Jacob asked, and said, Tell, I pray thee, thy name? And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?” Could He entrust the glories of His name to such a bruised reed Nay! the servant whom He had chosen, His beloved, in whom His soul had found its delight, upon whom He should put His Spirit, alone was fit for such a Charge and task as that. Not so such a withered, halting man as Jacob! Not to such smoking flax will He confide the manifesting forth His glory.

Jacob, notwithstanding, gets his blessing, and has his heart's desire, for “He blessed him there."

Thoughts on Jacob, Jacob, Thoughts on: Part 2

Yet when judgment is in hand, it is the Lord's strange work: only two men are in view, and the Lord afar off, for “he went his way.” Though He can visit thus and bless His saints, and the land through them, yet neither can He dwell with them, nor in it. His character in connection with men in flesh, though chosen ones on the earth, had never been vindicated, so that He could not own a public connection with them, lest the truth of His character might be obscured, and His name linked with their unrighteousness, instead of giving them communion with His holiness.

Still less was it possible He could dwell in man'! This could not be until the precious blood of Christ was shed, which sanctifieth, not to the purifying of the flesh, but to the purging of Our sins and consciences.

Then, and then alone, could He dwell in men, and among men; since only then would God the Father be perfectly glorified, perfectly manifested, perfectly vindicated, regarding man.

But the time was about to come, in the purpose of God, for Him to manifest the glories of His name, Jehovah. Grace in earthly blessing had been fully manifested by Him. Tacitly to man had been confided the exhibition of righteousness in man, as, for instance, in Abraham's entreaty with Jehovah touching the cities of the plain. Jehovah comes down in grace to find, if possible, some plea by reason of which mercy might still stay justice. “I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, and if not, I will know.” Jehovah comes in grace, Abraham urges righteousness— “Wilt thou destroy the righteous with the wicked? that be far from thee. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Let not the Lord be angry."

But what the friend of God does not get, because he dares not ask, since he has a conscience of righteousness, that very thing the Lord, with instant unhesitating grace, accords to the fearful cry of vexed, unstable Lot, a cry wrung from him by dread, and finding vent in paltry and distrustful arguments; showing what the Lord's heart, and will, and mind were; gladly hailing any mediator that would urge a plea for mercy on the ground of grace alone, “for he said, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing, also that I will not overthrow this city for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither, for I cannot do anything until thou be come thither.” And if for such a mediator He so freely spare, what will He not do for Him who, for them for whom He pleads, and in His death and resurrection, has justified and reconciled them?

Failure in man, as the witness for Jehovah of righteousness, had resulted, but in such a way, that grace could bear with it and overlook it for the time being: except, indeed, in the case of Lot, where the very ground of possible blessing was departed from, and the foundation of God's ways of mercy rejected, thereby bringing judgment on the scene wherein he should have been the salt. For the word of the Lord God by Noah had been, “Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be. . . Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.” Yet Lot is found sitting in the gate of Sodom, a servant to the Canaanite; unlike Abraham, who, when he had to do with the powers of the world, took entirely a separate place, and responsibility before the Lord alone. (Gen. 21:28.) But now the moment had arrived for all things to be measured by a divine standard, and for men to be brought into an acknowledged, established, divine relationship, with God dwelling in their midst, and to provide a suitable dwelling-place and maintenance in accordance with His revealed character.

This responsibility Jacob takes up, saying—

1. Jehovah shall be my God.

2. This atone shall be God's house.

3. I will surely given tenth unto thee.

And who was this about to assert his claim to such relationship, and that he is able to provide such a dwelling-place, and to maintain it? Is it one who has proved himself by faithfulness amid the things in which he is found, and who besides has shown such qualities as would declare his fitness to fill the post? Nay! but one above all others who from the first is seen as a supplanter, taking his brother by the heel and supplanting him in the birthright; and whose life up to the above-noted moment had been characterized only by an act of selfish deceit, chicanery, and lies—not righteous but unrighteous; not upright, but a groveler; not peaceable and yielding, but a paltry grasper. And such a man presumes to put himself on terms with God; making the acknowledgment of Him, and rendering of His due, conditional upon His keeping equity, judgment, and truth, insinuating thus a possibility of failure, judging Him to be such another as Himself, making himself the measure of God's truth. So true is it that we think of God by nature according to the state of our own consciences. But not only so, really making blessing to depend, not upon what God is, but upon his own faithfulness, saying, “If the Lord do this, then will I do that.” So that though the Lord proved faithful and true, yet that would not suffice to bring in the needed blessing, for Jacob would still have to do his part. And did he? Let the word declare! Is there not now a counterpart to this? making God's blessing hinge upon man's faithfulness? Abiding blessing cannot come until God has His due, and when it comes, it is none apart from Him. He Himself is good, and in Him only is any.

The good about to be revealed to man in the earth was this—the Lord dwelling with His people. Unbidden, with all the hurry of flesh, Jacob would make this dependent upon him—a bruised reed indeed, a stinking torch—and rushes in, with legal mind, rash step and grasp, instead of leaving the Lord God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, to work it out by grace in His own time. “If I come again to my father's house in peace, Jehovah shall be my God,” this shall be God's house, and I will maintain it.

All turns upon Jacob: he, the jewel-center, so adamantine in his righteousness, that all God's purposes may work upon him I so inflexible, immovable, that God can use him as the fulcrum upon which His eternal will may be rested, and His glory lifted from the dust.

But man from Adam's stock has ever come short of God's glory, proving worthless for His purposes. In his flesh dwells no good thing, an instrument unfit for use; opposed to His efforts, at enmity with His will, doubting God's word, mistrusting His grace, discrediting His power, and therefore taking really the whole burden and responsibility of the work upon himself. Has not this always been the way of flesh, in blind temerity? How different are the ways of God! He holds Himself responsible for all, from first to last. He foreknew from the first, and predestinated the extent and character of the blessing, and at the due time called forth the appointed vessel.

Still the grace and truth of God credits Jacob with faith and love, and therefore sets him in the path by which the desired end should be attained. What is that end? That “in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 28:14.)

Note here the double character of blessing—full well declaring the stability of God's eternal counsel. Surely there is a blessing “Too Jacob,” “to him,” to have and hold, secured by God's faithfulness, but dependent for its enjoyment upon Jacob's faithfulness. But, blessed be God, there is also a blessing “in Jacob,” the burden of which rests upon God alone (“the genealogy” which fell to Judah, of whom came Shiloh, the chief ruler, as distinct from the birthright which was given unto the sons of Joseph, from thence the shepherd, the stone of Israel Gen. 49:24; 1 Chron. 5:1, 2), independent altogether of the active instrument. “To thee and to thy seed. . . In thee and in thy seed.” Also to Abraham was it not the same (Gen. 12:2, 3): “I will make of thee a great nation.... and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” The first committed into Abram's charge, the other held in God's hand alone; the former referring to possession and the land, the last to blessing towards all.

Again (Gen. 17:8), “To thee and to thy seed will I give the land;” and both Ishmael and Isaac have their part in this covenant of possession, but it is with Isaac—the seed unborn—the covenant is established (Gen. 17:21; 21:12), and in him alone the seed is called. Again, in Gen. 22:17, 18, when it is a matter of possession and man's power, it is to Abraham; but if it is a question of eternal blessing from God towards all, it is in his Seed alone, secured and sealed by the immutability of His counsel and the oath of God; in the Seed, the Forerunner who has for us entered into that within the veil, fulfilling all the counsel of God, taking up all the responsibility of man, coming to do God's will in the prepared body, in the path of perfect obedience, bearing the sins of many in the offering of His own body, sanctifying them through the offering of His body once, and by that one offering perfecting for aver them that are sanctified. Thus do we see Him come not only to put away sin by Himself, but to bring in a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; and not only a vindicated God, dwelling in the land among a redeemed people, but a glorified God, dwelling with men in a righteous heavens and a righteous earth.

Ignorantly does faulty, foolish, failing Jacob undertake this mighty work, taking it from the ground of grace, and placing it upon the shoulders of his own faithfulness! Behold him, in unwise haste, while yet it is high day, and the flocks ungathered, rolling the stone from the well's mouth, and watering Laban's sheep! Thus did not Abraham's servant, who waited and prayed and wondered in silence, and let the virgin haste and run and draw to give him drink and all his camels. Thus did not the meek and lowly One, who, in tender grace and long-suffering patience, refused to fulfill a single wish, as Messiah, Son of man, or Head of all things, with His bride, the church, until the due time and the Father's will required.

What a scene there follows—Jacob fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, blown about by every wind of circumstance—the sport of lust! He could well believe Jehovah would bless others, but as for his own house, himself must provide for that. So flesh provided for, but fills its lust, and in those things which it naturally knows it corrupts itself; worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator, it is given up to vile affections; not liking to retain the knowledge of God, it is given up to a reprobate mind.

At length Jacob has attained the utmost limit of his desire by deceit, chicanery, and fraud. Through all, and in spite of all, the unseen God has heard the desire of Jacob's heart, and given him to the full, yet in his own thought he has done it all—God little; known or acknowledged. Jacob's hand, and thought, and fraud have gained it all; all is his. Jacob's cattle are strong, and “the man” (note that word), “the man increased exceedingly, had much cattle, maid-servants, men-servants, camels, and asses."

And now God's time has come. Jacob had uttered his before the Lord, and God's promise must be fulfilled, to bring him back to his father's home in peace, so that it may be tested whether he will perform his vow. So, in view of His eternal purpose, the Lord says to Jacob, return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred. “I am the God of Bethel, where thou vowedst a vow unto me. Arise, get thee out of this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.” “Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons, and his wives upon camels, and he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods, which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten, in Padan-Aram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of

Canaan.” How fares it with God's name—God's house—God's dues? This depends, in Jacob's view, upon his recognition of the fact that God had been with him, giving him bread and raiment; if so, Jacob would return a tenth, set up the house, and own Jehovah. He has been taken at his word, and Jehovah in faithfulness performs his part. But notice Jacob's thought! Has God given him aught? Nay, naught. All is his getting which he had gotten. Had he not cared for himself, he had been left bare indeed. To Jacob's conscience these were not the gifts which God had given, but Laban's heart and Laban's images which he had stolen; the objects of Laban's love and worship. (Gen. 31:19, 20, margin.) Has not this always been the tale of religious profession when faith has failed? To serve the world for wages, for bread and raiment, and to end with appropriating the objects of its love and worship—the way of Balsam, and the teaching of Jezebel.

“He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.” If Jacob has not received from God, he has been heaping up treasure to himself, of which he must be stripped as bare as a withered branch, ere he can become a worshipper of God, not to speak of being a witness for His name, a builder and maintainer of His house.

Gently, and with loving, firm, unsparing hand does Jehovah prune away his fruitless branches. The times of ignorance are now passed, and Jacob is taken in hand. “Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art the wretched, and the miserable, and poor and blind and naked.” Laban's flock he had watered while yet high day, in fleshly hurry, at the first; now, at the close of his sojourn, he hastens to depart, ere yet he had completed the perfect term of service. Is not this religious flesh? In impatient zeal joining with the world, to serve it for its profit, and in the end thereof, with undue eagerness, severing that connection. For his two wives twice seven years he served, but only six years for the cattle. Withal he was not in the place where God would have him. Behold the contrast with the Bridegroom yearning greatly for the bride, yet content to be cut off and have nothing!—refusing to serve the world for hire—content to be a stranger unto His brethren, an alien unto His mother's children. To serve His Father in the appointed place—surely profiting the worm—becoming obedient unto death-loving the wages of righteousness, having a right to all, yet taking none, that He might receive all in resurrection. “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again."

But see what religions flesh, found with the man elected and loved of God, has done! Concealed beneath her skirts the idols of the world! It was not the Jewish bride, Rebekah, that has done this; nor Leah, the wearied one, who found her resting-place with that which had gone before, became wearied and faint in mind, resisted not unto blood, and fell back unto the mountain that might be touched and burned with fire. It is Rachel the loved one of the flock, the younger; that had the heart of Jacob, the beautiful well-favored one, who travailed in hard labor, and in departing brought forth the son of her sorrow, now at God's right hand, the appointed ruler in Israel. Note, that between the travailing with Benoni, and the bringing forth and naming of him Benjamin, Rachel's soul departs; and from Mic. 5:2, 3 we learn that, during this momentary interval, this little while, the thousands of Judah shall be given up, and the “rampant of his brethren” will occupy the earthly scene, who shall not return unto the children of Israel until the bringing forth shall be accomplished. Rachel, therefore, represents in type those to whom the Lord said, “A little while, and ye do not behold me, and again a little while, and ye shall see me. Verily, verily, I say to you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice, but ye will be grieved, but your grief shall be turned to joy. A woman, when she gives birth to a child, has grief, because her hour has come; but when the child is born, she no longer remembers her trouble, on account of the joy that a man has been born into the world. And ye now, therefore, have grief, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one takes from you.” The remnant of his brethren, bearing the name of God's Israel, and owning wifely responsibility at the time of the giving up of Judah, and before the return unto the children of Israel; the remnant of his brethren; departing from earthly places in bringing forth Benoni, the child of her sorrow, whom she knew as a dew from the Lord in the midst of many people (Deut. 33:18; Gen. 49:28), but who, when owned of Jacob, will also be Benjamin, the remnant of Jacob, among the nations, in the midst of many people, as a lion among the beasts of the forest (Gen. 49:27).

This crime, the theft of Laban's images, is worthy of death, but Jacob knows not of it, and, sheltered by the mighty hand of God, is secure from all but Him. A “heap of witness” separates him from all evil occurrent, and, until that heap of witness be removed, and the pillar be taken out of the way, the world will not seek the hurt of the chosen of God, neither will His saints call for judgment on the world.

The tower of watching is set up by the saint of God, a sign for them that, until their Lord comes, there is peace for and with the world; while for the world the presence of God's saints is a witness that He will avenge unrighteousness and oppression. The “heap of witness” is set up by those of the world who claim relationship with the saints of God, and is a sign for them that so long as the witness remains—religions profession—no harm can come to them. Notice, that Laban covenants not to pass the heap for harm to Jacob, whereas both heap and pillar mast be passed over for Jacob ere the day of reconciliation ends. God, as it were, is set between as judge. So the world will trample Christian profession under foot before personal harm can come to Jacob's seed as Christ's; while wrath cannot be poured out upon the world until not only: Christian watching for the Lord is overpast, but for the conscience of the world no righteous judge exists.

In spite of the protecting interposition of God and His security from every foe, Jacob, in his heart, claims all the praise, for “he aware by the fear of his father Isaac.” Was this what he had agreed to do? According to his own confession God had been with him. Had he not had bread and raiment these twenty years? Now surely was the time to own Jehovah his God. But no, it needed faith. Other dangers were yet to be encountered. Jehovah must, as it were, be held to His word, and proved to the end, before the heart's worship can be His. Besides, Jacob, in bargaining with Laban for his hire, had stood upon righteousness (Gen. 30-33). Had he been righteous? And now, with bold front and swelling words, he asks, What is my trespass? Certainly he knew Jehovah would not own his ways; so he swears by the fear of his father lease. Faith and sin judged were needed before Jehovah could be owned his God.

God's grace had come in, and saved Jacob and his seed from the fruit of his deeds in the service of Laban; but now a deeper danger shows itself, a heavier storm lowers in the distance.

What is the sting of this new scourge? What bolt lies hid in this fresh thunder-cloud? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. Is not God’s grace equal to the crisis? Is anything wanting on His part to assure us of His ability to save? Nay His revelations are ever suited to the occasion, and sufficient.

“Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him, and he said, God's host!” Will he not now judge his ways, and will Jehovah his God? He called that piece Mahanaim—two hosts—God's host and his host. If God is there so is Jacob; and when the day of trial stifles; God vanishes from his thoughts, and Jacob alone remains, for he divides the people with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands thus filling the whole field of his vision. Jacob, without faith in exercise, is under sin and under law, and unfit to apprehend grace.

Despite the host of God, he is greatly afraid and distressed upon receipt of the tidings about Esau; his guilt, half forgotten, stinging him to fear, bringing his and into bondage before God; for however little in his own sight he might be, at any rate he had become two bands. (Gen. 32:7-10.)

All is Jacob here, and not Jehovah; Jehovah's: glory set aside and only Jacob's blessing thought of. Therefore Jacob's state of soul is such that he is morally incapable of owning Jehovah as his God, and being His witness among men. I, I, I, occupies the scene, and is the whole subject of his prayer. Therefore in this hour of trial he fails to fulfill his vow, and only owns Jehovah as the God of his father Abraham, the God of his father Isaac, the Jehovah who spake to him, but not his God.

Jehovah, as such, in God in righteous grace. Jacob had not judged sin, and therefore would not trust love.

If Jacob will not own Jehovah by His new name, God will in grace give him a blessing other than he sought.

Jehovah’s glory from men depended, as we have seen, upon man trusting truth in God: man's blessing from Jehovah rests anon the finding truth in man. In vain, for ages, has God looked on earth. At the first He saw that the wickedness of men was great in the earth; and the whole mind of the thought of his heart evil only every day. A second time the cry was great, because the sin was very grievous, the cry of them waxed great before the face of the Lord. Again He looked, seeking good, and found they were all gone aside, together become. filthy, none that doeth good, no, not one; until at length a Babe was born in Bethlehem—the Son of the Highest, the Son of God, yet conceived in the womb of the virgin (the Holy Spirit coming upon her in the power of the Highest), taking part in flesh and blood, in this made like unto the seed of Abraham in all things:—then immediately the glory of Jehovah shines, for truth is found in man, and glory is to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men.

Truth is found in man, and it is Jehovah's glory to bless him; but this is not man's trusting truth in God, upon which Jehovah's glory, manifested in men, depends. Glory in the highest there is, but not glory, only peace, on earth.

Thirty circling seasons pass, and on that same humbled One the heavens open, and God the Spirit, dovelike, descends and abides; and a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Then can blessing flow unhindered. “The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.” This is glory in heaven and man blessed, but not glory on earth and God blessed. A second time, and the glory of the Father comes to earth, but the place is a high mountain apart, and it rested upon One only map, and a voice came out of it, saying again, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight,” adding the words, “hear him,” to indicate that He by work and word would create all things new in Himself, so that the tabernacle of God might be with men, that He should tabernacle with them, and they be His people, and God Himself with them, their God. A third time the Father spoke from heaven. He had been blessed and glorified in that One man, and would be again glorified in His vindication: but meanwhile that corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies, and in His death brings forth much fruit, that from the mouths of multitudes might glory flow “to him who loveth them, and washed them from their sins. in his blood, making them a kingdom, priests, unto his God and Father;” and they might worship Him, and say, “Thou art worthy, our Lord and our God, to receive glory, and honor, and power! Thou hast been slain, and hast redeemed to God by thy blood.” “Worthy is the Lamb that has been slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. To him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb,. blessing, and honor, and glory, and might be to the ages of ages."

Thus is He that sitteth upon the throne, and the Lamb, blessed and glorified by man in a full outflow of praise: but how comes it thus to pass? The man now raised to the highest pinnacle of glory, the center of it all, is the One who stooped to the deepest depth of woe, and in that depth was deserted of His God; yet, in the eternal darkness of that forsaken place, while bearing our sins, the wrath and judgment due to them, being made to drink into His soul all the bitterness, made a curse from God for us, made sin for us, pleading our sins while bearing the bruise and wound of each, yet in His body bearing each, until every one had been wiped, out from God's, sight in His blood forever; yet in that place, of darkness, distance, confusion of face, and unutterable dismay, distress of soul, aversion of God's face, and seeming reversal of His ways, amidst it all He yet trusted in Him. He cried in the daytime, and He was not heard, in the night-season and no reply—forsaken, unhelped; unheard—yet He trusted in the Lord. Never yet had the feeblest creature been so dealt with as now His righteous servant. They that reproached, and the despisers, the mockers, and revilers even said, “He trusted on the Lord,” yet God had brought Him into the dust of death. Through through dark; by day, by night; in life, in death, He trusted on the Lord; in the days of His flesh, having offered up both supplications and entreaties to Him who was able to save Him out of death, with strong crying and tears.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

Thoughts on Jacob, Jacob, Thoughts on: Part 1

“IF God will be with me.... so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall Jehovah be my God; this stone and.... shall be God's house, and... I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

It was to this end that all God's dealings with Jacob pointed. It was in His counsels to reveal Himself unto men in this character as the eternal, unchangeable, righteously-blessing God; and, when at length Jacob had reached the limit of his desire, and had got to himself much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses, and therefore for the moment had no further object before him, Jehovah presents Himself to Jacob as the only worthy object, the true satisfying portion, saying, “Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee."

Blessing is ever consequent upon grace, whether in the giver only, or the recipient also: “grace is poured into thy lips, therefore God hath blessed thee forever.” But blessing to man in grace, simply, is not the perfect manifestation of Jehovah. It must be righteous grace; for if Jehovah dwell among the children of Israel, it is because He has redeemed them. (Num. 35:34; Ex. 13:15.)

So Jehovah had said unto Abram, “Get thee out of thy country, from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.". “So Abram departed,” and into the land of Canaan “he came.” Again, after Lot was separated from him, He says, “All the land which

thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever." And note here, that for the first time "the seed" is associated with Abram. Again the word of Jehovah comes to Abram, but now the promised seed stands out alone, distinct, as the pledge, depository, and assurance of blessing. But still all is grace. No word of righteousness on God's part here—blessing on the ground of unlimited, unconditional, absolute grace, irrespective of what might be due to Him who gave, or of the receiver.

This is not Jehovah acting as such, nor God manifesting Himself perfectly as "grace and truth," for this could be only in His Son. It is blessing coming out from Jehovah because of hidden grace.

But God delights to manifest Himself in all His fullness; and blessing coming out to us is very different from going in to Him, and finding grace there to stand in.

In the Old Testament all His dealings were for the purpose of bringing out His fullness as Jehovah, "the Eternal," blessing righteously men on earth. In the New He reveals Himself as the Father, and all His works and words, whether by the Son or by the Spirit through the word, were that children might be brought to Him as the Father.

So we find hitherto to Abram all is simple grace, with secret reference to the coming Seed, in whom all things should be established, and God Himself glorified; for though all is grace, yet is Abraham taught, that if he is to inherit, it must be through death, and that of another, under judgment. (Gen. 15:9-17.)

Then follow fourteen years, a perfect blank (because flesh is established and under trial) having an acknowledged place. After this he must also know what it is, no only to have the sentence of death passed on him in the sacrifice, but also what it is to have it in himself; not, however, before the seed is brought upon the scene for faith. Then can he circumcise flesh in self and the things of self, receiving to himself the promises in Isaac. But when, in fact, the promised son appears, then not only is flesh judged, but cast out also, "for in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

Throughout it all God is dealing in blessing and disciplinal providence, Himself hidden meanwhile, never known as Jehovah.

Once again does God speak unto Abraham, for the last time, in special declaration of blessing; and here before God does he again come into view in connection with the seed, but both on the ground of resurrection, as a man who had learned that truth, and by faith took the place through substitution and death.

The first revelation of God showed Abraham and his seed in separation; the second, Abraham and his seed in death, but with the promise of life; the third, Abraham and his seed in resurrection.

Though justice is implied, and the claims of God reserved, yet blessing comes out solely on the ground of grace; and the conscience of the believer corresponds to the manifestation of God, so that there is comparatively but feeble apprehension of truth. Nevertheless what was known of God was divine and able to make perfect up to its measure. Notwithstanding it was not the perfect revelation of God to men on earth of Jehovah—not to speak of the Father to men in heaven: this could not be until a man, the Man, was there.

Man yet was not capable of receiving it. By faith he had reached a truth, that of resurrection, from the ground of which redemption through righteousness could be understood and received. So the first communication from Jehovah to Isaac is still in grace—blessing less than ever, if that were possible, subject to conditions, saying, "Go not down into Egypt, dwell in the land which 1 shall tell thee of. Sojourn in this land: unto thee and unto thy seed I will give." He sows that land, and receives an hundredfold; so greatly did the Lord bless him, and this for Abraham's sake, and the people of the land also for his own sake, "for he pitched his tent in Beersheba." (Gen. 26:31.)

All was founded upon Abraham, but was the reward reckoned to him of grace or desert? Surely grace alone, which gave him to believe in and obey the word of separation, circumcision (death), and resurrection.

Yet all this was not a manifestation of Jehovah, as such. Abraham, planted in grace, is the tree upon which God the Lord can shower His blessings from a distance; but for Him to dwell in the land which is the blessing He designed for it, the land must be morally worthy of Him. No matter the depth of its need and wretchedness, God can dwell, and will dwell, and delights to dwell in it, to bless it, provided He is morally vindicated, and His character witnessed for, in truth, in the place in which He is.

So in all these preliminary ways of God, He, as the Lord, visits the earth, but does not dwell in the land, Whenever He visits, it is indeed for blessing, seen remarkably on the one occasion in which its absence is most conspicuous; for though we find three men, and One of them—the Lord—when blessing Abraham, appearing unto him in the plain of Mamre, He Himself says unto him, "I will certainly return unto thee.... and Sarah thy wife shall have a son at the time appointed."

(To be continued; if the Lord will)

Bible Herald: 1880, The Birthright; and the Blessing

Genesis 25:27-34; 27:30-36

GOD'S ways and dealings with His own people are marked by strong peculiarities, and distinguishing blessings. As a rule, we are not sufficiently alive to them, and fail to realize that the one great object of Christ was, not only to redeem, but to purify for Himself a peculiar people. There are two distinguishing peculiarities which mark us in these relations to God, —first, the birthright; second, the blessing. We find this to be so, even in nature. Ask a Scotchman what distinguishes him from any other man: and he will at once speak of his nationality, and tell you it is by his birth. To bequeath a blessing is beyond any earthly power to do, but birthrights are handed down from father to son. This is merely for the sake of illustration. There are, likewise, certain immunities and privileges peculiar to God's people. Another thing we find is, that our experiences govern us in these matters a great deal. A believer has, or has had, two sets of experiences; as a natural man the experiences of the heart are shown by their fruit, viz., discontent, envy, bitterness, malice, etc. But do you think that a Christian can be

destitute of right experiences? Can he have knowledge of Christ, and be in communion with God, and yet have no corresponding experience; and is he not nourished by what he has got? A Christian stands here as “peculiar, “for he cannot be a discontented man, because he has got Christ; and not only this, but God makes this a realized power, and it produces experiences.” I will dwell in you by my Spirit; “our bodies are only the vessel; but the Holy Spirit in the believer is the felt power. Where are we to look for our birthright? Not in this world, nor of man, for we are “born of God." Is not this peculiar? You are not merely something better than you were, but you must altogether refuse to acknowledge what you were as in the flesh, because you are “born of God." This is a distinguishing truth, and a fact, as you read in John 5:21, “The Father quickeneth.". In Israel's days, many who were halt, and diseased, came to the pool of Bethesda, waiting for the angel,—but " My Father worketh, and I work," supersedes all remedial measures of the law; for this quickening power is the beginning of a new creation by birth. Is this not peculiar? People speak oftentimes of national creeds, and lean upon them; but a church-creed is not a life-giving power, whereas the word of God is a living word. “God gives life" through His written word. If we turn from all these considerations, to recognize others, and look on the great fact of God sending forth His Son, by the mystery of 'flesh and blood at the incarnation, will not this give a new object for faith, and bring experiences and feelings into the soul by the Holy Ghost? If not, then we can have no adequate conception of God's unspeakable gift to us, and no experiences, except our own sinful ones, which fall to our lot through the first Adam and a corrupt nature.

God creates and forms new experiences in those who are in Christ. We may have conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, and between the old and new natures in us, but conflict should never discourage; on the contrary, it is a good sign. The Spirit of God in the believer makes him live out the new life, which he has by birthright, as one with Christ, and transformed from the world. It is like the steam-power overcoming everything which is contrary, whether winds or waves, and the vessel reaching its port depends on it. Our right by birth is as sons of God, and heirs, and the pathway is to Christ at the right hand of God in glory. It is He who worketh in us to will and to do, and the Spirit is the power which leads us along through all the difficulties of the way; they only prove the mighty power which has surmounted them, when at their highest point of danger. Divine life in Christ is now the life; and our being partakers of His nature makes experiences in us of a new character. In this world, and amongst the generations of men, all the cultivation is given to the mind; they do not cultivate the heart. In Proverbs, I see: "My son, give me thy heart." Nothing here masters the heart; for how can man grapple with his own heart? It is God's prerogative, and God takes this up. “Christ dwelling in the heart by faith," and” Christ in you the hope of glory," are our birthrights by the effectual grace of God our Father. " Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man " (Eph.), must produce many experiences of a new and right sort. The Spirit resists the lusts and desires of the flesh, and of the mind, and the bad nature; but here it is more. We have eternal life “to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." We are likewise strengthened with might by His Spirit to comprehend, etc., and to know the love of Christ; this is a new history, and it is our birthright. If we lose sight of our birth, and rights-by-birth through grace, and begin to look at ourselves, Satan says, Do you think this is your portion, are you pure and lovely? But the believer looks at what Christ is, and we behold ourselves in His comeliness, and we are blessed according to the Father's love to Him. Nothing was too high for Christ; He is set at the right hand of the Father, and we are joint-heirs with Him. This is, then, your birthright, else you deny the love and grace of the Father, and you deny the efficacy of the blood of Christ, and the witness in you by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is not by the will of the flesh, nor by man, nor of men, that we get our own right, for they are Christ's rights, and His alone,—and this is a distinction. It is a great comfort that God insists on this with us, as the result of our redemption. We are spoken to as those who are “bought with the blood of Christ;" we are not our own, and belong to God; our bodies are His. All these new and divine rights produce heavenly feelings and affections (as they well may) in the believer's heart, supplied through the Holy Spirit. “It has not entered into the heart of man, etc.,.... but God has revealed it by his Spirit." Moreover, the anchor to our souls is inside the veil; and when tossed up and down by the wind and waves, or by the wear and tear of the wilderness journey, we look where the forerunner has for us entered, inside the veil, and this hope is the anchor of the believer. There may be rough and stormy seas, but faith and hope work out their salvation by means of them, like a gallant ship which runs out her anchor in proof thereof, and swings quietly, and peacefully thereby. " We look at things unseen, knowing that things seen are temporal." If you drop these blood-bought peculiarities, you must take up with mere earthly experiences; and the heavenly ones will not govern you, and characterize you, and, may be, will not occupy you.

In this 27 chapter, we see that Jacob and Rebekah valued so greatly the birthright and the blessing, that they falsified themselves to obtain them from Isaac. What a rebuke is this to us, it may be-if we ask, “How do we value that which we rightly and lawfully possess?" In verse 29 of the 25. chapter, Esau is guided by His own present experiences, for he was faint, and at the point to, die;—whereas his brother Jacob's heart was set upon the birthright, though Jacob acted wrongly as a supplanter; and had he been patient, God would have given the birthright by election (see Rom. 9), and bestowed upon him the blessing in His own way. Esau says: "What good shall this birthright do me," for I am faint, and he gives up his birthright for a mess of pottage. If you do no look at your birth by the grace and calling of God, you will undervalue the right, and practically you will give it up for what will suit your haste, and serve you at the present moment. Look to Christ, who gives the standard and value to the birth, and its rights, and the blessing, according to the purpose and calling of God, as displayed in the glorified Son, on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. We are to be like Him; so if faint, look to Him for strength. Of a natural man it is said, "When he dies, all his thoughts perish;" but the Christian's thoughts get brighter and brighter. It is not I dying, but all that is of sin, and my former self is separated from me forever, and the Spirit goes to Christ. The flesh and sin are left behind, and this is how faith sees it now, and despises the mess of pottage. If God did not summon us in John's Epistle to behold “the manner of the Father's love" in calling us out to glory, and telling us we are” sons of God," we could not speak on this subject; but there can be no question about these blessings in and with Christ, any more than of our birth. Many a natural man is born without any birthrights; but where are the heirs of God to turn for their birthright as sons? Thanks to “the Father," we find the roll in numerous Scriptures. Take Eph. 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies." Here we get birth, birthright, and blessing. Our new experiences of ourselves are according to the new creation, and take their form from Christ where He is, and we learn there is something outside and far beyond Adam, and the first heaven and the first earth, and self. There is, therefore, a new prayer offered up 'by Paul for us in verses 15 to the end, because the birthrights, and the blessing go so infinitely beyond us all, so he prays for “the spirit of wisdom and revelation, etc." Do not be afraid to say you think it beyond all that your heart ever knew, or conceived in you, for it shows, at least, that you see the birthright is there, and think rightly of it.

Take another Apostle, and a different Epistle, and see how Peter brings the inheritance down upon a level which shows that it is not beyond anyone. The fact is, that in chapter 1:3, we are viewed in our birthright and blessing “as begotten, by Christ's resurrection from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away." Is not this wonderful? If I went to any conveyance and told him I came about an inheritance, he would ask me, “What is your title?" It is by death, I reply. Very well, he understands me so far; but if I add, and it is by resurrection, would he not look surprised, as indeed he well might? Suppose I went on to say, in further describing this inheritance, that " it

was incorruptible (he never heard of such a thing), and undefiled, and fadeth not away;" he would tell me he could have nothing to say to me, or to do with my case. He had never drawn up a conveyance of such a character, or for such an inheritance, and it was quite foreign to all practice in conveyance in the courts below; but such is the believer's birthright! Go about with this thought of Peter's, that you are begotten to an inheritance reserved for you in heaven with Christ the heir, and that you are kept for it by the power of God through faith unto salvation; passing the time of your sojourning here in fear watching and looking for Christ, " as God's obedient children," till He come. Beloved brethren, ye do not get this exhortation in 1 Peter 1:14, until the Holy Spirit has brought out the birth, the birthright, and the blessing; then ye are addressed as obedient children, calling upon the Father if “faint or ready to die." We are nearer to our inheritance by all the circumstances and personal experiences on the way. Nearer by death, than now; therefore it can have no terrors for us. One thing more, in Gen. 25:33, take care none of us do what Esau did, when he thought lightly of the birthright, for he sat down to eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way; Jacob loved the inheritance, and Esau despised it. Jacob saw there was one thing worth having between God and His purposes of blessing, and that was the birthright. In Eph. 1, “Blessings in heavenly places” revealed to us as the heirs of God, joint-heirs in the glory; and this is told with all the freshness of the Holy Ghost's unction by Paul, as he unfolds the Father's counsels to us by the Spirit. This must produce feelings and affections. As to all else, everything worketh together (under the sun) for unmixed “good, to those who love Christ," and are the called according to His purpose.

Touching our pathway with Him, Jesus said, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, or whether I speak of myself." Obedience is the divine way of learning for us; and we know the Father by doing His will. The higher you mark and estimate your birthright, the more practically, and in character with it, you will walk down here, " as sons of God, without rebuke in the, midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world," etc. (Phil. 2:15, 16).

Edification: Volume 8, Church, the Bride of Christ., The

Genesis 29:18-28. Genesis 24:2-6, 58, 61-67.

(From Notes of Addresses).

IF in Genesis 2 we have Eve as a type of the church, the bride of Adam, by God’s gift, we find in Rachel, the bride of Jacob, one who typifies the Church as the object of the Bridegroom’s love, and in Rebecca, the type of the church as the object of the Spirit’s interest, led by the servant across the desert to the bridegroom.

We have considered Genesis 2. Let us now turn to the subject of Jacob and Rachel.

Very little is said of this case, but the love that Jacob bore to Rachel is the outstanding feature. It brings before us the Church in the character of a Bride but this time in relation to the love of the Bridegroom rather than the gift of God. Eve was God’s gift to Adam, it is quite true. The Church is God’s gift to Christ. For the moment, He has not got the Kingdom, but He has had given to Him a bride—the Church—and over and over again in John 17, He speaks about us having been given by the Father to Him.

But there is also this side of the story, that the bride is the object of the love of the Bridegroom, just as Rachel was the object of Jacob’s love. It says, “Jacob loved Rachel.” He had served a double period for her. He had to render a double service for her, and when speaking of those seven years of service, it says, “They seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.” There is an old saying that “love lightens labor,” and there is truth in it. There was a love that lightened the burden of Christ. “For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame.” It is true that our Jacob is serving a double period of service for us. He has served one period of service and. He is now serving the second period before He gets His bride.

He served us well upon yonder Cross under the weight of judgment. “He loved the Church and gave Himself for it.” They said to Him, “Come down from the Cross and save Thyself and us.” But He came down from the throne of glory to the Cross that He might save. Come down from the Cross and save, He could not. “Himself He cannot save,” they said, and they never said a truer word. Let us take those words as they come hissing from their Pharisaical lips and weave them into a crown for His glory:

We have the explanation of His doing His first bit of work. It was no rude Roman nails that kept the Saviour upon the Cross. It was not their fastening that kept Him there. It was love that kept Him, there. “He loved us and gave Himself for us.”

We may turn to Exodus 21, where we have another figure of the same love. It is the Hebrew servant, and the law with regard to him, which is, that he has to serve six years and when those six years are over, he can leave. But, as the law ran, he had to go out as he came in. “If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he were married then his wife shall go out with him.” It all depended on how he came in. “If his master shall have given him a wife, and she shall have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master’s, and he shall go out by himself.” Here, we have the parallel to Genesis, the one who has been given him by his master. What happened when the six years of service was over? The wife and children became the master’s. What about himself? He must go out as he came in—alone. Go out without them? Leave the objects of his love and go without them? Yes. What a test!

But another clause is put in, a saving clause. What is that? “If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife and my children, I will not go out free.” Then there is only one thing for him. “His master shall bring him into the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him forever.” He can then have the objects of his love forever. That is just Luke 9 over again. The Lord had come to the end of His life of service, just before the Transfiguration. His years of service were practically over, and Moses and Elias came down to the mountain and talked with Him about His decease. If you have a Greek Testament, you will find that that word translated here “decease” is really the same word as that for the second Book of the Bible—Exodus. They spake concerning His exodus. Moses and Elias were talking to Him about His going out. How did He come in? He came in alone, and He will have to go out alone, unless He is prepared to go to the place of piercing; and, Hallelujah to His blessed name, He went to the place of piercing, and every step of that journey from the glory Mount to the Mount of sorrow and death and judgment, was musical with this, “I love you, I love you, I will not go out without you. In order to have you Mine forever, I will die for you.” That is the Saviour we know and love. Oh, what love! There is no love like the love of Jesus.

He is serving us in the glory now. The yesterday of His love was “He loved the Church and gave Himself for it.” The today of His love is “that He might cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church.” The presentation of it is the tomorrow of His love. He is performing His second period of service now, that beloved Lord of ours. The Bridegroom is up there in the double character of an Intercessor and Priest, to sustain us in our weakness, and to undertake our case when we have sinned. He is an Advocate with the Father, and a Priest with God, to represent us there in the presence of God. Oh, what bitter tears we have had to shed. I have had to shed bitter tears many a dine because I have not taken advantage of His service as Priest, to support me, and have fallen on the road, and I have had to weep over the fact that I had to take advantage of His intercessory service as Advocate with the Father. And this is what He is doing, that He might cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and when that period of service is up, Christ will get His bride, His Rachel, the object of His affections.

We come now to the instance of Isaac and Rebekah. There is another person prominent in this case. The servant is called by Abraham and sent on a mission to seek a bride for his son, and his service seems to be the predominating feature. He says, “Where am I to look for her?” The answer was, “You must look for her amongst our own kindred. Don’t choose a bride out of the nations, it must be one of our own kindred, one of our relatives.” Don’t you see, there must be no disparity. The Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call us brethren. Everything about us, that would have made Him ashamed to own us, He has obliterated by His death, in order that He might have us on new ground, in a new association and relationship, in a way in which He will not be ashamed to call us His brethren.

Well, the servant starts upon his mission. He is a fitting figure of the Holy. Ghost in His mission on earth today, seeking out in His blessed activities a bride for the true Isaac. Isaac was one who had been received from the dead. When you find the Holy Ghost recording the action of Abraham in offering up Isaac, He practically puts it down that Abraham did offer him and that he received him from the dead in figure, and that Abraham is positively put beside God in that respect. He is allowed to feel something of what God felt when He gave His Son. It says, “He did not withhold his only begotten son.” What about Ishmael? He was of the flesh, and God did not reckon him. God looked upon Isaac, the child of promise, as the only begotten son, and He said that Abraham had practically offered his son, and had practically received him again from the dead. He is a type of the true Isaac, a representative of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The servant sent by Abraham is a figure of the Holy Ghost, the One sent by God to seek a bride for His exalted Son. The story is so sweet and blessed. The servant finds the bride and sets her up first of all with jewels of silver (silver is the redemption money) and jewels of gold (gold sets before us the righteousness of God); then he brings out the raiment, which represents the new character. So she is set up in redemption and righteousness, and in a new character. You and I, who form part of the bride of Christ, have been established on the ground of redemption and on the ground of righteousness, and we are now to appear in the character of Christ Himself. The features of Christ are to be seen in us.

Then Rebekah’s relatives make a challenge: “Wilt thou go with this man?” The challenge to us is, “Will you go with the Holy Ghost?” What is the Holy Ghost doing? Conducting the bride to Christ. What else? Attracting the affections of our hearts, which should be bridal affections, to Christ where He now is. It is the Holy Ghost’s mission to carry us right across the wilderness to meet Christ, because we find that Isaac comes out to, meet his bride. He meets them in the field.

There is another striking thing in connection with this, you never hear of one word that the servant speaks except about Isaac after he takes charge of Rebekah to bring her to Isaac. The Holy Ghost’s mission is not only to bring us to Christ, but on the way to meet Him the Spirit of God would engage our hearts and affections with the Lord Himself. Later on, we find Isaac and Rebekah meeting and greeting each other, and the chapter winds up by saying, “He brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent,... and Isaac was comforted.” Here is a bride that is going to be a comfort to a bereaved heart.

Sarah represents Israel. She is spoken of as the mother of Israel. Just as a mother represents her family, Sarah represents Israel; and Sarah is dead. What does that mean? Isaac has lost his mother. So Christ has lost Israel for the time being. What has He got in place of the Kingdom and people? He has had a new company given to Him, the Church which is to be His bride, and which in the meantime, since He has lost Israel, is to be a source of comfort to His heart. What a privilege is ours today in the hour of Christ’s rejection, when He has been deprived of His earthly rights, to administer a little comfort to His blessed heart.

Then when we turn to the end of the Bible we find the bride again. The bride, it says, is the Lamb’s wife, and when it speaks of marriage, it does not say, “the marriage of the bride,” but “the marriage of the Lamb.” He is everything. The bride is looked at in association with Him. The Church as the bride of Christ will share His joy and His glory when she comes out in her bridal attire, arrayed as a bride adorned for her husband. It is not the dress that suits her eyes, it is not the adornment that would please her tastes. No. Everything is to answer to the tastes and pleasure of her husband. He is everything, and the bride is everything to Him.

What a unique place the Church fills in the thoughts of God, does it not? Here we are, a poor, insignificant set of people, having often to bemoan our crookedness and waywardness, and yet to think that we are to be linked up with Christ, as that which is destined to be His bride, to sit with Him on His throne and share with Him. All His interests are ours, and ours His, both merged into one. So God puts one name on them, which covers them both. He puts the name of Christ now upon us, so that we are the bearers of His name.

So it is going to be with Israel, when she comes forth again, and Jehovah gets His earthly bride. His name is Jehovah-Tsidkenu, and this is the name by which she shall be called. He is going to put His name upon her in that day of glory, as He has put His name upon us in this His day of rejection. There is union, and with union comes the thought of affection. Union of purpose, union of affection, we are united to Him. What a privileged people! Oh, what a fall the Church has suffered when we think of her high and holy destiny. What a frightful fall she has suffered, that we should find her hand and glove with the world, that has stained its hand with the blood of Him whose bride the Church is.

May the Lord give us more vitality and affection of heart for Himself, that we may look upon ourselves here, insignificant as we may be, as God’s gift to His Son, that we may look upon ourselves as the object of the Holy Spirit’s interests and activity as He conducts us through this weary waste until He sets us down in the presence of the true Isaac, and we go to be His joy and glory forever. May the Lord be praised for such a privilege. Amen!

Art. Cutting.

Echoes of Grace: 1966, Wilt Thou Go With This Man?

(Gen. 24:58)

"Wilt thou go with this Man?" Dear unsaved one, on theeIs the question most tenderly pressed,Wilt thou cease thy vain search for true happiness here,And take, in exchange for it—rest?It is rest that He offers—a home, and a crown,Bought for thee at a price—His own life's blood poured down."Wilt thou go with this Man?" Shall His beauty and loveWin thy heart from the shadows below?Shall the light of that smile which brings life to the deadSet God's pardoning seal on thy brow?Wilt thou go with this blest One? He waits thy reply,He is longing to save thee—oh, why wilt thou die?"Wilt thou go with this Man?" Say, who is it that woosThee to fly for thy rest to His arms?`Tis the glorious Savior—Oh, canst thou refuseHis sweet love, though no danger alarms?Soul, despise not, reject not so precious a gift,Lest His jealousy burn, and destruction be swift."Wilt thou go with this Man?" 'Tis thyself that He seeks,'Tis thyself that He yearneth to save,As much as if thou in thy weakness and sinWert alone Satan's captive and slave.He saw thee, He loved thee, He came where thou art;And now, when He calls, canst thou bid Him depart?

Young Christian: Volume 9, 1919, I Being in the Way, the Lord Led Me: Genesis 24:27

Following a wild storm that had blown the snow in heaping drifts, the sun broke through bright and clear, and the wind having abated, the men were busily engaged in clearing the roads that had become almost impassable.

It was on Christmas day, and while others were eagerly opening or sending out their presents, the Lord led me to think of some who perhaps at this very time might be in need. Acting upon this impression, and after filling a box with neccessaries, rather than Christmas presents, I started out into the country.

My little horse, now dragging the cutter over bare ground; then, plunging through drift after drift of snow, finally came to a small cottage. Remembering that an old man lived there alone, I went to the door and knocked.

“Come in,” was the response.

On entering, there sat the poor old man endeavoring to keep warm by the scanty fire which he had.

He bade me sit down, and we entered into conversation. After a few words about the storm and things in general, the “Old, Old Story” was retold, and what the Lord in His love and mercy had caused to enter my own soul only a short time before, now went forth as “living water,” and as the dear old man listened to the wondrous tale of God’s love, and how He had proved that love in sending “His only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The tears coursed down over the withered cheeks, and he there and then drank of that stream, of which, if a man drink he shall never thirst. His soul’s need was so great, and his interest so deep in learning how abundantly that need had been provided for, that he had not even mentioned his temporal need, though, as I afterward learned, not a morsel of food was in the cupboard.

Before leaving, I carried the box in from the cutter, which on receiving he thanked me for over and over again, and I trust in his heart, thanked “the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort,” who so distinctly “led me” on that memorable occasion to this dear old man—the object of His grace.

Eastern Manners and Customs Illustrating Various Bible Passages, Eastern Manners and Customs: "Nay my Lord,I give it thee."

"Nay my Lord... I give it thee."-Gen. 23

Flattering and empty speeches like those of Ephron to Abraham, when a purchase was under consideration are common in the lands of the Bible to the present day. When a friend of the writer had occasion to hire a house in Jerusalem, the native to whom it belonged met his inquiries respecting the rent with "I do not want any money from you; you are my father; come and live in my house as long as you like; you are welcome; I shall charge you no rent," &c. At last, however, he named his price, which was as exorbitant a one as he could ask, and the arrangement was concluded. Compare with this the interview to which reference has been made and which took place some 3700 years. ago. Abraham states his business, the acquisition of a burying place, and before he has time to complete his sentence (compare verses 4 and 9), the people interrupt him by assuring him that he is welcome to bury his dead in the sepulcher of any one of them. But he courteously declines the offer of interment for his own dead in one of their heathen sepulchers; and asks for a price to be fixed. Three times does Ephron reiterate that the field is to be a gift, but, on being further pressed, he fixes the very large sum of " four hundred shekels of silver"; about £52 of English money, adding, with apparent indifference, "what is that betwixt me and thee?" Abraham, we are told, " hearkened unto Ephron;" he paid respectful attention to his words; but " he weighed to Ephron the silver," and thus acquired his " first and only possession in Canaan," viz. a grave.

Food for the Flock: Volume 1, Death Works in Us

EN 22:1-14{

In speaking of Abraham here, I will first recite the simple case, and then bow it is doctrinally true, and lastly how it is practically true.

First, here is Abraham entitled to everything that God had given him, but he is called to put all the lights out, with his own hands. There is nothing wrong in what he has, but he is to throw himself into darkness on this side, that he may have the light on the other side. He offered up his son, counting upon " God who raiseth the dead." He threw himself into darkness in this present scene, so that he might have the light in that. You must accept the darkness on this side if you are to have the light on that. When I present the fact that we have to do with the Man in heaven,. that involves your placing yourself in darkness as to the man here: that is a tunnel.

The more we are in the tunnel, the more we are leaving the darkness behind us, and coming to the light on the other side. The darkness is connected with what we are passing through. I do not want you simply to take hold of the fact that you are united to a Man in heaven, but I want your soul to accept the tunnel. I begin with the fact that I have to do with One in glory who is the light, and joy, and undivided resource of my heart; but, on the other hand, what do I accept in this present scene, but that all goes into darkness here in order that I may more enjoy the brilliancy of the-light that is on the other side. You will find that practically we are all brought into the tunnel on this side. That is what Abraham was called to do, and he finds that it is God, as Jehovah-Jireh, that he has to do with: it is that same word that he says to Isaac as they are going up the hill; when he has reached the point he can say, The Lord will see to it; God will provide Himself a lamb.

Now let me just note one or two matters connected with it. I suppose even the youngest child could not read this chapter without being struck with the thought that it was no easy matter, this man going up day after day to reach a point where, with his own hand, he was to put out all that was cheering to him on earth. What sustained him, as with measured tread he advance up the hill? He says: I count upon God as I pass into the tunnel; I have to find my way through this impenetrable darkness.-He does not run at the thing; he does not hastily accomplish it; but it was day after day, step by step, and he reached it with his heart deepening in the fact, I have to do with God. Oh, it is a wonderful thing! And, believe me, when you come to speak of practice, the measure of your strength is the measure of the strait you go through with God. You say, I have gone through deep sorrow; but the question is whether you have gone through it with God-as counting upon Him. The strait you have passed through with God is the real measure of your strength; that is what it is in every case. Therefore the scripture says: " Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." It is trying, not trial. It is no trial to a horse to jump over a fence; he only really makes manifest what is already there. And your faith will be put to the trial, if you use the word in that way,. but it is only trying, not trial-it is putting it to the test.

Abraham had this faith forty years before it was tried. There is forty years between Paul and James. James says he was “justified by works," when he had offered Isaac his son-upon the altar.

Have you faith about a certain thing? Do you say, I have seen it and know it? Well, I say, you will be tried certainly; it may be thirty or forty years before you are, but it will come out in the end; you will certainly be tried.-=The children of Israel were accustomed to earthly blessings, and the Lord showed. them that they were learning more by trial in the wilderness, where for forty years He suffered them to hunger and fed them with manna, " that they might know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live;" they found out thus what God was, the One who was to be their succor in it.

So with Abraham here; it was the faith that he had before, that is now being put to the test. He had seen the star-spangled sky, and had said, I believe that. And now, says God, here is the heir, and a great many years ago you said you believed me; now I am putting you to the test: put him to death.

Death is that for which we have no remedy; and, what is more, there is no law of nature about death. It takes anybody, young or old-anybody; it does not come after a certain number of years; it is arbitrary. It is not a question of a thing that is mendable; it is not a thing within the compass of man; that is the reason it brings in God with it. He was to put him to death; he was to offer him up; he expected God to raise him from the dead; but, as far as he himself was concerned, he was to put himself into complete darkness. When death comes in, there is no remedy; God says, I stand there; death is a thing beyond 'you; you cannot touch it. The reason I speak of it now is, that this was the thing that was called for in Abraham. When we come to practice we find it is darkness, but the moment our eye rests upon Christ we get light in it.

Abraham here went into the tunnel; indeed he was more like a contractor making a tunnel for himself. He found a way through it to God; the way that faith penetrated through to get to the light on the other Side. He could say: Well, I can take the darkness, I can bring it in with my 019), Laud, because I count upon God who raises the dead.-How this was fulfilled in the Lord!

The heart is not sufficiently honest about it. Did you not bring death into the world? You have brought it in, for death was the judgment for sin. And yet people seem so surprised when death overtakes them: and we all have felt it. Well, who brought it in—this terrible thing-this anomalous thing? What is the character of it? Why, that " man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward;" so much so that the poet says, " Every great thought is allied to melancholy." That is what we have brought in ourselves. We are not only suffering from the judgment of God, but we cannot look at the dearest object we have on earth without thinking, Death may lay its finger on it, death may sweep it away. We have brought it into the world ourselves, so we ought not to be surprised at its-overtaking us. Thus it is that the man who possesses most in this world is. the most miserable. Solomon says: "Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life her ways are moveable, that thou canst hot know them."

Now the Lord has come in and what He has done is this. He was the Son of the Father-He was the perfect Man who answered to the mind of God; but He says, I am not going to abide alone. I do not think we estimate what a terrible thing it was for Christ to die; He, the Creator, the Prince of Life! We do not estimate what it was for Him to be brought into the dust of death; He says: " Father save me from this hour Thou hast brought me into the dust of death."

On the Lord's day morning, when the saints are gathered round the Lord's table, the heart is sad and grieved as one sees their demeanor and their dress. If it were one of their own relations that had died, their whole demeanor would be different; so would their dress be different.. And we go there not only to remember the death of our greatest benefactor, but that He died for me. I say nothing shows the unfeeling nature of our hearts more, than the way we take the death of Christ. You cannot meet a greater death than the death of Christ. Death has done its worst; the greatest death I can ever have to meet is the death of the Lord I often prepare myself for the death of friends in thinking of this. Christ's death has thrown the whole of this scene into a new order of things; it threw man out, and cast the terrible shade of His own death over all here. I am in the scene where Christ has died, and the table of the Lord is the avowal of this, that I have passed from the man that is

here, to the Man that has died for me. I " show the Lord's death until He come."

It is the wonderful center point of Christianity. In baptism I renounce myself because of the death of Christ; but the Lord's supper is the avowal that I not only touch Him in His death, but that I have communion with His body, and with His blood. I am like the very Man that was here upon earth; I have His, very nature. I have reached Him through His death. "Father save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour."

He is the antitype of both Abraham and Isaac. He was-the One who met all the mind of God, but lie says, I will give it all up; with my own hand I will put out the light. It was His own action, and therefore at the supper He " gave thanks." He was the most wonderful impersonation of divine beauty as a Man, but He says: I will let it all go; and, not one shade of regret, I will give thanks; this is my body which is for you; this is my blood which is shed for you.

The characteristic expression of the Lord's supper is that we have passed from the man that is here. So says the- apostle to the Corinthians: I have shown you your folly; now I speak as to wise men. “The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" It is through Christ's death that I reach the Man that is there, and thus I am referred back to the sixth of John, and eat His flesh and drink his blood.

They all bungled about this from the beginning. Every one says, We like to be like Jesus, and I agree with it, but how do you work it out? I say, I never can reach Him but through His death; death of judgment, and death of calamity too. I have communion with the blood of Christ, and I have communion with the body of Christ. I make a way through I go down into the darkness that I may find Him at the other side. He goes down into it. When is the Son of Man glorified? When He goes down sunder all the weight of our judgment.

He is more careful to maintain the glory of God—what is due to Him—when He takes that place, than to secure my deliverance. He answers so completely to the requirements of God, He will not weaken any of them; for indeed He is more occupied, if I may so say, with maintaining the glory of God, than with the benefit that will accrue to me from it. He has entered into this; He has gone down into the judgment, and made a way through it; He has been raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father, and has brought in the light of another day.

He is now the One to impart eternal life-life that was now to be imparted with a new order of things. Life was connected with blood; now it is connected with the Holy Ghost: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." I have a life now that is on the other side of death, on the other side of the tunnel, a life that can go through it, because the Life that has gone through it is our life. As you get in the third of John: “The Son of Man must be lifted up." He has opened the way through, and now He imparts life to us; death is on our side, but life on His.

And He has given me the light of the eternal day to enjoy that eternal life-divine capacity to enjoy God without any languor whatever. It is an entirely new thing imported; He has broken the power of death and abolished it, and He has brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel. It is not that I get a man like Lazarus coming out of it, for he was bound with grave clothes; but the Lord has broken the whole power of death; the napkin about His head was laid aside.

What I want now definitely to bring before you is this: that the Lord Jesus Christ has gone into death, and you have really to accept the fact. You all know the benefit of His death, but will you go the road? Will you take the tunnel?-You say Oh! I will have all the benefit of it soon. No doubt you will; but what about it now? Look at the apostle; he says: Always bearing about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in me.

God will never let any soul be able to say that he is neglected. He gives you a blow, sufficient to make you understand His will, and, if you do not bow to that blow, He will not give you another for perhaps four or five years. He says, Well if you will not bow, I will let you alone. But, if you do bow, He says, I will never take thy hand off you. “We who live are always delivered unto death." He never takes His hand off.

I know I used to think, Well, the Lord will take His hand off after this; I shall have good times when once this trial is over; I will just live this out, and then I shall have a run of fine weather! And so it was for a time; but, the moment I began to bend, down came another stroke, and I came to understand that it is, "We who live are always delivered unto death;" I found out that it is, If you bend, I will give you another stroke, but I will, help you through it. It is "always delivered," and you brought it in; there is a justice in it.

The leader of a forlorn hope says, “Death or glory;" the Christian says, Death and glory. There are only two true things, death and glory -not death or glory. It is not only that Christ has answered to my sins, but He has entitled me to the inheritance of glory. It is plain no person can appreciate glory except as he knows death. I see many people who know little or nothing of it, and I say, you have never yet tasted what death is; I do not mean bereavement, so much as a true sense of what the death of Christ is.

Now you believe in the benefit, but are you enjoying it? I do not believe you ever will, until you take the tunnel, and get the light on the other side.

But, you say, will you tell us what is the tunnel?-Why, throw everything here into the dark, that you may have the light there. I Walk right into it; I am looking for the light at the other side; but then, if I do, I must throw the light here into darkness. “Thou wilt show me the path of life, in Thy presence is fullness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." What loss if I gain the sense of eternal life-eternal brightness? I have my heart comforted by that blessed One with the joys that accompany that life which He has brought in, and it is then a small thing to throw all here into the shade. Any man who is trying to enjoy this present life is not enjoying the other.

You say: Am I to give up this or that? It is not a question of what I am going to give up-; that is surrender, and I am not saying anything about surrender. Jephthah was as wrong as Abraham was right; if you do such things you will be made weak. But I accept death; that is the great thing; it is all darkness here; the true character of this scene is death. The greatest One who was—ever on this earth died from off it; He entered into death and thus He throws a shade over all this scene, and I do not expect anything but death here.

Then am I to be melancholy? Not at all! I pass from it into a scene of settled enjoyment-of perennial brightness; not the coming and going. Saints have not the sense of perennial brightness; they are not sensibly united to Christ; and, as a consequence they are often un, happy and dull if the meeting is not a happy one. I am often happier at an unhappy meeting than at a happy one, because then I rise from circumstantials to the One who is the source of brightness, and I say, I am happy in the Lord, though I am not at all happy in the way you are

going on. Instead of finding the “joints and bands," I have to fall back to the Lord, the source of them. The state of the bride in the Canticles, is just that; when He is present all is right. But I am never dissociated from Him; I am united to Him; I have to do with Him. Instead of finding that I am contributed to by the scene through which I am passing, I seek for nothing from it; I am satisfied with Himself; my most blessed and happy time is to be in solitude with Himself; all my power to enjoy is in Himself.

Well, it is in proportion as you accept the tunnel now you will enjoy the glory afterward the light of the day that is coming. It is not always necessarily bereavement; the apostle's “death "that to which he was delivered-was, I think, persecution; it does not always mean bereavement.

I pass on not to the effect of the doctrine. Doctrinally we must accept the fact that we have to do with death; you must bring death before your soul in order to enhance what Christ has done for you. I take three aspects of this. First the passover in Egypt; then the Red sea; then Jordan.

First, the blood was shed. The person was to go in and shut the door, and eat the lamb roast with fire. Had not he to do with death? I say that all the loss of souls is that they have not to do with death.—0h, I am saved by the blood! you say. Very true, but staying thus you will never get out of Egypt.

Then I come to the Red Sea, where all the enemies were drowned; and I walk through it with all the assurance that Christ has first walked through it for me. You have touched it; you have been made conversant with it; it is not that you can, as it were, pass it lightly from you.

And then I come to the Jordan, and I have to walk across it, with this difference as compared with the Red Sea, that I do not see a drop of water at all. And there I am over the tunnel.

Now what is a dead man really? A dead man is one who has neither a hope nor a fear. Have you done with prospects? Prospects are far harder to get rid of than possessions, because possessions you have, and know the value of, but prospects you do not. It is a grand thing if you are done with prospects.

Now I do not believe that simple ability will ever rise to any eminence; there must be ambition also. Many men have ability who have not ambition; but it is your aspirations which mark your destiny. It is a great loss to the natural character not to have ambition; if you have no, ambition, you will not apply yourself to a thing; but, if you have, you are sure to apply yourself. You will find that the most eminent men are the most laborious. The higher the bird goes, the more strain there is upon his wing.

You say, What are you going there for? -I am going because the Spirit of God leads me—But He will lead you through. Jordan!—Ah never mind that! I have lost everything, I have neither a hope, nor a fear.

I find most people cannot give up their expectations; you have not lost attractions here-links to the scene. It will not do for you to say, I will stand and look over; they had to walk across Jordan. I have traversed the place where I have been dead myself; I have traversed it with my eye upon the One who has abolished it. I do not " Stand shivering on the brink afraid to launch away."

I have the enjoyment before me of that land that is mine I have got onto the ground of God, and that land is mine—mine before I enjoy it. It is not that I get it before I go in, but it is mine before I realize it.

So much for it doctrinally. Now I come to it practically; what it is to express it; what it is to a person when he really accepts it.

How differently we all view things here! I say to a person: What are you looking forward to in this world? He tells me: I am looking forward to the time when I shall be able to give up my business, and have some quiet little country place to which I can retire with my family.-Oh then you are not looking for the tunnel I Paul says, I see the martyr's course and the stake before me; the fellowship of his sufferings, and being made conformable unto His death.

I say to a man who has friends, what would you do if they were all to go? How would you stand if everything went?-I have One who never can go-One who has won my heart; and that One will group round Himself every single worthy object of my heart in that bright morning of resurrection; there they are! If my heart is wrenched when the calamity of death befalls me, it is there I learn to know the One who will walk beside me, as surely as He walked beside Mary. And He does not do it like the benevolent man of this world, who would do anything to relieve a hungry man, but who does not 'at all know what his feelings are. There are very few who would say, I will suffer hunger so that I may know what a hungry man feels. But this is what the Lord has done; He has made Himself familiar with my circumstances that He might be able to sympathize with me in them.

If you only accept the Lord's supper all comes easy. The fact is I have changed my man.—I desire to cultivate the knowledge of this more. I often come from the Lord's table with a sort of a shudder at the thought that I have to deal again with the man of the earth, that I have to go out again into the midst of men to be jostled and pushed by the man for whom Christ died. It is “the communion of the blood of Christ." It is to me one of the solemn thoughts -that surround the soul at the Lord's table, that He walks into the midst Himself, to see how His people are remembering His death. The angels look on with wonder, as they see His people gathered together in solemn conclave to remember His death.

I will take now an example in the fiftieth chapter of Genesis, to show you how you really have to learn practically the tunnel in order that you may know the value of Christ. There is one thing that is as clear as daylight; and that is, that a great many people have gone through trials that have not done them a bit of good. A person goes into trial, but God only knows how that man will come out; in most cases they come out of it worse than they went in. If you become occupied with your sufferings, if you get full of yourself, you will come out worse than you went in; but if you are exercised by it, "afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness," as if you had not done anything wrong at all. But, if you do not get the sympathy of Christ with you in the trial, you will come out worse than you went in. It is a well-known thing, that going through the world without sympathy makes the hardest of men; the favorite of the family, is always the most loveable; it often makes them selfish, but still they are loving.

Joseph was the best of the brothers. Never was such a brother!-I ask every person in thief room, Do you know Him-the true Joseph? Are you intimate with Him?-Joseph's brethren-never knew his heart. When did they learn it? When death came in-when " their father was dead." Then

they said, Joseph will hate—us. You have not yet learned what Christ is!-Now Joseph wept, and he spake to their hearts: "I will nourish you and your little ones." And when does this happen? After they had been living seventeen years upon his bounty: then they entered the tunnel; light comes in, and brings out these two things; Joseph wept, and his brethren spoke to him.

But now look at what happened. Seventeen years has transpired, so that there was no. question as to his being their savior.-But has the death of your father so come in that there is no screen between you and the Lord Jesus Christ? I am then practically brought into such close quarters with Him, that I have discovered His heart at the very same time that I have discovered my own enormity. Thus the two things come out together. And how do they come out?-Simply by death coming in, and never could they come out any otherwise.

I next take the widow of Sarepta in the seventeenth chapter of the first of Kings. Elijah is here a figure of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is now looking out for a home with a poor Gentile. He says: Her misery has touched my heart; I will go to her, and there I will find a home.-She is seeking two sticks that she may make a meal for herself and her son, that they may eat it and die. And what can any of us speak of more than one meal? If even that! Here was a heart that was trying to make the best of life while it lasted, and that was only for one meal. I am going to die, so I may as well make the best: of it while it lasts; a short life and a merry one!

But Elijah knocks at the door: May I come in?-Yes, come in, and very glad. He comes in, and she, and her son, and the prophet eat many days; a full year goes by; a spring, a summer, an autumn, a winter go over them-every variety of season before the trial comes; they had a very enjoyable time.-But what happens now? Death comes in;-the tunnel. And you find she is really not clear about anything; she says, You are come to call my sin to remembrance. Elijah stretches himself upon the child-Christ's own action, in joining Himself to the dead; the child's soul returns to him again, and Elijah comes down and says: There is your son alive?—And now she can say, I have been in the tunnel, I have learned in it that you are a man of God; I have learned what your heart is; I see that life is come out of death.

Let me say, in passing, that the chastening spoken of in the twelfth of Hebrews is not in connection with wrong doing, but with right doing. It will do you good, you will think less of yourself in future, but it is those who are suffering for righteousness; it is resisting unto blood striving against sin. " My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him." Neither be a duck that does not mind the rain, nor a hen that is miserable in it, but say, I am looking for the benefit that. is to accrue to me from this very painful circumstance.

When the widow of Nain lost her only son, she lost her last link to earth. We are so constituted that if the heart has twenty-one links, and twenty of them are broken, it will still hang on to the twenty-first; and this is where the trial comes in; lose the twenty-first and all is over. The meaning of the word Nain is beautiful; it means pleasantness. The Lord comes' in at Nain at the most solemn time that you can conceive; the least prop of the broken heart-of the widowed heart has failed. Well it was now that life was to come in. Life and incorruptibility have been brought to light.

I see people shrinking from it, but the word is, " Count it all joy," for I have got the strength of Christ in it; I have faith in what He is to me there.

Now I pass on to take Jonah as an example of another kind. Jonah is a servant who will not do the Lord's will. Well, says the Lord, I will bring him down to death; I will bring him down to where he cannot do one single thing; nothing but death before him, and death too with a bad conscience.-Then Jonah prays to God, and says: " I am cast out of thy sight, yet will I look again to thy holy temple." And now Jonah

comes up again, having learned death upon himself.

But he has to learn death in a double way. Sometimes I know death only in myself, and then I learn to be devoted. When I learn that God is abolutely for me, then I am absolutely for Him; it brings out devotedness to God in me when I have learned that God is for me. But many a devoted man is like Jonah when he comes up; he is full of God's work, but he is not soft. He must be softened. God will soften me here; I have a double death to learn.

Now Jonah rests under the gourd, and finds his consolation in it, and his affections drawn out towards it; and God says, I have drawn out your affections; now I will take it all away. Jonah is a plain, honest man, and he says, I do well to be angry.

And it is ever thus. It is double death-double suffering; one connected with the circumstances, the other, with the person. When you are suffering from sickness it has a different effect upon you to what it has when you are suffering in your surroundings. It is like Gideon's fleece; at one time death only on the individual; at another, death all around us. It is a terrible thing to have to learn that we can survive the death of everything here; but then death has come in, not to bring this out, but that it may cast you upon God. This is the virtue of it, and death has come in that it may bring it out.

Well, one more example. Hezekiah had been the servant of God for fourteen years-twice seven; and then God said to him: Now you are to set your house in order, for you are to die and not to live; now you are to go into the tunnel. And Hezekiah is the most abject picture of misery. He says: Like a crane or a swallow so do I chatter.-Why?-Because all his links were here.

And do not imagine that this is a peculiar case. At many persons' death beds there is often a wonderful loosening from all here. At first the work may be very slow, but as soon as they come to the point, It is is all gone here, then it is all bright there. There are often those who have e physical fear of death, but the nearer they come to it the less they care about it. The sad part of many death beds is, that, instead of being happy at the prospect of going to be with Christ, they are at first quite inconsolable at the thought of death. I think the death beds of most the saints in this day are lamentable exhibitions; no joy; just quiet peace at the most; showing how little they know of the One-they are going to.

Let me take another example: that of Paul-in the first of Philippians. He says: I desire to: I depart and be with Christ, which is far better," can take the tunnel with cheerfulness. I have not got a single link here upon earth; Jerusalem was my gourd, and a very strong link it was; but that is gone, and I can take the tunnel cheerfully.

I find many persons will talk of the Lord's coming who cannot look at their own side of it at all. Are you quite ready to go? I will look at that side. I long to depart, I have nothing to stay for; all the strings are cut, and the balloon is ready to go. Well, if you are ready to go, you were never so fit to stay; you are not fit to stay until you are ready to go. The man who has ties here must be warped. Surrounded with family ties

and links, he feels how hard it would be to have to leave them, not only on his side, but on theirs. The apostle says, I am ready to go; have not one single thing to detain me, it is better to be with Christ, far better.

Then, when you come to the moral dealing, do not shrink from it. The only thing that can make the glory true to your heart is death here. The proper setting for the diamond here is death. As I walk through the tunnel I am learning the blessedness of that One who has brought in the glory to be my light in it. The true place morally for us is, as Peter says, that of death.

“Christ suffered for us in the flesh. Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind” If Christ suffered for you in the flesh, what are, you going to do? Are you going to minister to the flesh? It is a most monstrous thing to say, I will minister to the flesh for which Christ died. I, who am Christ's member! But you say my, spirit is all right. Yes, but your body is a member-of Christ. Would you put on it an ornament that Christ would not put on? Would you go to-. a flower show? It is your body that is a member-of Christ. Am I to put the members of Christ in an unholy position?-I am going to melt my body into glass, that I may be so transparent that the life of Christ only may shine out in it.

If you were thus faithfully going on, instead of finding things to invite and attract you, you would find that they were cut down, and that you were shut out from them. What your taste is in most, you suffer in most; so that where you are naturally most alive, is the very place you will find most death. Paul in the twelfth chapter of the second of Corinthians goes into the third heavens, and he comes down and finds: I am. made nothing of; I am cut short in the very thing I was eminent for.—I am made little in humanity where I am made most in Christ. Where I had my natural power, there death has come in. Paul was a very energetic man; he ended by being shut up in prison.

I close with that as the moral. We know who when we may meet again, but we know Him he has made the way through the tunnel; we know the brightness of that scene where Christ is-the brightness of that eternal day; but, if you want to deepen your sense of it, you must accept the tunnel-accept all here as a waste; throw all the light here into darkness, that you may have the light beyond you.

I often see that while people talk of making Christ their object they do not make Him their mark. Now a mark is a thing that I see; you cannot have a mark unless you can see it. If you take Christ as your mark you cannot get a higher. If you can take the highest fence, of course you will be able to take the next, which is lower. Christ, "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Then what place do you expect? Nothing but a place of suffering; and I do not expect any mitigation of it.

Then do I steel my heart against everything that is beautiful? Not at all; but- I accept what is true of myself. I am brought now into a path where there is "fullness of joy;" but that joy is at His "right hand." You have to refuse to indulge yourself here; the smallest indulgence in a certain sense is mischief. The world neglects the body at one time and indulges it at another; but the body is the Lord's; and I take the proper care of it-methodical care of it-because it is His; but I do not indulge it; " Christ suffered in 'the flesh."

When a person argues, What harm is there in doing anything? I say, Stop, that is the flesh! there is no use saying any more about it. I have to do with Him who is all the source of life and power, and in whose presence is " fullness of joy."

The more I go into the tunnel-the more I cast everything into the shade here-the more I know of the glory beyond. The Lord lead our hearts to know what a real thing it is to walk through this world in all the joy of Him, who has opened up a Way through this wilderness into the light, and joy, and blessedness of the living God.

The world could not understand Christ; but He knew the world thoroughly. He was ever mixing with everybody, but always Himself, and never of the world; and we are by rights as much strangers in it as He was. Flesh, and Satan; and the world always go together; but he was ever drawing round Him everything that was of God, and judging all that was not. If you were a great man you would get a good place in an inn, if you were a little man you would get a little place; but He got no place at all. Have your souls got the thorough conviction that you have none either? and that all that you have got to do in it is to overcome.

Even if we do not cling to the world, how it clings to us! If Christ had His place it could not. If it were last night that the Lord Jesus had been put to death by the world, would any of us be hail fellows well met with it? What matters it whether it was last night or 1800 years ago? Some are insisting on belonging to this world and to Christ too. I say you are wonderful people if you can. Christ could not. All I do is to get through it as earnestly and as fast as ever I can. (J. N. D.)

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Cuyahoga Falls Conference: 2023, Genesis 22:3-24

Reading

No tongue declared, Oh, give our hearts its depth to prove and reign without arrival there from thee, O Lord, we all receive thine, Holy Thine alone we'd live 274. Hey, Cortana. These are completely. Although I've ever had. Continue with Genesis chapter 22. I would suggest perhaps reading from verse 3. Read from verse 3. Chapter 22, Verse 3. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his *** and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clayed the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went under the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off.

And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the *** and I, and the lad will go Yonder. And worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son. And he took the fire in his hand and a knife, and they went, both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, my father. And he said, Here am I my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, But where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they went, both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of, and Abraham built an alt sorry. And Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said,

Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him. For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Jireh, as it is said to this day. In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. And the Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said by myself, have I sworn, saith the Lord, For because thou hast done this thing. And has not withheld thy son, thine only, son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Because thou hast obeyed my voice. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham dwelt at Beersheba. And it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milka, she hath also borne children unto thy brother. Nahor has his first born. And Buzz's brother Camuel the father of Aaron, and Chested, and Hazzo, and Pill Dash, and Jitlap, and Bethuel. And Bethiel begat Rebecca. These eight Milka did bear to Nehor, Abraham's brother and his concubine, whose name was Rumah. She bare also Teba and Gahem, and Dehash and Mayaka. I like to connect the first verse and the third verse together as we talk about Abraham's faithfulness toward God. He has faith, He has worked. He did not hesitate. So we commented yesterday that Abraham answered to God was behold, here I am. It shows his willingness. He didn't question what God wanted him to do. They just simply say here I am. What an example to us when there when God has called us to do something. You know, we sometimes as children and perhaps even parents here where children would appreciate this. You call your young child or teenager over and you know that even before you ask them to do something. You see the attitude that I don't want to do this. It's not for me. They will argue, Can you imagine you have a child that will come when you call for the name? They'll say, behold, here I am. Mom dad, what would you like me to do now then in verse three it gives us more sense. It sets here and he rose up early in the morning. Now I don't know about you when there are things that I don't like to do things that I dread doing I don't get to it right away. I wait and here what an opposite. It was the thing that Abraham. Not despised, must have grieved him to offer up his Son as a burnt offering, but yet because of his obedience to God, he rose up early as if he couldn't wait. He couldn't wait to do God's will.

I have a question now, but I was wondering if someone could help me understand what gave. Support The law is going up, but it's not quite Deuteronomy chapter 18 and verse 10. I think it's pathogen Leviticus also, but they're in Leviticus chapter, sorry, Deuteronomy chapter 18, verse 10. There shall not be found among you anyone that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire. And that was an abomination of the people of the land. Of course, Abraham had here a very. Close relationship with the Lord, but is there anything further that we should understand about how how it was known that this command of human sacrifice was was was ripe and for Abraham to do, but it would be clearly wrong under the under the law there. School gardens were very slowly better. This chapter is just one phase of the life of Abraham and the question is what gave him confidence. You have to go back to chapter 12 to start to get an answer to that question. In chapter 12 it says Now the Lord God. In verse one, Now the Lord God had said unto Abraham, yet thee out of thy country. And from thy kindred and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee, this is the beginning. God calls Abraham. He was living in a land of idolatry and among his family and his friends and so on in that land. And God calls him and says, Abraham, you're going to leave. I call upon you to leave everything that you've had in your life up to this point. To go somewhere you've never been and somewhere you don't know what it's like. And when you leave it? I'll show you where to land. He didn't even know where he was going to stop. He was simply called to leave everything behind and go. That's why in one sense he's called the Father of faith, because he is the first example in Scripture that we have of what it is to live by faith. And faith to be lived begins with the developing of a trust that God is to be trusted. Whether I have any idea or not what's going to happen, God is to be obeyed whether I have any idea or not what the outcome is going to be. Of the result of that obedience, Abraham didn't learn the lesson immediately. He starts out, but before very long if we follow the chapters which follow. He ends up in Egypt, a picture of the world. What sent Abraham down to Egypt? His faith wasn't developed and it had to have learning by the experiences of life. And every one of us is in that same school. God has called us by faith, and in the beginning of that journey we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. But it's just the beginning of the learning of what faith would bring us into. And so. The process starts in chapter 12, and I'm not going to try to develop it through the chapters that we would be done and not get through the first verse. But as it says in chapter 13, verse one, and Abraham went up out of Egypt, he'd already gone down to Egypt and in faith he doesn't want to let the king understand who his wife really is. He doesn't count upon God to preserve. So he mixes his faith with some of his own devices, if you will, to protect himself in the circumstances. Because she was one that was beautiful and so on. But when we get to Chapter 22.

Abrahams faith has been developed to that point where we can see him in the primary character of the chapter, which is a picture to us of the love of God the Father. And the first part of this chapter, as we had yesterday, is the major really thought of it until verse. Through verse 14 from verse 1 to 14 there's a picture we see an M faith and we've been emphasizing what he did in obedience and so on. But it's all that which he had already gone through the process of learn and God's trying him in verse one to say have you learned the lessons yet Abraham and he had he had learned the lesson of being a heavenly man and he had gone out from his country not knowing where he went we. Are to leave the world. We know where we're going. We know we're going to heaven. What we have to learn by faith to leave the world behind and live as Abraham lived. And so in the 1St 14 verses in this chapter, it's bringing out that he's now a picture of the love of God the Father and the Son and giving his son. And then he in verse 15, you get a new start for himself. And God says, because you've done this, now I'm going to bless you. And so Abraham learns and gets blessing for himself. As well as the beginning of the family of God on earth. He's the father of the family of Israel and God setting them aside as a people for himself. And that you get the start of that in verse 14. Wonder if I could add to that. Instead of looking at Genesis 12, go to Acts 7, which is really the same portion that you brought before us, but Steven takes it up in his discourse in Acts 7. Acts Chapter 7. Of course, the previous verse, they're all sitting in the council looking steadfastly on Stephen. The high priest says, Are these things so? And he takes up with what you've been bringing before us. He said, men and brethren and fathers hearken. The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he'd dwelt in Karen. And he said unto him, Get thee out of thy country and of thy kindred, and come into the land which I will, I shall show thee. And then came thee out of the land of the Chaldeans that dwelt in care. And I've I've tried in my own life to try to. Picture what this looked like. So just picture Abraham. He's umm. He's he's there in Mesopotamia. He he has this message from the Lord. He loads his camels up or whatever he had. I don't know what he had at that point and and the neighbors, they say so. So where are you going? Well, I don't know. And they say, well, are you kidding me? Here he is. He's all packed up, ready to go. Obviously with with some intent, Abraham, I'm sure his neighbors recognize them as someone that was a reasonable person. And his answer is I, I don't know where I'm going. And I think that was. A very impressive in connection with what our brothers bringing before us because if we go over a few chapters in Genesis. Look at Genesis 15. I'm going around in circles here, eventually your question, sorry. So in Genesis 15. We have this statement. It's repeated enrollments. Like Paul, It's repeated in Galatians by Paul. It's repeated in James by James. And it's this statement. In verse 6. He believed in the Lord. And he counted it to him for righteousness. And so we

have in Romans, he believed God. We have in James, in Galatians, rather he believed God's.

Three times in the New Testament, this this item of faith, which is is so impressive that we have it repeated that he obviously developed from that time that he sat on his camel and had to tell his neighbors. I don't know where I'm going. He had the he had to, he had to lay hold of something. And I think what we see in our chapter is, is the experience of him having laid hold on that and now here years later. As our brothers brought before us, the Lord brings this test to see what was so manifest to so many people that was so real in His life, and with which the Lord desires to be real in our own lives as well. After 13, the Lord's promise to Abraham in verse 16, I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that man can number the dust of the earth. In shall thy seed also be numbered. And in chapter 15 the verse was before where you read. Verse five He said he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven until the number of the stars. They'll be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And later on, we know that Sarah didn't bear him any children so. She makes a suggestion and through that suggestion. A son was born, but it's Ishmael, and the Lord says this shall not be the one through whom I will give you blessing. And so it seemed pretty impossible situation that Abraham 99 years old. And that's what we have in verse seven, chapter 17. He's 99 years and nine the Lord. 90 years old and nine. The Lord appeared to Abraham and said I am the Lord Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect. You know, we, we tend to look at difficulties, brethren, in our own ability to meet those difficulties, and that's what gives place to doubt. But he is the Almighty God, and I think it's so amazingly wonderful that finally, at 100 years old, Sarah bears him a son, Isaac. And this was must have been a tremendous joy to Abraham's heart. This was the son of promise, and so now he says. Take that son and offer him for a burnt offering and you can imagine what it must have meant. But it was so I think this is the way God developed his faith, like you were mentioning, Don, and through those circumstances, through those experiences. He learned that God is faithful to His Word. And so when this test came, there is no evidence of any delay on Abraham's part. He rises early in the morning, saddles his *** and goes off to do what God had asked him to do. You know, Abraham, I don't know how old Isaac must have been at this juncture. I don't know that there's any way of knowing. But the fact that. Abraham laid on Isaac the wood for the burnt offering, and I would imagine you'd need quite a bit of wood for a burnt offering. He was not just a young boy, he was a young man, probably, we don't know how old, but he was one also, who had evidently seen his father offer sacrifices before. And so, when they leave the two servants behind, he asks his father. Where is the Lamb? And I say all these things, brethren, so interesting to me. I just wanted to mention something that I find very helpful. In Romans chapter one, there's an expression. It's mentioned twice in the book of Romans at least.

In verse. 5 Romans, 1/5. Apostle Paul says, By whom we have received grace and apostleship or obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name Romans 16. And verse. 26. Talking about the revelation of the mystery that is now made manifest and by the scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment. Of the everlasting God made known to all nations for the obedience. Of faith, that expression, the obedience of faith. If you really trust God, you're going to obey Him what he says. If I don't obey him, what am I basically saying? I'm saying, well, this time I think I know a little bit better than God, so I'm going to go my own way. That sounds pretty bad, but that's basically what we're saying if we don't obey. So there's one characteristic of faith. It's obedient. And so we see the obedience of faith in Abraham here in these verses. What a wonderful thing. I'd like to make another formula, one of the same time will come on and one of those Abraham's. Abraham starts out in the life of faith and as we've already had bought before us he. He stumbles in it, he has to learn it. And until the 22nd chapter. Where we have him in a mature faith. But I want to comment on it in connection with the comment made last night in the gospel meeting where Jonah, it was commented on Jonah. There was not only what was going on in Jonah, but he had an effect on those around him. And so he was having an effect on the others in the boat by his own. Disobedience to the will of God at that point and not being willing. In Abraham's case, and in your life and mine, learning the path of faith is a humbling experience. We're all learned to be humbled in it, and in Abraham's case. He had been promised a blessing when he was told to go out. And yet what happens? He's old and nothing's happening. You know, sometimes we believe God's going to read the word of God and we say, well, God's going to do this or that. Time passes and it we don't see the result. So what sometimes happens, our faith fails and we take matters into our own hands. And so he did, Sarah said. I'm old. I can't have kids. I can't have a child. It's too late. So what happens? The handmaid Sarah was put in the picture and she has the child Ishmael, which is already said in pictures, a child of the flesh. But what's the consequence for Abraham, the children of Israel to this day and in the coming day of tribulation? Are going to feel the effects of Hagar's descendants. He also when he leaves in chapter 12 when he's called to leave, he takes luck. Is relative with him. What's the consequence? Lot wasn't a man of faith like Abraham. He didn't have the same character of faith. And so the effect was Lot chose the world. He goes into Sodom, and while there was faith in law, I believe he has to be dragged out of the city before the judgment falls on it. He'd gone into what we call the world, to live in the world and try to mix the world and have it with his faith and when they go out of it. His wife, who didn't have faith, has turned into the pillar of salt. But then he. By his two daughters starts another family, not a family of faith. From that point on, those children, along with Hagar's children, were a constant born in the flesh of Israel.

They became the enemies in many cases of the Israelites. And so the bottom line message is, brethren, we're in the path of faith too. But it's a humbling path. And sometimes when we don't walk in faith, in the learning process, we bring upon ourselves or upon our children or upon the assembly where we are consequences that go well beyond our own generation. God will thank you, Abraham. He's proving Abrahams faith, perhaps to us to show that he was right. His faith was counted to him for righteousness. These two verses you mentioned, the one in Deuteronomy and the one here in Genesis 22, they seem contradictory, but I don't believe they're contradictory at all. God never intended to allow Abraham to kill his son. And when Abraham got to the appointed place on the mountain. God stopped him. He did not allow him to sacrifice his son, to pass his son through the fire. I think perhaps the thought may be substitution. Abraham turned around and saw behind him a ram caught in the thicket by the horns. And he was able to use that RAM. In the place of his son as a substitution. If you look in verse of our chapter, look in verse 12. God commands Abraham not to not kill his son, he says in verse 12. Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him. For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from thee. Neighbor him lifted up his eyes and looked. And behold, behind him Iran caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for his burnt offering. In the state of his son. So God never planned for Abraham to go through with this sacrifice of his son. These two verses are not contradictory. Like to comment? Part of a verse that was read yesterday and briefly commented on. Where at the end of verse six it says they went both of them together. That same expression occurs at the end of verse eight again. So they went both of them together. And. Then we see a modification of that statement again in verse 19. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together. Well, we know that Abraham in this case pictures the Father, and the Lord Jesus would picture that son who willingly gave himself for us. So we see unity here. We see communion between the Father and the Son that was never interrupted. Which was constant and consistent. And so I believe we have that thought and there were a couple verses that came to mind that. I was just looking at the other day in connection with walking together, and here it's not the father and the son, but it's the believer walking. In communion with the Lord and walking in communion with His brethren. Let's just turn to 2nd Kings chapter 2 for a moment. We see Elijah and Elijah here brought before us

in this chapter and I just want to call the mind. Several expressions that occur here in the chapter the end of verse 6. And says they too went on. There's a togetherness there, isn't there? There's communion not only with the Lord, but with one another. The end of verse seven. They too stood by Jordan.

The end of verse eight, they too went over on dry ground, but I think that verse 11 is a culmination of what we have in the earlier versions and it says and it came to pass as they still. Went on, we read in Galatians, it says we did run well, who did hinder you? And so it's the Lord's desire that each one of us go on in communion with himself. The Lord looks at the end as well as the beginning. And so may we be like the apostle Paul to finish our course. With joy. And so I just thought of that word together they. Still went on. Just said further justify God and then to Abraham. Very quickly, Hebrews 11 gives Abraham credit, in God's view for completing what he was told to do. It says in Hebrews 11 clearly that he offered up his only begotten son. Here in this chapter, he was told to offer up his only son, and so he did what God told him to do, and God gives him credit for the ACT. That his son wasn't burnt wasn't something that Abraham could have seen. In fact, Hebrews 11 Says he looked past death to resurrection, something he'd never seen. But he knew the heart of the gods that was calling to him, giving him instructions, and so he continued on, even though he thought the flames would end up consuming his son. But He carried out what we were reminded yesterday was a voluntary offering. The burnt offering character, the voluntary character of it. God credited him with it in Hebrews 11. There was no inconsistency between what happened and what God told him to do. Also, one other point in Deuteronomy 18. Verse 9, prior to the instruction in verse 10, the key to that is that they were not to get their instructions from the abominations of the Canaanites. Their instructions were to come from God and they were not to follow the people in the land. What's Abraham doing here is getting his instruction from God. So he's consistent in getting his instruction from God. God's consistent in what he asked him to do and what he credited him with doing. And there's no. There's no injustice or inconsistency with God in it. There's one count that you referred to in Hebrews 11. If we read the first part of verse 19, it says accounting that God was able. That's a powerful statement, isn't it? I should comment on this. Thank you for the question to a lot of young people here, younger ones too, I think it's good to raise questions and don't feel that you've been corrected. Sometimes we listen to the answer, we feel like we're being corrected. No, we're trying to help. So thank you for that. One more thought. And that is often we found in the Word of God. It would tell us something and then Satan will come along. And he would trust that just so slightly. Either he adds a little bit to it or take a little bit away from it or simply just lied about it. So it should be an encouragement to us in a sense that we're the search the scriptures, we need to study the scriptures study so that we can be approved of God, not of men. So we know how to cut a straight line when the time comes. Like that or a few more words about they went together to. And what it's a picture of. As we know, here is the burnt offering, and the Father and the Son. The New Testament picture is carried on in John's Gospel. And in John's Gospel, you have the character of the burnt offering and you have the Father and the Son going together. And when you get to what we read about in the end of the life of the Lord Jesus, we have nothing about the three hours of darkness recorded for us. We have it in Matthew, we have it in Mark, we have it in Luke, but you don't have it in John.

The Father and the Son together in the matter of atonement, go beyond what is revealed or our capacity to know, and it's well for us to respect and reverence. There are things in which the Father and the Son go together that go beyond whatever we will ever be able to comprehend or understand. It's their own, and uniquely their own joy. In some things and their own understanding.

Cuyahoga Falls Conference: 2023, Genesis 22:1-2

Reading

Sorry 72 in the appendix, but though I cannot tell or sing or know the fullness of thy love while here below. My empty vessel I may freely bring, O thou who art of love, the living spring, my vessel fill. 72 in the appendix. 127 as well, brother. I'll bless the home, the Father's house. There love divorce. What? Is. The. Rainforests on God's Lord being in the heart of the heart, and I can't believe I'm not going to get. We just say just give him 127. Two things that touch my heart in verse one that we're saying about his Father's love. In the second stanza, we sang about the son. Who knows? Is well beloved. I just like to make a suggestion that a portion that I'm sure we all very familiar with. Genesis chapter 22. Let someone else have something of their heart. Picking that portion speaks well of the Father and the Son. Genesis chapter 22, verse one. The cage cops have released things that attempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham. And he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get the end of the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his *** and took two of his young men with him. And Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went under the place of which God had told him. Then, on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the *** and I, and the lad will go Yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac's son. And he took the fire in his hand and a knife, and they went, both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father. And he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire in the wood, But where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they went, both of them together, and they came to the place which God had told him of. And Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order. And bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand. And took the knife to slay his son. And the Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. He said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him. For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Jireh, as is said to this day. In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. And the Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and he said. By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord. For because thou hast done this thing. Thou hast not withheld thy son thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba.

And Abraham dwelt at Beersheba, And it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milka, she hath also borne children unto thy brother Nehor us is first born, Buzzes brother Camuel the father of Aaron, and Chesed, and Hazzo, and Pildash, and Jidlaf, and Bethie. Well, and Beth, you all begat Rebecca. These eight Milka did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother and his concubine, whose name

was Rumah. She bear also Tiba. Gam Deash. Reading Beating took up the New Testament passages and often the following doctrines. There is no reason that we can introduce many of those thoughts in this chapter. I like to frame something in our mind too, before we get any deeper into this. We often think of the story of Abraham, the obedience one, and rightly so, and and Isaac, Justice, obedient to the Father's will. But I'd like to add another thought to this here, and if we can focus on that, that is, This chapter is about God's mind, God's will, and God's commandment to Abraham. So we have to think of this as is not about me first. We often have thought when we read Scripture is how does that apply to me? I believe that will come naturally. We need to see what does God have in mind. So we find in the very beginning it is is that God did tried Abraham or the King James used the phrase tempted. We'll find in Hebrews He used the word he tried them, it was God. And what was he to do? He is to bring his son. We often think of that as an offering, but what does it say here? It's a special offering. It is a burnt offering we don't really know much about. The four or five types of offerings until we get to the book of Leviticus, But here is mentioned, it is a burnt offering. It's an offering specifically. For God, All of it is for God. As a sweet smelling savior. So I like to just preference that. As we go through this now, you may see this is still Old Testament. Let me preference something a little bit further. How does the New Testament begin? You can look at it. We should know that it start off by saying the generation of Jesus Christ. The son of David, the son of Hebron. If you can't see or do it doesn't it God has this in mind. How does this chapter we read ends now I end interestingly because it applies to us. Well, I'm going to read let's jump down to verse 23 is close enough to the end is that end back duel he got Rebecca. Why Rebecca? Because she's the bride. Here in this chapter we will read that Isaac was to work, was to be offered up as a third offering for God. We don't read up Isaac coming back with him, he said. Abraham returned back to his young man. So in type, Isaac was offered up after the death and resurrection as if it were. A bride was being prepared. So I hope you see where I'm trying to go through this trust of the Spirit of God will guide us to see more of how God has His plan for us. I.

Is said in verse two. We have a sacrifice of degrees. It's one thing. To give up a son. We think of families where there are several sons and to give up one of several would be at trial. But then it says thine only son. That makes it even stronger, doesn't it? And then? Whom thou lovers? And we can't contemplate with our human minds. What that meant for God the Father. To send his well beloved. I'd like to go back to verse one just a little bit, but we mentioned that God is trying Abraham. I thought perhaps we can take an application here for us too. Have we been tried? Have there been time that we felt that we're going through trials and difficulties? Don't know about you. I know I have. And I'm sure many in this room have gone through different trials. And as we grow a little bit in Greece, we learned that the Lord allowed that for our learning, for our strengthening of faith. But interesting to see here. When Abraham was tried, he said. And I thought this is interesting because often we crumble under trials here, Abraham said. Behold. Here I am, obedience to God's will. Even though trying time is ahead of him. Can we say that when we're in difficulties and say to the Lord, here I am. He's basically saying, Lord, what would you have me to do? Can we truly say thy will be done? It may not be pleasant. And as Bruce mentioned, giving up a son, the only son. That's a great trial, that's a great testing, here I am. And. The fact that God is love is significant. And so he says, Take now thy son, thine only son. You know, he had Ishmael, but he was not a son of promise. This was the son of promise. And offer him up for a burnt offering. I don't know if I'm right, but I think it's basically before Leviticus. It's only burnt offerings that were are mentioned, aren't they? I don't remember for sure, but. That's the predominant offering before the levitical order was given that. Like you say, it's a picture of the Lord Jesus completely. Dedicated to God the Father's glory, so he's going to be burnt to ashes. And to think of how that Abraham. I just marvel, brethren, that. Verse three it says he rose up early in the morning. He didn't delay at all. And we know in the New Testament what it says, that he knew that God could even raise him from the dead. If God had given him a son when he was 100 years old. And his wife was 90 years old. Something that was miraculous, really. Would there be anything too hard for God to raise him from the dead? And since God had already promised him that his seed was going to be like the stars of the heaven and as the sand by the seashore, why it was a matter of simply believing God. Would God forego? If we're going to burn him to ashes, would God forgo that promise? No.

Abraham knew that and I think that's beautiful. That's that's faith tested, exercised. Probably signify a sweet smell. We often associate things with words. So if we were to associate burnt. So if a house was on fire and you go there afterwards you smell the burnt smell of the house. But I do not believe that's the thought in connection with burnt. Awfully is a sweet smelling. Savour the Lord, look at that essence. It was nice. Is for him so here he was to offer that up even though he's testing Abrahams faith. We see Abraham have to fade. I'm going to jump ahead. We'll see look look at the latter part of verse five. He he said told the young man I and the lad will go Yonder and worship. Well that's nice. It's going to go where the Lord asked him to go, but then he said and come again to you. He has that confidence, but yet his faith took him further than that. And I'm jumping ahead again. We find that he was ready with that knife, the thrust into his son. The Lord as it waited, waited and testing, and that as if it was still the last moment, they waived Abraham. Now I see your faith. So when we are in trials and difficulties, we have to remember that the Lord knows. Because often things look so dim, looks like there's no way out. And actually when we read you the word of God, we often bring ones to the lowest point where we can see that there is no way out. Then we see his hand coming into the box because He knows how hard. If you don't like me, I will say, Lord, it's OK. There's one more thing I can try. I got this. And then when that failed, our hearts were, well, maybe I missed something. There's another thing I can try. Instead of leaving it in the Lord's hand. People to get ahold of that God's promises are true. You can trust God. There is one thing. That we do that God cannot do that is lie. So if he gives you a promise. You can trust it. Well, maybe I don't understand. Well, that's a possibility. I don't understand very well the word of God, but. Get to know the promises of God. Exceeding great and precious promises. And let me tell you, young people, if you believe them, the Lord may allow you to be tested how far your belief goes. And it's something that is true in the life of faith. That if you believe God, you're going to be tested. How? Real is that faith, you say? And so here it is, the test of faith for Abraham. I can't think, like you say, of a harder task to do than to take your son and to go and offer him a burnt offering. But that was the test. And Abraham? There is no sign of any back talk to God, no sign that he said, but Lord, you said this was to be the Son of promise. No back talk, simply obey. And that shows how much you really trust God. How much do you owe me? Taking out the honorable form of connection. Be leaving, he could say in Acts chapters 27 for I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me. That's confidence, isn't it? And it was clear. It was clear to him. God said it, I believe it. And as we say, that settled.

Like to comment on two things have already been brought before us. As Bob said, this chapter is the first chapter in the Bible that brings love before us. Also, David said one of the thoughts of the chapter is the purpose of God, What's in the mind and will of God. I'd like to connect those two thoughts with the chapter by what I believe the Spirit of God gave to us in hymn 127. I'm going to reread the first verse and a little of the second verse and then comment on these things. I'll bless the home, the Father's house. Their love, divine death, rests. What else could satisfy the hearts of those in Jesus? Bless. This home made ours His Father's love, our hearts full portion given the first portion of the first born Son, the full delight of heaven. Oh what a home, the Son who knows he only. All His love and brings us to His well beloved, to that right rest of all. Everything that's the purpose and will begins in the heart of God as to what will last. And here we have brought before us in this chapter

the preeminent, I believe thought is what's in the heart of God. And the heart of God is seen here in the way in which he tempts Abraham. He uses Abraham as a means to display a truth to us. And. We don't have the son's love in this chapter. Isaac is simply there and the father of Isaac is the one that makes all the decisions and Isaac is just simply passive, if you will in the chapter. But the father? As we talk about Abraham, what was he willing? Was he willing to obey? Yes, he was, and we see faith in Abraham. But what about the Father, our God? Was he willing to give? Was his love strong enough that he was willing to give? And of course, we know the answer. He was. And so he takes, in reality his own son. To be the burnt sacrifice. It's God's heart that produced that, in which His Son would give everything to himself and the Son here and type. For example, they clave the wood for the burnt offering. That's the manhood of both Son brought before us in figure, and so it's the two of them together. That go alone. For the offering. And that's the truth of what it costs. The father, his son and he had to go together. We had nothing to do with it in purpose and thought, in heart or any other way. We were just get to see it, if you will, in picture here. And so the father's heart was satisfied. But at the cost of his son giving everything to himself. But. The other side of it is. And it's also the Father's heart, but it's the other side of it. The sun here is passive. We don't see anything of his love here, but we get it in John's Gospel. We get the sons heart displayed to us in the Gospel of John. And he says in the 14th chapter, I'm going to go to my father's house. But what is his joy? The Father wants the son to have his joy. We sang 127. We sang in the in the appendix. The 22 is it, and you find the word high in there a whole lot of times. Why? Because we're so fixed on our joy and we miss out on the greater joy. The Father's joy is preeminent, and we should learn to make it preeminent in our own hearts. But following that.

What does the father do for the son? He says to the son, I want your joy, your joy, my son to be full. And how's his son's joy going to be full? He says you've got to be with me in my father's house, and then I'll be satisfied. If I bring you to my father's house, my father's joy. And my joy will be fully, perfectly satisfied. And so when he's leaving us here on earth and John, he's returning to the father's house. But is his joy satisfying? Not yet, not yet. And it won't be until you're there. And I'm there, and then he sees in us the fruit of the travail of the soul, his soul's love, and he's satisfied, and the father satisfied because he can't be satisfied unless the heart of his son is at rest and enjoy. And that's in my own soul. That's the preeminent purpose of this chapter. We got faith tested and so on, and Abraham, and it's an important thing for us to learn. But Even so, if we talk about purpose, Abraham doesn't have a clue in this chapter what's going on. There's absolutely no intelligence in his soul except the question of obedience and submission. And Abraham is the father of faith to us because he submits and obeys even when he knows nothing. And that's another purpose of the chapter. But we miss a lot if we if we don't see in a the purpose of the Father's heart for us and the satisfaction of the complementary satisfaction of the Sun. There's a thought that. What you're saying, Brother Dawn, with regards to Abraham's faith? In that first verse. A man of faith always answers the same way Abraham did here he said, behold, here am I. It's the way a man of faith answers. But to me, what really emphasizes. Abraham's faith that there was number question here as to what he was going to do, but the burnt offering was a voluntary offering. We don't get that until we get to Leviticus that. God is not confined with time. The burnt offerings was a voluntary offer. Burnt offering is mentioned at least three times. We find that we read that earlier in verse two that God said to Abraham to take his son. He said for a burnt offering. What's your thought? And then Abraham said that as well in verse six. He took the word, this is Abraham took the word of the current offering. Then we find Isaac in verse seven. He said behold the fire and the word, but where is the lamb for burnt offering? So we see the Godhead is working on this together. What the university and Leviticus chapter one voluntary offering and I thought of that portion there and how one would might take their. Their best lamb or their best animal without blemish, it says, and offered as a burnt offering. But. This man was going to offer his only son, Isaac, and what it must have been for him to consider that and to obey it in complete dependence upon God and his authority and his guidance. And that's the picture for you and I. And, and when we consider that little portion in this chapter that says God will provide himself a lamb, we see that in our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't we behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world? And we often read that verse in first Peter.

Chapter One. For as much as you know that you are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of Lamb, without blemish and without spot. And he offered Him up. For us there, we even read it in Isaiah, don't we? When? He wrote here am I send me And he voluntarily went to the Cross forest, didn't he? I think if you look in John chapter 5, there's a little bit more there. That speaks about the father and the Son. Further rule is bringing out. And. John 5 and verse 19 it says the Son can do nothing of himself but what he sees the Father do for what things. So whatever he do, what things so ever he doeth these also do with the sun. Likewise for the Father loveth the Son, and show with him all things that himself do it, that he will show him greater works than these, that you may marvel. And so on. He says, verse 23, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth, not the Son on earth, not the Father which hath sent him. Verse 26. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have light in himself. Participating in that expression to that was called the mind in verse 2. For a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, which I will tell the other by contrast, and 2nd Kings chapter four we have name it and. God told Naaman a specific river that he was to. He submerged in but then he questioned that, didn't it? Aren't the rivers of Urbana and far Par those rivers in his own land? Better. He didn't accept the. The provisions for his own blessing. And it was that river, the Jordans that he was to dip himself. He questioned it. But here Abraham does not question it doesn't. Here's a specific commandment. I don't question it. It's God's will. Servants that. Encouraged him, and he was encouraged to do it, to do what God had said. God didn't change his his instructions, did he? But naman. In a gracious manner, too, didn't they? My father had gone. Burnt offering being holy for God is connected with. Fact that it's voluntary in a greater sense. That God had a choice. He could say I will or I won't. He could send his son, he was not obligated to and the other offerings it was an obligation to offer. If it was a sin offering or a trespass offering the one who offered, there was no choice in it. It was a commandment. It was an obligation to do what you had to do because of your sin. You couldn't provide the offering really yourself. That is the lamb. There had to be a lamb for you to offer. But with God it's not. So God didn't have to. Do it. But He voluntarily chose to send His Son. The Son likewise in deity could say, hear my, send me. And so with the Son there was that voluntary will, as in perfect unity with God the Father to do it. Having become a man, He puts aside His will completely to do the will of the Father.

I do always those things which please the Father characterized his life perfectly. And so in that way he's passive as to will as we see him, the sun, passive as to will in this chapter. And yet it's a wonderful thing to recognize. It's another expression of the greatness of the love of God that's brought out in this chapter that he voluntarily chose. To have a sin offering. Army as well, I should say, have his Son the for himself a burnt offering, and we do well to, as it were in some sense, put aside our own needs and whatevers, and see the heart of God manifested even in the offering. Like to perhaps look at a practical example. Brother mentioned Leviticus, one that give us a detail of the offerings of the burnt offering I'm thinking of. The smallest of it is the turtle Duff. Let's turn to that. There may be something we can learn from that. Leviticus chapter one. When one is to bring in a turtle down, there is a set of things there to do. Now, of course there are other things. If you're rich, you can bring in an oxygen, a Bullock, and so on. But this is the part I got in my heart there, verse 15. Perhaps I'll start at verse 16. And this is for the turtle dot. And he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers and cast it beside the altar on the east side by the place of the ashes. So

the first thing, this offering, even though it was a willing offering coming in, what does this the priest have to do the crop? What's the crop? Guess the gizzard and some of you who raised chicken would know what that is. Chicken eat almost anything. I remember we used to have chicken when we were young and I remember we used to tea stones. Not a good thing. You throw rubber bands on the ground and they would, they would just gobble it up thinking as it were and where does it go? It go into the gizzard and you go into the crop. A lot of undigested food. So we have things that we haven't meditated on, but we know we can repeat it. Have you make it good for your own soul if it's just part of the crop, things that you are just repeating and echoing? Is that here? The Lord just said take it, cast it away into the ashes. So we need to make the word of God good to our own soul. But then what about the feather? Again, how many of you have seen? A chicken before the feather has been plugged, you look at the size of a chicken and once you pluck the feather off, the sides look a lot smaller. I think the feather as if it was something that, well today I guess we can use the phrase it's for the show. We fluff it up to look bigger. No Peacocks do that. There is a form of a hand and they flubbed up those big feather to make it look so huge. Supposingly pretty, the Lord said all this fluffs, cast them aside. So when we come to the Lord now, there's more to it. I don't want to seek too much more of the time on that. You have to cleave it and so on, so that everything is exposed, so that it can't find any fault as if it were. But it's an interesting thought for me to think of even the simplest of the offering. The Lord wants reality. He wants that faith from our hearts, the obedience, like Abraham of old. To do what he was asked to do. I just want to make a quick comment about suffering. In a first in Philippians chapter one and verse 29, it says unto you, it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. We may be called on to suffer in in unimaginable ways. And as you mentioned earlier, David, we've all suffered to different extents, but we can't choose our own Crucible.

We can't decide how I'm going to suffer. We've been talking about voluntary. Suffering voluntary burnt offering. Are we willing? To accept what God has given to us to suffer. It may be very difficult. But the Lord gives us the grace to go through the suffering, and there's just one verse I want to read in First Corinthians 10 and verse 13. The temptation, the the testing. 1St Corinthians 10 verse 13 There hath no temptation taking you. But such as is common to man, but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that she may be able to bear it. Some people have to go through incredible suffering in difficult times, and we wonder how can they bear it? Without the Lord, how can we bear? But the Lord? He goes through these difficult times with us, and He wants us to know that He's there for us. We take 18 in the back, 18 in the appendix. And. I. Believe Lord. Genesis 18. There are 17. And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do both in prayer?

Fragments Gathered Up, If They Only Knew

It has been said of some that they wrought, of others that they wrote or spoke better than they knew. Doubtless even Abraham only vaguely entered into the far-reaching, mysterious import of the words with which he calmed the anxiety of Isaac with regard to a sacrificial lamb. “God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering” (Genesis 22:8).

How these words have echoed down the ages, and what a striking exemplification we have here of the admirable saying of Augustine that the Old Testament enfolds what the New unfolds! So do nicely adjusted mirrors with their opposing beams materially enhance each other’s radiance.

Next, we may note the remarkable way in which the Patriarch enters into God’s side of the question. “God will provide himself a lamb.” So Simeon, “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” Sometimes we think too exclusively of our salvation, though doubtless the sinner must begin with the sin-offering. But God’s portion, so to speak, must come first, as we learn in the opening of Leviticus. And in beautiful accord are these words of Abraham.

R. B.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Two Great Lights?

Question: Gen. 1:16. Why the “two great lights” mentioned in the fourth day’s work, seeing that the sun is really the center of our planetary system? and how could it have been dark (ver. 2) if the sun was then in existence?

Answer: The two “great lights” were constituted as they still are (not created then) in relation to the earth prepared for man, like the work of all the six days. The dense darkness that prevailed in the chaotic state which preceded these days easily accounts for the gloom, though the sun, moon and stars were already in existence since God created the heavens and the earth, which took place, it may be, ever so long before the great geologic ages previous to the Adamic race. Not that scripture is occupied with these material processes; but it leaves ample room before the first day in ver. 3.

Young Christian: Volume 3, 1913, Shut Door, The

“And the Lord shut him in” (Gen. 7:16).

Noah did not close the door. These are words that God keeps for Himself. The burden is too heavy for the back of man. To shut that door on a world about to perish would have been too great a responsibility for a son of Adam. Another moment, and another, and another might have been granted by Noah, and the door might never have been shut, and the ship that carried the life of the world might have been swamped. And so it is in the ark of salvation. It is not the church nor the minister that shuts or opens the door. These do God’s bidding; they preach righteousness; they offer salvation, and it is God that shuts and opens the door. O, what a sigh and shudder will pass through the listening universe when God will shut the door of the heavenly ark upon the lost!”

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Lot's Daughters and Their Husbands

Question and Answer: Gen. 19:8, 12, 14. An American friend writes wondering at the oversight in Lectures on the Pentateuch (76) where Lot’s daughters are spoken of as brought out without “their unbelieving husbands.” It is clearly new to him that there is any question possible. But it is a fact that very competent persons agree with the Vulgate that the two daughters were only espoused and still under the father’s roof, not yet taken to their future homes. Hence the Hebrew well bears the marginal reading of the Revisers, “were to marry” in ver. 14; for it is literally “the takers of.” The A.V. agrees with the Sept. If these be right, it would of course imply other married daughters who perished in the judgment that befell Sodom. Bp. Christ. Wordsworth accepts the Latin version unhesitatingly. But enough is said to show the question.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Lot Only Two Daughters?

Question: Gen. 19:14-16. Is it correct, as often assumed, that Lot had only two daughters of sorrowful memory?—A Disciple.

Answer: It would seem that besides the two maiden daughters in his house Lot had others with his sons-in-law outside, whom he sought in vain to save from the doomed city. In the “Introductory Lectures on the Pentateuch” this oversight is said to have been made. That the confusion has been often made by excellent men is of no weight against the simple force of the word.

Scripture Queries and Answers, Scripture Queries and Answers: Number of Lot's Daughters; Pharoah Perished in the Red Sea?

Q.-Gen. 19:14-16. Is it correct, as often assumed, that Lot had only two daughters of sorrowful memory?—A Disciple.

A -It would seem that besides the two maiden daughters in his house Lot had others with his sons-in-law outside, whom he sought in vain to save from the doomed city. In the " Introductory Lectures on the Pentateuch " this oversight is said to have been made. That the confusion has been often made by excellent men is of no weight against the simple force of the word.

Q.-Ex. 14 xv. Is there substantial ground for doubting that the Pharaoh of Exodus, Menephthah, perished with his host in the Red Sea? I am aware that Sir G. Wilkinson (Ancient Egypt, i. 54) so thought, and that the Rev. Professor Rawlinson follows him (Hist. of Anc. Eg., ii. 336).—A Disciple

A.-We are not limited to the writings of Moses. The Psalms are no less divinely inspired. If the language is only general in Exodus, Psa. 136:15 is explicit, that Jehovah " overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea."

Girdle of Truth: Volume 5, Communion, and the Ground of It

Genesis 18:17-19

I have been occupied lately with this word as being a very descriptive display of the ground of intimacy on which the Lord sets His people with Himself. In the case of Abraham, the condition of the revelation put him in that place, but the testimony to us is, that we have the place in which he stood, though in a much higher sense. He stood on the earth, the place of judgment, but we are altogether out of the place of judgment, enjoying the blessing itself.

The men rose up and looked toward Sodom. The Lord directed them in judgment; and Abraham went with them to show them the way. The Lord makes His saints His companions; not invariably, but still He does. " Who hath known the mind of the Lord? but we have the mind of Christ." Thus in the communications God has made to us, He has made us His own companions in the best way; for I do not know a better way in which any one can show his love to another, than by communicating to him his thoughts and feelings. " Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." So we are to walk with Christ, until He comes and takes us up to Himself. The exercise and path of faith is down here.

Abraham went with the men to show them the way only. And mark, the Church is above judgment; I don't mean above discipline to do them good. Lot looked towards Sodom, but Abraham was out of it. Abraham being the Lord's companion is not only delivered out of the judgment, but when the Lord is going to judge He must tell Abraham about it. " Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do, for I know him," &c. So it is with us. The ground of this communication is the thought the Lord has about us. He has centered His love in us, therefore He lets us into His confidence. He says, If I have brought Abraham into this place, I will introduce him into it. So God has made known to us the mystery of His will, because of the place in which He has put the Church in Christ.

There is great blessing in this word, " I know him." The Lord does not talk about those He is going to judge in that way. When He talks about judgment, He talks about going down to see, and till He has fully investigated it, He won't touch them. It is not so with the saints. He has no need, so to speak, to go down to see about them, for He fully knows them. As He said of Abraham, " I know him." The cry of Sodom had come up before God; but before going to execute judgment, He will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it "which is come unto me."

" The men went towards Sodom, but Abraham stood yet before the Lord." That is blessed. For if the Lord knows Abraham, so that he is able to get the blessing, he stays with the Lord Himself. He is going to bring judgment on the world, and He won't smite till He can't help it; but no judgment coming on the world can separate Abraham from God. God's eye so rests upon Abraham, that he rests quiet in God. So it is with us. Whatever trial may be coming on the world, our place is to abide with the Lord Himself; and then, like Abraham, the effect of having drunk into this grace will be, we shall be calm, quiet, and happy. Our place is not to go down to search out the depths of iniquity, bat to let the cry come up to us. There will be Lots many, but let us be with God on the mountain, abiding in perfect peace with the Lord Himself.

Abraham being in perfect peace had nothing to ask for himself, and was therefore free to intercede for others. So it was in the case of Abimelech. If Abraham be a prophet, if he has this intimacy with the mind of the Lord, let him pray for these. So it is with us. " If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you." The possession of the Lord's mind gives the power of intercession for others, not like wrestling Jacob to get blessing for himself, though we may have to wrestle for ourselves and to get-individual blessing. Here it is communion, and the knowledge of this communion produces peace and joy. There is reverence of course, " I am but dust to ashes," but perfect intimacy. And the Lord went His way " as soon as he had done communing with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place." Abraham's position was with the Lord, in perfect peace, in unquestioned confidence, having nothing to settle with God, but on the ground on which he can enjoy perfect communion with Him.

Christian Truth: Volume 10, God's Order

"I know him [Abraham], that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Gen. 18:19. Strange that in the families of so many of God's people nowadays, His instituted rule is exactly inverted—the children lead the mother, and the wife rules the husband. Nothing but evil can accrue from such a state of things.

Sound Words - 1873, Answers to Correspondents: Already Holy; Everlasting Possession vs. Passed Away

Q.-What does our Lord mean in John 17:19: " And for their sakes I sanctify myself." Surely He was holy?

A.-Sanctify here has, of course, no reference to our blessed Lord becoming personally more holy, or more acceptable to God, but to the position which, for us, Re would occupy in glory. It is not here His work for us on the cross by which, according to Heb. 10:10, we are already sanctified, but His position in glory, as taken for us, the revelation of which to our souls by the word sanctifies us, and sets us apart from earthly things for God's glory, according to the heavenly place that Christ now occupies.

Many persons rejoice in the work of Christ on the cross for them, and know that by that work they are fitted for God's presence, but not having apprehended the place in glory that Christ occupies for them, they, though having peace with God, are earthly minded, and do not see separation from " this present evil world." Occupation of heart with Christ in glory at God's right hand takes the heart off; the earth, and outside the world, and we thus become "sanctified by the truth." It is this blessed effect of the glory of Christ that we have set before us in 2 Cor. 3:18, " We all with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Q.-In Gen. 17:8, we read that Abraham's seed should have the land of Canaan -for an everlasting possession, and in Rev. 21:1, we read of a new heaven and a new earth for the first' heaven and the first earth were passed away. How can these two statements be reconciled?

A.-The force of the word everlasting is always supplied to the mind by the connection in which it is used. In itself the word signifies continuance and uninterruptedness, but its force is modified according as it is used abstractedly, or in connection with some definite idea by which its particular import is supplied to the mind. Thus in the case of the promise to Abraham in the place referred to, " the everlasting possession " would involve the uninterrupted possession of the land of Canaan by his seed as long as the earth continued in the condition to which such a promise would apply, and thus the force of this word everlasting in this instance would fall within the scope of another promise of God made to Noah in the end of Gen. 8, " While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Then in the next chapter we read, " And the bow shall be in the cloud: and I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." As long then as the earth, as it now is, continues " every living creature of all flesh" will be under this " everlasting covenant " of God, and the seed of Abraham will have " the everlasting possession "

of the land promised to them. In the new heavens and new earth it will be no question of " all flesh," or of a special nation enjoying special blessings, but all such conditions and distinctions will have disappeared, and a totally new order of creation have come in, which will be the eternal state abstractedly, a condition of uninterrupted blessedness totally independent of the previous dealings of God with men, and with nothing in the future to bound the thought supplied by the word " everlasting."

Christian Friend: Volume 2, Perfection, Extract From a Letter on

You must take your place right before the Lord Jesus Christ—the Savior. The Epistle to the Hebrews, I may say, puts you there.

In early days, God Almighty set Himself before Abraham, when Abraham had taken up confidence in Hagar, confidence in the flesh, confidence in something other than the all-sufficiency of God. “I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect.” (Gen. 17:1) This was a rebuke. Abraham was not then perfect in his generation. He had lost the power of the name or revelation of God. The state of his soul did not answer to that in God which was dispensed or made known to him. That is, Abraham was not perfect, failing in confidence when God was with him as the Almighty.

In the days of the ministry of the Son (revealing Him who makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good) perfection of another order was looked for, as we read in Matthew 5:44-48. There the Father, in all the full, free bountifulness of paternal goodness, is set before us by the Lord, and perfection is imitation of Him. Confidence was perfection, when the Almighty was revealed, or stood before the soul; generosity, that counts only on the need, and not on the worthiness of its object, is perfection when the Father stands before us.

So, in the day of the same ministry, perfection again takes another form, as we may see in Matthew 19:21. The Lord Jesus had been on the heavenly hill, in the glory that belonged to that place, with Moses and Elias. (Chapter 17) He was, in an eminent sense, the Stranger—the self-emptied heavenly Stranger here; and standing before the rich young man, He speaks to him of a perfection suited to such an one: “If thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow Me.” This is a high order of perfection indeed—imitation of the fully-emptied heavenly Jesus. And nothing less than this is the living, practical perfection that suits the heavenly calling. “I have overcome the world,” says Jesus. Perfection is the taking of that place with Him, which this dispensation opens and shows to us. Paul had much of it realized in his soul when he uttered Philippians 4, and the Hebrew saints knew a good deal of it, as we see them in Hebrews 10:32-34, in the day of their illumination.

But, beloved, we must not stop here. Good it is to look at all this, and discern these forms and characters (different as they are) of perfection in the people of God. But God looks to be glorified in us in a still different form of perfection, and we find this precious secret in the epistle to the Hebrews.

There, the Holy Ghost summons our conscience into the presence of Christ as a Savior. His perfection for us sinners is there made known to us. The law never provided in Moses, or in Aaron, or in Joshua, or in the victim on the Jewish altar, or in all these put together, a perfect Captain of salvation, or Author of eternal salvation; but God has given us such an one in His suffering Son; and the conscience of the sinner is called into His presence, summoned to stand before Him, and to take of the perfection which is there revealed to it, by enjoying peace and cleansing, and consequent boldness of access into the divine presence.

Here is your perfection, beloved, obtained by the gaze of faith at the Lamb of God. It is not the perfection of confidence which knows God’s all-sufficiency for the circumstances of life, nor the perfection of generosity which acts after the pattern of paternal goodness, nor the perfection of imitation of a heavenly Jesus; but it is that form of perfection that glorifies God more than all, because it glorifies Him in that grace that has dispensed a remedy to our deepest necessity, and healed a breach in the tenderest place—the conscience of a wretched, ruined, good-for-nothing sinner.

And God would have this perfection, the principle and power of all others. If we trust in God, if we imitate the bountifulness of the Father, if we walk in the steps of a heavenly, self-renouncing Master, it must be because we have been “illuminated” by the sight, or rather by the clear, full, and gladdening light of Him who has perfected Himself for our salvation. “He is perfect for you, though you may be weak in looking at Him.”1 J. G. B.

Bible Treasury: Volume 13, Genesis 17:1-8, Brief Words on

God brings good out of evil, and in every kind of the trial of our faith He finds occasion of ministering to us, not only according to His heart, but according to our own. Of this there was none in innocence, as none in heaven. He brings all the fullness of His grace into trial to prove there is One who is interested in us in our varied sorrow. He has brought Himself nearer to our hearts in trial than at any other time, showing the perfectness of His heart of love to us. He has purged our consciences entirely. Without this our hearts could never reflect upon all that He is.

There are two characters of our intercourse with God. In Canaan Israel dwelt in God's land, in the desert they did not. In them God dwelt in ministering to their need, and in blessing them. Through daily life the Christian learns what God is for us in the desert; here God especially shows His grace and mercy, but it is not quite right to rest here, in what God is to us, in ministering to our wants in the desert. Whether in the desert or in Canaan, we are with God; but it is a different thing to have God abiding with us in the desert, and we abiding with Him where He is. Christ comes down here; He bears our sicknesses, and carries our sorrows. There is not a sorrow of the human heart that Christ does not enter into it-tried in all points like as we are. This wins the affections, because it speaks to our hearts. Cain was in the place of what you call duty, he had not a sense of sin, nor of the new thing. There is not a single thing in the character of sorrow into which Christ did not come. Trial ought not to be needed; but yet God has to put us through all kinds of sorrow and trial, that we may feel our need of God, so proud and self-sufficient are we. Jesus says, Come to Me; I stand wholly alone and out of the world. If you have a want, come to Me; if you have found the world is toil and labor, come to Me. I have tried the world, and find not one thing in it; if you have found this too, come to Me.

I meet self in its wants, sorrows, and trials. God comes to meet us where we are; but we are not to stop here.

If a friend help me in difficulty, and supplies all my need, I do not stop here, I seek fellowship and communion with that friend. God came, and said to Abraham, Fear not; this world is a place of fear. We want a shield: God says, I am thy shield. We are poor: God is our reward. Walk before Me, be with Me according to what I am-perfect, walking with God according to the revelation that God gives us of Himself. God comes into the heart, and there is not a fiber but He puts in tune by His own grace. You will have sorrows where self-sufficiency is at work; you will have trials where self-will is not judged to show you what is in God, and to ripen you for heaven; to make us think of the sorrows of others, and love others, caring for the wants of others, and not our own. When God talked with Abraham, he fell upon his face; ha did not ask God for anything. When He has emptied us, and we have learned Him, He talks with us, telling us of Himself— “I am the Almighty God.” He expects us to care for Himself. He cares for us surely. Whatever your trial, come to Himself; do not reason about it, but bring it to Him. God talks to you of His plans and purposes, of His own blessedness. I put Myself into this blessed relationship with thee, that I may bring thee into enjoyment with Myself. Abraham falls upon his face. This is holy reverence, the spirit of worship. God is not ashamed to be called your God.

How far can you intercede for others? I find this often a test to my own soul. God would have us live in the knowledge of Himself, and in the blessed enjoyment of Himself, in a spirit of intercession. If I am in the presence of God, I shall fall on my face and be nothing-God is everything.

Bible Treasury: Volume 1, Perfection: Fragment

Perfection—When it is said, “Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” (Matt. 5:48.), Jesus Himself explains this passage by what precedes. This perfection consists in acting according to love and not according to the law of retaliation which says, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” It is the acting towards men according to the principle of God acting towards us according to the grace of our heavenly Father. There is no question here as to the root of sin in our nature.

This word perfection is used in connection with the three great revelations of God. He made Himself known to Abraham as the Almighty, to the Jews as the Eternal, and to Christians as Father. God said to Abraham, “I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect:” thus signifying that he ought to walk before God, trusting continually in His power as Almighty. Abraham did not do this—he failed in this respect, for he spoke falsehood (Gen. 20:2), just because he was not trusting in the almighty power of God. The question is not as to sin in Abraham's fallen nature, but of acting in full confidence in God's omnipotence. In fact, Abraham had still sin, and he fell.

It was said to the Israelites, “Thou shalt be perfect with Jehovah thy God (Deut. 18:13). The matter in hand here was their not imitating the abominations of the Canaanites in their idolatries; but there was no question of the state of purification from all sin, of the heart of one Israelite or another. The contrary is so true that in the same book (Deut. 29:4) Moses says to them, “Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day.”

Thirdly, it is said (Matt. 5:48), “Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” We at once observe a difference in the expressions. It is not said, Be perfect “before me,” or “with thy God,” as was said to Abraham and to the Israelites, because the name of Father reveals to us the fullness of grace. According to this sweet name they were already children, accepted is Christ as Christ is accepted of the Father. They were already made accepted in the Beloved; righteous before God as Christ is righteous; loved as Jesus is loved. Now it is not said, Present to God a character of perfection, such that you should be accepted of Him through this means, and that you should be well-pleasing to Him; but you are the children of your heavenly Father—therefore display His character to the world. “For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” He acts according to His grace, and not according to the law: you saved sinners, you are and ought to be witnesses of it. The publicans love those who love them, but your heavenly Father loves His enemies. Act according to this rule, and be perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. It is not said, Be perfect before Him, or with Him, as if you were without sin, but like Him, act in love towards your enemies.

There is no question here as to whether sin is or is not in the flesh, but of the principle which ought to direct the conduct of God's children, in contrast with the principle of the law or of natural justice. But if to be perfect as my heavenly Father is to be applied to the absence of the sin of my nature, if it means that I resemble Him perfectly in this respect, seeing that perfection, according to those who hold that doctrine, still leaves things which expose us to eternal damnation, the same thing would be true of the divine perfection—an idea which, of course, would be the grossest impiety and absurdity.

Girdle of Truth: Volume 4, God's Dwelling Place

All the relationships we have with God are founded on these two names -God and Father. I can only know God in the way he has revealed Himself-and that is the way He has revealed Himself, as the God and Father of Jesus.

Hence it is said to be eternal life to know God thus, i.e., in the Son. It is never said, that they had eternal life in connection with God Almighty:-we know they had, but it is not so characterized.

There are two things we have to know in God, that are precious to us-communion and God's dwelling place. Now this latter Abraham never had. We never read of God dwelling with any until redemption is accomplished. God could visit, give promises, &c., but He could not take up a person, or body of persons, and say, There is my dwelling place, until redemption was fully accomplished. How could God dwell where He saw sin?

The more I go on, the more I see the immense importance of this, that the unqualified results of grace should have their place in the hearts of the saints. I am sure nothing can protect them against the incoming of the seductions of the latter days, but the consciousness that they are not of the world of which Satan is the prince; but that they belong to God in virtue of a redemption which has put them in connection with Himself, apart from all question of sin, flesh, or Satan.

God blessed the faultless creature, but He was not the companion of the creature. He visits Abraham, but He has no dwelling place with Abraham; but the instant I get redemption at the Red Sea, I get the song, " This is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation." In the 15th of Exodus, and in the 29th, we find this to be the settled purpose for which He has brought them out.

Singularly lovely are the visits He pays to Abraham, but Abraham was a stranger on earth, and God was a stranger; but He has a throne in Israel. The worth of redemption is that He can dwell among them. Did God dwell among them when He said, " When I see the blood," &c. No. He is passing through as a judge. The moment redemption is wrought, (i. e., the work done which takes us out of the condition we were in, and puts us into another) He dwells among them. This is an immense truth. Has God made any mistake as to the cleansing which He has accomplished by the blood of Christ? Any mistake as to the righteousness which He has made us to be in Christ, and on which He has put His seal and fiat because He likes it? Let your hearts say what the value of the redemption is on the footing of which God comes and dwells in us. Can a single unsettled question remain if God has made me His home? He does not dwell with Abraham, but on the ground of redemption He does in Israel. In Egypt God had not lost the character of a judge, but of whom was He a judge at the Red Sea? Only of their enemies. His character is changed entirely; He is in relationship with them. So at Pentecost. Grace had come and sought them, but redemption had to be wrought; and then God comes and dwells with them. They are delivered and so cleansed as that God can make His abode with them. There is not one atom that does not bear the stamp of the blood and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. There will be all kinds of exercises in order to maintain the relationship, but we are in it. It is there to be maintained.

In Genesis the 17th, we see the difference between a soul resting on promises for the earth, and the heart resting in God so as to have communion with God. It is a different thing to get kindness, and to enjoy Him who does the kindness. The first revelation of God to Abraham. gave no communion, but calls him from " Ur of the Chaldees." But Abraham will never bring " Terah" into Canaan. You may have left the

world, and yet you will never get into Canaan with Terah. Many a soul is longing to be there, but there is a 'constant grieving of their Leader. Is He going to put His sanction on that? Never. When at God's call he went to go into Canaan, " into the land of Canaan they came." In the giving up of self and of the world there is power. Abraham gave it up and Abraham had power. Lot had no power. Abraham brought Lot back, and had the spoil of the world, yet gave it all up. God was his portion. He had given up the world and not gotten Canaan. His trust is in God. He will not have a single thing in which God is not.

If I say, I am your reward (Gen. 15) where do I get the measure and character of the reward? In your heart. That is not wrong, but it went no further. It made what man could look for, the measure of what God could give. It could meet every want, but am I going to make God merely a servant for all my wants?

In the 17th chapter it is not meeting man even in respect of His own promises and man's wants. There it is, " I am the Almighty God," &c.; not a word of " thy." It is not, I am "thy" Almighty God. He was that, but He was much more. It is what He is. God reveals Himself, saying in effect to Abraham, " You have not to do with promises, you have not to do with wants; you have to do with me." " Walk before me, and be thou perfect." Let there be the full answer to what I am.

What God wants is to take us out of it all to enjoy Himself. He has given us a nature capable of enjoying Himself. He is a Father and we are children. When He says, I am holy, our hearts reply, 0 what a comfort. Not a particle of sin will be in His presence. He is love-to be sure He is, and it is shed abroad in my heart, and I am living in it and on it. God talked with Abraham. I get not merely promises, but communion.

In the 15th chapter Abraham says, What wilt thou give me? In the 18th he is interceding for others. If you are living in the sense of your own need, your prayers will turn round yourself; but when there is that kind of confidence which is found in communion, besides prayer for your wants, you will be able to intercede for others; there will be the intercessional link. In the 15th chapter Abram remains Abram; in the 17th his name is no more Abram, but Abraham.

Has He not done the same with the Church? We are associated with the full tide of His own thoughts in grace. After the struggling at Peniel, God gave no revelation of Himself; but when Jacob got back to Bethel He revealed Himself unasked.

We are not in the flesh at all; we are not in Egypt at all; and the God we have found is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He talks with us. We are on our faces it is true, but still He talks with us on the ground of redemption. We are not in the old name by which we were known in flesh, but in Christ. " The Lord direct our hearts into his love."

The Springing Well: Volume 5 (1902), Story of Ishmael; or, God Will Hear. - 1, The

“Thou . . . shalt call his name Ishmael because the Lord path heard thy affliction” (Gen. 16:1).

ISHMAEL lived a very long time ago, but it is just as true that he lived and spoke as if he had lived in the next street, and had passed up and down every day. How can I be so sure about him? Because all that we know of Ishmael is written in the Bible, which is God’s own true Book: and it is there that we can read of what he did. We can read of many wonderful things and persons in God’s own wonderful Book, but the most wonderful of all is, that God gave His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come down to this world and die on the cross, that all who believe in Him should live for ever. The little hymn says:

The name of Ishmael’s mother was Hagar. She had not to choose a name for her little baby when he was born, because God had sent word to her what she was to call him: the Angel of the Lord had said to her, “Thou shalt call his name Ishmael.” Hagar was very sad and in great trouble when the Angel of the Lord spoke to her: he said that her little son should be called Ishmael, because the Lord had heard her sorrow. Ishmael means “God will hear.”

There are many names in the Bible that have very nice and special meanings—not only names, of people, but names of places. If you have a marginal Bible, you will be able to look and find many of these meanings. You will see that Ishmael means “asked of God,” and Bethel means “house of God.” You will notice that El means God, and there are numbers of Scripture names in which you can see the letters El.

We do well to think of the words that Hagar spoke at the time when the Angel had been speaking to her. She said, “Thou God seest me.” We should always think of this. If we are in a lonely place, or a place of danger, the thought “Thou God seest me” should comfort us. If we are tempted to do what we ought not to do, the same words would help us to do what is right. Do you know a lovely verse in the 139th Psalm? “The darkness hideth not from Thee: but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee.” So God can see in a dark night just as well as when the sun is shining. “Thou God seest me” is true for each one of us, in the daylight or in the dark.

When Ishmael was a big lad, perhaps about fifteen or sixteen years old, he and his mother had to go away from the home where they had been living, and they had very little to eat or to drink to take with them—only some bread and a bottle of water. They must have walked on and on till they got into a desert place, and they had drunk all the water that had been in the bottle, and most likely they had eaten all the bread. Think of them—this lonely mother and her boy! Do you not pity them? Ishmael lay down under one of the shrubs, and his mother sat a little way off, but not very near, as she said, “Let me not see the death of the child.” Very likely she thought that he would die, after the fatigue, the hunger and the thirst, for she had no more food to give him, and she lifted up her voice and wept. She must have thought of the day, many years before, when she had said “Thou God seest me,” and her heart must have been full as she thought that her dear child seemed almost dying: and yet God had promised that Ishmael should grow up to be a man; and if she thought of that she would have found comfort, for she might have known that God always keeps His promises.

[We shall give a further article in our next issue on this subject, and shall then ask our young friends to answer various questions in connection with Ishmael, of whom and his descendants God often speaks in His Word.]

Things New and Old: Volume 21, Security Arising From Death

There are several lights in which we may view death. It is the wages of sin. (Rom. 6:23.) It came by man. (1 Cor. 15:21.) It has a claim on all the children of Adam, and all such are liable to enter into it. It terminates a man's existence upon earth, it cuts short all his plans in connection with this life, and manifests how really, because of sin, he is but a sojourner in the world. To the weary, the troubled, the distressed, it brings cessation from earthly toils, and earthly vexations. (Job 3:13-19.) To many it has come as the king of terrors. (Job 18:14; Hebrews 2:15.) To the unconverted, the impenitent, if at all alive to that which comes after it—judgment (Heb. 9:27), it is a most unwelcome intruder. The Christian, however, if at peace with God, without desiring it (2 Cor. 5:4), can yet quietly yield to it. For him its sting is gone (1 Cor. 15:55, 56), it is annulled (2 Tim. 1:10), and made subservient to his interests (1 Cor. 3:22); and, if called to pass through it, he will find it the door of exit from earth, through which he departs to be with Christ. (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23.) There is, however, another light in which we can view it, for it makes secure beyond the possibility of revocation or change, that which is based upon it. "For a testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." (Heb. 9:17.)

But this introduces the thought of the death of another by which we receive a benefit. The man of the world then may talk of the certainty of death, the Christian can speak of security which results from it; but the worldling will be thinking of his own, or other men's death, the Christian of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. To the worldling, if he continues such, death is certain, "for it is appointed unto men once to die." Death will come, and rob him of all that he possesses. Others may profit by his death as far as regards the things of this life, but to him death will be a robber, a spoiler, a captor. And it is the prospect of death which makes him feel, whether willing to confess it or not, how uncertain is his continuance on earth, and his tenure of the things of this life. Certainty of death, and insecurity arising from it, on these the man whose portion is in this life may sadly soliloquize, and descant. With the Christian how different! Of the uncertainty of his death he may speak, and on the security resulting from death, that his hopes shall be accomplished, he can confidently rely. If he thinks of death as affecting himself, he knows it cannot take from him one iota his proper portion. His inheritance lies beyond it, and is untouched by it, for it is "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven, for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Pet. 1:4, 5.) If he thinks of the death of the Lord, he knows how secure is his future. Now the one who has taught us this is God, and in the darkness of night He gave His servant Abraham, and us also, to understand, that what is based upon death, can never be annulled, nor altered.

When Abraham first pitched his tent at Sichem (Gen. 12), God promised to give the land to his seed. When Lot separated from him, and chose the plain of Jordan, by Sodom, God renewed His promise to Abraham, that the land should be given to his seed, and accompanied the reiteration of His promise with the gracious addition of "forever." (Chap. 13:15) In chapter 15 God came to him in a vision, and Abraham asked for assurances both as to the existence of his seed, and as to their possession of the land. As regards his seed God gave him a fresh promise, and he believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. As respects the inheritance of the land, God entered into a covenant to reassure him of it. Now this was not the first covenant God had made with men. But it was the first which was ratified by death.

God established His covenant with Noah, when He shut him into the ark, and kept him in safety throughout the flood. (Gen. 6:18.) He made a covenant too after the flood with the whole human race, and with every living creature with them, from all that went out of the ark, to every beast of the earth, that a flood should never again cut off all flesh, nor destroy the earth. (Gen. 9:9-17.) It was nothing new then on God's part to enter into a covenant engagement with man, when He graciously bound Himself to Abraham on that memorable night. But it was quite a new feature in any such engagement, as far as we are aware, for God to ratify it by death. In after years, too, God made covenants without any such ratification, for example, Exod. 34; Deut. 29:1 Sam. 23:5; but on this occasion He instructed Abraham as to what he was to do. When all was prepared, God bound Himself at sunset to bring back Abraham's seed to that land, and to judge those who should have afflicted them. And when darkness had overspread the earth, a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp passed between the pieces of the animals slain. The burning lamp was the token of the divine presence. (Exod. 20:18; Eze. 1:13; Dan. 10:6.) The smoking furnace seems to be the emblem of judgment (Psalm 21:9.; Isa. 31:9; Mai. 4:1); for judgment on their enemies, as well as deliverance of his seed, God bound Himself to Abraham to accomplish. We know how fully that was carried out. The same inspired word which tells us of the covenant, acquaints us will! its fulfillment.

But why did God act in this way with Abraham?

He had promised in chapters 12 and 13 that his seed should have the land, and that forever. Why then, did God pass, as it were, through the pieces of the animals slain? It was to give the most complete assurance of the fulfillment of His promise, binding Himself in the most solemn way to perform the promise to Abraham's seed, after the patriarch's death. But why were the animals slain? Men might make a covenant after that manner, in token that they deserved death, if they broke it, as Jer. 34:18-20 shows us. But on God's part there could be no failure. Was not then God's action on this occasion an intimation to Abraham of the immutability of the covenant thus made? For where death has come in, one cannot revert to the condition of matters which existed before it. The life given up cannot be taken back, hence there can be no change in the engagement solemnly entered into. What is based upon death must therefore stand forever. Abraham, it would appear, perfectly understood this, for never again, that we read of, did he ask from God for any fresh assurance that his seed should inherit the land. All was made sure to him, since the covenant was ratified by death.

Now, if we read this narrative only as a chapter in the life of the patriarch, we could not but feel an interest in the account of that night's intercourse with God, when the Almighty was solemnly binding Himself to a creature to perform for his seed what He had already promised. But that would be all. Yet, surely no one, whose God is Abraham's God, should turn away from that history as one in which he has no concern. Of course in the fulfillment of the promise then confirmed to Abraham, we have no direct concern. In the ways of God, however, and His teaching, we are intimately concerned; for we learn what He is, who is the unchanging One, from what He has said, and from what He has done. And here we are taught by God Himself of the immutability of that which rests upon death. In this principle then here first authoritatively set forth, we are all interested. For in the death of God's Son, we who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are now deeply concerned. All then that rests on His death must abide immutable, and secure. Is this man's deduction merely? Nay. It is God's own gracious teaching from His ways with Abraham on that night.

Have we then forgiveness of sins by the blood of Christ? (Eph. 1:7.) That must stand good forever, for the blood, which is the life, has been shed, and the life so surrendered cannot be taken back. Death having come in there can be no going back to a previous condition of matters,

and so no revocation of what has been affected by it. Are we justified by His blood? (Rom. 5:9.) Our justification must abide then forever. What has been done cannot be undone. Have we boldness to enter the holiest by His blood? (Heb. 10:19.) Of that right of entry we can never be deprived. All is secure and unchangeable which rests on death, and we can add the death of God’s Son. And who teaches us this, and would settle the heart in this confidence? It is God, who has written this history of that light’s intercourse between Himself and Abraham for our instruction, and the establishing, and joy of our hearts. C. E. S.

Bible Dialogs and Answers to Correspondents, Answers to Correspondents.: ROM 5:1; God's Foreknowledge; The Smoking Furnace; Washing Other's Feet; 2CO 5:2-3; The Rock; The Blood;

W. C. O.—Rom. 5:1.—Many thanks for your kind and brotherly letter. Yes, peace with God does indeed rest on something outside ourselves. It is founded on the fact that Jesus was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification. But though the foundation has thus been laid, we only come into the enjoyment of peace and thus "have" it when we receive the truth unfolded in the preceding part of the epistle. To know, deep down in our souls, that we are guilty sinners before God and subject to His just judgment, fills us with dismay. But when we understand that the very One at whose bar we stand convicted has concerned Himself about our sins, that our sins have furnished the occasion for the display of His love, when we see that the Lord Jesus has borne the load of our guilt and put it away forever, when we behold Him risen—the whole question of our sins having been settled once for all—it is then that we have peace toward God. This great blessing is the inalienable right and privilege of all believers, but we think it is going too far to say that every believer has it. Thank God, the atoning work of Jesus has re' moved from God's sight the believer's every sin, and he stands in His unclouded favor. But though this be so, how many sincere souls—through defective teaching—have misgivings as to whether they are quite right after all! Safe in Christ and accepted in the Beloved they surely are, little as they may be assured of it, but peace towards God is the very thing they need. Oh that all such would look away from themselves, and see in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus that which silences every fear and puts to flight every doubt!

S. H.—The doctrine of God's foreknowledge does not weaken in the least degree the responsibility of men nor bind them to a particular line of conduct. A discerning parent may warn his sons that a certain course will inevitably lead to dishonor, beggary, and ruin. His foreknowledge and admonitory words make them the more responsible, and if they heed them not it only aggravates their guilt and folly. Neither was the doctrine of predestination ever designed to make men lie down and go to sleep in the lethal chamber of fatalism. But our first business is not with such subjects at all, and, if wise, we shall leave them alone till other and more pressing matters are attended to. The most abject fatalist cannot deny that the gospel knocks at his door, unless he contends that "every creature," "whosoever," "all" are terms which have no possible reference to him. Should he acknowledge this, and yet plead that "faith is the gift of God," we assent most gladly, and call upon him on that account to be of good cheer, for what is there that God will not give to the one who seeks it of Him i Everyone who asks receives, and all who seek find. Alas! with most objectors the difficulty lies in the will, not in the want of power.

As to modern discoveries proving the Bible untrustworthy, we should advise those who say so to profit by past experience, and be a trifle less loud in their assertions. We are constantly being favored with fresh theories based on fresh discoveries. But their deceptive career is very short, and there is hardly time to greet the new-corner and examine his credentials before we are called upon to show him to the door and to receive the next. The credulity of skeptical young men is amazing, there is no end to it, and were the subject not so serious, we should find it hard not to laugh at them for their childish gullibility. As it is, we pity them with all our heart, and exhort them to be no longer children in understanding.

L. W. P.—We regret to say that the subject of your note is hardly suitable for discussion in these columns. It is too controversial. Many whom we greatly esteem hold different views about the matter, and all we can say here is, Let everyone search the Scriptures for himself as to it and act accordingly.

H. J. F.—Gen. 15:17; Ex. 3:1.—The smoking furnace is a symbol of the trial to which the seed of Abraham would be subjected when they sojourned as "a stranger in a land that is not theirs." It pointed on to Egypt and the 400 years spent in "the iron furnace," out of which the Lord brought them by the hand of Moses (see Dent. Iv. 20). The burning bush, which burned and was not consumed, speaks of the weakness of the people in the midst of whom God dwells, for our God is a consuming fire. But whatever the siftings and searching and judicial dealings of God, whether with Israel of old or with His people now, He maintains them, keeps them, and always seeks their good. The fire burns in the midst of the bush, but the bush is not consumed. Blessed be God!

E. C.—John 13:11.—We hardly think the washing of one another's' feet which the Lord enjoins is to be confined to mere temporal service, however lowly, for any of "His own." Embracing that, it surely goes much further. Has it not some spiritual significance, and does it not point to our being the means of spiritual cleansing and comfort to others in our intercourse with them? We may not know at the time that we are thus washing the feet of another, but this is what would be taking place if our hearts were constantly under the influence of the love of Christ. Some word falling from our lips would powerfully affect another for his good, and this would answer, in its way, to the feet-washing of John 13

B. R. W.—2 Cor. 5:2, 3.—The apostle is speaking of his body as a tabernacle or tent in which he dwelt. But, exposed to violent persecution for Christ's sake, it might at any hour be destroyed. What then? He had a sure abode, eternal in the heavens. But in its present condition the tabernacle house is connected with this groaning creation—groaning because of sin and its effects; and we groan, too, earnestly desiring to have the last tie dissolved by receiving—if we fall asleep—our resurrection body, or if alive by mortality being swallowed up of life. The third verse is a solemn word for the conscience of the easy-going Corinthians. Clothed they were with flesh and blood, but how did they stand in the sight of God? Would they be found naked—any of them—and destitute of that "white raiment" which a professor may think he has while having it not? Compare Rev. 3:18. It was a word, by the way, to which they and all of us might well give ear.

L.—Matt. 16:18.—The rock on which Christ would build His Church is the confession of Himself as "the Christ, the Son of the living God." It is built on the truth of His Person and glory. Son of the living God, whom death could not conquer and hold. It was as such that Paul preached Him from the first (Acts 9:20), and to him was given to unfold in his ministry the truth about the Church with a fullness found nowhere else in the Sacred Word.

G. M.—We should be sorry to think that "the glorious doctrine of the blood," as it has been called, is dropping out of the gospel preaching of to-day. In some circles no doubt it is, but we trust not among those, to 'whom you specially refer. Nothing can possibly be more important than £o give to "Tan PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST" the place Scripture assigns to it. All along the ages, from Eden to Calvary, by type and symbol, the great truth has been proclaimed that "without shedding of blood there is no remission." Through the blood we have forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26:28); by the blood we are justified (Rom. 5:9); by the blood we are redeemed (1 Peter 1:18); by the blood, we are cleansed from all sin (1 John 1:7); by the blood we have boldness to enter the holiest; by the blood we are made nigh to God (Eph. 2:13). It is by the blood that God is just and the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus (Rom. 3:25, 26). The redeemed sing about the blood in glory (Rev. 5:9); the white-robed multitude of Rev. 7 who came out of the great tribulation washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. The Bible, from cover to cover, is vocal with the praises of the blood. We believe the preaching that is most blessed is the preaching that gives great prominence to the blood. God forbid, then, that it should be relegated to a subordinate place. It must stand foremost in all true gospel testimony as being the imperishable basis on which every blessing rests. For an answer to your second question see our reply to L. W. P.

Christian Friend: Volume 9, Trained and Armed

When by any special assault of the enemy he succeeds in turning aside from the right path any of God’s people, and they fall into his hand, there is a special lesson to be learned by those who are preserved-a lesson directly for them, and from God Himself. Up to that time God has been dealing in admonition and warning with those now gone astray, who, refusing to hear any of His counsel, are finally allowed of Him to fall into the snare of the enemy, and God’s dealing with them is thereafter after another sort and manner entirely. But for those who are left, with whom the warnings and admonitions and love of His heart and hand are thenceforward occupied, it is for them to profit withal by what has passed, and what they have seen as to the enemy, and as to the points whereby their brethren have fallen, an easy prey to him.

Any deliberate course of self-will must end for any of us in the discipline of His hand. This is true for an individual as well as for the Church. We cannot too often be reminded of this. He is a “jealous God,” and “what a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” We are His, and “love is strong as death, jealousy cruel as the grave.” (Sol. 8) He will share it with none; and surely we love to think of Him thus! “My beloved is mine;” and if a believer, I can say also, weak, worthless as I am, “I am His; “for He says so. The heart delights to ponder on it, and will throughout all eternity; for love is exclusive. But let us remember the cost-not now the cost to Him, the cross was the measure of that; but what is involved as to us-the cost to us. After all it is but the giving up (is it gladly?) of what Paul designates as “dross and dung.” (Phil. 3) It is the counting up in the light of eternity of all that we have and all that we are on earth, according to the direction which He gives us in Luke 14:25-35.

Mark then, in Gen. 14:14-18, the moral of the lesson which was proposed, and which is sufficiently simple for any babe in Christ to understand, though we shall see the same principle is true also in other instances. None can encounter the enemy without defeat except the trained and armed man. “Abram armed his trained servants,” and conquered the enemy. We are expected not to be overcome, but to be “over-comers “(Rev. 2:3), whatever the power, and malice, and subtlety of the enemy may be, in a warfare not now natural; for “we wrestle not against flesh and blood,” but against spiritual wickedness, “wicked spirits in high places.”

Had Abram engaged in conflict with the enemy without having ready servants trained to bear arms, the probability is that he and they too would have been overcome. But they were both trained and also armed. The first supposes a lengthened and varied disciplinary exercise in the house, the last the suited weapons of offense and defense for the occasion. All of these Lot was deficient in. At ease and settled here, he dreamed of no enemy, and so was taken unawares, and found defenseless. The discipline of Abram’s house, may we not say, was unknown in the house of Lot, and mark the sure result.

No, my brother in the Lord, you are never to relax; never to forget, on the one hand, your pilgrim and stranger calling, nor, on the other, the discipline of your own house in accordance with the fact that the enemy is around. The time is coming when this day-drill and the armor of defense against him, so necessary to you now, and the given resistless sword of offense, will both be laid aside; but it is not yet. You are “called to be a soldier;” but what is an untrained soldier, and one without armor, without arms?

I believe then the especial want of Christians in the present day is to be trained and “armed,” and more especially so in reference to our own recent trials God would bring this, I believe, before us. The training, the armor, the arms, then what are they for us? And I ask my own heart, as I see some have been carried away by the enemy, Do I possess these? And I ask, Have you this daily discipline and arms, so that you are not in danger of being also presently carried away by some other similar device of the same enemy? This is the question for us. We must see to it that we are armed: For, need I ask, was Lot? Need I say that all Christians are not? The Ephesians are exhorted to take the whole armor of God by the apostle Paul, and the saints also to arm by the apostle Peter: “Forasmuch as Christ also hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind.” (1 Peter 4) And wherefore these exhortations, if all are already thus armed? And this brings before us the key to the whole matter? One has trodden this earth before us to whom Peter refers, and never did the enemy for a moment get an advantage over Him, or turn Him aside from aright path. We are to be armed with the same mind. What mind that was, seen so unfalteringly in. Him, Phil. 2, unfolds to us. He would obey, and He would serve. He would only do the will of God, and this necessitates in all of us a continued path of going down. Remember that it is only in your going down that you can follow Him, or that God can be exalted; for the old man and the new cannot be exalted together. Only in the giving up of my will am I like Christ, nor like Him wholly even then; for He did God’s will, and both must be there if I am fully to follow Him; that is, if I am to be armed at this special moment both to recover my brother, or to be myself preserved from joining him, and sharing with him in his captivity.

What was it in our beloved brethren that turned them aside? Where did the enemy get an advantage over them? Was it worldliness, or pride, or envy, or the ten thousand other snares he employs? These are questions difficult to answer, but questions which we must answer if we are to profit by the discipline of God’s hand at this moment; for you do, not arm against a danger you are ignorant of, and remember we are not armed if these things are allowed in us, and, alas! we too may then be carried away captive by the same enemy at any moment.

I pause, before looking at one or two passages of Scripture, to reply to a remark I have heard. It is this: “But was not the professing Church carried away by the enemy soon after the apostles?” I admit it. And was not Lot similarly carried away a captive to his own will, and so in the hands of the enemy (though doubtless unknown to himself) long before the occasion we have read together in chap. 14.? He made a deliberate choice of what was easiest to nature in chap. xiii. But there came a special time of trial to Lot and his house which brought it all

out, and it was not the first; and so God does allow these special trials to come, when the enemy puts forth a special effort, and through one of these trials He has seen fit in His wisdom (and for our blessing, if we take heed thereto) recently to pass us. May God enable us to profit by this moment, and may its lessons never be lost upon us I Allow me now to show you a similar instruction from the book of Judges. Israel is in an evil state, under the oppression of Midian and Amalek. Gideon (chap. 6), by whom God would help them, must be himself, and his house also, in a moral condition suited to God, and in contrast with that of the people; that is, he must himself be trained and armed. His father and his father's house had fallen under the enemy, and were worshippers of Baal. First he humbles himself and takes the place of being "least in his father's house," then erects an altar to the true God, then throws down his father's altar of Baal, and cuts down the grove that was by it, offering sacrifice to God alone; and only after all this does God use him to overcome the host of Midian (chap. 7) Others may be found in the Old Testament; but to come to the New, a similar line of truth is found in Paul's address to the elders at Ephesus. (Acts 20) About to be taken from them, when they would have no longer his counsel to guide them, his advice to them is, "Take heed unto yourselves." They must discipline themselves, and thus be trained, and he would arm them in view of those solemn times of difficulty which he saw approaching for the Church, when they would have to stand alone against the enemy; and it is thus also that he addresses Timothy. (2 Tim)

Nothing is more touching than this tender solicitude of an aged servant of the Lord for those he is leaving behind; for it is God's continuous care for the Church and those who are His. Putting off the armor himself ("I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith "), who is there that cannot see that he is putting it, in the second epistle, upon Timothy? He says there must be self-restraint and endurance. "No man that warreth entangleth himself" (the opposite of conflict here is self-entanglement in the world). "Hold fast the form of sound words." "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." "Study to show thyself approved unto God." "Flee also youthful lusts." "Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned." "From some turn away." "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season. Watch thou in all things." These are passages that form a continual training or drill which clearly show the object of the apostle in this epistle, of which every word is (perhaps now more than at any other moment) especially valuable to us. But it is also the arming of the man of God by one who knew well the subtle power of the enemy, and the value and necessity of such armor. Nor without it can any man of God "be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Of 110,000 men that marched through the wilderness "able to go to war" of the two and a half tribes (Num. 26), only "about forty thousand prepared" (armed) "for war passed over before the Lord to battle, to the plains of Jericho." (Josh. 4)

In short, then, the lesson for the present moment that is pressed upon us, in view of what we have recently passed through, is very simple. The Lord Jesus has gone through this scene before us, triumphantly "spoiling "the house of the enemy, and delivering his captives out of his hand. Do you desire from this moment to start afresh, and to go through this world like CHRIST? Would you follow Him? Then you must be like Him, and both trained and armed. Whatever others may do, you must crush, by the power of the Spirit, as taught in the Word, every movement of your own will that rises up in opposition to your calling as a Christian. You must suffer. You must be "trained" and "armed" in yourself at home. Without these things you are only providing the enemy with a means and a weapon against you, which sooner or later be assured that he will use. May we then see to it that we are both "trained" and "armed" for this moment, that the Lord may not only use us, but also continue to preserve us, to the glory and praise of His holy name. For the battle is not over yet, and to any who would boast, say, "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." (1 Kings 20) H. C. A.

IF the children of God make any alliance with the world, and thus pursue a line of conduct opposed to their true character, they must find disappointment.

Christian Friend: Volume 14, Genesis 14:18-20; Hebrews 7:1-3

While Melchizedek is confessedly a mysterious personage, his typical significance is clear from the inspired explanation in the epistle to the Hebrews. In Genesis we learn that he was king of Salem (undoubtedly Jerusalem, see Psalms 76) and priest of the most High God, and that, bringing forth bread and wine, he blessed Abraham on returning from the slaughter of the kings. This is all the information the history affords. When we come to the Hebrews, the apostle tells us how, and in what manner, he was a figure of the priesthood of Christ. First, his name, Melchizedek, means king of righteousness, and then king of Salem, which is, king of peace. Now these are the two characters in which Christ will reign in the kingdom; first as David, and then as Solomon, though He will ever combine the two; for He will reign throughout the thousand years in righteousness, and the effect of this will be peace, according to that word, "The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness." (Psalm 3; compare Isaiah 32:17) But Melchizedek was also a priest, and it is of Christ, as the royal priest, that he is specially the shadow, even as we read in the Psalm, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." (Psalms 110:4) It is this of which the apostle writes in Hebrews 7, where he is showing the superiority of the priesthood of our Lord to that of Aaron; and in doing this he tells us that Melchizedek was "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but, made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually." Some, pressing the literal meaning of these expressions, have raised difficulties; but the term "without descent," or without genealogy, makes all plain. It simply means that Melchizedek has no recorded genealogy in the Scriptures; that in this sense he is without father or mother; and that his birth and death are left unnoticed, to the end that he might be a type of the everlasting priesthood of Christ. In this way he is "made like the Son of God," he appears on the scene as God's priest, and, inasmuch as there is no account of his having ever passed away, he is regarded as being a priest continually, and he is so regarded that he might be a more perfect type of the glorious and unchangeable priesthood of our Lord and Saviour. He was not, as some have ventured to assert, the Son of God, but only a figure of Him in the character of His priesthood. It may be added, that the present service of Christ as the Priest is after the pattern of that of Aaron; but when He comes forth in His robes of glory and beauty, He will assume the Melchizedek character; for He will then be a Priest on His throne. But if He is king and priest, all believers, through virtue of association with Him in the grace of God, will also be kings and priests (See Revelation 1:5,6); and hence the twenty-four elders are seen seated on thrones, robed with priestly garments and with crowns of gold on their heads. (Revelation 4)

Christian Treasury: Volume 6, Melchisedec

Heb. 7:8

"It is witnessed that he liveth."

There is really no solid ground for denying that Melchisedec was a man as simply as Abram, Lot, or any other personage that figures in the description of Gen. 14.

The mystery consists not in the person, but in the way in which the Spirit of God records his appearance and action in the scene, so as to make of him a suitable type of the Lord Jesus. Thus not a word is said of his birth, or of his death. There is total silence as to his ancestors, and no hint is given of the lapse of his office, or of any successor.

The Holy Spirit by Paul argues from this silence, which is so much the more striking as contrasted with the well-known pedigree and succession of Aaron. And it thus illustrates Christ's priesthood, which really had those features that are here shown to be typically foreshadowed in Melchisedec. For instance, while verse 8 refers to Melchisedec, the testimony Scripture renders is to his life, not to his death, whereas it frequently speaks of the death of Aaron and his sons. The same principle applies to his abiding "a priest continually."

The Bible does not speak of his institution, nor of his resignation. When first we hear of Melchisedec he is a priest, and as such we leave him; no son, no successor appears. Each of the following are obviously and eminently typical:

(1) The name, "King of righteousness";

(2) The place, "King of Salem";

(3) His sacerdotal office (especially in connection with so peculiar a title of God), "priest of the most high God";

(4) The circumstances, "met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings";

(5) The character of his actions, "blessed him" (and not merely sacrifice and intercession).

There is scarcely more difficulty as to Melchisedec than as to Jethro, priest and king of a later day, though of course the latter could not furnish so apt an illustration in the circumstances of the case as the former. Both were real, historical persons and not merely mystical.

Two remarks may be made towards the better understanding of this chapter and epistle. The first is that if the order of Christ's priesthood is that of Melchisedec, the exercise is that of Aaron (Heb. 9:11). The second is that in verses 18 and 19 of our chapter, we must take "for the law made nothing perfect" parenthetically. The word "did" is in italics and ought to be left out of the Authorized Version.

Bible Witness and Review

by Dan Hayhoe

There is one brief episode in the life of Abraham that gives us the pattern for blessing and fruitfulness. Also in the book of Ezra there is a pattern that Satan follows when he attacks God's people to prevent that blessing and fruitfulness. We shall begin with the positive aspect: an example in Scripture which tells us of Abraham who did indeed enjoy blessing in his life. Then we shall see how Satan methodically, step by step, attacks those who seek to go on in faithfulness to God.

First, in Gen. 14, Lot and his family and all his goods were taken captive, but Abram goes out with his armed servants and his household, wins a great victory, and recovers Lot and his household. Now what we are going to see is what happens immediately following that victory. Often in the Christian life, God, by His grace, allows us to win a victory, not through our own power but through the power of God and the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Then there is going to be a test, a major decision and a confrontation with Satan himself immediately after that victory. That is exactly what we find in Abram's life.

The victory has been won and in verses 17 through 20 we read, "And the king of Sodom went out to meet him.... And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand." But notice in verses 21-23, "And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich."

Let us lay this out in very clear terms. The victory has been won. Abram has a desire to go on for God, and now he's met by two opposing forces, the king of Sodom and the king of Salem. A decision is now going to be made. He faces the attraction of family, because Lot had affiliated himself with Sodom by going back there again, and was there just prior to the ultimate judgment upon that city. Now Abram faces these two men, the king of Sodom and the king of Salem.

Let us look first of all at the king of Salem in verse 18, "Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine." I believe this is a picture of what Christ would offer to the believer in his or her Christian pathway. The Lord Jesus Christ is typified by the king of Salem. Salem means "peace" and we read in Isa. 9:6, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Melchizedek was the priest of the most high God.

We find the Lord Jesus Christ is our great High Priest in the glory for us. He is the Prince of Peace, not perhaps acting in that character towards the world at this point in time, but nevertheless this king of Salem brings Christ before us. And what is it that the king of Salem would bring to Abram's attention? He would give Abram bread and wine. He does not take from Abram; he gives to Abram. That is the Christian pathway; that is what Christianity is. It has often been mentioned that Christianity is not known by what it finds, but by what it brings. The Lord Jesus Christ wants to bring Himself into our lives to give blessing, peace, joy and happiness to us.

The wine would speak of the joy that we find in Christ and the bread speaks of Christ Himself. We could trace that from Genesis to Revelation. In Genesis we find Joseph, a type of Christ, with all around starving for lack of food, but where Joseph was there was bread. (Gen. 41:54.)

Where the Lord Jesus is, there always will be bread. The children of Israel went through the wilderness and they were fed with manna from heaven. This speaks of Christ in His humanity, Christ in His manhood and the privilege of feeding on Christ for the daily pathway.

In the book of Ruth, we find Naomi who had gone from Bethlehem, "the house of bread." She had gone into the world, Moab, and there was famine. Finally, in restoration she comes back to Bethlehem again and hangs her head in shame and says, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." When she returns to Bethlehem, "the house of bread," we find immediately that it's the beginning of barley harvest. And so where there is restoration, there is bread and nourishment.

We go on to John 6:48 and the Lord Jesus Christ says, "I am that bread of life." Christ is the bread. We could go right on through to the book of Revelation and find in Pergamos that the Church and the world are united, a particular temptation to the believer. The privilege of the overcomer is to eat of the hidden manna, feeding secretly on Christ in his own soul regardless of the state of the Church around us, and regardless of the difficulties and the problems in our families. In Gen. 14 Abram's own nephew had gone off into the world and he had to go out physically and bring him back again. He is met by the king of Sodom trying to entice him back into Sodom. With all these difficulties arising in our lives and families, the hidden manna and feeding on Christ in our own soul are what will keep us.

The king of Salem does not ask for anything from Abram; he gives. And the Lord Jesus Christ gives; He gives everything. He gave Himself. "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." He gave everything for us and all He wants in return is our affection and to have us walking in communion with Him. If, by His grace, He gives us a little service to do for Him, it is a wonderful privilege to be involved in that, but He does not demand it of us.

What about the king of Sodom? Sodom means "an abundance of dew." It also means "their secret" and "burning." It was a wicked and sinful place. We look around and we see what appears to be blessing in this wicked world around us, an abundance of dew, perhaps, but don't forget He "sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Do not let that fool us because Sodom also means "their secret." The secret sin of Sodom soon spilled out into the open and then what happened? Burning, the judgment of God upon that city. And what does the king of Sodom say? "Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.”

Satan says: Give me the souls; you take the goods. In fact, I will help you get them Go ahead with your education; go ahead with your plans for advancement in the business world. Go ahead with your plans for accumulating wealth. Take it all, but give me the souls.

Here is the decision: maybe you've won a great victory, a spiritual victory in your life. Maybe you have been used for the restoration of someone in your own family like Abram was for Lot. But now the decision comes: are you going to go on for Christ, the King of Salem? Or are you going to be drawn by Satan, the king of Sodom who says, "Give me the souls, and take the goods to thyself." v. 21, margin. That is the challenge for all of us. Satan says: Give me the souls; you take the goods. In fact, I will help you get them. Go ahead with your education; go ahead with your plans for advancement in the business world. Go ahead with your plans for accumulating wealth. Take it all, but give me the souls. We have fallen into that trap of accumulating "goods" while millions of souls are perishing without Christ.

What was Abram's response? Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine." A thread speaks to us of our clothes, how we present ourselves to the world and those around us at work and school. The shoe-latchet would speak to us of our walk, our association with this world and our pathway through this world. Abram says that he would not take anything; he would be completely separate, sanctified, and meet for the

Master's use (2 Tim. 2:20, 21). That is the beginning of a pathway of blessing and fruitfulness for the Lord Jesus Christ.

“After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." What is the prize? Christ! "For to me to live is Christ." Phil. 1:21. "I... count them but dung [refuse], that I may win Christ." Phil. 3:8. Every link formed with the world weakens the testimony and saps spiritual strength.

First Step

In Gen. 17:1, we see several specific steps leading up to verse 6, which says, "I will make thee exceeding fruitful." I know that every one of us wants fruitfulness for Christ. The primary evidence of divine life is fruit. The pattern for fruitfulness is in Gen. 17:1, "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God." The first step is a revelation and the realization of who God is.

Second Step

The next step is, "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect." We begin with a knowledge of God as revealed in Christ and go on to a walk in communion with God. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." 1 John 1:3. That is fellowship and communion. There is no true fellowship apart from the fellowship that is based on a knowledge of Christ as revealed from God the Father.

Third Step

The third step is, "Be thou perfect"; the margin says, "Be thou sincere." The word "sincere" comes from two Latin words—sine cera—"without wax." Phil. 1:10 says, "that ye may be sincere... till the day of Christ." In the days when this scripture was written at the time of the Roman empire, the potters would make their clay pots and sometimes the pots would crack during the firing process. A potter who was not honest would take wax and seal up the crack and color it so that when you looked at it you could not see the cracks unless you held it up to the light. Then you would find that there was actually wax filler in it. A potter who was honest and did good work would turn his finished product upside down and stamp on the bottom "sine cera"—without wax. That's what "sincere" means.

Fourth Step

The fourth step is in verse 3, "Abram fell on his face." It tells us in 1 Peter 5:6, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." If we start the pattern of our early life in stubbornness and self-will, in refusing to bow under the hand of God, it will plague us for the rest of our lives. And then when we are older and someone in the assembly says something that hurts us, or is

not true about us, we will react in self-defense and self-vindication. That will bring sorrow and sadness into our lives and our families' lives, and division and sorrow among the people of God. If we can do like Abram did and fall on our faces and humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, there will be blessing.

Fifth Step

The next step is that God talked with him in communion. That may go beyond our selfish thoughts about what is God's will for our life; it is really an understanding of God's thoughts for His people. Perhaps you say, "I wonder why I cannot understand prophecy?" Those are God's thoughts with respect to His people. If we do not understand it, one of the reasons may be because our thoughts are so selfish and narrow that they don't include the purposes of God.

Sixth Step

The next step is in verse 5, "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham." A new name really brings before us a complete change, leaving behind everything that was before. We become a new creature [creation] in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17.) That happens when we are born again. But I believe there is a time in our lives, too, as we go along for the Lord, that we have to remind ourselves to walk in the good of that position in which we have been placed.

We have seen God's pattern for blessing. Now we're going to see Satan's pattern for attacking God's people. In Ezra's day the Lord stirred up the hearts of some of His own people who had been in captivity. There was a restoration and they began to rebuild the temple. And when that happens, Satan always attacks. We have seen the positive side-the pathway to blessing in the life of Abraham. Now we're going to see the negative side and how Satan attacks in the time of Ezra.

The temple, which was being rebuilt, was God's center on earth. God's Church, the assembly, is how God manifests Himself on earth today. Those who are willing to put their heart, soul and energy into identification with God's assembly are going to face a tremendous onslaught of Satan. "Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the Lord God of Israel; then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do." Ezra 4:1, 2. The answer is in verse 3: "Ye have nothing to do with us.”

First Tactic

Satan's first attack is to introduce those who were really Samaritans, who would say, "We are with you; we are one of you," but they were enemies and adversaries. Take that as a warning not to join hands with the world even if it is to accomplish something that may seem to be for the glory of God. If it is not done according to the Word of God, it cannot have the blessing of God in our lives. The children of Israel were faithful; they refused that.

Second Tactic

The second tactic of Satan is in verse 4: "Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building." Satan is going to weaken our hands; he is going to trouble us and bring all kinds of things into our lives that are going to sap our energy and take away our strength.

In the book of Haggai we find they left building the temple; instead they went back to building their own houses. If we turn to Ezra 6:11, we find the result. "Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this." If we turn our energies to ourselves rather than God, it is going to bring down God's judgment on our own heads.

Third Tactic

Let us see Satan's next tactic in Ezra 5:3, 4. They had questioned God's authority. "Who hath commanded you to build this house?... What are the names of the men that make this building?" There is a tremendous movement in Christendom to question the inerrant authority of the Word of God. And there will be many who will come to us and say, "Who gave you the authority to meet in that simple way around the Person of Christ?" The authority comes from God Himself and the Word of God, and from the Holy Spirit who has the liberty to guide and direct our thoughts to Christ in the midst. The authority does not come from man.

Fourth Tactic

We will find Satan's last tactic in Ezra 9:2. "For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass." That was Satan's final tactic and the one that worked. That was the one that wrought havoc and brought in this awful mixture. The command in 2 Cor. 6:14,15 is so clear: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.... What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel [unbeliever]?”

May the Lord preserve us from Satan's tactics and give us the courage to follow the pattern for blessing and fruitfulness.

Faithful Words for Old and Young: Volume 9, Saw - Chose - Pitched His Tent

UPON two footstools, put on a chair, I mounted; then on the ledge of a tall bookshelf, and with much difficulty turned the key of the glass door. A little more climbing, and I secured the prize I wished for—an old yellow book, with “Miscellany for the Young” outside. I was quite a child, and had often longed to peep in it, but did not find it so interesting as I expected. One question, however, I read, in the few minutes I looked in it, which I have always remembered— “What uncle and nephew parted in peace to meet again after a battle?” I did not then know the right answer, but I daresay you could say at once that it was Abraham and Lot, of whose parting we read in Gen. 13.

I want you to think for a few minutes about Lot, and the choice he made. His father was dead, and he was living with Abraham, his uncle; but both being rich in flocks and herds, they found they must separate, and Abraham told Lot to choose in which direction he would go. It was an important moment in Lot’s life, let us see how he acted. We do not hear of his asking wisdom of God at all; the Bible says he “beheld,” he “chose,” and “he pitched his tent,” but it never says he asked God to “instruct and teach” him in the way in which he should go, and he chose to dwell near the wicked men of Sodom, “who were sinners before the Lord exceedingly.” The choice was quickly made, but its results he felt all his life. And Peter tells us that he “vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds,” but he seems to have lacked courage to give up the fruitful well-watered plain, for even when, after being carried away prisoner, he was rescued by Abraham, he went back to Sodom, and would have been destroyed when the Lord rained brimstone and fire upon it and Gomorrah, had not God brought him out, “the Lord being merciful unto him.”

We see from Peter’s account that Lot was a servant of God, but his was anything but a happy life, and we may trace back much of its misery to the choice he made in early life of his home and companions; he deliberately went into temptation, and though God delivered him, he brought upon himself much trouble and danger, for “the way of transgressors is hard.”

Have you ever noticed in so many of the Bible stories how we are shown that people do not commit great sins all at once, but Satan leads them on little by little? Lot at first did not go into Sodom, but “pitched his tent towards it;” however, in the next chapter we read that he “dwelt in Sodom.” Eve first “saw,” then “desired,” afterward “took” the forbidden fruit. (Gen. 3:6.) Achan “saw,” then “coveted,” and in the end “took” the spoil at Jericho. (Josh. 7:21). And Lot “beheld,” next “chose,” and lastly “pitched his tent” in a place of temptation.

F. E. T.

Plain Papers to Dwellers on Earth, Dwellers on Earth, Plain Papers to: No. 2 - Lot

We have now traced the sad history of Cain, and also of "the dwellers on earth " in Revelation. We have seen that the earth is not a safe dwelling place, and yet, alas, how many are building their hopes and desires upon it. How many even of God's dear people have never seen that it is a condemned world, and under judgment, which will most assuredly fall upon it in God's appointed time.

It is to Christians who are thus living in the world, and who see no harm in mixing to a certain extent in its pleasures that I would now give a solemn warning, taking as an example the painful history of Lot, the second of the three characters spoken of before.

Lot was the nephew of Abraham, and when Abraham obeyed the call of God to come out from his country, unto a land that God would show him, Lot went with him. (Gen. 12:1-4.)

And here let us pause for a moment. Is there any call to be obeyed now? Indeed there is. In Matt. 11:28 we find the Lord Jesus Christ in grace saying, " Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' And whom does He address? The weary and heavy-laden sinner. Have you obeyed His call? Oh, see to it, that, like Abraham who was called, and Lot who came out with him, you, too, may.a): His voice and obey it; and I may say, on the authority of God's holy word, He will never m you away. (John 6:37.)

You must do as Abel did, acknowledge yourself to be a lost and ruined sinner in God's sight; this is your only title to His grace and mercy, for Jesus died to put away sin, and bring to God.

But to return to our subject: Lot went with Abraham, and for a time remained with him. As long as he did so, he was blessed, but a change comes; through a dispute between their herdsmen, they decide to separate.

Abraham having the mind of the Lord, gives Lot the choice of land either to the right, or to the left. (Gen. 13:1-9.)

It is difficult to believe that Abraham would have given Lot the choice of Sodom, because in verse 13 we are told how wicked the men of Sodom were; it is therefore doubtful whether Lot did look to the right or to the left as his uncle told him. Verse 10 says, " And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that 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.'

Lot seems to have looked straight before him, and because the plain of Jordan was well water and just the place he would like for his flocks and herds, he chose to dwell there.

And did he not choose wisely? In the eyes of the world he did; but oh, how sad it is, he chose, to pitch his tent toward Sodom, near the very people whom God describes here as " wicked, and sinners before the Lord, exceedingly?' (Gen. 13:13.)

Dear fellow-Christian, may I ask, are you, doing as Lot did? He thought everything or his flocks and herds, and but little of the claims of the God who gave him these riches; an though he was daily grieved at the ungodly conduct of those around him, for he was a righteous man (2 Pet. 2:6-8), yet for the sake of his Hue and herds, he stays on until God had to put for His power and in mercy bring him out by for' lest he should share the just punishment which falls on those wicked men.

If we as Christians make friends of, and quite happy in the company of unbelievers, are, as James (iv. 4) says, the enemies of God. How solemn!

We hear of people saying, " But then by our intercourse with them we may help them?' it cannot be; for in 2 Cor. 6:14-18, We are told to come out and be separate, and in other scriptures too. It is not possible to do good or to help others if we are disobedient to God's ourselves, nor can we expect His blessing. The cross of Christ is the barrier between the Christian and the world. (Gal. 6:14.) How can we who love Him take pleasure in the company of the world that put to death the Son of God?

We do not read that Lot improved the condition of those amongst whom he went to dwell, on the contrary, they appear to get worse.

And now that Lot is settled in Sodom, is he able to enjoy the peace and tranquility he expected? No; for in chapter xiv we read that four kings came up in battle against the king of Sodom, and the four neighboring cities; and Lot gets into sad trouble, for the opposing army is victorious, and carries off the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, taking Lot and his goods too.

Thus God in grace gives Lot a warning, and well would it have been for him if he had then learned his lesson, without needing further chastening at the hand of the Lord.

Abraham hearing of his nephew's adversity, goes after him, and is enabled of the Lord to deliver him and all his goods, as well as those belonging to the king of Sodom: thus does God deliver Lot out of his trouble. Even after Lot has received this great warning he goes back to live in Sodom, for in chapter xix we read of his being there again; and the two angels find him there when they come as the messengers judgment, to that city and the neighboring ones.

The angels remain in Lot's house all night, and in the morning they take Lot and his wife and two daughters by the hand, and hasten them out of Sodom, " the Lord being merciful unto him" (ver. 16), lest he should be consumed in the iniquity of the city. Lot lingers, and at last he and his have to be almost dragged out of the city.

Ah how loath he was to leave it; how much he thought of it, and of the new relationships he had formed there. So engrossing do the things of this world become if they are the object of the heart, that they draw it away from the Lord; and when He speaks" once, yea twice," how slow we are to hear and to pay heed, until the Lord has to speak louder, as it were, by taking them away; for, dear reader, Lot entered Sodom a rich man, but he left it a poor man, his life only and that of his two daughters being spared.

In Lot's wife we see also a sad lesson; her heart is in Sodom, though her feet are being unwillingly led away from it, and in direct disobedience to the divine command she looks. back and is made a monument of disobedience.

And what had Lou's intercourse with the men 4-if Sodom done for then? Just look at chapter xix. 24, Even his sons-ha-law, whom one would naturally expect to reverence what he said, When they hear Lot speak of judgment to come, do not believe him; " he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law." So now, if we believe the word of God that this world is under judgment, and yet go and make friends with it, our words of warning will seem to them as idle tales, and how can they believe us 2 And by acting thus, we shall have lost the precious opportunity, never to be ours again, of living for Christ in this scene, and of being bright and shining lights, for Him in this dark world. (Phil. 2:15.)

Christian Friend: Volume 11, The Call of Abram* Genesis. 12:1-10

The call of Abram, the father of the faithful, is evidently of special importance in this respect, that it is the first public separation of one called out of this world, and this gives a very particular position to the one so called out. The people of God were always morally, and must necessarily be, a people separate from the world. But Abram was the expression of something different. He was not merely to be a godly man in his family, but a godly man called out of his family. It was God exercising and establishing a title over those He had morally and spiritually called which broke the ties of nature, claiming them and calling them out into public testimony of separation. This distinguished the call of Abram—the public assertion of the claims of God over His people. The call of Israel out of Egypt is somewhat analogous, though it was not said to Israel, “Come out,” but to Pharaoh, “Let my people go,” because it was the assertion of the right of power over the prince of this world regarding God’s own people. Therefore it was said to Pharaoh, “Let my people go,” and on his refusing to do this God shows His power in redemption—first by blood, then by leading them out by the Red Sea. Thus it was not in the case of Israel the invitation of the power of grace to those who were its subjects to break the tie, but the assertion of the power of God over the enemy, breaking down every claim of the world. In the case of Abram it was not precisely that, it was an address to Abram himself—the claim of God over the person thus called. It was love working, not a claim of power. It was grace made effectual in its working in the heart of Abram.

For a time, however, the tie of nature was not broken: Abram went out with Terah his father. He did not leave his father’s house, he lingered after something; he did not fully surrender himself to the Lord’s will at once, and therefore the Lord could not show him the land of Canaan. Abram had left a great deal, but he stopped short of Canaan. It is true he had left his country and his kindred, but he had not left the nearest tie of nature—his father’s house—therefore God could not show Canaan to him while he was clinging to Terah, and going but half way with God. Thus he stays in Haran. So it is with us, if there is still cleaving to us a desire after that which naturally belongs to us, there will not be the full entering into those things that God is ready and waiting to show us. All the communications of God to Abram, as to what Canaan was, took place after, or consequent on, his arrival in Canaan. God puts the position he is to be in, in direct contrast with natural ties; He said to Abram, “Get thee out into a land that I will show thee.” He knew that natural ties were mixed up with what Abram had to leave, but he was to leave his country and all, having no other warrant for it but God’s word. God had called him, and the call implied a claim. It was not merely the question of the public government of the world, Abram is entirely separated from that; he is to be a stranger to his father’s house, and a stranger still when brought into Canaan. It was the Lord’s love resting on an individual, and associating him with all that he had in His mind, and putting him into the place of all the promises of blessing. We see what he was called out from Joshua 24:2:“Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.” Men were not merely wicked, but God having manifested in the deluge the power of government in the world, Satan got hold of that power in the minds of men, who were thus led to worship devils, to whom they ascribed the power, and not to God.

It was this which formed the occasion of this public testimony for God in separating Abram from all around him; it separated him totally from every tie which was recognized in the world. He was not merely to be righteous and to be a worshipper, all that is true, but he was to be connected in his own person with a glory the world had lost sight of, for it had put the devil in God’s place; thus it says in Acts 7:2, “The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham.” God calls Abram out from the world to a glory set before him. Glory is revealed, and one called out by the knowledge of it. We have thus in principle the public call of God of the heirs of glory out of the world; the world is not set right, but left just as it was, and we find now a special link of connection set up between God and Abram. God reveals Himself to him, and says, “Come out unto a land that I will shew thee.” The life of Abram depended on a present communication from God, an immediate present connection between himself and God, which was to be kept up by the Lord making good all He has promised. So the Lord reveals Himself to our souls,

and gives His word as a sure ground of our conduct; and, blessed be God, we can count upon His infallible faithfulness, and live by faith in daily, constant, unceasing dependence on Him, to lead on to the possession of the desires of our hearts. But we find also that the Lord's promises involved the acting of Abram likewise, for while he does not leave Terah, God cannot bring him into Canaan. He could not enjoy Terah and Canaan together. God took care of that; if the father's house be not left, Canaan cannot be shown. The blessing to faith is only found in the path of faith. God's call gives the warrant for acting, and so far as Abram acts in dependence on God, the promises are made good to him.

In all that is spoken of Canaan, it is not rest that is before us. Look at the book of Joshua; there it is conflict. Does Abram get rest? He had not so much as to set his foot upon, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob —a heavenly position, but with conflict, he gets as soon as he had left Terah, and come into the land of Canaan; for the Canaanites are still there. The thing that God calls us to we do not get now, and that which marks the completion of Christ's work is that He sat down. We sit down in heavenly places in Christ; but do we get rest? No; we have to fight with wicked spirits in heavenly places. The saint is called into a place of rest, but as yet gets nothing. Thus we see that the worship of devils was not set aside, but that Abram was called out and brought into the promised land; but not to rest, because the Canaanites were there.

"And the Lord appeared unto Abram." (vs. 7) He now appears to him in the land. It is not the call which sets us in the place of worship; but as soon as we enter the land, then we can worship, because our relationship with God is known and settled and enjoyed. Before it is the walk of faith; but that is not worship. So we, as seated in the heavenly places, can worship, knowing our relationship as sons. "And there built he an altar, and called upon the name of the Lord." In Hebrews 11:8-10 we get three things as regards the power of faith in Abram.

1St (verse 8), "By faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." He went in simple present dependence, leaning on the promise of God. There was the life of faith.

2nd, when in the land (verse 9), "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." The Lord's appearing to him was the foundation of his worship, the Lord known in the land; and there he built his altar. The Lord further explains His purposes and intentions to him, and how they were to be accomplished. Thus he got prophetic knowledge. But it was not this which sustained Abram's soul. He could say, "I know now how it is all to be accomplished. It is in my seed, and not in myself. I am a stranger here." How then was his soul sustained while he was a stranger?

3rd (verse 10), "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Thus Abram's soul was not merely brought to worship, but he was sustained by a closer communion with that God who had chosen him, in faith that He would build the city Himself.

I have been struck that, in Revelation 4 where, speaking of the throne of God's government, there are peoples, and angels, and assemblies, and living creatures, &c., a whole population there; but when I come to the heavenly city (Revelation 21), there is a high wall, and streets, and gates of pearl; but where are the people? No one there, because the people are lost in the idea of the glory of God and the Lamb, and nothing else is thought of (though we know it is the Lamb's bride), for God and the Lamb are there. It was looking for this city which made Abram a pilgrim and a stranger. The world could not understand him, and might have said, "Now Abram is in the land, what has he got?" Nothing; for he could not explain to them how it was, but he had seen by faith that city of which God was the builder. We see then Abram is called, and having by faith entered into the conditions of the calling, he gets into the land, and when there he has a present revelation of the Lord, which is the ground of his worship; but it is not rest, the Canaanite being there.

If God has called me out, I must leave the world just as it is, and not think of setting that right. God has called me out of the world into connection with Himself, and I cannot connect any natural tie with such an association. You cannot hold relationship with Christ and the world at the same time. The worship of God is founded on the knowledge of the heavenly position we are in, being called out of the world into fellowship with Himself. We have not a single thing in common with the world. We can sit and sing of redemption, just as if we were now in heaven. My relationships with God will not be in the least changed when I get home; they will be just the same then as they are now; and there is no ground upon which we shall be there that we are not upon now. He has set us in Christ, and we can say, as in Deuteronomy 26:3, "I profess this day unto the Lord thy God that I am come unto the country;" not shall come. We are there, and have the understanding of how God will accomplish His promises— "in thy seed." Not the earthly rest in the fulfillment of promise to man, but heavenly rest where He dwells, where the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof—that is where He has brought us.

God says to Abram, "I will show thee," "I will bless thee." Thus it is now a particular relationship on a new ground with persons He has called, and has its existence in separation from the world. It is well for our souls to have the relationship into which we are called distinctly before our minds, that we may know how to worship and be sustained by the strength which it supplies. And if the foundations of the earth are out of course, I am not of it. Having the sentence of death in myself, I shall not fear death; but we shall have the comfort and joy of the place we belong to. The sweetness of a calm is better known when the storm is raging without. May the Lord give us the true revelation of Himself.

J. N. D.

Bible Treasury: Volume 17, Abram Called and Worshipping

This chapter occupies a place of great importance, being the first public call by which a saint is separated from the world.

Genesis brings out the great principles of God's actings with those taught of the Spirit to know His mind: the God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob—not as the God of the whole world, though this is true, but specially of individuals. God is not ashamed to identify Himself with them. God is not ashamed to be called our God, because we are not of earthly but of heavenly calling. A time is coming when He will be God of the whole earth, when Satan is bound. Till then He is God of those called out to Himself. Abraham is the depositary of promise; Isaac is the son in resurrection; Jacob is the elect of God, type of Israel cast out and brought back again. Thus God gives the principles of His dealings with men (individuals having been called secretly before).

In Noah another principle had been developed: government for the restraint of evil. Then we saw the whole order of earth formed by families and tongues, after their nations and in their lands. After this corruption in a new form comes in. Man set up in responsibility fails now as

before. It is the history of the world. There is the violence of men in Nimrod, and the rebel anion of men in the confederacy of Babel. But the more serious evil is that Satan sets himself up before man's imagination as the head of power by idolatry. The Gentiles worship demons. “The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not unto God” (1 Cor. 10:20). It was the delusion of ascribing to Satan under a creature form those things which God did. They “served other gods” (Josh. 24). Even the line of Shem was involved in this idolatry like the rest; but as Satan had thus introduced himself into heavenly places as an object of worship, God's people must be delivered from it. In order to effect this, God calls out Abram.

The chapter consists of two great parts: what Abraham was as blest in connection with God (ver. 1-9); and what his failure was when yielding to his own thoughts (ver. 10-20), of which last we do not now speak.

In the first part we have two things: God called Abram to come into the land; and then his worship in the land. “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.” This called for separation from all God's natural order of things. God did not say, Leave off worshipping other gods, but Leave thy kindred. So it was afterward even as to the Jewish system when Christ was rejected: God's religious order then had to be left. “When He hath put forth all His own, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him; for they know His voice” (John 10).

God's ties hitherto were made by natural order, by family blessings and inheritances. Out of all this (not evil things only) is Abram called. This was the divine way of breaking the link of idolatry. The word is not, Correct your ways in the country of your birth where you are, but “Get thee out.....to a land that I will show thee.”

The law was given to Israel for the place where God was to keep them, as the role for them in Canaan; for, before, the Lord God dealt with them in grace, which alone brought them out of Egypt. The law was to direct them where they were to be afterward. But they broke it in the wilderness before they got it down into their midst; so that Moses pitched the tabernacle without the camp, and every one who sought the Lord went out.

Thus man ever fails; and there is nothing to rest on but God's revelation of Himself, the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. Well may we believe His word; seeing that by the word of God all things came into being and subsist. By His word the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water perished. The word of God is a necessary authority to the believer, who is under the responsibility of the obedience of faith. The ground of faith is “The Lord hath said.”

But even at first Abram could not get into the land of Canaan, because Terah was with him. Terah was not called, but, being the father, he took Abram.

Going thus Abram did not go in faith, and therefore did not get into Canaan. They came to Haran and dwelt there; but Haran was not Canaan. Thus nature cannot break from nature: only faith can. It is natural order once more, all within the limits of the flesh, and therefore outside the blessing promised. There is in this no faith in the word of God. Now nothing can set aside the immediate and personal responsibility of obedience to God's word; nothing must be tolerated between God and the soul, save His word. The error of the church in all ages springs from putting something else between. All divine means is to bring the soul to God. This is a simple principle God will never give up—the immediate claim of obedience to His word.

Nothing in nature is according to purpose. God has created, and will cause all to pass away: these things are all to be dissolved. But He never sets aside His purposes if His counsels stand. His will must surely be done. The gifts and calling of God are not repented of. He calls man to Himself out of corruptions and the lie of Satan.

Blessing is two-fold (ver. 2, 3): first to be recipients of blessing; next to be instruments of blessing to others. How good it is thus to be twice blessed—and the occasion of blessing. It is God's own joy to bring the lost into blessing as we see in Luke 15: 9-25.

But in Abram's case there was a hitch. He could not come into the land the Lord would show him while one link of natural ties remained unbroken. When Terah died, Abram starts afresh. “So Abram went as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls they had gotten in Haran. And they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came” (Gen. 12:4, 5). When Terah his father took Abram, “they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran and dwelt there” (Gen. 11:31). His father gone, Abram and those he took went with him; “and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.” Now the result followed.

There Jehovah, we are told, appeared unto Abram; there he builded an altar unto Him; and if he pitched his tent elsewhere, it was where he builded an altar unto Jehovah. It represents our being blessed in heavenly places in Christ, while the Canaanite is still in the land. Compare Eph. 6:12. For we have to wrestle with spiritual wickedness there. Our bodies are not in heaven of course, but we are one with Christ Who is there; and there in spirit we are called too. Faith has to act on God's word. The testimony is plain. We are blessed in heavenly places in Christ. We are not of the world as Christ is not. Our conversation, our citizenship, is in heaven; in the world, but not of it; not in heaven, but heavenly, 1 Cor. 15. We walk by faith, not by sight. We are called to set our minds on heavenly things, not on things here.

It will be noticed that Abram's worship began with the LORD'S appearing to him. So it always is in principle. Faith takes God at His word and acts on it. The manifestation to Abram was the source of his worship. So the disciples, when they saw Christ going up to heaven, thereon worshipped Him; and ever after drew near worshipping Him in heaven, as they worshipped the Father. Worship supports a man in peace, and for us properly is heavenly, for Christ is there. Without Him we can do nothing, still less worship; and He has given us the Spirit that it might be real, and of divine character. Through Him by one Spirit we draw near to the Father. This is unfolded in Ephesians, which shows us manifesting to principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God.

If the prodigal came to his father, he ran, fell on his neck, and kissed his son. Yet this was not worship; but where is the house, the feast, the music and the dancing? These figure worship. What communion! We are called as knowing ourselves free for our Father's home above. He has revealed Himself in His Son that we might draw near there. It is one thing to be on the way to God; another to be there in Spirit, and at home there as already brought to God, Christ “having obtained everlasting redemption.” Then we worship. It is the same when the father kissed the

returning prodigal, as when he had him within the house with the best robe and the fatted calf and the music and the dancing; yet how different man's state! We should be at home with God now, rejoicing in what the Father is in His own house, and not be occupied with what passes in our hearts, save to judge it and turn to Him Who is beyond all thought.

Edification: Volume 8, Abraham and Lot.

“NOW the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will skew thee... So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him” (Gen. 12:1, 4).

That Abraham heard the voice of God there can be no doubt. Living as he was on the other side of the flood with Terah his father and serving other gods, there came to him, in unmistakable language, a voice, clear and distinct, “Get thee out.” He was to leave his present surroundings and all that pertained to them and go to a land that God would show him.

Has this no voice to us today? Is there not a call to get out? Are there not such things as environments, associations which are not in keeping with the divine mind? Is Christendom today, the well-ordered house of God that obtained at the beginning? Is not a scene of confusion, disorder and self-will? Are not things very much like what obtained in the time of the Judges? “And the children of Israel darted thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance. In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (24:24, 25). Self-will and indifference to the rights of Christ abound. What is the divine call? — “Get out! “But to whom does it come? To those who walk in the steps of their father Abraham.

Is my reader a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ? Then you are a son of Abraham, and called to walk in his steps. The word of God comes to you. Are your associations such as can stand the search-light of the word of God? If not— “Get out.” You will never improve them by staying in them, for rather the reverse will happen— “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” You yourself will be affected and that for the worse. In New Testament language the word is: “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:17,18). If you have never been exercised bore, may the Lord exercise you now!

Abraham obeyed the call and “went out, not knowing whither he went.” Perhaps you say: “I am aware of many things in my particular associations which are not scriptural; neither is scripture consulted on such matters. I am often disquieted but if I come out—where shall I go?” Three men were once in conversation together. One was disquieted because his minister had developed modernist ideas and was preaching them from the pulpit. He asked what he should do of the second man, who in his turn asked the third—a simple, plain, Bible-loving Christian. Quickly came the answer with no additional arguments to back it up: “Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge” (Prov. 19:27). Abraham obeyed because God spoke to him. Fellow-Christian, if you have heard his voice, bidding you come out, obey and leave the consequences with Him. He will certainly show you your way as you proceed.

There may be some reading this article who have heard and obeyed the divine call and are tempted to go back. Let such remember what is written, “And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned” (Heb. 11:15). Return to your old associations you may. But can you; dare you; will you? Who called you out? The Lord Jesus said, “He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice” (John 10:3,4). Will you turn back from such a Shepherd? Surely the rather, the language of your heart will be, “Lord to whom shall we go? Thou halt the words of eternal life.”

“Lot went with him.” Did Lot hear the divine call? — we are not told so. He simply went with Abraham—an associate, and nothing more. His subsequent history proved what he was. Personally a “just man” whose righteous soul was vexed because of the filthy conversation of the wicked, but nevertheless, only an associate of Abraham. He could not and did not retain the true pilgrim character and when the test came he disclosed the thoughts of his heart and went after the well-watered plains of Sodom and finally was saved, “but so as by fire.”

May I ask my reader, Are you but an associate with those who—through grace—are seeking to maintain a separate walk with God? — the men and women of conviction, who know where they are, and why they are where they are—who have truly gone “outside the camp” and are bearing the reproach of Christ. Are you where you are, merely because you have been brought up with those who have heard and obeyed the divine call? or because something about them has attracted you? That savours more of a Lot than an Abraham! Take heed! Get down before God at once: seek His face, prayerfully: study His word with holy diligence and give yourself no rest until you reach a divinely given conviction. Oh, for men and women of conviction and spiritual backbone!

Is anything too hard for the Lord? He, who has called us out, can maintain us. Let us seek to be true to our Lord: true to His claims upon us: true to the divine ground upon which His written word puts us. Let us hold fast, and strengthen the things that remain. Our Lord is coming, “Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. 3:11).

J. H. Evans.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, "Said" or "Had said"?

Question: Gen. 12:1. The A.V. renders this, “Now the LORD had said to Abram,” &c.; the R.V. has “Now the LORD said,” &c. The difference involved is great. Which is correct? A DISCIPLE.

Answer: No doubt if we merely look at the Hebrew, there is room for discussion, for its tenses were modified by the context; and in fact versions ancient and modern differ. But happily for all who are humble enough to value a divinely furnished aid, we have Stephen in Acts 7:2, 3 making it certain that the appearing of Jehovah, when the call was given in the words cited, was not in Haran but in Mesopotamia. Here the call came, which was only partially verified in Abram while Terah lived; for the latter was quite content to dwell in Haran. But after

his death the power of Jehovah’s call revived in Abram’s heart. “So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken unto him.” “And they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.” The spiritual mind will feel that the difference between the A.V. and the R.V. is that between truth and error; and that the error is due to confidence in the bare view of the letter, which slights not only what the context implies but the invaluable help of the inspired N.T. interpretation. But this is decisive for believers, while it furnishes fresh fuel for skeptical criticism.

Plain Papers to Dwellers on Earth, Dwellers on Earth, Plain Papers to: No. 3 - Abraham

IT is with a sense of relief that one turns from the dark picture of Cain, and the " dwellers on earth," and the sad history of Lot, to the bright one of Abraham, the last of the three characters named in a previous paper.

In Gen. 11:27 we read of his birth, and from Josh. 24:2 we learn that Terah, the father of Abram, was an idolater, dwelling in Ur of the Chaldees. God calls Abram to come out, and he does so, as we have already seen.

At Haran, however, he and those with him pause, and God has again to speak. Haran is not the promised land, and once more Abram has to go forth, until at length he comes to the land of Canaan, and here God appears to him, and says, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." 'Gen. 12:7.)

What now is the next thing told us of Abram? Why, in this same verse (7) we read: " And there bulled he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him." He becomes at once a worshipper; he is filled with the thoughts of God's wondrous dealings with him, and his heart flows out in worship. Oh! can we not learn a lesson? If we have obeyed the call, referred to before, of Matt. 11:28, what has been the effect upon us? And note this difference: Abram was called of God to come to a promised land; you and dear fellow-christian, have been called to a blessed, Person. He says, " COME to ME." He, the holy and spotless Lamb of God, died to put away the sin that was the obstacle which kept us away from God, and now, having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He calls us to Himself. Oh, how much, more cause have we to worship than even Abram had! We are not only brought to Him, but united to Him, are made members of His body, and, as such, are privileged to meet, every first day of the week, around the table of the Lord, Christ Himself in our midst, to praise and worship Him. Do we value this precious privilege? or do we allow the least little thing to hinder us from being present? Let us take the lesson Abram's life would teach us.

The rest of chapter xii. records failure: Abram being pressed by famine, instead of relying upon God to supply his need, goes down to Egypt and falls into sin. It is ever thus when we get off the path of faith, we fall into sin; and, but for the longsuffering and patience of our God, where should we often be? But God follows Abram, and brings him back again, to the very place where he had at first pitched his tent and where his altar was. (Chap. xiii. 3, 4.) And then Abram is in a fit state for God to reveal Himself to him again, as we shall soon see.

We have noticed in the history of Lot, how Abram gives his nephew the choice of land, being quite content to leave himself in God's hands. Is he disappointed? Or is he left without the blessing? Let us look at verses 14-18. As soon as Lot has separated from him, the Lord speaks to him, and tells him to look north, south, east, and west: " For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever;" and again Abram worships.

This is ever God's way, He gives us infinitely more than we are ever called on to give up for Him; the Lord Jesus Christ says, in answer to Peter who had said, " Lo, we have left all, and followed thee," that he shall receive manifold more; ah, dear fellow-christian, in however small a way it may have been, yet have we not proved this true, the more we cleave to Christ, turning' away from the world, the more precious we find Him and the deeper our happiness—would that we knew more of it!

Chapter xiv. gives the account of Abram's victory over the conquerors of Sodom and Gomorrah, and his rescue of Lot; on his return, Melchisedec, king of Salem, a wondrous type of Christ (see Heb. v. 6-10), meets him, and blesses him in the name of the Most High God possessor of heaven and earth; and Abram gives him tithes of all.

The king of Sodom then offers to Abram the recovered goods; but the servant of the Most High God will receive nothing at the hands of the world (of which, as we have seen, Sodom is a type), not even a shoe-latchet will he have; Abram will be rich only by the bounty of God, for he adds, " lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich." (Ver. 23.)

And now how beautiful are the opening words of chapter xv. " After these things," when Abram, entirely separate from the world, is living in faith and dependence on God, the Lord appears to him, and says, " Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

What blessed words, how they must have rejoiced Abram's heart to hear, what rich compensation for everything else! But this is not all: God promises him a son, and confirms it by the smoking furnace and burning lamp in the sacrifice; and in verse 18 again promises to him the land, and to his seed, from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates.

In chapter xvi. Abram and Sarah fail, and seek to make good the promise in their own way, instead of waiting for God to accomplish His own word, in His own time.

But in spite of his failure, God again promises him a son (chap. xvii.), and makes a covenant with him, changing his name from Abram to Abraham, which means a father of a great multitude; and from then on to the end of his life we see how Abraham lived in communion with God; and to him the Spirit of God in scripture twice gives the wondrous title of the " Friend of God," (2 Chron. 20:7; Jas. 2:23.)

Yet wondrous as this is, the portion of the believer now is infinitely more so. We are told in 1 John 3:1-3, that we are the sons of God, and in the first chapter of that same Epistle (ver. 3) we learn, " Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." Why do we know so little of it? Even because the things of this world come in, and we too often walk in darkness instead of the light of His presence; the Holy Spirit that dwells in each believer (1 Cor. 6:19, 20) cannot take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us (John 16:13-15) if our minds and hearts are running on the earth, and the things of this life. Oh, let us see to it that we obey the apostle Paul's injunction, " Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." It was only " after these things," when Abraham would receive nothing from, and have nothing to do with, Sodom, that God did thus commune with

In the end of chapter xviii. we find Abraham, who is, as it were, above the scene in company with the Lord, looking down on those guilty cities, and thinking of the erring Lot, when he hears of their coming doom, intercedes on their behalf. Lot at the same moment is in Sodom, the very place where judgment is to fall, and little knows of the deliverance which he is about to experience in answer to his uncle's prayers.

Israel's Future, Israel's Future: No. 1

It is proposed in these short papers to examine what the scriptures teach as to the future history of the children of Israel. And we would approach this subject with the firm conviction that whatever God has spoken must come to pass. God said to Abram, " I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:2-4.) Though this unconditional promise has not been fulfilled in its full extent, yet it is obvious it must be, as it is absolutely God's engagement with Abram.

After this, God gives an express promise as to the land of Canaan. He said to Abram, " Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever," &c. (Gen. 13:14-17.) This promise of God to Abram is repeated: " I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land" (Chap. xv. 7.) "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." (Gen. 17:8.)

Then, further, after the offering up of Isaac, we have both the oath and promise of God: " That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore: and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 22:16, 17.)

Truly this is that promise of God which was confirmed in Christ four hundred and thirty years after the law. Head carefully Gal. 3:1618. Now then, if we Gentiles, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; if we, in the rich mercy of God, have been made to share the great consolation of the oath and promise of God, confirmed in Christ; is it not a strange thing to turn round after this, and deny the promise to the natural seed of Abraham?

Certainly it is of the utmost moment that we believe not only the promise and oath of God, in contrast with the covenant of works as given at Sinai: but more, the promise is fulfilled, or confirmed, in the death and resurrection of Jesus, the true Isaac. The law cannot disannul what has been confirmed in Christ. But then, are not both of these two things equally sure by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead? Our inheritance, our eternal salvation depends solely on the oath and promise of God, not on our engagement, as Israel, at Sinai. And also the future kingdom and blessing of Israel, as the nation to whom the promise is thus confirmed by the same resurrection of Christ, the Seed, from the dead.

Let it be granted that for the present Israel is set aside, and also that Abraham has never yet enjoyed the promised inheritance of the land—no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession. (See Acts 7:5.) Is it possible that the Gentile professing church has concluded for centuries that God never intends to keep His word and promise to Abraham? The Spirit of God, foreseeing this, spake by the apostle: " For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." (Rom. 11)

There are these two thoughts or purposes of God in scripture. The church for the heavens, and Israel for the earth. Let us not forget that during this unmeasured period of grace, God is, by the Holy Ghost, gathering out the joint-heirs of Christ, the one body, destined to be the heavenly bride of the Lamb. But then let us not, in vain conceit, suppose that God has forgotten His promise of the land to Abraham and his seed.

In being guided by scripture on this subject, no doubt we shall have to give up a vast amount of modern error, if we believe what God teaches in His word. Take that grave error of a general resurrection at the coming of Christ at the end of the world, as tradition says. Of course, if that were true, then Abraham would not be raised until the end of the world, and therefore the promise of God to him never could be fulfilled. It is clear he never has had so much as a foot of it yet. But did not God tell him he should have it? And how distinctly this is repeated to Isaac and Jacob! God said to Isaac, " Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee: for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries.... And will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations be blessed." (Gen. 20 vi. 3,4.) The same promise is repeated to Jacob. (Chap, 28:13.) Oh, tell us, Is God a man that He should lie? Again, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. (Deut. 32:8.) Yes, as to this earth, Israel is the center of God's thoughts.

Is not the history of the Old Testament, from the call of Abram, for the most part, the history of that people? Was not David their inspired psalmist? Is it not of their Messiah he speaks and sings, reigning in mount Zion? He speaks, indeed, of His sufferings and death, but it is for that nation. The church is never his theme; it was not then revealed.

The hatred and rejection of men is foretold: " Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Then the heathen will be given unto Him, and the uttermost parts of the earth for possession. And mark, this not in the way of grace, or during this time of grace, but for judgment. " Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Psalm 2) The least attention to these statements in the Psalm and the prophets, will prove the gross-ness of the error of applying them to the gospel or the church. You notice the above is in direct contrast with the present work of unbounded grace. And when the death of Messiah is foretold in the Psalms, whilst we have been brought into much higher blessing through that death, yet the direct application of blessing from that death is not in the Psalm to the church of God now, but to the future kingdom of God on earth. " All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations." (Psalm 22)

Now read the psalm of Messiah's reign (72). Is not every verse in contrast with this present state of confusion and rejection of Christ? During these times of the Gentiles Messiah is cut off, and has nothing; but then God will give Him His judgment—He will judge the people, He will break in pieces the oppressor. In His days shall the righteous flourish: now they are slandered, hated, persecuted, and sometimes killed. Now

Satan rules over the darkness of this world, then Christ shall have dominion from the river unto the ends of the earth. As a rule now all kings and nations reject Him, then all shall serve Him. Is it not sad to pervert the psalms which describe the future glory of the kingdom promised to Israel on earth, as though they described the church?

And now we come to the prophets. Did they prophesy concerning the church, or the future kingdom and glory of Israel? The Spirit of God anticipates and answers the question. There is the greatest care to show that the future time of blessing to Israel, and to all nations, will not be brought about by the gospel, but by judgment. " Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness: and the destruction of the transgressors and of sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed." (Isa. 1:27, 28.)

"The word that Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw concerning (not the church, but) Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it," &c. (Chap. 2:1-4.) Has this been fulfilled, or can it be during the times of the Gentiles; during which Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles, and the Jews scattered among all nations? Modern traditions make of none effect the word of God. God gives a prophecy concerning Jerusalem. Tradition says, No, it is concerning the church. Now read Isa. 9:6, 7. The child has been born unto them; but is the government yet upon His shoulder? Does He yet sit on the throne of David?

It is remarkable how the church was hidden. Think of these words—" For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,', and, between that word and the next, eighteen hundred years at least have taken place; for the remaining words have not yet been fulfilled: " And the government shall be upon his shoulder," &c. Has that great mystery, the incarnation of the Son of God, taken place? and shall not He also sit on the throne of David? Yes, and " of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." The same thing may be observed in chapter 11. The Spirit of the Lord did rest upon the holy Jesus, the Messiah. Verses 1-3 have been fulfilled, but 4 to 12 have not. Between 3 and 4 the period of the church has taken place, but not a word concerning it in the chapter. Not a line, from verse 4 to 12, has yet been fulfilled. "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." How very important to see the order of the word of God. First, there is the Spirit of the Lord on Messiah; then, the present interval being omitted, His judgment of the wicked (one); then, the blessing of His kingdom on earth, when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. He stands as the ensign of the people: " To it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious." Then the Lord Himself gathers the remnant of His people, the outcasts of Israel, and the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth. Do not you see, then, how God will thus fulfill His promise to Abraham, though blindness in part has happened unto Israel during this gospel interval?

There is the same order everywhere: we will, however, turn to one instance where the Lord Jesus marked the present interval in prophecy. In Isa. 61., the first verse describes His living ministry in incarnation, a The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," &c. If you turn to Luke 4:17, you will find the book of the prophet Esaias was delivered to Him in the synagogue. He read these words, until He came to the sentence, " to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," and, at that point, "He closed the book, and gave it to the minister, and sat down; and the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Now turn back to Isa. 61. In this (ver. 2) the first clause only was then fulfilled, Jesus announcing the acceptable year of the Lord to Judah. Then, before the next sentence, He has been rejected, and has nothing; Israel as a nation is cut off for more than eighteen hundred years, at the close of which unnoticed period of the church, the day of vengeance comes—the time of the great tribulation. Then read the description of the kingdom on earth. Surely it is the violation of all sense and scripture to apply this to the church. "And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations." Can there be a question that this is in the land of Israel, as promised to Abraham? " Therefore in their land they shall possess the double; everlasting joy shall be unto them." Thus we have the same order -the living ministry of Messiah, then the book is shut, and an interval before the day of vengeance: then follows the kingdom of Messiah on earth. What a description of the kingdom is chapter 60! Oh, what brightness and glory shall burst upon that nation at the coming of the Lord! But more in our next paper.

Edification: Volume 6, Who Builds?

“LET us build,” said men of old, “a city and a tower, whose top may reach to heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth.” (Gen. 11:4.)

“I will build,” said the Son of God, “My church; and the gates of hell [Hades] shall not prevail against it.” (Matt. 16:18).

“Let us build,” is doomed to failure, collapse, castastrophe.

“I will build,” is indestructible, permanent, eternal in glory forever.

In studying Scripture you see these two influences at work—God’s work and man’s; God’s standing invincible and forever, man’s buildings ever and always erected upon the sand, only to fall and perish.

Alas! even in saints of God you see the two influences at work. Time tests all religious movements and that adversely. All committed to men’s hands fails and breaks down. Are we then pessimists? Do we prepare ourselves for defeat and failure? A thousand times, No! By very contrast the building of God stands pre-eminent, rearing its head above the storms.

Take the great religious movements of the Old Testament. We have Moses, the lawgiver, a sublime figure, filling a unique and magnificent place for God. He is succeeded by Joshua, a fine man, a gallant fighter, but he lacks the power and greatness of Moses. Great as Joshua was, he was not the giant Moses was. Then came the nameless elders of Joshua 24:31, and then you get the awful debacle of the Book of Judges, ending up with such terrible stories as the concubine of the Levite of Bethlehem-Judah being cut up into twelve pieces; and of the way in which the Benjamites captured their wives, the book ending with the description of the awful state of things, “In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judg. 21:25).

Is that all? Is God defeated? Certainly the contrast between Moses and Judges 21:25 needs no moralizing. Is God defeated? Nay: Ruth follows Judges. There we get humble and obscure people, in whose hearts God has worked, and who are altogether delightful in their setting. We get Naomi, Ruth, Boaz, the line for David set, and in truth for “great David’s greater Son,” the Lord from heaven.

Run down the ages, and we get Malachi writing the last inspired book of the Old Testament, and silence falls for nigh four hundred years. The lamp of faith burns low. There is no national testimony. Things seem as dead as possible. Is God defeated? Nay, Luke lifts the curtain, and we get Joseph, “a just man”; Mary, the honored mother of our Lord according to the flesh, whose Magnificat shows that, humble as she was in distant Nazareth of Galilee, her mind was deeply saturated in and formed by Scripture, for her song is a veritable mosaic of Holy Writ; Elizabeth and Zacharias, Simeon and Anna, and there were others, whose names we know not.

Then the Son of God comes, and by and by Pentecost arrives and the Holy Spirit descends on the believers, and the Church of God is formed on earth.

Then we get Paul in the New Testament answering to Moses in the Old Testament—Paul, the chiefest of the apostles, the chief instrument of inspiration, as witness Ephesians, Colossians, Galatians, Philippians, etc., etc. Then you get Timothy, like-minded with the apostle, yet like Joshua of old in contrast to Moses, not so great a character in contrast to Paul, followed by the “faithful men” (2 Tim. 2:2), answering to “the elders that outlived Joshua,” and then “greedy wolves” entering in “not sparing the flock.”

Is God defeated? Nay. The end will be glorious. The end of the Church’s history will be more glorious that its start. The Second Advent will be greater than Pentecost. The Holy Spirit coming down to form the Church, will give place to the Holy Spirit presenting the Bride to the Bridegroom in the cloud.

“Let us build,” but they had brick for stone and slime for mortar. A good thing when it all has to perish, as it will one day.

“I will build,” yes, and when the summoning shout of the Lord Jesus is heard in the air, such will be its irresistible power that every bit of His building, every saint of, God, dead or living, from the day of Pentecost, will be caught up—His glorious Church as well as the Old Testament believers—” all that are Christ’s at His Coming.” All the malevolence of hell will have been spent in vain. Christ’s triumph will be secure.

And that Coming draws very nigh. It may be “perhaps today.” We are on the very threshold of His return. “Surely I come quickly,” is His challenge to our affections and our hearts leap up in response and cry, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

A. J. Pollock.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Age of Abram and Terah

Question: {vi 293-299;303}Gen. 11:26-32; 12:4. How was Abram but 75 when he left Haran? Terah lived to 205. If Abram was born when Terah was 70, would not this make Terah live 60 years after Abram went to Canaan? H.B.

Answer: The difficulty is due to supposing that Terah’s eldest son was Abram. {vi 292;294}Gen. 11:25, 27, does not give the order of birth, but names Abram first from his superior dignity, as is common in Biblical genealogy.

Acts 7:4 is express that Abram came into Canaan only after Terah’s death, who was 205 years old. Deducting 75 years (Abram’s age at that epoch) we have 130 as the years of Terah’s life when Abram was born. Haran was really the eldest; Nahor, the second son of Terah, married Haran’s daughter Milcah, his own niece; and Abram was youngest of the three. Lot was Haran’s son, as Sarai (or Iscah) was his daughter. Thus Lot was Abram’s brother-in-law, as he also is called his brother, and Abram called Sarai his sister. The great difference (60 years) between the eldest and the youngest sons of Terah (by two different mothers, as Abram intimates) made this possible and explains the matter.

It is plain therefore that Dean Alford was not only precipitate but predisposed to think Stephen in error, and the inspired word guilty of “demonstrable mistake.” Josephus and Philo were right and confirm the account in the Acts; and so was Usher.

The mistake arose from assuming that {vi 293-294}Gen. 11:26-27, meant the order of birth, and consequently that Abram was eldest. There is no ground to doubt that he was the youngest, but named first because of his honorable position. So was Shem in {vi 138;148;173;224;236}Gen. 5:32; 6:10; 7:13; 9:18; 10:1; yet x. 2, compared with ver. 21 plainly shows that Japheth was the eldest, Ham being probably the youngest (Gen. 9:24). The place of precedence is due in both Shem and Noah, not to birth but to the honor God set on them respectively. Haran then was the eldest son of Terah, and Abram born 60 years after. And with this agrees the fact that Sarah (or Iscah) Haran’s daughter was but 10 years younger than Abram. Nor is there force in the objection that this makes Terah 130 years old when Abram was born; for Abram took Keturah after Sarah’s death, when he was at least 137 years old and had six sons subsequently ({vi 660-661}Gen. 25:1, 2). It is Stephen in Acts 7 who enables us certainly to adjust what in the O. T. was not so clear. And so the early Jews saw, as may be gathered from Philo (de Mig. Abr. 1. 463). Bengel made no mistake here.

Scripture Queries and Answers, Scripture Queries and Answers: Coming For or With His Saints; Abram's Age; Spirit Dwelling With You

Q.-1 Cor. 4:5. Does this verse refer to the Lord's coming for or with His saints? M.

A.-The Lord comes and receives the saints to Himself for the Father's house. As the last act before the marriage Supper (Rev. 19), the bride gets herself ready; which appears to point to that manifestation of the glorified before Christ's bema or judgment-seat, as the result of which each shall receive according to what he did by the body as an instrument. Then follows, after the bridal supper, the appearing before the world.

Q.-Gen. 11:26-32; 12:4. How was Abram but 75 when he left Haran? Terah lived to 205. If Abram was born when Terah was 70, would not this make Terah live 60 years after Abram went to Canaan? H.B.

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Q.-John 14:16-17. What is meant by the Spirit dwelling with you and to be in you? and how does it differ from the O.T. action?

A.-As we had the Father and the Son in the first half of the chapter, the Spirit, another Paraclete or Advocate, introduces the second half at this point, Who when given should remain with the disciples forever (unlike Christ Who was leaving them for heaven), or, as it is added later, He remaineth with you and shall be in you. It is a mistake as old as Euthymius Zigabenus to fancy here a distinction between the then time and after Pentecost. The true sense is that, when given as at Pentecost, His was a permanent stay with them; and not only so, but He would be in them in a way peculiar to Himself, and only known since redemption. No doubt, He had acted on souls and in saints at all times, as we see in the O. T. throughout. But now His presence personally and forever was the fruit of Christ's redemption and heavenly glory. The Father was revealed in the Son; the Son incarnate had done the will of God, consummating all sacrifice, and was received up as risen Man in glory; and the Holy Spirit, given and come forever, was the witness and power of all, both in the Christian and in the church; as we wait for the coming of the Lord to receive us to Himself and set us before the Father in His house, where Christ is now.

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