

The
Daily
Sacrifice



H.A. IRONSIDE

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Daily Meditations on the Word of God

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**Dedicated
to the memory of
my beloved life-companion**

HELEN GEORGIA IRONSIDE

**who, after more than
fifty years together, left me
to be with Christ**

May 1, 1948



Prefatory Note

The kindly reception given to my former book of daily readings, *The Continual Burnt Offering*, coupled with many requests for another similar volume, has led to the preparation of this selection of Scripture texts, with comments and suitable poems or hymns. I send it forth with the prayer that it may be as well received as the other which is in constant demand still, and that it may prove helpful in making God's Word increasingly precious to many of His children.

H. A. IRONSIDE.

Chicago, 1948



JANUARY 1

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"

—Gen. 1: 1, 2.

GOD, the Creator of the universe, brought all things into existence by the Word of His power. The direct agent in creation was the Son, the Word, as declared in John 1: 1-3; Colossians 1: 16, 17; Hebrews 1: 2, and other passages. That original creation was perfect.

Some believe that all was chaos in the beginning and that the earth slowly reached a habitable condition. But we read in Isaiah 45: 18 that "He created it not in vain" (*i.e.*, void). Many scholars agree that in place of "was" we should read "became." The earth, through some terrible cataclysm (possibly connected with the fall of Lucifer) became waste and empty, enshrouded in darkness and covered with water. Over this chaotic swirling waste the energizing Spirit of God moved, or brooded, as a hen brooding over the nest from which new life is to come.

**"O soul of mine, be strong!
Make this a glad new year,
And life one grand sweet song,
Some other life to cheer;
No time hast thou to dream
Or waste life's precious hour—
While borne upon life's stream,
Waste not thy manly dower.**

**Amid life's busy din,
O soul, think not of rest!
Great battles thou must win,
Make this new year thy best.
O soul of mine, be strong,
Let noble passion sway,
And love's triumphant song
Make glad each passing day!"**

—Walter Bruce Grimes

JANUARY 2

"And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them"

—Gen. 1: 26, 27.

APART from revelation, God must ever remain the Unknowable. It is true that in nature we see marvelous evidences of His power and wisdom, but it is only in the Son that He is told out in all His fulness (John 1: 18). Jesus came to reveal the Father, for He alone knew Him in the reality of His Being (Matt. 11: 27; Luke 10: 22). He and the Father are one in nature though distinct in person (John 14: 9). In the Old Testament God is revealed as Creator. As such He is the Father of spirits (Heb. 12: 9) because He is the God of the spirits of all flesh (Num. 16: 22). So man, as created originally in the image and likeness of God, was a son of God (Luke 3: 38). But that image was marred and the likeness lost through sin, so that now it is by regeneration, a new creation, or new birth, that man becomes a member of the family of God and can look up into His face and call Him Father (Gal. 3: 26; 4: 6).

**"Rivers to the ocean run,
Nor stop in all their course;
Fire ascending seeks the sun,
Both speed them to their source;
So my soul, derived from God,
Pants to view His glorious face;
Forward tends to His abode,
To rest in His embrace"**

JANUARY 3

"Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, . . . and he builded a city"—Gen. 4: 16, 17.

"To Seth also . . . was born a son . . . then began men to call upon the name of the Lord"—Gen. 4: 26.

IN these early chapters of Genesis, after the fall of Adam and Eve, two distinct lines of their descendants come before us: the line of Cain, the natural man, active, often brilliant and inventive, but existing without God, seeking to make the world a pleasant place in which to live, although manifesting increasing wickedness as the centuries went by. The line of Seth called upon the name of the Lord, and although never numbered among the great ones of the earth, sought, like Enoch, to walk with God, and, like Noah, to obey His voice in all things. Methuselah led right up to the year of the deluge. His grandson and household were the only ones to go through that time of judgment and through them God began a new world-order.

**"To trust in man is but a thing of naught,
With Thee is mercy, Lord, with Thee is might;
To trust in Thee at all times I am taught
Is best, for what Thou plannest must be right.
My hand I place in Thine for all the year:
Thou art a refuge; what have I to fear?"**

JANUARY 4

"Make thee an ark of gopher wood . . . and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch"—Gen. 6: 14.

IN the ark, built according to divine direction, we have a beautiful type of Christ. Pitched with pitch within and without, it went through the flood carrying its passengers safely over to the renewed earth—a picture of Christ bearing the judgment of God against sin and saving all who trust in Him. Note that Noah and his family did not have to hang onto spikes or some similar arrangement outside the ark. They were safe inside where the waters of judgment could not reach them. Blessed it is to be thus "in Christ Jesus," where there is no condemnation (Rom. 8: 1).

**"In the refuge God provided,—
Tho' the world's destruction low'rs,—
We are safe, to Christ confided,
Everlasting life is ours.**

**And, ere long, when come to glory,
We shall sing a well-known strain,—
This (the never-tiring story):—
Worthy is the Lamb once slain!"**

—Mary Bowley

JANUARY 5

"God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged"—Gen. 8: 1.

THE same God who in His righteousness had judged the "world that then was" and swept the ungodly away in His indignation, kept Noah and his family in mind and brought them in safety through the flood. Peter tells us they were saved through the water. Often, as the ark floated on the crest of the waves, doubts and fears may have beset the family within, as to what the final outcome would be. But their questionings, if there were such, could not change God's love for them or alter His purpose to make Noah the head of a new race to inhabit the renewed earth.

The raven and the dove speak of the two natures in the believer. The one feeds on carrion, so never returned to the ark; but for the dove there was no rest save in the ark until the flood was assuaged. When the dove returned with the olive leaf Noah saw in it an evidence that the flood was receding. When it did not return at all he knew it was time to leave the ark.

"Though battles rage, and foes oppress,
And Satan's darts be hurled,
Above the very real distress
That haunts a stricken world,
I lift my head. Though shoulders bend
Beneath the chastening rod,
Secure I'll walk unto the end—
For I remember God.

And even though the flesh should fail,
And faint this heart should grow,
When fears confound, and doubts assail,
Still am I safe, I know—
As safe, when floundering in clods
As clothed with dignity—
For I am Christ's, and Christ is God's,
And GOD remembers me."

—Helen Frazee-Bower

JANUARY 6

"And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done"—Gen. 8: 20, 21.

"THE Lord smelled a savor of rest" (*literal rendering*) because it spoke to Him of the work of His beloved Son. It was not that God found any delight in the sacrifice of a lamb out of the flock, or, as some have blasphemously suggested, that Jehovah was supposed to enjoy the fragrance of roasting meat. But He looked forward with glad appreciation to what His Son was to accomplish on Calvary. In view of this, He made a covenant with Noah, declaring that He "would not again curse the ground for man's sake." He knew that man is unimprovable so far as his natural heart is concerned. It is only evil and that continually. But in the work of the cross all this was to be dealt with (Rom. 8: 3, 4; 2 Cor. 5: 21).

"No blood, no altar now,
The sacrifice is o'er!
No flame, no smoke, ascends on high,
The lamb is slain no more:
But richer blood has flow'd from nobler veins,
To purge the soul from guilt, and cleanse the
reddest stains."

JANUARY 7

"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: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing"

—Gen 12: 1, 2.

NOTE the expression "had said." It was before, not after, he left Ur of the Chaldees that this word came to Abram. He was commanded to leave not only his country, but also all his kindred, to go to a land which God would show to him. It is evident that, in the beginning, there was not sufficient faith or understanding to enable him to act upon this, so he allowed his father, Terah, to take the lead, and as a family they left the land of their nativity and went on to Haran, where they remained until after Terah's death, when the original instruction he had received was remembered and acted upon, and Abraham led the way to the land of Canaan.

MY PRAYER

**"Dear Lord, go with me as I travel on my way,
Help me to think no ill from day to day.
Teach me to smile through tears, and to employ
A kindly word or deed—that joy
May linger near some soul
Who strives to sing, tho' billows roll.
If on the mountain, or the sunny lea,
O'er carefree trails, or on the sea,
I need Thy Presence with me everywhere,
Stay near, dear Lord—this is my prayer."**

—Mae Troy-Hawkins.

JANUARY 8

"And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left"—Gen. 13: 8, 9.

ABRAM could afford to be generous with his earthly-minded nephew because his heart was set on that "city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). Toward this he looked, and all earthly inheritance or temporal possessions seemed very insignificant in comparison with it.

Only as we see a better world above our heads, can we put this world beneath our feet. It was this which enabled Abraham to preserve the pilgrim character to the end and so to relinquish to Lot that which the younger man desired. Nothing so frees the soul from the bondage of covetousness as the knowledge of God and the appreciation of what He has prepared for those who love Him (1 Cor. 2:9). Abraham had a very real understanding of eternal verities and values, and so could appraise aright the passing things of time and sense.

"'Tis the treasure I've found in His love
That has made me a pilgrim below;
And 'tis there, when I reach Him above,
As I'm known, all His fulness I'll know.

And Saviour, 'tis Thee from on high
I await till the time Thou shalt come
To take him Thou hast led by Thine eye,
To Thyself in Thy heavenly Home."

—J. N. Darby.

JANUARY 9

"And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. 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: 7, 8.

GOD'S covenants are of two kinds: some are conditional upon man's response to His commandments; others are unconditional because He makes a promise in sovereign grace which He determines to carry out whatever the nature of the response on man's part may be. His promise to give the land of Palestine to Abraham was of this latter character, also the promise to make of him a great nation. There can be no possibility of failure in regard to both of these parts of the covenant. Therefore it is called an everlasting covenant. It is sovereign grace acting for the blessing of those who have done nothing to earn such wondrous favor. In this respect, it is like God's salvation, which is altogether by grace and made good to all who believe.

**"Mine by covenant, mine for ever,
Mine by oath, and mine by blood,
Mine—nor time the bond shall sever,
Mine as an unchanging God.
My Redeemer!
Oh, how sweet to call Thee mine!"**

JANUARY 10

"After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan"—Gen. 23: 19.

THAT grave in the land of Canaan was the only piece of ground that Abraham actually possessed, although God had given it all to him by promise. He buried Sarah there in the certainty of resurrection when all that God had pledged will be his. In the meantime he was content to remain as a stranger and a pilgrim, for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. Every time he gazed upon, or thought of that lonely grave in Machpelah, he must have recalled the words that God had spoken, and so he looked on in faith to their fulfilment in due time, and thus he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. He had dared to believe God when he was notified that in him and his seed all nations should be blessed. In the same faith he laid away the body of his beloved life-partner, assured that some day he would behold their children dwelling in peace in that land and enjoying all that God had promised. Later he himself was buried in the same tomb. They will rise together at the first resurrection.

"When the weary ones we love
Enter on their rest above,
When the words of love and cheer
Fall no longer on our ear,
Hush! be every murmur dumb
It is only 'TILL HE COME!'"

—E. H. Bickersteth.

"They called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go"

—Gen. 24: 58.

IT is thus the awakened soul decides for Christ. To each there comes the question, Wilt thou go with this Man?—the Man of whom Isaac was but a type, the Man Christ Jesus. He wishes to have us for Himself. The Holy Spirit has come down into this world to seek a Bride for the Son. It is He who wins our hearts for a Man we have never seen—the glorified Man at God's right hand. Happy the soul who responds gladly, "I will go," and so is betrothed to Him forever.

"Behold, a Royal Bridegroom
 Hath called me for His bride!
 I joyfully make ready
 And hasten to His side.
 He is a Royal Bridegroom,
 But I am very poor!
 Of low estate He chose me
 To show His love the more:
 For He hath purchased for me
 Such goodly, rich array,—
 Oh, surely never bridegroom
 Gave gifts like His away.
 He sent His Guide to guide me:
 He knew how blind, how frail
 The children of the valley:—
 He knew my love would fail.
 He knew the mists above me
 Would hide Him from my sight.
 And I, in darkness groping,
 Would wander from the right.
 I know that I must follow
 Slow when I fain would soar:
 That step by step thus upward,
 My Guide must go before."

—Unidentified.

JANUARY 12

"What good shall my life do me?"—Gen. 27:46.

IT was the querulous question of a troubled, dissatisfied mother who had been disappointed in her elder son's marriage to two heathen women, and who felt that life would no longer be worth-while if her other son followed in the same way. But the question may well be taken up by everyone as we face the exigencies of our days. Life may indeed prove useless if Christ is ignored and God is neglected. The only life that is really worth-while is the life that is given to the Lord and lived to His glory.

"I would not dare to live another day
If Thou, O Christ, couldst fail,
Or should Thy prayers before Thy Father's throne
Cease to avail.

But since I know that Thou wilt be the same
Throughout eternity,
That I am kept by that same love
That purchased me;

And am persuaded that in Thee
I need not fall;
Since I committed unto Thee
My soul, my all—

I will not fear though calm give place to storm
And peace to war,
For when my Saviour putteth forth His sheep,
He goes before."

—Barbara Cornet Ryberg.

JANUARY 13

"Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of"—Gen. 28: 15.

IN the life of Jacob we see exemplified a saint under the discipline of God, a man of conflicting emotions and often, unhappily, of mixed motives. He was, nevertheless, throughout all the years of his maturity, one who valued the things of God and appreciated the covenanted blessings promised to Abraham and his seed. Named a "supplanter," or "heel-catcher," which is the literal meaning of "Jacob," because of what took place at his birth (Gen. 25: 25, 26; Hos. 12: 3), he manifested the same traits of crafty self-interest in many things, and yet we see him a chastened man to the last, to whom the things of God were very real and precious. The truth of the two natures in the believer is evidenced in his experiences in a very definite manner: the old Jacob nature in conflict with the Israel nature, so that at times we see the former dominating his ways and at other times the new life is graciously manifested.

**"O child of God, wait patiently
When dark thy path may be,
And let thy faith lean trustingly
On Him who cares for thee;
And though the clouds hang drearily
Upon the brow of night,
Yet in the morning joy will come
And fill thy soul with light.**

**O child of God, He loveth thee
And thou art all His own;
With gentle hand He leadeth thee,
Thou dost not walk alone;
And though thou watchest wearily
The long and stormy night,
Yet in the morning joy will come,
And fill thy soul with light."**

—Fanny J. Crosby.

JANUARY 14

"Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him"—Gen. 37: 3, 4.

IN Joseph we see a very striking type of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was the beloved one of the father, but that very fact caused his brethren to look upon him with envy and hatred. Yet he was destined to become the saviour of the world.

Joseph's dreams were divine revelations, and they told of the glory that was yet to be his. But as he made these things known they but added to the jealousy with which his brethren regarded him. Yet in due season all came to recognize him as their deliverer from death.

So our blessed Lord came into this scene, owned by God as His beloved Son, and appointed by Him to be heir of all things. He was despised and rejected by His own, but is now the Saviour of all who believe. Eventually the very nation that rejected Him as their King will own Him as their long-awaited-for Messiah, and will "mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son."

"O Love divine, what hast Thou done?

The Incarnate God hath died for me!
The Father's well-beloved Son
Bore all my sins upon the tree!
The Son of God for me hath died
My Lord, my Love, is crucified.

Behold Him, all ye passers-by!

The bleeding Prince of life and peace!
Come, sinners, see your Saviour die,
And say, was ever grief like His?
Come, feel with me His blood applied,
My Lord, my Love, is crucified.

Then let us sit beneath His cross,
And gladly catch the healing stream;
All things for Him account but loss,
And give up all our hearts to Him.
Of nothing think or speak beside:
My Lord, my Love, is crucified."

—Charles Wesley.

JANUARY 15

"And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life"—Gen. 45: 4, 5.

IT is a great thing when one learns to look beyond all second causes to God Himself. David, when he recognized that God was dealing with him in permitting Shimei to curse him as he fled from Absalom (2 Sam. 16: 5, 13), and Joseph, when he looked back over the unhappy experiences he had endured because of his brethren's envy and hatred, are remarkable examples of this. Both alike realized the truthfulness of the declaration given so many years afterward, that, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8: 28).

Whatever suffering the faithful heart of Joseph had endured in the years following his rejection by his brothers and the bondage into which they had sold him, he had lived to see that in it all God had been working out a plan for the enrichment of his own soul and blessing of many people, yes, even of those unworthy brothers who had behaved so badly toward him.

**"I would not ask Thee, Lord, why I must go
Through strange and unknown ways;
I know Thou leadest me, and I can trust
Thy love through all my days.**

**I do not need to see the path ahead;
'Tis known, O Lord, to Thee,
And I am safe when guided by Thy hand,
E'en though I cannot see."**

—Bessie Patten Gilmore.

JANUARY 16

"Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, . . . and he was put in a coffin in Egypt"—Gen. 50: 25, 26.

"A coffin in Egypt." These are the words with which the Book of Genesis closes. It leaves Israel as a people developing into a nation, with Joseph their brother and protector now dead. Before his passing, he "gave commandment concerning his bones" (Heb. 11:22). His embalmed body was to remain in an Egyptian sarcophagus until the nation went up out of Goshen to take possession of Canaan, as promised by God to Abraham. When the day of deliverance arrived, they took the bones of Joseph with them (Exod. 13:19). All through the wilderness journey they guarded these sacred remains of their deliverer, until at last they were laid to rest in the land of Promise (Josh. 24:32). There is more than a hint here, easily understood by the spiritually-minded, of our present responsibility: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus" (2 Cor. 4:10) until we enter the rest that remains eternally for the people of God (Heb. 4:9).

"O Lord, I want my life to speak on

When I am gone:

May something I have done my days outlive,

Some sacred act of faith its memory weave,

And unto men a lasting blessing give,

When life is done.

Oh, may some word I've said, some deed of love,

A comfort prove:

Let something stand a lasting monument—

Approved of God, an holy complement,

That I upon His work was full intent,

Sent from above."

—R. E. Neighbor.

JANUARY 17

"And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour"—Exod. 1: 13, 14.

THE sufferings of the Israelites under a cruel government that hated them and spurned the God they worshipped, proved to be the very opportunity Jehovah desired to display His grace to the one and His righteous judgment upon the other. Israel was chosen in the furnace of affliction that they might know the loving-kindness of the Lord and might become His peculiar treasure, a nation living under His direct protection and special care. As we think of the beginnings of our own nation, we cannot but be reminded of similar circumstances. Persecution because of hatred of their conscientious, religious convictions, drove the fathers of the republic, the early colonists, from Europe to America, where, in a most marked way, the divine providence watched over them and gave them a home in a new world. No one can be familiar with the philosophy of history without realizing the large part that oppression had in preparing a people for new and better things under the fostering care of God. The God of Israel is the God of our fathers and is still our sure resource. People learn in affliction what they often fail to learn in more favorable circumstances—their own helplessness and God's omnipotence.

"He knows the way I take, He tries
My life by fire. Then sweet surprise
His love hath planned;
He brings me forth, when tried, as gold,
And every care comes, I am told,
At His command.

All sorrows that long years have brought,
All careless blunders others wrought
That cause me grief,
All disappointments, all despair,
Are His appointments and His care:
He brings relief."

—Mrs. Edgar F. Johnston.

JANUARY 18

"And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink"—Exod. 2: 3.

THIS was an act of real faith. The child had to be exposed to danger and possible death. The ark was, in a sense, a little picture of Christ, as was the ark of Noah. Jochebed, in type, entrusted her baby boy to the care of the Lord, when no longer able to protect him in the home. The king had commanded that all male children of the Hebrews be cast into the river. This mother put her baby in the river—but in the ark of safety first. So we may trust our children to the care of the loving Lord as they are thrust forth upon the current of life.

"Leave God to order all thy ways,
And hope in Him, whate'er betide,
Thou'lt find Him in the evil days,
An all-sufficient strength and guide.
Who trusts in God's unchanging love
Builds on a rock that naught can move.

Sing, pray, and swerve not from His ways,
But do thine own part faithfully;
Trust His rich promises of grace,
So shall it be fulfilled in thee:
God never yet forsook at need
The soul that trusted Him indeed!"

—Geo. Neumark.

JANUARY 19

"God led them not through the way . . . that was near. . . . But God led the people about"

—Exod. 13: 17, 18.

WE may not always understand why God leads us roundabout through the wilderness of this world instead of taking us by what might seem to us a more direct and more agreeable way. But He is working out a plan in our lives that calls for the very experiences we are passing through. He has designed to teach us lessons we could not learn otherwise.

Had Israel missed these varied desert scenes they would never have known what God could be to a needy people in the way they proved Him to be. He led them by the right way, although it must often have seemed to them a strange way.

**"He leads round, but He leads right;
Heaviest burden groweth light;
Marah! Elim! Wilderness!
Each in turn the Lord doth bless;
Canaan shines, far off but bright;
He leads round, but He leads right.**

**He leads round, but He leads right;
Cloud by day, and fire by night;
Morn by morn, 'Let God arise,
Scattering all our enemies';
And we'll sing with evening light,
He leads round, but He leads right!"**

—Anon.

JANUARY 20

"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward"—Exod. 14: 15.

TO obey meant, so far as the natural eye could see, certain death. But He who gave the command, opened up a dry way through the bed of the sea, as soon as they set forward. He never asks of us impossibilities, nor does He command us to do what is unreasonable. Augustine of Hippo wrote long ago, "God's commandments are God's enablings," and this is ever blessedly true. What seem to us to be insurmountable difficulties or insoluble problems are simple enough to Him whose power is omnipotent and whose understanding is infinite. When He says, Go forward, all barriers give way as we obey His voice!

"Have you come to the Red Sea place in your life,
Where, in spite of all you can do,
There is no way out, there is no way back,
There is no other way but—through?

Then wait on the Lord with a trust serene
Till the night of your fear is gone;
He will send the wind, He will heap the floods,
When He says to your soul, 'Go on!'

And your fears shall pass as your foes have passed,
You shall be no more afraid;
You shall sing His praise in a better place,
A place that His hand has made."

—Annie Johnson Flint.

JANUARY 21

**"And all the people answered together, and said,
All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses
returned the words of the people unto the Lord"**

—Exod. 19: 8.

AT the moment, they doubtless meant every word that they said, but they little realized the incorrigible evil of their own hearts and the resulting untrustworthiness of their best intentions. It was not long before the people who promised such implicit obedience were dancing around the golden calf, and from that time on theirs was a history of alternate failure and partial revival, until, at last, God disowned them and cast them away from their land. Never will they be restored as a nation until they acknowledge their sin and seek His face (Hosea 5: 15). Then they will realize that it is not in man's unaided power to keep God's holy commandments. Man can live victoriously only through the might of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

**"How long beneath the law, I lay
In bondage and distress!
I tried the precept to obey,
But toiled without success.**

**Then, all my servile works were done,
A righteousness to raise;
Now, freely chosen in the Son
I freely choose His ways.**

**To see the law by Christ fulfilled
And hear God's pardoning voice,
Will change a slave into a child,
And duty into choice."**

—Anon.

JANUARY 22

"Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness . . . Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked"—Exod. 23: 1, 7.

IT is so easy to do this. Sometimes just an unkind suggestion, which is taken up by others, will be exaggerated as it is spread abroad, until one who is utterly innocent will be blackened beyond the possibility of clearing himself. This, in God's sight, is wickedness. To be "an unrighteous witness" is abhorrent to Him who is the God of truth. Our Lord Himself suffered in this way, when false witnesses rose up against Him, perverting His words and charging Him with offenses of which He was guiltless (Ps. 35: 11; Mark 14: 55, 56).

"Keep thee far from a false matter." This is the only path of safety. Avoid all fellowship with those who indulge in the evil habits of slander and misrepresentation. God's ear is ever open and He hears every false accusation, and will, in His righteous government, cause all such falsehoods to react against those who are guilty of promulgating them.

"I have so much to do, before my work on earth is through—
I spoke a word in haste today; I must retrieve it while I may.
An unkind thought, perhaps of hate, I tried to catch but
was too late.—

How wilful was the look of scorn, I gave it in the early
morn.

The little lie was easy told, because it made my story bold—
I lost a chance to smile today; instead I scowled and turned
away.

I saw a beggar with a cup; I only looked and passed him up.
I didn't help across the street the aged man with faltering
feet.

A blind man's voice, untrained and loud, I heard above the
noisy crowd—

He sang eternal light and love, of meadows green and skies
above. . . .

I saw, I heard, I knew my wrong; I learned it from the blind
man's song!"

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments"—Exod. 34: 27, 28.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS embrace all man's responsibilities toward God and toward his fellows, and are summed up by our Lord in the two great commandments—to love God wholeheartedly and one's neighbor as himself. What man, thus tested, can claim to be guiltless? Christ has magnified the law by His life of perfect obedience and His holy teaching, and on the cross met the full penalty for its violation, and this on our behalf, as He was the sinless One. Now, when we trust in Him, we are born of God and indwelt by His Spirit, and as we walk in the Spirit every righteous demand of the law is fulfilled in us without any legal threatening. Because of love for Christ we are glad to do the will of God.

"All that I was—my sin, my guilt,
My death, was all my own;
All that I am, I owe to Thee,
My gracious God, alone.

The evil of my former state
Was mine, and only mine;
The good in which I now rejoice
Is Thine, and only Thine.

The darkness of my former state,
The bondage, all was mine;
The light of life in which I walk,
The liberty, is Thine.

Thy grace first made me feel my sin,
It taught me to believe;
Then, in believing, peace I found,
And now I live, I live.

All that I am, even here on earth,
All that I hope to be,
When Jesus comes, and glory dawns,
I owe it, Lord, to Thee!"

—Horatius Bonar.

"And when any will offer a meat (or meal) offering . . . his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil upon it and put frankincense thereon."

"No meat offering, which ye shall bring unto the Lord, shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire"—Lev. 2: 1, 11.

THE meal offering spoke of the perfection of Christ as Man here on earth. The fine flour typified His flawless humanity. In Him was no leaven of corruption—no sin of any kind. Nor was there in Him the honey of mere natural sweetness. All was divinely perfect. His whole Being was devoted to the will of the Father. The mingling of oil with the fine flour speaks of His Divinity and Humanity commingled in the Incarnation. The anointing with oil prefigured His anointing by the Spirit as He began His ministry. The salt in every meal offering speaks of the preservative power of righteousness.

**"His nature, not only God's Son,
In Manhood He had His full part,
And the union of both joined in one
Form the fountain of love in His heart."
—Hawkes**

"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord"—Lev. 10: 1, 2.

THE priesthood in Israel failed from its very inception. In Leviticus 8 and 9 we have the induction of the family of Aaron into their sacred office, and in chapter 10 we learn that Nadab and Abihu sinned by offering strange fire before the Lord, thus ignoring the heaven-sent fire that burned upon the altar. It was but another evidence of the unreliability of man, no matter what his privileges. As the years went on, this was demonstrated over and over again. The house of Eli became a scandal to the whole nation, and in due time that branch of the priesthood had to give way to another, which in turn became utterly unworthy, until in Caiaphas that whole system came to an end before God, when he rent his garments (Matt. 26:65), something the high priest was strictly forbidden to do (Lev. 21:10). Christ Himself is now our great High Priest ever living to make intercession for us.

"Great High Priest, whose prayers are music
In the Father's ears,
I shall know their glorious answer
Through eternal years.

Even now, O Lord, I know it,
Made by love Divine,
One with Thee, henceforth, for ever,
Therefore one with Thine."

—G. Ter Steegen.

JANUARY 26

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy"—Lev. 19: 1, 2.

TO be holy is to be separated from all that is evil or unclean. Israel had been brought into relationship with the infinitely holy One. They were responsible then to be wholly separated to Himself. In 1 Peter 2: 9 present-day believers are designated, as Israel was (Exod. 19: 6), "an holy nation." And in the previous chapter we are exhorted to be holy in practice because He who hath called us is holy (1 Pet. 1:15). While standards of holiness have differed in various dispensations, according to light given by God to His people, in every age the redeemed of the Lord have been called to walk as a people sanctified (set apart) to Him to whom they belonged and who had identified Himself with them. Observe, however, that our passage does not say (as often misquoted) "Be ye holy; *as I am holy*," but, "*for I am holy*." We will never be as holy as God is, or as Christ was as Man here on earth, until we are made fully like Him in the day of manifestation (1 John 3: 1-3).

**"More holiness give me,
More strivings within;
More patience in suff'ring,
More sorrow for sin;
More faith in my Saviour,
More sense of His care;
More joy in His service,
More purpose in prayer."**

—P. P. Bliss.

"Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another . . . Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning"—Lev. 19: 11, 13.

ABSOLUTE integrity as between man and man was inculcated by God's holy law. No double-dealing, no deceitful practices of any kind were permitted. Under the law, employers were commanded to pay honest wages to their employees and to see that they received what was owing as soon as it was due. There was to be no over-reaching or attempting to profit themselves by holding back what their workers had rightfully earned.

It is hard for some people to understand how the believer can be said to be "not under law, but under grace" (Rom. 6: 14), and yet that "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." A simple illustration may help. The law of the land, as well as the law of God given at Sinai, forbids stealing. Here is an upright citizen who is philanthropically minded and who, therefore, finds pleasure in benefiting his fellows. He does not refrain from theft merely because the law forbids it, but because he delights in the very opposite. This is the proper Christian attitude. Though not under law, he is not lawless, but lives in glad subjection to the law of love.

I thank Thee, Lord, that I may live
A simple life of childlike trust;
Believe, obey, receive, and give,
Because I may—not that I must.

Nor would I bow because I must,
But pleased to yield, glad to obey,
In loving, fearless, constant trust,
I'd serve, and sing because I may.

"It came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony. And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran"—Num. 10:11, 12.

THE Book of Numbers gives us the account of the wilderness experiences of the children of Israel. It is the book of testing, covering the forty years between Sinai and the entrance into the land of Canaan.

For us as Christians there are many salutary lessons to which our attention is called in the New Testament, where we are told that "all these things happened unto them for ensamples (types): and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10: 11). Their many failures are held up as warnings to us, lest we also go astray by unbelief and self-indulgence. The only path of safety is that of implicit obedience to the Word of the living God. To turn aside and follow the path of our personal inclinations is bound to result in failure, dishonor to God, and loss to ourselves.

It is well to remember that the *wilderness was no part of God's purpose for His people, but it was part of His ways with them*, to bring them to a realization of their own frailty and the untrustworthiness of their own hearts, in order that they might learn to depend entirely upon Him.

What though today
Thou canst not trace at all the hidden reason
For His strange dealings through the trial season,
Trust and obey!
Though God's mercy-cloud enfold thee here,
In after life and light, all shall be plain and clear.

"And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?"—Num. 11: 4.

THE people of Israel, influenced by the murmurings of the mixed multitude, despised the manna and complained because they had no other food. They lusted for the delicacies of Egypt, but they forgot the taskmasters' whips. When people get out of fellowship with God, the things of the world become attractive again. But Israel's backslidings brought judgment, and this is ever the result of departure in heart from the Lord (Prov. 14: 14).

"When our soul is much discouraged
By the roughness of the way,
And the cross we have to carry
Seemeth heavier every day;
When some cloud that overshadows
Hides our Father's face from view,
Oh, 'tis well then to remember
He has blessed us hitherto.

Looking back the long years over,
What a varied path! And yet,
All the way His hand has led us,
Placed each hindrance we have met;
Given to us the pleasant places—
Cheered us all the journey through,
Passing through the deepest waters,
He has blessed us hitherto."

—L. Oakley.

JANUARY 30

"The Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them"

—Num. 20: 12.

GOD will be sanctified in them that come nigh Him. Grace does not set aside government. The Lord is very jealous of the order of His house. Those who are in covenant relationship with Him are responsible to obey His voice. The more light given, the greater is the responsibility resting upon the recipient. God will not be trifled with. What might be in great measure overlooked in the case of one of lesser privileges may be considered a very grave offense on the part of one who has been signally honored of God. The lapse of a greatly used and well-instructed servant of Christ is far more serious than the same offense on the part of one comparatively ignorant of divine truth and who has had lesser opportunities of service and testimony.

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky:

To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfil:
Oh, may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will!

Arm me with jealous care,
As in Thy sight to live;
And oh, Thy servant, Lord, prepare
A strict account to give!"

—Charles Wesley.

JANUARY 31

**"It came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man,
when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived"**

—Num. 21: 9.

BRASS is a symbol of judgment. The serpent is a type of sin which has poisoned the entire human race. The brazen serpent represents Christ as made sin for us on the Cross—there bearing the judgment that our guiltiness merits. In the wilderness when the bitten, dying Israelites looked to the uplifted serpent they lived. Nothing else was needed. There was life in a look.

Our blessed Lord has interpreted this for us in His words to Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3: 14, 15).

"The serpent lifted up
 Could life and healing give.
So Jesus on the Cross
 Bids me to look and live.
For whosoever will believe
Shall everlasting life receive."

—A. T. Pierson.

FEBRUARY 1

"Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion"

—Num. 24: 19.

EVEN self-seeking Balaam had to confess. "Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion." It was in the mind of God from the beginning to set up on earth a nation which should be for the display of His glory, and over which the King of His appointing should reign forever. This was confirmed to David and his house. Christ Jesus, of David's seed through Mary, is the One in whom the promise is fulfilled. As long as Israel walked in obedience to God and in the hope of the fulfilment of His Word, they enjoyed national prosperity and were invincible in warfare. As a typical people they show what God desires to see in any nation to whom His truth is committed. True piety is a bulwark against evil from without and delivers from dissension within.

"He is coming, the 'Man of Sorrows,'
Now exalted on high;
He is coming with loud hosannas,
In the clouds of the sky.

He shall gather His chosen people,
Who are called by His name;
And the ransomed of ev'ry nation,
For His own He shall claim."

—Alice Monteith.

FEBRUARY 2

"These words . . . shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children . . ."

—Deut. 6: 6, 7.

IN Old Testament times the Jewish home presented the highest type of family affection and child-training that was known in the world. Paganism at its best never reached anything like the Jewish ideal as to this. But it is in the Christian home that we see the fullest development of family privilege and responsibility. There Christ is ever to have the pre-eminent place; and husband, wife, parents, children, masters, and servants are all called upon to live and behave toward one another as in His holy presence and as seeking His glory in all that they do (Eph. 5: 22 to 6: 9). To this end, there should be the daily reading of the Scriptures and prayer in the family circle, when all together bow before the Father above and commit one another to His loving care. But besides this, the young are to be trained in the ways of the Lord and the knowledge of His Word. Where parents leave this to the Sunday School or other outside activities, they are unfaithful to the responsibility God has put upon them. Nothing can make up for lack of Christian nurture at home.

"I supposed I knew my Bible,
Reading piecemeal, hit or miss,
Now a bit of John or Matthew,
Now a snatch of Genesis,
Certain chapters of Isaiah,
Certain Psalms (the twenty-third),
Twelfth of Romans, First of Proverbs—
Yes, I thought I knew the Word!
But I found that thorough reading
Was a different thing to do,
And the way was unfamiliar
When I read the Bible through.
You who like to play at Bible,
Dip and dabble, here and there,
Just before you kneel, aweary,
And yawn through a hurried prayer.
You who treat the Crown of Writings
As you treat no other book—
Just a paragraph disjointed,
Just a crude, impatient look—
Try a worthier procedure,
Try a broad and steady view;
You will kneel in very rapture
When you read the Bible through!"
—Amos R. Wells.

FEBRUARY 3

"Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be your's: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be"—Deut. 11: 24.

THIS promise was reiterated to Joshua. (Josh. 1:3). God had given all the land of Canaan and adjacent countries also, from Lebanon and the Euphrates unto the Mediterranean Sea, to Israel before they ever entered upon their inheritance at all. It was all theirs by title. But they were responsible to make it theirs by actual experience. So is it with believers today. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ (Eph. 1:3), but how few of us have really entered experimentally into the enjoyment of our inheritance! Israel never occupied all the land God promised them. When they are restored to the Lord in the last days, we are told that "the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions" (Obad. 17). This will be under the New Covenant of grace.

**"There are heights of sweet communion
That are all awaiting me;
There are ocean depths of mercy
That are flowing full and free;
There are precious pearls of promise
That can ne'er be priced in gold,
There's a fulness in my Saviour
That has never yet been told."**

FEBRUARY 4

"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known"—Deut. 11: 26-28.

SIN never pays. Intemperance cannot produce happiness. Licentiousness brings only ruin and death. These are incontrovertible facts. In all the years of human history, no one has ever found peace and satisfaction in throwing the reins upon lust and living to gratify sensual desire. The path of sobriety is the path of security. A life of temperance is a life of serenity. When the Lord God is sanctified in the heart (1 Pet. 3:15) and the Holy Spirit is given control of the life, the soul enters into peace and contentment such as the devotees of passion and appetite never know. Every sin brings its own punishment, either in this life or the next, but a life of godliness is profitable in all things, whether for time or eternity.

"Oh, count up the cost, and weigh the loss,
'Gainst all the gain of yonder Cross.
Then which shall it be?—the joys of earth,
The world's sad smile, and its hollow mirth?
For that is all it can offer thee;
And then—a lost Eternity!
Or wilt thou now have the world's poor scorn,
And dwell with Christ through an endless morn?
Wilt thou have Jesus? Then—come what may—
Thou shalt be safe in the solemn day."

FEBRUARY 5

"Give me a true token"—Josh. 2: 12.

RAHAB wanted definite assurance of security in view of the hour of judgment coming upon Jericho. Hence her insistent demand, "Give me a true token." That token was for her the scarlet line which she was commanded to hang in the window. Such a scarlet line is the precious truth of redemption by the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. When in doubt as to her safety Rahab could look upon that scarlet line and be at peace. Even so, today, the troubled soul has but to rest in faith upon the testimony of the Word of God as to the abiding value of the blood of Christ to be free from every doubt and fear.

"On merit not my own I stand;
On doings which I have not done;
Merit beyond what I can claim,
Doings more perfect than my own.

Upon a life I have not lived,
Upon a death I did not die,
Another's life, Another's death,
I stake my whole eternity.

Not on the tears which I have shed,
Not on the sorrows I have known,
Another's tears, Another's griefs,
On them I rest, on them alone.

Jesus, O Son of God, I build
On what Thy cross has done for me;
There both my life and death I read,
My guilt, my pardon, there I see."

FEBRUARY 6

"And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day"

—Josh. 5: 9.

IN the early days of Joshua, after each new victory, the armies of Israel returned to Gilgal, there to renew their consecration and to give thanks for divine help in time of conflict. The name "Gilgal" means "rolling," and was given because it was there that the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. There those who were born in the wilderness were separated to God by the covenant sign of circumcision, which had been neglected during the years of their wanderings. Gilgal, therefore, speaks of self-judgment—the recognition of the unprofitableness of the flesh.

"Back to Gilgal, back to Gilgal,

Let me, O my spirit, go,

Where the stones of death lie buried

'Neath the mighty Jordan's flow;

Where the manna ceased from falling

On the resurrection day—

Back to where the shame of Egypt

From the host was rolled away."

—William Blane.

FEBRUARY 7

"There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel"—Josh. 7: 13.

THIS was the secret of the defeat at Ai. Sin in the camp made Israel powerless to stand before their enemies. The effort of Achan to conceal the accursed thing did not prevent the Lord from dealing with Israel because of it. Only after it was brought out into the light and judged in the presence of God was victory assured to the host of the Lord. Who can tell the extent to which hidden sin has weakened the Church of God today in its conflict with the powers of evil! Only by confession and unsparing self-judgment will weakness be overcome and victory assured.

"Above the swamps of subterfuge and shame,
The deeds, the thoughts, that honour may not name,
The halting tongue that dares not tell the whole,
O Lord of Truth, lift every Christian soul!"

FEBRUARY 8

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"—Josh. 24: 15.

ME and my house." These words bring before us a principle that runs all through Scripture. God delights to bless the households of His people and He looks for household piety. This comes out in many definite instances, as in the case of Noah (Gen. 7: 1), Abraham (Gen. 18: 19), Lydia, and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16: 15, 31-34). We see the sad effects of failure on this line in the instances of Eli (1 Sam. 3: 13) and of David himself (2 Sam. 23: 5), who failed grievously in not bringing his sons into subjection, although God overruled in wondrous grace.

"Thou gracious God, whose mercy lends
The light of home, the smile of friends,
Our gathered flock Thine arms enfold,
As in the peaceful days of old.

Wilt Thou not hear us while we raise,
In sweet accord of solemn praise,
The voices that have mingled long
In joyous flow of mirth and song?

For all the blessings life has brought,
For all its sorrowing hours have taught,
For all we mourn, for all we keep,
The hands we clasp, the loved that sleep.

The noontide sunshine of the past,
These brief, bright moments fading fast,
The stars that gild our darkening years,
The twilight ray from holier spheres,

We thank Thee, Father; let Thy grace
Our loving circle still embrace,
Thy mercy shed its heavenly store,
Thy peace be with us evermore."

—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

FEBRUARY 9

"And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that He did for Israel"—Judges 2: 6, 7.

IN God's dealings with Israel we may see exemplified great principles that have valuable lessons for us. As we go back over church history we can see how similar conditions have prevailed. Times of declension have been followed by seasons of revival, generally brought about by certain leaders whom God has raised up to call His people back to Himself. It has been their responsibility to emphasize some line of truth that had been ignored, to a great extent, for years. Luther re-affirmed the truth of justification by faith; the Wesleys, regeneration and the witness of the Spirit; Moody and others, the preciousness of free grace; and so with others of God's messengers. The great danger came in the next and following generations, when those who did not have to purchase the truth at the expense of suffering and persecution readily surrendered it and turned back to what their fathers had left for Christ's sake.

"Faith of our fathers! living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword;
Oh how our hearts beat high with joy
Whene'er we hear that glorious word!
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!

Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free;
How sweet would be their children's fate,
If they, like them, could die for thee!
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!"

—Frederick W. Faber.

FEBRUARY 10

"Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed. Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them"—Judges 2: 15, 16.

DISOBEDIENCE to the Word of God always results in misery and bondage. God will not be trifled with. He rightfully demands wholehearted obedience and unqualified submission to His will. Happy for us if we recognize this as our first responsibility, and so yield ourselves to Him as those bought with a price, who are His, both by creation and redemption. Failing in this, we bring sorrow upon ourselves and dishonor upon the name of the Lord. But when failure comes in, there is a way back through repentance and confession. If we thus judge ourselves, God will give deliverance in His own way and time,

"Come, let us to the Lord our God
With contrite hearts return;
Our God is gracious, nor will leave
The desolate to mourn.

His voice commands the tempest forth,
And stills the stormy wave;
And though His arm be strong to smite,
'Tis also strong to save."

—John Morrison.

FEBRUARY 11

"He said unto Him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house... And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man"—Judges 6: 15, 16.

GIDEON'S words did not reveal what psychologists today call "an inferiority complex." It was rather a true humility—a realization that in himself there was no power to deliver Israel. He came of a poor and insignificant family. He himself recognized his own helplessness. He did not feel there was anything of which he could boast. But he was to learn that God's strength is made perfect in weakness. Obedience was all that was needed. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8: 31) Gideon had the promise of the divine presence to rely upon. His future history tells us how remarkably God fulfilled His word in using this country lad to destroy the power of haughty Midian and to deliver and guide Israel.

**"Blest are the humble souls that see
Their emptiness and poverty,
Treasures of grace to them are given,
And crowns of joy laid up in heaven.**

**Blest are the meek, who stand afar
From rage and passion, noise and war;
God will secure their happy state,
And plead their cause against the great."**

—I. Watts.

FEBRUARY 12

"And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God"—Ruth 1: 16.

FOR Ruth there was nothing in Moab. It had been to her but a great graveyard. Now bereft of every human prop, she turned to the God of Israel for help, and cast in her lot with His poor, weak handmaiden, Naomi. Her decision was the first step toward bringing her into the royal line from which the Messiah was to come. She seemed to be renouncing all that was worth-while. She really had nothing to lose but everything to gain.

"He took away the love of those
Whom I had loved so well,
And what it cost my grieving soul
No word nor pen could tell.
But as I leaned against His heart,
Wounded and crushed and sore,
I deeply drank of truer love
Than I had known before;
A love that knows no selfish aim,
That trials cannot kill,
That chides me for my faults, ah, yes,
But keeps on loving still.

Dear Lord, in Thine omnipotence
Thou surely couldst recall
My many sins of yesterday,
Remind me of them all,
But love like Thine delights to cast
Them in the deepest sea,
And will remember them no more
Through all eternity.
Earth holds so many hungry hearts,
To men be this the sign
That we are Thy disciples, Lord,
Give us a love like Thine."

—Barbara C. Ryberg.

FEBRUARY 13

"It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field"

—Ruth 2: 22.

THIS was Naomi's advice to Ruth after she had met and been favored by Boaz, the near kinsman who could redeem her forfeited inheritance. In his fields she found grace and sustenance. To wander elsewhere would have been a grave mistake. May we not take this to heart as those who have been taken into favor in and by Christ Jesus. He has given us evidence of His love and consideration. Surely we need not roam in the fields of the world looking for that which is found alone in Christ.

**"Midst all the things which change and pass and perish,—
The blessings which so oft seem growing dim,—
How good it is to calmly, truly cherish
The treasure which is ours in having Him.**

**His love unchanged throughout the years abideth,
When other loves have changed or passed away;
No aching, breaking heart in Him confideth
But finds its night of sorrow turned to day."**

—J. Danson Smith.

"And I will raise Me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in Mine heart and in My mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before Mine anointed for ever"—1 Sam. 2: 35.

IT is a very serious thing to be put in a position of special privilege in spiritual things; for with the privileges there go great responsibilities. God set apart the priestly family in Israel as His representatives to the people, and that they might represent the people before Him. It was therefore all-important that they should be a holy and conscientious group to whom the people would look up and in whom they would have confidence. Failing in these particulars, they no longer had any place of real value in Israel, and so were set aside at last. Man has failed in every relationship in which he has stood before God. Christ is Himself our great High Priest, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26-28). Believers now are all linked up with Him as a priestly house, upon whom the responsibility rests to witness for God to men and to intercede with Him on behalf of men. It is therefore incumbent upon us to walk before Him in holiness and righteousness.

**"His priest am I, before Him day and night,
 Within His Holy Place;
 And death, and life, and all things dark and bright,
 I spread before His Face.
 Rejoicing with His joy, yet ever still,
 For silence is my song;
 My work to bend beneath His blessed will,
 All day, and all night long—
 For ever holding with Him converse sweet,
 Yet speechless, for my gladness is complete."**

—G. Ter Steegen.

FEBRUARY 15

"And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord"

—1 Sam. 3: 19, 20.

GOD Himself can put no greater honor upon one whom He has taken into relationship with Himself than to call and commission him to be His spokesman to other men. But with this privilege go great responsibilities. The life should correspond with the message. In Samuel we see consistency of behavior—a walk before God—which gave Israel to know he was Jehovah's representative, to whom they could turn for helpful counsel and for spiritual enlightenment in a day when there was no open vision (3:1). That is, there were few who had understanding of the mind of the Lord.

**"I want my life to testify that He can save;
I want to help to make His crimson banner wave;
I want to tell the blessed story ev'ry day;
I want to be a light to others on their way.**

**I want to live as Jesus lived,
I want to love as Jesus loved,
I want to serve and honor Him and
please Him in ev'rything;
I want my life to testify that
He's my Lord and King."**

—J. P. Scholfield.

"Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord: and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him. . . . Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us"—1 Sam. 7: 9, 12.

OF all animals, this was one of the most helpless and dependent. It well pictured Israel's own state. It also typified the One who was yet to be manifested as Israel's Saviour, who, as a lamb dumb before its shearers, was to submit patiently both to man's malignant treatment and to the judgment of God as He took the place of the guilty. With the lamb on the altar, Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him, as He always hears those who come to Him in acknowledged repentance and in faith put in their plea.

A memorial stone was erected on the battlefield site to celebrate, not Israel's might or prowess, but the Lord's victory over their haughty foes. It is well that we set up such stones of remembrance that we may never forget the mighty acts of our God!

"Ebenezer, stone of help,
Oft I pause to raise anew,
To remind my fainting heart,
God hath helped me hitherto.

Ebenezer points two ways—
Stirs my mem'ry; faith renews,
Thus encouraging my heart,
Lest the thought of Him I lose.

Ebenezer backward looks
O'er the way my feet have trod,
And my joyful soul gives praise
For the wonders of my God."

—Zuella Cooke.

FEBRUARY 17

"Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house"—1 Sam. 10: 25.

ISRRAEL, in the beginning of her national history, was a theocracy. God Himself was her King, who revealed His will through His prophets and through the inspired Word as committed to Moses and his successors. It was when the priesthood had broken down, and even the prophetic office failed in a measure, that the people demanded a king, in order that they might be more like the nations surrounding them. They were out of touch with God, and so they wanted an arm of flesh on which to lean. In response to their insistent plea, God gave them Saul, after warning them, through Samuel, of what his reign would mean. But nothing could dissuade or turn them aside from their determination to have a leader who could rule over them and command their armies in time of war. Saul was their choice as well as God's. In vociferously acclaiming him their king, they were only carrying out what He had decreed, little as they realized it.

"God SEES my path: to Him 'tis clear
When there's no light to guide me;
So in the dark I do not fear
That evil may betide me.

God HEARS my cry; and when the way
Is rough, and feet will stumble,
He chideth not; Himself the Stay
And Comfort to the humble.

God KNOWS what lies in front of me,
Each step that must be taken;
Therefore I go assuredly,
In faith and trust unshaken."

"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart"—1 Sam. 16: 7.

MEN are prone to make much of brilliant gifts and magnificent carriage, but God, who sees not as we do, looks upon the heart. With Him it is beauty of character and lowly subjection to His will that count far more than outward show. He chose David, not only because of what He knew him to be in his youth, but because of what He was going to make of him in years to come. We say, "The child is father of the man," and we mean that early years give promise of future behavior. It is a remarkable fact that most men whom God has used in an outstanding manner learned to know Him in their youth, and walked with Him through the years that followed.

"Serve the Lord in the days of youth,
Learn His law and accept His truth;
Sing His praise with a ready tongue,
While the heart is young,
While yet the heart is young.

Serve Him then, ev'ry youthful day,
Choose His guidance without delay;
Waste no part of these precious years,
Youth soon disappears,
Too soon it disappears."

—Edith Sanford Tillotson.

FEBRUARY 19

"What one nation in the earth is like Thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to Himself, and to make Him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for Thy land, before Thy people, which Thou redeemedst to Thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?"—2 Sam. 7:23.

THE covenanted blessings were not for David alone, but for the nation as such—that nation Israel whom God had redeemed from bondage and brought into the liberty which they enjoyed under His gracious care. While Israel stands out pre-eminently as the nation of God's choice (Amos 3:2), yet any other people has similar reasons for thanksgiving and acknowledgment of the divine intervention on their behalf which He has watched over and blessed with the knowledge of His Word, as in the case of our own America, and other favored peoples in the world today. How jealously we should guard the privileges bestowed upon us!

"Rejoice, O land, in God thy might,
His will obey, Him serve aright.
For thee the saints uplift their voices:
Fear not, O land, in God rejoice.

He shall forgive thy sins untold;
Remember thou His love of old;
Walk in His way, His Word adore,
And keep His truth for evermore."

—Robert Seymour Bridges.

FEBRUARY 20

"And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about"—1 Kings 7: 23.

BEFORE the sanctuary of old in the court of the tabernacle there was the laver, and in that of the temple the brazen sea. These were for the cleansing of the priests, and they typified the water of the Word by which we who believe are sanctified and cleansed today that we may be fitted for fellowship with God and for service to men.

John saw in heaven a sea of glass. It is the same Word, which abides eternally but will no longer be needed for our purification up there. So we see the saints of God standing on the sea of glass. The unchanging Word is the solid foundation upon which they will be forever established. As we remain here on earth in the place of testimony we need to be washed by the Word continually that we may be freed from the defilements which we contact on every hand. In yonder land there shall be nothing to cause us to need the cleansing Word, but we shall stand upon its sure testimonies forever. Till we reach that scene we need cleansing day by day.

**"By what means shall a young man learn
his way to purify?
If he according to Thy Word
therefore attentive be."**

—Scottish Psalter.

FEBRUARY 21

"For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. . . . Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant"
—1 Kings 11: 4, 11.

WHENEVER and wherever tested by God, man has proved himself to be a failure. Of all who had gone before him none attained to the wisdom of Solomon; yet even he sinned grievously by forgetting the commandments of the Lord, and so brought grief and ruin at last upon Israel. Under his reign they reached the highest pinnacle of worldly glory. Because of sin, both his and theirs, they became at last an outcast people, driven from their land and wandering in pain and wretchedness among the Gentiles. Sin always brings disaster. May we learn from their sad history the folly of turning away from the paths of righteousness.

"Eternal Ruler of the ceaseless round
Of circling planets singing on their way,
Guide of the nations from the night profound
Into the glory of the perfect day:
Rule in our hearts, that we may ever be
Guided and strengthened and upheld by Thee.

Oh, clothe us with Thy heavenly armour, Lord,
Thy trusty shield, Thy sword of love divine;
Our inspiration be Thy constant Word;
We ask no victories that are not Thine:
Give or withhold, let pain or pleasure be;
Enough to know that we are serving Thee."

—John White Chadwick.

"And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? Tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil"—2 Kings 4: 2.

THE poor widow who came to Elisha for help little realized that she possessed already all that was necessary to meet every need under the good hand of God. That pot of oil represented the grace of God as ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit. As long as there were empty vessels to receive it, the oil was not stayed. And so it is today. God has given to everyone of us the riches of His grace which we may use as the need arises, and the supply will never fail until it can be truly said that "There is not a vessel more." It is but an Old Testament way of saying, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

**"In the heart of London city,
'Mid the dwellings of the poor,
These bright golden words were uttered,
'I HAVE CHRIST! What want I more?'**

**Spoken by a lonely woman,
Dying on a garret floor,
Having not one earthly comfort—
'I HAVE CHRIST! What want I more?'**

**You may have much gold and grandeur,
Yet by God be reckoned poor;
He alone has riches truly
WHO HAS CHRIST, though nothing more."**

FEBRUARY 23

"And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha"—2 Kings 6: 17.

UNBELIEF ever fills the heart with fear, for it magnifies the difficulties and loses sight of the power of God, but no matter what the circumstances which may confront the believer it still remains blessedly true that, "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." The angels of the Lord were encamping roundabout the city wherein Elisha and his servant dwelt, even before the servant's eyes were open to behold them; sight but confirmed that which was true already. So may we have opened eyes to recognize the marvelous way in which the angel of the Lord encampeth roundabout them that fear Him and delivereth them.

"He fainteth not, nor ever groweth weary,
The Mighty One, whose arm is strong to save!
He giveth strength to aid the fainting pilgrim,
And to the weak the courage to be brave,
He sleepeth not; His eyelid closeth never;
His children are His care both night and day;
He raiseth up the poor, the needy lifteth;
The wayward feet He leadeth in the way.
He faileth not; His faithfulness abideth;
Our friends may fail, but He remaineth true.
His 'fear nots' glow with comfort for the troubled;
The faithful Guide will lead the journey through."

"He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left"

—2 Kings 22: 2.

IN the godly king Josiah we have a fine example of that purpose of heart which should ever characterize those who know the Lord. It was said of him that he "turned not aside to the right hand or to the left." On the one hand, false religion beckoned to him and sought to enslave him, but he refused to be deceived; on the other side, the pleasures of the world sought to turn him aside from the path of sobriety and devotion to the Lord, but resolutely he turned from every temptation presented, because he had set his heart upon doing the will of God. It is no wonder that his reign was a record of blessing and revival. He was used of God in a mighty way because of his single eye and his undeviating devotion to the path of obedience. In this we may well imitate him.

"My heart is fixed, Eternal God,
 Fixed on Thee,
 And my unchanging choice is made;
 Christ for me.
 He is my Prophet, Priest and King,
 Who did for me salvation bring;
 And while I've breath I still shall sing,
 Christ for me!

Let others boast of heaps of gold;
 Christ for me.
 His riches never can be told;
 Christ for me.
 Your gold will waste and wear away,
 Your honors perish in a day;
 My portion never can decay;
 Christ for me!"

FEBRUARY 25

"The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off for ever"—1 Chron. 28: 9.

HOW blessed it is to have to do with an understanding God! He with whom we have to do knows our inmost thoughts and all the reasonings of our hearts. Yet knowing us so well, knowing all our sins and failures, He calls us into fellowship with Himself, and delights to reveal Himself to all who turn to Him in truth. To seek Him is to find, and to be found of, Him. To turn away from Him is to forsake our own mercies, and to learn by sad experience the evil of departure from the living God.

"How wonderful to have a Friend
Who always understands!
Who knows, who loves, who cares when all
Is placed in His dear hands;

Who sees our inmost secret thoughts,
The longings deep within;
And, greater still, who died for us
To rescue us from sin!

And so, today, shall we not place
Our all in His dear hands,
With springing tears of gratitude
For One who understands?"

—Natalie D. Wurts.

"Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for My name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart: notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house"
—2 Chron. 6: 8, 9.

DAVID'S desire to build a house for the Lord was recognized by God as good, and Nathan the prophet agreed at once that it would be an excellent thing to do. But both he and David had to learn that God's thoughts are oftentimes different from those of the best and most well-intentioned men. David was not to build the house. That was to be the work of his son Solomon. This, however, did not cool his zeal or cause him to be less interested in the project. He manifested a truly subject spirit, and in his prayer, as he sat before the Lord (2 Sam. 7: 18-29), he gave vent to his deep appreciation of the grace God had shown toward him.

"When the Master of all the workmen
 sent me into the field,
 I went forth elate and happy, the tools of
 His service to wield,
 Expectant of high position, as suited my
 lofty taste,
 When lo! He set me to weeding and
 watering down in the waste.

Such pottering down in the hedges! A
 task so thankless and small!
 Yet I stifled my vain ambition, and worked
 for the Lord of all,
 Till, meeker grown, as nightly I sank to
 my hard-won rest,
 I cared but to hear in my dreaming, 'This
 one has done his best.'

The years have leveled distinctions. There
 is no more great or small;
 It is only faithful service that counts with
 the Lord of all.
 And I know that tilled with patience, the
 veriest waste of clod
 Shall bring forth the perfect harvest,
 planned in the heart of God."

FEBRUARY 27

"They sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid"—Ezra 3: 11.

EVERY revival of the work of the Lord is an occasion for renewed praise and thanksgiving. Jerusalem had been in ruins for seventy years. Its glorious temple had been utterly destroyed, but through the good hand of God the foundation of the new temple was laid and this filled with rejoicing the hearts of the remnant, who had returned to the land and to the city where Jehovah had set His name. So from time to time throughout the centuries when things have been at a very low ebb indeed, God has come in grace and given revival and blessing to His people. This spiritual refreshment is an evidence of His unceasing care for His own.

"Call us back from hearts cast down,
And, oh, afresh inspire
Our souls to seek Thee more and more;
To burn with deep desire,
Till hearts o'erflow, and faces glow
With holy, ardent fire.
Lord, call us back!

Broken is the remnant, Lord,
And difficult the day;
What shame and sorrow cover us,
Our tears oft dim the way;
The tide runs high, Thy coming's nigh,
Our hearts are loth to stay;
Lord, take us Home!"

—Helen McDowell.

"But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then they returned answer by letter concerning this matter"—Ezra 5: 5.

NO matter what opposition Satan may raise up in his attempt to hinder the work of God, where His people press forward in the energy of faith the Lord can be depended upon to give all needed grace and wisdom that they may carry out that which He Himself has planned. Unbelief looks at the hindrances and shrinks from the dangers, but faith looks to God alone and counts on Him to undertake in His own marvelous way. This is a lesson that we all need to learn as we face the difficulties and perplexities of life.

"The thing surpasses all my thought;
But faithful is my Lord;
Through unbelief I stagger not,
For God hath spoke the word.

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, It shall be done!

Obedient faith, that waits on Thee,
Thou never wilt reprove;
But Thou wilt form Thy Son in me,
And perfect me in love."

—Charles Wesley.

FEBRUARY 29

"For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him; but His power and His wrath is against all them that forsake Him"—Ezra 8: 22.

THERE was nothing wrong in asking for a guard of soldiers in order to protect the caravan which included besides men, so many defenseless women and children, as they wended their way across the open spaces to the land of Palestine. But Ezra felt that for him to ask such a guard would be out of harmony with his declaration that God Himself was all-sufficient to protect them from every foe. Therefore, he called the people to prayer and fasting, and in the strength of the Lord they went forward, counting upon God's all-protecting arm instead of looking to any humanly-devised means of security. The result was they were carried through in triumph—something that always takes place when the soul depends on God alone.

"Though dark be our way, since God is our Guide,
'Tis ours to obey; 'tis His to provide:
Though cisterns be broken, and creatures all fail,
The word He hath spoken shall surely prevail.

His love in times past forbids us to think
He'll leave us at last in trouble to sink;
The Lamb in His glory is ever in view,
The pledge and the proof He will help us quite through.

And since all we meet must work for our good,
The bitter is sweet, the med'cine is food;
Though painful at present, 'twill cease before long,
And then how triumphant the conqueror's song!"

—John Newton.

MARCH 1

"O Lord, I beseech Thee, let now Thine ear be attentive to the prayer of Thy servant, and to the prayer of Thy servants, who desire to fear Thy name: and prosper, I pray Thee, Thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer"—Neh. 1: 11.

HERE indeed is a most interesting and precious suggestion. Although Nehemiah's prayer was that God might move the heart of the great king Artaxerxes, when he prays to the Lord about him, he simply prays that the Lord would grant him mercy in the sight of *this man*. The faithful cupbearer of the king realized that in the sight of God his master was but a man like any other, and he counted on God to so exercise the king that he would carry out what seemed to be very evidently the Lord's will in regard to the welfare of the returned remnant. Faith does not quail at difficulties nor is it troubled because of the seeming greatness of the agencies that Providence may use. Faith realizes that God is above all circumstances and above all personalities.

"Oh, for a faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by every foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of any earthly woe!

That will not murmur or complain
Beneath the chast'ning rod,
But, in the hour of grief or pain,
Will lean upon its God:

A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without;
That when in danger knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt.

Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste, e'en here, the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home."

—William H. Bathurst.

MARCH 2

"I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses"

—Neh. 4: 14.

HE who fears God need fear no one else. Nehemiah, strong in the assurance that the Lord had sent him to build the walls of Jerusalem, did not quail before the opposition of the enemy; his confidence was in the One who had commissioned him. So should it ever be with us. When God gives the word we need not dread the power of the enemy nor be discouraged because of opposition. He who is in us is greater than all that can be against us. That which He bids us do He will give us the power to accomplish, and He Himself will stand between us and the foe.

**"Soldiers of Christ, lay hold
On faith's victorious shield;
Arm'd with that adamant and gold,
Be sure to win the field:
If faith surround your heart,
Satan shall be subdued;
Repell'd his every fiery dart,
And quench'd with Jesus' blood.**

**Jesus hath died for you;
What can His love withstand?
Believe, hold fast your shield, and who
Shall pluck you from His hand?
Then, having all things done,
And ev'ry conflict past—
Accepted each through Christ alone,
You shall be crowned at last."**

—Charles Wesley.

MARCH 3

"The seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers. And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God"—Neh. 9: 2, 3.

CONVICTED of the evils resulting from unequal yokes (2 Cor. 6:14) with the wicked inhabitants of the land, the people of the Lord separated themselves, not from their fellow-Israelites but from these idolatrous strangers, and in contrition of heart judged their past compromising behavior and confessed their own disobedience and departure from God and the ways of their fathers, as a result of which God had dealt with them in judgment. The Word of God is profitable for reproof and correction (2 Tim. 3:16), so they spent the first part of the day over the Scriptures in order that they might learn the mind of the Lord and see wherein they had failed. Then the next part of the day they acknowledged these failures, judging all in the light of the Word, and when their consciences were freed by confession, they worshiped the Lord for His loving-kindness in bearing with them and revealing His Word to them.

"The counsels of redeeming grace
The sacred leaves unfold;
And here the Saviour's lovely face
Our raptured eyes behold.
Here light descending from above
Directs our doubtful feet;
Here promises of heavenly love
Our ardent wishes meet.
Our num'rous griefs are here redress'd,
And all our wants supplied:
Naught we can ask to make us blessed,
Is in this book denied.
For these inestimable gains,
That so enrich the mind,
Oh, may we search with eager pains,
Assured that we shall find."

—S. Stennett.

MARCH 4

"Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day; I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish"

—Esther 4: 16.

AT first Esther did not realize the terrible danger to which her people and she herself were exposed, but when Mordecai made it all clear to her she undertook to act in a manner that has excited the admiration of all who have pondered the record throughout the years. She knew she was really taking her life in her hands by going into the king's presence uninvited, but realizing her responsibility to her people and with implicit confidence in the God whose name is not even mentioned in the book of Esther, she declared, "If I perish, I perish." It was the spirit of Christ seen in this daughter of Israel—a spirit that should actuate all believers who are found at any time in perilous circumstances. The body may perish, but all is well for eternity for the one who trusts the living God.

"Come, humble sinner, in whose breast
A thousand thoughts revolve,
Come, with your guilt and fear oppress'd,
And make this last resolve:—

I'll go to Jesus, though my sin
Like mountains round me close:
I know His courts, I'll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.

Prostrate I'll lie before His throne,
And there my guilt confess;
I'll tell Him I'm a wretch undone
Without His sov'reign grace.

I can but perish if I go—
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away, I know
I must forever die."

—Jones.

MARCH 5

"And said, If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces"

—Esther 8: 5.

ESTHER'S words here are very suggestive in regard to prayer: (1) if it please the king; (2) if I have found favour in his sight; (3) if the thing seems right before the king; (4) if I be pleasing in his eyes. It is in an attitude such as this that we should come into the presence of the King of kings, seeking His favor, not in an arbitrary way but in accordance with His infinite love and wisdom, and with the assurance in our own hearts that we are seeking to walk in a way that is pleasing in His eyes, for it is written, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

"The weary ones had rest, the sad had joy that day,
And wondered how.
A ploughman singing at his work had prayed,
'Lord, help them now.'

Away in foreign lands they wondered how
Their feeble words had power.
At home the Christians, two or three, had met,
To pray an hour.

Yes, we are always wondering, wondering how,
Because we do not see
Someone unknown, perhaps, and far away,
On bended knee."

MARCH 6

**"Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard:
I cry aloud, but there is no judgment"—Job 19: 7.**

WHEN God seems indifferent, He is often most concerned. We may imagine that He does not care, when He permits us to pass through affliction, grief, and sorrow. Our prayers may seem to be unheard. The heavens appear to be brass above us. But all the time He is looking down upon us in sympathy and compassion, and is preparing to work out our deliverance in such a way as to magnify His grace and glorify His name. He is actively engaged on our behalf even when we, as yet, fail to realize it. What is needed is that we learn not only to wait *on* Him in faith, but to wait *for* Him in patience.

"God's 'No' means 'Something better, —
I can trust Him with my all.
The God who formed the universe
Attendeth when I call;
And when in love and wisdom
He withholds my heart's request,
His 'No' means 'Something better,'
He will give me what is best.

God's 'Wait awhile's' bring blessings
That His 'Right away's' withhold:
When He's tried me in the fire
I shall then come forth as gold.
Oh, what peace it brings in sorrow,
And what comfort fills my breast,
Just to know, whate'er His answer,
He will give me what is best!"

—Barbara C. Ryberg.

MARCH 7

"Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood"—Job 22: 15, 16.

THE history of the antediluvian world is told in four chapters. What began in one act of self-will closed with corruption and violence filling the earth, save for one righteous man and his household, to whom God extended mercy when He sent the flood to destroy the rest of the human race. The condition of that world for centuries before the deluge is depicted graphically in a few sentences by Eliphaz in the book of Job (22:15-18). Blessed by God with all that heart could wish, so far as temporal things were concerned, they abused His gifts and turned away from the Giver. Therefore, judgment had to take its course, as predicted by Enoch, whose words are preserved for us by the Holy Spirit in the Epistle of Jude, verses 14 and 15.

"They dream'd not of danger, those sinners of old,
Whom Noah was chosen to warn;
By frequent transgressions their hearts had grown cold,
They laugh'd his entreaties to scorn:
Yet daily he called them, 'Oh, come, sinners, come,
Believe and prepare to embark!
Receive ye the message, and know there is room,
For all who will come to the Ark.'

He could not arouse them, unheeding they stood,
Unmov'd by his warning and prayer;
The prophet passed in from the oncoming flood,
And left them to hopeless despair:
The flood-gates were opened, the deluge came on,
The heavens as midnight grew dark,
Too late, then they turned, ev'ry foothold was gone,
They perished in sight of the Ark."

—Kate Harrington.

MARCH 8

"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips; I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food"—Job 23: 12.

JEREMIAH said, "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and Thy word was unto me the joy and the rejoicing of my heart." David sang, "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste!" Ezekiel ate the book which the angel handed to him, and to John came a similar command. As he fed upon the revelation God had given, it was as honey in his mouth but as bitterness in the inward parts of his being. As we thus feed upon the Word it produces self-judgment and brokenness of spirit before God, but it is also sweet to our taste if we are in fellowship with Him whose testimony it is.

We need to eat the Word that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As we meditate upon the truth we become strong spiritually and our minds are enlightened so that we may enjoy communion with God, thinking His thoughts after Him. Thus we shall receive strength to overcome the wicked one.

**"When temptation fierce assails me,
And my soul begins to fear,
Then the Comforter reminds me
Of some promise known and dear.**

**When I straightway claim that promise,
Humbly thankful on my knees,
Strength is mine to win the battle;
Foiled again, the tempter flees."**

—Maud E. Cramer.

MARCH 9

"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed"—Psalm 2: 2.

GOD calls His King His Anointed, that is, His Messiah. The term was used very loosely at first. King Saul is called "the Lord's anointed" (1 Sam. 24: 6; 26: 9, 16; 2 Sam. 1: 14, 16). David was thus designated (2 Sam. 22: 51). But as time went on, there was One personality before the eye of God who was distinctively marked out as His Anointed. This is the rejected One of Psalm 2: 2. He is called Anointed in four definite aspects. 1, He was anointed from eternity (Prov. 8: 23, "set up" is really "anointed"). 2, As born into this world, He was owned of God as the Anointed (Christ) (Matt. 1: 16). 3, After His baptism in the Jordan He was anointed as the Servant of Jehovah, and He was recognized as the Anointed throughout His ministry on earth (Matt. 16: 16). 4, In resurrection God has now made Him to be Lord and Christ (Acts 2: 36).

"Anointed King, with glory crowned,
Rightful Heir and Lord of all
Once rejected, scorned, disowned
E'en by those Thou cam'st to call;
Thee we honor, Thee adore,
Glorious now and ever more.

Royal robes shall soon invest Thee,
Royal splendors crown Thy brow;
Christ of God, our souls confess Thee
King and Sov'reign even now.
Thee we rev'rence; Thee obey,
Own Thee Lord and Christ alway."

—Richard Holden.

MARCH 10

"Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself"—Psalm 4: 3.

THIS is true sanctification: to be set apart from the world and all its allurements for Himself, that we may be to the praise of His glory. It is when He is known, first as our Saviour and then as our Lord, that our hearts instinctively turn from all else to Him, and that we find in Him full satisfaction as we dwell in His presence, securely sheltered beneath His wings, enjoying the wealth of love that He delights to lavish upon His chosen ones.

**"Set apart for Jesus!
Is not this enough,
Though the desert prospect,
Open wild and rough?**

**Set apart for His delight,
Chosen for His holy pleasure,
Sealed to be His special treasure!
Could we choose a nobler joy?—and would we if we might?**

**Set apart to serve Him,
Ministers of light,
Standing in His presence,
Ready day or night!
Chosen for His service blest
He would have us always willing
Like the angel-hosts fulfilling
Swiftly and rejoicingly each recognized behest."**

—Frances Ridley Havergal.

MARCH 11

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?"—Psalm 8: 4.

THIS psalm celebrates the omnipotence of God as manifested in creation (1-3), and then looks at man in his littleness and helplessness, standing in vivid contrast to the almighty power of Jehovah, and yet the object of His special favor. It is not of man as originally created that the question "What is man?" is asked. But of man, fallen, for it is "the son of man" that is in view. Adam was the son of God (Luke 3: 38) by direct creation. The son of man takes in the entire fallen race. But what was lost by Adam's sin is retrieved in Christ; therefore He is emphatically the Son of Man who will be set over all creation in God's due time (Heb. 2: 6-9). What the first man lost by sin the Son of Man has regained by redemption.

**"On His Father's throne is seated
Christ the Lord, the living One!
All His toil on earth completed,
All His work for sinners done.
In the glory
See Him—God's eternal Son!**

**Man the cross to Him awarded;
Man the Saviour crucified;
This world's judgment stands recorded,
God's own justice satisfied!
By the glory
Christ was claimed on earth who died.**

**Son of Man, His incarnation
Opened first the tale of grace;
Son of Man, in new creation
Leader of a chosen race!
Well may glory
Crown Him, in the ordered place!"**

—Miss H. K. Burlingham.

MARCH 12

"When He maketh inquisition for blood, He remembereth them: He forgetteth not the cry of the humble"

—Psalm 9: 12.

COUNTLESS multitudes of His faithful witnesses have been martyred by the relentless religio-world system which is to be headed up in Babylon the Great. Untold myriads have stained the earth with their blood and have been taken home to be with Christ after having been branded as dangerous heretics by those who arrogated to themselves the title of Christ's representatives. But not one of these has been forgotten by God. When "that great city Babylon" shall be thrown down to rise no more, in her will be found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all that were slain upon the earth. Divine retribution will be meted out to all who have had any part in the persecution and oppression of God's children to whom His truth was more precious than life itself. The Greeks used to say that the mills of the gods grind slowly but they grind exceedingly small. Surely in a truer sense may this be said of the government of our God. Nothing can impede the progress of His royal chariot. Blessed are they who do and die for His sake!

"I have borne scorn and hatred,
I have borne wrong and shame,
Earth's proud ones have reproached me
For Christ's thrice-blessed name!—
Where God's seal sets the fairest
They've stamped their foulest brand,
But judgment shines like noonday
In Immanuel's land."

—Mrs. A. R. Cousins.

MARCH 13

"How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?"—Psalm 13: 1, 2.

FOUR times the Psalmist asks the question, "How long?" He was suffering keenly; his soul was in deep distress, and it seemed that there was no end to his sorrow and perplexity.

Many other children of God have been in the same condition, and have felt as though the Lord had forgotten and was indifferent to their needs and their prayers, but we may be sure that He never forgets, and even though He may permit the trial to continue for what seems to us an exceedingly long time, relief will come at last, and we shall know as we look back that all His dealings with us were in love and grace.

" 'Father, Thy will, not Mine, be done:'
So prayed on earth Thy suffering Son;
So in His name I pray.
The spirit faints, the flesh is weak,
Thy help in agony I seek—
Oh, take this cup away!

If such be not Thy sov'reign will,
Thy wiser purpose then fulfill;
My wishes I resign;
Into Thy hands my soul commend,
On Thee for life or death depend;
Thy will be done, not mine."

MARCH 14

"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: Thou maintainest my lot"—Psalm 16: 5.

IT is a blessed experience when one has learned to find everything in God. When the sense of His presence and the realization of His loving-kindness fills the soul, and He Himself is the portion of our cup, we can well cry, "My cup runneth over."

Yet we are often so foolish and imagine that we can find satisfaction elsewhere than in Christ Himself; but when all else fails and we turn to Him, we find that He is all we need to satisfy our hearts and to guide and direct our steps, as we pursue our pilgrim way through this world on to the next that remains for the people of God.

When we find our inheritance in Him we are no longer distressed and troubled because of difficult conditions which we have to meet as we walk in fellowship with Him through this world.

"Father, whate'er of earthly bliss
Thy sovereign will denies,
Accepted at the throne of grace
Let this petition rise.

Give me a calm, a thankful heart,
From every murmur free,
The blessings of Thy grace impart,
And make me live to Thee.

Let the sweet thought that Thou art mine
My life and death attend,
Thy presence through my journey shine,
And crown that journey's end."

—Mrs. Steele.

MARCH 15

**"As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness:
I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness"
—Psalm 17: 15.**

GOD has so ordained it that nothing in this world will ever satisfy the human heart. What our Lord said of the well of Sychar is true of everything that earth can offer, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." Even in the experience of devoted Christians there is always something lacking, something yet to be desired as long as we are here in our mortal bodies, but when at last we shall enter into the presence of the Lord, when we shall see Him as He is and become fully like Him, then indeed we shall have attained that for which we longed all through the years—perfect satisfaction. There will be no yearning for that which has not yet been attained, because there will be nothing left that our hearts shall long for that we will not have already, in being with Christ and like Christ for eternity.

**"When I shall wake in that fair morn of morns,
After whose dawning never night returns,
And with whose glory day eternal burns,
I shall be satisfied.**

**When I shall see Thy glory face to face,
When in Thine arms Thou wilt Thy child embrace,
When Thou shalt open all Thy store of grace,
I shall be satisfied."**

—Horatius Bonar.

MARCH 16

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower"—Psalm 18: 2.

THE Psalmist uses seven different words to describe what the Lord meant to his soul. As we meditate upon them we get some sense of His all-sufficiency, not only to meet every need but also to protect from every danger, to strengthen for every trial and to arm us for every conflict. Why, then, should we ever dread the onslaught of the enemy or become distressed or discouraged when circumstances seem to press hard against us. The God who is the rock of our salvation is also the fortress in which we are safe from every foe, and the deliverer who stands between us and the enemy. He Himself is our strength and shield. In Him we have everything that heart can desire. Our salvation is in His keeping; He is the high tower from which we view the land of promise whither His grace will soon take us to be with Himself.

"Oh, safe to the Rock that is higher than I,
My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly;
So sinful, so weary, Thine, Thine would I be;
Thou blest 'Rock of Ages,' I'm hiding in Thee.

How oft in the conflict, when press'd by the foe,
I have fled to my Refuge and breathed out my woe;
How often when trials like sea-billows roll,
Have I hidden in Thee, O Thou Rock of my soul!"

—William O. Cushing.

MARCH 17

"But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people"—Psalm 22: 6.

IN this psalm we are permitted to draw near and listen to the breathings of the heart of our blessed Lord as He took the sinner's place and bore our judgment on the cross. The psalm begins with His cry of agony, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The Hebrew ending of the last verse might readily be translated, "It is finished." Made sin for us, our Saviour cries, "I am a worm, and no man." The word rendered "worm" is *tola*, minute creatures which were gathered in quantities and crushed in order to produce the scarlet dye, which speaks of worldly glory. On the cross the Lord Jesus was crushed in judgment that we who trust in Him might be robed in garments of glory to His eternal praise.

"I see Thee alone, broken-hearted,
Of comforters findest Thou none;
Yet Thine was the gladness of heaven,
The love and the glory Thine own.

The gall and the vinegar only,
The thirst of Thine agony stills;
Yet Thine were the streams and the fountains
Of Thine everlasting hills."

—G. T. S.

MARCH 18

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake"—Psalm 23: 3.

WHO need fear or falter with such a Guide? He who died for us as the Good Shepherd now leads us on through the wilderness of this world as the Great Shepherd, guarding and protecting us until the glad hour when He will return as the Chief Shepherd to reward all His undershepherds and to gather His flock about Him in the eternal fold.

Sometimes the road may seem rough, and conditions may be far from such as flesh and blood would choose, but when assured of His leading we can go on in faith and patience, knowing that all must work out for our blessing and for His glory.

"He leads us on by paths we did not know;
Upward He leads us, though our steps be slow,
Though oft we faint and falter on the way,
Though storms and darkness oft obscure the day;
Yet when the clouds are gone,
We know He leads us on.

He leads us on through all the unquiet years;
Past all our dreamland hopes and doubts and fears,
He guides our steps, through all the tangled maze
Of losses, sorrows, and o'er-clouded days;
We know His will is done;
And still He leads us on."

—N. L. Zinzendorf.

MARCH 19

"The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way"—Psalm 25: 9.

HE who desires divine guidance must humble himself before God and be submissive to His will. We often pray that the Lord will lead us and show us the way we should go when actually what we have in mind is that He should endorse the plans we have already made. This is always wrong. True prayer does not consist in trying to persuade God to do what we want Him to do, or to endorse some plan that we have already made. It rather consists in submission to His will and a sincere desire to learn from Him the path He would have us take. When we come to Him in meekness we can be sure that He will guide us aright.

"Let Him lead thee blindfold onwards,
Love needs not to know;
Children whom the Father leadeth
Ask not where they go,
Though the path be all unknown,
Over moors and mountains lone.

Give no ear to reason's questions;
Let the blind man hold
That the sun is but a fable
Men believed of old.
At the breast the babe will grow;
Whence the milk he need not know."

—G. Ter Steegen.

MARCH 20

**"In Thee O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never
be ashamed: deliver me in Thy righteousness"**

—Psalm 31: 1.

THIS was the verse that stirred the soul of Luther. As a monk in the monastery, greatly troubled about his sins, he read in the Latin Psalter, "Deliver (or save) me in Thy righteousness." "What!" he exclaimed, "I can understand how God could *judge* me in His righteousness, but surely if He *saves* me it must be in His mercy." As he continued to ponder the Word of God, particularly the truth as set forth in the Epistle to the Romans, he learned how God could be just and yet the Justifier of those who believe in Jesus. This is the great truth which when once that Luther grasped it, was used to bring about the Reformation.

"The perfect righteousness of God
Is witnessed in the Saviour's blood;
'Tis in the cross of Christ we trace
His righteousness, yet wondrous grace
God could not pass the sinner by,
His sin demands that he must die;
But in the cross of Christ we see
How God can save, yet righteous be."

MARCH 21

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile"—Psalm 32: 1, 2.

HERE we have the fourfold blessedness of the sinner who has turned to the Lord and put his trust in Him. First, his transgressions are all forgiven. Second, his sin is atoningly covered by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Third, God no longer imputes iniquity to him but recognizes him now as His own child, standing in grace before Him. Fourth, he is a man in whose spirit is no guile, for there is nothing more to hide. All has come out in confession before God and has been forever put away, so that God Himself will remember his sins and iniquities no more. This is the portion of all who believe the message of the gospel.

**"How blessed is our portion! When we look
Upward, within the vail, our life is there:
Our names are written in the Lamb's own book,
For grace hath made us share with Him.
All of those glories, which by heir belong
To Him, whose worthiness is heaven's eternal song.**

**Yes, blessed is our portion! Blessed He,
Who, in His grace before the world began,
Did set on us His love, sov'reign and free,
On us, the sinful heirs of dying man;
And blest us with all blessings in His Son,
Whose priceless love our hearts from
sin and folly won."**

—J. G. Deck.

MARCH 22

"They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed"—Psalm 34: 5.

IT is not merely that divine light penetrates the soul when we gaze by faith upon the face of the God of all grace as revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ, but the wonderful thing is that we reflect the glory that shines from His countenance in our own lives. The words rendered "were lightened" might well be translated "became radiant." Just as Moses looked upon the face of God and his own face became radiant, so the believer who is occupied with Christ will show by a radiant life that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him. This was true of the disciples of old when people took knowledge of them that they had been in the company of God's blessed Son.

"Marvel not that Christ in glory
All my inmost heart hath won;
Not a star to cheer my darkness,
But a light beyond the sun.
All below lies dark and shadowed,
Nothing there to claim my heart,
Save the lonely track of sorrow
Where of old He walked apart.

I have seen the Face of Jesus—
Tell me not of aught beside;
I have heard the Voice of Jesus—
All my soul is satisfied.
In the radiance of the glory
First I saw His blessed Face,
And for ever shall that glory
Be my home, my dwelling-place."

—T. P.

MARCH 23

"They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures"—Psalm 36: 8.

THE river of God's pleasure is the Holy Spirit's testimony to the glory of Christ. Like the refreshing stream of Ezekiel's vision, it brings life and gladness everywhere this river goes. We drink of it now and our souls are refreshed. We shall drink it forever, for it is the same river that flows through the street of the heavenly Jerusalem. God delights in Christ, and He would have us delight in Him too.

From the Rock that God has riven
Flows the sacred river,
Through the wastes of barren ages,
Ever and for ever.

Still on this side and on that side,
Grow the healing trees—
Bearing fruit for all who hunger,
Leaves for all disease.

From the everlasting fountains
Still it flows along,
Making glad the holy city
Of eternal song.

From the throne of Christ in glory,
Rock that God has riven,
Onward still the crystal river
Bears the life of Heaven."

—C. P. C.

MARCH 24

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and He delighteth in his way"—Psalm 37: 23.

ELSEWHERE David prayed, "Order my steps in Thy Word." This is the only path of safety through a defiling world. The Word of God is a light on the road, showing up every danger and snare and indicating the right places upon which to place our feet. The words of the Apostle John may well be taken as from the Lord Himself, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

Some one noticed that in George Muller's Bible he had written in the margin opposite this verse, and as following after *steps*, "*and the stops*." Our steps and our stops are alike ordered of the Lord as we allow Him to guide by His Word.

**"Our path is most rugged, and dangerous too,
A wide trackless waste our journey lies through;
But the pillar of cloud that shows us our way
Is our sure light by night, and shades us by day**

**Our Shepherd is still our Guardian and Guide,
Before us He goes to help and provide:
The springs that refresh us from heaven were given,
Our bread is the Manna that came down from heaven."**

—J. G. Deck.

MARCH 25

"Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice"—Psalm 50: 5.

GOD would ever have His people gathered to and about Himself. In Genesis 49:10, where Christ is seen prophetically as Shiloh in whom is peace, we read, "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." When Israel thirsted in the wilderness God commanded, "Gather the people together, and I will give them water" (Num. 21:16). In the new age just dawning, the Lord Jesus declared, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). In view of His glorious return Paul writes of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and "our gathering together unto Him" (2 Thess. 2:1).

As His people give Him His rightful place in the midst, their hearts are drawn out in worship and praise, while they contemplate the sacrifice of the cross.

"Gathered in Thy name, Lord Jesus,
Losing sight of all but Thee;
Oh, what joy Thy presence gives us,
By Thy grace and truth set free.
Yet with reverence we would linger
In the shadow of Thy cross,
Which has closed our hearts forever
To the world and all its dross."

MARCH 26

"Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me"—Psalm 51: 11.

WE are not to understand the various expressions relating to the activities or operations of the Holy Spirit in Old Testament times, in the same sense as we do since Pentecost. Prior to that great day, the Holy Spirit fell upon men, empowering or enlightening them for certain lines of service, but that did not necessarily mean that new birth had taken place. Now He indwells all real believers (Rom. 8: 9, 15) and He imparts various gifts for service according to His will (1 Cor. 12: 4, 7). He never leaves one whom He seals (Eph. 1: 13, 14; 4: 30). Of old, He came upon Saul—an outward thing—and left him when he proved rebellious. Now, He abides forever in the hearts of those who trust in Christ (John 14: 16).

"Here on earth a temple stands,
Temple never built with hands;
There the Lord doth fill the place
With the glory of His grace.
Cleansed by Christ's atoning blood,
Thou art this fair house of God.
Thoughts, desires, that enter there,
Should they not be pure and fair?
Meet for holy courts and blest,
Courts of stillness and of rest,
Where the soul, a priest in white,
Singeth praises day and night;
Glory of the love divine
Filling all this heart of thine."

—G. Ter Steegen.

MARCH 27

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee"—Psalm 55: 22.

WE wrong our own souls and grieve the heart of our loving Lord if we fail to heed His gracious Word, bidding us cast our burdens on Him, counting on His sustaining grace. Yet how slowly we learn the folly of endeavoring to struggle along under the load of care from which He would gladly relieve us! Our very trials and testings are permitted in order that we may learn in full measure how wonderfully God can undertake for us.

"Child of My love, lean hard,
And let Me feel the pressure of thy care;
I know thy burden, child: I shaped it;
Poised it in Mine own hand; made no proportion
In its weight to thine unaided strength,
For even as I laid it on, I said,
'I shall be near, and while she leans on Me,
This burden shall be Mine, not hers:
So shall I keep My child within the circling arms
Of My own love.' Here lay it down, nor fear
To impose it on a shoulder which upholds
The government of worlds. Yet closer come:
Thou art not near enough. I would embrace thy care;
So I might feel My child reposing on My breast.
Thou lovest Me? I know it. Doubt not then:
But loving Me, lean hard."

—Anon.

MARCH 28

"My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him"—Psalm 62: 5.

THE man of faith recognizes no second causes. He takes everything as from the Lord, either directly or by His permissive will. Therefore, he can look up to Him in every circumstance and count on God's sustaining grace in every hour of trial and testing. They who wait upon Him, we are told, shall never be ashamed. They are enabled to mount up as with eagles' wings above the mists of earth into the clear sunlight of divine love. They run the race without weariness; they walk the rugged path without fainting. For God has promised that they shall not want any good thing. Therefore, the trusting soul goes on his way with gladness, looking to Him alone to meet every need.

"I look to Thee in every need,
And never look in vain;
I feel Thy strong and tender love,
And all is well again.
The thought of Thee is mightier far
Than sin and pain and sorrow are.

Thy calmness bends serene above
My restlessness, to still.
Around me flows Thy quickening life
To nerve my faltering will;
Thy presence fills my solitude;
Thy providence turns all to good."

—Samuel Longfellow.

MARCH 29

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"—Psalm 66: 18.

HERE we have the reason why many of our prayers are not answered. So long as we are not honest before God, so long as we are endeavoring to hide or gloss over unconfessed sin, we have no right to expect anything from God. He has never promised to answer the prayer that comes from one who is going on in that which he knows to be wrong. It is as we come before Him in a self-judged spirit, seeking to know and to do His will, that He delights to hear and undertake for us. If we ask anything according to His will we know that He hears us, and will answer in a way that will fill our hearts with praise and bring glory to His own holy name.

**"Lord, teach us how to pray aright,
With reverence and with fear;
Though dust and ashes in Thy sight
We may, we must, draw near.**

**Give deep humility, the sense
Of godly sorrow give,
A strong desiring confidence
To hear Thy voice and live."**

—James Montgomery.

MARCH 30

"Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?"—Psalm 77: 9.

WHY does God delay? How often have troubled hearts asked this question! Afflictions abound, sorrows increase, difficulties surround on every hand. In earnest prayer all these things are brought before the Lord. Yet there is no apparent response. Does He not care that His people are in such suffering and distress? Far be the thought! He not only cares, but He is ready to supply all needed grace for the trial, and when the hour has struck He can be depended upon to act in power, according to the need. God's delays are not to be interpreted as denials. When we get Home, we shall understand why He seemed to tarry when we felt the need was so urgent.

**"Count up the mercies of today,
And discontent will flee away;
More calm and patient thou wilt grow,
While from your lips thanksgivings flow."**

MARCH 31

"The sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow
a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even
Thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God"

—Psalm 84: 3.

THE sparrow, the most worthless of birds, and the swallow, the most restless, picture us in our natural estate as utterly unprofitable in ourselves and unable to find rest in anything that earth can offer. Yet we may go to the altars of the Lord and there find all our hearts crave. Notice there are two altars—that of sacrifice in the court of the sanctuary, where the Victim was slain and offered up on the sinner's behalf, and the golden incense-altar in the holy place, which speaks of Christ's intercession in heaven. We find rest for the conscience in the work of the cross and rest for our hearts in our Lord's gracious ministry in heaven and on our behalf.

"Like the worthless little sparrow,
I have found my peace with Thee,
Since upon that brazen altar
Thou wast sacrificed for me.

As the restless, flitting swallow
In Thy golden altar nests,
In Thy constant intercession
Now my soul completely rests.

Oh, the perfect peace of dwelling
In Thine altars, O my King,
Where the swallow and the sparrow—
Yea, and even I may sing."

—Mary Helen Anderson.

APRIL 1

"I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing"—Psalm 101: 1.

ALL God's ways with His people will eventually work out for blessing. Whether it be His mercies which are new every morning, or His disciplinary dealings against which we often complain, all are for our good. Therefore we may well heed the admonition, "In everything give thanks." There is no such thing as "bad luck" for the child of God. All is ordered by a loving Father's hand and the experiences which seem the hardest to understand and the most distressing to endure, are under the control of Him who makes no mistakes but orders all for His glory and our profit.

"With mercy and with judgment
My web of time He wove,
And aye the dews of sorrow
Were lusted with His love.
I'll bless the Hand that guided,
I'll bless the Heart that planned,
When throned where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land."

—Mrs. Cousins.

APRIL 2

"Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain"

—**Psalm 104: 1, 2.**

PLATO said, "The radiant light is the shadow of God." That was a wonderful thing for a pagan philosopher to say. But David sees clearer. He speaks of God as enrobed with light. Back of all the brilliant glory and splendor of the light is God Himself, from whom all light shines. He dwells in the light which no man can approach unto. But He has come out to us in the Person of His Son, who is the light and life of men, the light of the world. He is the image of the invisible God, in whom the light is fully manifested.

"Immortal, invisible, God only-wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great Name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above,
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all, life Thou givest—to both great and small;
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish—but naught changeth Thee.

Great Father of Glory, pure Father of Light,
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
All praise we would render; O help us to see
'Tis only the splendor of light hideth Thee! AMEN."

—Walter Chalmers Smith.

APRIL 3

"Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. And He increased His people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies. He turned their heart to hate His people, to deal subtilly with His servants. He sent Moses His servant; and Aaron whom He had chosen"—Psalm 105: 23-26.

IN these words, God, by His Holy Spirit, has summarized for us Israel's experiences in Egypt, and given us to see why they were permitted. He caused the family of Jacob to go down to that land, during the years of famine, to preserve them alive and to hold them together as one people. There, under favorable circumstances, they multiplied greatly, and if there had been no change in conditions they might eventually have held the controlling power in that country. But God had other plans for them. He had given the land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed by solemn covenant (Gen. 17:8). In order, therefore, to prepare Israel to remove from Egypt to the land of promise, He permitted persecution and affliction to be visited upon them. The Psalmist declares that it was He who caused the Egyptians to hate His people. That is, it was all in His permissive will. The hard bondage into which they were pressed made them long for deliverance and cry to God for help. In due time, He sent His servants, Moses and Aaron, to announce that the day of their redemption from slavery had drawn nigh.

**"Through scenes of strife, by graves of lust,
Our desert path has been;
But here, O Lord, we've learned to trust,
And love Thee, though unseen."**

—Mary Bowley.

APRIL 4

"He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness"—Psalm 107: 9.

IN creating man, God so constituted him that the passing things of time and sense could never satisfy the yearnings of his soul. It was the very purpose of God in bringing such a creature into existence that He might have one who could enter into His own thoughts and yield Him true love and devotion. So He put within the heart of every man a void which only He could fill. Thus the soul is errant until it finds its rest in God.

“From creature love and earthly joy,
Not pure enough to satisfy,
We seek our happiness in God,
In whom is love that cannot die.

Love unbeginning, without end,
We bring to Thee our longing heart!
Thou hast the skill, whate'er the hurt,
Thy healing sweetness to impart.

And Thou canst fill us, till we are
Thy witnesses to manifest
How Thou canst bring a human heart
Out of all restlessness to rest.”

—Max I. Reich.

APRIL 5

"Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar"—Psalm 118: 27.

IN this prophetic psalm, which depicts our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem when acclaimed as the promised Son of David, with His rejection as the Stone set at nought, following, we have the only passage in Scripture that indicates the specific use of the horns of the sacrificial altar. To these the victim was bound in order to be slain. The Lord was bound to the cross where He offered up Himself as a propitiation for our sins by the cords of love (Hos. 11: 4), love to the Father (John 14: 31), and love for the Church (Eph. 5: 25); yes, love for Israel too who rejected Him, and love for this poor lost world. What response have we made to that love?

"'Twas love that sought Gethsemane,
Or Judas ne'er had found Thee;
'Twas love that held Him to the tree
Or iron ne'er had bound Thee.

'Twas love that lived, 'twas love that died
With endless life to bless us;
Well hast Thou won Thy blood-bought Bride,
Worthy art Thou, Lord Jesus!"

APRIL 6

"All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee. They shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom"—Psalm 145: 10-12.

IT is a wonderful thing to know that God has spoken to men. There is a sense—and a very important one—in which He ever speaks in Nature. This vast and amazing creation bears constant witness to His eternal power and wisdom (Rom. 1:20). It tells of a personal God behind the universe, who sees and hears and is concerned about our comfort and well-being. It is unthinkable that He who created the eye cannot see, or that He who created the ear cannot hear (Ps. 94:9). But He has given a more remarkable testimony than that of His works, great as they are. He has given us His holy Word—an inspired Book consisting of messages given through many different prophets and divinely commissioned representatives, over a period of sixteen centuries. In the Bible we have a clear revelation of Him and His holy will. And there we read how He has spoken in His Son (Heb. 1:2). In Christ we see God fully told out (John 1:18).

**"His promise thy pillow (Ps. 4:8);
His arms for thy bed (Deut. 33:27);
His wings for thy covering (Ps. 91:4);
He, broken, thy bread (John 6:35).
Himself in night-watches
Thy clear-shining light (John 9:5).
Thy Healer, thy Keeper (Exod. 15:26; Ps. 121:5).
Till faith becomes sight (Ps. 1:15)."**

—Helen Howarth Lemmel.

APRIL 7

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction"—Prov. 1:7.

FEAR here implies, not dread, but rather reverent awe. He who does not revere God is branded as a fool, a simpleton, who in his colossal ignorance often fancies himself wiser than his Creator and so ignoring all advice, plunges headlong into things that are destructive alike to body and soul.

"Life passing aimlessly, seeking for joys,
Building bright hopes upon frail earthly toys;
Satan fills time for us as it slips by,
Little we think of God, Soul, you and I.

Pleasure an opiate, making us deem
Hell but an idle threat, heaven a dream;
Caught in his silken web like any fly,
We, Satan's captives held, Soul, you and I.

Down from the heavens above, God sent His Son;
He died upon the cross, for us undone;
Now through God's wondrous grace, Christ makes
us nigh,
We evermore are His, Soul, you and I.

Praise Him for ever, then, who set us free;
Live henceforth unto Him, all His to be;
For us the world's vain mirth is but a lie,
We have found CHRIST our joy, Soul, you and I.

Washed in His precious blood, no more to be
Derelicts menacing life's human sea;
No more in Satan's power, doomed but to die,
We are Christ's ransomed ones, Soul, you and I."

—J. A. B.

APRIL 8

"The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility"—Prov. 15: 33.

HUMILITY is one of the loveliest flowers that springs up in the garden of the regenerated heart. We are all inclined to pride and vanity by nature. When the Spirit of Christ possesses us, we manifest that lowliness and meekness which ever characterized our blessed Lord. To many this seems like slavish servility, but it is the very opposite. Greatness is evidenced by one's readiness to deny self and to serve others for His sake, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for all. We cannot share in His atoning or redemptive work, but we can and should follow Him in His life of patient service for the blessing of a needy world.

"Obedient and devoted One,
To all the Father's will,
God's only, blest, eternal Son,
A servant's place did fill.

Thou 'meek and lowly One' in heart,
We seek Thy subject mind,
We 'neath Thy yoke would have our part,
Thy restfulness to find.

To 'walk in love,' be this our joy,
As Thou hast walked below,
To serve and worship—our employ
As homeward still we go.

Oh, stay our minds and hearts on Thee,
Whilst onward still we press,
That we may more conformed be,
To Thee whose name we bless!"

APRIL 9

"A man's heart deviseth his way"—Prov. 16: 9.

WHAT one is in his secret thoughts determines his real character. The disciple of Christ is called to maintain the very highest standard of personal purity. He is to judge, in their beginnings, the first evidences of evil desire, lest he fall into grievous, open sin, which will bring lasting reproach upon his name and grave dishonor to the God he professes to serve. To indulge in carnal thoughts and lustful desires is to be guilty of uncleanness before Him, whose holy eye discerns the inmost secrets of the heart. The sacredness of family life will never be jeopardized by one who thus walks in self-judgment before God.

**"No end is right accomplished wrongly;
The only good is good all through.
Men must believe, believe so strongly
That nothing but the right will do.**

**For truth is not a thing of season,—
A thing to alter or to trade;
Men must be right before they reason,
And then may reason unafraid."**

—Douglas Malloch.

APRIL 10

"The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water"—Prov. 17: 14.

A little grit in a motor will soon ruin the most costly engine, and it is the little things that destroy family affection and set one member against another. The cherishing of resentment because of possible slights, giving way to feelings of displeasure because others are preferred before us, allowing the thoughts to wander into forbidden paths, all of these, small as they may seem at first, are the things that mar family life and destroy fellowship. Plug the leak at once and the whole dike may be saved.

"The boneless tongue, so small and weak,
Can crush and kill," declared the Greek.
"The tongue destroys a greater horde,"
The Turk asserts, "than does the sword."

A Persian proverb wisely saith,
"A lengthy tongue— an early death;"
Or sometimes takes this form instead,
"Don't let your tongue cut off your head."

"The tongue can speak a word whose speed;"
The Chinese say, "outstrips the steed;"
While Arab sages this impart,
"The tongue's great storehouse is the heart."

From Hebrew wit this maxim sprung,
"Though feet should slip, ne'er let the tongue."
The sacred writer crowns the whole,
"Who keeps his tongue doth keep his soul!"

APRIL 11

'He that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days'
—Prov. 28: 16.

THE covetous man is an idolator who, whatever his profession otherwise, is a worshiper of the great god SELF. He thinks of himself first, last, and all the time. He is never satisfied. He always craves more than he possesses, hoping that each addition to his store will give that peace and satisfaction which he has never yet found.

True satisfaction is the portion only of those who have learned, like Paul, to be content with such things as it has pleased God to entrust them with (Phil. 4: 11, 12). It is only as we know Christ that this can be true of us. When He fills the vision of our souls we can surrender all else gladly, knowing that He will never forsake those who confide in Him and who delight themselves in His Word.

**"I thought I needed many things
Along life's toilsome way,
When days were long and heavy cares
Left scarcely time to pray.**

**I thought I needed many things
For those I held most dear,
When they were sad and longed for rest
Or change of portion here.**

**When it was THEE I needed, Lord,
To satisfy my heart,
To fill my days with rest and peace,
And every grace impart."**

—Grace E. Troy.

APRIL 12

"I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all"—Ecclesiastes 2: 14.

GODLINESS does not mean that we shall be permitted to go through life without participating in the ills that have come upon mankind because of the fall. But for Christians there is promised strength to endure, and the comfort of God to console. As one looks forward to the end of life on earth, there is the sure and glorious hope of a place with Christ in the Father's house. Moreover, all service done for Him will be rewarded in that day when we appear at His judgment-seat—not to be judged for our sins, for that judgment took place at the cross, when our blessed Substitute bared His breast to receive the stroke that our iniquities deserved. But we shall give an account of all our service since we trusted Christ, and we shall receive reward or suffer loss according to whether we have lived to His glory or for our own pleasure.

"My life is a wearisome journey:

I'm sick with the dust and the heat,
The rays of the sun beat upon me,
The briars are wounding my feet;
But the city to which I am going
Will more than my trials repay;
All the toils of the road will seem nothing,
When I get to the end of the way.

When the last feeble footsteps are taken,
And the gates of the city appear,
When triumphant songs of redeemed ones
Sweetly fall on my listening ear;
When all that now seems mysterious
Shall be plain and be clear as the day—
Yes, the toils of the road will seem nothing,
When I get to the end of the way."

"He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity"—Ecclesiastes 5: 10.

EARTHLY possessions cannot satisfy. It is impossible to get enough of this world's goods or its fleeting honors to quiet the yearning for more. We have all laughed over the story of the Quaker who, in order to impress this lesson upon his neighbors, put up a sign on a vacant piece of ground next to his house, which read, "I will give this lot to anyone who is really satisfied." A wealthy farmer, as he rode by, read it. Stopping, he said, "Since my Quaker friend is going to give that piece away, I may as well have it as anyone else. I am rich. I have all I need, so I am able to qualify." He went up to the door, and when the aged Friend appeared, explained why he had come. "And is thee really satisfied?" asked the owner of the lot. "I surely am," was the reply. "I have all I need, and am well satisfied." "Friend," asked the other, "if thee is satisfied, what does thee want with my lot?" The question revealed the covetousness that was hidden in the heart.

"Am I not enough, Mine own? enough, Mine own, for thee?
Hath the world its palace towers,
Garden blades of magic flowers,
Where thou fain wouldst be?
Fair things and false are there,
False things but fair.
All shalt thou find at last,
Only in Me.
Am I not enough, Mine own? I, for ever and alone,
I, needing thee?"

—G. Ter Steegen.

APRIL 14

"Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!"—Ecclesiastes 10: 17.

SOLOMON extols the land whose leaders set an example to the generality of the people by using God's gifts temperately, not in giving way to gluttony or inebriation. It means much to any country when those in high station refuse to be parties to the use of intoxicants. Frivolous worldlings sneered when the Hon. William Jennings Bryan turned down his glass at a banquet, or drank the pure juice of the grape instead of wine, but his example meant a great deal to uncounted thousands who realized something of what it cost one in his position at that time to stand firmly against one of the most outstanding evils of the times.

"To do as one may please is not
True liberty, though men awhile
May think it so, and find delight
In self-indulgent ways, and smile

Derisively at those who walk
With vital conscience for their guide.
These live in arrogance and scorn
Of others' rights and welfare, chide

Those who believe in self-control
And sacrifice. These will not pay,
In peace or battle, freedom's wage,
But yield unto a tyrant's sway.

Real freedom is the liberty
To do as one believes he must,
In justice and in mercy, do,
The man who has it puts his trust

In God's eternal verities;
And, knowing well what freedom is,
Will give his service and his strength,
His life, his all, to keep it his."

—Clara Aiken Speer.

APRIL 15

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment"—Ecclesiastes 11: 9.

IT is a solemn thought that, although the grace of God avails to save the vilest sinner, yet nothing can ever make up the losses of a wasted life. The effects of sin remain even though the sinner is justified by faith in Christ. In the government of God there are temporal consequences of evil living which no repentance and reformation will ever undo. Therefore, the importance of turning to God in youth ere one's influence for evil has affected others in a way that will leave eternal consequences. The only path of true blessing is that of subjection to the will of God.

**"I took the best of my youth
For pleasures all my own—
Forgetting I must some day reap
The chaff that I had sown.**

**I took the best of every day,
When mind was fresh and keen—
To do the special things I loved,
The things that would be seen.**

**My youth soon fled, and I, alone,
Reaped sorrow for my pleasure;
The things I loved to do for show
Proved but an empty treasure.**

**But when I gave my best to God,
My life—the morning hour—
I found His pleasure was my own,
His grace, my shining tower!"**

—Mildred Allen Jeffery.

"Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee"—Cant. 1: 4.

WHILE the carnally-minded may see very little in the Canticles of an elevating character, those who have been taught of the Spirit find in it a marvelous picture of that hallowed communion between the Lord and those who enter through grace into the bridal relation with Him. To the godly in Israel the King was Jehovah and the Bride the chosen race; for the Christian the Bridegroom is our blessed Lord Himself, and the Bride the Church collectively, or the saved soul individually. Sweet it is to be drawn into His dwelling-place and to enjoy communion with Him, thus lifting the soul above all the trifling things of earth. Mary of Bethany entered into this in large measure when the Lord was actually present on earth. We today may enjoy the same precious fellowship as we meditate on the Word and lift our hearts to the Lord in prayer.

**"O Love divine, how sweet Thou art!
When shall I find my willing heart
All taken up by Thee?
I thirst, I faint, I die to prove
The greatness of redeeming love,—
The love of Christ to me.**

**God only knows the love of God;
Oh, that it now were shed abroad
In this poor stony heart!
For love I sigh, for love I pine;
This only portion, Lord, be mine;
Be mine this better part."**

—Charles Wesley.

APRIL 17

**"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness,
leaning upon her beloved?—Cant. 8: 5.**

THROUGHOUT the Christian centuries spiritually-minded believers have discerned in the Bridegroom and the Bride of the Canticles, pictures of Christ and His Church. Here the Bride is seen coming up out of the wilderness leaning in loving confidence on the mighty arm of her Beloved. It is a delightful illustration of the dependence of the Church upon her risen, glorified Lord.

**"Leaning on my Beloved as I tread the desert
sand,
Journeying o'er the pathway, that leads to
Immanuel's Land;
Learning my utter weakness,—leaning upon His
might,
Dark tho' the road and dreary, His Presence
makes it bright.**

**Leaning on my Beloved I am safe from all
alarms.
No evil can befall me when sheltered within
those Arms;
Tempests may blow around me, and the thunders
roar o'erhead,
Leaning on my Beloved, I've nothing at all to
dread.**

**Leaning on my Beloved, His right Hand embracing
me
How can I e'er feel lonely, or how can I
anxious be?
Surely there's peace and gladness, and surely
there's perfect rest,
Found by the weary pilgrim who leans on
Jesus' breast.**

**Leaning on my Beloved, His voice I can always
hear,
His Word like the sweetest music falls on my
list'ning ear,—
He tells how He died to win me, on Calvary's
cursed tree,
How He gave His life a ransom, in order to
purchase me."**

—M. E. Rae.

"He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"—Isa. 2: 4.

A comparison of Micah 4: 1-5 and this duplicate passage in Isaiah 2: 2-4 with many other passages in the prophetic Scriptures will make it plain that the blessed and idealistic conditions therein depicted will never be attained so long as Christ Jesus, the Prince of Peace, is rejected. "The last days" refer, not to the climax of the Christian dispensation, but to the closing period of God's dealings with Israel and the nations after the rapture of the Church. Following the time of trouble predicted in both Testaments (Jer. 30: 6, 7; Dan. 12: 1; Matt. 24: 21, 22), which comes after, not before, the rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4: 13-17), the Lord Jesus will appear in glory as the Son of Man from heaven (Matt. 24: 29, 30); and after the judgment of the living nations (Matt. 25: 31-46) He will take over the government of the world, and the kingdoms of this world will "become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ" (Rev. 11: 15).

**"HOSANNA to the King of kings!
The great incarnate Word!
Ten thousand songs and glories wait
The coming of our Lord!**

**Thy vict'ries and Thine endless fame
Through the wide world shall run,
And everlasting ages sing
The triumphs Thou hast won."**

—Isaac Watts.

APRIL 19

"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts"—Isa. 6: 5.

A sudden realization of the holiness of God brought with it a sense of Isaiah's own unfitness for the divine presence. He felt in his inmost being that he was defiled and unclean, even as, long years after, Peter the fisherman felt, when consciously in the presence of the Creator Incarnate (Luke 5: 8), and as Job felt long before when a sense of the majesty of Jehovah burst upon his soul (Job 42: 5, 6). It is always thus when one comes to such a recognition of the holiness, power, and majesty of God. Unclean lips come from an unclean heart, and this is part of our inheritance from Adam. Isaiah confessed his own sinfulness and that of all the people among whom he moved; "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23).

"God of all power, and truth, and grace,
Which shall from age to age endure,
Whose Word, when heaven and earth shall pass,
Remains and stands for ever sure.

Purge me from every evil blot;
My idols all be cast aside;
Cleanse me from every sinful thought,
From all the filth of self and pride.

Give me a new, a perfect heart,
From doubt, and fear, and sorrow free;
The mind which was in Christ impart,
And let my spirit cleave to Thee."

—Charles Wesley.

APRIL 20

"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in justice"—Isa. 32: 1.

FOR many centuries men have looked with longing for the golden age of righteousness when Christ's kingdom will be established over all the earth and all mankind will own His benevolent yet righteous sway. There are differences of opinion as to just when and how this will be brought about, but all Christians join in praying, "Thy kingdom come," and all look forward to the triumph of truth over error, and of good over evil. When that day comes, those who have been faithful to Christ in the time of His rejection will reign with Him in the hour of His manifested glory and power. We can well afford to suffer with and for Him now in view of that which is to be our blessed portion then.

When we see Him enthroned we will never look back with regret that we have endured too much for His name's sake during our pilgrim pathway, but will rather wish we had been more faithful and devoted, for we shall realize then the true blessedness of a life yielded wholly to the Lord Jesus Christ.

"When shall the voice of singing
Flow joyfully along?
When hill and valley, ringing
With one triumphant song,
Proclaim the contest ended,
And Him who once was slain,
Again to earth descended,
In righteousness to reign.

Then from the craggy mountains
The sacred shout shall fly;
And shady vales and fountains
Shall echo the reply.
High tower and lowly dwelling
Shall send the chorus round,
All hallelujahs swelling
In one eternal sound!"

—Pratt's Col.

APRIL 21

"The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever"

—Isa. 32: 17.

ASSURANCE forever! Is it not a wonderfully-pleasing expression? Assurance not for a few days, or weeks, or months—nor yet for a few years, or even a lifetime—but forever! It is this blessed assurance that God delights to impart to all who come to Him as needy sinners seeking the way of life.

Two words are employed in this verse that are intimately related—peace and assurance. Yet how many deeply-religious people there are in the world who scarcely know the meaning of either term. When I know that my sins have been dealt with in such a way that God's righteousness remains untarnished, even as He folds me to His bosom, a justified believer, I have perfect peace. I know Him now as "a just God and a Saviour" (Isa. 45: 21). He says, "I will bring near My righteousness; it shall not be far off, and My salvation shall not tarry" (Isa. 46: 13). What cheering words are these! He has provided a righteousness, *His very own*, for men who have *none of their own*! Gladly, therefore, do I spurn all attempts at self-righteousness, to be found in Him perfect and complete, clothed with His righteousness.

"Our Saviour's word will give us peace,
Peace which will make our sorrows cease.
If we but trust His grace, we'll find
His peace will keep our heart and mind."

—M. Gibson.

"The lame take the prey"—Isa. 33: 23.

GOD finds delight in working through those who confess their weakness and inability. In the day of His power He will take up poor lame Israel and lead them on to glorious victories over their former oppressors. So now He makes the base things and the things that are despised to triumph over the great and mighty of this world. He works with broken vessels. It is when the earthen pitcher is shattered that the light shines out. A crippled Jacob becomes Israel, a prince with God. In our weakness His strength is made perfect.

"The lame shall take the prey
And I am lame—
Lame in my inmost soul,
O Saviour, make me whole!
But ever keep me lame enough to be
Of use to Thee.

If Thou shouldst make me strong—
Strong in myself—
To wrestle, fight and pray,
Toil for Thee night and day,
I might unwittingly soon cease to be
Wrecked upon Thee.

So leave me with the lameness Jacob had,
Halting upon his thigh;
That when, amid the battle sorely pressed,
The vict'ry of the Cross is manifest
Through my prevailing prayer, the praise may be
Wholly to Thee.

For here is victory—
Give me the power
To fight until the sword cleave to my hand,
And having overthrown them all, to stand,
And be content for only God to know
Who wrought with Him that day."

—Mary N. Garrard.

APRIL 23

"And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering"—Isa. 40: 16.

SIN is so terrible an affront to a holy God that no sacrifice, however great, which man could offer would ever avail to put it away.

Although the mountains of Lebanon became as a great altar, and all the cedars thereon were hewn down and piled up for one enormous fire, on which were sacrificed the vast herds and flocks that grazed upon the pastures of these wooded hills, yet all together they would not be sufficient to atone for one sin. Only the precious blood of Christ avails to make propitiation for our guilt and to justify us before God.

"An altar make of mighty Lebanon;
Secure and slay the flocks and herds thereon:
Consume the life ten thousand trees supply,
To send a cloud of fragrant smell on high.

But all my fears and all my sins remain,
No blood of beasts can wash away the stain:
No voice comes down to make my terror cease,
Or fill my soul with heavenly joy and peace.

To Calvary I turn my longing eyes,
'Tis only here my hopes and songs arise:
One perfect Sacrifice for sins, once made,
Provides for me a sweet and pleasant shade.

No works of mine can saving merit claim;
Acceptance is in my Redeemer's Name:
I therefore bid all empty forms depart,
My only sacrifice a contrite heart."

—William Wileman.

"I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them"—Isa. 42: 16.

IF God explained all His ways with us beforehand we would no longer walk by faith, but by sight. He leads us along strange paths, and through new and peculiar experiences that we may learn how marvellously His grace can sustain, and how blessedly His wisdom can plan. It is not necessary that we should see the road ahead. It is only necessary that we trust our Guide. He knows the end from the beginning, and He never deviates from His purpose of blessing. When, at last, we have reached the city of God and look back over the way we have come, we shall praise Him for all His dealings with us, and we shall understand the reason for every trial.

**"Hast thou wondered WHY He led thee,
By such strange and lonesome ways—
WHY thy future lay enshrouded
In a dark mysterious haze?**

**Wondered WHY thy feet are guided
Where the shadows thickly lie—
WHY the storms, and WHY the darkness,
WHY that cold and stormy sky?**

**Hush! He speaks. He whispers to thee,
'By a way thou hast not known,
I have led thee by a pathway,
Marked out solely for My own.'"**

—M. E. Rae.

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee"

—Isa. 43: 2.

HE who led Israel in safety through the Red Sea and the Jordan, and who walked with the three devoted Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace, is still the unfailing recourse of His troubled people in every hour of trial, no matter how severe the test. Faith can count on His sustaining grace and blessed companionship in each perplexity or apparent defeat or grave danger. Millions have tested and proven the faithfulness of His promise.

"Though the waters of affliction
And the waves of trouble roll
O'er my life's most precious treasures,
They shall not o'erwhelm my soul.

Through the fiery furnace, ever
Walking by my Saviour's side,
Fiercest flame can touch me never,
For secure in Him I hide.

Though temptation should assail me,
Still my soul is undismayed,
Naught in Heaven or earth can harm thee!
Jesus says, 'Be not afraid.'

So my eyes are fixed on Jesus,
All my trust is in His love,
He has promised still to guide me,
Till I reach my home above.

Oh, Thou precious Friend of sinners!
Thou hast bought me for Thine own,
Lead through fire, or through the waters,
Only lead me to Thy throne."

"I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth"

—Isa. 49: 6.

IN Isaiah 49 we have a remarkable prophecy of Christ's rejection by Israel and the calling of the Gentiles. In verse 4 Messiah says, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent My strength for nought." That is, as far as Israel is concerned, but He leaves all with Jehovah, and declares, "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord." For He has said unto Him, "It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth." It was to this scripture that Paul directed the attention of the envious Jews at Antioch, who were so angry when they saw the way the Greeks thronged to hear the gospel.

**"Whosoever heareth!" Shout, shout the sound!
Spread the blessed tidings all the world around;
Spread the joyful news wherever man is found:
"Whosoever will may come."**

**"Whosoever cometh" need not delay,
Now the door is open, enter while you may;
Jesus is the true, the only Living Way:
"Whosoever will may come."**

**"Whosoever will," the promise is secure,
"Whosoever will," forever must endure;
"Whosoever will," 'tis life forevermore:
"Whosoever will may come."**

APRIL 27

"Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin"

—Isa. 53: 10.

THE four accounts of the crucifixion taken together give us the full meaning of the work of the cross. Jesus is presented as enduring the shame and physical anguish inflicted upon Him by man for three awful hours. In that period He gave no evidence of perturbation of spirit. He was in perfect communion with the Father, and manifested a tender concern for others, but there was no word of self-pity or commiseration for His own sufferings. But in the last three hours He was enduring the terrible ordeal of bearing the judgment our sins deserved. His cry of loneliness is the key to the deeper suffering of those hours of darkness when God, the righteous Judge, had to abandon Him to the inward spiritual suffering as the Surety for sinners. It was then His soul—not merely His body—was made an offering for sin.

"The Holy One who knew no sin
God made Him sin for us,
The Saviour died our souls to win
Upon the cruel cross.
His beauty shineth far above
Our feeble powers of praise,
And we shall live and learn His love
Through everlasting days."

—H. K. Burlingham.

"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem"

—Isa. 66: 13.

THE Hebrew word translated "comfort" in this verse is from a root meaning "to sigh." It might be rendered, "As one whom his mother sighs with, so will I sigh with you." We know how a loving mother enters into the sufferings of her children. Taking the little one in her arms she sighs with him as he sobs out his grief upon her bosom. So does God feel for us in our trials. Of old He said concerning Israel when they were in Egyptian bondage, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people. . . ; I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them." He is ever the same in His concern for His afflicted children. His great heart of love is moved with compassion as He beholds the ravages that sin has made and the sufferings that it has entailed upon all mankind. Yet we are so slow to refer our troubles to Him, thinking of Him as a stern Judge rather than a tender, loving Father.

"When tears are falling, and mind is sad;
When life seems robbed of the bliss it had;
When heart feels empty, bereft, and lone;
When treasured joys are no longer known;
It is then, it is then He will draw so near
To comfort, and strengthen, and soothe, and cheer!

He knows the anguish, the grief, the pain!
He understandeth the tears that rain!
The heart's deep hunger—its loneliness;
The love so craving the fond caress!
It is then, it is then that He will draw near
To lovingly, tenderly dry each tear.

Will He come as King—with a great array—
With sovereign splendor and grand display?
He comes not thus when He comes to bless
His dear one in broken-heartedness!
Ah, no—as a mother—the best, most dear—
To soothe and to comfort will He draw near!"

—J. Danson Smith.

APRIL 29

"Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that My fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts"—Jer. 2: 19.

WHEN we are not obedient to the voice of God He permits us to become enslaved to unholy passions and evil propensities, that we may learn anew the corruption and untrustworthiness of our own hearts and the need of constant dependence upon Him. Thus sin itself is made to serve. We learn lessons through our failures that some of us refuse to learn at the feet of the Lord.

"How oft, alas, this wretched heart
Has wandered from the Lord!
How oft my roving thoughts depart,
Forgetful of His Word!

Yet sovereign mercy calls,—"Return!"
Dear Lord, and may I come?
My vile ingratitude I mourn:
Oh, take the wanderer home!

Almighty grace, Thy healing power,
How glorious, how divine!
That can to life and bliss restore
A heart so vile as mine.

Thy pardoning love, so free, so sweet,
Dear Saviour, I adore;
Oh, keep me at Thy sacred feet,
And let me rove no more!"

—Steele.

"He that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool"—Jer. 17: 11.

FROM the beginning, the Holy Scriptures have recognized the rights of mankind to the enjoyment of the results of their own thrift and providence, as also of property lawfully acquired by inheritance. The Bible does not countenance a state of society in which private possessions are to be confiscated for the benefit of all. It does teach the responsibility of those who have them, to be considerate of the needy and to share with those who have not. But this must be a voluntary thing, not the taking by force from those who are wealthier than their neighbors, in order to give to the poor. Stealing what belongs to another is not only a crime against society, it is also a sin against God. All orderly governments recognize the distinction between "mine" and "thine." Where this is not acknowledged, we see chaos and anarchy.

The Christian, above all others, should be characterized by honesty in all things. Unjust gains, unlawful accumulation of wealth, riches obtained by deceit or trickery, are all abhorrent to the new life that has been imparted to the believer.

**"Better than gold is a conscience clear,
Though toiling for bread in a humble sphere;
Doubly blest is content and health
Untried by the lusts and the cares of wealth.
Lowly living and lofty thought
Adorn and ennoble the poor man's cot,
For mind and morals in nature's plan
Are the genuine tests of the gentleman."**

—Abram J. Ryan.

MAY 1

"Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hands of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it"—Jer. 18: 3, 4.

THE pottery was probably outside the walls of the city, where suitable clay could be found for making jars and bowls and other kinds of earthenware. As the prophet entered the establishment, he found the potter making a vessel upon the wheels.

As Jeremiah looked on, he saw that the vessel was ruined in the process of working it on the wheels. But it was not cast away as though it had become utterly useless. The potter crushed the clay, softened it again with running water, and refashioned it. This was a vivid illustration of what God can do with broken lives, or with nations that have turned away from allegiance to Him.

**"Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter; I am the clay.
Mould me and make me after Thy will,
While I am waiting, yielded and still.**

**Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Search me and try me, Master, today!
Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now,
As in Thy presence humbly I bow."**

—A. A. P.

MAY 2

"Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not"—Jer. 45: 5.

THESE words were spoken to Baruch by Jeremiah, the weeping prophet. Our blessed Lord, in the days of His humiliation here on earth, emphasized the importance of self-abnegation as a first requisite for the life of discipleship. He Himself chose to take the lowly way, and all who would follow Him must deny self and seek the honor that comes from God only. This is the very opposite to the way of the world. It is the pushing, energetic, self-assertive man who craves a name for himself in earth's halls of fame. It is the meek and humble follower of Christ who will be recognized in the day when the Lord makes up His jewels.

"God harden me against myself,
This coward with pathetic voice
Who craves for ease, and rest, and joys:

Myself, arch-traitor to myself;
My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,
My clog whatever road I go.

Yet One there is can curb myself,
Can roll the strangling load from me,
Break off the yoke and set me free."

—Christina Rossetti.

MAY 3

"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness"—Lam. 3: 22, 23.

IF God had dealt with us after our sins and in accordance with our deserts we would have been cast away from His presence long since, but in His infinite mercy and compassion He has dealt with us according to the love of His heart, and in all His ways He manifests His faithfulness and His deep Fatherly interest in those who have put their trust in Him. None who wait upon Him need fear that He is indifferent and unconcerned; His love is unchanging, and His heart is ever toward His own.

**"'Great is Thy faithfulness,' O God, my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not,
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.**

**Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness,
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.**

**Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand besides!"**

—T. O. Chisholm.

MAY 4

"Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever; Thy throne from generation to generation"—Lam. 5: 19.

WHAT confidence it gives to realize that we are linked up eternally with Him who remains forever, whose throne is unmoved by all that goes on down here on earth and abides from generation to generation. There can be no thwarting of His counsels, which from of old are faithfulness and truth. Everything He has promised He will perform; no word of His shall be void of power. It is blessed indeed to realize that He who is from everlasting to everlasting has taken us into relationship with Himself, having given us life eternal and thus made Himself responsible to see us through all the various vicissitudes of life and to give us a place in the Father's house for all eternity.

**"Great God! How infinite art Thou!
What worthless worms are we!
Let the whole race of creatures bow,
And pay their praise to Thee.**

**Thy throne eternal ages stood,
Ere seas or stars were made;
Thou art the ever-living God,
Were all the nations dead,**

**Eternity, with all its years,
Stands present in Thy view;
To Thee there's nothing old appears—
Great God, there's nothing new!"**

—Isaac Watts.

MAY 5

"They went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went"—Ezek. 1: 12.

THE marvelous vision which is brought before us in this chapter is that of the government of God—Jehova'h riding in triumph on His chariot down through the ages and exercising His righteous sway over all the nations. No matter how things may seem to go in this lower scene, the chariot-wheels of the Lord, moved by the living creatures, go every one of them straight forward; nothing can turn aside the divine purpose. God works all things in accordance with the counsel of His own will. To the trusting soul this gives peace despite circumstances.

"O Lord, my life's a mystery
I do not understand;
The end of all Thy ways with me
I do not know; I scarce can see
At times Thy guiding hand.

I often, in my unbelief,
Distrust Thy love and care,
And from my senses seek relief,
Which wounds Thy heart, while double grief,
Resulting, is my share.

A foolish, sinful child am I,
So easy turned aside!
Why should I in the future pry,
Or, doubting, ask the reason why
Thou thus, O Lord, dost guide

Good Shepherd, firmly grasp my hand
And lead me while I go;
For Thou hast said Thy purpose grand,
Which yet I do not understand,
Hereafter I shall know."

MAY 6

"Then I came to them of the captivity at Tel-abib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days"—Ezek. 3: 15.

IT is a great thing to enter in spirit into the trials and circumstances of others. It is easy to look on coldly while others suffer, and to criticize and blame; but he who, like Ezekiel, puts himself in their place and can say, "I sat where they now sit," will find his heart going out to every sufferer in pity and compassion, and will seek to be a blessing and a help to those who are in any distress. It was the Spirit of Christ manifested in the prophet which led him thus to enter into the sorrows of his people, and that same Spirit, when He controls our lives, will fill us with loving sympathy for the needy and despairing, who await a kind word or kind deed to cheer them on their way.

"People we've laughed and had fun with
Are sometimes forgot down the years.
There's something so fleeting to pleasure,
It never endears as do tears;
A casual encounter some summer,
Then we leave them and pleasantly say,
'It was awfully nice knowing you, really,'
And each of us goes his own way.

But people who've suffered together
Never drift very widely apart;
Those who have shared your deep anguish
Forever abide in your heart;
For somehow there's something to sorrow
That draws us all ever so near,
The laughter is shortly forgotten,
But we always remember the tear!"

MAY 7

"Thou son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities and let them measure the pattern"—Ezek. 43: 10.

THE reason that God gives for showing this marvelous vision of the millennial temple to Israel is that it might make them ashamed of their iniquities as they measured the pattern and entered by faith, into the blessedness that was in store for them in the latter days, and that they might abhor themselves and realize how many sins and failures had robbed them of blessings in the days that had gone. So as we today contemplate the things which God has prepared for those that love Him, we may bow in contrition before the Lord and be ashamed of the sins that in days gone by hid His face from us and caused us to fail to enter into any true apprehension of our blessed portion in Christ. Our inheritance is reserved in heaven for us. The Father's house above shall be our eternal home.

"Away with our sorrow and fear!
We soon shall have entered our home,
The heavenly city appear,
The day of our glory have come!
From earth we shall quickly remove,
To dwell in our proper abode,
In mansions of glory above—
The house of our Father and God.

The Christ has our dwelling-place won,
And we in His glory shall be
With Him everlastingly one,
His glory and bliss we shall see.
All tears shall have passed from our eyes,
When Him we behold in the cloud,
And taste the full joy of the skies,
The love of our Father and God!"

—Charles Wesley.

MAY 8

"Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants"—Daniel 1: 12, 13.

IN the story of youthful Daniel and his three like-minded companions we have set forth most vividly the blessings attendant upon sobriety and clean living generally. These youths, taken from home influence and exposed to all the license and frivolity of a worldly court, purposed in their hearts to refrain from all that was defiling and debasing, thus cleaving to the high standards set forth in the precepts of the law, and the instruction received from their spiritual leaders in the land of their fathers.

God honored their self-denial, and caused even those who might naturally have been prejudiced against them to acknowledge that their way of living was far superior to that of those who permitted appetite to rule them.

**"Henceforth may no profane delight
Divide this consecrated soul;
Possess it Thou, who hast the right,
As Lord and Master of the whole.**

**Nothing on earth do I desire,
But Thy pure love within my breast;
This, only this, will I require,
And freely give up all the rest."**

—Byron.

MAY 9

"He revealeth the deep and secret things: He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him"

—Daniel 2: 22.

IT is God of whom Daniel speaks. All things are known to Him. Though He is absolutely holy He knows every sinful thought and action of which men are guilty; though He is perfect light, that light penetrates into the darkness, revealing every secret thing; "For whatsoever doth make manifest is light." Yet none need fear to come into His presence if he but judge his sin and own his guilt, for God Himself has devised a plan whereby all iniquity may be dealt with and sin forever put away. The precious blood of Christ cleanses from every stain all who trust in Him.

**"We fly not now from that all-seeing eye,
Which once we shunned, to hide ourselves in night;
The blood that purged our sins has brought us nigh,
To dwell in God's own love, and walk in light;
Thee, holy, holy, holy Lord, we love,
Whose holy will we now delight to learn and prove."**

—J. G. Deck.

"At the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?"—Daniel 4: 34, 35.

FAITH delights to contemplate the way in which God so overrules in the affairs of men and nations as to lead them to fulfil His will even when they think they are acting solely from the standpoint of their own selfish interests. In this way He uses one nation to chastise another because of its manifold iniquities and then in its turn that nation which had been His instrument is chastened by another group. This is the true philosophy of history which has been manifested through all the centuries of human government. It means much to realize this. It delivers the soul from worry and anxiety, enabling one to rest quietly in the assurance that the divine counsels will all be carried out however much Satan and his minions may seek to hinder. Isaiah wrote, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." And he who sees God's hand in all the events of history knows that it is all His story.

"Blest be our everlasting Lord,
Our Father, God, and King!
Thy sov'reign goodness we record,
Thy glorious power we sing.

The kingdom, Lord, is Thine alone,
Who dost Thy right maintain,
And, high on Thy eternal throne,
O'er men and angels reign."

—Charles Wesley.

MAY 11

"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help. I will be thy King: where is any other that may save thee?"—Hosea 13: 9, 10.

THE question finds its only answer in Acts 4: 12, where the Apostle Peter declares, when speaking of the risen Christ, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." The Lord Jesus is God the Son become Man to accomplish our redemption. To receive Him in faith is to be saved eternally. To turn from Him in unbelief is to be lost forever—to destroy oneself. There is no other alternative.

**"I praise—I praise the Lamb,
Now seated on the throne;
Th' eternal Son—the great I AM,
Who stood for me alone.**

**Beneath the crushing weight,
Of all my guilt and sin;
To save me from my desp'rate state—
My rebel heart to win.**

**With Him I now am blest,
Before His God, and mine;
In Him I find eternal rest,
And like Him, soon shall shine.**

**My soul, then praise the Lamb,
Now seated on the throne;
Th' eternal Son—the great I AM,
Who stood for me alone."**

"Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things"—Joel 2: 21.

THIS is a word of encouragement, not only for God's earthly people Israel, but also for every child of His who is in any trouble or undergoing any kind of grief or sorrow. No matter how dark the sky at present may be, it is all bright ahead. The Lord has promised that He will do great things—things that are utterly beyond our comprehension now, but which, when accomplished, will fill our hearts with praise and thanksgiving. He who has brought us thus far on our pilgrimage journey will see us through to the end, and when at last we behold the gates of pearl standing wide open we shall praise Him for all His wondrous care, and realize that at last we have entered triumphantly into the Father's house to go no more out forever.

"Beyond the bounds of time and space,
Look forward to that heavenly place,
The saints' secure abode;
On faith's strong eagle-pinions rise,
And force your passage to the skies,
And scale the mount of God.

Who suffer with our Master here,
We shall before His face appear,
And by His side sit down;
To patient faith the prize is sure;
And all that to the end endure
The cross, shall wear the crown."

—C. Wesley.

MAY 13

"I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, My great army which I sent among you. And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and My people shall never be ashamed"

—Joel 2: 25, 26.

THIS is God's promise to the restored backslider, to the one who has left his first love, but who returns at last to the Lord in self-judgment, confessing all his past failures and pleading the value of the precious blood of Christ which settled for all his sins, past, present, and future. God has promised to make up in His own way for all the loss that came in through wandering from Him; the revived heart finding everything in God will confess at last that the Lord has dealt wondrously with him.

"Thou know'st the way to bring me back,—
My fallen spirit to restore;
Oh, for Thy truth and mercy's sake,
Forgive, and bid me sin no more:
The ruins of my soul repair,
And make my heart a house of prayer.

Ah, give me, Lord, the tender heart,
That trembles at the approach of sin;
A godly fear of sin impart;
Implant and root it deep within,
That I may dread Thy gracious power,
And never dare to offend Thee more."

—Charles Wesley.

MAY 14

"I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer Me burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts"—Amos 5: 21, 22.

IN these verses Jehovah expresses His abhorrence and detestation of religious rites and ceremonies which are used to cover up iniquity, as though God could be appeased by ceremonial observances by those who persisted in sin. The feasts and solemn assemblies here referred to were those He Himself had commanded (see Lev. 23; Deut. 26), but which were only acceptable to Him when accompanied by rectitude of life on the part of those who draw near to Him in faith.

"I will not accept them." It is of the offerings prescribed in Leviticus 1 to 7 that God so speaks. Yet these all typified the person and work of His blessed Son, and were divinely commanded. But when wicked men drew near to His altar with their sacrifices, which they presumptuously offered, He refused to receive or acknowledge them. It was not that the offerings were wrong or opposed to His will, but the people were wrong because they lived in gross self-indulgence and yet dared to come into His courts with their gifts as though nothing had happened to incur His disfavor.

**"While the warm blood is pulsing through these veins,
And health, and strength, and energy are mine,
And every throbbing spring of life remains,
This body I 'present'—O God, 'tis Thine!—
'A living sacrifice!' With cords divine
Bind it unto the altar. Thy desire
Thus I fulfil; send Thou the living fire
To signify that it Thy seal obtains.**

**And yet, O God, it seems no sacrifice
When I behold what Thou hast done for me;
When thinking on my Saviour's dying cries,
Love-smitten, glad I to the altar flee:
By His own blood made 'holy' in Thine eyes—
Acceptable through Him, my God, to Thee."**

MAY 15

"The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?"—Obadiah 3.

THE Edomites were the descendants of Esau, Jacob's elder brother; thus they were closely linked with the people of Israel, but in their pride and folly they turned away from the true God and worshiped idols, forgetting Him who had created and cared for them through the years. We are elsewhere told that, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." So Edom's pride, which caused them to lift themselves up against God, was punished at last by their complete destruction as a people. What a lesson it should be to us of the folly of trusting in our own hearts and turning away from the only One who can deliver in the hour of trial.

"'Tis a wilderness path that I tread,
But I trust not my wayward feet;
And the cloud of His presence is spread
For a shield from the scorching heat.
I eat of the manna of Heaven,
And drink of the water from Home,
And glimpses of Canaan are given
While here as a stranger I roam.
But my pilgrimage soon will be o'er,
The desert for ever be past,
And my feet shall be weary no more,
For my Home—I'll have reached it at last!
There the joys of the blessed I'll share,
On my Father and Saviour will gaze
And often with gratefulness there
I'll remember my pilgrimage days."

"But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord"—Jonah 1:3.

THE course of the backslider is always downward. When Jonah, in a spirit of disobedience, rose up to flee from the presence of the Lord, he went down to Joppa; then down into the ship. Verse 5 says he went "down into the sides of the ship;" in 2:6 we read, "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains." It is only as we walk in fellowship with God that our way is upward. Then indeed we shall prove that the path of the just is as a shining light which shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day, ever leading us upward and onward to that city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.

"Now have I seen Thee and found Thee,
 For Thou hast found Thy sheep;
 I fled, but Thy love would follow—
 I strayed, but Thy grace would keep.
 Thou hast granted my heart's desire—
 Most blest of the blessed is he
 Who findeth no rest and no sweetness
 Till he rests, O Lord, in Thee.

O Lord, Thou seest, Thou knowest,
 That to none my heart can tell
 The joy and the love and the sorrow,
 The tale that my heart knows well.
 But to Thee, O my God, I can tell it—
 To Thee, and to Thee, Lord, alone;
 For Thy heart my heart hath a language
 For other hearts it hath none."

—H. Suso.

MAY 17

'But I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord'—Jonah 2: 9.

IT took Jonah some time to learn that salvation is of the Lord. If we read this chapter carefully we find him quoting Scripture, but that did not avail to deliver him from the belly of the great sea-monster. He looked in spirit toward Jehovah's temple, made vows, and offered prayers, but still he remained a prisoner in that dark dungeon; but the moment he turned from self altogether and cried, "Salvation is of the Lord," Jehovah spoke unto the fish and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. We too have to learn the same lesson. Self-effort avails nothing: the Lord alone saves the trusting soul.

Saviour, I look to Thee,
Let me Thy fullness see,
Save me from fear;
While at Thy cross I kneel,
All my backslidings heal,
And a free pardon seal,
My soul to cheer.

Saviour, I look to Thee,
Thine shall the glory be,
Hearer of prayer:
Thou art my only aid,
On Thee my soul is stayed,
Naught can my heart invade,
While Thou art near."

—Hastings.

MAY 18

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting"
Micah 5: 2.

THE birth of Jesus Christ was in exact accord with the prophetic Word. It was foretold that He was to be the Seed of the woman (Gen. 3: 15), therefore the Child of a virgin (Isa. 7: 14). The place of His holy nativity was mentioned by name seven centuries before He was born in Bethlehem. That He was to be both God and Man was plainly declared (Isa. 9: 6). The name "Immanuel" means "God with us." The last clause of the verse declares, "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." This could never be said of one who was merely a man, however great and good he might be. This Man is Jehovah's Fellow (Zech. 13: 7), destined to share the throne of Jehovah with the Father (Ps. 110: 1). It was His rightful place because He was one with the Father from all eternity (Ps. 102: 25, 26; 45: 6, 7).

"Conquering Prince and Lord of glory,
Majesty enthroned in light;
All the heavens are bowed before Thee,
Far beyond them spreads Thy might!
Shall not I fall at Thy feet,
And my heart with rapture beat,
Now Thy glory is displayed,
Thine ere yet the worlds were made?"

As I watch Thee far ascending
To the right hand of the throne,
See the host before Thee bending,
Praising Thee in sweetest tone;
Shall not I too at Thy feet
Here the angels' strain repeat,
And rejoice that heaven doth ring
With the triumph of my King?"

—Gerhard Ter Steegen.

MAY 19

"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

—Micah 6: 8.

THROUGHOUT all dispensations, and transcending all legal regulations, we see in Scripture the precious truth that eternal salvation is only through the matchless grace of God in Christ Jesus. But different tests have been put upon men in the various ages of time, in order to show them their own unworthiness and inability to earn divine favor. Nevertheless, whether before or after the cross, all who profess to have entered into relationship with God are called to walk in obedience to His revealed will. In the legal dispensation no one was ever justified by either the law itself (Rom. 3:20) or by the sacrificial system (Heb. 10:4) which foreshadowed the one offering of our Saviour. But the practical righteousness of believers consisted in obedience to the commandments of God. In this present dispensation of grace we are saved through faith alone, but are now called to walk as obedient children, glorifying God in our daily lives. If we fail in this, we come under divine discipline (Heb. 12:6-12).

"Thou sweet beloved Will of God,
My anchor ground, my fortress hill,
The Spirit's silent fair abode,
In Thee I hide me and am still.

O Will, that willest good alone,
Lead Thou the way, Thou guidest best;
A silent child, I follow on,
And trusting, lean upon Thy breast.

God's will doth make the bitter sweet,
And all is well when it is done;
Unless His will doth hallow it,
The glory of all joy is gone."

MAY 20

"The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him. But with an overrunning flood He will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue His enemies"

—Nahum 1: 7, 8.

HOW vivid is the contrast here! To those who trust Him, the Lord is indeed good; they find in Him a fortress in the time of danger, and can rest in confidence no matter what difficulties they have to face, assured that He knoweth them that trust in Him. But how different it is with the wicked that know not God! They imagine evil against Him, but in the day when He rises up in His wrath to deal with them, His judgments will be like an overrunning flood carrying all before them, and His enemies will go out into the blackness of darkness forever.

**"Sinners, the voice of God regard;
'Tis mercy speaks today;
He calls you by His sacred Word
From sin's destructive way.**

**Why will you in the crooked ways
Of sin and folly go?
In pain you travel all your days,
To reach eternal woe.**

**But he that turns to God shall live,
Through His abounding grace:
His mercy will the guilt forgive
Of those that seek His face."**

—W. Scott.

MAY 21

"O Lord, how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto Thee of violence, and Thou wilt not save! Why dost Thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention"—Hab. 1: 2, 3.

THIS is the cry of a soul in perplexity. Habakkuk saw iniquity apparently triumph on every hand; righteousness had fallen in the streets: sin and evil were manifest everywhere. Was God indifferent? Had He forgotten His afflicted people? How often have we known similar experiences only to learn at last that God never overlooks anything; that His eye is upon all the ways of the children of men, and in His own due time He will manifest Himself in omnipotent power. Let conditions be as they may we should trust and not be afraid, assured that none can turn aside His will.

**"I don't look round me; then would fears assail me,
So will the tumult of earth's restless seas;
So dark the world, so filled with woe and evil,
So vain the hope of comfort or of ease.**

**I don't look in; for then am I most wretched;
Myself has naught on which to stay my trust;
Nothing I see save failures and shortcomings,
And weak endeavors crumbling into dust.**

**But I look up—into the face of Jesus,
For there my heart can rest, my fears are stilled;
And there is joy, and love, and light for darkness,
And perfect peace, and every hope fulfilled."**

—Annie Johnson Flint.

MAY 22

"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry"

—Hab. 2: 3.

IN the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the writer quotes this verse from the Septuagint Version, and shows us that it was really the coming of the Lord that is in view, declaring that, "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." This is our hope and confidence. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming again. When He returns He will put down all iniquity and reign in righteousness, giving to this poor world at last perfect government, and thus giving to mankind that peace which the angels predicted when He came the first time—a peace which mankind rejected and which therefore can never be known until He Himself reigns as Prince of Peace.

"Hasten, Lord, the glorious time,
When, beneath Messiah's sway,
Every nation, every clime,
Shall the gospel call obey.

Mightiest kings His power shall own;
Heathen tribes His name adore;
Satan and his host, o'erthrown,
Bound in chains, shall hurt no more.

Then shall wars and tumults cease;
Then be banish'd grief and pain;
Righteousness, and joy, and peace,
Undisturb'd, shall ever reign.

Bless we, then, our gracious Lord;
Ever praise His glorious Name;
All His mighty acts record,—
All His wondrous love proclaim."

—Lyte.

"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation"—Hab. 3: 17, 18.

IN the beginning of the chapter the prophet prayed for revival and blessing. Here, at the close, he speaks as a revived man lifted above all circumstances and enabled to rejoice in the Lord. Though the dark clouds of war and desolation are hovering over the land, he finds his joy not in temporal things but in God Himself. This is as it should be, for there is nothing in this scene that can satisfy the human heart or give lasting pleasure, but at God's right hand there are pleasures forevermore which fully answer to all the yearning of the soul.

"Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian while he sings;
It is the Lord, who rises
With healing in His wings:
When comforts are declining,
He grants the soul again
A season of clear shining,
To cheer it after rain.

Though vine nor fig-tree neither,
Their wonted fruit should bear,
Though all the fields should wither,
Nor flocks nor herds be there;
Yet God the same abiding,
His praise shall tune my voice,
For while in Him confiding,
I cannot but rejoice."

—W. Cowper.

MAY 24

"Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy: for He shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land"—Zeph. 1: 18.

HOW foolish it is of men to spend their lives heaping up riches which in the day of adversity take wings and fly away! In the day when God arises to shake terribly the earth, of how little value will all those things be that worldlings treasure, and for which they are even willing to risk the loss of their souls! How much it will mean in that day to know the reality of redemption, not with silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ, and to be linked up eternally with the One who shed that blood to redeem us to Himself.

"Nor silver nor gold hath obtained my redemption,
No riches of earth could have saved my poor soul;
The blood of the cross is my only foundation,
The death of my Saviour now maketh me whole.

Nor silver nor gold hath obtained my redemption,
The guilt on my conscience too heavy had grown;
The blood of the cross is my only foundation,
The death of my Saviour could only atone.

Nor silver nor gold hath obtained my redemption,
The way into heaven could not thus be bought;
The blood of the cross is my only foundation,
The death of my Saviour redemption hath wrought."

—James M. Gray.

"Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger"—Zeph. 2: 3.

AS we read this verse we are reminded of our Lord's words, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." Meekness is not a characteristic of ruined man who is far more likely to be lifted up in pride than to take a lowly place before God, and yet the place of meekness is the place of blessing; it is the meek who shall inherit the earth. Those who are willing to forego present enjoyment for Christ's name's sake find lasting blessing which never can be taken from them. The admonition to seek meekness implies the rarity of this virtue; it is found only in fellowship with Christ.

"Happy the meek, whose gentle breast,
Clear as the summer's evening ray,
Calm as the regions of the blest,
Enjoys on earth celestial day.

His heart no broken friendships sting;
No jars his peaceful tent invade;
He rests beneath the Almighty's wing,
Hostile to none—of none afraid.

Spirit of grace! all meek and mild,
Inspire our hearts,—our souls possess;
Repel each passion rude and wild,
And bless us, as we aim to bless."

—Thos. Scott.

"Then spake Haggai the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the Lord"—Haggai 1: 13.

IT is a great thing to be chosen by God as the messenger in order to carry His message to His people or to the world. Many, it is to be feared, profess to represent Him, who know little or nothing of that which He would have them proclaim. In Haggai we see a man wholly subject to the Lord. As His representative Haggai sought to give forth to the returned captives the message which God had given him. It was a message destined both to exercise the conscience and to strengthen the hearts of the people of the Lord. As we ponder these words they may well speak to us today, bidding us consider our ways and be strong in the Lord and the power of His might.

"Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
In living echoes of Thy tone;
As Thou hast sought, so let me seek
Thy erring children lost and lone.

O teach me, Lord, that I may teach
The precious things Thou dost impart;
And wing my words, that they may reach
The hidden depths of many a heart.

O use me, Lord, use even me,
Just as Thou wilt, and when, and where;
Until Thy blessed face I see,
Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share."

—Frances R. Havergal.

MAY 27

"The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of hosts"—Haggai 2: 8.

GOD here declares that the wealth of the world belongs to Him. It may often seem otherwise to those who lack faith, but the man who puts his confidence in God knows that all that men esteem as riches belongs to Him and is dispensed as He sees fit. When need arises, therefore, faith can act upon the word, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." He to Whom all the silver and the gold belong, is abundantly able to meet every need as it arises.

"Father, into Thy hands alone
I have my all restored:
My all, my property I own:
The steward of the Lord.

Confiding wholly in Thy love,
Through Jesus strength'ning me,
I wait Thy faithfulness to prove,
And give back all to Thee.

Determined all Thy will to obey,
Thy blessings I restore;
Give, Lord, or take Thy gifts away,
I praise Thee evermore."

-C. Wesley.

"For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her"

—Zech. 2: 5.

IT is of Jerusalem that the Lord here speaks—Jerusalem as it will be in the latter day when the people of Israel will have returned to the Lord their God, and He Himself will be manifested in the midst of them. But the spiritual application is for believers in every dispensation. We to-day can count upon Jehovah to be a wall of fire about us protecting from every danger, and to be the glory in the midst of us and enlightening our hearts and giving us to rejoice in the revelation of His infinite lovingkindness. No foe can ever injure the one who is under the divine protection.

**"Zion stands with hills surrounded—
Zion, kept by power divine;
All her foes shall be confounded,
Though the world in arms combine;
Happy Zion,
What a favored lot is thine!**

**Every human tie may perish;
Friend to friend unfaithful prove;
Mothers cease their own to cherish;
Heaven and earth at last remove:
But no changes
Can attend Jehovah's love.**

**In the furnace God may prove thee,
Thence to bring thee forth, more bright,
But can never cease to love thee;
Thou art precious in His sight;
God is with thee—
God, thine everlasting light."**

—T. Kelly.

MAY 29

"Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And He answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment"

—Zech. 3: 3, 4.

JOSHUA was the representative of a sinful people, and therefore he was seen in vision as clothed in filthy garments, but when Satan attempted to accuse him the angel of the Lord appeared as an advocate. The word went forth, "I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." It is thus that God deals with all who turn to Him in repentance and who put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ who bore our sins in His own body on the tree. The believer stands justified before God, and is in God's sight as though he had never sinned at all.

**"God who gave the blood to screen us,
God looks down in perfect love;
Clouds may seem to pass between us,
There is no change in Him above.**

**Though the restless foe accuses,
Sins recounting like a flood,
Every charge our God refuses:
Christ has answered with His blood."**

—Mary Bowley.

MAY 30

"Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts"—Zech. 4: 6.

THIS is a lesson we are all very slow to learn. We try to accomplish things in our own power and by our own wisdom, only to fail again and again. When at last we realize our utter helplessness and yield ourselves to the Lord that He may work in and through us by His Holy Spirit, we find that He can do what we have tried in vain to accomplish before. Oil is a beautiful type of the Holy Spirit, and just as the unseen oil flowed through the golden pipes to keep the light burning, so does the Spirit of God, though unseen, work in and through those who are yielded to Him.

"How I praise Thee, precious Saviour,
That Thy love laid hold of me;
Thou hast saved and cleansed and filled me,
That I might Thy channel be.

Jesus, fill now with Thy Spirit
Hearts that full surrender know;
That the streams of living water
From our inner man may flow."

—Mary E. Maxwell.

"And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the Man whose name is The BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord: even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both"—Zech. 6: 12, 13.

CHRIST Himself is the Branch out of Jesse's root. It is He who builds the temple of the Lord, who bears the glory and shall sit as a Priest upon His throne. The counsel of peace is between the Father and the Son, and all who believe enter into the blessedness of this peace which Christ Himself has made by the blood of His cross, and which He imparts freely. It is not we who make our peace with God, but we enter into the good of it and enjoy this peace when we believe the gospel.

"Behold the Lamb with glory crowned!
To Him all pow'r be given;
No place too high for Him is found—
No place too high in heaven.

He fills the throne—the throne above,
He fills it without wrong;
The object of His Father's love,
Theme of the ransomed's song.

To Him whom men despise and slight,
To Him be glory given;
The crown is His, and His by right
The highest place in heaven."

—T. Kelly.

JUNE 1

"I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn"—Zech. 12: 10.

IT will be a wonderful day in Israel's history when, after all their wanderings, they turn back to Jehovah to behold Him revealed in the One whom once they rejected and crucified. As they look upon Him whom they have pierced, their hearts will be broken in repentance, and they will know at last His saving grace. Blessed are all they who have turned to Him already and found in Him an all-sufficient Saviour!

**"Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free,
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.**

**Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear Desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.**

**Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a Child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us for ever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.**

**By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all-sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne."**

—Charles Wesley.

JUNE 2

"Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau"—Mal. 1: 2, 3.

FROM the purely natural standpoint, Esau was the more admirable character of the two. He was frank and straightforward, a man of the open air, daring and bold; just such a one as most men esteem. Jacob was crafty and scheming, a weakling who depended on his wits rather than his physical prowess. But he valued eternal things, and from his youth counted the covenant of God as something worthy to be obtained. Dealt with by God in discipline, he became sobered and mellowed as the years went by, until, at last, we see him as a reverent worshiper in lowly subjection to the will of God. There is no evidence that Esau ever placed much value upon that birthright which as a youth he sold for a mess of pottage. His interests were in the things of time, not in those of eternity.

"Impetuous Jacob stretched a hasty hand
And marred the beauty of the life God planned.
How wonderful that God could smile and wait.
Fulfilling still His purpose soon or late!

Thus in our lives our Father perseveres,
From morn to morn, through all the livelong years.
Why should we let Him wait so long a while
To see our chastened hearts reflect His smile?"

—Thomas O. Blair.

"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh"—Matt. 2: 11.

THE coming of God the Son into the world as a little Babe tells of His infinite love and condescension. No one is afraid of a baby as such. Yet Herod and all Jerusalem were troubled at His coming. This tells out the bitter enmity of man's heart toward God. The Incarnation was the expression of His infinite love and concern for sinners. He came not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3: 17). But His love was met by coldness and suspicion. He was rejected by those whose blessing He sought. It is all-important that we challenge our own hearts as to whether we are still numbered among those who spurn His grace, or among those who have bowed in repentance at His feet and who bring Him the gold, frankincense, and myrrh of our heart's truest adoration.

"O'er vale and hill the Wise Men sped
Upon their holy quest,
Their guide a flaming star that led
To Bethlehem's lowly manger-bed,
And to the Christ so blest.

They knelt before Him offering
To Him their gift of gold,
The royal tribute they would bring
To One they hailed as newborn King,
Rejoiced now to behold.

They gave Him frankincense so rare,
And laid it at His feet.
'Tis incense speaks of praise and prayer;
For One divine they worshiped there,
The Babe they came to greet.

And myrrh they brought to Him as well,
Foreseeing pain and loss;
The myrrh of suffering to tell,
A shadow o'er His head that fell
E'en then of Calvary's cross."

JUNE 4

"And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"—Matt. 3: 16, 17.

HE who would be used of God in this scene is called to dedicate himself to the divine will, and must needs be tested in order that he may prove a fitting instrument for carrying out the divine purpose. In this, our Lord is our great exemplar. In His baptism He proclaimed His devotion to the Father and His readiness to fulfil all that righteousness of which man, as a whole, had fallen so far short, and in His victory over Satan, as indicated by His adamant refusal to consider even for a moment His unholy suggestions, He showed Himself to be the chosen One of God who had come to carry out all His will and to bring to fruition the plan of redemption. Audibly, the Father declared His delight in His Son. He who had in His baptism offered Himself to God as a sacrifice for sin was thus attested to be Himself the sinless One, for the sin offering must be most holy (Lev. 6: 25).

"Salvation, strength, and wisdom to Him whose
works and ways

Are wonderful and glorious—eternal is His
praise:

The Lamb who died and liveth, alive for
evermore,

The Saviour who redeemed us, for ever we
adore."

—J. Heerman.

JUNE 5

"Seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: and He opened His mouth, and taught them"

—Matt. 5: 1, 2.

THE Sermon on the Mount is not the proclamation of the plan of redemption. It is a setting forth of the great moral and spiritual truths that should control the hearts of those already born of God. Unregenerate men could never attain to the high and holy standards that Jesus made known as becoming for all who would seek to follow Him. To the flesh, these principles are only condemnatory, for no one has lived up to them apart from divine grace, and therefore, like the Law given at Sinai, they only show up the corruption of the natural heart and shut men up to judgment. But when one knows Christ, he is enabled by the Spirit to live this supernatural life.

"Where cross the crowded ways of life,
Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife,
We hear Thy voice, O Son of Man!

In haunts of wretchedness and need,
On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
From paths where hide the lures of greed,
We catch the vision of Thy tears.

The cup of water giv'n for Thee,
Still holds the freshness of Thy grace;
Yet long these multitudes to see
The sweet compassion of Thy face."

—Frank Mason North.

JUNE 6

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil"

—Matt. 5: 17.

OUR Lord tells us He came not to destroy, but to fulfil, the law. By His perfect obedience to all its sacred precepts He magnified the law and made it honorable (Isa. 42: 21). By His sacrificial, vicarious death on the cross, where He bore the condemnation of the broken law, being made a curse for us, He became the end of the law for righteousness, to all who believe (Rom. 10: 4). That law was a ministry of death and of condemnation (2 Cor. 3: 7, 9), because of man's inability to keep it. He who was never under its condemnation took our place and died in our stead. Now we who believe are not under law, but under grace (Rom. 6: 14). This does not free us from the responsibility of seeking to glorify God in our lives, but it puts our obedience on much higher than merely legal grounds. Born from above, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5: 5). This becomes the motivating principle of the new life. As we are now occupied with the risen Saviour, we obey God's Word out of devotion to Him, and so the righteousness of the law is "fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8: 4).

"Our sins were laid on the Saviour's head,
The curse by our Lord was borne,
For us a victim our Surety bled,
And endured that death of scorn;
Himself He gave our poor hearts to win—
(Lord, never was love like Thine!)—
From the paths of folly, and shame, and sin,
And fill them with joys divine."

—J. G. Deck.)

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"—Matt. 6: 10.

IT is blessed to know that the present confusion will not go on forever. As certainly as God has spoken, so shall the prayer, "Thy kingdom come," be answered at last, and all earth's dominions shall become the kingdom of our God and His Christ. Then His saints will be rewarded for all their toils and sufferings, and righteous retribution shall be meted out to those who have defied the High and Holy One and made mankind miserable by their wrongdoing.

We who have trusted Christ as our Saviour are called upon to own Him even now as earth's rightful Sovereign, and to yield Him glad and loyal obedience during the time that He is still the rejected One. Those who suffer with Him now shall reign with Him when He is revealed from heaven in power and majesty. What joy it will be to see the One who was crowned with thorns, crowned with the imperial diadem of the universe in that day! And who can estimate the blessing that His personal rule will bring to this poor world, so long distracted by man's sin and rebellion against God.

"Thy kingdom come—on bended knees
The passing ages pray;
The faithful souls have yearned to see
On earth that kingdom's day.

But the slow watches of the night
Not less to God belong,
And for the everlasting right
The silent stars are strong.

And lo, already on the hills
The flags of dawn appear;
Gird up your loins, ye prophet souls,
Proclaim the day is near:

The day in whose clear-shining light
All wrong shall revealed,
When justice shall be clothed with might,
And every hurt be healed!

When knowledge, hand in hand with peace,
Shall walk the earth abroad—
The day of perfect righteousness,
The promised day of God!"

—Frederick Lucian Hosmer.

JUNE 8

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things"—Matt. 6: 31, 32.

WHEN God is known as Father, anxiety disappears. The love of His heart has led Him to engage to see His children through all the changing scenes of life, meeting every requirement for their peace, happiness, and contentment as they in turn seek to walk in fellowship with Him. This is no encouragement for slothfulness on our part. We are to walk before Him as obedient children who can count on His unfailing grace. His Fatherhood embraces all who are born of the Spirit through faith in His blessed Son. It is a mistake for unsaved, unregenerated men to claim relationship with Him, though He longs to reveal Himself as the Father to all men everywhere, but they can know Him only through Christ (John 14:6).

What would we think of an earthly father who had the care of little children and left them to worry as to how they should obtain the necessities of life? The children know that a loving father makes himself responsible to provide for their needs. So it is with our Heavenly Father.

**"He knows, He loves, He cares,
Nothing this truth can dim;
He gives the very best to those
Who leave the choice to Him."**

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"

—Matt. 7: 7, 8.

GOD does answer prayer. This is one evidence of the supernaturalism of what is commonly called "revealed religion," as distinguished from mere human philosophy. The word "religion" is too broad a term for Christianity itself, but it is a convenient expression to cover the full setting forth of man's relationship to God as set forth in both Old and New Testaments. In all past dispensations, as well as in the present one, God has been revealed as the hearer and answerer of prayer (Ps. 65:2; Isa. 56:7; Matt. 21:13). It is He Himself who invites us to come to Him with our petitions, and promises to give according to our need (Phil. 4:19).

It is not necessarily true that we always receive exactly what we ask. God reserves to Himself the right to answer as His wisdom dictates. But He never ignores the cries of His children.

"'Tis ours to ask, 'tis His to answer prayer,
Whether by granting our requests that seem to us
so fair;
Or, by withholding, thus to try our love;
The earth beneath us seems as brass, as iron the
heavens above,
Still we must pray—nor doubt the answer good;
Though not what we desired, or hoped, nor by
us understood;
Yet we will pray, for praying we are blest.
Then, come what will, with God above,
Whatever is . . . is best."

—A. Salmon.

"And when He was entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but He was asleep"—Matt. 8: 23, 24.

TO the natural eye, conditions had become very critical. But the Lord Jesus Christ slept in peace as the storm raged. Was the raising of the storm that evening on the Sea of Galilee simply a natural phenomenon, or was it of definite Satanic origin? It would seem that it was an effort on the part of the Adversary to destroy the Lord Jesus Christ before He could fulfil the mission on which He came to earth. But just as when the people of Nazareth tried to shove Him over the cliff and kill Him, but were unable to effect their purpose (Luke 4: 28, 29), so, in this instance, Satan was again foiled. He had no power to take the life of the Son of God. That life could only be laid down voluntarily by Christ Himself in accordance with the Father's will (John 10: 17, 18).

"Who made Orion and the Pleiades,
And measured heaven in His mighty hand,
Still calls the waters from the ample seas
And pours them out upon the thirsty land.
Above the warring earth God sits enthroned;
From calm eternity He orders what is best;
Within the tumult man may hear intoned
His peaceful words: 'Come unto Me and rest.'
Oh, heart and arteries and veins and tongue,
The hands and feet, the senses and the mind,
Join in the sweetest anthem ever sung,
Which Christ upon the angry waves designed;
For He who calmed the sea with, 'Peace, be still'
Controls all things according to His will."

—Nicholas Lloyd Ingraham.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light"—Matt. 11: 28-30.

THE rest that the Lord Jesus gives freely to all who come to Him is rest of conscience in regard to the sin question. The distressed soul, burdened with a sense of guilt, comes to Him and finds peace when he trusts Him as the great Sin-bearer. The second rest is rest of heart. Adverse circumstances may rise up to alarm and fill the heart with fear and anxiety, but he who takes Christ's yoke and learns of Him is able to be calm in the midst of the storm. He finds perfect rest as he trusts all to Him who sitteth over the waterfloods and is Lord of all the elements.

"Jesus, I rest in Thee,
 In Thee myself I hide;
 Laden with guilt and misery,
 Where can I rest beside?
 'Tis on Thy meek and lowly breast
 My weary soul alone can rest.

Thou Holy One of God!
 The Father rests in Thee,
 And in the savor of that blood
 Which speaks to Him for me;
 The curse is gone—in Thee I'm blest;
 God rests in Thee—in Thee I rest.

The slave of sin and fear,
 Thy truth my bondage broke;
 My happy spirit loves to wear
 Thy light and easy yoke:
 Thy love, which fills my grateful breast,
 Makes duty joy, and labor rest."

—J. G. Deck.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it"—Matt. 13: 45, 46.

CONTRARY to the ideas of many, the sinner is not the merchantman. He has nothing wherewith to purchase, nor is God offering salvation to those who can afford to buy. The Lord Jesus is the Buyer, as in the previous parable. The "pearl of great price" is the Church—that mystery which was yet to be revealed through Paul (Eph. 3: 3-7). Calvary was the market-place where the Lord sold all that He had—gave Himself, in fact—in order that He might purchase this pearl and make it His own forever. To interpret this parable so as to make Christ the pearl and the sinner the merchantman is to pervert the message of the gospel, which tells of salvation offered without money and without price (Isa. 55:1) to those who have no merit to plead, nor any assets wherewith to purchase (Rom. 4: 4, 5).

**"Tale of tenderness unfathomed
Told by God to me—**

**Tale of love, mysterious, awful—
Thus God's love must be.**

**There below in midnight darkness,
Under those wild waves,
Lies the treasure God is seeking,
Jewel that He craves.**

**Down beneath those sunless waters
He from Heaven has passed,
He has found His heart's desire,
Found His pearl at last.**

**All He had His heart has given
For that gem unpriced—
Such art thou, O ransomed sinner,
Yea, for such is Christ."**

—C. P. C.

"Straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid"—Matt. 14: 27.

THE four words, "Be of good cheer," represent only one Greek word. It has been suggested that it might be rendered by the English term, "Cheerio"! Several times our Lord used this expression to encourage the fainting hearts of His disciples. The same word is used in Acts 23: 11; 27: 22, 25. When Christ Himself is concerned about us there is no cause for worry or anxiety on our part. No matter how heavy the storm or how distressing the trials we have to face He is there to cheer and to deliver.

**"Night was upon them, the tempest was howling,
Waves running high, and their hearts full of fear;
When all was darkness, the Saviour drew near them,
And they heard His voice saying, 'Be of good cheer.**

**Are we in darkness? Do winds blow against us?
Are we in fear with the waves running high?
Listen! By faith we can hear through the tempest,
'Be not afraid, My dear ones; it is I.'**

**'Be of good cheer.' Earth's foundations seem tottering,
All is unrest, and men's hearts are perplexed;
We need not fear, since the Lord is so near us,
He draweth nigh, and in Him we may rest."**

JUNE 14

"Behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And He said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but One, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments"
—Matt. 19: 16, 17.

IN addressing Jesus Christ as "Good Master," the young man evidently meant to do Him honor, but Jesus points out the fact that only God is good. All men are sinners (Rom. 3:12). Therefore, if Jesus was only a man, He was not good, in this absolute sense. If truly good, then He was God. After this solemn declaration, the Lord Jesus took the inquirer up on his own ground. The Law promised life to those who kept it (Lev. 18:5; Gal. 3:12). So the Lord answered, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." This declaration was designed to show the man his inability to obtain life on that ground, for if conscience were active, he would realize he had violated the Law already.

"What must I do, has oft been asked,
Eternal life to gain?

Man anxious seems for any task,
If this he may obtain.

But all the doing has been done,
As God has clearly shown,
When by the off'ring of His Son,
His purpose He made known.

He laid on Him the sinner's guilt,
When came th' appointed day,
And by that blood on Calv'ry spilt,
Takes all our sins away."

—Anon.

JUNE 15

"The multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest"—Matt. 21: 9.

NONE but the Holy Spirit could have foreseen the crucifixion of our Lord following so soon after what is often called "the triumphal entry." Actually, it was not the nation that officially acclaimed Him as the promised King on that historic Palm Sunday. The leaders fiercely resented the homage paid Him and voiced their opposition in no uncertain terms. But to Jesus this welcome by the "little ones" was as a cup of cold water to His spirit after the bitter hatred He had experienced. He had given thanks before to the Father that "these things"—the mysteries of the kingdom—were hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed to babes (Matt. 11:25). In the reception accorded Him as He rode into the city of Jerusalem, this was confirmed.

For one brief moment Jesus was acknowledged as the rightful Heir to the throne of David (Luke 1:32). But the time had not yet come for Him to assume that throne. Not until He returns in glory will He build again the tabernacle of David that is thrown down (Acts 15:16; Amos 9:11, 12).

**"Hail to the Lord's Anointed:
Great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
His reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free,
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity."**

—James Montgomery.

"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his Son?"—Matt. 22: 41-45.

"**W**HAT think ye of Christ?" This is ever the one all-important question which every man who hears the gospel is responsible to answer in the fear of God. These Pharisees were, presumably, looking for the coming of Christ, the Messiah. To them Jesus puts the direct inquiry, "Whose Son is He?" Knowing it was predicted that He would come through David's line (Jer. 23: 5), they replied without hesitation, "The Son of David." This was true, but it was not all the truth. Though Son of David as to His Humanity, He was David's Lord because of His Deity. He is called both "the root and the offspring of David" (Rev. 22:16).

"The Lord said unto my Lord." The quotation is from Psalm 110: 1. There David says, "The Lord [that is, Jehovah] said unto my Lord [my Master], Sit Thou at My right hand." In this passage "Great David's greater Son" is seen exalted to God's right hand, as Man, and is recognized by David himself as the One to whom he owes heart-allegiance.

"If asked what of Jesus I think,
 Though still my best thoughts are but poor,
 I say, He's my meat and my drink,
 My life and my strength and my store;
 My Shepherd, my trust, and my Friend,
 My Saviour from sin and from thrall;
 My Hope from beginning to end,
 My Portion, my Lord and my All."

—J. Newton.

JUNE 17

"Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant"—Matt.23: 8-11.

THE Lordship of Christ is what is here insisted on throughout. Because He is Son of God as well as Son of David He is to be acknowledged as Leader, our Teacher and Master, and to Him we are to yield wholehearted honor and obedience. We are to esteem His gifted servants highly for their work's sake (1 Thess. 5:13), recognizing them as the expression of His love for the Church, because He has given them to us that they might open up His Word for our blessing and edification (Eph. 4: 8-16). But we are not to give to them the honor that belongs to God alone. In themselves they are nothing (1 Cor. 1:26-29; 3:7). Christ is our real Master. He, by His Spirit, is our true Teacher. When His servants seek recognition from men and glory in titles and degrees, they exhibit the very opposite spirit to that which should characterize followers of the Lord Jesus.

**"Lord of glory, we adore Thee!
Christ of God, ascended high!
Heart and soul we bow before Thee,
Glorious now beyond the sky:
Thee we worship,
Thee we praise—
Excellent in all Thy ways."**

—R. Holden.

JUNE 18

"What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world [or, age] ?"—Matt. 24: 3.

IN order to get the true viewpoint it should be remembered that the great mystery of the one Body had not yet been revealed—so our Lord addressed His disciples as the believing remnant in Israel. A similar group will be found in the world (many in Palestine itself) in the time of the end (Dan. 12: 4), during the dark days of the Great Tribulation (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24: 21, 22), after the present par-
enthetical age has come to a close. We should not read this prophecy, therefore, as though addressed to the Church as such, but rather to the faithful in Israel waiting for the coming again of Messiah to bring in the promised Kingdom, when heaven's authority will be acknowledged over all the earth. There are general principles that are applicable to all believers so long as Christ is absent. But the distinctive truth of the Church as the Body of Christ is not found here, nor is there any definite teaching as to the rapture of the saints when our Lord descends to the air at the close of this present dispensation (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

"There's a whisper from the glory
of the coming of the Lord!
Oh, the joy my heart is tasting
as I rest upon His Word,
And what peace amid earth's tumult
doth this precious truth afford,
The Lord is coming soon!

In the glory of His promise
I am living day by day,
And the light of Heav'n is dawning
on earth's dreary, desert way,
While I wait that sweetest whisper,
'Up, my child, and come away,'
The Lord is coming soon!"

—Margaret E. Barber.

"Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet"—Matt. 24: 6.

ALL men's efforts to bring about a warless world are doomed to result in failure, so long as the Prince of Peace is rejected. He alone can speak peace to the nations. In His own times He will take over the reins of government, and then the nations shall learn war no more.

While His authority is denied and His Word spurned, the world will ever be, as He Himself foretold, a scene where nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and men's hearts will fail them for fear as they behold the things that are coming on the earth.

But even when ideologies are clashing, kingdoms being destroyed and vast armies endeavoring to annihilate one another, the heart of the Christian may be kept in peace as he realizes that God's restraining hand is over all, and the most wicked of men can do nothing apart from His permissive will.

"In the sun, and moon, and stars,
Signs and wonders there shall be;
Earth shall quake with inward wars,
Nations with perplexity.

Soon shall ocean's hoary deep,
Tossed with stronger tempests, rise;
Wilder storms the mountains sweep,
Louder thunders rock the skies.

Dread alarms shall shake the proud,
Pale amazement, restless fear;
And amid the thunder-cloud
Wilt thou, Son of Man; appear!"

—R. Heber.

"When they were come unto a place called Golgotha, . . . they crucified Him"—Matt. 27: 33, 35.

GOLGOTHA! Calvary! The Place of a Skull!—what sacred memories cluster around these words! Before our Lord was crucified they meant nothing to anyone except as designating a place outside the walls of Jerusalem for the execution of criminals—offenders against the laws of mighty Rome. But for more than nineteen centuries since the Son of Man was lifted up, the very name *Calvary*, or its equivalent in other tongues, has stirred the hearts of millions as the symbol of a love that was stronger than death, which the many waters of judgment could not quench.

"And still in tender love and grace
Thou did'st with us abide
Until we came unto the place
Where Love was crucified:
And there Love broke the stubborn will
And set the soul aflame,
When from that cross upon the hill
Our great deliverance came:

The burden gone, the beauty seen
Of holy Love's design.
Oh, matchless grace to intervene,
So wistful and benign!
We, too, would kiss those blessed feet
And bathe them with our tears—
Those feet that followed our dark beat
Adown the misspent years.

Such Love as tracked our wanderings
And would not quit the quest,
Lends to our aspiration wings
And answers every test.
It is not of our changeful moods:
No death can it destroy:
We range its glorious amplitudes,
And share its grand employ."

—Lewis H. Court.

"The angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay"

—Matt 28: 5, 6.

THAT empty tomb told the story in an incontrovertible manner that Jesus was victor over death, having effected eternal redemption for all who trust in Him. His resurrection testifies to the Father's perfect satisfaction in the work of the cross, and tells of the sin question forever settled, and the way into the Holiest now opened up.

"The tomb was sealed that burial day
Against imagined threat of theft;
But when the stone was rolled away
Only the linen clothes were left.

Between the darkness and the dawn
(The sentries' eyes were blind to see)
Their Prisoner of death had gone:
Lord of Eternal Life was He!

The earth to her foundations shook,
And sundered were the gates of hell;
The soldiers looked as dead men look,
Such awful fear upon them fell.

Some women came, for love and care;
'Ah, who will roll us back the stone?'
A strange, unearthly light was there—
The sepulcher with glory shone!

The women stood, and held their breath
To see an angel looking on
The place where Christ awoke from death—
Was ever such a sight at dawn?

"Why seek ye here the Living One?"
The messenger of Heaven said;
'Go, tell that God's almighty Son
Hath newly risen from the dead!'

As forth they fled, without a word,
Silent in wonder, trembling, pale,—
Lo! Jesus met them, and they heard
With throbbing joy His calm 'All hail!'

—Paul Gerrard Jackson.

JUNE 22

"He healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew Him"—Mark 1:34.

THESE unclean spirits recognized in Him the One who was to pronounce sentence of judgment upon them. In the unseen world no one doubts the Deity of Christ. Angels gladly confess it. Demons acknowledge it, and men and women who have gone into the other world know His power and authority. It is only on earth that any dare dispute it. He silenced the demons, as He did not desire testimony from them. But He delights in the recognition by men of His true nature and being (Matt. 16:16, 17; John 20:28, 29).

"Thou Son of God, Eternal,
Who was, when things began;
Before all things created,
Thy pleasure was with man.
All things by Thee were formed,
All for Thy pleasure made,
By Thee the deep foundations
Of heaven and earth were laid.

Thou from the highest glory
Didst stoop in grace to be
Made flesh, and dwell among us:
Oh, wondrous mystery!
Thou who dost fill the 'bosom,'
And all its counsels know,
Thou whom the angels worship,
Reveal'd as Man below."

"And it came to pass, that He went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and His disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto Him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?"—Mark. 2: 23, 24.

IT is a sad and yet illuminating commentary on the evil of men's hearts and the perversion of their minds because of sin, that our blessed Lord was so often found in controversy with the leaders of the Jewish people over questions of minor importance, but which unspiritual and legalistic men magnified in their thinking so as to make them of supreme and momentous value. So hedged about were they with human traditions and unauthorized religious observances, that it was next to impossible for the Lord Jesus Christ to exercise His gracious ministry for the glory of His Father and the alleviation of human misery without contravening some of these man-made rules and regulations, which the priesthood in Israel had exalted to the place of sacramental observances. To them it meant far more to attend punctiliously to these traditional commands than to manifest the love of God toward those in physical or even spiritual need and distress. They had never learned the value of a man, in God's sight, nor how displeasing it is to Him when those who profess to honor His name are indifferent to the sins and sorrows of their fellows.

"Give me a passion for souls, dear Lord,
A passion to save the lost;
Oh, that Thy love were all adored,
And welcomed at any cost.

Tho' there are dangers untold and stern
Confronting me in the way,
Willingly still would I go, nor turn,
But trust Thee for grace each day.

How shall this passion for souls be mine?
Lord, make Thou the answer clear;
Help me to throw out the old life-line
To those who are strugg'ling near."

—Herbert G. Tovey.

JUNE 24

"The same day, when the even was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side"

—Mark 4: 35.

ALL was settled in His mind. He did not suggest that they attempt to reach the other side of the lake, which was the country of the Gadarenes (5:1), but He spoke definitely of actually crossing over. If they had remembered these words later they would have known that no storm could alter His plans for them and for Himself.

Jesus Christ our Lord is Master of all circumstances and sufficient for every emergency—winds and waves obey Him, demons flee before Him, disease and death are destroyed when He appears. Nothing can withstand His power. He has all authority in heaven and on earth. And the wonderful thing for us to know is that He is our Saviour and Redeemer. We who have trusted Him are bidden now to cast every care upon Him because He careth for us. Difficulties are but opportunities for Him to display His power. Emergencies give us the privilege of proving His loving interest in us as we confide in His grace and count on His might.

**"The words were His! The Master's! He had spoken!
'Let us pass over to the other side.'**

**And so, they hoisted sail,—let go the shore-line,
And out upon the deep their craft did glide.**

**Then night came down, and with it came a tempest,
And fierce and wild the angry billows swept;
Their boat began to fill; they grew distracted,
And cried aloud to Him, who strangely slept.**

**Perhaps their hearts had missed the hidden meaning,
The wondrous import of that little word,—
The link connecting them in such a union,
The 'US'—uniting servants with their Lord."**

—J. Danson Smith.

"After six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and He was transfigured before them. And His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus"—Mark 9: 2-4.

ON the mount, the disciples were taken into God's confidence and given a foreview of the kingdom to be ushered in with power and glory at our Lord's second advent. In the plain, they beheld anew something of the ravages of sin and Satan, under which this poor world suffers and groans still, and from which it will only be freed completely when Christ returns. But all down through the present age of evil the Lord Jesus is the One who hears the prayer of faith and gives deliverance to those who put their trust in His Word. No case is too difficult for Him to deal with. His disciples often fail because of unbelief and failure to recognize their own inability to work apart from Him, who commissions them to represent Him in this scene.

"They saw His glory on the mount,
 Their Lord transfigured there;
 They heard God's voice from the cloud
 The Sonship of the Christ declare.

They fain would tarry on the mount,
 So wondrous was the sight;
 To build three tabernacles there
 Would be their great delight.

But in the valley far below
 Were tasks that must be done;
 And so they left the holy mount
 With God's beloved Son.

We, too, would tarry on the mount,
 But Christ would have us go
 Back to the ordinary tasks
 Awaiting us below."

—Linden J. Carter.

JUNE 26

"He took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when He had taken him in His arms, He said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My name, receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me"

—Mark 9: 36, 37.

BECAUSE of their confiding trust and guileless simplicity, little children were recognized by the Lord Jesus Christ as the ideal subjects of the kingdom of heaven. It was a child whom He called and set in the midst as an illustration to His disciples of what His followers should be. Notice the order. Jesus called. The child came. He was placed in the midst. To hear His voice, to obey His Word, and to trust His grace is to insure recognition from the Lord of heaven. Pride, which is so natural to sinners, who have nothing to be proud of, is hateful to God. "Though the Lord be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly: but the proud He knoweth afar off" (Ps. 138:6). Our colored friends are right when they sing:

**"The quickest way up is down;
You may climb up high
And try and try,
But the quickest way up is down."**

—Negro Spiritual.

JUNE 27

"What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder"—Mark 10: 9.

IT is not to be expected that ungodly men and women will bow to the authority of Christ as to marriage or any other matter. But those who profess to honor His name should be willing to suffer any inconvenience or discomfort rather than violate His Word. He instituted marriage for the blessing of the race, and especially for the protection of the children. It is this that Malachi stresses (Mal. 2:14, 15). The children suffer most when the home is broken up. Yet the selfishness of those who have brought these little ones into the world will lead unsubject souls to destroy the home they have set up, in order to gratify their unbridled desires.

**"The voice that breathed o'er Eden,
The earliest wedding-day,
The primal marriage blessing,
It hath not passed away.**

**Still in the pure espousal
Of Christian man and maid,
The Holy Three are with us,
The threefold grace is said,**

**For dower of blessed children,
For love and faith's sweet sake,
For high mysterious union
Which nought on earth may break."**

"They brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and He sat upon him. And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest"—Mark 11:7-10.

IT is interesting and profitable to observe how exactly the various outstanding events in our Lord's life were predicted by prophets, divinely-inspired men of God (2 Pet. 1:21) who lived hundreds of years before their words began to be fulfilled. Zechariah was one of the post-exilic prophets who spoke of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow (1 Pet. 5:1). Graphically he portrayed Israel's rightful King entering His earthly capital in lowly state, riding upon an ass (Zech. 9:9). But between this verse and that which immediately follows, there was to ensue a long period of rejection by His chosen people. Centuries were to roll by before the words were to be fulfilled which declare, "He shall speak peace unto the heathen: and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." Yet all will come to fruition in God's appointed time.

"Ride on! ride on in majesty!
Hark! all the tribes hosanna cry!
O Saviour meek, pursue Thy road
With palms and scatter'd garments strew'd.

Ride on! ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
Bow Thy meek head to mortal pain,
Then take, O God, Thy pow'r and reign."

—George C. Stebbins.

"Seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, He came, if haply He might find any thing thereon: and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet"—Mark 11: 13.

FIGS begin to form on the Palestian wild fig-tree as on some other varieties, before the leaves appear; so from its outward appearance this tree should have been in fruit. But it was like men who make a fair profession of piety, but in whose lives none of its fruits are to be found. Such was the nation of Israel at this time. They prided themselves on being the chosen people of the Lord and were very punctilious about religious rites and ceremonies, but their hearts were far from God, and the fruits of a living faith were lacking. Jesus said to the barren fig tree, "Let no fruit grow on thee for ever." This was the "curse" He pronounced against it. And before the day had gone, the "fig tree withered away." In this it became a symbol of what Israel was to become because they knew not the time of their visitation. From the Jewish nation after the flesh God will never look for fruit again. When they turn to Him they will become a regenerated people, and in that day will bear fruit to His glory.

"'Nothing but leaves:' the Spirit grieves
Over a wasted life.
Sins committed while conscience slept;
Promises made, but never kept;
Hatred, battle, and strife—
Nothing but leaves!

And shall we meet the Master so,
Bearing our withered leaves?
The Saviour looks for perfect fruit:
We stand before Him, humbled, mute,
Waiting the word He breathes—
Nothing but leaves!"

—L. E. Akerman.

"And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows"

—Mark 13: 7, 8.

IT is always a mistake to base the expectation of the Second Advent upon troubled conditions among the nations. God has said, "I will overturn, overturn it . . . until He come whose right it is" (Ezek. 21:27). This refers to the overturning of governmental authority. Wars will continue in this sin-maddened world until Christ returns as Prince of Peace.

Throughout all the waiting period, before the final hour of tribulation comes, there will be upheavals among the nations and great calamities in the earth. But these do not in themselves declare the end is upon us. They are but the precursors of the day of the wrath of the Lamb (Rev. 6:12-17) which ushers in the Great Tribulation in all its intensity. They are the inevitable results of sinful man's rejection of earth's rightful Ruler.

**"Our God shall come," according to His promise,
To dry the tears, and bind each bleeding heart;
To bring about the saints' eternal meeting,
Where sin and death shall never, never part.**

**'Our God shall come,' the sands are surely dropping,
'A little while'—He will not tarry long;
Sin's shadows then from His bright path receding,
The right will then have triumphed over wrong.**

**'Our God shall come,' the Father of the orphaned,
The widow's Friend—the Saviour of the lost;
The Rock of Ages for the tried and tempted,
The Lifeboat and the Shelter for the tossed."**

—H. Bunn.

JULY 1

"Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray Him unto them. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray Him"—Mark 14: 10, 11.

JUDAS was the treasurer of the apostolic company (John 12: 6), trusted by the rest, but all the time unrenewed in heart and life (John 6: 70). Professing to be a son of God (Acts 1:17) he was really the son of perdition (John 17:12), destined, because of his own sins, to a lost eternity in endless woe. This was "his own place" (Acts 1: 25). Though so highly privileged, it would have been better for him had he never been born (Matt. 26: 24). He was, apparently, the only one of the Twelve not a Galilean. Iscariot (*Ish-Kerioth*) means "man of Kerioth," a city of Judah.

It was covetousness, the love of money, a root from which every form of evil may spring (1 Tim. 6:10), that led Judas to betray his Master to those who sought His death. What a solemn warning to all who profess to be Christ's disciples!

"It may not be for silver,
It may not be for gold,
But still by tens of thousands
Is this precious Saviour sold,
Sold for a godless friendship,
Sold for a selfish aim,
Sold for a fleeting trifle,
Sold for an empty name,
Sold in the mart of Science,
Sold in the seat of Power,
Sold at the shrine of Fortune,
Sold in Pleasure's bower,
Sold where the awful bargain
None but God's eye can seal
Ponder, my soul, the question:
Shall He be sold by thee?
Sold! O God, what a moment!
Stifled is conscience' voice!
Sold! And a weeping angel
Records the fatal choice!
Sold! But the price of the Saviour
To a living coal shall turn,
With the pangs of Remorse for ever
Deep in the soul to burn."

—Wm. Blane.

JULY 2

"They came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and He saith to His disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And He taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy"—Mark 14: 32, 33.

IN order to understand the true character of the work of Christ it is all-important that we distinguish carefully between the agony of anticipation in Gethsemane and the agony of abandonment upon the cross. In the Garden the Lord Jesus was not bearing our sins or making atonement for them. The suffering He there endured was in view of the drinking of the cup of wrath, which was the just portion of the wicked (Ps. 75: 8), and which was not pressed to His lips until He hung upon the cross. This involved His being made sin for us; He, the sinless One, bearing the judgment that our iniquities deserved. As the holy and righteous One, His spotless soul shrank from the awful ordeal of being numbered with transgressors and accounted as though He were guilty of all the evils that the race had ever known or should ever be guilty of. It was the very perfection of His humanity that caused the Man Christ Jesus the agony depicted in the Synoptic Gospels in view of this fearful ordeal.

**"Son' of God, 'twas love that made Thee
Die, our ruined souls to save;
'Twas our sins' vast load that laid Thee,
Lord of Life, within the grave;
But Thy glorious resurrection
Showed Thee conqueror o'er the tomb;
So the saints by Thy protection
Through Thy work shall overcome."**

"And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept"—Mark 14:72.

THERE is a difference between Apostasy and Backsliding. This difference is illustrated clearly in the records concerning Judas and Simon Peter. Apostasy is a complete rejection of the truth, and hence of Him who came to proclaim it and who is Himself the way, the truth, and the life. One may profess faith in Christ and give outward adherence to His teaching without ever being born again. In the hour of severe temptation, such an one may apostatize, completely repudiating all he once professed to believe. This is to become apostate, and for such an one there is no promise of restoration. Backsliding, on the other hand, is a lowering of one's spiritual experience until in the hour of testing there is no strength to stand, and so sad failure may come in to mar one's testimony. But the Lord says, He is married to the backsliding one, and He will bring about restoration eventually (Jer. 3:14). Peter was a backslider. Though he fell into grievous sin, he soon realized his wretched plight and returned in deep penitence to the Lord he had denied.

"I cannot triumph over inward sin,
Nor rise above the world's rude strife and din;
I cannot live for Thee one single hour,
Except as Thou, O Lord, dost give the power.

Communion's holy path I cannot tread,
Nor feed my soul upon the Living Bread,
Nor fill a humble witness-bearer's place,
But by the workings of Thy sovereign grace."

—Wm. Blane.

JULY 4

"And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

—Mark 15: 33, 34.

IN considering the sufferings of our Lord on the cross, it is important to remember that the six hours during which He hung upon the cross were divided into two parts. From the third hour (9 a. m.) to the sixth hour (noon) the sun was shining down upon the scene. During these hours the emphasis is put upon His sufferings at the hands of sinful men. Nothing that man could do to or against Him had anything to do with making atonement for sin. But from the sixth to the ninth hour (3 p. m.) darkness enshrouded the scene, and the Son of Man was hidden from the eyes of the throngs gathered about the cross, while God was dealing with Him about our sins. Then He was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5: 21). Then the bitter cup was pressed to His lips, and He drained it to the dregs. His awful cry of agony and abandonment, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" tells us as nothing else could something of what it meant for Him, the Holy One, to stand before God as our Surety and to bear the judgment which our sins deserved.

"Should worldly pleasures so attract,
The vision of my soul to dim,
Lord, lead me back to Calvary,
That I'll again remember Him.

Should I my love for souls thus lose,
Thy claims, Thy cause, Thy call neglect,
And other friends and interests choose,
May I not then Thy thorns forget.

Should bright success or weary toil,
Thy dealings, or Thy firm commands,
Tempt me to boast or to complain,
Show me Thy bleeding feet and hands."

—T. J. Bach.

JULY 5

"The angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"—Luke 1: 35.

IT is a great pity that a truth so wonderful and mysterious as the Virgin Birth of Christ should have become the subject of theological controversy and often accompanied with unchristian bitterness in these days. Unbelievers have always objected to what Scripture tells us as to our Lord's birth, but it has remained for men bearing the name of Christ to reject, and even ridicule, it in our day. Yet we need to remember that if our Lord Jesus Christ was not miraculously born of a virgin, having no human father, He was not supernatural at all, but simply a man endowed with special spiritual insight, and this, of course, is what the Modernists believe Him to have been. But this is not the Christ of Scripture, for Jesus was not simply a great master teacher. He is, as His name implies, Jehovah, the Saviour.

"He has come! the Christ of God;—
Left for us His glad abode,
Stooping from His throne of bliss,
To this darksome wilderness.

Unto us a Child is born!
Ne'er has earth beheld a morn,
Among all the morns of time,
Half so glorious in its prime.

Unto us a Son is given!
He has come from God's own heaven;
Bringing with Him from above,
Holy peace and holy love."

—Horatius Bonar.

JULY 6

"And the Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man"—Luke 2: 40, 52.

OUR Lord as a Child was not a precocious, impulsive lad, whose behavior suggested self-will. He grew up as a normal person, developing naturally as a perfect human being. But He was the only child who ever lived on earth who did not need to be born again, for He was not born of the flesh, but of the Spirit. As He grew He increased in wisdom. There is a great mystery here, but it is the mystery of the incarnation itself, and we need to remember our Lord's own words, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt. 11:27). That the Eternal Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24) should so veil His glory in our humanity as to grow daily in wisdom as He increased in stature, is beyond our comprehension, but it emphasizes for us the reality of His Manhood, who had become in all things like unto His brethren, apart from sin (Heb. 2:17). As He thus grew before the Lord, the divine favor rested upon Him, and those of the home circle noted with approval the loveliness of His unfolding life.

**"Art Thou Him whom little children
Knew long years ago,
When a little child amongst them
Thou didst come and go?**

**Holy, true, and tender, doing
All Thy Father's will;
If men loved, or if they hated,
Loving, serving still.**

**See Thee who a child becamest
In a cottage poor,
That I might in Thy fair palace
Dwell for evermore."**

JULY 7

"Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil"—Luke 4: 1, 2.

BEFORE the Lord began His public testimony, it was needful that He be tried, or tempted, not to see if He would sin, for from His birth He was the Holy One of God (Luke 1: 35) as even demons later confessed (Luke 4: 34), but to prove that He was beyond the reach of human frailty and sin; therefore the One fitted to take the place of the guilty and bear the judgment their sins deserved. Had He Himself been a sinner, either by nature or practice, He would not have been eligible to make propitiation for others (1 Peter 3:18; 2 Cor. 5: 21). Only a sinless substitute could take the lost sinner's place.

**"Forty days and forty nights
Thou wast fasting in the wild,
Forty days and forty nights
Tempted, and yet undefiled:**

**Sunbeams scorching all the day,
Chilly dewdrops nightly shed,
Prowling beasts about Thy way,
Stones Thy pillow, earth Thy bed.**

**Let us Thy endurance share,
And from earthly greed abstain;
With Thee watching unto prayer,
With Thee strong to suffer pain."**

—George Hunt Smyttan.

"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye"—Luke 6: 41, 42.

THE Mote and the Beam. The two words used in this passage stand out in vivid contrast. The word translated "mote" signified originally a bit of dry twig or straw, such as the wind often carries into the human eye, thus causing blurred vision and tears until it is ejected again. The word for "beam" really means a stick of timber, but was used colloquially in the Greek speech of our Lord's days on earth as a synonym for a splinter, which, though small in itself, seems a veritable beam because of the pain it causes. In one of the papyrus notes found in Egypt some years back, a youth writes to his mother telling of the suffering he had endured because a beam had been driven into his thumb underneath the nail. This makes clear our Lord's meaning. No one is fit to rebuke another when there is something in his own life that is as much worse than that which he thinks he detects in the other, as a beam, or splinter, is greater than a mote, or speck of straw.

"Let us pause ere we would speak
Words we know would grieve the weak,
Flashing fiery mental pain,
Grievous words oft long remain.

Balm of love. Ah, welcome guest!
O'er a sickroom breathing rest;
Giving cheer in deed and thought,
Blest by heaven, by God inwrought.

Lord of love, draw near and bless,
Then shall we true love possess;
May no jarring note cause strife,
Flood with harmony home life."

—Ellen Dean.

"As He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistering. And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him"—Luke 9: 29-32.

THE Apostle Peter tells us that the Transfiguration was a picture of the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet.1:16-18). In other words, it was a miniature of the kingdom which is yet to be manifested in this world. Jesus Himself intimated that (Matt. 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27).

The present application of the Transfiguration is linked with that which the Spirit of God brings before us in 2 Cor. 3. As we are occupied with the glorified Saviour, we ourselves, though still in our bodies of humiliation, are transfigured (it is the same word) into His image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Thus exhibiting in our measure the grace and holiness so fully seen in Him, we shall be in position to manifest Him to a demon-controlled world, no longer helpless as were the disciples at the foot of the mount; for the risen Christ, who is Himself God, will work in and through us, both the willing and the doing of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13).

**"The world, I thought, belonged to me—
Goods, gold, and people, land and sea—
Where'er I walked beneath God's sky,
In those old days, my word was 'I.'**

**Years passed: there flashed my pathway near
The fragment of a vision dear;
My former word no more sufficed,
And what I said was—"I and Christ."**

**But, oh, the more I looked on Him,
His glory grew, while mine grew dim:
I shrank so small, He towered so high
All I dared say was—"Christ and I!"**

JULY 10

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth"—Luke 12: 15.

THE man who has found satisfaction in Christ can never be troubled because of his failure to acquire the things of earth. Yet how many professed Christians are unhappy and distressed because of real or fancied wrongs done to them concerning "things" that after all are soon to perish. Happy are they who are so occupied with heavenly realities that the loss or possession of the things of earth means little to them. Their peace is not disturbed, nor does rancor fill their hearts, if they do not get all that they might be legally entitled to. They can commit the entire case to God and count upon Him to do for them what He sees to be right and best.

"If the world were mine and all its store,
And were it of crystal gold;
Could I reign on its throne for evermore
From the ancient days of old,
An empress noble and fair as day,
Oh, gladly might it be,
That I might cast it all away;
Christ, only Christ for me.
For Christ my Lord my spirit longs,
For Christ, my Saviour dear;
The joy and sweetness of my songs
The whilst I wander here—
O Lord, my spirit fain would flee
From the lonely desert away to Thee."

—Mechthild of Helfde.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord"—Luke 13: 34, 35.

THERE is something pathetic in this lament over Jerusalem, the city privileged above every other, and yet destined to become the guiltiest city in all the world, because there the holy Saviour was to be crucified and slain as the many prophets of the Lord had been slain in the years gone by. Like a brooding hen seeking to shelter her chicks from the hawk, so the Lord Jesus would have saved Israel and delivered Jerusalem from her enemies, temporal and spiritual, but her people refused to hear His voice.

From the moment He uttered these words, the Jewish nation was set to one side to make way for the new order, which was to begin on the coming feast of Pentecost. Israel had crossed over the dead line. Their national hope was perished. Not until the return of the Lord from heaven will they be taken up again, when a nation shall be born in a day (Isa. 66:8). Then, as a regenerated people, they shall cry, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Messiah has returned to His own place at the Father's right hand, until in the hour of their great affliction, Israel shall turn to Him and seek and find deliverance.

**"From heaven His eye is downward turned,
Still glancing to and fro,
Where'er in this wide wilderness
There roams a child of woe.
And when the rebel chooses wrath
God wails his hapless lot,
Deep-breathing from His heart of love,
'I would, but ye would not.'"**

JULY 12

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants"

—Luke 15: 18, 19.

THEOLOGIANs have often discussed the relative place of repentance and faith, and have argued strenuously as to which comes first in the soul's experience. The fact is they are so intimately connected that no man would repent in the Scriptural sense who did not believe what God has declared concerning sin, its punishment, and its remedy, and no man would put his faith in the gospel message and trust the Lord Jesus as his Saviour who had not been brought to repentance. It should be borne in mind that there is nothing meritorious in this. To repent is to change the mind. It involves a reversal of one's attitude toward self, sin, and God. This comes out very clearly in the case of the prodigal. Proud, haughty, self-sufficient, and indifferent to his father's love, he left for the far country. Humbled, subdued, penitent, and awake to a sense of his sin against his father's goodness, he started back to the home he had left sometime before with such utter unconcern. In this we see both repentance and faith manifested.

"The Prodigal, with earthly comforts fled,
Thought not about a father's care—his dream
Was mostly of the abundant food that fed
Those wild young days as swift as a mountain stream;
And here, in this far country, dwelled no man
Who grieved that the wants of swine were better met—
He would arise—then lo, his heart began
To say the litany of true regret—

Forgiveness, just forgiveness, was his plea—
The strange new hunger that oppressed him so;
Thus step on striving step he came to know
How vast his father's tenderness—a sea
With waves of love and mercy rolling in
To wash away the weariness of sin."

—Kathrine H. Williams.

JULY 13

"And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation"—Luke 19: 41-44.

THE ministry of Jesus in Israel was their opportunity to get right with God. Failing in this, they must be exposed to judgment. The same is true for all men. Today Christ is presented by the Holy Spirit through the Word as the only hope of men individually, and of nations collectively. If He and His message are spurned, destruction must follow. Christ alone is the hope of the world. To reject Him is fatal. He came to the Jews as the Prince of Peace to bring in everlasting righteousness (Isa. 9: 6, 7), but so insensate were they, so utterly blind to the truth of His glorious Person, that they fulfil their own Scriptures in rejecting Him (Acts 13: 27). Their day of opportunity was now gone. Long years of suffering must elapse before they should as a people know the blessedness He came to bestow upon them.

"Did Christ o'er sinners weep,
And shall our cheeks be dry?
Let floods of penitential grief
Burst forth from every eye.

The Son of God in tears
The wond'ring angels see;
Be thou astonish'd, O my soul;
He shed those tears for thee.

He wept that we might weep;
Each sin demands a tear:
In heaven alone no sin is found,
And there's no weeping there."

—Beddome.

JULY 14

"He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you"

—Luke 22: 19, 20.

THE institution of the Lord's Supper followed immediately after the Passover, which Jesus participated in with His disciples. It was the last Passover feast that God ever recognized, for He who sat that night at the head of the table was Himself to die as the true Paschal Lamb on the following day.

The Lord's Supper was destined to be the characteristic feast of the new dispensation. It is primarily a memorial of Christ. In its observance we remember Him personally, and we show His death till He come (1 Cor. 11:26). It is not, properly speaking, a sacrifice, but a reminder of the one Sacrifice offered on the cross, which has settled the sin question to the divine satisfaction. But the sacrifice of praise is intimately connected with it (Heb. 13:15). The early Christians often referred to it as the Eucharist, from a Greek word meaning "thanksgiving" (Phil. 4:6), because as they thus remembered the Lord in the breaking of bread their hearts went out to Him in thanksgiving and praise. To speak of "the real presence" in the elements of bread and wine (the fruit of the vine) is to deny this character of a remembrance. We would not need to remember Him if He were corporeally present. By the Spirit He is always present when two or three are gathered in His name for this purpose or any other (Matt. 18:20), but actually, in His physical body, He is at God's right hand in heaven.

"Be known to us in breaking bread,
But do not then depart;
Saviour, abide with us, and spread
Thy table in our heart.

There sup with us in love divine;
Thy body and Thy blood,
That living bread, that heavenly wine,
Be our immortal food." Amen.

—James Montgomery.

JULY 15

"When they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment, and cast lots. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided Him, saying, He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the chosen of God"

—Luke 23: 33-35.

AS we meditate upon our blessed Lord's sufferings on the cross we may well be subdued and humbled as we remember that it was because of our sins He endured that awful agony. We, ourselves, are the very "Why" of Calvary. All His life long the Lord Jesus had looked forward to this hour when He was to be immolated as the great sin offering, fulfilling all the sacrificial types of the old dispensation. His one offering was to settle the sin question forever. It was not possible that the animal sacrifices offered under the law should put away sin (Heb. 10: 4). There was not the intrinsic value in such blood to pay the debt of sin. But because of the infinite value of the Person of Christ He could by His one offering make an available propitiation for the sins of the world, so that upon the basis of His finished work, God could proclaim remission of sins (Acts 13: 38, 39), to all who believe.

"Saviour! may we never cherish,
That which nailed Thee to the cross;
All of earth, oh, let it perish,
Be it counted worse than lost:
Let no siren's song seducing,
Lure us from our joys divine,
Idols in the heart producing,
Hearts which would be wholly Thine."

—Sir Edward Denny.

JULY 16

"He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet"—Luke 24: 38-40.

CHRIST'S victory over death is the assurance that the sin question has been settled to the divine satisfaction, and that peace has been made by the blood of the cross. As the risen One, "He is our peace," who has vanquished our foe and has opened the way into the immediate presence of God for all who come to Him by Jesus Christ. As we look up, by faith, into the holiest of all, and see Him, who once stood in our place when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, now seated as the glorified Man at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, we know we have nothing to fear. God has accepted us in Him, His beloved One, and we now stand free of all condemnation. All this is involved in His salutation, "Peace be unto you."

**"Christ's grave is vacant now,
Left for the throne above;
His Cross asserts God's right to
bless
In His own boundless love."**

JULY 17

"He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man"

—John 2: 24, 25.

THIS was not knowledge acquired by personal experience of the sins and errors of fallen humanity, for He was ever "the Holy One of God" (Luke 4: 34). Neither was it an understanding that resulted from the study of some form of philosophy or psychology, for He was not a product of the schools or a disciple of some adept in scientific lore (John 7:15). He knew what was in the hearts and minds of men because He was God manifest in flesh, He who of old could say, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins" (Jer. 17:10).

Therefore He spoke with absolute authority (Matt. 7: 29), recognizing man as the highest of God's creation (Matt. 6: 26; 12: 12), yet marred and blighted by sin so that his very heart is now a nest of every unclean thing (Matt. 15:19) until cleansed by the regenerating power of God, which lifts him from the natural to the spiritual plane (John 3: 6).

"My rescue from eternal woe,
My every blessing while below,
My life, my joy, my heaven, I owe
To God's forgiving love.

I have no merit of my own;
In Christ I stand—in Him alone—
Complete before Jehovah's throne,
Through God's forgiving love.

Oh, wondrous grace! that Thou wilt take,
Yea, prize a heart that sin doth break,
Accepting it for Jesus's sake,
In Thy forgiving love."

JULY 18

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him"—John 3:36.

THERE are many truths which we may or may not believe or understand. But if we are to be saved, there is one thing that is all-important, and that is a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as our very own Saviour. Let us be certain about this. To believe in Him spells eternal life. To turn away from Him means eternal judgment (John 3:36). Faith honors God, for it receives His testimony concerning His Son, and rests upon it, knowing that it is the word of One who cannot lie.

"WHOSOEVER! I have caught it!
Anyone who will believe
In the Christ whose blood hath bought it,
Shall eternal life receive.
'Shall not perish'—God hath said it—
Everlasting life is mine!
It is written—I have read it—
In the Book of Truth Divine.

I believe it! I believe it!
I am saved through Jesus' blood;
God hath spoken—I believe it!
Now I have the Gift of God."

JULY 19

"Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"—John 5: 16, 17.

WITH terrible malignancy, these men, who made their boast in the Law, would have destroyed Him who came to fulfil the Law and the prophets, had they been permitted to do so.

The legalist cannot understand the grace of God. To him there is nothing so important as the observance of rules and regulations. Spiritual realities are an unsolved mystery to him, and even distressed mankind are of small moment compared with the performance of religious rites and ceremonies. But the heart of God, as expressed in the life of Jesus, puts the emphasis, not on some sacramental system, but upon faith in the Word of the Lord and devotion to the Person of Christ. God's rest, after the work of creation was finished, had soon been broken because of man's sin, and He had never kept a sabbath of perfect freedom from service to mankind since. As the Father thus wrought, so the Son was constantly occupied in repairing sin's ravages. For Him there could be no sabbath rest from toil and labor until the work of redemption was accomplished.

"O Lord, we now the path retrace
Which Thou on earth hast trod,
To man Thy wondrous love and grace,
Thy faithfulness to God!

Unmoved by Satan's subtle wiles,
Or suffering, shame, or loss,
Thy path uncheered by earthly smiles,
Led only to the cross.

O Lord, with sorrow and with shame,
We meekly would confess,
How little we, who bear Thy name,
Thy mind, Thy ways, express."

—J. G. Deck

"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"

—John 8: 44.

MANY otherwise seemingly orthodox Christians are inclined to reject the doctrine of the personality of the Evil One. To them he appears to be but a personification of evil. The only devil there is, according to some, is the devil of one's own evil thoughts and desires. Such evidently overlook the fact that our Lord was tempted of the Devil. He who was absolutely holy, who never knew a desire contrary to His Father's will, was, nevertheless, tempted by Satan—a definite, wicked, personal spirit. Moreover, it is Christ Himself who tells us positively that the Devil is. He describes him as a murderer, and as the father of lies. He shows that he is an apostate being—one who once was different from what he is now—"he abode not in the truth." The testimony of Scripture throughout coincides with this. Satan is the accuser, as in Job's case; the tempter, as in the case of Eve; the adversary of God and man, as Peter and other apostles tell us.

"Men don't believe in a Devil now,
As their fathers used to do;
They've forced the door of the broadest creed
To let his majesty through.
There isn't a print of his stealthy foot,
Or a fiery dart from his bow,
To be found in earth, or air today,
For the world has voted it so.

Won't somebody step to the front forthwith
And make their bow, and show
How the frauds and crimes of a single day
Spring up? We want to know.
The Devil was fairly voted out;
And they claim the Devil's gone;
But simple folk would like to know,
Who carries his business on?"

JULY 21

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world"—John 9: 5.

WHILE our Lord ministered among men He was the visible manifestation of light—His holy life casting light on every man with whom He came in contact (John 1: 9). All are shown up, in the light of His perfection, as being sinful and unrighteous. The true Light casts light upon every man. When our Lord looked on to the testimony to be carried on after His return to heaven, He said, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5: 14). This tells of our responsibility to shine as lights in a dark scene (Phil. 2: 15).

"'I am the Light'; how long in heathen darkness
Must they remain, for whom the Saviour died?
Groping in night, and lost in sin and sorrow,
When for their need the Lamb was crucified?"

"'I am the Light'; but precious hearts are darkened;
This blessed gleam has never found its way;
No gospel story of salvation's wonder
Ever has turned their hopeless night to day.

"'I am the Light!' Ah, Church of Christ, arise ye!
Cast off thy chains of lethargy and greed;
Break thine unhallowed union with the worldlings;
Haste with the message! Meet the desp'rate need."

—Alice E. Sherwood, Sel.

JULY 22

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"—John 10: 10.

THE abundant life, of which our Lord spoke to His disciples, is life in the energy of the Holy Spirit. It is that eternal life which we receive at new birth, and which, therefore, all Christians possess (1 John 5: 12). But it is more than that. It is life controlled by the indwelling Holy Spirit, whom God has given to all who obey Him (Acts 5: 32). This refers to the obedience of faith (Rom. 1: 5) by which we appropriate the promises of God. As we yield ourselves to the Spirit's guidance we enter into and lay hold of that which is really life (1 Tim. 6: 12, *lit. trans.*). Apart from the new birth, this is impossible. There must be a life communicated, by which we are to live, before we can live the life. But when truly regenerated (Titus 3: 5) we are renewed by the Holy Spirit day by day as we reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6: 11).

**"Now I live— 'a new creation,'
Death, and judgment, past to me,
Jesus bore the condemnation—
Bore the cross and set me free.**

**Once I stood of sin convicted,
Waiting thus the sinner's doom,
Judgment was on Christ inflicted,
God has raised Him from the tomb.**

**Now I have a life in union
With the risen Lord above;
Now I drink in sweet communion,
Some rich foretastes of His love."**

—G. W. F.

JULY 23

"Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again"—John 11:20-22.

IN the case of Lazarus, Jesus purposely delayed returning to Bethany until after death had come in. His delay was not because of indifference or lack of love, either for the sick man or his grieving sisters, but God had something to work out for His own glory and their blessing which could not be reached until death had ensued. It takes a living faith to wait *for* God, as well as to wait *on* Him. He will not be hurried. Seeing the end from the beginning, He is never thwarted nor taken by surprise. He can be depended on to work out every circumstance for the blessing of those who rely upon His unerring wisdom and confide in His unchanging love.

"O Lord, my life's a mystery
I do not understand;
The end of all Thy ways with me
I do not know; I scarce can see
At times Thy guiding hand.

Great Shepherd, firmly grasp my hand
And lead me while I go,
For Thou hast said Thy purpose grand,
Which yet I do not understand,
Hereafter I shall know."

JULY 24

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father”—John 14: 12.

CHRIST promised His disciples that if they believed, they should do even greater works than He had done—after He returned to the Father; and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, came to abide with them forever (John 14: 16). Pentecost was itself the first fulfilment of this, and, as the days went on, the truth of the promise was demonstrated more and more, as scores, hundreds, and even thousands (Acts 4: 4), turned to the Lord through the ministry of Peter and John and the other apostles. Miracles were comparatively few, though they were wrought as occasion seemed to demand, but the greater works consisted in bringing the multitudes to repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In this mighty work Peter and John had, during the earlier years of Christian testimony, the first place.

**“Father, to Thee my soul I lift;
My soul on Thee depends;
Convinced that every perfect gift
From Thee alone descends.**

**We cannot speak one useful word,
One holy thought conceive,
Unless, in answer to our Lord,
Thyself the blessing give.**

**From Thee, through Jesus, we receive
The power on Thee to call,
In whom we are, and move, and live;
Our God is all in all.”**

—Charles Wesley.

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me"—John 15: 1-4.

CHRIST, as the true vine, supersedes Israel, the empty vine (Hos. 10: 1), which brought forth no fruit for Jehovah. He had nurtured and cared for this vine, which should have been a testimony for Himself (Isa. 5: 1-7), but it brought forth wild grapes, unpalatable and obnoxious to God. He brought this vine out of Egypt (Ps. 80: 8), and at one time it bade fair to bring forth fruit to His glory (9-11), but, alas, sin and selfishness blighted it and it was cast away as a worthless thing. In its place a new testimony is introduced. Christ Himself takes the place of Israel to bear fruit for the Father through His people here on earth. As we live in hallowed fellowship with Him, we produce that fruit in which the Father delights.

**"My soul is now united to Christ the Living Vine;
His grace I long have slighted, but now I know He's mine;
I was to God a stranger till Jesus took me in;
He freed my soul from danger, and pardoned all my sin.**

**By floods and flames surrounded, I still my way pursue;
Nor shall I be confounded with glory in my view.
Still Christ is my Salvation; what can I covet more?
I fear no condemnation, my Father's wrath is o'er."**

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"—John 15: 13.

OUR Lord was speaking of man as such, the natural man. For such an one voluntarily to lay down his life to save his friends from disaster is the highest expression of love known to mankind. But we see a love that transcends this in Christ. He laid down His life for His enemies, for that is what we all are by nature (Rom. 5:10). There was in us nothing that warranted such love. But He looked upon us in our deep need, and in His infinite grace He gave Himself to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10). Since He has thus given Himself for us, the least we can do in return is to be ready to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3:16). When the love of Christ constrains us, no sacrifice will be considered too great on behalf of others (2 Cor. 5:14).

**Yes, man for man perchance may brave
The horrors of the yawning grave;
And friend for friend; or son for sire,
Undaunted and unmoved expire,
From love or piety or pride;
But who can die as Jesus died?**

JULY 27

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me"—John 16: 2, 3.

TERRIBLE are the scenes depicted in these verses; yet in them all we may see a devoted company to whom Christ is precious, who for His name's sake endure grief and suffer reproach. God will never overlook the trials and afflictions of His people. He values aright the patience of His saints who manifest their love for Him by obedience to His commands and by their steadfast faith in His sure testimonies. "Ye have need of patience," we read, "that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36). And again we are told, "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:25). As our hearts are fixed on Christ and we look on in faith to the fulfilment of His promise to return and take us to be with Himself in the Father's house, we are enabled to endure as seeing Him who is invisible. He, Himself, is the Man of patience waiting expectantly at the Father's right hand until His enemies shall be made His footstool and the appointed hour will come when He is to descend to the air to call His redeemed to meet Him there. May we then be patient unto the coming of the Lord.

"O patient, spotless One,
Our hearts in meekness train,
To bear Thy yoke, and learn of Thee,
That we may rest obtain.

O fix our earnest gaze
So wholly, Lord, on Thee,
That, with Thy beauty occupied,
We elsewhere none may see."

Miss Wigram.

JULY 28

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace"—John 16: 33.

IT took many of us a long time to learn that true peace is found alone in Christ Jesus. We sought it nearly everywhere else before we came to Him, but we never found that which could give rest to the conscience or assurance to the heart. But in Him we found both. We have peace with God through the blood of His cross. We enjoy the peace of God as we lay every burden at His feet.

"My peace I give to you amid life's sadness;
Know Me, and you shall never need to fear;
I will be with you, source of all your gladness,
Unseen, but loved, I will be always near.

My peace is yours; go share your peace with others,
So shall your peace grow fuller day by day;
God is your Father, go and tell your brothers
I am their peace who seek Me on time's way.

Thy peace, O Christ, is far beyond my guessing,
In Thee I find the very God of peace;
Today I have the promise and the blessing,
Tomorrow more, a love which cannot cease."

—Howard T. N. Ussher

JULY 29

"I have glorified Thee on the earth. I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do"—John 17: 4.

ON the cross He finished the work of redemption, and now He lives to save eternally all who believe in His name. It is important to see that we are not saved by faith in Him plus anything else, but by faith alone. This is the testimony of the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews particularly, all of which are based upon the text, "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1: 17; Gal. 3: 11; Heb. 10: 38). These words are quoted from Habakkuk 2: 4. A by-faith righteousness is altogether different from a by-works righteousness.

" 'Tis finished all—our souls to win,
His life the blessed Saviour gave;
Then rising, left His people's sin
Behind Him in His open grave.

Past suff'ring now, the tender heart
Of Jesus, on His Father's throne,
Still in our sorrow bears a part,
And feels it as He felt His own.

Sweet thought, we have a Friend above,
Our weary, falt'ring steps to guide,
Who follows with the eye of love
The little flock for which He died."

JULY 30

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; 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: 20, 21.

IT is sometimes said that it is a pity this prayer has never been answered. But that is a mistake. However much outward schisms have rent the professing Church, the glorious fact remains that "there is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4: 4). The more our souls enter into this, the greater will be the power of our testimony to the world. Manifested unity is the strength of the Church of God, and strikes terror to the forces of evil (Phil. 1: 27, 28).

Christian fellowship is something far deeper and more precious than mere companionship of like-minded persons or a confederation of societies or local assemblies. It is a spiritual reality that is manifested by communion with the redeemed of the Lord everywhere, "the communion of the Holy Ghost" (2 Cor. 13: 14). Elsewhere it is called "the communion of the Body of the Christ" (1 Cor. 10: 16), and "the fellowship of His [that is, God's] Son" (1 Cor. 1: 9). Into this fellowship all believers are introduced by the Spirit's baptism, which makes them members of that mystical Body, of which the exalted Christ is the Head (Eph. 5: 30).

"In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South or North;
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth.
Join hands, then, brothers of the faith,
Whate'er your race may be:
Who serves my Father as a son
Is surely kin to me."

JULY 31

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth"—John 18:37.

THE crucifixion of our Lord Jesus was far more than a martyrdom for truth, though it was that. A witness is a martyr. But the cross was the display of God's hatred against sin and His infinite love for lost mankind. We should never think of Calvary as though it simply involved an innocent man dying for guilty men. It was God giving Himself in the Person of His Son to bear the judgment which His righteous law declared to be the penalty of sin. There "the Offended died to set the offender free."

"Jesus! Source of life eternal,
Jesus, Author of our breath,
Victor o'er the hosts infernal,
By defeat, and shame, and death,
Thou thro' deepest tribulation
Deigned to pass for our salvation:
Thousand, thousand praises be,
Lord of glory, unto Thee!

All the shame men heaped upon Thee,
Thou didst patiently endure;
Not the pains of death too bitter,
Our redemption to procure:
Wondrous Thy humiliation
To accomplish our salvation:
Thousand, thousand praises be,
Precious Saviour, unto Thee!"

AUGUST 1

"If thou let this Man go, thou art not Caesar's friend"—John 19: 12.

CRAFTY, self-seeking, and relentlessly cruel, Pilate was a scheming politician, who regarded the rights of no man if to maintain them might prove an embarrassment to himself. Thoroughly convinced, both of the innocence of Jesus and the enmity behind the accusation of the leaders in Israel, Pilate quailed before the threat embodied in the words, "If thou let this Man go, thou art not Caesar's friend." Fearing that his political enemies might misrepresent him before the emperor, he chose to sacrifice the Lord Jesus, who in his eyes was an unimportant Galilean artisan, turned teacher, in order that He might retain the favor of Rome. Consequently, his name has gone down in infamy throughout the centuries, as embodied in the words of the creed, "Suffered under Pontius Pilate."

"I see the crowd in Pilate's hall,
I mark their wrathful mien;
Their shouts of 'Crucify!' appall,
With blasphemy between.

And of that shouting multitude
I feel that I am one;
And in that din of voices rude
I recognize my own.

'Twas I that shed the sacred blood,
I nailed Him to the tree,
I crucified the Christ of God,
I joined the mockery.

Around the cross the throng I see
Mocking the Sufferer's groan;
Yet still my voice it seems to be,
As if I mocked alone."

—Horatius Bonar.

AUGUST 2

"The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre"

—John 20: 1.

IS there, in all history, a more thrilling incident recorded than that of the amazed followers of Jesus Christ when they found the tomb empty, where, only a few days before, they had reverently and sorrowfully laid away the body of their Lord? The imperial seal and the Roman guard guaranteed no human interference, no possibility of rifling that sepulcher. Yet, in spite of every precaution, the great stone that covered the entrance was rolled back, and the crypt was found to be vacant. No wonder the disciples themselves, who had forgotten or failed to understand the promise of the Lord Jesus that He would rise again the third day, were in a quandary as to what had taken place until the evidence of His resurrection became so overwhelming that they could no longer doubt. They ate and drank "with Him after He rose from the dead" (Acts 10: 41), and had absolute proof that He was indeed the very same Jesus they had known during the years of His ministry among them (John 20: 27). With them it was not merely faith accepting the testimony of others—even of God Himself, or His Holy Word. It was actual sight, verifying what the Scriptures, divinely inspired, had predicted.

"It was night!
Darkest that was ever seen;
Treachery, desperate and mean;
'Friends' on whom He could not lean.
It was night!
Night for Him—and for them night;
For they could not bear the sight,
So they left Him in their fright,
That dark night.

Morning light!
'Very early' in the dawn
Of that resurrection morn
Hope was dead. But joy was born.
Oh, the light!
'Mary' was the name He said;
'Master!'—Gone was all her dread;
He was living, and not dead,
Glory light!"

M. Warner.

AUGUST 3

"If I will that he tarry till I come"—John 21:22.

TILL I come." This expression refers clearly to our Lord's promised, personal return from heaven. The same words are used in Luke 19:13, where the nobleman, going into a far country, commits treasure to his servants, saying, "Occupy till I come"; and again in Rev. 2:25, where the risen and glorified Lord says to the faithful remnant in the corrupt Thyatiran church, "That which ye have already hold fast till I come." In 1 Cor. 11:26, after giving instruction concerning the Communion service, or the Lord's Supper, the Holy Spirit says, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." This is the blessed hope set before the Christian. Some generation of believers (who can say it may not be ours?) will be living on the earth when this glorious event takes place (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). Meantime, generation after generation have been called to pass through death, thus going to be with Christ. But this is a very different thing to His coming for us. At death the spirit and body are separated, the one going to heaven and the other to the grave. At the Lord's return death will be swallowed up in victory and the body raised and reunited to the spirit, to be forever with the Lord (1 Cor. 15:51-54).

" 'Till He come! ' Oh, let the words
Linger on the trembling chords.
Let the 'little while' between
In their golden light be seen;
Let us think how heaven and home
Lie beyond that 'Till He come! ' "

—Bickersteth.

AUGUST 4

"Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"—Acts 1:8.

OUR risen Lord made known His program for world evangelization clearly enough before His ascension, when He instructed His disciples to go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit, beginning at Jerusalem, then throughout Judea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. But there seemed to be a strange reluctance to carry out the commission as given. It took persecution to move the disciples out into the adjacent lands, then to farther countries, and even then they appeared to shrink from going to the Gentiles. Peter had to be specially called and instructed in order to prepare him to go to the house of Cornelius, a Roman, who may also have been a proselyte of the gate (as the Jews designated a Gentile who had accepted the Old Testament revelation of one true and living God), but whose house the Apostle would not have entered had it not been for the vision of the sheet let down from heaven—so slowly did the most devoted of Christ's followers enter into the great concern of the heart of God for the evangelization of a lost world.

**"Three things the Master hath us do,
And we who serve Him here below
And long to see His kingdom come,
Must pray, then give, or go.**

**He needs them all: the open hand,
The willing feet, the asking heart,
To work together and to weave
The threefold creed that shall not part.**

**Not all can go, but all can give
To arm the others for the fray;
And young or old, or rich or poor,
Or strong or weak—we all can pray."**

AUGUST 5

"Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain"—Acts 2:23.

THE betrayal, mock trial, and condemnation to death of our blessed Lord form together the most colossal miscarriage of justice in all history. Yet everything was foreseen by God, and all was in accord with the sure Word of prophecy. Those who participated in this infamous crime were all playing the parts long since predicted, little as they realized it. It is not that they were foreordained to act as they did. They were free moral agents in one sense, because they acted deliberately according to their own wills. But they were slaves of Satan, the great arch-enemy of God and man, who led them on to do what God Himself had declared should be done. There is a difference between His foreknowledge and His foreordination—a difference that Peter made clear in his sermon that day. Every adverse actor in that most awful drama of the ages was individually responsible for his behavior toward the Holy Saviour, even though it was by their means that He was brought to the cross, where He offered up Himself as a propitiation for our sins.

**"I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood;
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,
As near the cross I stood.**

**Sure, never, till my latest breath,
Can I forget that look:
It seemed to charge me with His death,
Though not a word He spoke.**

**Alas! I knew not what I did—
But now my tears are vain;
Where shall my trembling soul be hid,
For I the Lord have slain!"**

—John Newton.

AUGUST 6

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus"—Acts 4: 13.

NOTHING brings out more clearly the blessing of Pentecost than the contrast between the behavior and testimony of these two disciples before and after that stupendous event. Peter, who had been self-assertive and overconfident, yet vacillating and even cowardly in the hour of danger, became, when endued with the Holy Spirit, humble, yet bold; firm, yet gracious; and was enabled to bear witness to the risen Christ in such power that multitudes were brought to Him. John, who would have called down fire from heaven, on one occasion, to destroy those who were opposed to his Master (Luke 9:54), became the apostle of love, whose letters overflow with the tender compassion of Christ. Both men were born again before the coming of the Spirit to usher in the new dispensation of the grace of God, but, in accordance with the promise given by the Lord, they received power for witnessing when the Comforter came to convince the world, through them, of sin, righteousness, and judgment. They became transformed, and men took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. His holiness was reflected in their lives; His love filled their hearts, and in His name they both wrought signs and wonders (Acts 4:30) and bore testimony to the fact that He who died on the cross now lived to save all who trusted in His name.

**"Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All His wonderful passion and purity;
O Thou Spirit divine,
All my being refine,
Till the beauty of Jesus my Saviour be seen in me."**

AUGUST 7

"They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name"—Acts 5: 41.

THERE is a difference between suffering with Christ (Rom. 8:17) and suffering for Him (Acts 5: 41). All Christians suffer with Him because of the very fact that they are partakers of the divine nature, and therefore are quick to feel the adverse conditions through which they are called to pass. But to suffer for Him is to bear shame and reproach—even unto persecution and death—for Christ's name's sake (Acts 9: 16). We are told that unto us it is given, not only to believe on Him but to suffer for His sake.

"Blest are the sufferers, who partake
Of pain and shame for Jesus' sake;
Their souls shall triumph in the Lord;
Glory and joy are their reward."

—Isaac Watts.

"'A little while'—'twill soon be past,
Why should we shun the promised cross?
Oh, let us in His footsteps haste,
Counting for Him all else but loss;
For how will recompense His smile
The sufferings of this 'little while.'"

-J. G. Deck.

AUGUST 8

"When the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt"—Acts 7: 17.

GOD has a definite time for the fulfilment of every promise. Israel became a nation of slaves, suffering under the cruel task-masters set over them by a new dynasty of Pharaohs, who "knew not Joseph" (Ex. 1: 8). Every effort was made to destroy them, but the more they were afflicted the more they multiplied and grew (Ex. 1: 12), until the hour struck which God had foretold to Abraham, His friend, and their deliverance was effected. So it shall be in connection with the termination of their present long-drawn-out agony. The time of the promise draws nigh. Deliverance will come with Messiah's Second Advent in God's appointed time.

**"God is working His purpose out,
As year succeeds to year;
God is working His purpose out,
And the time is drawing near—
Nearer and nearer draws the time—
The time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with
the glory of God,
As the waters cover the sea."**

AUGUST 9

"The Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake"—Acts 9: 15, 16.

THE importance of the story of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and his selection by the risen Lord to be His special ambassador to the Gentiles may be gathered from the fact that it is related, more or less fully, five times in the New Testament. Here in Acts 9 we have Luke's account. In chapter 22 we have Paul's story of his conversion as he related it to the Jews in Jerusalem. In chapter 26 he tells it again before Festus and Agrippa. Then in Philippians 3: 4-11 he refers to it when writing to a Christian church. To his son in the faith, Timothy, he again tells the story of his one-time enmity to the gospel and the grace of God that transformed the persecutor into an evangelist (1 Tim. 1: 12-16). These five recitals of the great change that came to this man are most suggestive, emphasizing, as they do, the incorrigible evil of the heart of man—even religious man—and the sovereign, electing grace of God.

"Hast thou no scar?

No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?

I hear thee sung as mighty in the land,

I hear them hail thy bright ascendant star,

Hast thou no scar?

No wound? no scar?

Yet, as the Master shall the servant be,

And pierced are the feet that follow Me;

But thine are whole: can he have followed far

Who has no wound nor scar?"

—Amy Carmichael.

AUGUST 10

**"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common
. . . . I perceive that God is no respecter of persons"
—Acts 10: 15, 34.**

WHILE God has given special privileges and opportunities to some nations, which, up to the present time, have been denied to others, He is, nevertheless, concerned about the salvation of all men. Through the cross all are cleansed in the sense that no one is now to be accounted outside the pale of the covenanted blessing of Abraham, through whose Seed all nations are now looked at by God as in a new place of privilege and responsibility. All men are precious in His sight. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should turn to Him and live (2 Pet. 3: 9; Ezek. 33: 11). How foolish and wicked it is for those who profess faith in Him who died for all (2 Cor. 5: 14, 15) to cherish in their hearts contempt for any people, whatever their ignorance or unpleasant characteristics!

**"We've a message to give to the nations,
That the Lord who reigneth above,
Hath sent us His Son to save us,
And show us that God is love.**

**We've a Saviour to show to the nations,
Who the path of sorrow has trod,
That all of the world's great people
Might come to the truth of God."**

—Colin Sterne.

AUGUST 11

"To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins"—Acts 10: 43.

THESE are the words of the apostle Peter who was one of those to whom Jesus, in resurrection, gave authority to proclaim remission of sins (John 20: 23) and declared that heaven would ratify such a proclamation. This sermon proves conclusively that there was no sacramental absolution involved in this commission. Peter did not retire into a confessional and offer forgiveness, or remission, to all who came to confess to him and to do penance! He declared that every believer has remission of sins, and heaven ratified this by giving to Cornelius and his household the gift of the Holy Spirit when they received the message in faith. There is no other commission given to Christ's servants today.

**"I am in that 'whosoever,'
I believe He died for me!
Praise the Lord, I'm saved for ever!
Jesus lives, and I am free!"**

AUGUST 12

"We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they"—Acts 15: 11.

WE have the historical account of the mission of Peter to the home of Cornelius in Acts 10, and Peter's own story, when challenged by the Jerusalem brethren, in chapter 11. In both it is evident that the river of grace, which had been artificially restrained by the dams of human ignorance and prejudice on the part of the believers in Judea, had burst all bounds and was now flowing out into all the world. Nevermore would it be possible to limit it to one particular nation, but the glad tidings of a full, free, and eternal salvation for all men everywhere, who will turn to God in repentance and trust His blessed Son, was destined to be carried to the uttermost parts of the earth, bringing life to the nations wherever the living waters should flow (Ezek. 47: 9). The heart of God will never be satisfied until every man has heard the message of salvation and been given an opportunity to be saved by His grace.

**"God from eternity hath willed,
All flesh shall His salvation see;
So be the Father's love fulfilled,
The Saviour's sufferings crowned
through thee."**

—James Montgomery.

AUGUST 13

"They . . . were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia, . . . they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not"—Acts 16: 6, 7.

HE who has commissioned His servants to go into all the world with the gospel message can be depended upon to guide His workers as to their respective fields of labor, if there be but dependence upon Himself and readiness to obey His leading. He opens doors and none can shut them; He closes and none can open (Rev. 3: 7). It means much to be in such intimate fellowship with Him that His voice can be heard and thus each laborer shall be directed in the special work he ought to do, and in regard to the proper field of service, at any given time. We read, "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way" (Ps. 25: 9).

"Master, speak! Thy servant heareth,
Waiting for Thy gracious word,
Longing for Thy voice that cheereth;
Master! let it now be heard.
I am listening, Lord, for Thee;
What hast Thou to say to me?"

Master, speak! and make me ready,
When Thy voice is truly heard,
With obedience glad and steady
Still to follow every word.
I am listening, Lord, for Thee;
Master, speak; oh, speak to me!"

—Frances Ridley Havergal.

AUGUST 14

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God"—Rom. 3: 19.

IN choosing Israel from among the nations to be a special people unto Himself (Ps. 33:12) God had in view the blessing of the whole world (Gen. 12:2, 3). Moreover, in His dealings with that nation the entire world was on trial. To Israel He revealed Himself and made known His will, as He had done to no other people (Ps. 147:20). If they, under the most favorable circumstances, failed—as, alas, they did—then it became evident that there was no possibility that any people could or would of themselves prove obedient to His law. This is what Paul emphasizes in our present text. To Israel the law was given. Their failure to obey it (as a sample nation) demonstrated the sinfulness of all the world.

**"Vain are the hopes which sons of men
On their own works have built;
Their hearts, by nature, all unclean;
Their lives make known their guilt.
Let Jew and Gentile stop their mouths
Without a murmuring word,
And the whole race of Adam stand
Guilty before the Lord.
But Lord, how glorious in Thy grace
When in Thy name we trust;
Through faith we have a righteousness
That makes the sinner just."**

-Anon

AUGUST 15

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith"—Rom. 4: 13.

NOT only Israel, but many other nations, sprang from this man (Gen. 17: 4, 5) whose understanding of God marked him out as unique in his day and, through all the centuries since, as the outstanding witness to the truth revealed to him, and to the importance of faith in God's testimony.

We need to remember that it was while he was still a Gentile after the flesh that enlightenment came to him. It was not until he had received and believed the promise that he and his household were circumcised (Gen. 17:10-14) and so separated unto God. This was the sign of the covenant already made to him, and it marks the beginning of the Hebrew people. Paul emphasizes this in discussing the great truth of the imputation of righteousness to all who believe (Rom. 4: 9-12). The grace extended to Abram as a Gentile and confirmed to him later as a separated man, is the same grace that flows out to all men, through Him who is the promised Seed, the Son of Abraham (Matt. 1:1). Dispensations have changed, but God's promise of salvation by grace abides through all ages.

"The Son—He left God's throne above
 (So free, so infinite His grace!),
Emptied Himself, and then in love
 Bled for our lost, our ruined race:
'Tis mercy, all beyond our thought,
That us to God in Jesus brought.

No condemnation now we dread,
 Jesus is ours, prepared our place,
Our life in Him, our hidden Head,
 Himself our righteousness thro' grace,
Bold we approach the heavenly throne,
Heirs of the crown He for us won."

—C. Wesley.

AUGUST 16

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God"—Rom. 5: 1, 2.

FAITH is taking God at His word. The gospel is the glad message of an accomplished redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-5). When the repentant sinner believes that message he puts his trust in the Saviour thus revealed. To believe *about* Him saves no one. To believe *in* or *on* Him means life eternal (John 3:36). The difference is like that of one believing that a great airplane is strong, safe, and fully capable of carrying one across the sea from continent to continent. But one may believe all that and yet never reach the other side of the ocean. He must trust himself to the massive ship of the air, if he is ever to get across. The illustration fails in this: that the airplane may be wrecked, and its passengers lost; but Christ will never fail to carry safely to glory all who put their trust in Him.

**"The Lamb was slain—His precious blood
On Calvary's awful tree was shed;
He for the guilty sinner stoed,
And bore the judgment in his stead;
He has made peace—
And now He lives, who once was dead.**

**Proclaimer of that peace to all,
He tells of full unmingled grace;
To high and low, who hear the call,
To old and young, of Adam's race;
He preaches peace—
And love divine shines in His face.**

**Behold Him now exalted high,
Upon the throne He took His seat;
Oh, wondrous grace that we brought nigh
And in Him seated are complete;
He is our peace—
Who for the light 'hath made us meet.'"**

—G. W. Frazer.

AUGUST 17

"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound"
—Rom. 5: 20.

NOTICE the "much mores" of Romans 5. The superabounding grace of God to the believer is set forth most strikingly in these five "much mores." Verses 8 and 9: We are justified through the blood of Christ, *much more* shall we be saved from future wrath. Verse 10: Reconciled to God by the death of His Son, *much more* shall we be saved through all the trials of the way because He lives for us on high. Verse 15: By Adam's one offense the race came under sentence of death. *Much more* shall grace abound to all those who trust Christ. Verse 17: Death reigned over all because of one man's sin. Now all reign in life who have received God's gift by faith: "*Much more* they . . . shall reign in life." Verse 20: "Where sin abounded, grace did *much more* abound."

"Grace is the sweetest sound
That ever reached our ears;
When conscience charged and justice frowned,
'Twas grace removed our fears.

'Tis freedom to the slave,
'Tis light and liberty;
It takes its terror from the grave,
From death its victory.

Grace is a mine of wealth
Laid open to the poor;
Grace is the sov'reign spring of health;
'Tis LIFE FOR EVERMORE."

—T. Kelly.

AUGUST 18

"Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace"—Rom. 6:14.

GOD'S salvation is not an impractical theory. It is a blessed reality. He who turns to Christ finds satisfaction for his conscience in the work of the cross, where the sin question was fully dealt with. But there is more than this. As he yields himself in loving obedience to the claims of the risen Lord, he finds divine power and all needed grace given him to live practically to the glory of God, and to honor Him in all his ways. Sin no longer holds dominion over the surrendered life

"Grace taught our wand'ring feet
To tread the heavenly road;
And new supplies each hour we meet
While trav'ling home to God.

'Twas Grace that wrote each name
In God's eternal book;
'Twas Grace that gave us to the Lamb,
Who all our burdens took.

Grace saved us from the foe,
Grace taught us how to pray;
And God will ne'er His grace forego,
Till we have won the day.

May grace, free grace, inspire
Our souls with strength divine;
May ev'ry thought to God aspire,
And grace in service shine.

Grace all the work shall crown
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone
And well deserves the praise."

AUGUST 19

"I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died"—Rom. 7: 9.

PAUL tells us that so far as his outward life was concerned before his conversion, he walked in obedience to the requirements of the law, so that as "touching the righteousness which is in the law" he was blameless. The one commandment which made him realize the sinfulness of his own heart was the Tenth—and no one could know by observing his behavior that he was guilty of violating it. He was alive, in the sense that he did not realize he was under sentence of death as a law-violator. But when awakened to see how this commandment applied, he knew that he was, so far as the law was concerned, a dead man (Rom. 7: 9-11). Surely, every honest person must make the same acknowledgment. Which of us has not known lust in some form or another? The fact is, it is absolutely impossible for the natural man to keep this law. Ever since the Fall, men have been drawn away of their own lusts and enticed, and from this all manner of sin springs (Jas. 1: 14, 15).

**"In vain we seek for peace with God
By methods of our own:
Nothing, O Saviour, but Thy blood
Can bring us near the throne!**

**The threatenings of the broken law
Impress the soul with dread:
If God His sword of vengeance draw,
It strikes the spirit dead.**

**But Thine illustrious sacrifice
Hath answered these demands;
And peace and pardon from the skies
Are offered by Thy hands.**

**'Tis by Thy death we live, O Lord!
'Tis on Thy cross we rest:
Forever be Thy love adored,
Thy name forever blessed."**

—Isaac Watts.

AUGUST 20

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"—Rom. 8: 18.

CHRISTIANS are not exempt from suffering. When one trusts in Christ, it does not mean that he is at once freed from all the consequences of sin. So far as divine judgment is concerned, he is forever delivered from that (John 3:18, R. V.). But he is still in the body from which the Adamic curse has not yet been lifted. Consequently he suffers with the groaning creation, of which that body is still a part. Then, in addition to this, he now finds that the world to which he once belonged, has become a scene of hostility because of the place he has taken in association with a rejected Christ. All this involves suffering, but with every trial and affliction there will come needed grace to endure, as seeing Him who is invisible (Heb. 11: 27).

"Look to Him who once was willing
All His glory to resign,
That, for thee the law fulfilling,
All His merit might be thine.
Strive to follow day by day
Where His footsteps mark the way.

Look to Him and faith shall brighten,
Hope shall soar, and love shall burn;
Peace once more thy heart shall lighten—
Rise! He calleth thee! Return!
Be not weary on thy way,
Jesus is thy strength and stay."

—Frances Ridley Havergal.

AUGUST 21

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God"—Rom. 8: 26, 27.

THE indwelling Comforter is the power for prayer (Jude 20). Even when we are too bewildered to know what is best, He who indwells us is constantly employed in presenting our real needs before God, and Christ presents these petitions as our High Priest and Intercessor above, adding to them the fragrant incense of His own perfections. Thus the answer is sure, and far beyond our poor thoughts or expectations.

"He maketh intercession . . . according to the will of God." Because the Spirit is Himself a Person in the Godhead, His pleading on our behalf must be in accordance with God the Father's will. Therefore His intercession can never be in vain.

"Hold Thou my hand, O Lord!
Keep Thou my feet;
With Thy companionship
Life is complete.

Awake my mind, O Lord!
Prompt every thought;
Let my lips only speak
As I am taught.

Draw my eyes upward, Lord!
That I may see
Thy gracious smile and know
Thou guidest me.

Thy love from doubt and fear
Keeps my heart free,
So will I rest content
To walk with Thee."

—Mary Skinner.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"—Rom. 10: 4.

HE has met all the claims of the violated law and is Himself the One typified in all its sacrifices. He is thus the end, in the sense of being the fulfilment, of the law. This is realized only by believers. Every righteous claim of God's throne has been met, and the believer is thenceforth not under law, but under grace, and as he walks in the Spirit the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in Him (Rom. 8: 4). The law proposed a certain manner of life to those with whom the legal covenant was made, and promised life to those who walked in obedience to it. This was a testing of man in order to demonstrate his utterly lost and sinful condition. No man ever met its claims until the Man Christ Jesus came and fulfilled its every demand.

"Jehovah lifted up His rod—
 O Christ, it fell on Thee!
 Thou wast sore stricken of Thy God;
 There's not one stroke on me.
 Thy tears, Thy blood, beneath it flowed;
 Thy bruising healeth me.

For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,
 And I have died with Thee;
 Thou'rt risen: my bands are all untied;
 And now Thou liv'st in me.
 The Father's face of radiant grace
 Shines now in light on me."

—Mrs. Cousins.

"There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him"—Rom. 10:12.

NATURALLY, we are all selfish and concerned about our own fancied importance and our personal recognition by others. Even in things religious we like to feel that we are the favorites of Providence and that others are of less importance in the divine economy than we and our group. It is the grace of God that delivers from all of this and makes us to know no man after the flesh (2 Cor. 5:16), but to see in all, sinners like ourselves, for whom Christ died, and who have the same title as we to the knowledge of His redemption. It is this conflict between man's limitations and God's boundless grace that we see as we study the early days of Christian missions. And even after nineteen centuries of gospel preaching, we have need still to be reminded that all are on the same level before God as helpless sinners, and for all the same salvation has been provided.

'God loved a world of sinners,
For them He gave His Son;
And whosoe'er receives Him,
He saves them, ev'ry one;
He came to bring salvation,
To bear our sins away,
That we with Him in glory
Might live through endless day."

—James McGranahan.

AUGUST 24

"Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee"

—Rom. 11: 18.

IN order that God's purposes might be carried out, He chose Abraham and his seed, through Isaac and Jacob, and separated them to Himself, giving them an honored place which no other people have ever known (Amos 3: 2). They are His peculiar treasure (Ex. 19: 5; Ps. 135: 4) destined some day to be the display of His grace and power to all mankind (Isa. 53: 1-3; 54: 1-8). Now, they are like olive branches torn out of the olive tree of promise, of which Abraham is the root, and wild branches of the Gentiles have been grafted in contrary to nature (Rom. 11: 17-22). But when the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in, these natural branches will be grafted again into their own olive tree and so all Israel shall be saved. Therefore the Gentiles are warned not to look with prideful contempt on Israel, who are still "beloved for the fathers' sake."

"By the holy hills surrounded,
On her firm base securely founded,
Stands fast the city of the Lord;
None shall rend her walls asunder;
On her men look with fear and wonder,
And mark who here keeps watch and ward.
He slumbers not, nor sleeps,
Who His loved Israel keeps.
Hallelujah!
Happy the race
Who through God's grace
Shall have in her their dwelling-place!"

AUGUST 25

"Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"—Rom. 12: 2.

THERE are times when we are all called upon to take a definite stand for God and His truth, no matter what the consequences. We are forbidden to conform to the spirit of the age but are commanded to be transformed by the renewing of our minds that, knowing God's perfect will we may walk in it. Satan pleads for amalgamation. The Bible calls for separation. The world would seek to destroy those who witness against its evil works, even as it sought to destroy our blessed Lord. But he who refuses to bow to Baal and stands for God, even though he has to stand alone, can never be destroyed. Death itself will but open the way into the throne-chamber of the King.

As we scan the pages of Holy Writ we can see how the non-conformists of the past were made to triumph over all their vindictive foes. Abel was slain, but he being dead yet speaketh. Noah refused to go with the men of his day in their rebellion against God, but was saved through the flood when all others, save his own family, perished. None ever loses who sides with God.

"Th' accursed tree was the reward
Which this sad world did give
To Him who gave His precious life
That this lost world might live.

And has this world a charm for us,
Where Jesus suffered thus?
No; we have died to all its charms,
Through Jesu's wondrous cross.

Farewell, farewell, poor faithless world,
With all Thy boasted store;
We'd not have joy where HE had woe—
Be rich where HE was poor."

—W. Trotter.

AUGUST 26

"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.

THE recognition of this unity of all Christians (not as denominations, but as individual members of Christ) results in practical fellowship and love for all saints. It destroys narrow sectarian prejudices and enables us to recognize every one redeemed by the precious blood of Christ as being one with us in Him. As in the human body, so it is in the spiritual Body of Christ. Just as, when one is in health, each organ functions for the benefit of the whole, so it should ever be in the Church of God. To each has been committed some special responsibility which no one else can discharge.

**"Let us join—'tis God commands—
Let us join our hearts and hands;
Help to gain our calling's hope,
Build we each the other up:
Still forget the things behind,
Follow Christ in heart and mind,
Toward the mark unwearied press,
Seize the crown of righteousness."**

AUGUST 27

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord"—Rom. 12: 11.

EVER since the Fall, God has decreed that man shall earn his bread by toil, either with his hands or with his brain. The Christian should readily see the wisdom of this. Realizing that honest work is in itself a safeguard against many temptations that beset mankind, he will not be disposed to quarrel with the declaration that "if a man will not work, neither shall he eat." Whether he be owner or manager of a business or of some agricultural project, or an artisan, or mechanic, or office-helper, or a laborer, he is required to be conscientious in his service, doing all as unto the Lord. This will insure a care for the rights of his fellows and will keep him from overreaching or underpaying those in dependent positions. True Christianity involves faithfulness in every walk of life.

"How quickly time is passing!
The seasons come and go—
The summer with its sunshine,
The winter with its snow,
The springtime with its fragrance
Of bursting bud and bloom,
The short cool days of autumn—
All seem to pass too soon!
Our neighbors, friends and loved ones—
Their ranks are thinning out;
So many we find missing
Each time we look about.
We too are rushing onward,
Our days will soon be o'er,
Our places soon be vacant,
Our voices heard no more.
Will any heart be lighter
Because we've sojourned here?
Oh, are we truly trying
To scatter love and cheer—
To make the way seem brighter
To those we meet each day;
For, like the fleeting seasons,
We, too, shall pass away!"

AUGUST 28

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof"—Rom. 13: 13, 14.

THESE were the verses that spoke to the conscience of Augustine of Hippo and brought him to yield his life to Christ.

God created man for His glory. As originally made, he was designed to have authority over all the lower creation. But sin has brought man down to the low level of "the beasts that perish" (Ps. 49:12), so that he readily becomes the slave of all kinds of fleshly lusts and passions which tend to degradation and dishonor. But when born from above, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, man is renewed in "the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3: 10), thus enabling him to triumph over perverted appetites and keep the body in the place of subjection (1 Cor. 9: 27). In this way, the body glorifies God (1 Cor. 6: 20), and is delivered from the power of carnal lusts, so fulfilling the "righteousness of the law" (Rom. 8: 4).

**"Teach us where'er we live,
To act as in Thy sight,
And do what Thou wouldst have us do
With radiant delight;
Not choosing what is great,
Nor spurning what is small,
But taking from Thy hands our tasks,
To glorify them all."**

AUGUST 29

"The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly"—Rom. 16: 20.

EVIL-DISPOSED men are inclined often to blame God for ever having permitted Satan to tempt them. Apart from his evil suggestions they are sure that they would never deviate from the straight and narrow way. The Bible tells of a time when the great enemy of God and man will be bound for a thousand years and Christ Himself will reign over all this lower universe. Yet even then it will be demonstrated that sin will not be done away in its entirety, for at the close of that glorious period men will still be found ready to join in a revolt against God and His Christ, when Satan is loosed for a little season.

The natural heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and only the grace of God can enable one so to rise above its lusts as to walk before God in holiness and righteousness. The same power that will bind the devil eventually can enable us now to triumph in Christ and to walk in newness of life. The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

"Come, Lord, and tarry not!
Bring the long-looked-for day;
Oh, why these years of waiting here,
These ages of delay?

Come, for creation groans,
Impatient of Thy stay,
Worn out with these long years of ill,
These ages of delay.

Come and begin Thy reign
Of everlasting peace;
Come, take the kingdom to Thyself,
Great King of Righteousness!"

—Bonar.

"Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's: grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ"—1 Cor. 1: 1-3.

A SSEMBLIES of Christians in apostolic days constituted one fellowship, wherever they might be located individually. All held the same precious faith, all proclaimed the same blessed gospel, and each was recognized as the expression of the Body of Christ in the particular place where he was found. Many divisions have come in since, and many unsaved ones have come into various churches, but true believers still constitute one holy fellowship as the "sanctified in Christ Jesus."

As we enter into the truth of the one Body, our hearts will be enlarged to take in every member thereof.

Even where marked differences of judgment are found as to church order, disciplinary measures, and creedal statements, there will be practical unity where Christ Himself becomes the object of our hearts' adoration.

**"Christ, from whom all blessings flow,
Perfecting the saints below,
Hear us, who Thy nature share,
Who Thy mystic Body are.**

**Sweetly may we all agree,
Touched with loving sympathy:
Kindly for each other care;
Every member feel its share.**

**Love, like death, hath all destroyed,
Rendered all distinctions void;
Names, and sects, and parties fall:
Thou, O Christ, art all in all!"**

—Charles Wesley.

AUGUST 31

"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord"

—1 Cor. 1:9.

FELLOWSHIP involves the sharing of like interests and service in common for the glory of the one great Head of the Church. It is a fellowship of life and the Spirit, and cannot, therefore, be forced or built up by mere human effort or loyalty to certain ideals. It is something spontaneous, which those only know who have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Into it every new convert is welcomed, and from the moment he receives divine life he begins to share in its blessings, whether at first he fully realizes it or not. Unsaved people have no part nor lot in it (Acts 8:21), for "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). It is God Himself who asks, "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14).

**"Blest be the dear uniting love,
That will not let us part;
Our bodies may far off remove,
We still are one in heart.**

**Joined in one Spirit to our Head,
Where He appoints we go;
And still in Jesus' footsteps tread,
And show His praise below.**

**Closer and closer let us cleave
To His beloved embrace;
Expect His fulness to receive,
And grace to answer grace.**

**Partakers of the Saviour's grace,
The same in mind and heart,
Nor joy, nor grief, nor time, nor place,
Nor life, nor death can part."**

—Charles Wesley.

SEPTEMBER 1

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual"

—1 Cor. 2: 12, 13.

THE Bible not only *contains* the Word of God, but it *is* the Word of God (John 10: 35; 2 Cor. 2: 17; 4: 2; Heb. 4: 12). That is, it is, throughout, a divinely given revelation of the mind of God, as to man and the world at large, and as to the plan of redemption. This is communicated in the very words that the Holy Spirit taught (1 Cor. 2: 13). As we read the Holy Scriptures we may be certain that it is the Lord who speaks throughout, in every book and every chapter. As we study this Word we gain the knowledge of God and learn to know His power and grace as we could never learn them by contemplation of His creation, great and wonderful as it is. To surrender this Word, to turn away from its sure testimonies, is to be left to drift in the darkness without certainty of any kind.

"The Spirit breathes upon the Word,
And brings the truth to sight;
Precepts and promises afford
A sanctifying light.

A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic, like the sun;
It gives a light to every page;—
It gives, but borrows none.

The hand, that gave it, still supplies
The gracious light and heat;
Its truths upon the nations rise,—
They rise, but never set."

—William Cowper.

SEPTEMBER 2

"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?"—1 Cor. 6: 15.

OUR bodies belong to God and should be devoted to His service because of His twofold claim upon them. He created us, and He gave His Son to redeem us. Moreover, it is by His power and goodness that we are sustained and strengthened for the responsibilities He puts upon us. While unsaved men ignore His authority, we who have trusted Christ as Saviour should own, with gladness, His Lordship over us and so yield to Him all our ransomed powers. The deepest joys in life are found as we recognize His claims and present our bodies in sacrificial service.

**"Now, O God, Thine own I am!
Now I give Thee back Thine own:
Freedom, friends, and health, and fame,
Consecrate to Thee alone:
Thine I live, thrice happy I!
Happier still if Thine I die.**

**Take me, Lord, and all my powers;
Take my mind, and heart, and will;
All my goods, and all my hours,
All I know, and all I feel,
All I think, or speak, or do—
Take my soul and make it new!"**

—Anon.

SEPTEMBER 3

**"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup,
ye do show the Lord's death till He come"**

—1 Cor. 11:26.

MANY are the precious lessons associated with the remembrance of the Lord Jesus in His death, as we sit at the table of the Lord. We recall Him to mind in His lowliness, His gracious service, and His sacrificial death. We think of His love for us even unto the shedding of His precious blood to put away our sins. In view of all this, how contrite should our spirits be! Surely there is no place for self-seeking in the light of the cross and all that transpired there. We look on, too, in faith to His return for His saints and to take His great power and reign. It is to be observed "till He come."

**"See, the feast of love is spread;
Drink the wine and eat the bread—
Sweet memorials, till the Lord
Call us round His heavenly board,
Some from earth, from glory some,
Severed only 'Till He come'!"**

—E. H. Bickersteth.

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things"

—1 Cor. 13: 4-7.

THE "Song of Love" of 1 Corinthians 13 is recognized by all who know it as the great classic on that wonderful theme. But the love there set forth is far more than human affection. It is the outworking of the new nature, implanted by the Holy Spirit in all who are in saving relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. No man, apart from divine, enabling grace can attain to it. But where Christ dwells in the heart by faith, love is the inevitable result. It is not something that has to be pumped up, for it is not found in the unrenewed heart. It flows forth spontaneously from the inmost being of one who knows Christ and is yielded to His control.

Nothing can wear out the patience of love. It is ever kind, rejoicing in others' blessing, and modest as to one's own attainments.

"Beloved, let us love;
Love is of God;
In God alone hath love
Its true abode.

Beloved, let us love:
For they who love,
They only are His sons,
Born from above.

Beloved, let us love:
For love is rest,
And he who loveth not,
Abides unblest.

Beloved, let us love:
In love is light,
And He who loveth not,
Dwelleth in night.

Beloved, let us love:
For only thus
Shall we behold that God
Who loveth us."

—Horatius Bonar.

SEPTEMBER 5

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you"—1 Cor. 15: 1.

THERE is no other remedy for man's lost condition but the gospel. That gospel tells of Christ, who suffered and died for our redemption and now lives to sustain all who trust in Him.

When He is received by faith, a new life is imparted, and with that new life there are necessarily new motives, new desires, and new ambitions. As the believer walks with God, these result in true Christian devotedness, godliness of life, and loving concern for those still unsaved, as well as brotherly care for those in Christ.

"Someone asked Luther, 'Do you feel
That you have been forgiven?'
He answered, 'Not but I'm as sure
As there's a God in heaven.
For feelings come and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving;
My warrant is the Word of God,
Nought else is worth believing.'"

Though all my heart should feel condemned
For want of some sweet token,
There is One greater than my heart,
Whose Word cannot be broken.
I'll trust in God's unchanging Word,
Till soul and body sever;
For though all things shall pass away
His Word shall stand forever."

—Anon.

SEPTEMBER 6

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body"—1 Cor. 15:42-44.

N**A**TURAL and Spiritual. Almost unconsciously, perhaps, many people think of these terms as though they were contrasting a material body with a spiritual one. That is, they imagine that the present body of flesh and blood is to be entirely done away with in resurrection, and a body of spirit—immaterial—will take its place. But the risen body of our Lord was as truly material—a body of flesh and bone (Luke 24:39)—as that which hung upon the cross. It was the same, only glorified. A natural (or soulish) body is a body suited to the soul, the seat of all natural instincts and emotions. The spiritual body will be suited to the higher spiritual life which will be ours in resurrection.

**"We shall sleep, but not forever,
There will be a glorious dawn!
We shall meet, to part—no, never,
On the resurrection morn!
From the deepest caves of ocean,
From the desert and the plain,
From the valley and the mountain,
Countless throngs shall rise again.**

**We shall sleep, but not forever,
In the lone and silent grave;
Blessed be the Lord that taketh,
Blessed be the Lord that gave.
In the bright Eternal City
Death can never, never come!
In His own good time He'll call us
From our rest to Home, sweet Home!"**

—Mary Ann Kidder.

SEPTEMBER 7

"Henceforth know we no man after the flesh"

—2 Cor. 5: 16.

IN thinking of man, it is easy to go to one of two extremes: either to look upon him as a majestic being ever moving onward and upward by his own innate power and increasing wisdom, or to think of him as so utterly depraved that he is deprived of all sense of responsibility, and so is but an automaton under the control of forces which he is powerless to resist.

Scripture presents man as the highest of God's earthly creation, who lost his place of pre-eminence through sin, but who is still the object of God's love and is capable of being renewed through grace and given the place of son in the family of God.

As all are involved in one common ruin, we are not to despise any, but, recognizing the fact that Christ died for all, we are to consider every man as a potential saint, for none are so far from God but that there is salvation for them if they turn to Him in repentance, and trust the Saviour He has provided.

"Abba's purpose gave us being
When in Christ, in that vast plan,
Abba chose the saints in Jesus
Long before the world began;
Oh, what love the Father bore us!
Oh, how precious in His sight!—
When He gave the Church to Jesus!
Jesus, His whole soul's delight!

Though our nature's fall in Adam
Seemed to shut us out from God,
Thus it was His counsel brought us
Nearer still, through Jesu's blood;
For in Him we found redemption,
Grace and glory in the Son,
Oh, the height and depth of mercy!
Christ and we, through grace, are one!"

—Hawker.

SEPTEMBER 8

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"—2 Cor. 5: 17.

THE old creation was placed on trial in Adam, its federal head. When he failed we all fell, in him and with him. The new creation stands forever secure in Christ, its Head, who bore the judgment entailed by Adam's fall and the sins of his race. It is in resurrection that the Lord Jesus became head of this new order which eventually shall supersede the old completely. God will never be satisfied until He brings in "a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Then all things in heaven and in earth will be reconciled unto Himself and God will be all in all. Who can estimate aright the glories that He is yet to reveal to those who through His infinite grace, have their part in this new creation where sin will never again be permitted to lift up its ugly head. It is in this sphere that "all things are of God." Everything that is of Adam will pass away. All that is of Christ will abide for eternity, to the glory of God and the blessing of His saints.

"Head of the new creation,
To God's right hand ascended,
Thy saints rejoice,
With heart and voice,
Before Thy feet low bended.
We own Thee, Lord, exulting
In all Thy joy and glory,
And long to be
On high with Thee,
Where all shall bow before Thee."

—J. G. Deck.

SEPTEMBER 9

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ"—2 Cor. 11:2.

WRITING to the Corinthian church Paul says, "I have espoused you as a chaste virgin unto Christ." It is after we enter with Him into the Father's house that the marriage of the Lamb will take place. The Church will be displayed in robes of glory and beauty as the Bride of the Lamb. Saints of all ages will share the felicity of the marriage supper which speaks of joyous fellowship in which all heavenly saints participate, but the center of that scene of bliss will be He who loved the Church and gave Himself for it.

"The bride eyes not her garment
But her dear bridegroom's face;
I will not gaze at glory
But on my King of grace;
Not at the crown He giveth,
But on His pierced hand;
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Immanuel's land."

—Mrs. A. R. Cousins.

"It pleased God, who . . . called me by His grace"
—Gal. 1: 15.

THE sovereignty of God in salvation comes out vividly in the conversion of Saul. It is certain that he was not seeking after Christ, but Christ was seeking him, and after an undefined period, in which the persecutor's conscience had been exercised by the "goads," the Lord suddenly manifested Himself, though not in such a way as to compel Saul to become a Christian against his will. But He brought such pressure to bear upon that will that there was an immediate surrender, and Saul took the place of a repentant, submissive believer, seeking for further light upon the path he was to tread. He might have done despite to the Spirit of grace as others did (Heb. 10: 29), and resisted the Holy Ghost, as did the opponents of Stephen (Acts 7: 51), but instead he bowed in brokenness of spirit before Jesus and confessed Him as Lord.

"O GOD of grace, our Father,
We bless Thy holy name,
We who enjoy Thy favor,
Made holy, without blame;
In love, which sought and found us,
And brought us nigh to Thee,
And won the rest of glory,
Our heavenly home shall be.

Thy deep eternal counsel
Chose us in Christ the Son
Before the earth's foundation,
Or sin had yet begun;
That we might all the nearness
Of the beloved know,
And brought to Thee as children
Our children's praises flow."

—G. W. Frazer.

SEPTEMBER 11

"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain"

—Gal. 2: 21.

THE letter to the Galatians is the most vehement of all Paul's epistles, written out of the fervency of his heart as he realized that many whom he had led to Christ were being ensnared in a system, which, while it professed to be the strength of holiness, was actually "the strength of sin" (1 Cor. 15: 56). In this letter he shows that believers are justified by faith alone, apart from the works of the law, and that to go back to law after one had been brought to know Christ, is to fall from grace (Gal. 5: 3, 4). It is to drop down from the high standard of salvation by grace alone to the confused conception of preservation and final security by the works of the law. This Paul could not tolerate, and we may well thank God today for his strong stand against it.

"Not saved are we by trying;
From self can come no aid;
'Tis on the blood relying,
Once for our ransom paid.
'Tis looking unto Jesus,
The Holy One and Just;
'Tis His great work that saves us—
It is not 'try' but 'trust'!

No deeds of ours are needed
To make Christ's merit more;
No frames of mind or feelings
Can add to His great store;
'Tis simply to receive Him,
The Holy One and Just;
'Tis only to believe Him—
It is not 'try' but 'trust'!"

SEPTEMBER 12

"Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed"—Gal. 3: 23.

THE law was designed to convict men of their sinfulness and inability to save themselves. The more honest a man is and the more tender his conscience, the more readily will he acknowledge that he has broken that law times without number and is helpless to keep it, apart from divine aid. To those so convicted God presents Christ as the Holy One who met every claim of the law perfectly, and then went to the cross and suffered, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. All who believe in Him have eternal life here and now and are forever delivered from condemnation.

"To us our God His love commends,
When by our sins undone;
That He might spare His enemies,
He would not spare His Son,—

His only Son, on whom was placed
His whole delight and love,
Before He formed the earth below,
Or spread the heavens above.

Our sorrows and our guilt to bear,
Our judgment to sustain;
He came, upon the tree to die,
That we might life obtain."

—Jas. Stennett.

"Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all"—Gal. 4: 26.

THE heavenly Jerusalem is our mother—that is, our mother city. We are the children of grace and we belong by new creation to heaven. Our citizenship is there (Phil. 3: 20; note, for *conversation* read *citizenship*, the true rendering), and we are called to behave ourselves now as those who belong to that new and glorious scene. When we walk as men of this world, and forget our new citizenship, we dishonor the One who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

"Jerusalem! thou glorious city-height,
 Oh, might I enter in!
 My spirit wearieth for thy love and light,
 Amidst this world of sin—
 Far over the dark mountains,
 The moorlands cold and grey,
 She looketh with sad longing,
 And fain would flee away.

O City beautiful! Thy light appears—
 The gates by grace set wide—
 The Home for which through long, long exile years,
 My weary spirit sighed—
 The false and empty shadows,
 The life of sin, are past—
 God gives me mine inheritance,
 The land of life at last.

Zion's God is all our own,
 Who on His love rely;
 We His pardoning love have known,
 And live to Christ, and die:
 To the new Jerusalem
 He our faithful Guide shall be:
 Him we claim, and rest in Him,
 Through all eternity."

—Charles Wesley.

SEPTEMBER 14

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another"

—Gal. 5: 24-26.

WHEN the will is yielded to God, so that we no longer seek to obey the desires of the flesh, but find our joy in doing His will, as revealed in the Word, life takes on a wholly different character to what we ever experienced before. The surrendered believer leaves the Holy Spirit free to do that work which is His constant delight, so occupying one with Christ Himself, "who is our life" (Col. 3: 4), that the life also of Jesus becomes manifested "in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4:11). This is life at its best, whether one designates it as the victorious life, the overcoming life, the higher life, or by any other term. It is the life of Christ working in those who are yielded in Him, thus lifting the believer above earthly principles, worldly ways, and carnal activities. But we need to remember: we are not to be occupied with ourselves and our experiences if we are to know the blessedness of this, but with Christ Himself, and so we shall become increasingly like Him (2 Cor. 3:18).

"Grant my mind and my affections
Wisdom, counsel, purity,
That I may be ever seeking
Naught but that which pleases Thee
Let Thy knowledge spread and grow,
Working error's overthrow.

Holy Spirit, strong and mighty,
Thou who makest all things new,
Make Thy work within me perfect,
Help me by Thy Word so true;
Arm me with that sword of Thine,
And the victory shall be mine.

In the faith, oh, make me steadfast;
Let not Satan, death, or shame
Of my confidence deprive me;
Lord, my refuge is Thy Name.
When the flesh inclines to ill,
Let Thy Word prove stronger still."

—Heinrich Held, Trans.

SEPTEMBER 15

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus"—Eph. 2: 4-7.

THE Ephesian believers were like all others who are saved by grace. In their natural state they were away from God and dead to spiritual realities. Awakened and led to trust in Christ, they became members of His Body and were sealed by the Holy Spirit. Unable to save themselves by good works, they were now called to walk in good works as an evidence of the reality of the new life God had given to them. Grace does not do away with responsibility, but puts it in its right place.

God sees all believers as linked with Christ in His resurrection and now associated with Him in His glory. It is representation here. We are seated *in* Him. Some day we shall be seated *with* Him. "Heavenly places" is the Canaan of the new dispensation—our inheritance in Christ.

"Glory unto Him who died—
Who for us was crucified—
Came in rich, abounding grace—
Took the guilty sinner's place.

Glory unto Him who lives—
Him who life eternal gives—
Quickened from the silent grave,
He is mighty now to save.

Glory unto Him on high,
By whose blood we are made nigh;
Seated in Him is our place—
Trophies of His matchless grace."

—G. W. Frazer.

SEPTEMBER 16

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God"—Eph. 3: 17-19.

TO know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." This seems paradoxical. How can one know that which is beyond knowledge? Just as a babe knows its mother's love, but cannot understand the reason for that maternal affection, so we know we are the objects of the love of Christ, but we cannot fathom His reasons for so loving us. As we ponder and appropriate these precious things, we are filled—not exactly "with"—but into "all the fulness of God," just as a basin might be placed on the sand as the tide comes in. It would soon be filled into all the fulness of the ocean, even though its capacity was but small.

"God loveth thee—then be content;
Whate'er thou hast, His love hath sent;
Come pain or pleasure, good or ill,
His love is round about thee still.
Then murmur not, nor anxious be,
Rest thou in peace, God loveth thee!

God loveth thee. Though dark the night,
His smile shall make thy pathway bright,
When weary ways before thee lie,
The Lord, thy helper, draweth nigh.
Press bravely on, the end to see:
Be not dismayed, God loveth thee."

SEPTEMBER 17

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all"—Eph. 4: 4-6.

THE Church of God is defined as "the fellowship of His Son" in 1 Cor. 1: 9. This Church is composed only of those who have personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They alone constitute "the Church, which is His Body" (Eph. 1: 22, 23). This Body was formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12, 13). It is therefore the communion, or fellowship, of the Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14). It is He who unites believers and gives them to enjoy the precious things of Christ. It is therefore incumbent on us, as Christians, to endeavor to keep (which implies, to manifest) "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4: 3). This unity is sevenfold, as indicated in the verses quoted above. It is not a sectarian unity, nor a question of loyalty to some one particular denomination. It is the recognition of all Christians everywhere as members of Christ and hence of one another.

**"Jesus, united by Thy grace
And each to each endeared,
With confidence we seek Thy face,
And know our prayer is heard.**

**Still let us own our common Lord,
And bear Thine easy yoke,
A band of love, a threefold cord,
Which never can be broke.**

**To Thee, inseparably joined,
Let all our spirits cleave;
Oh, may we all the loving mind
That was in Thee receive.**

**This is the bond of perfectness,
Thy spotless charity;
Oh, let us, still we pray, possess
The mind that was in Thee."**

—Charles Wesley.

SEPTEMBER 18

"Be filled with the Spirit"—Eph. 5: 1c

THE Holy Spirit, a divine Person, has been sent to earth by the Father and Son (John 14:16; 15:26) to guide the Church through this present scene. All believers are born of the Spirit and baptized by Him into Christ's Body. He indwells them individually and is the One who reveals the truth, makes Christ precious, and enables them to triumph daily over all the power of the enemy. All believers have the Holy Spirit thus dwelling in them, but it is another thing to be filled with the Spirit. He wants to have complete control of the life, that every thought may be conformed to the obedience of Christ. As we yield ourselves unto God in true surrender, and reckon ourselves dead to sin in the death of Christ, the Holy Spirit becomes the power for holiness and guards us from the evil that is in the world.

"Our blest Redeemer, ere He breathed
His tender last farewell,
A Guide, a Comforter bequeathed,
With us to dwell.

And His that gentle voice we hear,
Soft as the breath of even,
That checks each fault, that calms each fear,
And speaks of heaven.

And every virtue we possess,
And every conquest won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are His alone.

Spirit of purity and grace,
Our weakness, pitying, see;
Oh, make our hearts Thy dwelling-place,
And worthier Thee!"

—Harriet Auber.

SEPTEMBER 19

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"—Eph. 6: 12.

OUR conflict in this age of grace is not, as Israel's was in the past, with adversaries of flesh and blood. We do not draw the sword to destroy the opponents of our Lord and His gospel. But we fight with the sword of the Spirit against spiritual powers of evil—the unholy forces that would, if they could, nullify our testimony by leading us into things that bring dishonor upon the name of Him whose we are and whom we serve (Acts 27: 23).

**"Lo, the day of God is breaking;
See the gleaming from afar!
Sons of earth from slumber waking,
Hail the Bright and Morning Star.**

**Trust in Him who is your Captain;
Let no heart in terror quail;
Jesus leads the gath'ring legions,
In His name we shall prevail.**

**Onward marching, firm and steady,
Faint not, fear not Satan's frown,
For the Lord is with you always,
Till you wear the victor's crown."**

—Wm. F. Sherwin.

SEPTEMBER 20

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit"—Eph. 6: 18.

THE Holy Spirit is the power for prayer. We can only pray in the Spirit as we walk in the Spirit. This explains why the prayer-life is, with many, so unsatisfactory, and answers to prayer are so seldom known. When the Spirit of God is grieved by our self-will or disobedience, there will be no liberty in prayer. When we present our bodies unto God as living sacrifices, determined that He shall have His way in all things, we will find the Spirit free to enlarge our hearts, illumine our minds, and lead out our thoughts in prayer in a way previously unknown.

"Until I learned to trust,
I never learned to pray,
And I did not learn to fully trust
Till sorrows came my way.
Until I felt my weakness,
His strength I never knew;
Nor dreamed till I was stricken,
That He could see me through.
Who deepest drinks of sorrow
Drinks deepest too of grace;
He sends the storm so He Himself
Can be our hiding-place.
His heart, that seeks our highest good,
Knows well when things annoy;
We would not long for Heaven,
If earth held only joy."

—Barbara Cornet Ryberg.

SEPTEMBER 21

"We . . . worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh"

—Phil 3: 3.

THE Holy Spirit delights to occupy our hearts and minds with Christ. It is as we are taken up with Him that we bow before God in adoration and thanksgiving for what He is as revealed in Jesus Christ and in His Fatherly care. This is worship in the highest sense. It is a great and holy spiritual frame, far above forms and ceremonies, whether found in the Old Testament Scriptures or invented by men in the Christian era. In fact, such carnal rites are rather hindrances than helps, for they tend to occupy us with things seen and heard, rather than with the Lord Himself.

**"To Thee, O God, our hearts we raise,
In solemn songs of thankful praise
Thee as our God and Father own,
And bow our souls before Thy throne:
While here below we seek to sound
Thy praise to earth's remotest bound.**

**Worship and praise we render Thee,
Father of endless majesty;
Thy true and only Son adore,
One with Thyself in bliss and power;
And God the Holy Ghost declare
The saints' eternal Comforter."**

—Mary Bowley.

"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ"—Phil. 3: 7.

EVERY conversion is a miracle. It is God who produces this inward change through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, who effects it by the Word of Truth. But all conversions are not accompanied by outward signs. To most, "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (Luke 17: 20). However, Paul's conversion is definitely typical, involving a sense of sin, and a recognition of Christ Jesus as the only Saviour. When the soul is committed to Him, one is saved. This calls for recognition of His authority over the life, and a readiness to be directed by Him as the risen Lord. From the moment Saul's heart was won for that Jesus whose followers he had persecuted and whom he had looked upon as an impostor, his one great yearning desire was to know Him better and to glorify Him in all things. This should be characteristic of those who have yielded their hearts to Him.

"Wherever Jesus leads me I will go,
Not only to the mountain-top aglow
With radiant morn and ling'ring light at eve,
But to descents that wind through a ravine,
Where faith must venture on a path unseen
And trust His faithful guidance, and believe.

Though siren voices plead the joys of youth
And seek to lure me from the path of truth,
On pleasure's primrose way awhile to roam,
I know full well where my Forerunner leads
And, with His grace supplying all my needs,
I'll follow Him until He calls me Home."

—W. M. Czamanske.

SEPTEMBER 23

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God"—Phil. 4: 6.

WE would receive more from God if we were more grateful for what He has bestowed upon us already. Everything we have is the expression of His Fatherly care and the evidence of His love. Therefore we are exhorted to give thanks always for all things (Eph. 5: 20), knowing that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8: 28). And as we recognize His faithfulness in the past, we can pray with confidence, counting upon His loving care for the present and the future. If we fail to avail ourselves of the high privilege of bringing our petitions to Him in faith, we both wrong our own souls and dishonor His holy name, who bids us thus to ask and receive according to His royal bounty.

Some go to God in prayer
As though they would be heard
By merit of their earnestness,
Or power of their word;
As though God did not want to bless,
Or to their crying heed,
But might be influenced to hear
If they could prove their need.

Some go to God in prayer
With broken, bleeding hearts,
Craving the peace and victory
Which He alone imparts.
They lay their burdens down
On shoulders that are strong,
Then take them back upon their own
And carry them along.

Some humbly talk to God;
Confess their helplessness,
And having laid their burdens down
Trust Him to do the rest.
Such go away in peace,
And with the victor's shout,
To watch with interest, and see
How He will work things out."

—Barbara C. Ryberg.

SEPTEMBER 24

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content"—Phil. 4: 11.

THIS is the language of one who knew God as a loving and wise Father who ever has in mind the best interests of His children—those who have been born into the family of the redeemed through faith in that gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe. Since God has given His Son for our salvation, how can we doubt His goodness and so fret against circumstances which He has ordained for our blessing. We are to give thanks always for all things, knowing that all things work together for the good of those who love God.

"Lesson only God can teach,—
Hast thou learned it, O my soul?
Rebel hearts can never reach
Such a prize and such a goal;
Blessed staff to pilgrims lent—
'I have learned . . . to be content.'"

Humble souls, herein is rest:
Tread the path the worthies trod;
Learn of Christ this lesson blest—
Acceptance of the will of God—
By the Holy Spirit sent,
'I have learned . . . to be content'."

—K. Cameron Ward.

"Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit"
—Col. 1: 8.

WHEN the Holy Spirit is given His rightful place in the heart, He will lead us into the life of abundant blessing. The happiest people on earth are those who are subject to the will of God and are occupied with Christ and not with self. For these there will be countless opportunities to manifest the grace of God toward those whom they contact from day to day. And as they serve, they will find richer enjoyment than the worldling can ever find in his life of selfishness.

**"That cup of Thy love and gladness
 Has cheered us along the road,
 Through ages of sin and of sadness
 Partaking the joys of God—
 Through Thy Spirit sent down from heaven
 Thy Christ to our hearts is dear;
 The Spirit who tells of His sweetness
 Is with us here.**

**Thus false though our hearts and faithless
 We love Him with love divine—
 With a love that is true and scatheless,
 For it is not ours, but Thine.
 Thy love from our hearts outflowing,
 Its source in the heavens above,
 That love of Thine own bestowing,
 Eternal love."**

—T. P.

SEPTEMBER 26

"God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery . . . which is Christ in you, the hope of glory"—Col 1:27.

PAUL speaks of a sacred secret, the mystery of Christ and the Church, which was revealed to him that he might make it known to others. It is the precious truth that every believer is a member through the Spirit's indwelling of that one Body, of which the risen, ascended Lord is the Head. And just as the same life that is the head of our mortal bodies is in every part of our physical being, so Christ is in each of His members, and He Himself is the basis of all their confidence, the hope of glory and assurance of everlasting felicity. He too is the strength of our souls, come to live out His own life in us as we walk in fellowship with Him.

"Once far from God and dead in sin,
No light my heart could see;
But in God's Word the light I found,
Now Christ liveth in me.

With longing all my heart is filled,
That like Him I may be,
As on the wondrous thought I dwell,
That Christ liveth in me."

—Maj. D. W. Whittle.

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ"—Col. 2: 16, 17.

IN every dispensation many have been found who, misunderstanding God's reasons for giving to His people visible ordinances designed to picture different aspects of His redemptive grace and His purpose for His saints, have exalted these outward signs to such a place as to make salvation depend upon their observance, thus nullifying the truth of justification by faith alone. This is always true of ritualists, to whom sacramental observances mean more than the truths they illustrate. But the most punctilious attention to rites and ceremonies and the keeping of holy days can never produce the new birth or clear the soul from the guilt of sin. When our Lord was on earth, His chief conflicts were with those who hoped by dead works to purchase that which God offered to give freely to all who came to Him in faith.

"'All of grace'—from base to summit,
Grace on every course and stone
Grace in planning, rearing, crowning,
Sovereign grace, and grace alone!

'All of grace'—for useless strivings
Perfect pardon's sweet content!
Life and light for death and darkness!
'All of grace,' omnipotent.

'Grace for grace,' and 'grace sufficient,'
'Grace abounding,' 'Grace that reigns,'
Grace the guarantee of glory!
Grace, grace! grace! How sweet the strains!"

—Thos. Spurgeon.

SEPTEMBER 28

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him"

—Col. 3: 16, 17.

THE Word and the Spirit. The same effects are here seen to result from a heart filled with the Word of God, as when one is said to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-20). It is a well-known axiom that "things equal to the same thing are equal to one another." Clearly, then, to be controlled by the Word of Christ and to be filled with the Spirit are one and the same. Or, to put it another way, the Spirit-filled believer is the Word-controlled believer. We are filled with the Spirit only as we walk in obedience to the revealed will of God, set forth in the Holy Scriptures.

"For all that God in mercy sends;
For health and children, home and friends,
For comfort in the time of need,
For every kindly word and deed,
For happy thoughts and holy talk,
For guidance in our daily walk,
For everything give thanks!"

SEPTEMBER 29

"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; . . . fearing God: . . . Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven"—Col. 3: 22; 4: 1.

WHERE the gospel is believed and the Christian program actually accepted, employers become considerate of those who work for them, and employees give conscientious and adequate service in return for wages received. The Bible, and particularly the New Testament, ever recognizes the relationship of what we call Capital and Labor, and never hints at the necessity of overthrowing this order, but rather regulates it according to the law of love and principles of righteousness. If men are rich, they are to hold their wealth as subject to God Himself and to use it for His glory and the relief of those in distress (1 Tim. 6:17-19). If men are dependent on their own toil for daily bread, they are to be honest and faithful in meeting their obligations (Col. 3: 22-25).

"Oh, to be nothing, nothing,
Only to lie at His feet,
A broken and emptied vessel,
For the Master's use made meet.
Emptied that He might fill me
As forth to His service I go;
Broken, that so unhindered,
His life through me might flow.

Oh, to be nothing, nothing,
Only as led by His hand;
A messenger at His gateway,
Only waiting for His command,
Only an instrument ready
His praises to sound at His will,
Willing, should He not require me,
In silence to wait on Him still."

—Georgiana M. Taylor.

SEPTEMBER 30

"Our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts"

—1 Thess. 2: 3, 4.

CONSCIOUS of their own integrity, the early messengers of Christ declared the message in the fear of the Lord, with no corrupt motives, nor selfish desire simply to create a following which would prove profitable to them. Paul emphasizes the importance of reality as to one's own life before God, if his service is to have any weight with men. To how many professed ministers of Christ might Emerson's stinging words apply: "What you are speaks so loud I cannot hear what you say"! They who would preach Christ must needs be careful to manifest Christ in their ways; else what they are will belie their message.

"How blest is life if lived for Thee,
My loving Saviour and my Lord:
No pleasures that the world can give
Such perfect gladness can afford.

To know I am Thy ransomed child,
Bought by Thine own most precious blood,
And from Thy loving hand to take
With grateful heart each gift of good;

All day to walk beneath Thy smile,
Watching Thine eye to guide me still,
To rest at night beneath Thy care,
Guarded by Thee from every ill."

—Anon.

OCTOBER 1

"Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation"—1 Thess. 5: 8.

UNLESS we distinguish carefully between salvation by pure grace and service, or discipleship, for which a sure reward is promised, we are likely to become confused when considering such a passage as this. We are not called to fight our way to heaven. But as already bound for that blessed country, we are called to be soldiers in our Lord's army, contending against every unholy thing that would impede our progress or bring dishonor upon our Saviour's name. For all such service we shall be rewarded "in that day," that is, when we stand at the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10).

"The fight is on, O Christian soldier,
And face to face in stern array,
With armor gleaming, and colors streaming,
The right and wrong engage today!
The fight is on, but be not weary;
Be strong, and in His might hold fast;
If God be for us, His banner o'er us,
We'll sing the victor's song at last!"

—Mrs. C. H. Morris.

OCTOBER 2

"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you"—1 Thess. 5: 16-18.

WE are told that whoso offereth praise glorifies God (Ps. 50: 23). One of the marks of the wicked is unthankfulness (2 Tim. 3: 2). Ingratitude is a sin and reveals the state of a heart estranged from God. In prayer we are invited to come to Him, presenting our petitions, but even as we make our requests known, we are to give thanks for mercies already received (Phil. 4: 6). This is emphasized in the above text, which shows that unceasing prayer and constant thanksgiving should ever be characteristic of the believer. In this, as in all else, our blessed Lord sets us an example. When things were moving on to the darkest hours for Him, He could look up to God, His Father, and say, "I thank Thee" (Matt. 11: 25), as He submitted Himself in prayer to the will of God in all things.

"Why shouldest thou not rejoice, my soul,
Loved as thou art with changeless love?
For Christ hath borne thy sins—the whole—
And, on His Father's throne above,
Lives everlastingly,
And intercedes for thee.

Well-pleased is He—our gracious God—
With all the work that He hath done,
And spared not He to lay the rod
Upon His well-beloved Son!
And all that agony
For thee it was—for thee!

What is there then to make thee sad
Except thy sin that caused His grief?
How much there is to make thee glad!
Within thine earthly span so brief,
How canst thou ever sound
The fulness in Him found?

"Rejoice, again I say, Rejoice"
In Him, thy living, loving Lord;
His joy be thine, His will thy choice,
Himself thy Shield, thy great Reward.
That One thine eyes shall see
Who soon will come for thee!"

OCTOBER 3

"For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness"—2 Thess. 2: 11, 12.

WHEN light is refused darkness ensues and God Himself gives men up to the errors which they choose in place of His truth.

It is a very solemn and serious thing to trifle with revealed truth. Pharaoh refused to hear the voice of God and was given up to hardness of heart. We read of some who, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, shall be given over to strong delusion that they all might be judged who obeyed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Judgment does not produce repentance. When men are seen suffering from the results of their own waywardness we read, "They gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." It is the goodness of God as seen in the cross of Christ that leads to repentance.

**"Hear the just law; the judgment of the skies,
He who hates truth shall be the dupe of lies;
And he who will be cheated till the last
Delusions strong as hell shall bind him fast."**

—William Cowper.

"Even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread"—2 Thess. 3: 10-12.

EVIDENTLY there were those in the Thessalonian church who were obsessed with the idea that, since the Lord's return is ever imminent, it was useless to work for daily sustenance. They preferred to be supported by their brethren who were in better circumstances than themselves. Such demonstrated the truth of the saying, "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." Living careless, idle lives, they became thoughtless in speech and were troublemakers as they went from one home to another expressing themselves with undue freedom.

God has ordained that man should live by labor (Gen. 3:19). To attempt to go through this world as a parasite, subsisting on that which others have earned, is to bring dishonor upon the name of the Christ whom they profess to serve.

"This is the gospel of labor; ring it, ye bells
of the kirk,—
The Lord of Love comes down from above
to live with the men who work;
This is the rose that He planted, here in
the thorn-cursed soil—
Heaven is blessed with perfect rest, but
the blessing of earth is toil."

—Henry Van Dyke.

OCTOBER 5

"Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck"—1 Tim. 1: 19.

THE faith which we are here commanded to hold is not merely confidence in God but rather that faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. In other words, it is the form of doctrine which has been committed to us. This faith and a good conscience are intimately linked together. He who becomes careless as to his behavior and puts away a good conscience will soon become recreant concerning the faith. We hold the truth only as we walk in subjection to that truth; if we trifle with it we lose it. We can hold the mystery of the faith only as we maintain a pure conscience (3: 9).

"My soul, be on thy guard,
Ten thousand foes arise;
And hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the skies.

Oh, watch, and fight, and pray!
The battle ne'er give o'er;
Renew it boldly every day,
And help divine implore.

Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor once at ease sit down;
Thy arduous work will not be done,
Till thou obtain thy crown."

—Heath.

OCTOBER 6

"For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come"—1 Tim. 4: 8.

WE all know something of the value of physical exercise. If we would keep our bodies in health we must avoid sloth and lack of energy. The same principle applies to spirituality. As we exercise ourselves unto godliness by study of the Word, by prayer and by witnessing for Christ, we grow in grace and advance in knowledge. We value physical strength which, after all, is but for a time; how much greater value should we put upon godliness, which is profitable both for time and for eternity.

**"O Lord, Thy heavenly grace impart,
And fix my frail, inconstant heart;
Henceforth my chief desire shall be
To dedicate myself to Thee.**

**Whate'er pursuits my time employ,
One thought shall fill my soul with joy:
That silent, secret thought shall be,
That all my hopes are fixed on Thee.**

**Thy glorious eye pervadeth space;
Thy presence, Lord, fills every place;
And wheresoe'er my lot may be,
Still shall my spirit cleave to Thee.**

**Renouncing every worldly thing,
And safe beneath Thy spreading wing,
My sweetest thought henceforth shall be
That all I want I find in Thee."**

—Jean F. Oberlin.

OCTOBER 7

"Which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords"—1 Tim. 6: 15.

THE Lord Jesus is to be made known in the fulness of times as the blessed and only Potentate. The word rendered *blessed* might just as well have been rendered *happy*. Earth has known few happy potentates, but when Jesus reigns He will be manifested in that character, because with Him is omnipotent authority. Moreover, He will then be the only Potentate, for all other rulers will bow before Him and acknowledge Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. Happy are they who in this day of His rejection by the world, recognize in Him earth's rightful King and yield Him loyal obedience as the Lord of their lives.

"Thou art coming, O my Saviour,
Thou art coming! O my King,
Ev'ry tongue Thy name confessing,
Well may we rejoice and sing;
Thou art coming! rays of glory,
Thro' the veil Thy death has rent,
Gladden now our pilgrim pathway,
Glory from Thy presence sent.

Thou art coming, not a shadow,
Not a mist and not a tear,
Not a sin and not a sorrow,
On that sunrise grand and clear!
Thou art coming! Jesus, Saviour,
Nothing else seems worth a thought,
Oh, how marvelous the glory,
And the bliss Thy pain hath bought!

—Frances R. Havergal.

OCTOBER 8

"Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also"

—2 Tim. 1: 4, 5.

THE home in which Timothy grew up was not actually Christian, as the gospel did not come to his mother and grandmother until after he was well-grown, and his father is not said to have been even a proselyte to Judaism. But it was a pious, Jewish home, nevertheless, where the sacred Scriptures were read and loved, and so the heart of the lad was ready for the message of the grace of God in Christ, when Paul and Barnabas came to Lystra and Derbe. Timothy's early training bore rich fruit in future years, and led to his becoming an earnest servant of the Lord Jesus after he was converted through Paul's ministry.

"O happy home whose little ones are given
Early to Thee, in humble faith and prayer,
To Thee, their Friend, who from the heights of heaven
Guides them, and guards with more than mother's care!

O happy home where each one serves Thee, lowly,
Whatever his appointed work may be,
Till every common task seems great and holy,
When it is done, O Lord, as unto Thee!"

—Carl Johann Philipp Spitta.

OCTOBER 9

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier"

—2 Tim. 2: 1-4.

THE believer is not only a child of God, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18, 19), but he is called to do valiant soldier-service, contending earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). This figure is frequently used in the Epistles. Note specially 2 Cor. 10: 3-5; Eph. 6:10-18; 1 Thess. 5: 8, as well as our present text. The Christian life is a constant warfare. We have three subtle and cruel enemies ever arrayed against us—the world, the flesh, and the Devil—and against all these we are called to make a resolute stand. We do not fight in our own strength but as we are empowered by Him whose soldiers we are.

**"He giveth more grace as the shadows grow deeper;
His love seems more tender as trials increase;
Each day as I trust Him I find He is able
To keep me secure in His infinite peace.**

**Oh, marvelous grace of my wonderful Saviour!
No measure can tell me how wide or how deep;
But in every trial and heartache and sorrow,
I know He has kept me; I know He will keep."**

—Lillian M. Weeks.

OCTOBER 10

"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil-doer, even unto bonds; but the Word of God is not bound"—2 Tim. 2: 8, 9.

REMEMBER . . . *Jesus Christ.*" It is really a battle-cry—as of late we hear often the slogan "Remember Bataan." The word "that" is omitted from the Revised Version. When pressed by the foe, even to the point where one despairs of life, let us remember Him who could not be overcome of death, but arose in triumph from the grave. It is He who beckons us on to ultimate victory. His promises never fail of fulfilment. So Paul could say, in his distress, "*I suffer . . . even unto bonds . . . but the Word of God is not bound.*" Shut up in prison, it might appear as though the Apostle were defeated, but the Word he had proclaimed was bearing fruit still. That Word could not be fettered or destroyed.

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave, and follow Thee;
Though I be despis'd, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shalt be,
Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought or hoped or known;
Yet how rich is my condition—
God and Heaven are still my own."

—H. F. Lyte.

"Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"

—2 Tim. 3: 14, 15.

TIMOTHY had been instructed carefully by his godly Jewish mother and grandmother (1:5). So when he heard the gospel he was ready to receive it in all simplicity. Paul exhorts him to continuance in the study of and obedience to the sacred writings of the Old Testament, which had been the means of preparing his heart for the gospel message.

It is a great thing thus to learn the Word of God in the family circle. Timothy's mother had given heed to the commandments regarding this, as in Deut. 6. Teaching a child the truth of Scripture is like placing kindling and fuel in order. Then when a match is struck, it bursts into a flame. So Timothy's heart and mind had been stored with the Word. Paul's preaching brought definite conviction and decision, and so Timothy was made "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

**"If Thy Word be true no longer,
As its critics boldly claim,
All our faith would be unfounded
And our hope be put to shame.**

**But, though all the world should crumble,
And all earthly things decay,
Thy Word shall endure forever
And shall never pass away."**

—W. M. Czamanske.

OCTOBER 12

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"

—Titus 3: 5.

GOD'S sovereignty enables Him to deal in grace with erring mortals, apart altogether from any ability on their part to earn or deserve His loving favor. But our poor, legal hearts respond very feebly to His goodness and loving-kindness. It is difficult for us to abide in a sense of grace. We would far rather try to put God in our debt (Rom. 4: 4) than take Him at His word and receive His gifts in simple faith. When we do come to Him in faith we are regenerated and God the Spirit takes His abode in us.

"Lord, we are Thine: bought by Thy blood.
Once the poor guilty slaves of sin,
But Thou redeemedst us to God,
And mad'st Thy Spirit dwell within;
Thou hast our sinful wand'rings borne
With love and patience all divine;
As brands, then, from the burning torn,
We own that we are wholly Thine."

—J. G. Deck.

OCTOBER 13

"Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me"—Philemon 9-11.

IT has been well said that the letter from Paul to his friend Philemon is the finest specimen of early, personal, Christian correspondence extant. It was written to commend a returning, runaway, thieving slave to his master, and with characteristic generosity and a deep sense of the importance of maintaining a standard of righteousness, Paul offers to be surety for this man, Onesimus, and agrees to meet every responsibility as to his past evil-doing. He knew that the life of Onesimus had been changed completely by divine grace, and so he unhesitatingly requested Philemon to receive him, no longer as a slave, but as a brother in Christ.

Luther said, "We are all God's Onesimi." For in this incident we have a striking picture of our lost condition by nature and practice, and of the activities of divine grace on our behalf. The letter sets forth most beautifully the great truths of forgiveness, on the ground of the expiatory work of Another, and acceptance in the Beloved.

"Once I stood of sin convicted,
Waiting thus the sinner's doom,
Judgment was on Christ inflicted,
God has raised Him from the tomb.

Now I see in Christ's acceptance,
But the measure of my own;
He who lay beneath my sentence,
Seated high upon the throne."

"But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows"—Heb. 1: 8, 9.

IT is the Father who is addressing the Son and owns Him as eternally One with Himself in reigning over the universe. Here, as elsewhere in Scripture, we hear one Person of the Holy Trinity addressing another—yet both alike over all blessed forever. The quotation is from Psalm 45: 6. In the seventh verse of the same Psalm, it is His Manhood that is in view. He who is God became Man without ceasing to be God, and as Man He has companions. But He must ever be supreme; His the special anointing that marks Him out as the sinless Christ (anointed) of God.

"Glory be to God on high,
And peace on earth descend:
God comes down, He bows the sky,
And shows Himself our Friend:
God the invisible appears:
God, the blest, the great I AM,
Sojourns in this vale of tears,
And Jesus in His name.

We, the sons of men, rejoice,
The Prince of Peace proclaim;
With heaven's host lift up our voice,
And shout Immanuel's name:
Knees and hearts to Him we bow;
Of our flesh and of our bone,
Jesus is our Saviour now,
And God is all our own."

—Charles Wesley.

OCTOBER 15

"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities"—Heb. 4: 15.

THERE has never appeared on earth another who so thoroughly entered into all human distresses and understood all the perplexities that trouble the minds of men, as the Lord Jesus Christ. None else could fathom the depths of human hearts as He, who was God and Man in one blessed, adorable Person. He did not need to study men. He knew them intuitively. He knew their thoughts and anticipated all their problems. And so today He remains the one unchanging Christ, who can minister to men in every circumstance. He binds up broken hearts, heals sin-sick souls, and meets every demand of the most exacting searcher after ultimate truth. He is Himself "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Men speak sometimes of "the problem of Jesus." He is not a problem. He is the solution to every problem.

"What can it mean? Is it aught to Him
That the days are long, and the nights are dim?
Can He be touched by the griefs I bear,
Which sadden the heart and whiten the hair?
About His throne are eternal calms,
And strong glad music of happy psalms,
And bliss unruffled by any strife—
How can HE care for my little life?

And yet, I want Him to care for me,
While I live in this world where sorrows be.
When the lights die down from the path I take;
When strength is feeble and friends forsake;
And love and music which once did bless,
Have left me to silence and loneliness,
Then my life-song changes to sobbing prayers,
And my heart cries out for a GOD WHO CARES."

—Hugh Miller.

"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them"—Heb. 7: 25.

THE work of redemption was finished upon the cross. The ministry of intercession has been carried on ever since our Lord returned to the Father. He bears up before God all His own, even as the high priest of old bore the names of all Israel on his heart (Ex. 28:15-29) and on his shoulders (Ex. 28: 9-12) when he went into the Holy Place to offer the pure incense, which speaks of prayer (Ps. 141: 2). This intercessory work is for the purpose of maintaining and sustaining His people in their testimony for God, as they pass through this adverse scene, in which they are strangers and pilgrims (1 Pet. 2:11). It is precious to realize that He ever prays for even the feeblest of His saints, and enters into all their trials and sorrows as they journey on to the home above.

"Entered the holy place above,
Covered with meritorious scars,
The tokens of His dying love
Our great High-priest in glory bears;
He pleads His passion on the tree,
He shows Himself to God for me.

This instant now I may receive
The answer of His powerful prayer;
This instant now by Him I live,
His prevalence with God declare;
And soon my spirit, in His hands,
Shall stand where my Forerunner stands."

—Charles Wesley

"For this cause He is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance"—Heb. 9: 15.

THE Old Covenant is that of law. It asked of man what he in his unregenerated condition could not give: a perfect obedience to and love for a holy, sin-hating God. The New Covenant is that of grace. It proclaims God's remedy for man's wretched condition and offers life, not as a result of what man may do for God, but because of what God in Christ has done for man. The law said in effect: "Do and live." Grace says: "Live and do." Under the New Testament God offers forgiveness to all who trust in Christ on the basis of the blood of the covenant, that blood which was shed on Calvary. His work avails not only for believers since the cross, but for those of past ages as well. To each believer is given a new nature. The law is written upon the heart. As a result it becomes a joy and delight to the renewed soul to walk in obedience to God, and so "the righteousness of the law" is "fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8: 4).

"Our great High-Priest is sitting
At God's right hand above,
For us His hands uplifting,
In sympathy and love:
Whilst here below, in weakness,
We onward speed our way;
In sorrow oft and sickness,
We sigh and groan and pray.

Through manifold temptation,
My soul holds on her course,
Christ's mighty intercession
Alone is her resource;
My gracious High-Priest's pleadings,
Who on the cross did bleed,
Bring down God's grace and blessings,
Help in each hour of need."

—A. P. Cecil.

OCTOBER 18

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries"—Heb. 10: 26, 27.

JUDGMENT is God's strange work. He delights in mercy. The cross is the supreme testimony of His grace and tells out as nothing else could His love for and interest in a lost world.

The preaching of the gospel is the appointed method of making known the heart of God to those who are arrayed in rebellion against Him. He calls upon all men everywhere to repent because He is not willing that any should perish. But if sinners persist in refusing His grace, if they continue to spurn His offer of mercy, then there is nothing left for them but judgment, a certain fearful-looking-for of His wrath which is to devour the adversaries.

God will never have to apologize to any man for dealing thus with him if he has refused to believe the gospel. All His ways, whether of grace or of judgment are perfect, and in all His dealings with mankind He will be glorified at last.

"God's house is filling fast,
'Yet there is room!'
Some guest will be the last,
'Yet there is room!'
Yes! soon salvation's day
To you will pass away,
Then Grace no more will say—
'Yet there is room!'"

—G. W. Frazer.

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac. . . accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead"—Heb. 11: 17, 19.

GOD ever finds delight in the manifestation of implicit faith on the part of His children. It was this that was so precious in the character of Abraham. Although it took him some little time to venture out fully on the word of God, and there were occasional lapses afterward when he acted according to nature rather than in obedience to God, yet the trend of his life was that of confidence in God and obedience to His Word, even when that Word seemed to be contrary to all human experience and natural affection. In all this he becomes an example to us, bidding us receive the Word in all simplicity and act upon it in faith, however strange and difficult it may seem in the eyes of those who have never known the Lord for themselves.

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise claims,
And looks to God alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, It shall be done!"

"The time would fail me to tell of Gideon"

—Heb. 11: 32.

THE outstanding lesson of Gideon's life is that of the importance of individual faithfulness. In a day of sad declension and of insubjection to God on the part of the chosen people, Gideon stands out as one who dared to believe God and to act upon His Word. He always honors individual devotedness, no matter how dark the day and how far the public or collective testimony may have deteriorated. So today, God is looking for and using men who dare to go against the general trend of the times, who put faithfulness to His testimony above self-interest, and consequently are willing and ready to risk everything in obedience to the Word. Such can be sure that He who calls and equips them for His service will never let them down. One man with God is a host in the conflict with the embattled forces of evil.

"Show me the way, O Lord,
And make it plain;
I would obey Thy Word,
Speak yet again;
I would not take one step until I know
Which way it is that Thou wouldst have me go.

O Lord, I cannot see!
Vouchsafe me light!
The mist bewilders me,
Impedes my sight:
Hold Thou my hand, and lead me by Thy side;
I dare not go alone: be Thou my Guide."

—Jane Euphemia Saxby.

OCTOBER 21

"Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: (of whom the world was not worthy)"—Heb. 11: 36, 38.

OF God's devoted martyrs, or witnesses to the power of faith to enable one to endure as seeing Him who is invisible, the Holy Spirit has declared that they are numbered among those "of whom the world was not worthy."

What a testimony of faithfulness unto death the annals of the people of God in all ages have recorded. From Abel unto the last who will ever be slain because of devotion to the Lord and His truth, it has been one long story of the power of Satan and his world arrayed against the authority of God and His saints. Evil has seemed often to be triumphant for the moment, but when the final conflict has been fought and the results are disclosed in their completeness, it will be seen that not one saint has died in vain. All will be rewarded in that day, and will reign with Christ when the prince of this world and all his minions shall come under the righteous judgment of God. They always win who side with Him.

**"Who suffer with Thee, Lord, below
Shall reign with Thee above;
Then let it be our joy to know
This way of peace and love."**

—T. Kelly.

OCTOBER 22

"Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven"—Heb. 12: 26.

ARE we so walking with God that we can go on in trustful confidence even though we know this world and its Christless religion will soon pass away? Everything that men generally look upon as stable and secure is destined to be shaken to pieces and utterly destroyed. He whose hopes are centered only in earthly things is destined to a terrible awakening when he shall behold all for which he has lived and labored, slipping from his grasp, and he himself going down with it unto eternal ruin. But he who knows Christ and sets his affection on things above will have that which will abide "in the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds." The believing heart is fixed upon God Himself and upon those things which cannot be shaken but shall abide forever.

How short-sighted is the man who in his eagerness to accumulate wealth puts all his money in bags that have holes, and builds his house upon the shifting sands of time! He only is wise whose treasure is in heaven and who builds upon Christ the Rock of Ages.

**"While created things are wasting,
Still our God abides the same;
All His words are everlasting,
All His works His love proclaim.
Blood-bought children,
Sing we praises to His name!"**

"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves"—James 1: 21, 22.

THE Epistle of James occupies a unique place in the New Testament. It is addressed specifically to the twelve tribes of Israel. Thus it is God's last message in this age to Israel as such. But this does not mean that it is not for all the children of God. It abounds in practical truth which rises above all dispensational distinctions. Closely allied in substance to the teaching of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, which was primarily addressed to the disciples as waiting for the setting up of the kingdom, it stresses the behavior that should ever characterize those who own Jesus Christ as the anointed Saviour, while waiting for His return.

Not what we have, but what we use;
Not what we see, but what we choose—
These are the things that mar or bless
The sum of human happiness.

The things near by, not things afar;
Not what we seem, but what we are—
These are the things that make or break,
That give the heart its joy or ache.

Not what seems fair, but what is true;
Not what we dream, but good we do—
These are the things that shine like gems,
Like stars, in fortune's diadems.

Not as we take, but as we give;
Not as we pray, but as we live—
These are the things that make for peace
Both now and after time shall cease."

OCTOBER 24

**"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture,
Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well"**

—James 2: 8.

IT is a great mistake to confound divine love with mere human sentimentality. Love is only genuine when it makes one willing to sacrifice for the sake of the objects of its affection. The love of God led Him to give His Son—His Only-begotten—for the salvation of a sinful world. The love of Christ led Him to Calvary, there to die in order to redeem us to God. The love of the Spirit moves believers to unselfish devotion to the Lord and sacrificial service on behalf of a lost world. This is the real motive power that keeps Christ's great missionary enterprise going. Constrained by love, men and women gladly exchange the ease and comforts of home life in this favored land, for the hardships and self-denying labors of the mission-field. The same love leads to patient endurance of trial and sorrow and the sharing of the griefs of our brethren here in the homeland.

**"So, dear Saviour, with Thy beauty
And Thy love my life invest!
Cleanse me, Master, fit and use me
In what form Thou seest best—
That through me by grace eternal
Souls shall find Thy joy and rest!"**

—Edith Goreham.

"Ye have not, because ye ask not"—James 4:2.

WHY pray at all? It is often said by some who attempt to be wiser than God's Word, that prayer in the sense of asking of Him is not only unnecessary, but foolish. We are told that prayer changes nothing, and that it is absurd to suppose our asking can in any way affect God's giving. But Scripture shows us that God has chosen to give, in answer to prayer, many things that He will not give apart from prayer, in order that we may have continual evidence that we have to do with a living God and that our souls may be drawn into communion with Himself.

"To talk with God, no breath is lost;
 talk on!
 To walk with God, no strength is lost;
 walk on!
 To toil with God, no time is lost;
 toil on!
 Little is much, if God is in it;
 Man's busiest day not worth God's
 minute.
 Much is little everywhere,
 If God the business does not share.
 So work with God—then nothing's lost;
 Who works with Him, does best and most."

—Old English Verse.

OCTOBER 26

"The prophets . . . prophesied of the grace that should come unto you"—1 Peter 1: 10.

TO the prophets of old it was given to predict that Christ was first to suffer and then to reign, but the time to elapse between these events was not revealed to them. They searched their own Scriptures as they sought to understand this (1 Pet. 1:10-12). It is now that God has shown what would take place in the long interval, namely, the proclamation of the gospel among all nations and the gathering out of the Church, the Body of Christ.

When the angels announced the birth of Jesus, they spoke of peace on earth (Luke 2:14). When the children welcomed Him as He rode into Jerusalem they sang of peace in heaven (Luke 19:38). The change indicates what took place in the interval between these two proclamations. There can be no peace for the earth while the Prince of Peace is rejected.

"Oh, wonder of the love of God,
The which the soul o'erpowers!
This mortal track Thy feet hath trod
To make all heaven ours.
We did not seek Thy grace to find;
We would not heed Thy call:
The unregenerate heart and mind
Fast held us in their thrall,

We knew instinctively our need;
Our helplessness we knew,
And craving for the Life Indeed,
That was our spirit's due:
Yet did Thy gentle patience wait
On our rebellious ways
That made the misery of our state,
The darkness of our days."

—Lewis H. Court.

OCTOBER 27

"For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God"—1 Peter 2:15, 16.

WHILE ever prepared to suffer, if needs be, for his convictions, and expecting to be misunderstood by carnal and worldly-minded men, the Christian is called upon so to behave himself toward all, that his life will witness for him as one desirous of benefiting and blessing the community of which he is a part. Recognizing all men as created in the image of God, though that image has become sadly marred by sin, the obedient believer in Christ will be an example of good will toward all, and will seek to serve in love as occasion permits.

The world has never enjoyed perfect government because of the sinfulness of the human race, but the more closely men obey the revealed will of God, the more truly they will comprehend and enjoy national and international felicity, which rests upon recognition of man's responsibility to God and respect for the blessing of all races and peoples.

**"His lesson art thou learning,
O tired and weary soul?
His ways art thou discerning,
Who works to make thee whole?
In the haven of submission
Art thou satisfied and still?
Art thou clinging to the Father,
'Neath the shadow of His will?
Now while His arms enfold thee,
Think well He loveth best:
Be still, and He will mould thee
For His heritage of rest."**

—Anon.

OCTOBER 28

"But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ"—1 Peter 3: 14-16.

NO greater privilege has ever been bestowed upon men than that of suffering for the sake of Christ, as witnesses for Him in this world. Naturally we shrink from everything of the kind, and would prefer a life of ease and comfort to one of stress and conflict. But those who suffer with Christ here will reign with Him when His kingdom is displayed in power and glory. No one will regret in that day anything he has endured for the gospel's sake in this age of evil. But many will wish they might live their lives over again in order that they might endure for Him what they avoided when here. Our great care should be that we never suffer because of ill-behavior, but only for righteousness' sake, and as consistent Christians.

**"From vintages of sorrow
Are sweetest joys distilled,
And the cup outstretched for healing,
Is oft at Marah filled.
God leads to joy through weeping,
To quietness through strife,
Through yielding into conquest,
Through death to endless life.
Be still—He hath enrolled thee,
For the kingdom and the crown,
Be silent, let Him mold thee,
Who calleth thee His own."**

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy"—1 Peter 4: 12, 13.

THE mystery of suffering has perplexed many all down through the ages. It is part of man's sad inheritance because of sin having come into the world, and in this life the child of God is not exempt from pain, sorrow, and anguish. But the suffering of believers is all ordained of God to work out for blessing. Through this ministry of suffering we are enabled to understand better what our Lord went through for us, when in this scene. He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." God uses suffering to keep us from sin (1 Pet. 4:1; 2 Cor. 12: 7), and as a means of chastening and discipline (Heb. 12: 5-11), whereby we are made more like our blessed Lord. As we suffer because of faithfulness to His name and devotion to His cause, we enjoy a very real sense of fellowship with Him, who is still hated by the world that rejects His testimony. The reward is sure and will make us forget all our light affliction in the enjoyment of the eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17).

"God never would send you the darkness
If He felt you could bear the light;
But you would not cling to His guiding hand
If the way were always bright;
And you would not care to walk by faith,
Could you always walk by sight.

It is true He has many an anguish
For your sorrowful heart to bear;
And many a cruel thorn-crown
For your tired head to wear;
He knows how few would reach heaven at all
If pain did not guide them there."

OCTOBER 30

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed"

—1 Peter 5: 1.

IT is a great mistake to say, as some have done, that Peter was appointed chief shepherd, or head, over all the flock. He speaks of himself as a co-presbyter with others who cared for the sheep of Christ. The expression, "who am also an elder," implies this. He was not lord over other elders, or presbyters. He was one with them. If Peter was ever a Pope he never knew it! But to the end of his days he labored in fellowship with his brethren in the ministry, preaching the gospel to the unsaved and seeking to "stir up" the saints (2 Pet. 3:1) to greater devotion to Christ, as he bore witness to the sufferings of Christ at His first coming and the glories to follow when He returns.

**"Christ's grave is vacant now,
Left for the throne above;
His cross asserts God's right to bless,
In His own boundless love.**

**And thence the child of faith
Sees judgment all gone by,
Perceives the sentence fully met,
'The soul that sins shall die.'"**

"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord"

—2 Peter 1: 1, 2.

"FAITH . . . through the righteousness of God." This is an expression peculiar to Peter. Paul speaks of the righteousness of God by faith, which is the standing of all who believe (Rom. 3: 22). But here the terms are reversed. Men are said to have shared in "like precious faith . . . through the righteousness of God." God could not be righteous if He denied faith to any who sought to know His grace. That faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). If, as Scripture says, "All men have not faith" (2 Thess. 3: 2), it is not because God has made it impossible for them to have it, but because they refuse to hear the Word. In His righteousness God has made faith available for all.

"Grace and peace be multiplied . . . through . . . knowledge." The more we study God's Word, the better we come to know Him who gave it, and our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it speaks. As we thus increase in the knowledge of the Father and the Son, our experiences are deepened and we find all needed grace for the path, coupled with an ever-deepening peace.

**"Lord, Thy Word abideth,
And our footsteps guideth:
Who its truth believeth
Light and joy receiveth.**

**Who can tell the pleasure,
Who recount the treasure,
By Thy Word imparted
To the simple-hearted?"**

—Henry Williams Baker.

NOVEMBER 1

"Beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity"—2 Peter 1: 5-7.

THE Christian life should be one of continual growth and development. From the seed of faith there should spring all of the fruit which is so precious in the eyes of the Lord and which results in a well-rounded, spiritual experience. Saving faith is far more than an intellectual acceptance of certain revealed truths. It is to trust in Christ alone for salvation, and this will be manifested by conformity to Him. We grow as we feed upon the precious promises He has given in His Word. Every one of these fulfilled in our own experience will encourage us to confide in the Word more implicitly. To ignore or neglect the Word means a fruitless life and incapacity for service.

"I asked the Lord, that I might grow
In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek more earnestly His face.

I hoped that in some favored hour,
At once He'd answer my request;
And by His love's constraining power,
Subdue my sins and give me rest.
Instead of this, He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart;
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

'Lord, why is this?' I, trembling, cried,
'Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm till death?'
*'Tis in this way,' the Lord replied,
'I answer prayer for grace and faith.'
'These inward trials I employ,
From self and pride to set thee free;
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou may'st seek thy all in Me.'"

—John Newton.

NOVEMBER 2

"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen"—2 Peter 3: 17, 18.

GOD has not left us to the thoughts and imaginations of our minds. He has withdrawn the veil and opened up the future to us through the declarations of inspired prophets and apostles and, most of all, through the instruction given by His own Son, who came forth from the Father and has returned to that glory which He had with Him from before the foundation of the world (John 17:1-5).

When we see in Him the Christ of God, the Eternal Son become flesh, we know we can trust His every word, and so we rest in faith upon what He has revealed. The future may still be unknown, as to many of its details, but we know Him who holds our destiny in His hands, and so we can go on in faith, free from all anxiety, knowing that He has gone to prepare a place for us, and some day we shall enter into the abode of the blessed. Whether we live on till His return or die before He comes back, we are safe in His keeping.

**"When nothing whereon to lean remains,
When strongholds crumble to dust;
When nothing is sure but that God still reigns,
That is the time to trust.
'Tis better to walk by faith than sight
In this path of yours and mine;
And the pitch-black night
When there's no other light,
Is the hour for faith to shine."**

NOVEMBER 3

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ"—1 John 1: 1-3.

"FROM the beginning." This expression, with which the first Epistle of John opens, is not the same as "In the beginning," with which the Gospel is introduced. The latter refers to the past eternity; the former to the beginning of Christianity. Note how frequently the expression is used in John's first and second letters. See 1 John 2: 7, 13, 14, 24 (twice); 3:11; 2 John 5, 6. In each instance it refers definitely to that which had been made known from the beginning of the Christian era, and which we are responsible to maintain to the end. It is the revelation of God in Christ through whom we enter into fellowship with the Father and the Son.

"O God, Thou now hast glorified
Thy holy, blest, eternal Son!
The Nazarene, the Crucified,
Now sits exalted on Thy throne!
To Him in faith we cry aloud,—
Worthy art Thou, O Lamb of God!"

—J. G. Deck.

NOVEMBER 4

"This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all"—1 John 1:5.

"GOD is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." The heavenly city is the city of light for God Himself is its source of illumination, and His beloved Son, the Lamb who bore our sins and now lives forevermore, is the lamp through whom all the light is diffused. "The glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus" brightens our pathway down here. What will it be to dwell in that light forevermore, when every stain of sin has been cleansed and we, once lost and guilty, who are now made light in the Lord, shall enjoy uninterrupted fellowship in the light eternally.

It will be the joy of all the redeemed to gaze upon that face once marred more than any man's, and see shining there the infinite love, holiness, and compassion of the God of all grace, who looked upon us in our deep need and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins, and that we might live through Him. It is this that will make heaven so wonderful. Christ Himself will be our endless delight.

**"Eternal Light! Eternal Light!
How pure the soul must be,
When, placed within Thy searching sight,
It shrinks not, but, with calm delight,
Can live, and look on Thee!**

**Oh, how shall I, whose native sphere
Is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before the Ineffable appear,
And on my naked spirit bear
The uncreated beam?**

**There is a way for man to rise
To that sublime abode:
An offering and a sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit's energies,
An advocate with God—**

**These, these prepare us for the sight
Of holiness above;
The sons of ignorance and night
May dwell in the eternal Light,
Through the eternal Love!"**

—Thomas Binney.

NOVEMBER 5

"If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin"—1 John 1:7.

IF we walk in the light." It is *where* we walk, not *how*. Believers are repentant sinners who have been brought out of darkness into the marvelous light of God's presence (Col. 1:13), and there they walk. The light shines from the mercy-seat in the holiest of all. The vail is rent, so the light is no longer hidden. God is now "in the light," and those who honestly face their sins before Him are in the light with Him. This might naturally move the soul to fear of judgment, but "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son" is sprinkled on the mercy-seat! This tells us that every righteous demand of the throne of God has been met in the work of the cross. So the believer rests in that which has satisfied God, knowing that the blood "cleanseth . . . from all [or every] sin." The blood abides in all its cleansing efficacy, and ever answers to God for us.

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'I am this dark world's light;
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy day be bright.'

I looked to Jesus, and I found
In Him my Star, my Sun;
And in that Light of Life I'll walk
Till trav'ling days are done."

—Horatius Bonar.)

NOVEMBER 6

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world"
—1 John 2: 1-3.

WHERE there is divine life in the soul it will manifest itself in the life. The believer is not a sinless person. He is one whose sins have all been expiated by Christ on the cross, and if now, as a Christian, he falls into sin, his fellowship is disrupted until as a necessary result of Christ's advocacy he confesses and forsakes his evil ways. As he walks with God, the new nature will lead to obedience to the expressed will of the Lord and to love of the bretheren. These are the marks of the new life. Mere lip profession counts for nothing. There must be the evidence of love in activity, which marks one out as in relation to Him who is, in His very being, love. It is His life that is reproduced in those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Weary of wandering from my God,
And now made willing to return,
I hear, and bow me to the rod:
Yet not in hopeless grief I mourn;
I have an Advocate above,
A Friend before the throne of love.

O Jesus, full of truth and grace,—
More full of grace than I of sin;
Yet once again I seek Thy face,
Open Thine arms, and take me in!
And freely my backslidings heal,
And love Thy faithless servant still."

—Charles Wesley.

NOVEMBER 7

"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death"—1 John 3: 13, 14.

ALL who are born of God partake of His nature. Hence, as He is love, so they are loving. Hatred is incompatible with the new life imparted to all who believe in the Lord Jesus. Nor is this love merely a matter of sentiment or of lip-service. It is a very real experience and marks out the believer as one who like his Master loves on in spite of the world's attitude, whether of hate or of cold unconcern. God's perfect love apprehended by faith frees the soul from fear and fills the heart with love toward others.

**"Happy the heart where grace doth reign
Where love inspires the breast;
Love is the brightest of the train,
And perfects all the rest.**

**Knowledge, alas, 'tis all in vain,
And all in vain our fear;
Our stubborn sins will fight and reign,
If love be absent there.**

**'Tis love that makes our cheerful feet
In swift obedience move;
The devils know, and tremble too;
But Satan cannot love."**

—Isaac Watts.

"God is love"—1 John 4: 8.

LOVE is the manifestation of the divine nature. God is love. His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 5: 5). As we walk in love we have fellowship with God. Observe, we are not told merely that God is loving. He is more than that. Love is the essence of the divine Being. We are told that God is merciful, but we could not say that God is Mercy. We know that He is compassionate, but it would be absurd to say God is Compassion. So with many others of His attributes. But we are distinctly told that God is light (1 John 1: 5), and God is love. Light and love tell us what He is in Himself. Light is, of course, a synonym for holiness. In the cross we see both light and love fully displayed. When our souls enter by faith into this, we receive the Holy Spirit, who is also the Spirit of love (2 Tim. 1: 7). And so we delight to walk in holiness (Heb. 12:14) and in love. We manifest love for God by showing love to His people (1 John 4: 20). We prove our love for Christ by obeying His commandments and keeping His words (John 14:15, 23).

"Come, let us all unite and sing—
 God is love!
 While heaven and earth their praises bring—
 God is love!
 Let every soul from sin awake,
 Each in his heart sweet music make,
 And sweetly sing for Jesu's sake—
 God is love!

Oh, tell to earth's remotest bound—
 God is love!
 In Christ is full redemption found—
 God is love!
 His blood can cleanse our sins away;
 His Spirit turns our night to day,
 And leads our souls with joy to say—
 God is love!"

—Howard Kingsbury.

NOVEMBER 9

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds"—2 John 9-11.

CHRIST is the great touchstone of our Christian fellowship. If the heart is rightly disposed toward Him, and we confess the truth as to His Person, there will always be real fellowship. We are to receive all whom He has received, to the glory of God (Rom. 15:7). On the other hand, we are called to separation from evil doctrine, as well as sinful and worldly behavior. To fellowship with those who deny the truth as to Christ is to be unfaithful to Him (Eph. 5:11). It is a false and unsafe principle to insist on, that we should extend our confidence and lend our influence to men and systems that are antagonistic to the revelation given in the Holy Scriptures. To do this is to become partakers of their evil deeds.

"In the Paradise of glory
In the Man Divine;
There my heart, O God, is tasting
Fellowship with Thine.
Called to share Thy joy unmeasured,
Now is heaven begun;
I rejoice with Thee, O Father,
In Thy glorious Son.

Here, who follows Him the nearest,
Needs must walk alone;
There, like many seas the chorus,
Praise surrounds the throne
Here a dark and silent pathway;
In those courts so fair
Countless hosts, yet each beholding
Jesus only, there."

—T. P.

NOVEMBER 10

"Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: because that for His name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles"—3 John 5-7.

JOHNS third Epistle is addressed to one known as Gaius, host to visiting brethren on numerous occasions, and evidently at times to John himself. There is now no way of knowing whether he was identical with "Gaius mine host" of whom Paul writes in Romans 16: 23, or whether this is the same as the Gaius whom he baptized at Corinth (1 Cor. 1: 14). Gaius, answering to the Roman Caius, was a very common name in apostolic times.

By assisting these traveling servants of Christ, Gaius earned the commendation of the apostle, who was thus speaking for his Lord. Similar conduct today will have the Lord's approval, we may be sure. He counts all done to His servants as done to Himself (Matt. 25: 40). This principle abides in all dispensations.

**"'For My sake' press thou still with patience onward.
Although the race be hard, the battle long;
Within My Father's house are many mansions,
There thou shalt rest, and join the victor's song.**

**And if in coming days the world revile thee,
If 'for My sake' thou suffer pain and loss,
Bear on, faint heart, thy Master went before thee;
They only wear His crown who share His cross."**

—Anon.

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him"—Jude 14, 15.

WE have no record in the Old Testament of this prophecy, but the Holy Spirit preserved it and has given it to us through Jude in order that it may speak to all who reverence the Word of God today. The prophecies as to the Lord's coming in judgment will be as literally fulfilled, and as certainly, as were those that referred to His first coming in grace. No one is ready for His second advent who has not availed himself of the redemption which He wrought out when He appeared the first time to settle the sin question. All others may well tremble at the thought of His imminent return.

"When the holy have gone to the regions of peace,
To dwell in the mansions above,
When their harmony wakes, in the fullness of bliss,
Their song to the Saviour they love.

Say, O sinner, that livest at rest and secure,
Who fearest no trouble to come;
Can thy spirit the swellings of sorrow endure,
Or bear the impenitent's doom?"

NOVEMBER 12

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen"—Jude 24, 25.

IN this short book we read of angels that fell, of the peoples in the cities of the plains who fell and of many others who have taken the same ungodly way; but here we read of One who is able to keep from falling all who put their trust in Him, and also that He will present us who believe His Word, without fault in the presence of God when He comes again in power and glory. Having begun a good work in us He will perfect it unto that day.

**"To Thee, my God and Saviour!
My heart exulting sings,
Rejoicing in Thy favor,
Almighty King of kings!
I'll celebrate Thy glory,
With all Thy saints above,
And tell the joyful story
Of Thy redeeming love.**

**By Thee, through life supported,
I'll pass the dangerous road,
With heavenly hosts escorted,
Up to Thy bright abode;
Then cast my crown before Thee,
And, all my conflicts o'er,
Unceasingly adore Thee:—
What could an angel more?"**

—Haweis.

NOVEMBER 13

"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle"—Rev. 1:13.

IF, like John, we are in the Spirit on the Lord's Day we too shall be able to see the Son of Man as He walks in the midst of the churches. For it is of these the candlesticks, or lampstands, speak. It is both precious and solemnizing to know that He, the risen, glorified Lord, is moving about among His churches and taking note of all that goes on; commending for everything that is according to His Word, and condemning all that is merely of the flesh and not of the Spirit. Magnificent in His robes of glory, the sword, which is the Word of God, proceeds from His mouth, and His feet like as fine brass, glowing with furnace heat, are quick to stamp out all that dishonors His name.

As we gaze upon His countenance, which is as the sun shineth in his strength, we remember that it is written, "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." He is not in the midst to condemn, though He is too faithful to allow evil to remain unrebuked, but He is among us to revive and restore, that we may glorify Him the more.

"Jesus, where'er Thy people meet,
There they behold Thy mercy-seat;
Where'er they seek Thee, Thou art found;
And every place is hallowed ground.

For Thou, within no walls confined,
Inhabitest the humble mind;
Such ever bring Thee where they come,
And going, take Thee to their home.

Great Shepherd of Thy chosen few!
Thy former mercies here renew;
Here to our waiting hearts proclaim
The sweetness of Thy saving name."

—Cowper.

NOVEMBER 14

"And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the first and the last"—Rev. 1: 17.

A VISION of the glory of the Lord always results in a sense of our own littleness and sinfulness. We may well fall down before Him in humiliation and self-abasement, but even as we do so we will hear His sweet and reassuring voice bidding us fear not, because we are precious in His sight, and have to do with Him who is the Eternal One, the First and the Last, who in grace became the Son of Man that He might redeem us to God.

We need not fear death for He has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He went down into the dark domain of the underworld and came forth in triumph. Now as the Risen One He wears at His girdle the keys of death and of the world unseen. Death for us is therefore a vanquished foe. As the all-conquering One He now sends forth His messenger to His churches that all may know what is in accordance with His will in order to do it, and what things are contrary to His desires in order that we may avoid them. Nothing ever takes Him by surprise. He knows the things which have been, those that are, and all that yet shall be.

"Why should I fear the darkest hour,
Or tremble at the tempest's power?
Jesus vouchsafes to be my tower.

Though hot the fight, why quit the field?
Why should I either flee or yield,
Since Jesus is my mighty shield?

Against me earth and hell combine,
But on my side is power divine:
Jesus is all, and He is mine."

—John Newton.

NOVEMBER 15

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love"—Rev. 2: 4.

THE church in Ephesus was thoroughly orthodox, even ready to fight to the limit for foundation truth, and refusing to listen to those who would pervert it. But they had left their first love. That is, in heart they had turned away from occupation with the Lord Himself. They were far more ready to contend for doctrine than to be taken up with Christ. This is a snare to which we are all exposed. It is of great importance that we be sound in the faith. It is even more important that our hearts are filled with fervent love for Him who has so loved us as to give Himself for us. This church, too, had labored much. Its members could not be accused of slothfulness. But work without love is of little value in the eyes of Him who, moved by His love to the Father and His love for us, was to go to the cross that He might purchase our redemption.

Shall we not examine our own hearts, and if we find that love is lacking, confess our coldness and indifference, and seek to repent and do the first works—those which are the result of faith that worketh by love?

"Oh, pardon us, Lord, that our love to Thy name
Is so faint, with so much our affections to move!
Our coldness might fill us with grief and with shame,
So much to be loved, and so little to love."

—T. Kelly.

NOVEMBER 16

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"—Rev. 2: 10.

THIS Smyrna church was made up largely of the poor of this world rich in faith. What its members lacked in this world's goods they made up in devotion to Christ and confidence in God. Although having to endure the blasphemous attacks of certain enemies of the cross of Christ, they were exposed to severe persecution, even to imprisonment and death for His name's sake; yet they remained steadfast, and so had the assurance that whatever they might have to suffer here, they would not be hurt of the second death. These words are written for our encouragement. It means much to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart despite the opposition of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Every seeming defeat is turned into glorious victory, when we are conscious of the Lord's presence with us and realize we are sustained by His mighty power. There is a wealth of encouragement in the Saviour's words, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Every believer has eternal life. But the crown of life is a special reward to be given for faithfully enduring trial, even unto death itself.

**"Faint not, Christian, though the road,
Leading to thy blest abode,
Darksome be, and dangerous too;
Christ thy Guide will bring thee through.**

**Faint not, Christian, look on high!
See the harpers in the sky;
And His love will then bestow
Power to conquer every foe."**

—Anon.

NOVEMBER 17

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it"—Rev. 2: 17.

WHEN Israel was in the wilderness, sustained by bread from heaven, God commanded Moses to fill a golden pot with manna and lay it up before the Lord within the ark, in the holiest of all. This was the hidden manna. Jesus shows us in John 6 that the food by which God sustained the host in the wilderness typified Himself. He came down from heaven as the Bread of God to give life unto the world. The manna spoke of Him in His humiliation. Now that He has gone back to heaven He is the hidden Manna on which the souls of His people feed by faith. The members of the church in Pergamos were exposed to severe temptations. Pergamos was the center of serpent-worship with all its debasing practices. There Antipas was slain, and there the devil made strenuous efforts to seduce God's children and break down the wall of separation between the Church and the world. But God's grace was all-sufficient to enable them to triumph, even as it is sufficient to make us today more than conquerors through Him who has loved and redeemed us. All who overcome by faith will enjoy the fellowship of the Lord in a very blessed and intimate way.

**"There on the hidden bread
Of Christ—once humbled here—
God's treasure store—forever fed,
His love my soul shall cheer.
Called by that secret name
Of undisclosed delight
(Blest answer to reproach and shame)
Graved on the stone of white."**

—J. N. Darby.

NOVEMBER 18

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of My Father. And I will give him the morning star"—Rev. 2: 26-28.

ONE can scarcely imagine a church in a worse condition than that of Thyatira. Superstition had taken the place of faith for the great majority. Immoral conditions prevailed and were condoned by the leaders. An unclean woman had obtained and maintained a strange influence over many who professed the Christian name while denying it in practice. But there was a remnant, a few to whom Christ was precious, and who were grieved to the heart over the state of the assembly. To these the Lord gave comforting words and a precious promise. He bade them hold fast until He returned, and assured them that even though they suffered now they should reign with Him in the day of His manifestation. Then He added, "I will give him the Morning Star." This is the blessed Hope of His coming for His own before the last storm of judgment breaks over the world. He Himself is the Bright and Morning Star. He is the One for whom His people wait. To behold Him as He is and to be caught up to be with and like Him forever—this will repay abundantly for all His afflicted ones have had to endure from the prince of this world and his emissaries.

"Thou Bright and Morning Star,
Oh, with what deep delight
Thou'lt come again,
And claim us then,
To dwell in cloudless light!
And oh, what boundless joy
Shall fill each raptured heart,
When we abide
At Thy dear side,
No more from Thee to part!"

—G. W. F.

NOVEMBER 19

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy"—Rev. 3: 4.

THE church in Sardis was a spiritual graveyard. Very few in it were really born again. Most had a name that they lived, but were dead toward God. Yet in the midst of these disheartening conditions a few were found who had not defiled their garments, and to whom the promise was that they should be counted worthy to walk with Christ in white. What encouragement this should give to Christians who find themselves in a community where there is very little of a spiritual character. Christ abides! Circumstances, no matter how depressing, need not hinder growth in grace. Such may be scorned as old-fashioned and bigoted by those who know nothing of the realities of true spiritual life, but they will find their craving for understanding and fellowship met as they continue in prayer and in the study of the Holy Scriptures. The Lord will never leave nor forsake any who endeavor to keep themselves unspotted from the world and from formal religiousness which hinders rather than helps in one's walk with God. There is no occasion to despair or become discouraged when one is assured of His approval.

**"If snowdrops, frail and delicate,
Can thrust a passageway
Through barren ledge and bedded rock
To greet the light of day;**

**If fairest lilies grow among
A cesspool's mud and mire
And keep their petals virgin-pure,
As gold tried in the fire;**

**If honeysuckles have been seen
To climb on icicles,
And roses in December snows
Surmount these obstacles;**

**Then there is no environment,
That men can ever face,
With handicaps that are too large
For God's sufficient grace."**

—W. M. Czarnaske.

NOVEMBER 20

"I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name"—Rev. 3: 8.

THE church in Philadelphia had the Lord's approval throughout. Yet it was not a great or strong company. It consisted of a few to whom Christ was precious and which had little strength. That strength was derived from feeding upon and obedience to the Word of the Lord. To those who kept His Word and did not deny His name He promised an open door of opportunity for service. We may be sure of the same today. No matter how perplexing the times in which our lot is cast, He who opens and no man shuts, and who shuts and no man opens, will open for us a door of service that we may maintain a constant witness to His saving grace. We do not have to be great and mighty in order to be useful Christians. Where there is a little strength and a heart of devotion He can use us and make us a means of blessing to others. And when our testimony here is ended we shall be given a place of recognition in the Holy City which descends from God out of heaven where we shall enjoy fellowship with Christ and all the redeemed throughout the ages to come.

**"I longed the world to compass
And many souls to save,
To tell the glorious gospel
Across the ocean's wave.**

**A humble place He gave me
And tasks some might call mean,
Yet in His choice and purpose
Is infinite wisdom seen."**

—E. W. C.

NOVEMBER 21

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne"—Rev. 3: 21.

THE overcomer is the one who has been born of God. He obtains the victory over the world by faith, a faith that is so set on things above that it enables him to put earthly things beneath his feet. In the coming day of manifestation all such will share the glory of our blessed Lord when He returns to reign in power and righteousness over all the world.

**"To him that overcometh
What wondrous things He gives!
Rewards that make the victor
Aye one with Him who lives.
What matter if the testing
Be difficult and long?
The mighty Lord, who loves you,
Himself shall make you strong."**

—Dorothy Langford.

"Behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald"—Rev. 4: 2, 3.

HOW blessed to look away from and above all the confusing scenes of earth and see, with the eye of faith, the throne set in heaven. There upon that seat of imperial authority is One like a jasper and a sardine (sardius) stone. In the breastplate of the high-priest in Israel the jasper stone bore the name Reuben, which means, "Behold a Son!" and the sardius was engraved with the name Benjamin—"Son of the Right Hand." It is easy to see who is meant then in this wonderful passage. He who is the Eternal Son, the Man Christ Jesus now seated on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, comes thus before us, and knowing Him we are assured that all is well, for to Him all power has been committed. Happy the privilege of those who like the four and twenty presbyters, the heads of the priestly company, gather round the throne to worship and extol the One who is Creator of all things, and who has claimed us for His own in infinite grace. It is as our hearts are occupied with Him that we become like Him even as we walk down here on earth.

"Jesus, who on His glorious throne
Rules heaven, and earth, and sea,
Is pleased to claim me for His own,
And give Himself to me.

His person fixes all my love,
His blood removes my fear;
And while He pleads for me above,
His arm preserves me here."

—Anon.

NOVEMBER 23

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created"
—Rev. 4: 11.

HE who sits in the midst of the throne is worshiped as the Creator of all things, by all heavenly intelligences, whether angels or men. He is worthy to receive glory and honor and power. Every loving heart delights thus to ascribe all worth to Him. Glory is excellence displayed; honor is the recognition of superiority; power here is might, not merely authority. That it is the Eternal Son who is worshiped in this way is evident, for He is adored as the Creator of all things. And we know from other scriptures that it is our blessed Lord Jesus by whom "were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist [or, hold together]" (Col. 1:16, 17). All creation is the witness of His power and wisdom, and all things were brought into existence for His pleasure. We, who through grace have been led to trust in Him as Saviour, are also destined to be for His joy and pleasure eternally.

**"Worthy of homage and of praise;
Worthy by all to be adored:
Exhaustless theme of heavenly lays!
Thou, Thou art worthy, Jesus, Lord!**

**Now seated on Jehovah's throne,
The Lamb once slain, in glory bright:
'Tis thence Thou watchest o'er Thine own,
Guarding us through the deadly fight."**

—Miss Wigram.

"I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth"—Rev. 5: 6.

WHEN the announcement was made in heaven that the Lion of the tribe of Judah had prevailed and was worthy to take the title-deeds to the universe and loose the seals thereof, John looked for a Lion, but beheld a Lamb. The two are identical, and speak of our Lord as the Conquering King and the Sacrificial Victim. He died upon the cross for our sins and now He is seen in the midst of the throne as a Lamb who had once been offered in sacrifice. He bears upon His glorified body the marks of His passion, and to all eternity these will be the mute witnesses of a love that was stronger than death.

As we gaze by faith upon His once-marred face how our hearts should go out to Him in worship and thanksgiving as we remember that it was love for us that brought Him from the throne of glory to the cross of shame. Some day He will take His great power and reign. Then all redeemed creation will be subject to the Lamb who once was slain, but lives eternally to bless all who trust in Him.

"What equal honors shall we bring
To Thee, O Lord our God, the Lamb,
When all the notes that angels sing,
Are far inferior to Thy name?"

Worthy is He that once was slain,
The Prince of Peace that groaned and died,
Worthy to rise and live, and reign,
At His Almighty Father's side."

—Watts.

NOVEMBER 25

"They cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? . . . For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?—Rev. 6: 10, 17.

WE do not, ordinarily, couple the thought of wrath with a lamb. We might rather have expected to read of the wrath of the Lion. But, as we have seen, these are but two different characters in which our Lord is presented. The Lion of the tribe of Judah who shall destroy His enemies and reign victoriously at last is the Lamb of God who died to take away the sin of the world. He now sits upon a throne of grace, and offers pardon and salvation to all who come to God in His name. But if His grace is despised, judgment must have its way and in due time the wrath of the Lamb must take its course.

What a prayer-meeting these verses depict! But in that day of divine indignation it will be too late to pray and too late to find a hiding-place. God is now showing mercy to every repentant soul. In the day of His wrath His judgment will fall on those who spurned His grace, for, it is written: "The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous" (Ps. 1: 5).

"On Christ, Almighty vengeance fell
Which would have sunk a world to hell;
He bore it for a chosen race
And thus became our hiding-place."

"Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads"—Rev. 7: 3.

IN every age God has had His elect who have not bowed the knee to Baal nor been carried away with the errors of their times.

Those who shall bear the seal of God in their foreheads as His judgments are being poured upon the earth will be delivered from the power of the enemy, even as His faithful witnesses have been sustained by His might and enabled to triumph by faith in all past ages.

God never permits any hour of trial to come to pass without arranging beforehand for the security of His own sealed ones. Nothing can touch them but what His love allows, and everything that He permits will work out for their good either in time or eternity.

His angels ever restrain the winds of adversity until He has sealed those who are to be His witnesses in the time of distress and tribulation. He works everything according to the counsel of His own will.

"How happy are the little flock,
Who, safe beneath their guardian-rock,
In all commotions rest!
When war's and tumult's waves run high,
Unmoved, above the storm they lie,
They lodge in Jesus' breast.

Whatever ills the world befall
A pledge of endless good we call,
A sign of Jesus near:
His chariot will not long delay;
We hear the rumbling wheels, and pray,—
Triumphant Lord, appear!"

—Charles Wesley.

NOVEMBER 27

"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"—Rev. 7: 14.

ALL who ever have been or ever will be saved, in any age or under any dispensation, will owe all their blessing to the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ. His precious blood alone can cleanse from sin. This white-robed multitude who will come up triumphantly out of the sufferings and sorrows of the great tribulation will stand before the throne of God because they shall have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Who but God can estimate the value of the propitiatory work of His beloved Son? Untold millions will worship and laud Him for all the ages to come because of what His grace has wrought.

We are all debtors to that grace. We owe all our blessing to the blood shed when the Lord Jesus became the great Sin Offering and gave Himself a ransom for all on Calvary. What praise should fill our hearts as we contemplate the work of the cross!

"Why speak of dress, since they are THERE?
Their martyred selves distinction show.
Yes, but their garments are so fair
Because of Calvary's crimson flow.

In blood of Christ their robes made pure
Tell of a Love so great, so strong,
That thus the stress they could endure—
They tell to whom those robes belong.

Poor blood they shed, His blood they claimed.
They died, but lo, they live in white:
Then, as the martyred host is named,
No stain they bear in Heaven's sight.

Oh, see them, then, display His grace!
The Lamb is all their song or claim.
Their robes o'er all that holy place
Diffuse the fragrance of His name."

—Henry Ostrom.

NOVEMBER 28

"Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne"—Rev. 8: 3.

THE brazen altar in the outer court spoke, of old, of the cross-work of our Lord Jesus Christ. The golden altar in the holy place, immediately before the veil, typified His intercessory work on the throne in heaven. There He ever liveth to present our cause before the Father; He is our Advocate, our Great High Priest, and our Mediator.

We are oppressed at times with the sense of the feebleness and inadequacy of our prayers, but nothing that is imperfect goes up to God. Our Lord, officiating at the golden altar, removes from our petitions everything that is unworthy and presents our prayers in all the value of His own perfections.

The very judgments that are destined to fall upon a Christ-rejecting world will come in answer to the cries of God's hidden ones.

" 'Twas God's most gracious favor
That gave His Son to die,
To live our intercessor,
To plead for us on high.
To all our prayers and praises
He adds His sweet perfume,
And love the censer raises
These odors to consume."

NOVEMBER 29

"The seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound"—Rev. 8: 6.

AT present the gospel trumpet is resounding through the world, calling all men to repent and to turn to Christ who died for our sins and lives to save all who confide in Him.

But the day is coming when, as in the case of Jericho of old, the trumpets of judgment will sound, proclaiming the end and doom of this present evil world, which has been arrayed for so long in fierce conflict against God and His saints.

When those trumpets sound the world will crumble, and will soon be superseded by an entirely new order when righteousness will cover the earth as the waters cover the great deep.

As we see these things beginning to come to pass, our hearts will be kept in peace if we walk with God and remember that all has been foretold and that He is working in all things according to His foreknown plan!

"Hark! how the gospel trumpet sounds,
As through the world the echo bounds,
Proclaiming to a ruin'd race,
That through the riches of His grace,
Sinners may see the Saviour's face,
In endless day.

And when, through grace, our course is run,
The battle fought, the vict'ry won,
Then crowns unfading we shall wear,
The glory of Thy kingdom share,
With Thee, our glorious Leader, there,
In endless day."

Medley.

NOVEMBER 30

"He opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit"

—Rev. 9: 2.

THE smoke out of the bottomless pit, darkening the sun and thus hiding the light of day, seems to be a picture of the strong delusion, which in the righteous government of God is visited upon men who, after having every opportunity to know the truth, have turned away from it. Men love darkness more than light when their deeds are evil. If people will not receive the message of the gospel, which sets forth Christ as the Light and Redeemer of the world, they are in grave danger of being given up to judicial darkness, and so left to perish in their sins.

When this state is reached the pestilential locust-errors from the abyss are let loose upon men, and their minds are tormented by the awful sense of being shut away from the light of life. As God gives light we are responsible to walk in it lest we be given over to the blackness of darkness forever. It is His will that all should receive the light of His truth. Condemnation follows its rejection.

"Darkness gathering, turmoil, doubt,
Satan's inroads all about,
Scoffers railing,
Men's hearts failing,
Battles sore, within, without—
But, Peace!—Because HE IS!

Calvary's darkness, a cross, a cry!
A risen Saviour gone on high,
Satan defeating,
Redemption completing,
The sinner freed, redeemed, brought nigh—
And Peace!—Because HE WAS!

Darkness preceding the flush of dawn,
Pregnant with hope of the Coming One,
Whose own, preparing,
His sufferings sharing,
Await the light of a new day begun—
So Peace!—Because HE IS TO COME!"

—Elsie K. Wells.

DECEMBER 1

"When the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not"—Rev. 10: 4.

FIGURATIVELY, the noise of the thunder is used in many places in Scripture as the voice of God. Elihu so speaks of it; David also, and several of the prophets. In this vision as John beheld the angels of the covenant descending from heaven, to take possession of this lower universe, with the opened book in his hand, the seven thunders of judgment roared through the skies. But their reverberations were silenced by divine authority, and John was commanded not to write what they uttered. Grace has turned aside the judgment of God for all who believe the record He has given concerning His blessed Son.

The storm of judgment broke over His sacred head on Calvary that we might never be exposed to it.

**"Let us love and sing and wonder;
Let us praise the Saviour's name;
He has hushed the law's loud thunder;
He has quenched Mount Sinai's flame;
He has washed us in His blood;
He has brought us home to God."**

—John Newton.

DECEMBER 2

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets"—Rev. 10: 7.

WHY did God ever allow sin to lift its hideous form in heaven, first when Lucifer fell and then on earth in Eden's Paradise? Why did He not destroy Satan and save the human race from his temptations to evil? Why has He permitted all the terrible consequences of sin to go on throughout the millennia that man has been on earth? Why do even the most godly suffer with the worst and vilest? Why? why? why?

All these questions will be answered when the secret of God's age-long toleration of evil will be revealed at the sounding of the trumpet which shall announce the closing-up of the present dispensation and the ushering in of Immanuel's righteous reign. Then all mystery will be done away and we shall understand, as we cannot now, just why conditions were allowed to run their course which we may think might better have been prevented. In that day God will be justified in all His ways with men, and we shall realize that He has wrought all in accordance with His infinite love and wisdom.

**"We are often tossed and driven on the restless sea of time,
Somber skies and howling tempest oft succeed a bright
sunshine;
In that land of perfect day, when the mists have rolled away,
We will understand it better by-and-by.**

**Trials dark on ev'ry hand, and we cannot understand
All the ways that God would lead us to that blessed Promised
Land;
But He guides us with His eye, and we'll follow till we die,
For we'll understand it better by-and-by."**

—C. A. Tindley.

DECEMBER 3

"There was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein"—Rev. 11: 1.

WE measure that which we desire to possess for ourselves. When one selects a plot of ground he is concerned as to its length and breadth and its exact limits. The temple of God and those who dwell therein represent Jehovah's peculiar treasure, Israel the rod of His inheritance. This He marks off for Himself at a time when the world outside is still in rebellion against Him. Even so is it now when His little flock constitute the temple in which He dwells by His Spirit in the midst of a hostile scene. Godless men may rage and ridicule those whom the Lord has set apart to Himself, but they are precious in His eyes and under His particular care. He has marked them off from all the rest of mankind as His own sanctuary, a spiritual house in which His grace and power are seen.

The outer court of the temple where the Gentiles were permitted to gather was not measured in John's vision, for the nations as such are not yet in spiritual relationship with God.

"Lord, we are Thine; Thy claims we own,
Ourselves to Thee would humbly give;
Reign then within our hearts alone,
And let us to Thy glory live.
Here may we each Thy mind display
In all Thy gracious image shine;
So shall we hail the looked-for day
When Thou shalt own that we are Thine."

—J. G. Deck.

DECEMBER 4

"I will give power unto My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth"—Rev. 11: 3.

IN every age God has had His chosen representatives. He has never left Himself without witness. He speaks to men *through* men to whom He has revealed His will and committed His testimony, whether this be a message of grace, as in the present time, or of judgment as in darker days which lie just beyond this present age. The two witnesses will combine the ministries of Moses the law-giver and Elijah the restorer, as they seek to recall men to a realization of their responsibility to God and to convict them of their folly in rejecting His authority. As they thus testify for Him no power, earthly or infernal, can hinder or thwart them till all is complete. So it is with God's witnesses now. They are "immortal till their work is done." If persecuted even unto death it only means to triumph by faith.

All the power of the enemy cannot thwart God's purpose. That which He has planned in eternity shall be carried out in due time.

**"Speed Thy servants, Saviour, speed them!
Thou art Lord of winds and waves;
They were bound, but Thou hast freed them;
Now they go to free sin's slaves.
Be Thou with them; 'tis Thine arm alone that saves.**

**Friends and home and all forsaking,
Lord, they go at Thy command:
As their stay Thy promise taking,
While they traverse sea and land:
Oh, be with them; lead them safely by the hand."**

DECEMBER 5

"They that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth"—Rev. 11: 10.

IT is a solemn fact that "unreasonable and wicked men," as Paul calls them, can make light of the most serious things and even scoff and blaspheme when God's judgments are being meted out.

The voice of His witnesses disturbs men. They are happy when their testimony is silenced. In this vision we see the Christ-rejecting mass celebrating with carnal joy and fleshly merriment, the fact that God's messengers are dead and, as they fondly hope, no one again will prod their guilty consciences.

Even as men who have no heart for Christ at the present time celebrate the memorial of His birth by sending gifts one to another, so when His witnesses have ended their testimony, they will rejoice and send presents to their equally guilty friends because the tormenting voices of the witnesses are heard no longer. How loudly this proclaims the incorrigible evil of the human heart when unsubdued by divine grace.

"No room for mirth or trifling here,
For worldly hope, or worldly fear
If life so soon is gone—
If now the Judge is at the door
And all mankind shall stand before
Th' inexorable throne."

DECEMBER 6

"She brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne"—Rev. 12: 5.

WE know from Psalm 2 that it is God's own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is destined to rule the nations with the inflexible rod of righteousness. But when He is manifested as King of kings and Lord of lords His Church will be associated with Him in the government of this world, as we see in Rev. 2: 26, 27. The Man Child then speaks of Christ and His Church: He the Head, the Church the Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. As we are to reign with Him in the coming day, we are the objects, as Israel was in the past, of Satanic malice and hatred, but all his efforts to destroy the Seed of the woman, and those who receive life from Him, will prove vain.

Just as our Lord Jesus, the Head, has been caught up to God and His throne, so in due time all His own will be glorified in the same way. Till then it is our privilege to suffer for and with Him, who, in grace, underwent such bitter agony that we might be redeemed to God. Already we are seated in Him in the heavenly places. Soon we shall be with Him there.

"Lamb of God, Thy faithful promise
Says, 'Behold, I quickly come;'
And our hearts, to Thine responsive,
Cry, 'Come, Lord, and take us home.'
Oh, the rapture that awaits us
When we meet Thee in the air,
And with Thee ascend in triumph,
All Thy deepest joys to share!"

—J. G. Deck.

DECEMBER 7

"I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death"

—Rev. 12: 10, 11.

THE devil is the prince of the power of the air, the vile leader of a host of wicked spirits in the heavenlies who are engaged constantly in making war on the saints of God. But the time draws near when he and his evil emissaries will be cast down from heaven into this world of which he has been, through long ages, the prince and god. Michael the archangel is the guardian of Israel, and to him is to be given the honor of expelling Satan and his apostate angels from the heavens. The devil has been the accuser of the brethren from the time sin first came into the world, but the advocacy of Christ is the answer to all Satan's efforts to condemn.

It is the part of wisdom never to underrate the strength of an enemy. Ours is a great and mighty foe, but his power will soon be broken, and he himself cast into the abyss. Meantime, we wrestle, not with flesh and blood, but with wicked spirits in heavenly places, the world-rulers of this darkness.

"I hear the words of love,
I gaze upon the blood,
I see the mighty sacrifice,
And I have peace with God.

I hear th' Accuser roar
Of ills that I have done;
I know them all, and thousands more,
Jehovah findeth none."

—Horatius Bonar.

DECEMBER 8

"It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations"—Rev. 13: 7.

IT was God who instituted human government in the beginning. So long as magistrates and rulers recognize that they are His servants and endeavor to rule in His fear and according to His Word, governments are a great blessing to the world. But when those in authority cast off all restraint and refuse allegiance to God, impiously denying His very existence and using their power to deceive and enslave the nations, government becomes a menace to the peace of the world. The beast of John's vision represents this very thing: power in the hands of man, used in defiance of God. Under such conditions the lot of His children becomes hard indeed, but by grace they will be enabled to overcome, and to live for His glory, no matter how bitter the persecution they may have to endure. This was so under the beast of pagan Rome of old. It will be so under the beast of the atheistic dominion of the last days.

When the demands of government come into conflict with the claims of Christ, then like those of old we must obey God rather than man.

**"The serpent's brood increase,
The powers of hell grow bold,
The conflict thickens, faith is low,
And love is waxing cold.
How long, O Lord our God,
Holy and true and good,
Wilt Thou not judge Thy suffering Church,
Her sighs and tears and blood!
Come, then, Lord Jesus, come!"**

—H. Bonar.

DECEMBER 9

**"I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion,
and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand,
having His Father's name written in their foreheads"**

—Rev. 14: 1.

MOUNT Sion is the memorial of grace. It was grace that chose David and enthroned him on Mt. Sion. When Christ our Lord returns in glory He will appear on this mountain welcomed by a host of His faithful followers who in times of great stress refused to be turned aside either by the persecutions or the allurements of the world. These we are told are the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb, the nucleus of His coming glorious kingdom.

How blessed to contemplate Him as the Lamb on Mt. Sion! It was as the Lamb of God He died to take away the sin of the world. As the Lamb He is now enthroned in heaven, and as the Lamb He will return in triumph. Those who love Him follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

As a lamb He was led to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before its shearers He bore all uncomplainingly. How gladly we should worship Him as the Lamb in the glory of God!

"O Lamb of God, still keep us
Close to Thy wounded side;
'Tis only there in safety,
And peace we can abide.

With foes and snares around us,
And lusts and fears within,
The grace that sought and found us,
Alone can keep us clean."

—J. G. Deck.

DECEMBER 10

"I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them"

—Rev. 14: 13.

IT is of course of the dead in Christ that the Holy Spirit so speaks. They are blessed because they are with Him who has redeemed them to Himself. They are absent from the body and present with the Lord. Having departed this life they are now with Christ which is far better than any possible earthly experience. Once they toiled and suffered here below. Now they rest from their labors, as they await the day when all believers shall be manifested at the judgment-seat of Christ and they shall be rewarded for everything they have done for Christ. "Their works do follow them."

To die in the Lord is to enter into eternal blessedness. On the contrary to die out of Christ means endless judgment. Jesus said, "Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins"; and of such He added, "Whither I go, ye cannot come." Note the vivid contrast: die in the Lord; die in your sins! It is not true as some fondly hope that there is something so purifying about death that all who pass through it will be fitted for heaven. Only those who die in Christ have this blessedness.

**"How blest the righteous when he dies!
When sinks a weary soul to rest!
How mildly beam the closing eyes!
How gently heaves the expiring breast!**

**Life's labor done, as sinks the clay,
Light from its load the spirit flies,
While heaven and earth combine to say,
'How blest the righteous when he dies!'"**

—Barbauld.

DECEMBER 11

"I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth"—Rev. 16: 1.

IT is in response to the anguished cries of suffering saints on earth whose prayers ascend to God continually that the seven angels empty their vials (or, more literally, bowls) of the wrath of God upon the earth. Now God may seem to be indifferent to what godless men inflict upon His people. He says, in Psalm 50: 21, "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence." As a result evil-disposed men take it for granted He is powerless to interfere. But the hour is drawing near when the long silence of God will be broken, and He will pour out His wrath upon that world which has refused to bow in repentance before Him and has manifested its hatred of His laws by oppressing and persecuting His saints. Judgment is according to righteousness, and although long delayed, will fall at last upon those who have dared to defy the living God. While the day of grace lasts, we who know Christ are responsible to seek the salvation of those for whom Christ died, that they may be delivered from the wrath to come. If men refuse to hear and heed the message they are responsible for their own ruin.

"When Thou shalt come, for whom we wait,
We then shall see and know how great
The gain that faith has stored.
With joyful hearts our song we raise,
Our God and Father now to praise,
While waiting for our Lord."

—S. Davis.

"I saw three unclean spirits like frogs . . . which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon"—Rev. 16: 13-16.

THE name "Armageddon" has caught the imagination of many as signifying a crisis in the great age-long conflict between good and evil. The word means "the mountain of Megiddo." In the valley below several great battles have been fought which had a decisive effect upon the destiny of the nation of Israel. The last effort of Satan through his unclean minions is to be staged in the same place. There will rage the battle of the great day of God Almighty. And there can be but one possible result. The hosts of hell will be vanquished by the armies of heaven. It is in view of this that the Word goes forth: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

The nearer we draw to the end of the age, the more we should be concerned about our personal testimony for Christ and about individual holiness of life. It is too late to be careless or indifferent. The times demand godliness of life and faithfulness in witnessing for Christ.

"Earth, what a sorrow lies before thee!
None like it in the shadowy past;
The sharpest throe that ever tore thee,—
Even though the briefest and the last.
I see the fair moon veil her luster,
I see the sackcloth of the sun;
The shrouding of each starry cluster,
The threefold woe of earth begun.
I see the shadow of its sunset;
And wrapt in these the avenger's form;
I see the Armageddon-onset;
But I shall be above the storm.
There comes the moaning and the sighing,
There comes the hot tear's heavy fall,
The thousand agonies of dying;
But I shall be beyond them all."

—H. Bonar.

DECEMBER 13

"The seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done"—Rev. 16:17.

WHEN Jesus was about to dismiss His spirit to the Father He cried, "It is finished!" thus indicating the consummation of the work of redemption. When the course of this present evil age shall have come to its conclusion a voice will be heard crying, "It is done"; thus declaring that at long last God's tolerance of iniquity shall have reached its end, and He will purge the world by judgment.

How restful it is to know that nothing takes God by surprise, but that He works all things according to a pre-arranged plan. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." He has never abdicated His throne as the moral Governor of the universe however much men may ignore Him, and even though Satan is acknowledged by them as the god and prince of this world. Amid all the changing scenes of earth we who trust in the living God may be at peace, for we know He has set a limit beyond which iniquity cannot go, even as He says to the waves of the sea, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

"Before Jehovah's awful throne,
Ye nations, bow with sacred joy;
Know that the Lord is God alone,
He can create, and He destroy.

Wide as the world is Thy command;
Vast as eternity Thy love;
Firm as a rock Thy truth shall stand,
When rolling years shall cease to move."

—Isaac Watts.

"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful"—Rev. 17: 14.

HUMAN government has been ordained of God in order to restrain the lawless passions of men and to enable the nations to live in peace and quietness. So long as the powers that be recognize their dependence upon Him and seek to rule in His fear, they prove a blessing to mankind. But when government arrays itself against God and His Christ it becomes a curse, and must be destroyed eventually because of its corruption.

The beast is human government at its worst. "Man being in honor abideth not, but is as the beasts that perish." Of old, pagan Rome made war with the Lamb and endeavored to destroy all who confessed His name. Throughout the centuries many other governments, notably Papal Rome, have followed suit. In our days Bolshevik Russia determined to stamp out all religion of every kind, and even today is but tolerant of Christianity because of political expediency. But no matter how great the power of those nations that make war on the Lamb, the Lamb shall overcome them. He is the earth's destined King, and His faithful followers shall triumph with Him,

"Behold the Lamb of God,
The Lamb once slain!
Who grasped the reed as sceptered rod,
Who wreathed His brows with pain,
Who bore erect sin's direful load,
And climbed the cross—to reign!

Behold the Lamb of God,
The Lamb once slain!
Back to that earth which drank His blood
(The martyr-scars remain),
Back to the hills His tired feet trod,
He comes, a King—to reign!"

—D. M. M.

DECEMBER 15

"I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"

—Rev. 18:4.

THE great world-religious system may seem very lofty and imposing for a time, and may appear to be impregnable and beyond all possibility of destruction. But its end is sure, for God has predicted its utter ruin, and "He will not call back His words." Meantime He would have His own blood-redeemed people separated from everything unholy and walking apart from that which is soon to be devoted to judgment. Hence, the call, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." We are called upon to walk in separation from evil, refusing all fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Unspiritual people may judge as narrow and bigoted one who seeks to be obedient to God in this matter, but when the hour of retribution strikes, who will not be thankful that he has obeyed the call to separate from every unholy alliance. Separation is not, however, to be merely negative lest it become Phariseism. We are to be separate from iniquity, but set apart to Christ. So we shall be preserved from all defilement, and kept for His glory.

"Without a murmur I dismiss
My former dreams of earthly bliss,
My joy, my recompense, be this,
Each hour to cling to Thee!

What though the world deceitful prove,
And earthly friends and joys remove,
With patient, uncomplaining love,
Still would I cling to Thee!"

—Charlotte Elliott.

DECEMBER 16

"The fruits that thy soul lusteth after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all"—Rev. 18: 14.

A very literal translation of the first part of this verse reads as follows: "And the fruit-season of thy soul's desire is gone from thee." This is both solemn and suggestive, as it tells of the condition of soul into which one falls who trifles with eternal things until they no longer leave any serious impression upon the mind and heart. "The fruit-season of thy soul's desire," speaks of those early days when conscience was tender and impressions were made which, if acted upon, would have resulted in salvation and everlasting felicity. But every day of procrastination tends to make the conscience less sensitive and the possibility of eventual salvation more remote, until at last the fruit-season of the soul's desire is gone, and there is no longer any concern about the things of eternity. It is a very dangerous thing to refuse to heed when God speaks. Many there are who, because of continued rejection of the Word of the Lord, have gone beyond redemption-point in the river of life, and now have lost all concern about their guilt and their danger. It is of God's great mercy if this is not so with you who are unsaved.

"'Manana,' says the Spaniard;
'Tomorrow,' some folks say;
But hear 'what saith the Scripture,'
'While it is called to-day.'

'Some more convenient season,'
One wanted long ago;
To bury first his father
Another wished to go.

Now is the time accepted;
Now is salvation's day;
Look on the fields of harvest,
Then, 'Son, go work today.'

So preach the Word, and scatter
The seed along the way;
Be instant in each season,
'While it is called To-day.'"

—Violet Ursula Fraser.

DECEMBER 17

"After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God"

—Rev. 19: 1.

ALL the hosts of heaven join in a paean of joy as they celebrate the righteous judgments of the Lord, ending with the glorious doxology, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" What a scene of rejoicing that will be when all evil shall be put down and righteousness shall be triumphant at last! No more will the faithful of Christ's flock be called upon to suffer from the grievous wolves who have sought their destruction through long centuries of conflict and testimony. As they look back they will see how wonderfully the Lord had undertaken for them, and they will realize then, as they cannot now, that for every trial they were called upon to endure there was a "need's be," in order that their tested faith might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. No one will then regret any suffering endured for His name's sake. All will be recognized and rewarded at the day of manifestation.

**"Rejoice, ye that love Him; His power cannot fail;
His omnipotent goodness shall surely prevail;
The triumph of evil will shortly be past,
And omnipotent mercy shall conquer at last.**

**Though Satan now maketh the nations his prey,
The dominion of darkness shall soon pass away:
Exulting, we join heaven's rapturous strains,—
Alleluia, the Lord God omnipotent reigns."**

—Noel's Col.

"I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war"

—Rev. 19:11

WHAT a marvelous scene is here depicted, as John with the pen of inspiration presents our blessed Lord as a mighty Conqueror, descending from heaven on a noble white charger with all the armies of heaven—the saints of all ages—in His train. He comes forth heralded as the Faithful and the True, the King of kings and Lord of lords. While identical with the once-lowly Jesus who died for our sins on the cross, the mystery of His nature is known only to the Father and to Himself. He has a name which no man knew, for no man knoweth the Son but the Father. That vesture dipped in blood with which He will be clothed carries our minds back to the cross where the cruel Roman spear pierced His side only to draw forth the blood that saves.

With the sharp sword of His Word He will smite the nations who have persisted in rebellion against His authority, and He will take over the government of earth, ruling with the rod of iron, inflexible righteousness. What a day it will be when all is fulfilled!

**"Hail, Thou once despised Jesus!
Crowned in mockery a king!
Thou didst suffer to release us;
Thou didst free salvation bring.
Hail, Thou agonizing Saviour,
Bearer of our sin and shame!
By Thy merits we find favor;
Life is given through Thy name."**

—Bakewell.

"I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God"—Rev. 19:17.

THERE are two suppers in this stirring chapter. In the earlier part we have the marriage of the Lamb—the supper of grace. Now we are called to consider the great supper of God—the supper of judgment. When the Lord descends to the earth at His second advent He will destroy with the brightness of His coming the armies of evil arrayed against Him and His followers. The carcasses of these men and their beasts are to provide a carrion feast for the birds of prey who shall be summoned to consume them. Thus will the last foes of God and of His Church be destroyed, and so the way prepared for the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth.

Millions of saints have prayed, and millions still pray, "Thy kingdom come"; and we look forward with great longing for the day when God's will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven. When the Son of Man returns, our prayers will all be answered.

"'Twill not be long—this time of lonely waiting;

God keeps His tryst—the promised hour is near.

Soon shall there burst from startled skies the wonder

Of that glad, quickening shout, 'The Lord is here!'

Oh, joyous day—sweet secret of His planning,

Not even shared with those about the throne.

Do wondering angels sometimes whisper softly,

'Perhaps today—He'll go to claim His own!'

—Mrs. Donald A. Dey.

DECEMBER 20

"The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever"—Rev. 20:10.

MAN has been tested under various dispensations or economies, only to manifest his untrustworthiness except as upheld by divine grace. Tested in innocence, in Eden's garden, he sinned by disobedience to the one command laid upon him. Tested under conscience from the fall to the deluge, he so behaved himself that corruption and violence filled the earth. Tested under the restraints of government and promise, he went into almost universal idolatry, from which God called Abram to whom He revealed Himself anew. Tested under law, the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles because of the evil behavior of those who had received that revelation at Sinai. Tested under the personal presence of the Son of God, they crucified the Lord of Glory. Tested under grace, many spurn the gospel message. Tested under Christ's righteous reign, many will join in Satan's revolt at the end. But God's plan will not miscarry. The devil will be banished to the lake of fire and his power forever ended, and those who have suffered because of faithfulness to Christ will receive a full reward.

"At length—the final kingdom,
No bound, no end possessing,
When heaven and earth—
God all in all
Shall fill with largest blessing.

All root of evil banished,
No breath of sin to wither,
On earth—on high—
Naught else but joy,
And blissful peace forever!"

—Gilpin.

"I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them"—Rev. 20: 11.

IT was Thomas Carlyle who wrote: "What a sublime thought is that of a last judgment; a righting of all the wrongs of the ages." And Solomon declared that God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ need have no fear of that judgment day, for "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." To these the Lord has promised they "shall not come into condemnation [or judgment]," for they have passed already out of death into life.

But the Christless may well dread that awful hour when all the wicked dead will stand before the Great White Throne to be judged according to their works. That judgment will be unbiased. It will be according to truth. Each case will be dealt with individually, and every one rewarded according to his deeds. Each will be dealt with in absolute righteousness. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

"That day of wrath, that dreadful day
When heaven and earth shall pass away:
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall we meet that dreadful day?"

Oh, on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be Thou, O Christ, the sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away."

—Walter Scott.

DECEMBER 22

"I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband"

—Rev. 21: 1, 2.

IN reading the description of the new Jerusalem, the eternal Home of the heavenly saints, it is important to remember that God is speaking in symbols, as indicated in Revelation 1:1, where the word translated "signified" really means, "made it known by symbols." But it is easy to read these in the light of what is elsewhere revealed in the Word of God.

We have here that city which hath foundations, for which Abraham looked in faith (Heb. 11:10). It is set forth in verses 1 to 7 as it will be for all eternity, when the new heavens and the new earth shall succeed the present temporal conditions. But from verse 9 of chapter 21 through verse 5 of chapter 22, we see the heavenly city in connection with the millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then the nations will learn war no more. Those will be the days of heaven upon earth, when the holy city, the center of light and blessing, will be the capital of the glorious kingdom over which Christ and His Bride, the Church, will reign in righteousness.

**"Press on! Press homeward! One there is beside thee,
Who knows the way—a way Himself hath trod.
Thy hand in His, how safely will He guide thee
The few steps more—and then the rest of God."**

—Lucy A. Bennett.

DECEMBER 23

"I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away"—Rev. 21: 3, 4.

GOD delights to dwell with men. From the time when He walked and talked with our first parents in Paradise, He has always expressed His pleasure in communion with His people. When, at last, time has run its course and all His children are gathered home in the new Jerusalem, He will rejoice in the fact that He has the unnumbered hosts of the redeemed gathered about Himself in a scene never to be marred by evil of any kind. It is this to which saints of all ages have looked forward, and this hallowed fellowship will be their supreme joy in the ages to come, when Christ Himself, the Lamb once slain, will be the lamp through whom the divine glory will be displayed in all its fulness.

"Oh, by Thy soul-inspiring grace,
Uplift our hearts to realms on high;
Help us to look to that blest place
Beyond the sky,
Where light and life and joy and peace
In undivided empire reign,
And thronging angels never cease
Their deathless strain;
Where saints are clothed in spotless white,
And evening shadows never fall,
Where Thou Eternal Light of light
Art Lord of all."

"He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely"—Rev. 21: 6.

WHEN all in heaven and in earth will be reconciled to God, even those who have persisted in rebellion against Him and in the refusal of His clemency, will be subjugated to His authority. Through enduring the horrors of the second death, eternal separation from God, they will realize that they have been dealt with in righteousness and are but receiving "the due reward of their deeds."

For the redeemed there will be unbroken fellowship with God, who shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and free them forever from all that was mutable or that could cause pain or grief. Theirs will be unbroken communion with Him who says, "I make all things new."

It is not God's will that any should fail of this blessedness. Therefore He offers to every thirsty soul to give freely of the fountain of the water of life. If any refuse to drink and live, they have but themselves to blame for their eternal loss.

"I am come unto the waters,
Thou didst call me by name—
Thou didst call unto the thirsty,
I was thirsty and I came.

Drink from out the depths unfathomed
Life eternal, life divine—
Thou, O measureless, exhaustless,
Thou for evermore art mine."

—Frances Bevan.

DECEMBER 25

CHRISTMAS DAY

"The angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord"

—Luke 2: 10, 11.

THE miraculous birth of our Saviour is one of the foundation stones of our Christian faith. It is the companion truth to that of His expiatory sacrifice on the cross. Because of this, it will generally be found that he who denies the one denies the other. Too much importance therefore cannot be attached to the historic fact that Jesus was born of a virgin mother and that the "Child . . . born" was the "Son . . . given" (Isa. 9:6). He who deigned to enter human conditions by the birth in Bethlehem is the One "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Mic. 5:2). To deny this is to repudiate the truth of the gospel, apart from which there is no hope for a lost world.

THE TRIUMPH OF CHRISTMAS

"Can we say, 'Merry Christmas!'
When all around it's night;
When war spreads death and sorrow;
And wrong o'ercomes the right?

Is love the greatest power?
Or is it hate and greed?
If we speak now of Christmas,
Will anyone give heed?

'Ah, yes!' comes back faith's answer;
The hearts of men still cry
For that one Consolation,
To cheer them ere they die.

Then still sound forth the Message
The angel heralds sang;
That o'er the hills of David
In peals of rapture rang.

Then from the lowly manger,
Shall rise a mighty Throne;
The Babe become earth's ruler;
And men serve God alone."

"There came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's Wife"—Rev. 21: 9.

THE eternal home of the saints was to John as a beautiful city "coming down out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." We often picture a city as a woman. We speak of London under the figure of the queen-city on the Thames. Rome comes before us both as the city that in John's day had dominion over all the earth, and as the scarlet woman, Babylon the Great. So the New Jerusalem appears as the capital city of the glorious kingdom of God and as the Bride of the Lamb.

All the redeemed are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, Jerusalem, which is above, is our mother. Our citizenship is in heaven. We are but strangers here passing on to that eternal rest which remains for the people of God.

"Jerusalem, the glorious!
 Glory of the elect,—
 O dear and future vision
 That eager hearts expect!
 E'en now by faith I see thee,
 E'en here thy walls discern;
 To thee my thoughts are kindled,
 And strive, and pant, and yearn!

O sweet and blessed Country!
 Shall I e'er see thy face?
 O sweet and blessed Country!
 Shall I e'er win thy grace?—
 Exult, O dust and ashes!
 The Lord shall be thy part;
 His only, His forever,
 Thou shalt be, and thou art!"

—Bernard.

"The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb"
—Rev. 21: 14.

IT was after the false harlot, the apostate church, had met her richly-deserved doom that John was given a vision of the true Church, as a great city built upon the foundation of the apostles of the Lamb, and surrounded by a wall great and high. The wall speaks of security and of separation. The inhabitants of that city will be protected from all evil and forever separate from all that is unholy. Yet its gates of pearl will be open to all who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

It may not be possible to explain satisfactorily all the wondrous symbolism of this description of our heavenly home, but what Christian heart does not beat a little faster as we read of its glory and its magnificence! What a glad consummation to our years of pilgrimage and testing when we all gather home together to go no more out for eternity! There we shall behold the King in His beauty and shall dwell in the light of His countenance throughout eternity.

"City of the pearl-bright portal;
City of the jasper wall;
City of the golden pavement;
Seat of endless festival.
City of Jehovah, Salem,
City of eternity,
To thy bridal-hall of gladness,
From this prison would I flee,
Heir of glory,
That shall be for thee and me?"

—H. Bonar.

"There shall be no night there"—Rev. 21:25.

IT has often been remarked that it is astonishing how little the Bible tells us about what we shall find in heaven. It shows us how to get there and emphasizes the importance of being sure we are in the way to the city of bliss; but it does not say a great deal about the place itself. Someone has described it as "the land of no more," for we are told that there will be no more tears, no more pain, no more sorrow, no more sin, and no more night.

This means a great deal to those who have known tears and sorrow, heartbreak, and bitter anguish. To such the night is a time to be dreaded. The long weary hours seem endless as one waits for the dawning of the morning. But over yonder night will be forever gone, and we shall bask eternally in the sunshine of the Father's smile and the Saviour's presence. As we look back over the path that led to the city, we shall praise our God for all His dealings with us.

"No night there, but an endless day
In that beautiful land far away, far away,
Our feet shall tread on streets of gold.
There is no night there, but joy untold."

—Anon.

DECEMBER 29

"He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb"—Rev. 22: 1.

THE pure river of the water of life that proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb is the Holy Spirit's testimony to the perfection of Christ and His finished work. In this our souls shall rejoice for all eternity. As we drink of that limpid stream we shall never thirst for the vain, empty, unsatisfying things of earth.

"Insatiate to this Spring I fly;
I drink, and yet am ever dry."

The more we know and enjoy of the preciousness of Christ the more we shall desire, and so we shall drink forever of that stream of blessing, that fountain of everlasting life.

Here on earth we know what it means to be led beside still waters and to have our spirits refreshed as the truth of Christ is revealed to us. Over there we shall know in all its fulness what here we know only in part. Christ will be our portion forever. We shall never tire of beholding Him or of the consideration of His love and grace.

"Glorious river of God's pleasures,
Well of God's eternal bliss,
Thirsty now no more forever,
Tread we this waste wilderness.

Waters of eternal gladness,
Won for us at countless price,
Lo, the desert is God's garden,
And the wastes are Paradise!

—T. P.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still"—Rev. 22: 11.

SOLEMN indeed is the lesson that these verses bring before us. Character tends to permanence. He who revels in filth and follows the ways of unrighteousness throughout his life here on earth, will go out into eternity only to be confirmed in his wickedness and never separated from it forever. On the other hand, he who turns to God in repentance and obtains new life in Christ through believing the gospel, will be characterized in his pilgrimage here by a love for purity and holiness, and will find his joy in seeking to walk before God in paths of righteousness. This delight in the things that please God will become more and more intense until called from this scene, when he will be fully conformed to the image of God's Son and confirmed in holiness and goodness.

Death does not make bad people good, and, thank God, it can never make good people bad! It confirms people for eternity in the ways in which they have chosen to walk. "As the tree falls, so is shall lie." Our state in eternity is unchanging.

**'Come, make thy choice!—for life or death eternal,
Christ or the world—the broad or narrow way;
The Father's Home, or the abode infernal,
Unending joy or sorrow—choose to-day.**

**Come, make thy choice! It may be now or never;
'Tis worse than madness longer to delay;
Now is the hinge of all the vast 'forever;
To-morrow never cometh—choose to-day."**

—Wm. Blane.

**"Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me,
to give every man according as his work shall be"**

—Rev. 22: 12.

WE may think His coming has been long delayed, but He "is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish." Every day He delays gives additional opportunity for men to come to Him and become members of the Church which is His body. When that Church is complete He will descend from heaven with a shout to call all His own to Himself. Then each shall be rewarded according to the measure of our individual faithfulness.

"The year is creeping to its end,
Low bent with burdens it has borne—
A world at war! No peace on earth,
Though Christ has died to give it birth.
What hope have we who wait and mourn
That things will change and times will mend?

Our hope is fixed on Him who died
And rose triumphant over death;
For He will come to earth again
To keep His promise made to men
For whom He cried with dying breath,
*'Tis finished! He was satisfied.

The New Year dawns! With it we pray
That, sooner than we think, the light
Of peace and life and love will drive
The shadows from our hearts, revive
Our hopes, dispel the shades of night,
And bring the glories of His Day.

—T. E. P. Woods.



