

BIBLE STUDIES.

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME 13.

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CHRONOLOGY.

Several lengthy contributions have been received regarding the subject of the **430** years of Israel's bondage (see pages **87** and **100**, last year's volume), but space will not allow publication in full, and we must bring the discussion to a close. H. J. Owles writes in support of the generally accepted chronological interpretation and refutes Panin's suggestions, but A. B. Russell endeavours to show that if Jacob could have a son at the age of 91 then nothing hindered Kohath and Amram from having sons when they were about **85** years old, and "thus endeavours to show that a period of **430** years could elapse from the year prior to the birth of Isaac to the Exodus. See later remarks as to **Panin**.

The greater part of a very lengthy contribution by A. F. Atkinson is taken up with an eulogy of Anstey as a chronologist, a matter which is beyond that of our subject. We cannot at the moment discuss Anstey's merits as a chronologist, but A. F. A. uses his list of dates to show that "it is transparently clear that the children of Israel dwelt **215** years in Egypt and not **430**." This "transparency" depends upon the acceptance of Anstey's work and not upon pure chronology. It is essential that we should distinguish between *pure chronology* (which we define to be the addition of specified dates) and *inference*. To the time when Jacob went to Egypt there are sufficient intervals specifically stated to allow a list of dates by addition.

Dates from the birth of Abraham.

Genesis	12. 4.	Abraham enters Canaan and goes down to Egypt	75
	„ 16. 16.	Ishmael born	86
	„ 21. 5.	Isaac born	100
	„ 21. 8.	Isaac weaned?	105
	25. 26.	Jacob born	160
	25. 7.	Abraham died (at 175).	175
	35. 28.	Isaac died (at 180).	280
	47. 9.	Jacob enters Egypt (at 130).	290

Thus pure chronology shows that from the entry of Abraham into Canaan to the entry of Jacob into Egypt there is an interval of **215** years. In the above table the only doubtful or inferred event is that of the weaning of Isaac.

We shall search in vain for sufficient data to compile a similar list to the Exodus by pure chronology, and inference must be used. The following quotation from Alford on Galatians **3. 17** shows what is involved in this matter of inference:—

" Joseph was **39** years old when Jacob came into Egypt (Genesis 41. 46, **47**; 45. 6); therefore he was born when Jacob was **91** (47. 9), **6 years before Jacob left Laban** (30. 25 and 31. 41), having been with him **20** years (31. 38, 41), and having served him **14** of them for his two daughters (31. 41). Hence, seeing that

his marriage with Rachel took place when he was **78** (91-20 + 7; the marriages with Leah and Rachel being contemporaneous, and the second seven years of service occurring *after*, not, as I assumed in the first edition, before, the marriage with Rachel); Levi, the third son of Leah, whose first son was born after Rachel's marriage (29. 30-32), must have been born not earlier than Jacob's 81st year, and consequently was about **49** (130-81) when he went down into Egypt. Now, (Exodus 6. 16) Levi lived in all **137** years: *i. e.* about **88** (137-49) years in Egypt. Rut (6. 16-20) Amram, father of Moses and Aaron, married his father Kohath's sister, Jochebed, who was therefore, as expressly stated in **Numbers 26. 59**, 'the daughter of Levi, whom *her mother* bare to Levi in Egypt.' Therefore Jochebed must have been born within **88** years after the going down into Egypt. And seeing that Moses was **80** years old at the Exodus, if we call *x* his mother's age when he was born, we have **88 + 80 + x** as a **maximum** for the sojourn in Egypt, which clearly therefore cannot be **430** years or even 400, as in the former case *x* would be **262** years and in the latter **232** years."

Alford then **assumes** that if the beginning of the period of **430** years begins with the entry of Abraham into Canaan, then pure chronology indicates **215** years from then to the going down into Egypt, and with this assumption there would be **215** years spent in Egypt, and thus Jochebed would be about **47** (or more if she were born before the death of her father), which **seems** reasonable to Alford.

Some of these statements by Alford are open to query and disagreement, though we refrain from doing so. At each stage there is debatable conjecture, and nothing could show more clearly the nature and number of the assumptions that must be made in connection with the chronology of this period. Anstey (like all other chronologists), must therefore enter the field of inference or even interpretation as regards the beginning of the period of **400** years: he **assumes** that it begins with the weaning of Isaac when Abraham was 105, and that the departure * from Egypt took place **505** years after the birth of Abraham or **430** years after his entry into Canaan. It is necessary to know these facts as to the inferences made so that the chronology is not quoted to assert that the children of Israel were in Egypt for **215** years. Inference is quite legitimate within its limits, but the consequences of the inference cannot be afterwards quoted to prove the truth of the inference. If, however, inference links together in a reasonable way all the known **facts**, then there is a high probability, but not certainty, as to its accuracy.

The matter is complicated by difficulties of text and translation. The LXX says that the sojourning of the children of Israel, covered by the **430** years, was in Egypt and Canaan [also the Samaritan Pentateuch. — S. B. J. The A. V. is indefinite as to where the sojourning of the children of Israel took place, and the R. V. says that it was in Egypt. Translation is a matter for expert scholarship, and is not guided and determined by the science of chronology. Hebrew scholars **must** determine what Exodus says, for such as are not expert enough to decide for themselves.

Panin's assumption that the **430** years began with the events of Genesis 17. gives no event which can be located as occurring **30** years later, and therefore, even if ages could be summed hypothetically to fill in the period, there is a hiatus. **We must** therefore conclude that Panin's suggestion lacks weight.

The question therefore remains, as to what events appear to fit most reasonably into the chronological scheme. Alford **assumes** the period of **430** years to begin when Abraham went to Canaan, and Anstey **assumes** the **400** years began with the weaning of Isaac and the casting out of Ishmael, both these assumptions being consistent with one another if we **assume** that Isaac was **5** years old when he was weaned. These inferences appear therefore to be justifiable.

J. M., A. T. D.

THE MIRACLES AND THE PARABLES.

As we enter upon a study of the Miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is of interest to look back upon our studies for 1944, and seek to recognise some links between miracles and parables.

The Lord taught both by miracles and by parables. There were some lessons which only the performing of a miracle could adequately teach. It **must** be remem-

bered that **the** miracles were no mere displays of power, but were " signs " as full of spiritual meaning and divine truth as the parables themselves. Nicodemus, the great teacher in Israel, confirms **this** when he says: "We know that Thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs that Thou doest, except God be with him " (John 3. 2). It is certainly true that the miracles were works of power. They were also manifestations of **His** glory, and convincing expressions of **His** great love and mercy toward those who benefited by them. They mostly bore testimony to the exquisite susceptibility of **His** spirit, the quickness, the fulness, the liveliness of **His** sympathy for human grief and ailment. Nevertheless, as far as we are concerned, **His** great wonders were primarily intended to teach spiritual truths. Sometimes, however, it was quite sufficient for **Him** to convey a lesson to **His** audience or reveal a particular truth by means of a parable. The parable was memorable even to the simple and uneducated of the people, with its concise and figurative style, and was a form of speech frequently used by the Lord in setting forth divine truth. **He** always had a deep meaning in **His** parables which was often incomprehensible to the multitudes, but which could be understood by those who were not spiritually blind, but willing to learn. The fact that the Lord conveyed **His** spiritual teaching in both miracle and parable is then our first link between the two.

A parable is always represented in a miracle. This is specially the case with the miracles of healing, and the Lord's words in Matthew 9. 12 constitute a little parable which brings out this point. He said, " They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick . . . I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. " Physical infirmities often speak of spiritual infirmities, and the Lord's words here suggest that **His** miracles of healing were, on many occasions, a picture of the healing of the soul, and of the redemption of the soul from the reign of death. Sickness and disease are a type of sin. The man full of leprosy in Luke 5. 12 is a good example. **He** probably had never seen the Lord before, face to face, and knew little more about **Him** than was rumoured. Yet when he approached the Lord he showed a profound reverence for **Him**, and his words were simple, but full of earnestness, faith and submission. **He** did not hesitate as to the power the Lord could wield, there was no presumption or dictation as to **His** divine will. **He** just cast himself upon that free will and almighty power which he knew the Lord possessed. The Lord's reply to his request was prompt and gracious, and the miracle was performed immediately, completely and satisfactorily. The whole story of the miracle may be regarded as a parable showing: —

1. The strange, spreading, loathsome and fatal disease of leprosy as a type of deep, pervading and corrupting sin.
2. The sinner in his terrible condition before God, and his need of a contrite and acceptable approach to God as a convicted and penitent sinner; also his desire to be cleansed of his sin.
3. The immediate and complete cleansing wrought by God of those who will implicitly put faith in **Him** whom **He** has sent—the **One** " who did no sin, neither was guile found in **His** mouth, " being spotless and undefiled. **He** associated **Himself** with us and bore the dread penalty of our sin on the cross, without becoming contaminated thereby.

Such an outline of the miracle, though brief, shows us that as we construe the spiritual truth involved, all miracles will appear in this aspect as parables, whether they are miracles of healing or not. Let us take the miracle which followed the cursing of the fig-tree. In all other miracles the Lord shows mercy, kindness and compassion (indicative of God's present dispensation of free grace) and this is the single exception. The fig-tree which should have been yielding its fruit, showed nothing but leaves. Israel's history had been one of unfruitfulness, sin and rebellion. And now they should have been rejoicing in the advent of their Messiah, but instead the air was full of conspiracy against **Him**. We see here the swift, severe and withering judgment which God shall bring down upon **His** ancient people and, indeed, upon the whole world. But such is not the only teaching brought out by this miracle-parable. The Lord uses the incident to show the power and conditions of prayer and the great results which can be achieved through believing prayer.

In some cases, parables follow miracles, and vice-versa. The illustration of the sheep in the pit (Matthew 12. 11, 12) is really a parable, and follows the healing of the man with the withered hand. The link, which is made by the Lord Himself, between miracle and parable in this case is very clear; also the sequel to the opening of the eyes of the blind in John 9. is undoubtedly connected with the parable of the Good Shepherd of John 10.

Some miracles remind us of certain parables through the use of a word or name. The parable of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18. is linked with the cleansing of the ten lepers in Luke 17. by the words "afar off," which describe the position of the publican in the parable and the lepers in the miracle. We are reminded of the parable of the prodigal son when we read the story of the woman with the issue of blood. She had spent all her living on earthly physicians with no result or satisfaction. When she was thus at her extremity, unable to look for human aid, she went to the Great Physician who alone could effectively cure her. It was when the prodigal son had spent all, and began to be in want, and came to himself that he made the decision to go back to his father. What his father did was far above anything he deserved or expected. "The poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst; I the LORD will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them" (Isaiah 41. 17). We are reminded too of the raising of Lazarus of Bethany (John 11.) when we read the story of Lazarus the beggar (Luke 16.). The rich man pleads with Abraham that he might send Lazarus to testify unto his five brethren who were left on the earth, for, said he, "They will repent." Abraham could only reply, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead." This was proved beyond doubt when another Lazarus was raised from the dead. The Pharisees and the chief priests continued quite unwilling to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Actually they hated Him the more, for "from that day forth they took counsel that they might put Him to death" (John 11. 53).

The disciples crossing the lake (Mark 6. 45-52) is a beautiful story and may be considered as a parable. The Lord Himself was alone on the mountain praying, yet watching them all the time. They spent a dark stormy night without Him, but that night ended in a bright and cloudless morning, when He joined them, for "about the fourth watch of the night, He cometh unto them." This surely speaks to us of the Lord's coming when instead of trouble there will be "good* cheer," and the winds will cease. Instead of tossing in the midst of the stormy sea of this world we shall immediately be at the land whither we are going (John 6. 21). Truly weeping may tarry for the night, but joy cometh in the morning! It is noteworthy that three miraculous incidents are connected with this story.

1. Jesus walking on the water.
2. The calming of the winds.
3. The immediate arrival at the opposite side, near Capernaum.

This miracle and the cursing of the fig-tree show us that some miracles, like spoken parables, have a dispensational character.

Such are some of the evident links between miracles and parables in the Scriptures. In our studies for 1945 it will be refreshing to observe in miracles their connection with parables as we have viewed it in these different aspects.

Martin D. Follett.

THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Comparison and contrast between the Lord's miracles and the main groups of Old Testament miracles (notably those wrought by (a) Moses and Joshua; (6) Elijah and Elisha).

From Manchester.—A broad review of God's ways with men throughout the dispensations of the Old Testament very forcibly impresses upon the student of scripture that the miraculous manifestation was comparatively rare. In general, men were required to exercise faith in the word of God. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things *not seen*." The Lord upbraided His own generation for their seeking after a sign, rather than accepting the testimony of God's word, and most generations of men and women have never witnessed

miraculous **evidences** of divine intervention (apart of course from those **recurring** wonders of "**Nature**" which are not regarded as miracles in the sense of which we speak). The following summary of miraculous occurrences in Old Testament times will serve to illustrate our point, although **it** may not include every miracle.

Approx. Date B. C. (per Newberry).	Miracle(s).	Remarks.
3017	Enoch's translation.	A significant type.
2350	The Deluge.	The end of an age .
2247	Confounding of tongues at Babel.	A unique step in God's dealing with men.
1890	Birth of Isaac.	The seed of promise.
1500 to 1450	Miracles associated with the Exodus, the desert journey, and the entering of Canaan .	The establishment of a nation for the dispensation of the law.
1150 to 1120	Samson's birth and feats of strength.	The consolidation of the nation.
975	Jeroboam's hand withered and altar rent, and man of God slain by lion.	The division of Israel from Judah.
910 to 838	Period of ministry of Elijah and Elisha —numerous miracles.	Prophets of the Restitution.
862	The sign of Jonah the prophet.	A unique testimony to a Gentile people.
713	Hezekiah's sundial sign.	
580	Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and the fiery furnace.	A testimony in the captivity of God's people.
537	Daniel in the den of lions.	

The remarks **in the** right hand column suggest that God has intervened with miraculous power only for some special purpose, such **as** to introduce a **new age**, to remonstrate with His backsliding people, to deal **in** signal judgment, or to confirm the witness **and** faith of His **servants** who **were** testifying among godless peoples. There may have **been** other miracles which are not recorded **in** the Scriptures, for He spoke to the fathers "**in divers** portions **and in divers manners**." **But we can** accept the Holy Spirit's testimony from the sacred writings, that for long **centuries** no miraculous **signs** are recorded, **and** that for the most part God's **saints** have known **Him** through faith **in His** will **as** revealed in the divinely **inspired** word.

As **students in a remnant** day we do well to **view** the miracles of the Old Testament in correct perspective, and particularly to notice the **absence** of miraculous **signs and** wonders **in** connection with the return of the **remnant** from Babylon to Jerusalem under Ezra **and** Nehemiah. **Haggai 2. 5** emphasises that the **LORD** was every **bit as** much with these feeble **remnant** builders, **as He** was when Israel were led out of Egypt with mighty displays of supernatural power. There are those who still hanker after wonders **and signs**, **but if we have assessed** the character of this dispensation **in** the light of God's word, **it** will help **us** to **be** content with carrying out His word in simple faith.

The foregoing **review** of Old Testament miracles shows that there were only two periods in Israel's history when the **number of signs** wrought by God's servants could **in any way** compare with the outpouring of divine power through Immanuel. Those two periods were from 1500 to **1450 B. C.** (the ministry of Moses and Joshua), **and** from **910 to 838 B. C.** (the ministry of Elijah **and** Elisha). We notice that, these periods are much longer than that of the Lord's public ministry, **yet the number** of miracles wrought by **Him is far greater** than those wrought by Old Testament prophets. The following analysis of these O. T. periods of miracles **may** serve to show this more clearly.

(1) MOSES.

(a) Miracles of Judgment.

The 10 plagues of Egypt.
Egyptians destroyed in Red Sea.

Judgment on Korah and his fellows.

Miriam's leprosy.

(b) Miracles of Blessing.

Israel's passage through Red Sea.

Pillar of Cloud and Fire.

Water sweetened at Marah.

Daily Mannah.

Clothes remained new.

Quails sent for meat (twice).

Water from rock (twice).

Aaron's rod that budded.

Serpent of Brass.

(c) Others.

The signs of the serpent and the leprous hand.

Balaam's ass speaks.

(2) JOSHUA.

(a) Miracles of Judgment,

The walls of Jericho.

Hailstones on Amorites.

Sun and moon stayed in their course.

(b) Miracles of blessing.

The crossing of Jordan.

(3) ELIJAH.

(a) Miracles of Judgment.

Three and a half years' drought.

Fire from heaven (Baal's challenge).

Fire from heaven consumes captains of fifty.

(b) Miracles of blessing.

Fed by ravens.

The widow's oil and meal.

The widow's son raised from the dead.

Jordan divided.

Translation of Elijah.

(4) ELISHA.

(a) Miracles of Judgment.

Destruction of youths by bear.

Gehazi's leprosy.

Syrians blinded and led to Samaria.

(b) Miracles of blessing.

Jordan divided.

Waters of Jericho healed.

Delivery of Jehoram and Jehoshaphat.

Widow's cruse of oil.

Shunammite's son raised from dead.

Meal saves from death in the pot. 100 men fed from 20 loaves.

Naaman cleansed.

Axe head restored.

Resurrection of dead man at Elisha's sepulchre.

We have already noted that the Lord's miraculous works exceeded in number those of any Old Testament prophet, and in view of John 21. 25 it is probably true that they exceeded the miracles of all the Old Testament prophets combined. It is also striking that a considerable proportion of miracles in the Old Testament involved judgment for the evil doer, reflecting the character of past dispensations. In glorious contrast the dispensation of the grace of God was heralded by the appearance of One whose power was used only for the blessing of men. The miracle of the withered fig tree stands in lonely contrast to all other signs wrought by Him through whom grace and truth came.

The ministry of Elisha is perhaps more comparable than that of any other prophet to the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. His kindly acts of grace present a delightful type of Jehovah's Servant, just as Elijah's rugged character prefigured that of John the Baptist. The friendship for the needy and the widow, the raising of the Shunammite's son, the cleansing of the leper, and the feeding of many from little, all seem to find their fuller counterpart in the miracles of the Lord. Yet whereas Elisha fed 100 men from 20 loaves, the Master could feed 5,000 men, besides women and children, from only five loaves and two small fishes. Truly it hath pleased the Father that in all things He should have the preeminence!

G. Prasher, Jun.

From Kilmarnock. —We note in connection with the signs and wonders (or miracles) which Moses and Aaron wrought, that they were performed at the command of God **in** order that the children of Israel, and also Pharaoh the king, might believe that the God of the Hebrews had sent them (Exodus 5. 3). In contrast to this the Lord **Jesus** had the power within Himself, and had only to speak the word and the miracle was performed. This is shown **in** the case of the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5. 30. Then again the signs that Moses performed brought death and judgment on the people, while those performed by the Lord (with the exception of the cursing of the fig tree) were in mercy and grace. In Luke 9. 54 we have **an** example of the Lord's dealing in grace in contrast to Elijah calling fire from heaven (2 Kings 1. 10).

We note that God manifested **His**, power through Moses, affecting many forms of life; water, earth, plant life, animal life, the elements, and latterly human life. The Lord's power was also **seen in** various ways, notably in casting out demons, which showed His authority over the powers of evil. This form of miracle needed special prayer and faith (see Mark 9. 29). In the drying up of the Red **Sea** and the overthrow of the Egyptians, the result was that "the people feared the LORD: and they believed **in** the LORD, and **in His** servant Moses " (Exodus 14. 31).

Numbers 20. 2 tells of the second time that water was miraculously supplied, but this time Moses failed by striking the rock when God commanded Him to speak to the rock. The meekest of **men** spoke unadvisedly and missed the honour of leading them into the land of Caanan, **in** contrast to the Lord Jesus who ever did the things that pleased the Father.

Joshua, the warrior, did miraculously—"through faith subdued kingdoms . . . waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens "; we contrasted the Lord, whose kingdom was not of this world. Joshua 10. 12 gives an incident which is unique in the world's history, when he commanded the sun and moon to stand still. [Compare 2 Kings 20. 11.]

Elijah was the fiery prophet of the law and his actions seemed more **in** judgment than **in** mercy. **His** fervent prayer was effectual in restraining rain and also causing rain to fall on the earth. His testimony against the worship of Baal caused the people to turn to the Lord.

Like the Lord Jesus he was carried up to heaven, but in **a** fiery chariot and a whirlwind, while **in** contrast, the Lord was received up **in** a cloud. **His** powers were not confined to Israel, for we find from 1 Kings 17. 22 that he restored to life the son of the widow of Zarephath, which reminds us of the Lord's action in curing the Canaanitish woman's demoniac daughter. (See Mark 7. 29, 30).

In 2 Kings 1. to 13. we have a remarkable number of miracles and prophecies wrought through Elisha. Chapter 2. tells of the turning of water into blood, which led to the destruction of the Moabites. [The Moabites mistook water for blood—Eds.] Chapter 5. gives the healing of Naaman, captain of the Syrian army. Here we have mercy shown to a stranger to Israel, which we thought was similar to the Lord's action in curing the centurion's servant (Luke 7. 1). **We** noted, however, the contrast between the haughty, angry Naaman, and the humble centurion. In restoring the Shunammite's son we see the same sympathy as the Lord showed to the widow of Nain when he raised her son to life (Luke 7. 12).

Chapter 13. tells of the death of this wonderful prophet whose name means " God **is** Saviour. " In verse 21 we read that when they were burying a **man** they cast him into the sepulchre of Elisha, and as soon as the man touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet. Could this be viewed as a miracle of Elisha ? [This could hardly be regarded as a miracle of Elisha, since he had been dead some time, but it does mark the close of the remarkable series of miracles which accompanied the ministry of Elijah and Elisha. —G. P. Jun.] **We** were reminded of Matthew 27. 52. When the Lord expired, " the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints... were raised. " **A. G. S.**

From **Glasgow**. —The first two miracles which Moses wrought in the sight of God's people, and in the sight of Pharaoh in the land of Egypt had a dual significance, firstly that the people of Israel might believe that "I am" had sent him to be their deliverer, and secondly to display God's divine power to Pharaoh. Having thus revealed Himself by the name Jehovah through those miracles performed by the faithful Moses, He delivered them out of all their affliction and from under the burdens of Egypt. We see a similarity in the Lord's miracles, for He healed the woman who had been bound by Satan eighteen years. He also came to destroy the works of the devil, for God was with Him. The contrast is equally striking, for as Moses said, "I Am hath sent me," the Lord Jesus could say that He Himself was this great "I Am." Moses only wrought miracles by God working through him, whereas it could be said of the Lord when He performed miracles that power had gone forth from Him. So we see that the Lord Jesus had power within Himself, albeit He worked in perfect harmony with the Father, even as He said Himself: "My Father worketh even until now, and I work:" (John 5. 17) "I and the Father are one" (John 10. 30). Therefore through those miracles the Lord Jesus not only revealed that the Father had sent Him, but also that He showed forth His Deity, the God-Man and the Eternal Son of God. Truly great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in flesh!

Having thus shewn forth His power in redemption by the signs wrought by Moses, and through the slain lamb, God now manifests Himself by other miracles. In the wilderness, as the God who is able to prepare a table in the wilderness for His people, He clearly shows Himself to be the all sufficient One, "Jehovah Jireh." In those desert miracles we see a likeness to those of the Lord, for He fed five thousand and four thousand at different times, because He had compassion on them as sheep not having a shepherd. The contrast here is seen that Moses could only strike the rock to give the people of Israel water to drink, and could only tell them by God's word what they would shortly have to eat, whereas the Lord Himself said: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life: . . . for My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed" (John 6. 54, 55).

In the days of Elijah, God also performed miracles to display divine power in opposition to the idols of the land, that His people might not be led astray unto idolatrous worship. Elijah also performed the great miracle of raising the dead, but only by prayer and faith in the God who had sent him. Coming over again to the New Testament we see the similarity of the Lord's miracles. The Lord wrought cures of the sick, gave sight to the blind, healed the lepers, and raised the dead. Whereas there was nothing in Elijah to do such mighty acts, the Lord is seen as the One who "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases." Again He could say, "I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth on Me, though He die, yet shall He live" (John 11. 25).

The miracles of Elisha the prophet, we believe, were with a similar purpose to those of Elijah, for the upbuilding of the people of Israel, and to turn their hearts back again to the God of their salvation. Elisha also healed several in Israel, and still further we read of Naaman the leper, a Gentile outside the commonwealth of Israel, being healed, that it might be a voice to Israel because of their lack of faith in God. We suggest that because Elisha received a double portion of the spirit of Elijah he performed almost double the miracles which Elijah wrought. The Lord also in His miracles sought to turn Israel from the error of their ways.

F. Harvey.

EXTRACTS.

From Atherton. —There appear to be four miracles accredited to Elijah, and eleven or twelve to Elisha. In 2 Kings 4. to 6. we have six miracles recorded reminding us of the great flood of the Lord's wondrous doings. We noticed that Elijah and Elisha are often seen in a praying attitude before performing their miracles. Was this true of the Lord? It was thought that the Lord Jesus was ever in constant touch with God. Day and night He sought the face of the Father. Though He was God, He was as truly Man, and as God's Son who became

His Servant, **ever did** the Father's good pleasure. He **was** empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 10. 38). He had power in Himself, which **we** believe He **used**; He knew also the power of the Holy Spirit (see John 2. 4). **We** noted the important words of the Lord, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing." **We were** also impressed with the special manner in which the miracle **was** wrought. With the prophets much **was** done outwardly, *e. g. (a) The widow's son.* Elijah stretched himself upon the child three **times** after he had laid him on his own bed. *(b) The Shunammite's son.* Elisha performed much of the **same** ceremony. **He** stretched himself upon the child, and placed himself in the exact position of the dead **as** in the power of God he brought back life. Why did Elisha break off in the midst of his attentions? [The raising of the widow's son and the Shunammite's son **was** evidently gradual, **but** the Lord's raising of the widow's son of Nain and Lazarus **was** immediate. It is said of Elijah, "**He** stretched himself upon the child three **times**, and cried unto the LORD." **Of Elisha it is said, "He** went up, and lay upon the child... Then he returned, and walked in the house... and went up, and stretched upon him." **We** cannot explain why the difference in the cases, but it all shows that it **was** the LORD who raised the **dead**, not these prophets. **But** the Lord **Jesus** raised the dead and quickened them. —J. M. J. This would **seem** to indicate a waiting upon God, for these men could never act for God unless they **put** great faith in **Him**. With the Lord in contrast **we see immediate** and speedy action. Christ spake and it **was** done. "Young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up" (Luke 7. 14). 6?. A. Jones.

From Bolton. —In connection with the miracles of Moses **we** thought of the first one in Exodus 7. 10, the changing of Moses' rod into a serpent. The power of Moses over the serpent might be compared with the power of the Lord over Satan. **We** think of the wonderful miracle in Mark 5., where the man **was** completely in the power of Satan, more so perhaps than any other man of whom **we** read. **We see** the power of man absolutely inefficient to hold him, yet the wondrous power of the Lord releases him.

The second sign concerning the leprosy reminds **us** of the Lord's power to heal lepers (*e. g.* Luke 5. 12). **We** note that, unlike those under the law, the Lord could touch the leper without being infected or defiled. **We** contrast the **fact** that Moses **was** a servant, with no power of his own, whereas the Lord, although a Servant, **was** divine, and though doing nothing apart from **His** Father, yet **was equal to Him** in power.

One of the miracles wrought in Joshua's **time** (Joshua 3. 9-17), **was** the passing of Israel over Jordan dryshod. **We** think of the One who went down into death, and was raised again, the Firstfruits of them that are fallen asleep (1 Corinthians 15. 23). A great train of saints followed; for **He** led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men (Psalm 68. 18; Ephesians 4. 8). The Jordan is often compared to death (see Jeremiah 12. 5, etc.), and in that connection also **we** think of the miracle when Elisha made the **axe** head to swim.

In the raising of the sons of the women of Zarephath and Shunem by Elijah and Elisha, **we see** that both the prophets **came** low, identifying themselves with the dead. These miracles provided a test of faith, but **we** think that the faith of the Lord needed not to be tested, for always **we** read that at a word the work **was** performed immediately. F. Heary, I. Sankey.

From Birkenhead. —**We** can take for the purpose of comparison the two most impressive miracles of the Old and New Testament, similar in element, but very different in working. Elisha raised the Shunammite's son and the Lord Jesus raised Lazarus, **but** in the details of the miracles there are all the contrasts of the Old and the New. Elisha raised the boy, not through a power which **was** in himself, or **came** through him, **but** by earnest speaking and praying to God. **He** prayed that God should raise the boy and God answered his prayer after a **time** by sending the life **back** into the lad. The **prayer** of the Lord Jesus **at** the grave of Lazarus was not a prayer of a servant, **it was** a prayer of a Son. He knew the will

of His **Father** and He **knew** that He had the power and authority of God to **bring** the soul of Lazarus back to the body. **His** words were words of command and the result **was** instantaneous, just **as He**, with the **same** voice, brought **light** from darkness and brought the first **life** out of non-existence.

The Old Testament miracles of judgment **are** many. The plagues **in** Egypt were worked by Moses **as** the servant of God and culminated **in** the last terrible judgment of the death of the firstborn. When Moses' rod was stretched over the path between the waters, and the Red **Sea** went back to its old state over the doomed hosts of Egypt, the judgment of God on the late masters of **His** people was completed, and **His** people freed. The terrible fate **of** the sons of Korah, the **fall** of Jericho, and some of the miracles that Elijah wrought, were works of judgment that God chose **men** to perform.

The Lord Jesus brought **a message** of love and mercy and **in** consequence his miracles showed the **same** qualities. The command of the elements was **as** perfect **as** that which God allowed Moses to use on occasions; the command over life **and** health was the same, but the **message** was **a** different, wider **message** of love, and the Messenger of God, who was God, brought with **Him** pity and mercy into the world where so few cared for Him. *L. B. H.*

From Aberfan. —The Old Testament saints were instruments used of God in His condescending **grace** to display the wonders of His name. The power they manifested was not their own, but theirs through faith **in** God. **It** is noteworthy that ere Elijah raised the dead son of the widow of Zarephath or Elisha the dead son of the Shunammite, they prayed to Jehovah (1 **Kings** 17. 20, 21 and 2 **Kings** 4. 33), whereas our Lord, using **His** authority, said to the dead one: "I say unto thee, Arise" (Mark 5. 41 and Luke 7. 14). In this case, **He** who was the embodiment of divine power spoke, and **His** word was life. **He** spake, and it was done; **He** commanded, and it stood fast. **Here** we have not the instrument, but the divine Worker Himself; not the channel, but the source of life. No wonder therefore that through **Him** flowed life abundantly to those around Him. At **His** life-giving word demons, death and disease fled.

The miracles of Old Testament times fall into three different classes. There were some which were wrought by **a** faithful appropriation of **a** revelation from God. **As** an instance we may take the example of Elisha feeding the people with little food **as** recorded in 2 **Kings** 4. 42-44. Here we have emphasised (in contrast, no doubt, to the voices of other gods) "Thus saith the LORD." (Compare also John 2. 5). Also into this class fall the **cases** of Moses at Marah, Joshua at Jericho, and Elijah with the widow of Zarephath. Into the second class fall miracles which were wrought in answer to faithful prayer, **as in** the **case** of Elijah and the drought (James 5. 17). In other miracles there **is** no direct reference to **a** revelation from God, but they **seem** to have been performed by the leading of the Spirit of God. The **case** of Elisha and the woman in 2 **Kings** 4. 1-8 **is** an instance. In all miracles there was one object, and that was the displaying of God's power to **His** praise and glory. *R. C. Jones.*

From Yeovil. —In dealing with the subject of miracles we do well to have clearly in our mind what **a** miracle really is. The following **is** put forward **as** a definition of **a** miracle, in most of its aspects: —"A miracle **is** an effect produced by divine power above or opposed to what are the regular laws of nature."

It is not **a** violation of the laws of nature, but **a** suspension of their usual operation, for some important purpose. For instance, the regular effect of death **is** that the body corrupts and returns to lifeless elements. This **effect** **is** produced by the appointed laws of nature. **When** God suspends that regular effect, and gives life back to **a** dead body for some important purpose, **it** **is** **a** miracle. **Such** an effect **is** clearly the result of divine power. No other being but God can do it. [If our friends refer to miracles generally, would not Exodus 7. 11, 12 show that the devil's agents **can** also work miracles? The climax of the devil's supernatural power **is** seen in Revelation 13. 14, 15. Israel were specially warned **against** the **signs** and wonders of false prophets in Deuteronomy 13. 1-3. —G. P., Jun. 1.]

It is in this way that **we** see the comparison between the Old and New Testament miracles. They all more or less conform to this definition.

There seem, however, to **be** more points of contrast than similarity. **We** note that in the Old Testament a high proportion of the miracles are concerned with the effects of nature, *e. g.*, nine of the ten plagues in Egypt were in this realm, and also most of the miracles wrought by Moses and Joshua while travelling with the children of Israel. This is in contrast with those wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ, most of whose miracles were performed on the bodies, minds or spirits of sick men and women. *Austin S. Glover.*

From London, S. E. —The similarity between the times of Moses and the Lord Jesus Christ is briefly this: both in Egypt and in the days of the Lord, Israel were in bondage and under a foreign yoke. [What had the Roman occupation of Palestine to do with the Lord's miracles? Nothing, in my judgment. —J. M. J.] The miracles of the ten plagues upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians were designed to prove that Moses had divine authority behind his demand: "Let My people go." The plagues were probably of such a nature that they showed the power of God in connection with those things which would most affect the Egyptians, *e. g.*, the death of the cattle meant the death of the sacred bull which was one of their objects of worship; the plague of thick darkness meant the obscuring of the sun which was also an object of their adoration. The miracles of the Lord, in the same way, were enacted against the works of the devil, when He healed the sick, released those who were demon-possessed, etc. In the case of the Lord, Israel were in bondage under Roman rule. The rulers and people were expecting the Deliverer to come to lead them out of it. He came, but instead of leading them out as Moses did, He sought to free or save them from their sins (Matthew 1. 21). He caused no plagues to fall in judgment upon the Romans; rather showed mercy and compassion to all. He went about healing all that were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10. 88.)

Elijah called for a famine of dew and rain upon the land as a judgment on the people. The Lord judged no one, but graciously dispensed wine to the wedding guests, bread to the hungry, fish to those who had caught nothing, and healing to body, soul and spirit. Elijah had to identify himself with the widow's son, stretching himself upon the lad. The Lord could say, "Go thy way; thy son liveth" to the nobleman; and to the centurion, "Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee."

Elisha's miracles were more in number than Elijah's. The widow's oil multiplied, and only ceasing when vessels failed, again compares with the feeding of the multitude from five small loaves and two fishes; enough for all to eat and be filled. When the Shunammite's son was raised to life, the sending on of his staff was incapable of bringing voice or hearing. Elisha must come himself and stretch himself as did Elijah. The Lord healed in some cases by a word from a distance, but came to the grave of Lazarus. *H. J. Owles.*

From Hereford. —The power and working of God are not limited by the narrow confines of human ability and expectation, and thus the presence and purpose of God have often been characterised among men **by**" miracles, " by expressions of extraordinary power.

Miracles—in the sense in which **we** are now considering them—are the works of God, and the expression of His character: **we may** therefore **expect** a similarity between those of the earliest days and those of later periods, for *I, Jehovah, change not."

In the days of Moses and Joshua, God was laying a foundation which was to last for centuries: here was a true "birth of a nation," and God gave the Israelites a beginning ever to be remembered. These years of the nation's infancy were noted for wonderful evidences of the power of Jehovah, the God of Israel, proofs upon which faith could build to face the future with confidence. In the days of Elijah and Elisha, the prophets were repeatedly sent to a rebellious and idolatrous people: they were special men raised up in times of special need, and their words and deeds were proof of their genuineness as messengers from God. When finally the King-Messiah presented Himself for Israel's acceptance and loyalty, He came with the works of God which bore ample witness to His Person and authority. To unbiassed men, whether learned and religious or ignorant and poor, His works were convincing proof of His mission (*e. g.*, Nicodemus, John 3. 2; and the blind beggar, John 9. 32, 33). But Israel were no more ready to receive Him than to remember the law of Moses and the fiery rebukes of Elijah, and in consequence the Lord took out from them the few faithful ones, and gave them the kingdom. His miracles and signs, like those of Moses' time, marked the beginning of a new era in God's purposes among men, and they were long remembered by His intimate disciples, even to the elderly John as last of all he wrote the Gospel.

E. H. Merchant.

From **Wigan**. —At the time when His people appeared leaderless and completely at the mercy of an arrogant Pharaoh, God raised up a man who would not only challenge, but utterly defeat this adversary. Moreover God purposed to equip Moses, the man of His choice, with supernatural powers in order that, as God said, "the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD" (Exodus 7. 5). John, giving the purpose of the Lord's miracles in his Gospel (John 20. 31), explains that Jesus did these signs "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." The preliminary manifestation of power by Moses revealed equally powerful enemies. With the gradual extension of infinite power manifested in the ten miracles, opposition faded, God was revealed, and men confessed, "This is the finger of God" (Exodus 8. 19). It seems significant that as the first of the ten miracles by Moses resulted in water being turned to blood, the Lord's first sign was to change the water into wine. Whilst the last exercise of power in Egypt brought death to the first-born of each Egyptian household, the Lord Jesus showed His last (though He healed the high priest's servant later) and greatest wonder by raising Lazarus from the dead. It is hardly necessary to add here that "the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." "There hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses" (Deuteronomy 34. 10). Nevertheless Joshua receives the promise from God that "as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee." God's intention in the first miracles associated with Joshua is to establish the authority of His servant in the eyes of the people.

It is doubtful if Joshua would ever have attained recognition as leader by word of mouth alone. Having gained prominence among the Israelites by his first miracle, Joshua leads them to victory at Jericho. In this instance God's purpose apparently is to extend Joshua's fame outside Israel to the other nations (Joshua 6. 27). There seems to have been a similar progression in the miracles wrought by the Lord Jesus. Did He not first show His power to relatives and family friends at the marriage feast? Far surpassing anything he had previously done, Joshua finally astounds Israel by successfully ordering the sun and moon to stand still (Joshua 10. 12-14). The Lord Jesus also wrought miraculously in the physical realm, and His miracles in other more important spheres far surpassed the work of Joshua. The unmistakable connection between Creator and the created was clearly displayed when, as the Lord hung in death on the Cross, the sun was hidden and darkness covered the face of the earth. One more point is noteworthy about Joshua. At the end of his life and service, he leaves no doubt about his real mortal identity when he tells the children of Israel: "And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth" (Joshua 23. 14). It would be superfluous to contrast him in this connection with the Lord Jesus.

J. H. Ollerton.

BIBLE STUDIES.

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11).

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THE MIRACLES.

Comparison **and** contrast between the Lord's miracles **and** the **main** group of Old Testament miracles.

From Ilford. —The miracles of Moses and Joshua nearly all brought judgment upon the Egyptians and the nations who were dispossessed of their land. Those of Elijah and Elisha also brought judgment upon the enemies of Jehovah during their lifetime, although some were performed on behalf of those who believed in God and His almighty power, and who accepted the prophets as coming from God. But the miracles of Christ were practically always to the benefit of mankind. The miracles of the Old Testament were wrought through men by the almighty power of God, and were a sign to the Israelites, and others, of the great power which God wielded. The miracles which Christ wrought were indicative of His own power which He possessed.

It is interesting to notice too, how some of the miracles of Moses were types of Christ and **His** teaching, *e. g.*, the passing through the Red Sea, the life given to those who looked to the uplifted brazen serpent, and the water which was supplied through the smiting of the rock.

Perhaps the greatest miracle which Christ performed, which has no counterpart, is the miracle of the salvation of men through faith in His name, which was brought to fruition by His resurrection, and which will be fully shown forth when **He** returns again for **His** own. *E. H. Jarvis.*

The divine purpose in the Lord's " mighty works **and** wonders **and** signs. "

From Edinburgh. —The Lord said to Moses, " I will raise them (*i. e.* Israel) up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him " (Deuteronomy 18. 18, 19). When God sent Moses to the elders of Israel, and to Pharaoh, He did certain signs through Moses and Aaron to shew that He had appeared to Moses, and that it was He who had sent him. When the people of Israel saw these signs they believed (Exodus 4. 30, 31). Similarly, when the Lord Jesus, the Prophet of whom God had spoken to Moses, came, His Father gave Him certain signs to do to show that He had sent Him.

The earliest of the Lord's signs was the turning of the water into wine in Cana of Galilee. John had come baptising in water that the Lord Jesus Christ should be made manifest to Israel, and certain of John's disciples, having heard the witness he bore concerning Jesus of Nazareth, had believed that Jesus was the Christ and had become His disciples. They saw the sign that He did at the

marriage. Through it His glory **was** manifested to them and their belief in Him was confirmed. Others besides His disciples would see this sign, and knowing of the signs Moses had done, and that Moses had spoken of a Prophet who was to come (see John 1. 21), it would speak to them of the **fact** that He was sent from God.

Some time later we read of the Lord casting out spirits and healing all that were sick (Matthew 8. 16). The Holy Spirit has said through Matthew that these works were done in fulfilment of the words spoken through Isaiah, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases." We read concerning Christ as our High Priest that He is not one that cannot be touched by the feeling of our infirmities (Hebrews 4. 15). While on earth He entered ^{fully} into the feelings and circumstances of the sick and the sorrowful, and was with them in their troubles. This is illustrated beautifully in that when Martha and Mary were mourning the loss of their brother Lazarus, Jesus wept with them. These works bore witness to the fact that He was the One of whom Isaiah had spoken.

In John 5. we read that because the Lord had cured a man on the sabbath, afterwards claiming that God was His Father, the Jews sought to kill Him. In answer to them the Lord Jesus made certain significant statements in connection with His Deity and Sonship. The works He did were the works of His Father. By these works the Father was bearing witness that He had sent Him. Peter spoke of the Lord Jesus to the Jews on the day on which the Holy Spirit descended, as "a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God **did** by Him in the midst of you" (Acts 2. 22). Eternal life was bound **up** with hearing His word and believing Him that sent Him.

The raising of Lazarus was proof of another statement that the Lord made in His answer to the Jews (John 5. 21). "For as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom He will." Lazarus' sickness was for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. **He** was glorified in that His power over death was manifested. He was shown forth as the Resurrection and the Life, and many of the Jews believed on Him.

The divine purpose in the Lord's mighty works and wonders and signs is summed up in John 20. 30, 31. They were done to show Him forth as the Christ, the Son of God, that men might believe on Him, and, believing, might have life in His name.

John A. H. Robertson.

From Hereford. —We see in John 7. 52 how the Pharisees in their hatred sought to minimise the effect of the words of the Lord on the officers by appealing to the Scriptures which they maintained would show that no prophet would arise out of Galilee. As leaders of the Jews it was their duty to know the Scriptures, and had they fulfilled their duty they would have seen in the miracles the Lord performed a double sign, for they would have seen a prophecy fulfilled as well as a display of power. It was this utter disregard of their responsibilities that brought down the terrible reproof to Capernaum: "Thou shalt go down unto Hades: for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day."

In John we see that the very works the Lord performed were to the glory of God, for they were the works the Father had given Him to do, and they were of such a high standard that they testified to the One who performed them, that He was the Son of God. This manifestation of God the Father in the Son was such that the eyes of many were opened so that they believed.

To the Gentiles the miracles were a revelation of God, but to the Jews they should have been recognised as the fulfilment of prophecy.

J. O. Tidmas.

From Atherton. —The English word "miracle" is used in the Authorised Version to represent two different Greek words in the New Testament, according to **Dr. Young**. In John's Gospel the A. V. almost invariably uses the word "miracle," and the R. V. the word "sign," the Greek word being *Semeion*, which means to work out, or to prove. The seven miracles recorded by John were chosen by the Holy Spirit to prove the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 20. 30, 31).

The words "miracle" and "mighty work" indicate an **act** of power outside the ability of man in himself to perform, a supernatural act. The word "wonder," while also telling of an act of power, gives **us** an extension of thought, telling not only of the act of power performed, but the effect it is intended to produce—wonder or amazement **at** something unexpected or extraordinary.

A question was raised from Matthew 12. 38-40, where the **Jews** asked for a sign. What is the explanation of the Lord's words in view of His many signs? [Signs were given to **assist** and strengthen faith in the Divine Sonship of the Lord, as John 20. 31 shows. No sign but one was given to **an evil and adulterous generation**—the sign of Jonah the prophet. This sign, namely that of the resurrection of the Lord, the greatest of all signs, instead of becoming the destroyer of all unbelief in the Jews, has been turned, **as** with the gall of bitterness, into the **cause** of the greatest condemnation, for the men of Ninevah shall rise **up** in the judgment and condemn that evil generation. —J. M. J. It was remarked that the word "sign" is only mentioned incidentally in the first three gospels, **but** specifically so by John. Reference was made to the outstanding sign of the Lord's resurrection. This was a sign to **all** the people, the Lord's signs in His lifetime, in contrast, being localised, in Cana, in Jerusalem, in Capernaum, etc. **His** reply to the Pharisees' query of Matthew 12. would **suggest** that the Lord was referring to them **as** a nation. It was suggested too that the Lord's signs were done primarily for the benefit of **His** own. **We** noted the particular words, "In the presence of **His** disciples" (John 20. 30). This was done also because of the value of their testimony after **His** resurrection (see Acts 10. 38-43). The Gospels themselves were written to and for believers in the first place. It was pointed out on the other hand that we cannot **fail** to observe that others saw the Lord's signs (John 5. 14). They were done too for their benefit, for in their unbelief they were accountable. Hence the Lord's condemnation of them in Matthew 12. 41, 42.

Another thought was expressed, regarding the divine **fact**, that **He** who is God, was truly Man (Matthew 8. 17). **He** took upon Himself blood and flesh, and not only so, but our infirmities and sicknesses. This scripture, **as** the context proves, refers not to **His** death, but to **His** becoming acquainted with man's woes, and dealing with them. [This taking upon **Himself** our blood and flesh and our infirmities and sicknesses is very confusing, **as it is** stated here by our correspondents. When the Lord became a partaker of blood and flesh, like unto the children (Hebrews 2.), **He** did not take upon Himself our infirmities and sicknesses. **He** was free from all the consequences of sin and the Fall which are the heritage of all men. **He** was separate from sinners. **But** when **He** healed the **sick it was** done in the light of the fact that **He** was the Sin-bearer, for sin was the **cause** of all sickness and infirmity. The sickness of the body was but the outward manifestation of sin-sickness in the soul, just **as** the physical death followed the spiritual death of Adam. Adam died the day he sinned, and he also died **at 930** years of age. —J. M. J. **He** was a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief (or sickness R. V. M.) (Isaiah 53. 3). **We** believe God limited His power in working through **His** servants the prophets, but not so with the Lord. In **Him** we have a full flow of mighty works, wonders, and signs. It may be no exaggeration to say that **He** did more than all God's other servants put together (see John 21. 25). [Christ is above comparison. —J. M. J. G. Sankey.

EXTRACTS.

From London, S. E. 5. —The miracles were an essential element in the life-work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and three distinct N. T. Greek words are **used** to represent the miracles: —

1. **Mighty works** or powers, because they were correctly regarded **as acts** of an almighty, superhuman power (*e. g.*, Matthew 11. 20).
2. **Wonders** or marvels or prodigies, because they **excited** astonishment or roused deeper feelings, expressing the **effect** on the spectator (*e. g.*, John 4. 48).
3. **Signs**, because they were the visible tokens of an invisible **power** or agency, the evidence of a divine commission (*e. g.*, John 3. 2).

There **is** another word, simply " works, " implying the natural result of Messiah's presence among **men**; the word " miracle " itself is not used except in conjunction with these other words.

The salient purpose of God in the miracles **is** to supply evidence of divine power exhibited in visible results (Luke 11. 20). " That the new creating powers brought into the world in Christ should manifest themselves in miraculous agencies **was** a necessary consequence of His own manifestation or epiphany. " The miracles provided God's real attestation or proof of the revelation being genuine; they were distinct signs of the nature of His ministry and His Divine Person.

From the manward side, **it was** God's intention that the Lord's miracles should **be** an encouragement to faith. They were **a** response to faith, and were never wrought without prayer and faith on the part of the Lord Himself, and seldom on the part of the healed and their friends. The miracles were designed to attract witnesses to the Lord **Jesus** Christ and His kingdom, so consequently were an encouragement to faith. Many believed when they **saw** (John 11. 45), and the recorded samples of His mighty works were intended to encourage belief that **Jesus was** the Christ, the Son of God (John 20. 31).

There would also **seem to be** a symbolic purpose in the miracles, inasmuch **as** they **set** forth such divine truths **as** the result of sin, and the cure of sin; the dire **need** of faith and the results of lack of self-control. They were symbolic of spiritual need **met** by the Redeemer. For example, the redemption of mankind from sin **was** typified, and **its** earnest given, in the redemption of individuals from ailments caused by sin. This **is** entirely different from stating **fas** some erroneously do) that " divine healing is in the atonement. " During His *lifetime* the Lord bore the sicknesses and suffering of mankind (Matthew 8. 17), but in His *death* He bore our sins (1 Peter 2. 24). The former may be symbolic or illustrative of the latter, but **we suggest** that nowhere in Scripture **is** there any reference to the Lord dying for our sicknesses.

That the **miracles** intentionally played an important part in the Lord's mission of revealing **His** Father, **is** abundantly clear from their number, scope and prominence in the four biographies of the Man, Christ Jesus. A grand distinction peculiar to Christianity **is, it** won such **a** large number " in an **age** of high civilisation, through a few humble preachers of lowly position, on *the evidence of miracles*. Basing **its claim** on miracles the creed of the slave became eventually the faith of the Caesars. "

F.

L.

E.

Prom Liverpool. —There are **at** least forty-six miracles recorded **as** being performed by the Lord Jesus Christ, and the **greater** part of these were works of healing. This shows the compassion which the Lord had for **suffering** mankind **as He came** in contact with the results of sin; **but it would be** a mistake to suppose that these works were performed on the impulse of the moment. There was **a** great purpose being worked out in them and each had **a** place in the counsels of God.

Thus we have the phrase in Matthew 8. 17, " That **it might be** fulfilled which **was** spoken by Isaiah the prophet, " while **in** other places, in connection with incidents in the life of the Lord, we read that they occurred, " that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. " Now this does not mean that prophecies were the **cause, and** the miracles the effects of that cause; that **men** of God prophesied certain things concerning the Christ and therefore **He** did those things when **He** came. Rather that the cause **is** to be found in the great purpose of God for the salvation of **man** and that both the prophecies and their fulfilment are the **effects** or the working out of that purpose. **His** mighty works were **a** witness (together with the **fact** that in performing them **He was** fulfilling the scriptures concerning the Christ), that **His message** was the **message** of God, that **He** was the Christ, the Son of God.

In the different types of miracles which **He** wrought we **see** manifestations of His* glory. When **He** turned the water into wine **He** showed **His** power over **material** things; when **He** calmed the storm with **a** word, **He** showed **Himself as** the Upholder and Controller of the creation; when **He** healed the sick and raised the dead **He** showed **Himself as** the sinless One. **It is** fitting that this third category should comprise the most of **His** mighty works, because **He came** to put away sin, and in sickness and death we **see** the obvious results of that sin.

A. Roberts, R. S.

From Innerleithen.—In Old Testament days prophets were sent by God to His people to lead them and to keep them in His ways, and sometimes to deliver them from the disastrous results brought about by their straying from Him. For instance, of the prophet Moses it is said: "There hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses... in all the signs and the wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land... which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel." Moses' first appearance to the children of Israel as their leader, through whom God would deliver them from Egypt, was accompanied by certain signs, to prove that he was sent of God. Moses himself prophesied that a Prophet *like unto himself* would God raise up from among His people, speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ. When the Lord came to the Jews, He also wrought signs and wonders, the primary purpose of which was that the Jews might believe in Him as their Messiah, sent from God, and not only as a teacher, as Nicodemus saw Him at first.

Unlike their forefathers in the days of Moses, the majority of the Jews would not accept the witness of these signs, albeit some did believe on Him, as did those in John 11. 45, and others who became His disciples.

From Ilford.—During the Lord's comparatively short ministry there was not a single act of His that was not full of import for those who had eyes to see and ears to hear, and it is abundantly clear that the Lord's miracles were* full of divine teaching. It was noted in our previous study that practically all His miracles brought blessing to men and this very fact should have convinced the recipients of these blessings and the many onlookers that there was something inherently good about the performer.

In the scriptures quoted regarding this subject a variety of purposes are clearly enunciated, *e. g.*

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. Matthew 8. 14-17 | The fulfilment of scripture. |
| 2. Matthew 11. 20-24 | To bring to repentance. |
| 3. John 2. 11 .. | That His character and glory might be manifested. |
| 4. John 5. 36 .. | To witness to His divine origin. |
| 5. John 9. 3 .. | That God might be manifested by the mighty works He did. |
| 6. John 11. 4, 4 5 .. | The glory of God as a result of onlookers believing. |
| 7. John 20. 30, 3 1 .. | That eternal life might be vouchsafed to believers. |

The fact that certain miracles are actually quoted as being the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy should to us, at any rate, show His perfect knowledge of the Scriptures, coupled with His divine ability to fulfil them. Thus His divine character should be portrayed to us, as it should have been to the people of the Lord's own day, and the next step, *viz.* repentance, should follow in natural sequence. This stage having been reached, a further purpose would be ripe for fulfilment—belief in Him bringing life to the believer and glory to God. It was suggested that whatever other specific purpose may have been intended regarding any miracle, they all had the one ultimate aim—glory to God. The angels' message at His birth was "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men." This undoubtedly was the divine purpose of the many wonders and signs which the Lord performed" during His ministry here, and the result should be the divine miracle of the new birth to the believer. *A. G. J. (Jun.).*

From Yeovil.—In Matthew 8. 17, we see that one of the purposes was fulfilment of the prophetic Scriptures. As the fulfilment of the Scriptures is thus unfolded, their divine unity is evidenced and the familiar couplet is impressed upon the mind.

The new was in the old concealed,
The old is by the new revealed.

In the narrative of Matthew 11. 20-24 the Lord was living at Capernaum. The result of His mighty works there should have caused repentance. But they did not. Hence the purpose of His mighty works had failed and the mighty works will be brought up in the day of judgment. The greater the light, the greater the responsibility.

The purpose in John 2. 11 was the manifestation of His glory, again proving His Messiahship. Note, this is the first recording of His disciples believing on Him.

It was noted that in John 11. 4 His glory was manifested, but in John 1. the disciples saw a glory which was hidden (John 1. 14). S. J. J.

From Birkenhead. The word "miracles," although never used in the Gospels (R. V.), may be substituted for the phrase "mighty works, and wonders and signs," as any difference between these three is only metaphysical [Are not different Greek words used? If so, did not the Holy Spirit have a definite purpose in selecting those different words?—see paper from London.] The miracles fully demonstrated the supernatural power possessed by the Lord. They were not confined to any one sphere, as may be seen from the following **summary**:—

1. The healing of all diseases.
2. Power over spirits.
3. Control over nature.
4. Power to forgive sins.
5. Ability to restore lost faculties.
6. His triumphant victory over death.

It would appear, upon examination, that the apostle John used the word "sign" slightly differently from the other Gospel writers. He used the word, in cases where the embodiment of some spiritual truth was desired, which is revealed upon investigation, e. g., the Lord portrayed as the Light of the world, healing physically blind people.

We have in Matthew 8. and 9. a group of miracles which followed shortly after the Lord's discourse known as "The Sermon on the Mount." There was a great transformation: the Teacher with all His wisdom, guidance and counsel, descended from the mount and became the great practical Healer, in close contact with sinful men. In the discourse there had been a little aloofness [Surely the opposite of aloofness was true of the Lord], the demands had been great, in fact bordering upon righteous perfection, and would not have such a forcible effect, being theoretical [The Lord's teaching on the mount was not theoretical, but intensely practical. —J. M.], as healing would have, being practical. In His capacity as Healer, there is no aloofness, no demands, the imperfect came to Him and He administered the remedy in a personal, friendly and comforting manner. It should be stressed that He was not a Healer in quest of publicity or fame, but the Saviour of the world, whose love and compassion were so magnanimous that He was unable to ignore the sinners' need. R. F. McCormick.

From Southport.—Most people to-day know of the great acts of healing performed by the Lord Jesus Christ and would at least credit Him as being a very kind Man or perhaps a Prophet. Yet all who know the Son of God would expect "mighty works, and wonders and signs," when the Creator of all things walks upon the earth. During the Lord Jesus Christ's boyhood and until He commenced His public ministry the Lord wrought no miracles. But the works which He later performed should have been sufficient for the Jews to realise that He was more than the carpenter's son, that He was the Christ, the Son of God, causing them to repent and to give glory to God.

The Old Testament contains many descriptions of the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. If the Jews had had ears to hear the Scriptures, and eyes to see that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled the prophecies contained in them, they would have recognised Him as their Messiah. For such scriptures we would turn to Isaiah, who tells us: "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isaiah 53. 4). Again, "He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted" (Isaiah 61. 1), telling of the acts of healing which He would perform. We would note that when in the prison John the Baptist doubted the identity of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, the Lord said, "Tell John the things which ye do hear and see" (Matthew 11. 4), which should have been sufficient to dispel the doubts, not only of John, but of the whole of Israel. It was also said concerning the scripture given in Matthew 8. 17 that the Lord Jesus Christ did not bear our diseases on the cross, as He did our sins, but that He dealt with the diseases of the people as He walked amongst them. J. G. Taylor, W. S. Holden,

From Hamilton, Ontario. —The divine purpose in the Lord's miracles might be regarded as sevenfold: —

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Fulfil prophecy | 5. Display the works of God. |
| 2. Turn men to God. | 6. Manifest the glory of God. |
| 3. Manifest His glory. | 7. Give convincing proof that He was |
| 4. Witness He was the sent One
from the Father. | the Christ. |

Isaiah had spoken of **Him** as the One who would bear our sicknesses and carry our sorrows (Isaiah 53. 4). The Psalmist spoke of **Him** as the One who would forgive our iniquities, and redeem our life from destruction, and would also heal our diseases.

When **He** stood up in the synagogue to read from the prophet Isaiah **His** words were: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because **He** anointed **Me** to preach good tidings to the poor... recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised," and when giving back the book to the attendant, **He** said: "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." No doubt the literal fulfilment of these words was anticipated, as may be inferred from the further statement, "Doubtless ye will say unto Me this parable, Physician, heal Thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Thine own country."

In His mighty works He manifested **His** glory, a glory the Jews sought to deny Him, saying, "Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner." How different with the disciples when they beheld His glory! Standing in awe and amazement they said, "What manner of Man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey **Him**?" Nicodemus was convinced by the signs, that the One in whose presence He stood was the sent One from God, and on this ground believed **Him** to be the Messiah. W. Young.

From Kilmarnock. —1 John 3. 8 says, "To this end was the Son of God manifested, that **He** might destroy the works of the devil." While no doubt this refers, in the first instance, to Christ's work of redemption and bringing Satan to nought (see Hebrews 2. 14, 15), we think it also includes the mighty works wrought by **Him** over disease, and death the result of sin, which was the work of Satan.

Matthew 8. 16, 17 tells of the Lord healing many demoniacs and sick people, and in this **He** was fulfilling Scripture (see Isaiah 53. 4), which was part of God's purpose in the miracles **He** performed. Had the scribes and the people been willing they could thus have recognised **Him** as their Messiah.

In John 11. the Lord was nearing the end of **His** labours; **He** had restored multitudes of sick persons and had raised a widow's son from the dead, but this was to be **His** mightiest work. He had received the message: "**He** whom Thou lovest is sick," but He must await **His** Father's time, for this miracle was "for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." The disciples had beheld **His** glory in **His** first sign; now they were to see **Him** as the "life-giving One," the Resurrection and the Life. A. G. S.

From Manchester. —"That the Scriptures might be fulfilled" was undoubtedly one of the purposes in the Lord's miracles. **He** who had been foretold in the Old Testament writings as the Deliverer of Israel would "proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind." **He** would bear their griefs and carry their sorrows. The prophecy in Deuteronomy 18. 15 promised that the Prophet to be raised up from the midst of Israel would be like unto Moses, suggesting that miraculous powers would accompany **His** ministry. This thought is strengthened by the fact that in verse 22 Israel were warned against false prophets whose claims were not substantiated by the fulfilment of their pronouncements. In the Lord Jesus Christ the Jew had a complete fulfilment of all that the sacred oracles demanded. He Himself linked the witness of John the Baptist with that of **His** mighty works and of the written testimony of Moses, when demonstrating the strength of **His** divine claims in John 5. 30-47.

That the godly Israelite should closely examine the claim of any to the Messiahship was to be expected. Statements by which the Lord showed **His**

equality and co-eternity with the Father (*e. g.*, John 5. 17-18) could not but arouse the deepest exercise in the heart of those honestly desirous of Messiah's advent. It is clear that God intended the works of the Lord Jesus to confirm the faith of such seekers after truth. To His works the Lord Himself appealed when John the Baptist's plaintive enquiry reached Him from the dungeon. "Go your way, and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard," was the command to John's disciples. With this we might well link the solemn passage in Matthew 11. 20-24, where the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida were reproved by the Lord for their unbelief. The fact that they had remained unconvinced despite the testimony of the Lord's mighty works would be reckoned against them in the day of judgment. "To the one a saviour from death unto death; to the other a saviour from life unto life."

The Lord's repeated emphasis on the truth that His works were for the glory of God should be carefully considered (*e. g.*, John 11. 4). There **was a** complete absence of the sensational publicity-mongering which so often accompanies modern charlatan "healing movements." Often the Lord discouraged those who had benefited from His acts of mercy from spreading the news. In this characteristic humility, the Lord's personal divine glory was delightfully expressed, He being in the Father and the Father in Him. G. P., Jun.

Questions and Answers.

Questions from London.

(A) Has the sequence of the ten plagues in Egypt any counterpart in the Lord Jesus ?

(B) If Joshua is a type of the Holy Spirit, in what sense did the fall of Jericho and the standing still of the sun and moon, typify the Holy Spirit's activity ?

Answers.

(A) The ten plagues have their counterpart, in our judgment, in the judgments during the time of the Great Tribulation, after which Israel will be delivered. We cannot see that the Lord's miracles are seen in the plagues in any sense.

(B) Joshua is a type of the Lord, and not of the Holy Spirit. Joshua brought Israel into their blessings and we obtain our blessings in Christ. —J. M.

Question from Birkenhead.

We would like help on the question as to whether the miracles of the Lord in the New Testament were performed by virtue of His own inherent power as the Son of God, acting in fullest fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit, or whether they were performed by Him as the Son of Man in entire dependence, for power, on the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Answer.

The first recorded miracle in Matthew shows the Lord's will and power, when He said to the leper, "I will, be thou made clean." This was in answer to the leper's statement of faith, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." In John 2. the Lord in His goodness performed a miracle before His time had come to commence His public ministry. In doing so He "manifested His glory." He was both God's eternal Son and Jehovah's Servant. Christ was anointed of God's Spirit (Luke 4. 18) and in the power of the Spirit He wrought and spoke, but who would say that the Lord did not act by His own power as Deity in fellowship with the Father and the Spirit ? Christ was much more than a servant. —J. M.

We should remember firstly as to the Incarnation, that in becoming man the Son did not cease to be God: and secondly as to the Holy Trinity, that the Father, Son and Spirit concur in all acts outwardly from themselves. The Father and the Spirit do not act apart from the Son. It is nevertheless true that our Lord Jesus Christ throughout all His life here was ever subject to the will of His Father. John 11. 41 may appear to indicate that the miracle was the work of the Father in response to the prayer of faith, but does it not rather indicate the perfect sympathy and fellowship between the Father and the Son ? For the work of the Spirit of God see Matthew 12. 28. —S. B.

BIBLE STUDIES.

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. M).

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THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Comparison **and** contrast **with** Old Testament **miracles**.

From Brantford. —The Jews always sought signs. They were abundantly blessed in this manner down through their history. The power of God is seen as the divine factor in all the miracles found in the Scriptures. The Lord Himself, as Man, relied upon that power.

The abundance of the Lord's miracles seems to stand out firstly. His days here on earth and a little period after could easily be marked as forming the most miraculous period in the world's history. Moses' miracles were mostly national and always affected Israel's enemies adversely. The Lord, as far as we can see, never caused anyone any bodily harm, though the spiritual enemies felt his power. Elisha turned Naaman's leprosy on Gehazi. This sort of thing the Lord never did.

The Lord had perfect knowledge of all things, in contrast to His servants of old. The Lord knew Lazarus was dead. Elisha was ignorant of the death of the widow's son. Elijah's and Elisha's time were somewhat similar to the Lord's, in that decadence was the rule, and individuals were more to the fore in treatment than in Moses' and Joshua's day.

Hiel Wood and Alex Sproul.

The divine purpose in the **Lord's** " mighty works. "

From Bolton. —The Lord's foremost thought and chief aim in all His work on earth was the glory and honour of His Father, for He said, " I do always the things that are pleasing to the Father. " The fulfilment of His Father's mind and will was always before Him, for again He said, at the early age of twelve, " Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business ? "

In Matthew 8. the Lord performed many mighty works in fulfilment of the Scriptures. Verse 17 brings before us the fact that the Lord continually showed forth the kindness of God, and His love, in that both in His life and His death He took (carried) our infirmities, and bare (suffered) our diseases. The beginning of His signs (John 2.) was to the intent that His glory should be manifested. Christ seems to stand forth here as the Creator, with wonderful powers of creation. Another purpose in the miracles of the Lord is seen in the fact that His disciples believed on Him.

In John 5. 36 the Lord, having spoken of John's witness for the sake of those around Him, referred to the witness of His Father, and showed how that witness was borne. It was borne in the mighty works of Christ, by word of mouth (to Peter, James and John), and also in the sacred writings. Nicodemus was convinced by the works, for he said, " No man can do these signs that Thou doest, except God be with Him " (John 3. 2).

In John 9. 3 the Lord does not mean that no sin had ever been committed by these people, but that neither he nor his parents had so sinned as to bring this blindness as a punishment. The real cause was in order that the **glory of God** should be set forth in his cure.

F. Heary, I., Sankey.

From Glasgow. —The Holy Spirit uses three terms descriptive of the acts of the Lord Jesus. The first ("powers") has to do with the agency by which these mighty acts were produced, and that agency is defined in the words, "which God did by Him in the midst of you." The second term ("wonders") would suggest to us the effect on those who saw the Lord's works. The third ("signs") would refer, we believe, to their significance, as being the seal by which God authenticated the One who wrought them.

Matthew 8. 17 is a quotation, by Matthew, from the Septuagint Version of Isaiah 53. 4. This is a very remarkable Scripture, and gives us an insight into the far-reaching effects of the work of the Lord Jesus. When we think of sin as the root, and sorrow, sickness, disease and death as the fruit, of sin, the work of redemption takes on a wider aspect. The Lord Jesus paid the price for sin, on our behalf, and also for all that sin brought in its train.

In the case of Lazarus being raised from the dead, it was "for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." In this we see the unity of the Godhead, and linking it with such a scripture as John 5. 19, 20 we get some enlightenment as to the purpose of the miracles of the Lord Jesus. They were done that it might be made manifest, both to those upon whom they were wrought, and to those who saw them, that God was working in their midst, and that men might see that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were even in these works manifesting their unity, and that as a result men might glorify God. The Son was associated with the Father in this miracle. *A. McIlree.*

From Brantford, Ont. —We might say first of all that the mighty works, wonders and signs of the Lord Jesus were to glorify God, and to fulfil the Scriptures spoken by the prophets. In all these He was the Faithful Witness. How evident this was as He manifested His power in the cleansing of the leper, healing of the servant, and Peter's mother-in-law, and the healing of many more!

Yet there was no response from His own city, but it seems rather a hardening. As we thought of Capernaum, the words concerning Pharaoh came to mind. He saw the mighty works of God time and again, yet he repented not. In Matthew 9. the Holy Spirit relates to us the mighty works that bore witness of Him, and then again Nicodemus' testimony was: "For no man can do these signs that Thou doest, except God be with Him." How true were the words he uttered! "If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father" (John 15. 24).

These words surely show to us His mighty works and wonders and signs, manifesting the Father and Himself to them that they were *one* (John 11. 42), that the people might believe that God had sent Him, and that He was the Resurrection and the Life. *Neil Sprout.*

The beginning of **His signs and** other early miracles.

From Cardiff. —It is worthy of note that whereas the emancipation of Israel from the slavery of Egypt commences, under the leadership of Moses, with miraculous plagues of judgment (the turning of water into blood being the first), the commencement of the Lord's ministry on earth is marked with a miracle of kindness and beneficence—turning water into wine.

The amount of water which the six waterpots held was a little more or less than 160 gallons (1 firkin = 2. 520 cubic inches=over 9 gallons). This amount may seem excessive, but we are not told that all the water became wine. The servants were directed to fill the waterpots to the brim with water and then draw out. When they obeyed the Lord to this extent the water which was drawn out became wine, and was borne to the ruler of the feast. Thus we are told in verse 9 of John 2. of water "now become wine" and of "the servants which had drawn the *water*." If it were a large wedding-feast then very probably all the water would be used, but it appears that only as the servants drew the water and bore it to the ruler was the miracle performed, and any that was left *in* the waterpots was still water. [It is difficult to follow the assumption of our friends here. Examination of the story *in* detail would rather support the view that all the

water in the pots was turned into wine. The faith of the servants in the Lord's command was the deciding factor.] [There are three possible views: (1) The traditional view (2) the view stated by our friends (3) that the water turned into wine was drawn directly from the well or spring. Westcott seems to favour (3) on the grounds (a) "draw" is applied most naturally to drawing water from the well (ch. 4. 7, 15), and not from a vessel; (b) "now" seems to mark the continuance of the same action of drawing as before but with a different end; (c) it seems unlikely that water taken from vessels of purification could have been employed for the purpose of the miracle. A view supported by such a careful scholar as Westcott deserves careful consideration but I find it difficult to adjust my mind to it. Why for instance was the capacity of the vessels given? Such information seems superfluous on any but the traditional view. —S. B. J.]

The healing of the nobleman's son is the first recorded of the Lord's miracles of healing. The conversation between the nobleman and the Lord is detailed. It reveals how the Lord brings out the faith of the intercessor, and in the miracles of healing we invariably have a glimpse of the grounds and character of faith. In each of these miracles the Lord deals differently, and yet each time He shows that the healing was the reward of simple faith. Perhaps He may kindly direct a weak faith or, by apparently refusing to meet the need of a sufferer, bring out a strong faith. Clearly one of His main purposes in working the miracles of healing was to bring those who were blessed thereby into a full and complete knowledge of Him as the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners. In the case of the nobleman we see the progress of a faith which was at first slender and elementary. His first faith may have only been based on external testimony, but it so increased as to bring him a good distance in the heat of the day (John 4. 52) to seek the Lord Jesus. When he had made his request, the tenacity of his faith was proved further, and strengthened by the answer which the Lord gave (verse 48). It developed considerably, however, when Christ's word for the miracle was accepted instead of His personal presence on the scene: "The man believed the word that Jesus spake unto him, and he went his way" (verse 50). Then, when he found that his belief was truly justified, that elementary faith which he first had was complete, and was the means of his whole house believing. We can also observe in this miracle a principle which the Lord almost always shows, that the miracle itself is not the ground of faith, but is the reward. "And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matthew 13. 58). "According to your faith be it done unto you" (Matthew 9. 29).

In dealing with the great draught of fishes, we must remember that Simon had already been introduced to the Lord by his brother Andrew, and that this had resulted in his becoming a disciple of the Lord Jesus. The attachment thus begun is evidenced by Simon's words, "But at Thy word..." (Luke 5. 5), but he had yet a lot to learn. When he obeyed the Lord's injunction to let down the net there was such a multitude of fishes that the net brake. Simon realised then more fully that he was dealing with God Himself, and all the unworthiness of his own self before such an One was reflected sharply on his mind. He realised then that in him, that is in his flesh, there dwelt no good thing, and he was taught to have "no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3. 3). This incident delivered Simon to a considerable extent from the distractions of the flesh and from his old self, and equipped him to devote himself to his Lord and Master and become a fisher of men. The Lord had so revealed Himself that Simon was smitten to the ground in his sense of failure and sinfulness; but Jesus says, "Fear not," and Peter now has a girdle of humility which makes him a fit instrument for divine service. There is a great lesson here for us, and if we are going to allow Christ to fill our hearts, and if we are going to be used of God in His service, then let us remember that the Lord has respect unto the lowly in heart and to the contrite spirit, but the lofty are an abomination unto Him.

In the raising of Jairus' daughter we again see the all-important factor of belief—"Fear not: only believe." What great and wonderful rewards are at the hands of those who will have but the faith to grasp them! There may be some controversy as to whether the maiden was actually dead or whether death was incomplete and she was sleeping. It should be noticed, however, that the

Lord in the three accounts of the miracle said that she was *not* dead but sleeping. However we may interpret the word "sleep" in this case, it nevertheless remains, in strict adherence to the Lord's word, that she was *not* dead. It is felt that this is the correct attitude towards the difficulty although it may perhaps require an analysis of the phenomenon of death.

Martin D. Follett.

From Yeovil.—In this first miracle of the Lord Jesus Christ we see several principles laid down, as it were, relating to His performance of miracles.

We see that when Mary told the Lord, "They have no wine," apparently she implied that He was able to produce more by means of a miracle. The Lord's reply shows that He was not willing to perform a miracle just at such a request. This is noticed in some of His later miracles, when those who saw them or experienced them were told to tell no man; We also remember that Herod was desirous of seeing a miracle performed by Him, but the Lord did not satisfy him. His miracles were performed that God might be glorified, and not just to satisfy a temporal need as in this case.

We also see that here there was faith exercised by both Mary and the servants who did His bidding. They must have believed He could do it, or they would not have gone to all the labour they did. This then is essential for the performing of miracles. We read that in one place He could do no mighty works, because of their unbelief.

There are also valuable lessons we can learn from the miracle. We notice that the water pots were filled to the brim, and so when the wine was drawn out it was pure and unmixed, straight from the hand of the Lord. Now these were vessels made for use. We, too, are vessels who should be meet for the Master's use. We should be filled with the Spirit, as were the water pots with wine. There was no room for anything but the water in those pots, and so there should be no room for that weak and unstable thing called the flesh in us. There was no mixture-brought before the governor of the feast; so we should serve God with undivided affection, and our work will give that evident satisfaction to God, that the wine did to the guests at the wedding feast.

It was also pointed out that in changing water into wine the Lord created a completely new substance. So with us when we are born again, we are given a completely new nature and not an old one converted or patched up.

Austin S. Glover.

From Southport.—The Scriptures leave us in no doubt as to which was the first of the Lord's miracles, as it is definitely stated that the turning of the water into wine was the beginning of His signs. This gives no foundation to the belief held by some that the Lord Jesus Christ performed supernatural deeds during His boyhood. This first of His signs was a very public manifestation of His power and divinity, and would no doubt cause a big stir among the large number of guests. No good wine can be produced without patient waiting over a number of years. The vine must become large enough to produce fruit, then the fruit ripens, and then comes the fermentation of the juice of the grapes. The Lord Jesus Christ made wine instantly, and showed that He was no ordinary man, but that He was what He claimed to be, the Son of God. It is no wonder therefore that His disciples believed on Him after such a manifestation of His glory.

A number of interesting points were noted in the miracle. The quantity of water in each pot was great, and each would involve considerable labour. Yet the servants fulfilled His command immediately, thus leading us to think that they looked upon Him as no ordinary man. The Lord Jesus Christ does not call His mother by that title, but uses the expression "woman," thus signifying that He was about to commence His work as a servant of His Father God, in which high sphere His mother after the flesh was but a woman. The question was also asked as to how many disciples were present. Were all twelve present, or just the five mentioned in the first chapter of John? [Matthew the publican would not be there.—*J. M.*]

The nobleman of the fourth chapter of John evidently knew the Lord's wonderful power, and it caused him to make the journey from Capernaum to

Galilee, not out of curiosity to see the wonders and signs, but because he realised that this Jesus of Nazareth could heal his sick son. With what earnestness he asked "Sir, come down ere my child die," and how very careful he was to ask his servants for the hour when his son commenced to amend, that he might have further proof that it was the healing work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The nobleman then learnt that his son never "began to improve," but that the fever had immediately left him.

The third miracle to be looked at also took place in Galilee after John the Baptist had been imprisoned (see Mark 1. 14 and 16). There by the shores of the lake, the Lord Jesus Christ taught the multitudes from the boat of Simon. Now Simon Peter was brother to Andrew, who had been a disciple of John the Baptist, and the two brothers had been together with the Lord in the first chapter of John (John 1. 42). It would appear that both the brothers had been fishing when the Lord came to the lake, as it is said that "they" called their partners in the other boat. The first miracle was performed in a very public way with the gathering of unbelieving guests who witnessed His creative power; the second was a demonstration to an individual of His healing power. This one was for the especial benefit of Peter. He must have realised the great power of the Lord, and that He was His Messiah for he cried, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5. 8).
G. Taylor, W. S. Holden.

EXTRACTS.

From Edinburgh.—It was suggested that the sign of changing water into wine had a voice to Israel, speaking of the future. The third day may speak of the Lord's resurrection. The marriage to which the Lord and His disciples were bidden is suggestive of His future union with Israel. [I do not follow this suggestion. —J. M. J. When they had no wine at the marriage, He supplied them and their joy was fulfilled. This might speak of a future day when Israel will draw water out of the wells of salvation, when her joy shall be in Him, and she will be filled (Isaiah 12. 3).

Different views were expressed as to whether Jairus' daughter actually was dead. On the one hand, the evidence of those who were gathered weeping and bewailing her, "knowing that she was dead," and the words "her spirit returned," indicate that she was dead. Opposed to these are the Lord's words, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." It was suggested that the Lord used the word "sleepeth" in the sense in which He used it in the case of Lazarus. [A different Greek word is used in the case of Lazarus.]. In that case, however, He said not only, "Lazarus is fallen asleep," but also "Lazarus is dead," whereas, in the case of Jairus' daughter, the statements "She is not dead, but sleepeth" indicates that the Lord was not using sleep as a figure of death. It appears, therefore, that while as far as human ability could determine the child was dead, actually she was not dead, and that the Lord, whose knowledge of the state of the child was perfect, stated the actual facts of the case, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." With regard to the words, "her spirit returned," we find similar statements in Judges 15. 19 and 1 Samuel 30. 12 used in connection with persons who had not been dead.

The catching of a draught of fishes which was so great that it amazed those experienced fishermen, Peter, James and John, manifested the Lord's power and authority over His creatures. The words of Psalm 8. were proved, "Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under His feet: All sheep and oxen, Yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." He was as able to control the multitude of fishes as He was to control the one fish that had in its mouth the coin with which He paid tribute.

John A. H. Robertson.

From Ilford.—From the very beginning of His ministry, Christ took every opportunity to show forth His kindness and love to man. In His first, miracle in John 2. 1-11, we see Him easing a very difficult situation by providing more wine when the supplies failed at the marriage. His mother evidently had already

realised **His** miraculous powers, and it should be remembered that Christ's words to her **had** not then the **same** harsh **meaning** which they **seem** to possess to-day.

When Christ returned to Cana of Galilee in John 4. 46-54, **we see** that **His fame** had spread abroad: **a man in** high office came to the Lord, begging Him to heal his son, and through his humble faith the boy became well. When his family saw that he **was** healed, they all believed. Had not the boy been **ill**, this may never have occurred. This should be **a** comfort to us to-day to realise that God may be planning great blessing out of seeming catastrophe.

In Luke 5. 1-11 **we see a** rather different result of the exercise of faith. The fishermen had caught nothing all night; 'but Simon evidently had some experience of his Master's powers, for he obeyed the Lord and let down his nets, and this simple act of faith and obedience **is** abundantly rewarded. This shows **us** that without Christ our work will be of no avail, but with Him, **we shall be** more than satisfied. It **is** interesting to note Simon's reaction to the miracle (verse 8). All of these early miracles, doubtless, were partly to strengthen the disciples' faith in the divinity of the Lord.

Eric Morgan.

From London, S. E. —The miracles or signs performed at the commencement of the Lord's public ministry, gave abundant evidence that **He** was the Sent One of God (John 3. 2).

This was so in the first sign which the Lord gave, in which **He** manifested **His** glory.

The nobleman's faith and affection for his son are worth noticing: "Sir, come down ere my child die." When he got the Lord's command, "Go thy way, thy son liveth," he immediately obeyed. On the following day he met his servants and received the good news that his son was restored to health. **He** then inquired **as** to the hour "he began to amend," and the answer came, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." It was not **a** gradual recovery, but the fever left the boy by the Lord's power. The cure was instantaneous and complete. "And himself believed, and his whole house." Could there have been any other outcome? Alas, many had seen this and other signs and had hardened their hearts in unbelief.

Peter, **James** and John had spent the night fishing without success, then Jesus appeared, first to teach. What **He** taught **we** are not told, but **He** caused such a large number of fish to enter the nets of these fishermen that "they were amazed."

The power of the Lord was brought into their daily lives. In the first miracle we read, "And his disciples believed on Him." Here we are told, "They left all and followed Him."

J. Dowson.

From Glasgow. —The second sign would teach us that the word of the Lord was sufficient for the healing of the dying child, and also for the nobleman's faith. Without coming into contact with the child, **He** simply says, "Thy son liveth." **We see Him** here **as** the omnipresent One. The revelation of Christ to an individual draws out faith. **He** knew the anxiety of the father for his child. The nobleman rested on the word of Christ. **He** believed, and went his way. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ (Romans 10. 17). **We** have here a lesson on faith. God rewards faith, but it is by experience a difficult path.

In John 1. 37-42 Simon **is** brought to Christ. In Luke 5. 1-11 he receives **a** definite call by Christ to the work. **He** had yet to learn that however necessary it was to catch fish, taking men alive was more important. Toiling all night and catching nothing, bespeaks the fleshly energy of man. The ability to take men alive must come from the enabling power of the Master. **We see the Lord as** Son of Man in **His** dominion over the works of creation. All things are under **His** control, including the fish of the **sea** (Psalm 8. 6-8). **He** exercised **His** power so that they enclosed **a** great multitude of fishes. Simon fell down **at His** knees. **He** confessed that he **was a** sinful man, and was self abased at the feet of Christ. **As** disciples we have much to learn in this important **matter**.

J. McIlvenna.

From Bolton. —In the first sign that the Lord did in John 2. we see Him rejoicing with those who rejoice. He indeed came to bring life and joy to man. The Lord's provision is always the best, far and above all that man can provide. The first sign was at a marriage, a time of rejoicing, whilst the second brings before us a contrast, someone at the point of death, a time of sorrow. We also contrasted the faith of the nobleman with the faith of the centurion in Luke 7. The Lord was here entreated to go to the house, but He healed the child by His power, and thus it seems enlarged and deepened the faith of the nobleman. The man believed, firstly, on the word of the Lord, and then in the Person of the Lord.

Andrew followed the Lord on that " first day " after John had testified of Him as the Lamb of God. Peter was brought to Him on the " second day, " and they both witnessed His power as the all-sufficient One on that " third day " in Cana of Galilee. They abode with Him on the second night. They still followed their ordinary calling. Now they were to learn that their place was with Him all the time, learning of Him continually, workers together for Him, trusting Him entirely to fulfil every need of theirs. They were to see that not only could He supply wine at a wedding feast, but could provide their daily bread, and after such a marvellous demonstration of His power, Peter was thoroughly ashamed of his previous doubts and fears, which he now recognised as being sin, arising from his sinful self. He confessed, " I am a sinful man, O Lord. " He recognised how puny was his knowledge even of his own craft, compared with that of this wondrous **One** whom he had come to know. *I. Sankey, F. Heary.*

From Birkenhead. —In the four parables mentioned there is an expression of the power of the Lord Jesus. His power over the inanimate things is shown in His first miracle, and His power over the animate creation is seen in the draught of fishes. His power to heal the human creation is seen, and also the most wonderful form of miracle, resurrection from the dead. Whether the daughter of Jairus was actually dead or whether it was something which only resembled death we are not prepared to say, but we were strongly inclined to the former idea.

Each of the signs caused belief in Himself. The disciples believed when they saw Him change the water into wine. They had believed in Him before, believed sufficiently to follow Him; then they were shown a side of His character to which they had been blind, and were made aware of a power in Him that was new to them, and so their faith in Him was fastened more securely. The sons of Zebedee believed when they saw His power over the fish. They knew that it was not mere chance that had brought the fish to their net. They recognised a power that they had not met before, and worshipped the One who showed the power. Why was Peter made aware of his sinfulness when he saw the miracle? Was it the teaching of the Lord to the crowds on the beach that together with this expression of power had broken Peter's self-sufficiency and opened his eyes just a little to the position of the Man who stood before him? Was it then that the revelation that came from beyond the world of flesh and blood, dawned upon Peter? [No, he knew Jesus to be the Christ in John 1. which was earlier than Luke 5. —J. M.]_____ *J. T., L. B. H.*

From Atherton. —The first two miracles we have under discussion compare very favourably in several points. (1) The Lord is seen in the changing of water into wine as the Creator, and in the healing of the nobleman's son as the Healer. (2) The belief His mother had (she believed in His power before seeing any sign done by Him) in His ability to supply the need; and the nobleman's belief that He was able to heal his son. (3) That obedience to the word of the Lord was manifested on the part of the servants in the one case, and of the nobleman in the other. (4) His mighty power in that no word was spoken, nothing visible to the outward eye; and also that He did not even need to see the patient, but healed from afar. Nothing was said beyond, " Go thy way, thy son liveth, " in the second case. (5) Two things resulted in the manifestation of His glory in both cases; the belief of His disciples in the one and the belief of the nobleman and his household in the other.

John 4. 54: the " second sign. " This was presumably the second sign in Cana of Galilee, for the Lord wrought signs between the first, and what is here spoken of as the second sign, though no details are given (see John 2. 23; 3. 2; 4. 45). The detailed signs were of **greater** import and value.

With reference to the raising of Jairus' daughter, there appear to be three distinct phases of miracle-working as the Lord wrought so wondrously. In the case of Lazarus he had been **dead four days**; the widow's son had barely **passed away** to be seen going to the burial ground; and Jairus' daughter, who so far as the people **judged was dead**, yet according to the Lord's explanation and precise knowledge, she **was not dead**. The Lord **was** undoubtedly **equal** to any phase of life, or death, sickness or **disease**; and the great Physician, manifesting works " that none other did, " proved His Deity and absolute knowledge of the **degree** of the seriousness of any **case**. The private nature of the miracle stands in sharp contrast to the public character of those of the widow's son and Lazarus.

G. A. Jones.

From Hereford. —This first of the Lord's signs occurred soon after the commencement of His ministry. The duty of lavish hospitality and the obligation to exercise it to the utmost is considered in the **East to be sacred**. Without going into the many **suggested** reasons for the failure of the wine, **we** can readily understand how the **wedded** pair would have **felt** it to **be**, as in the **East** it would still **be** regarded, **a bitter** and indelible disgrace.

The healing of the nobleman's son **was** the second sign performed by the Lord in Galilee, **but** not the second of His ministry (see John 3. 2).

In the miracle of the draught of fishes, **we see**, as **we** very often do in His life, the calm **yet** majestic manner of the Lord **Jesus** Christ. The night's fishing had brought no reward. The Lord **uses** the boat of Simon and amply rewards him. At the word of the **Master**, Simon **put** out into the deep, where **a few** hours before he had toiled for naught. Well might Simon and his companions **be amazed**, for instantly, without a word from the lips of the Lord, **a** great multitude of fishes were inclosed in the nets. How striking and pregnant were the words of the Lord, " Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men " ! The fish which they had taken from the lake died, **but** they **were** from henceforth to take men alive.

Robert Tidmas.

From Manchester. —The first miracle of the Lord **Jesus** Christ clearly indicates His humanity and feeling towards men and women. **We see** this in the **fact** that when they had no wine He fulfilled their **desires by** turning the water into wine. Here **we get** His Deity revealed, as only God could turn water into wine. The natural process is going on continually all the year round, **but** never had water before been turned instantly into wine.

Verse 5 is perhaps the keynote to this miracle. The Lord's mother is telling the servants, " Whatsoever **He** saith unto you, do it. " There is no doubt that this still applies to **us** to-day, and then **if we** do what **He says** there is for **us a** divine blessing. **We should be** guided by Him, even though the things **He** asks of **us** are so contrary to what **we** normally are inclined to do.

It is interesting to note the number of water-pots. Six is man's number, falling short of perfection. **Yet** how the Lord is able to **use** them, **just the same** as with men and women who fall so short of perfection !

The liberality of the Lord **was** noticed in that each vessel contained two or three firkins. God too is **just** as liberal with His blessings to those who serve Him, as **He was** in a past day. Here also in this parable **we see** God's workings with men and women, in that **He** keeps the good things till the last, as it were. When **we** have served Him faithfully there **is** laid **up** in heaven **a** rich and everlasting store of good things. " Compare this with what Satan offers people. The pleasures of sin they enjoy for **a** season, **but** what about eternity ? There is then nothing for them, **save** a time of terrible suffering, whereas **we** who have **put** faith in Christ will **be** enjoying all the blessings of our God. *R. Bowden.*

BIBLE STUDIES.

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11).

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THE RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER.

We have received a lengthy contribution from our brother A. F. Atkinson on the subject of the raising of Jairus' daughter. The subject **was** dealt with in Bible Studies (Vol. 3, 1935, pp. 36-40) at some length, and **we** hope that any of our friends who **are** interested in the question will **be** able to refer to that discussion. A. F. A. takes the view that Jairus' daughter **was** really **dead** and the Lord restored her to life. This view **was** also taken by S. B. in 1935, and most of A. F. A. 's arguments are **at** least touched on in his paper. One of his points **was based** upon the words in Luke, " knowing that she **was** dead. " A. F. A. deals with this point in greater detail, and **we** are giving this part of his contribution in full.

" Here the doctor associates himself with parents, etc., and must have had ' inside' information, maybe from one of the apostles. The very fact of Luke adding these unique details (i. e., not recorded by Matthew and Mark) shows the doctor's special interest in the case, very possibly resulting from his personal investigation of the facts. Luke, the recorder, knew she **was dead**, **as** did the parents: I regard this statement **as** most decisive. If they had been wrong in thinking she **was dead**, Luke would have written ' supposing ' rather than ' knowing' (e. g., Luke 3. 23). "

In the 1935 discussion A. T. D. dealt with the words " her spirit returned, " and the difficulty from the human standpoint of determining at what point death actually **takes** place. **He** regarded these words **as** a matter of re-orientation. The spirit that had turned **away** so that to all appearances the girl **was dead**, **at** the Lord's bidding turns back. A. F. A. would **disagree** with such a view, **as** follows.

" Some suggest that the Greek- word here means ' turned about' (and not ' returned'), **a** meaning **it** sometimes has in the N. T. This **is** highly improbable **because** (1) no such language **is used** elsewhere in God's word concerning the human spirit... (2) from the analogy of the many **cases** of healing of bodily sickness **by** our Lord, **as** recorded in the Gospels, where never once, I think, **is** the sick person's own spirit mentioned, Luke would have written (if the girl had not died) " Maiden, arise, **and** she rose **up** "; (3) A. V., R. V., and **best** translations read ' returned' and ' not turned about'... " [Eds.]

There are three points in the **sacred** narrative about which there **is**, and possibly always will be, divided opinions. (1) " She **is** not dead, **but** sleepeth, " (2) " Knowing that she was dead. " (3) " Her spirit returned, "

As to (1), **what did** the Lord **mean** when He **said**, " She is not dead " ? The news that reached Him earlier was what was said to Jairus, " Thy daughter is **dead**. " Here are two statements diametrically opposed, so opposed indeed, that when the Lord said that she was not **dead** they laughed **Him** to scorn. **We** could understand the Lord saying, " She is asleep, " **if** His words were to be taken figuratively, that the maiden was soon to be awakened **by Him** from death, **but** for the Lord to say that she was not dead, **but** asleep, when actually the girl was **dead** seems strange indeed. When Lazarus had **died** the Lord never said that he was not dead, **but** simply that he was asleep. To settle the minds of the disciples on the matter of what He meant **by** being asleep, He said, " Lazarus is dead. "

We gladly agree that the context usually is the determining factor as to the meaning and usage of words, **but it** is of some considerable importance, even **if it be** contended that **it** is not the deciding factor in the case, that the word *katheudo* (sleepeth) is never used in a figurative sense of death in the **New** Testament. **Of** the word *koimaomai* (to sleep) in its some eleven uses in the N. T., four are of literal sleep, and seven of death. And of **the** word *hupnos*, all its uses refer to natural sleep, **except** *exupnizo* " to awake out of sleep " (John 11. 11), where **it** refers to the awaking of Lazarus from death.

As to (2) " knowing that, she was dead. " Does this mean that Luke, as **guided** by the **Spirit**, takes the view that the maiden was **dead**, or is he simply expressing the **view** as held **by** the mourners ? **I judge it** is the latter and not the former. " They laughed **Him** to scorn, knowing that she was **dead**. " It was their knowledge and not Luke's knowledge, neither as a physician, nor one writing **by** inspiration.

Then as to (3) that " her spirit returned " ; our friend A. F. A. says that ⁴⁴ no such language is **used** elsewhere in God's word concerning the human spirit. " Some of our contributors last month have referred to what is said of Samson in Judges 15. 19. He had said, " Now shall I **die** for thirst, " **but** God clave the hollow place in Lehi, and of the water he drank, and it is said, " His spirit **came** again. " It is a remarkable thing that the words about Samson in the **LXX**. are exactly the words used of the daughter of Jairus :

" *Kai epstrepse to pneuma autou* "

And **came** again the spirit of him (Judges 15. 19).

Kai epstrepse to pneuma antes.

And **came** again the spirit of her (Luke 8. 55).

The parallel in the language between Samson and Jairus' daughter is so **exact** that **I am** strengthened in the belief stated before in Bible Studies, that in the case of the daughter of Jairus **it** was a **case** of the revival of a life not **yet** extinct. Her spirit had no more left the body than had Samson's. It was revival not resurrection. **I give** this as my humble judgment, and submit such considerations to others who differ from this point of **view**. Perhaps A. F. A. overlooked Judges 15. 19 when he wrote as we have quoted. **J. M.**

Nothing **said** above **by our** esteemed brother J. M. really affects what **I** wrote in 1935. It is only necessary, therefore, to emphasise two or three points to make **my** meaning clearer than was possible in that brief statement of the case.

Firstly, as to the Lord's words, " She is not **dead but** sleepeth "—**I am** glad that J. M. admits that *katheudo* means natural sleep. To **be** consistent he should tell us plainly that he believes (a) that the child had fallen into a natural slumber, (b) that this was no miracle **at all but** an unaccountable error on the part of the mourners, and (c) that " the **fame** hereof " was all a mistake. It is also necessary to explain " her spirit returned " in relation to a simple awakening from natural sleep.

With regard to Lazarus it should, I think, be pointed out that before the Lord said plainly, "Lazarus is dead," He said, "This sickness is not unto death . . . Lazarus is fallen asleep." If the Lord in this case had not later made His meaning clear we should have had a similar seeming discrepancy between the Lord's words and the actual facts, though here the facts themselves could not be in doubt. This, surely, gives us the clue to the case of Jairus's daughter. If the words are different the ideas are similar, and in each case we must see in the Lord's words a deeper meaning than the plain literal sense of the words would convey.

I am not concerned as to whether *katheudo* is ever used for death (it is in fact so used in Daniel 12. 2 LXX) for I do not contend for a figurative sense strictly. "She is not dead" does not seem to admit of a figurative sense; there is no reason, therefore, why "sleepeth" should be figurative. When I say that the literal view is impossible I mean that we cannot take the Lord's words in their plain matter of fact sense—the sense in which the mourners took them. The words are to be given their ordinary or common meanings, but the whole statement is to be interpreted in a mystical sense, that is, it has a deeper meaning than the simple sense would indicate, e. g., in the presence of the Lord of Life death is no more death but as a natural sleep. Only on such a view do all the facts fall into their place and the story become a consistent whole.

Now as to the words "Knowing that she was dead."—This statement, as A. F. A. says, is decisive. J. M. does not accurately state the problem here. No one doubts that Luke is expressing the view of the mourners, but Luke is the reporter, and except in verbal quotations, a reporter is able to, and usually does, indicate his own reactions by the words he uses. A faithful reporter who knew that the mourners were mistaken would have indicated his own knowledge by his choice of words: that is, he would have said "thinking," "believing" or as A. F. A. suggests "supposing." This is no theory or supposition, it is a question of the right use of words. By using "knowing" Luke tacitly indicates his acceptance of the mourners' verdict, because had it been otherwise their understanding of the case would not have been a "knowing" to him but merely a belief or supposition.

I do not regard the words "her spirit returned" as decisive except against an awakening from natural sleep (see above).

In conclusion, I will repeat the opening words of my 1935 contribution: "The narrative as a whole creates a strong impression that the child was dead and the Lord restored her to life. No argument to the contrary drawn from individual words or phrases seems strong enough to efface this impression." *S. B.*

THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The beginning- of His signs and other early miracles.

From Vancouver.—In beginning His ministry, it is noteworthy that the Lord chose perhaps the most densely populated part of Palestine, around the shores of Galilee, to do the greater part of His work.

The Sea of Galilee stands out prominently in the Lord's works. In John 6. 1 it is called the Sea of Tiberias from the city of that name on its shores. In Luke 5. 1, the Lake of Gennesaret from a beautiful fertile plain on the north-west. It was called in the Old Testament the Sea of Chinnereth or Cinneroth, from a town of that name which stood on or near its shore (Numbers 34. 11, Joshua 12. 3, 19. 35)

In the Lord's day nine very populous cities stood on the shores of the lake. Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum were on or near the sea, with Cana and Nazareth not far away. Cana of Galilee was the favoured location of the Lord's first miracle. It was from there, too, that Nathanael came (John 21. 2).

The miracle of the draught of **fishes** portrays **the** Lord sitting **in** Simon's boat, teaching the **things** He received from His Father. Simon **was** well repaid for the **use** of **his** boat. And **the** manifestation of the divine provision revealed that Jesus **is** the Christ, **the** Son of God. *H. Mc. L.*

" Healing **all that** were oppressed of the **devil.** "

From Birkenhead. —The **emissaries** of Satan have always been active on earth since Adam **was** banished, in **shame**, from his beautiful home in Eden. They have been busy flooding sin and desolation over **the** wonderful creation of God. Throughout the Old Testament they appear occasionally in **such** instances **as** the witch of En-dor and in Saul himself, in both of **which cases it is** evident **that** God **used** the evil spirit.

To-day they are still working, **but** perhaps rarely, **if** ever, do they completely indwell **a** person **as** they **did in** the Lord's time. Satan alters **his** ways to **suit** the times, and to-day **he uses** the drug of **science** and the chains of mechanical things to hold the people of **his** Prince-dom in the dust.

The demons cried with fear when they felt the great power against which their own strength was foolishly weak. They accepted **His** authority without question. **If He** said, " Go, " go they must, and all the power of hell could not **face** the Son of God.

The demons acted **as** emissaries for their master the devil. While **he is a** very powerful being, he has not the foreknowledge of God, nor has he the complete awareness of all life that God has. **He** needs his messengers to obtain information and perform duties, and he appears to have been violently active during the period of the Lord's life on earth.

Demon-possession was something entirely different from ordinary sickness. Perhaps ordinary sickness **caused** the weakness that **made** the entry and work of the demon much **easier**, but there are many scriptures which disprove any proposition that demon-possession **is** another manner of describing illness, e. g., Matthew 18. **24** speaks of the epileptic **as** distinct from those who were demon possessed, though there may be epilepsy and demon possession in the **same** person as in the **case** of the epileptic boy of Matthew 17. 15.

A person indwelt by the Holy Spirit cannot be demon-possessed, although he may through his own foolishness become **a** prey to the Satanic influences of demons. The victory of love at Calvary has dealt to the devil and his forces of darkness and evil **a** maiming blow that will one day be followed by the death-stroke. Until then Satan **is a** wounded adversary whose strength **is** still terrible and superhuman, although his evil power has been partially removed in the climax of his struggle. *L. W., L. H.*

From Liverpool. —**We** supposed that in some **degree** the whole of the human race could **be said to be** oppressed of the devil, **but** that from the scriptures given it was intended we should study the healing of those under the complete domination of Satan, those who were possessed with demons. **We** had some discussion **as** to what demons actually were and are, but **we** could not find any definite description, apart from the fact that they are referred to **as** spirits and that they serve Satan (whom **we** took to **be** the one referred to **as** " Beelzebub, the prince of the demons ").

In some respects this class of miracle displayed the most superhuman power of all the miracles, yet we **see** that the scribes sought to discredit that power, saying that **it** came from beneath, not from above. **We** should therefore **not be** discouraged if, in seeking to follow the Master, **acts** in the doing of which **we** **exercise** the **greatest** faith are misconstrued by those about us.

There does not seem to be anything comparable with these miracles, recorded in the Old Testament. The case of David playing before Saul, and the evil spirit leaving the latter, is hardly a parallel. This demonstrates the pre-eminence of the Lord, for while previously no one on earth had had power to control these demons, yet in His presence they were forced to submit to His authority. What a source of comfort and strength this should be to us when we realize that One, who commands the unclean spirits, and they obey Him, is now at the right hand of God for us. What force this lends to the assurance that neither principalities, nor powers, nor any other creature shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

E. Cain, R. S.

EXTRACTS.

From Kilmarnock.—In considering the Lord's healing of "all that were oppressed of the devil," it is noteworthy that none of these miracles are mentioned in the Gospel by John, which presents Jesus as Son of God. From the other narratives it would appear there were very many demon-possessed persons whom the Lord cured while He was on earth (see Mark 3. 11-12), besides those whose cures are specially mentioned. Would it be that Satan was more active because of the Son of God being on earth?

In the case of the demoniac of Gadara this was an "exceeding fierce" type and it was beyond the power of man to control him. When he saw Jesus he acknowledged Him as "Son of the Most High God," but he desired to be left alone, or not tormented. He did not realize he was being tormented by evil spirits. In this we have a picture of an unconverted person who is under Satan's power, resisting the strivings of the Holy Spirit, and is content to remain in his sins. The Lord, however, was about to manifest His authority over Satan.

Luke 8. 31 tells us, "They intreated Him that He would not command them to depart into the abyss." We understand this is the same word as we get in Revelation 9. 1-2 and 20. 1. Might it be that they had a measure of liberty in the demoniac, but if sent to the abyss they would then be imprisoned? (see also 2 Peter 2. 4 and Jude 6). No doubt under the direction of Satan they preferred to enter the swine, which resulted in the herd of about two thousand swine being drowned and the people desiring Jesus to depart from their country.

In the case of the demoniac at Capernaum there is quite a contrast to the Gadarene. He was in the synagogue, mixing with the people, and was not a terror to them. Perhaps he was of a religious turn of mind, for we know from 2 Corinthians 11. 14 that "Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light," and he has various ways in working with men. From Mark 1. 22 we learn the Lord had been teaching the people and His words had been with power. Perhaps this caused the demon to cry out through the man, acknowledging Jesus as the "Holy One of God." Jesus, however, would not have this testimony, and commanded the evil spirit to be silent, and cured the man. We note that Paul charged the spirit to come out of the girl who announced them as "servants of the Most High God" (Acts 16. 17-18). He would not have testimony from the evil one.

A. G. S.

From Ilford.—The miracles of the Lord can be divided roughly under a number of headings. For example, the restoring of sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and curing of other sickness, raising the dead, and healing of those oppressed of the devil. The last mentioned subject has a difference from the others in that although normal sicknesses were sometimes curable by human means, the curing of the demon-possessed people was only possible through the One who had power over these evil spirits [or His disciples] and who came to turn men from the power of Satan unto God, as stated in Acts 26. 18. In each case where people were under this condition, it was noticed how the evil spirits took complete

control of the faculties. With the demoniacs (Matthew 8. 28-84), the spirits which possessed them exercised such power that no one could bind them. Similarly with the epileptic boy, his whole actions were controlled by the spirits, so much so that he often fell into the fire and water (Matthew 17. 15). But the almighty power of the Lord could avail in these circumstances, and the demons, who knew who He was (Mark 3. 11), not only acknowledged His authority, but were compelled to carry out His commands. They also knew their ultimate end as shown by Matthew 8. 29. Jude 6 was referred to in this connection.

So in all these incidents we see the divine power of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also His great compassion on suffering man, whom He had come to save.

He is still the same; He is still able to keep us and deliver us from the evil one. It was also suggested that a parallel might be drawn between the way in which evil spirits completely dominated the person they possessed, and the way in which we could be a mighty power for God, if we were to allow the Holy Spirit to control us completely.

F. E. Jarvis.

From **London, S. E.** —The incident concerning a certain man's son, who was epileptic and had a deaf and dumb spirit, is mentioned in the three synoptic Gospels. Each records that the man came first to His disciples, and it is evident that if the disciples had had more faith they could have performed the miracle. Faith in the power of the Lord Jesus had to be exercised by the man, for the Lord said to him, "All things are possible to him that believeth."

The third miracle under consideration is the healing of a demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum. This is the first recorded case of the Lord casting out a demon. As a result His fame spread throughout Galilee and round about.

The demon here knows that Jesus is the Son of God. This agrees with James 2. 19, which says that the demons believe that there is a God and shudder; also with Acts 19. 15, where the evil spirit said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; **but** who are ye?"

Wm. F. Shulver,

From Glasgow. —Matthew, Mark and Luke seem to give us a record of the first miracle under consideration, in the same order, each of them giving it as taking place immediately after the stilling of the sea. The One who could still the raging tempest, and thus show that He was the Creator, could speak peace to the troubled minds of these poor demon-possessed men. In reading of this incident one is impressed with the fact that the Lord Jesus knew that He would meet these men, and there seems to be a very close connection between this miracle and that of the one already mentioned, which immediately preceded it. What a "great calm" there must have been in the minds of these men! We wondered why there should be only one man mentioned in Luke, and two men in Matthew and Mark.

In Mark 9. 14-29 we have a boy possessed with a deaf and dumb spirit. This miracle is more fully recorded there than in Matthew 17. It is significant that this miracle immediately follows the transfiguration, in regard to which the writer Luke tells us what the other writers miss out, that it was as He prayed that His countenance was changed. Prayer is the expression of need, but it is also the evidence of faith, and this is what the man, and not only he, but the disciples lacked, although they had already seen much evidence of the Lord's power. "This kind cometh not out save **by** prayer."

A. McIlree.

From Atherton. —With the coming of the Son of God as a Man to this earth's scene, there began a battle between Himself and the arch-enemy of God and man, even the devil. Why was there such dread disease, sickness, torment, plague, and demon-possession in the time of the Lord's public ministry? We

see surely the devil's challenge to the Son of God. There is also another side of things which is most important. Israel had been promised freedom from sickness and disease if they obeyed God's law, but when the Lord was present in their midst, we see the saddest story of sickness; disease and suffering.

It was indicated that the word "oppressed" we have before us, would seem to be the strongest form of oppression, as revealed in Acts 10. 38, "Healing all that were oppressed of the devil." This word is only mentioned twice in the New Testament scriptures, the other instance being in James 2. 6. From this it was suggested that our subject would only include those instances of demon possession where we have brought before us the devil's sovereign control over such cases.

It was also noted that we have mention of those who were but children being possessed with demons (see Mark 9. 14 and 29). It was suggested that here we have a possible fulfilment of Exodus 34. 7: "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and fourth generation." For the children concerned could hardly have been guilty of such serious sin as would result in demon-possession.

It was not thought that God's people could be oppressed of the devil in the sense used in Acts 10. 38. We noticed the word regarding the apostle: "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me." This was thought to be a New Testament counterpart to the case of Job. Having noted that there were cases of people who were the victims of their own sins, in particular the case of the man who lay by the pool of Bethesda, we wondered what part the devil had to play in such cases.

G, Sankey.

From Edinburgh. —In 1 John 5. 19 the following significant statement is found: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one." Satan and his angels, although committed unto pits of darkness and reserved unto judgment (2 Peter 2. 4) are allowed, in the wisdom of God, a certain amount of power over men. This power was much greater before the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ than it is to-day. Satan's power was diminished greatly by the death and resurrection of Christ. Hence we find that while the Lord was on earth demons, the messengers of Satan, indwelt certain men and took possession of them entirely. Although his power is diminished, however, Satan still has power over men who have not the Spirit of God. He is able also to affect those who have the Spirit of God. There was given to Paul a messenger of Satan to buffet him (2 Corinthians 12. 7). Further, the Lord Jesus prayed that His disciples might be kept from the evil one (John 17. 15). Also we have a wrestling against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6. 11-12). In this wrestling nothing short of the power of God will enable us to overcome. While the Lord was on earth, nothing short of His power could deal with demons. It was by the Spirit of God that He cast them out (Matthew 12. 28). He gave His disciples authority to cast out demons, but it was only by the Spirit of God and by faith that they could do so.

The demons knew the Lord Jesus and acknowledged His authority. Realising and dreading the judgment unto which they are reserved they cried out, "Art Thou come to torment us before the time?" On one occasion they intreated Him that He would not command them to depart into the abyss (Luke 8. 31). In every case they did only what He gave them leave to do or what He commanded them to do. In Matthew 8. we read that He gave them leave to go whither they had asked; in chapter 17. we read that the demon came out at His rebuke; and in Mark 1. that the demon came out at His command. From Luke 4. 41 we gather that in some cases demons came out voluntarily in the presence of the Lord. Those from whom the demons came out were completely and immediately cured.

John A. H. Robertson.

From Aberfan. —"The Lord hath anointed. Me . . . to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound " (Isaian 61., Luke 4.). Those persons who were possessed with demons were compelled to do the will of Satan through his servants, the demons. Their state was comparable to captives, and to these the Lord Jesus Christ appeared as a mighty Emancipator, able to bind the strong man.

The condition of demoniacs was much worse than those affected by ordinary maladies, the former being always distinguished from the latter by separate mention in Scripture (Mark 1. 32, etc.). The case of the raving, mad demoniac (Matthew records two demoniacs) in Luke 8. and Mark 5. is a striking example of a tyranny of woe, imposed by Satan. Forsaking respectability, and as impelled by the legion (at least 2, 000, Mark 5. 13) of evil spirits which indwelt him, this man made his dwelling in the tombs and mountains, and intractably resisted any effort to tame him. This state is typical of unregenerate man before God. The mind of the flesh, in spite of culture, is at enmity with God, and is not subject to His will (Romans 8. 7); also, man's dwelling is truly in the midst of death and corruption.

It is interesting to compare the plain, lucid, confessions (although, of course, not voluntary) of the demons, with men's opinion of the Lord Jesus Christ. The demons were fearfully submissive to the mandates of the One whom they confessed was the Son of the Most High God. With the preponderant evidence of God Himself, the angels and demons, men in their obstinacy and Satanic delusion esteem this One as an ordinary man or even less. Truly it was a great sin to belittle the Son of God, who had so humbled Himself, but how much greater sin—and that unpardonable—to attribute the works of the Holy Spirit of God to Beelzebub, the prince of demons ! (Matthew 12. 31 and 32). *Reg. Jones.*

From Cardiff. —It is a terrible and grim reality that unregenerate man is subject to the power of Satan. The prince of the power of the air now worketh in the sons of disobedience (Ephesians 2. 2). Men are servants of sin unto death (Romans 6. 16), Satan's slaves.

Demoniacal possession is not so much a type of this unregenerate state as a development of it. The Lord was confronted on a number of occasions with cases such as lunacy, mania and epilepsy, but such ailments are not the result necessarily of demoniacal possession, although they certainly represent the tragic picture of man's slavery to sin. Demoniacal possession, although perhaps appearing in these forms, was something much worse and much more formidable for the Lord to deal with. In the synoptic Gospels definite distinction is made between a normal case of mental disorder and a case of demoniacal possession. In Matthew 4. 24 we read of those " possessed with devils, and epileptic, and palsied. " In Mark 7. 32 we read of one who was naturally deaf, with an impediment in his speech, and in Matthew 12. 22 we read of one " possessed with a demon, blind and dumb. " The man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5.) had a natural impotence, but a similar infirmity recorded in Luke 13. 11-16 is attributed to a definite work of Satan—" whom Satan* hath bound. " Such a distinction should enable us to comprehend more clearly the mighty power which the Lord used, and which He imparted to His disciples for the restoration of those oppressed of the devil. It was a power, one feels, which was much greater than that used for curing other diseases, including mental disorders, for the Lord and His disciples grappled with the very forces of darkness, fought with the very emissaries of Satan, and were completely victorious each time. Such cures are undoubtedly looked upon as triumphs over Satanic power (Luke 10. 17-20). The demons themselves could well fear and tremble; they could well regard their earthly existence as being in jeopardy when they met the Son of God.

Martin D. Follett.

BIBLE STUDIES.

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL.

Whilst the raising of Lazarus (John 11.) shows in an outstanding way how truly Divine the Lord Jesus is, the record of this wonderful miracle reveals how truly human **He** was. There **is** a fine balance of thought in that couplet of **the** hymn:—

"As man, **He** pities my complaint,
His power and truth are all divine. "

The human pity and compassion of the Lord, **His** tender feeling for those who are beset with infirmity, **as** Hebrews 4. 15 describes **Him**, that **He is** touched with the feeling of our infirmities, are matters which should touch the hearts of each one of us and enliven us with greater appreciation of His sweet ways and cause us to love **Him** the more.

The manhood of the Lord and **His** human feelings are preciousely seen **as** He stands watching the scene of grief before **Him**. In this scene there was nothing of callous disregard over the death of a man. Alas, for the general callousness which seems to be creeping over the land, and the general formalism which sometimes **is** all too evident in the laying to rest of the human dust. There was nothing like this in Bethany. Four days had passed since the death of Lazarus, and perhaps **as** many days had gone since **his** body had been laid in the tomb, but grief still lies heavily upon that village home and upon many of the villagers. Tears still coursed down the **faces** of those dear people. But it **is** somewhat remarkable that we have no reference by John to **Martha's** tears. She wept, we have no doubt, but why does the Holy Spirit omit any reference to her grief? Both **she** and Mary **said** the **same** thing: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," but Mary said so lying **at** the Lord's feet. There she lay weeping or wailing. 'Behind her were the weeping or wailing Jews which had followed her from the house. What did the Lord do when confronted with such an evidence of sorrow? "**He** groaned in the spirit, and **was** troubled " (verse 33). Very much has been written on these words. I like the rendering of Tyndale, "**He** groined in **His** spret, and vexed hym silfe, " and I think it conveys the correct thought. "**Was** troubled " in the **Greek**, **as** will be

seen from R. V. margin, means that " He troubled Himself. " Darby suggests that " troubled " might be rendered " shuddered. " It will, no doubt, ever remain a mystery as to what were the mingled feelings of the Lord, whether on the one hand grief of heart predominated or whether indignation was the chief emotion in the Lord's mind as He saw the grief of others. But, as I have said, I like Tyndale, and the evidence of the Lord's grief is seen in what happened—" Jesus wept. " It is the shortest of all verses of scripture and amongst the most touching. The Jews truly read His affection in His tears. They said, " Behold how He loved him. " This was their view of what lay behind His groans, His trouble and His tears—His love for Lazarus, and we may extend it, His love for all who were grief stricken. Such is the heart of the Lord and such was the cause of all His miracles. Their grief was His grief, their trouble His trouble. Their tears touched the fountain of His tears. His pity is measured by His love. His compassions fail not because the spring of love never dries up.

With His face wet with tears and again groaning in Himself, He comes to the tomb, and here the divine power of the Lord issues forth, but oh to think that that power proceeds from a groaning tear-stained Man ! This is what bewilders human thought. Here is One that weeps with mourners, yet raises the dead, One who at last on the Cross was so weak as to be broken-hearted, yet so strong as to be death's conqueror.

J. M.

THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The beginning of His signs and other early miracles.

From Hamilton, Ont. —In John 4. 46-54, the Lord Jesus heals the nobleman's son. We should note that this is the second miracle Jesus did having come out of Judaea into Galilee. In this miracle we have a manifestation of the power of the Lord apart from His presence. The miracle was performed for a nobleman's son, one of the few cases recorded where men of wealth were recipients of His grace. The vast majority of His miracles were done for the poor and unprivileged, showing to us that the Lord Jesus is no respecter of persons: " The rich and the poor meet together: The LORD is the Maker of them all " (Proverbs 22. 2). These early works bore witness of Him, as we read in John 5. 36, and give power to His teaching. They were essential because, while His teaching was in accordance with the Old Testament Scriptures, it was at variance with the interpretation of them by the leaders of the Jews.

R. Dryburgh (Sr.), R. Dryburgh (Jr.)

From Kilmarnock. —In the temptation in the wilderness the Lord was tempted by Satan to perform a miracle by turning a stone into a loaf, but He was submissive to God's will.

At the wedding in Cana of Galilee, when His mother informed Him that they had no wine, we can see a gentle rebuke to her in His reply. He had been subject to His parents in the home at Nazareth, but now He was entering His public ministry as God's Servant, and she must not interfere with Him in that. In God's time, and in the graciousness of His heart, the Lord abundantly supplied their need with the best wine, and the faith of His disciples was strengthened.

In John 4. 46 we find the Lord again in Cana of Galilee, and one man set out from Capernaum (some 15 miles from Cana) to find Jesus, and get Him to come and heal his son, who was dying of fever. His faith in Jesus' word was as the mustard seed, small at first but ultimately increased. His son was cured, not by a gradual subsiding of the fever, but exactly at the hour when Jesus spoke the word, " the fever left him. " He who could say to the sea, " Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further " (Job 38. 11), could also command the raging fever to cease.

A. G. S.

" Healing **all that** were oppressed of the devil. "

From Vancouver, B. C. —The Greek word rendered " oppressed " in Acts 10. 38, is *katadunasteuo*, and according to Dr. Strong means, " to **exercise** dominion against. " This shows the authority the devil had over hapless victims. The Lord Jesus came, not only to challenge, but to break and destroy that power and liberate its victims. The demons who entered into men were perhaps part of the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places (Ephesians 6. 12). Over this sphere and these Satanic intelligences, Satan rules, and they do his bidding. He is also referred to in Ephesians 2. 2 as " the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience. "

These demons (or angels, see Matthew 25. 41) should not be confused, we judge, with the angels spoken of in Jude 6: " Which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day" (A. V.) [Why?]. It does not appear, from this scripture, that such are at liberty to move amongst the sons of men, as those spoken of in the Gospels [This is a very different matter indeed !].

The demon named Legion, who possessed the man as described in Mark 5., recognised the Lord, in whose holy presence he once had dwelt. Fear of divine wrath immediately descending is reflected in his plea: " I adjure Thee by God, torment me not " (Mark 5. 7). The Lord, too, knew him, for He had witnessed the fall of Satan and his hosts when as Lucifer, son of the morning, he was cast out.

The question arises concerning one possessed by a demon, whether the demon, once cast out, could re-enter that person. The Lord's words in Matthew 12. 43-45, although parabolic, would indicate that re-entry was possible, but only if the house, once swept and garnished, still remained empty at his return [This was not a demon cast out, but one that went out, a very different thing, I judge. —*J. M. J.* We suggest that a demon or demons could not re-possess a person once freed, and whose heart was filled with the Person of Christ, or indwelt by the Holy Spirit. * *Robert Armstrong.*

From Vancouver, B. C. —We find Satan opposing God and His people throughout the Old Testament, against Job in his book, against Israel in 1 Chronicles 21. 1, against the high priest in Zechariah 3. 1; and against all God's people throughout the ages.

Continuing on to the New Testament, Satan is seen against the Son of God in Matthew 4. 1-10, and seeking to turn Him aside through Peter in Matthew 16. 23. Satan entered into Judas, who himself was a demon (John 6. 70) [Not a demon, **but** a devil. The word in John 6. is *diabolos* not *daimon*. —*J. M. J.*], taking as it were personal charge. The Lord said, " The prince of the world cometh: and he hath nothing in Me " (John 13. 27; 14. 30).

The Lord steadfastly refused the testimony of demons as to His being the Son of God (Luke 4. 41). "Among the witnesses to His Sonship, no place is allowed for the statement of demons; nevertheless their word is left on record.

Among the unclean spirits which the Lord cast out, are some of different characteristics. There is the dumb and deaf spirit of Mark 9. 25, the dumb spirit of Luke 11. 14, the blind and dumb demon of Matthew 12. 22, and the woman that had the spirit of infirmity (Luke 13. 11) [I doubt very much that this spirit of infirmity was a demon. —*J. M. J.*, bound by Satan, but loosed at Christ's command.

It is noteworthy that the answer to the question in John 10. 21, " Can a demon open the eyes of the blind ? " is in the negative. Nor can such cause the dumb to speak, nor the deaf to hear, or heal the infirm; such things remain with God alone. Satan's power, though mighty, is limited, and more so as he has been bound by the " Strong Man, " and some day his power will cease altogether.

*

"

W.

McL.

From Yeovil. —Matthew 8. 28-34 comes after the storm on the sea, a physical disturbance followed by a spiritual. The demons knew they had an appointed time of destruction in the abyss (Luke 8. 31). The Lord thought more of two men than two thousand swine. Acts 10. 38 was a true description of the Lord in His work. Great wealth was lost when swine were lost, hence the people besought Him to depart. They thought more of swine than of Christ.

Mark 3. 11-12. It seems remarkable that it is here stated that the unclean spirits *saw* Him. *S. J. J.*

From Hamilton, Ont. —We noticed that as soon as the demons were given permission to enter the swine they rushed down the mountain side, and it is a downward course whenever a person is demon-possessed. As for the man from whom they came out, he was now on the upward course, for he desired to follow the Lord, and with this desire he was in the right condition to go and tell others the great things the Lord had done for him.

The swine rushed down the steep into the sea. There seems to be a link here with Matthew 12. 43: "The unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and findeth it not."

We think also of Ephesians 2. where we seem to take a backward look, and see ourselves dominated by the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience. But God, being rich in mercy, made us alive together with Christ. As we think of the willing spirit of the man who had dwelt in the tombs, and the devotion of Mary Magdalene, as examples of those who were freed from demon-possession, it should cause us, seeing we are released from Satan's power, to love and serve the One who has translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love. *N. McKay..*

From Brantford, Ontario. —In Matthew 17. we read how the demon had such power with the boy that he would cast him into fire and water. How like those who are unsaved, and who are so blinded by the evil one that they do not see the danger that lies ahead for them if they do not believe on God's Son ! The Lord Jesus had to rebuke His disciples because of their little faith. How small their faith and our faith must be when we need only have faith as a grain of mustard seed and we could remove mountains !

In Mark 1., Mark 3. and Luke 4. we read how the unclean spirits had knowledge that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God. The religious leaders of that day did not believe this. We think also of the time the Lord Jesus was tempted, when the devil could quote the word of God to Him, as seen in Matthew 4. The Lord could reply, "It is written"; in like manner, when we are tempted **we** should rest upon God's word **and** thus overcome Satan. *Oliver Burbridge.*

The Resurrection of the Dead.

From **Glasgow**. —Colossians 2. 9-10 and Hebrews 1. 3 are among the scriptures which clearly teach the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the power of His Deity was manifested when He raised the dead.

The two outstanding examples are the widow of Nain's son, and Lazarus of Bethany. Could there have been a fuller revelation of the God of Israel, "a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Exodus 34. 6)?" Both miracles reveal the compassionate heart of the Lord Jesus. What compassion filled His heart when He saw the widow's tears, and what love and pity were in the tears He shed at Bethany ! This exercise of His divine power revealed Him as the great "I AM." There was the Eternal One, the embodiment of power, with divine authority to reclaim and regenerate a ruined creation.

Let us now consider the setting of the two miracles. The **first** at the City of **Nain** seems to be connected with the Lord's testimony to John the Baptist. John had sent unto **Him** about this time, **and** the Lord puts His **divine stamp** on the **baptism** of John. He also showed how the Pharisees, by rejecting the **baptism** of John, had rejected the counsel of God. It is of **interest** to note that He bore this witness to John just after He had displayed His own **Deity** by raising the widow's son.

In the raising of Lazarus we have the Lord's answer to Israel's unbelief. If we read John 10. we shall see that things had reached a climax. The **Jews** said unto **Him**, "How long dost Thou hold us in suspense? If Thou art the Christ, tell us plainly" (verse 24). They demanded to know **who He** was. So the Lord declared to them **His eternal Being**: "I and the Father are one" (verse 30); "Say ye of **Him**, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I **AM THE SON OF GOD?**" (verse 36). But they did not believe; they took up stones to stone Him. It was then that the Lord withdrew, for if they disbelieved **His word He** would give them a sign that would manifest **His Deity**. This **sign** proved beyond all question **who He** was. and that the Father was with **Him**. It also brought the **issue** to a climax with the elders of Israel (chapter 11. 47). If we follow the course of events we shall see the importance of these two signs. The testimony that they confirmed decided the destiny of Israel as a nation. The Lord **Jesus** put to the elders of Israel two questions: "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?" (Matthew 21. 25); and, "What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He?" To the first question **He** put **His** divine assent when **He** raised the widow's son, and in reply to the latter **He** fully declared Himself to be David's Lord by the raising of Lazarus at Bethany. *
R. Thomson.

From Ilford. —Among many mighty works that the Lord performed during **His** manhood days, those involving the **bringing** to life of some who were **dead** are outstanding, and above all others give proof of His Deity. If none of the other miracles were sufficient to convince of **His** divine power and origin, the **exercise** of this power in connection with the resurrection of the **dead** should have been conclusive evidence of **His** divinity. John's enquiring disciples **went back** to their imprisoned leader with a record of **His** doings which would strengthen and sustain the faith of this humble fore-runner.

To the multitude **He** revealed **His** human compassion and divine omnipotence by **His** intervention at the burial of the widow of **Nain's** son. There could be no doubt here of the completeness of the restoration. Death truly had intervened, but **One** who Himself was to overcome death in the not-far-distant future exerted **His** mighty power; the heart of a wretched mother was rejoiced and Christ was displayed in all **His** gentleness and tender feeling, and in all His power.

To an even fuller extent were these characteristics exemplified in dealing with the case of Lazarus. A more human incident could hardly be imagined, and the fact that Lazarus had already been in the grave four days reinforced the fact of his decease, and left no grounds upon which the Jews could have cast doubt on the authenticity of the miracle. The unity of the Father and Son is fully evidenced by the Lord's utterance in verses 41 and 42.

Thus evidence was added to evidence to show forth the Deity of our Lord **Jesus Christ**, and to magnify **His** Father in heaven, and by our Lord's words in John 11. 25 His hearers were directed to consider **Him** who was **Himself** to become the Firstfruits of them that are asleep. Our hopes are not centred on a dead Christ (for then indeed we should be of all men most miserable), but in a risen, victorious Saviour who hath overcome the power of death.
A. G. J., Jun.

From Brantford, Ont. —The miracles of resurrection wrought by Elijah and Elisha show that these servants of the Lord were able to do this only after they had poured out their hearts in supplication to their Lord. When in like circumstances, the Lord spake and it **was** done. The power thus displayed by His spoken word confirmed His declaration, " **I am** the Resurrection, and the Life. " In considering this **we** would reverently say that the Lord in no **way** acted independently of His Father. Though He **was** the Son of God, and **as** such had infinite power, the Scriptures show Him **as** the Sent One of the Father (e. g., Acts 2. 22; John 10. 32; John 5. 36).

The words of Luke 7. 22 **caused us** to wonder **if** there **were** more persons raised than those recorded in the Gospels, and such scriptures **as** John 21. 25 may suggest this possibility. However, God has considered the ones recorded sufficient to convince **us** that Jesus **is** the Christ, the Son of God.

The raising *of* Lazarus caused many Jews to believe on Jesus, and many also **came** to Bethany" that they might **see** the man who **was** raised from the dead. **We** would suggest that the souls of those raised by the Lord would not go to Sheol, **but** would **be** held in abeyance by the Lord, knowing that they would **be** raised again. [Why make this suggestion when **we** have no revelation at all **as** to facts ? The value of such a suggestion **is** nil. —*J. M. J.* They were raised again, not to tell what **was** beyond the grave, but **as** a testimony to the power of the One who **said**, " **I am** the Resurrection, and the Life. "

James Bell.

EXTRACTS.

From Hamilton, Ont. —The raising of the **dead is** the most wonderful of the miracles wrought **by** our Lord; in no other way **is His** Deity so clearly manifested. Such works **as** these **we** believe were given **Him** to do **as** the most decisive of proofs that **He came** from the Father.

We have three instances in the Old Testament of the dead being raised: the Shunammite's son (2 Kings 4. 32-37); the son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17. 17-24); and the **case** of the dead man touching Elishah's bones (2 Kings 13. 21) [There is no resurrection of the **dead** in the man who touched Elishah's bones. —*J. M. J.* In contrast to these three **cases** Christ seems to have **used His** power quite freely in this respect, although only **a few cases** are recorded (John 21. 25). Together with **His** other miracles they formed our Lord's answer to the questions of John's disciples. **His** call to Lazarus to come forth from the tomb can **be taken as a figure** of the soon-coming time, when in answer to **His** call all the **dead** in Christ will **be** raised (1 Thessalonians 4. 16). *J. Weaver.*

From Hereford. —**We use** the expression " raising *from* the dead, " **because it is** different from the " raising *of* the dead. " The latter implies the raising of the whole company of the **dead**; the former of one or more persons out of that company, the expression " the **dead** " referring to the whole company of **dead** persons. So the " resurrection *from* the **dead** " **is used** in Scripture regarding the resurrection of the Lord **Jesus**, the resurrection of Lazarus (John 12. 1), the thought of Herod concerning the resurrection of John the Baptist (Mark 6. 14). [Strictly, the word "resurrection" **is** only **used** of the **raising** of dead persons to life in Hebrews 11. 35. —*S. B. J*

Not only **did** the Lord bring back to life those that were dead, but their faculties were restored also. They could **eat** and speak and feel and **see as** other people. The son of the widow of Nain gave full evidence that he **was** alive, for he **sat up** and began to speak.

How **we** should give evidence, too, of the **fact** that **we** have been quickened, and made alive unto God ! (Ephesians 2. 1, 5, 6).

Notice the gracious action of the Lord **as** he presents the youth to his mother, indicating the Lord's full compassion for her. The result of this miracle **was** that they glorified God, **which** was the main object of these wondrous miracles,

H. Jefferson.

From Kilmarnock. —When the Lord Jesus was on earth, the Sadducees, like many worldly-wise men of to-day, did not believe in the resurrection, but the Lord soon silenced them, and said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matthew 22. 29). The greater the knowledge we have of God's power and of His word, the less difficulty we shall have with the resurrection. In 1 Corinthians 15. the apostle makes it very plain how important this truth is, for "if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised... ye are yet in your sins."

In John 5. 28-29 the Lord Himself tells of the resurrection of the just and of the unjust (see also Revelation 20. 5, 6, 12, 13).

While all will hear **and** respond to His voice **then**, His power was manifested on earth in raising Lazarus and the widow's son. As He saw the widow weeping over the loss of her only son, possibly her only support in this life, His heart of sympathy was moved, and at His word the young man was raised and "He gave him to his* mother," thus fulfilling the prophetic word, "He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted." A. G. S.

From Atherton. —The query arises why we have only two recorded instances of this greatest of miracles being performed, amongst the many wondrous things Christ did. Does this imply that only two people benefited from the exercise of the Lord's greatest virtue? Would Matthew 11. 5 indicate that Christ raised the dead before the incident of the widow's son at Nain? Luke's account seems to show that the Lord's message to John took place after the widow's son had been raised, for Luke 7. 18 says that the disciples of John told Him of all these things. It would seem that they were eye-witnesses of the raising of the young man. [This deduction is correct, I think, that the incident concerning John comes after the raising of the widow's son, but it would be wrong to conclude that only this young man and Lazarus (we do not here make any allusion to the case of Jairus' daughter about whom difference of mind exists) were raised from the dead during the Lord's ministry. —*J. M. J.* After this John sends to the Lord, the ultimate result being the Lord's message to John, which compare with Matthew 11. 5: "Tell John what things ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them." Whilst suggesting that Christ only raised the two recorded cases, yet it is helpful to see that the word "dead" in the above scripture is in the plural number. The Lord healed very many who before their healing were unsaved people. This could not apply to the raising of dead people. We noted cases of resurrection in the Scriptures, the child raised by Elijah, the child raised by Elisha (both possibly not having reached an age of understanding), the widow's son at Nain (of whom we can state "nothing definitely). Lazarus was the Lord's, and "Dorcas and Eutychus raised by the Apostles were saved people. If unsaved people were raised it would bring in the erroneous doctrine of the "second chance," which finds no place in the Word of God. [How so? only such as refuse Christ could be regarded as having a second chance.]

The question was raised, too, regarding the two "groanings" of the Lord (John 11. 33 and 38). It was thought that the first was a groaning of sympathy as the Lord saw the effect and fruit of sin in death, and the second a groaning resulting from their unbelief **and** hardness of heart. *G. A. Jones.*

From Southport. —In the catalogue of the Lord's works sent to John the Baptist in prison (Matthew 11. 5) by the Lord Jesus Himself, appears the statement, "the dead are raised up." No greater demonstration could be given of the power of the One who was the Son of God, although the Man of Nazareth. John may have begun to doubt: "Look we for another?" he asks, and needed to be reminded of the Lord's mighty works and miracles. These works showed clearly that He was the Messiah, which is called Christ (John 4. 25).

The voice that called, " Lazarus, come forth, " and the hand that touched the bier of the widow of Nain's son, belonged to God's Eternal Son. That same voice was used in the creation of the world, and will be heard in a future day calling all forth from the tombs, some to eternal bliss and some to judgment: and that blessed hand, marked by the nail print, will one day open the Lamb's Book of Life, and read therefrom the names of those who have put faith in Him.

Eric R. Hodson, G. Taylor.

From Wigan.—We suggest that Martha and Mary, whose acquaintance with the Lord was so intimate, never imagined that He could raise their brother. Their regret, shared by many of their sympathisers, was that the Lord Jesus had not come while Lazarus was yet alive. With his passing had died all their hopes. Is it not yet another proof of the Lord's grace and love that faith was not the condition on which He raised the dead ?

Although it is only recorded that the Lord Jesus raised two person, from the dead (unless we include Jairus' daughter), yet it is quite possible that other dead ones experienced His quickening power. The two cases found in the Gospels seem very full of teaching, and yet they are peculiarly different. It has been noted by some that the scriptural account of the last scenes in the Lord's life is minutely detailed when compared with other narratives in the Gospels. We suggest that closely rivalling these accounts in length and detail is the description of the death and resurrection of Lazarus. This is in marked contrast to the narrative of the resurrection at Nain. Our conclusion from this would be that this later event was one of the key points in the Lord's life, to be compared in importance with the Mount of Transfiguration and the scene in Gethsemane. Overwhelming proof had been given of His Deity in works previously and wondrously wrought. Now we have the supreme expression of the Lord's inherent power, which will finally assure the minds of those who believe on Him, at the same time marking out those who are His mortal enemies ! As Lazarus comes forth, their hostile ideas are made up: " If we let Him *thus* alone, all men will believe on Him "; " So from that day forth they took counsel that they might put Him to death " (John 11. 48, 53). It is by such a manifestation of power that the Lord will divide mankind at His coming. Then His shout will be sufficient to call from the graves the myriads who are asleep in Jesus, and with them all living believers.

The Lord did not raise old people, naturally experiencing death as God's universal appointment. We remember the Lord's blessed words to Martha*: " He that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die " (John 11. 25-26). And this is the logical consequence of the Lord's proclamation, " I am the Resurrection, and the Life. "

J. H. Ollerton.

From Edinburgh.—It was no coincidence that the Lord came to the gate of Nain just when the widow's son was being borne out. No doubt many dead, young and old, had been borne out of the city in the same way as that young man. In this instance, however, we can see the hand of God working for His own glory. A great multitude was with the Lord. Much people of the city was with the widow. It was a great opportunity. The effect of the miracle upon the people was that fear took hold on all and they glorified God, acknowledging that a great prophet had risen among them, and that God had visited His people. As the people of God they should have been looking for the Christ. By this work, as by His other works, the Father had borne witness that Jesus was the Christ.

The raising of Lazarus was a further witness to the divinity of Christ. It was a witness first to those who had already believed on Him. He said that He was glad for His disciples' sakes that He was not present when Lazarus died, to the intent that they might believe (John 11. 15). To Martha, who had expressed her belief that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, but who at the last moment seemed to doubt the Lord's power to raise Lazarus, He said, " Said I not unto

thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldst see the glory of God ? " (verses 27, 40). It was a witness also to those who had not yet believed on Him. To such an extent was Lazarus a living testimony to the power of the Lord Jesus, that the chief priests, who were seeking to put the Lord to death, sought to put Lazarus also to death (John 12. 10).
Kenneth Robertson.

From Birkenhead. —Jairus¹ daughter was only on the point of death when her father came to the Lord; the widow's son was leaving Nain on the bier; Lazarus had been dead for four days, and yet the Lord raised them all by a word from His mouth, and that immediately. His purpose was not solely compassionate. He chose to stop the funeral procession and perform His miracle before the crowd that followed, and, in the case of Lazarus, He raised him before a large audience, so that we can see that these two great miracles were used by Him as signs that nobody could deny. They were the greatest public miracles that He performed, the climax of the revelation of divine power.

God had compassion on Abraham and sent a ram to take the place of his only son, Isaac. He had compassion on Jairus for his only daughter. He raised the only son of the widow of Nain, and He brought back to Martha and Mary the brother who was dearer, to them than life, yet He sacrificed His only begotten Son, the most precious Person in the eyes of the Father., and He allowed men to take Him' and slay Him.
D. Hyland, L. B. Home.

From Yeovil. —The raising of the dead was the type of miracle which the Jews expected to be performed by their Messiah when He came. Hence, when John the Baptist sent to ask if He was the One that was to come, or whether he was to look for another, Jesus sent the reply that those miracles which were to be expected of the Messiah were already being performed by Jesus, and these should be sufficient proof of the fact that He was the promised Messiah.

Regarding the raising of Lazarus, this may symbolize the dead and imprisoned state of each soul before coming in contact with the Lord Jesus Christ. We notice that Lazarus was wrapped round with cloth, and was placed in a stone chamber which was sealed with a large stone. Before Lazarus could be freed these had to be removed. Lazarus could not move them. But they were moved for him. So it is with our souls, imprisoned and bound though they be, these restrictions are removed for us by our wonderful Redeemer, and our souls are given a new and powerful life, free from sin.

From London, S. E. I. —Literally both men were raised up, being cured from the disease that caused death, but they would still be subject to the death of the body, and go the way of all flesh when their span of natural life was fulfilled. In these two miracles we also see: —

- (1) As told of the multitude who witnessed the son of the widow of Nain restored to life, " They glorified God. "
- (2) When He received the message from the sisters, He said, " This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby " (John 11. 4); and again later, " Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldst see the glory of God ? "

Of the widow of Nain's son it is said, "And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. " We would also tell of the great thing He hath done for us, and how He had mercy on us to deliver us from death.

In the case of Lazarus, the Lord commanded, "Loose him, and let him go. " We who were bound by slavish chains of sin are no longer in bondage. " If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. " We may walk indeed with freedom, dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

The Lord Jesus manifested the glory of God, proving Himself to be the Son of God. We see carried on to its final end the power and fulfilment of the words, " I am the Resurrection, and the Life. " Lazarus was indeed loved by the Lord, and as we contemplate the final event we also see the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ as He lifted up His eyes and said, " Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest Me. " It is truly a work of unity, the Father and the Son working together, and this was for us, even as for the multitude, " that they may believe that Thou didst send Me. "

G. A. Reeve.

Questions and Answers.

Question from Brantford, Ont. —Did the Lord raise the dead by the power of the Spirit ?

Answer. —See John 5. 21: " For as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom He will. " But as the Father never wrought but through the Son and in the Spirit, so the Son never wrought apart from fellowship with the Father and in the power of the Holy Spirit. The verse quoted shows how sovereign were the doings of the Son— " even so the Son also quickeneth *whom He will.* " Note too verses 25-29. —*J. M.*

Questions from Birkenhead: —

(1) In view of the fact that the story of the resurrection of Lazarus is peculiar to John, and that there are similar single recordings of miracles in the Gospels, is there any ground for the idea that the miracles were written up from the point of view of each Gospel in its peculiar application to one side of the Lord's character ?

(2) Does Romans 1. 4 refer to the resurrection of the dead in the Lord's lifetime or to His own resurrection ?

(3) Is the spirit of holiness mentioned in Romans 1. 4 the Holy Spirit or the intrinsic value in the Lord mentioned in Acts 2. 24 ?

Answers.

(1) It is difficult, if not impossible, to answer such a question. For instance, the incident of Luke 5. 1-3 is mentioned in Matthew 4. 18 and Mark 1. 16, but in neither Matthew, nor Mark is there any reference whatever to the miraculous draught of fishes. What particular application has the miraculous draught of fishes to the manhood of Christ, as in Luke, more than it would have to His kingship, as in Matthew ? Again, why the miraculous draught of fishes in Luke 5. and the miraculous draught in John 21., the former Gospel viewing Him as Son of Man and the latter as Son of God ? It will take one more enlightened than the present writer to answer such difficulties as our questioners raise.

(£) There is difference of mind on this passage, as was shown in a discussion of this matter in Bible Studies, 1933, p. 148, to which our questioners are directed. The words "*ex anastaseos nekron*" literally " out of resurrection of **dead** " (persons, plural), have been taken to mean, (1) the Lord's own resurrection, (2) the Lord's own resurrection plus the resurrection of others, the Lord's resurrection being proof of resurrection, (3) the resurrection of dead persons by the Lord during His lifetime. One eminent scholar, arguing that it means the Lord's personal resurrection, says that the Greek here means " by a dead resurrection, " but he says that the idiom of the English would not admit of such a translation.

(3) The human and divine natures of the Lord are referred to by Paul in Romans 1. 3, 4. God's Son is of the seed of David, according to the flesh, but He is declared, determined, or marked out to be the Son of God, according to the spirit of holiness. "According to the flesh, " and, " according to the spirit of holiness " relate to the Lord's natures as Son of Man and Son of God. I therefore conclude that the " spirit of holiness " (there is no definite article "the" before spirit) has to do with the Lord as a Divine Being and not to the Person of the Holy Spirit. —*J. M.*

(2) While it is difficult to answer this question in the form in which it is put, something may, I think, be said which will help our friends. It should be appreciated that our understanding of the characteristics of the Gospels is the result of the impact of our own minds on the Living Word. It is the result of analysis and classification, though not necessarily in any formal way. We have been taught to see a certain predominant characteristic in each Gospel, but these are not the only characteristics, and other minds may disagree with our choice; other characteristics may to them appear more prominent. Thus to Jerome, Augustine, and many of the Ancients, the Ox of Ezekiel's vision represents Luke's Gospel, symbolising the sacrificial character of the Lord's work. There is, in fact, only complete agreement as to the Eagle character of John's Gospel, and here there can be little doubt that the author, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is consciously presenting a particular view of the Lord's, character. —SB.

Questions from Vancouver: —

(1) Is the Abyss the same as Tartarus ?

(2) Do spirits or demons indwell men to-day as in the time of the Lord ? We know that they are present on earth from 1 Timothy 4. 1, etc.

(3) Is there any significance in the terms "demons" and "unclean spirits"? Are they interchangeable terms?

Answers.

(1) God used in the writing of the New Testament Greek words which conveyed certain ideas. Hades to the Greeks was the underworld, the abode of the dead. It also described the place of the punishment of the wicked. Tartarus "denotes an underground prison, as far below Hades as earth is below heaven." It is also used by Greek writers as "the place of punishment of the wicked after death." Tartarus is used once only in the New Testament, in 2 Peter 2. 4, and signifies the place into which the angels that sinned were cast. The Abyss is also used in connection with wicked spirits. It is into the Abyss that Satan will be cast, and from it he will be loosed. If we conclude that Satan is the angel of the Abyss (Revelation 9. 11), and I am inclined to that view, then he is king over wicked spirits who at a certain time will be allowed out of the Abyss (Revelation 9. 1-11) to do their fearful work on earth. Comparing 2 Peter 2. 4 with Revelation 9. 1-11, also with Revelation 20. 1-3, 7, and remembering that the Greeks viewed Tartarus as an underground prison, which Revelation 20. 7 says the Abyss is, we may not improperly regard Tartarus and the Abyss to be the same.

(2) Demon-possession existed in the time of the Acts, see chapters 16. 16-18, and 19. 12-17. I therefore see no reason to conclude that such a thing does not exist to-day. If we had no record of demon-possession after the Cross, we might conclude that the Crosswork of the Lord had id charged Things, through His bringing to naught him that had the power of death (Hebrews 2. 14), but quite evidently the Lord's death did not involve the freedom of all men from demon possession. Clearly demons know who have power to deal with them and to cast them out—"Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" Those who have no such power as these had to cast out demons with a word had better take warning from Acts 19. 16. We shall also be wise to refrain from defining such as are demon-possessed, unless we have special insight in the matter.

(3) I should say that demons are unclean spirits. Compare Matthew 10. 1 with Mark 3. 15, in the one place unclean spirits, in the other demons, but quite clearly the same spirits are indicated in both cases. —J. M.

Questions from Hamilton, Ont.: —

(1) Matthew 27. 52, 53: We would like further light on this passage. Did these saints remain in Jerusalem, or did they return to the tombs, or did they accompany the Lord to heaven in their raised bodies ?

(2) 1 Thessalonians 4. 14: Are we to understand that the dead in Christ are brought with Christ to the air, or have the words—"shall God bring Him" any other meaning ?

(3) John 11. 42: The Lord in speaking to God His Father said, " **Because** of the multitude which standeth around I said it. " Have we any record of what **He** said ?

(4) In what way may **we** understand " the oppression of the devil " ?

Answers.

(1) Note carefully the reading of Matthew 27. 52. It does not say that the saints were raised, **but** " many bodies of the saints... were raised. " These bodies were raised when Christ died, but they did not come out of the tombs till three days afterwards, after the resurrection of the Lord. Note too what Paul says about the resurrection, " Christ the Firstfruits; then they that are Christ's, **at His coming.** " None between Christ's resurrection and **His coming is** raised in incorruption (1 Corinthians 15. 23), hence the bodies of those saints did not accompany Christ to heaven; they were not incorruptible. It follows **as a** consequence, if what **we** say on 1 Corinthians 15. is correct, that they returned to the tombs. They neither remained in Jerusalem nor did they go to heaven. The raising of these bodies **was a** miracle, **as much as** the darkening of the sun **at** the time of the Lord's death, and cannot be explained. It **was a** fact, and facts must be accepted though **we** may not be able to understand or explain them.

(2) The souls (or persons) of the dead in Christ being with Christ (Philippians 1. 23) **must** descend to earth to receive their bodies which will be raised in incorruption. This is clearly implied in the words, " The dead in Christ shall rise first: then **we** that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up. " Note the force of the words " shall together with them **be caught up.** " The dead in Christ must descend to be caught up. But how do they descend from heaven ? This remains an unsolved mystery. Note too that asleep of averse 14 has to do with the body, for there is no such doctrine in the Scriptures as the sleep of the soul. Saints are put to sleep through Jesus and those that **are** such will God bring with Him. If this were the thought of souls descending from heaven the language would be " will God send with Him, " but it is not sending down, but the bringing up of sleeping saints. God will bring the sleeping saints with Jesus, sharers in His resurrection—" Christ the Firstfruits, then they that are Christ's. " **He** is the Firstfruits of the one great resurrection of such as are Christ's. The " with " in " with Him " is not the with of time, as that which might be imagined in " the saints descending with Christ, but it is the with of association, as in Ephesians 2. 5, 6, " quickened **us** together with Christ, " " raised us up with **Him**, and made us to sit with Him. "

(3) What the Lord said publicly before the ears of the multitude, after **He** had asked, " Where have ye laid him ? " and when He reached the tomb, was, " Take ye away the stone. " Martha knew the natural result of this, when she remonstrated with the Lord that it was unwise to pursue such a course, saying, " Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. " The command for the tomb to be opened was not to raise a reeking dead body, but because the Lord was about to perform one of the greatest of all **His** miracles. He was carrying the multitude forward in thought with, **Him** in this great act. They roll the great stone back, and stand waiting for the next **act** in the great drama. Prior to commanding Lazarus to come forth He speaks to the Father, and He refers back to His earlier prayer, to which Martha made some covert allusion, that He ought to pray to God for her brother (verse 22), and in perfect communion and confidence He says that **His** Father had heard **Him**, **as He** always did. He also says that He had publicly commanded that the tomb should **be** opened that the consequence of that opening, even **His** raising of Lazarus, would result in the • believing of the multitude in Him.

(4) It says, " healing all that were oppressed of the devil, " and an illustration of what **is** meant may **be** seen in the woman whom the Lord healed in the synagogue on the sabbath day, in **Luke** 13. 10-17. It **says** of her—" whom Satan had bound these eighteen years. " This is clearly **a case** of bondage and oppression. —J. M.

BIBLE STUDIES.

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11).

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THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The Resurrection of the dead.

From Vancouver. —The Lord Jesus is the Creator of all things and in Him all things consist. His appearing on earth in human form did not detract from His eternal Deity, for He came as described in 1 Timothy 3. 13,: " Great is the mystery of godliness; He who (God, A. V.) was manifested in the flesh. "

As such, He met and halted the sorrowing procession at the gate of Nain, and death fled before His eternal power as He stood by the bier of that young man. His words, " Young man, I say unto thee, Arise, " broke the power of death and new life surged back into his lifeless frame. "He that was dead sat up, and began to speak. "

With what joy and wonder his once-sorrowful mother must have received him into her embrace from the hand of the great Life-Giver. The scene is touching and beautiful. " He gave him to his mother " (see Luke 7. 11-15).

God received glory from that act of power performed by His beloved Son that day, and the raising of Lazarus was also God-glorifying, but the Spirit's record of the things which were done on that occasion is intended to convey truth to our minds beyond that of raising the dead during the Lord's sojourn. The primary and immediate objects of the Lord's actions on that occasion are clearly defined in John 11. 4, the glory of God, and of the Son of God.

But the raising of Lazarus is also a foreview of the resurrection of the dead in Christ. A beautiful picture indeed, which, though small, gives a clear portrayal of that soon-coming day, when by reason of our Lord's triumph at Calvary, death shall have no more dominion over us, and we shall be with Him in that glorious eternal home.

If we are correct in assuming that the raising of Lazarus, and the reunion at the supper, foreshadow the return of the Lord Jesus for His saints, could we suggest that the " two days " of John 11. 16, being the duration of the Lord's absence, speak figuratively of the present dispensation ?

R. Armstrong.

¹¹ The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. "

From Atherton. —Although we get a detailed account of only seven sabbath day healings, yet a contribution in part is provided by each of the Gospel writers. Luke, who writes of the Son of Man character of the Lord Jesus, excels by giving an account of five, omitting the two which John alone records.

How the Lord acted in these sabbath day healings is worth noting. (1) In three cases He was in the synagogue teaching, yet in His heart was that constant thought for the good and welfare of others. (2) In handling the Pharisees, He was fully aware of their thoughts and words, and consequent actions; but was it likely to make any difference with Him ? He was altogether above compromise, nor did He pander to the feelings of ritualistic men. Yet on one of those occasions, He found Himself in the house of one of the Pharisees eating bread (see Luke

14. 1). (3) In **each case, the Lord healed quite apart from personal faith being exercised by the individual concerned** [Is this so? **Was** there not faith in **His** word, even **if** they did not know who **He was**? Take the blind man of John 9; he believed the word of Christ, though he knew not that **He was** the Son of God. Compare John 9. 7 with **verses** 35-38. —J. M.]; in only one instance was He asked **by** others to heal, namely, Simon's wife's mother.

The query was raised from Matthew 12. 15 and Mark 1. 32, **as** to whether these miracles were performed on the sabbath. It would **seem** from Matthew 12. 15 that here we have no proof **as** to time, **but** the Mark scripture **seems** to indicate **at** the beginning of the next day. Note the words, "And at even, when the sun **did** set." In view of the attitude of the Pharisees to the Lord's healing on the sabbath, **we** wondered whether it was **necessary** for the Lord to heal on that day. It **was** thought that the Lord healed when it was necessary, to heal, and that much would depend upon the urgency of the case. It **is** remarkable to note that all the miracles on that particular day were works of healing; there **is** no mention of any other miracle being wrought on that day.

In Mark's account of the man with the withered hand, **we** read that **He** "looked round about on them with anger, being grieved **at** the hardening of their heart." It **was** an anger apart from sin.

We noted several distinguishing points in connection with the individuals the Lord healed. The Lord chose the impotent man out of the multitude, one who **was** reckoning upon the help of man: "I have no man," but man could not help him. In view of what **seems** to **be** a fact that the man in his infirmity **was** the **victim** of his own personal sin, does not the Lord's healing him indicate that **He** discerned a repentant spirit towards God? A contrast **is** seen in John 9, where the blind man was not guilty of personal sin (verse 3). It is also noticeable concerning the woman with a spirit of infirmity in Luke 13, that she had suffered for **18** years, yet despite this she was **seeking** to keep the law of her God. The Lord knew her heart, seeking after God on this sabbath day, and where the law failed to supply her need, the Lord, in His love and compassion, delivered her from her bonds.

Our responsibility in relation to the Lord's day was referred to, **as** to what **is** permissible, and what **is** not permissible. It **is** important that **we** do nothing that **is** unnecessary or could **be** left till another day. **We** should respect and honour the Lord's day (we **remember** that John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day). Our time should **be** taken up with the Lord's service. *G. Sankey.*

From Kilmarnock.—On referring to the Lord's words in Mark 2. 27, "The sabbath **was made** for man, and not man for the sabbath," our mind **was** directed to Genesis 2. 3. After reconstructing the earth, "God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it." It would appear that it was God's purpose that man should have a sabbath or a rest on the seventh day. This **is** plainly seen from the commandments given through Moses for the children of Israel (see Exodus 20. 10, **11**, and 31. **16**, 17). Not only was it to **be** a rest, but it was a sign between God and them (Ezekiel 20. 12).

So long **as** they were right in heart before God, it was well with them, but Isaiah 1. **12** shows a sad picture of the people, while outwardly observing the sabbath and other statutes, yet the Lord rejected them **because** of their condition. **We** find when the Lord was on earth this was exactly the condition of the leaders and the nation **as** a whole.

It was not **by** chance that the miracles before **us** were performed on the sabbath, for **we** believe it **was** to bring before the leaders and the people the fact that **He as** "Son of Man" **was** Lord of the sabbath, and that the old ritual of the law was passing away.

We note how **He** speaks with authority, and any who would hinder **Him** in **His** work of healing are silenced by **His** referring to their own actions on the sabbath, whether it was the man with the withered hand, or the woman bowed down with a spirit of infirmity, or the impotent man, all **was** the result of Satan's work, which the Lord **came** to undo. Although the Lord had performed so many miracles on the sabbath day, manifesting **His** divine power, yet the people were

so blinded by Satan, that they hurried the Lord of the sabbath to death in order that they might hold to their traditions (John 19. 81). We see, however, from Isaiah 66. 22, 23, that the time will come when **He shall be acknowledged as Lord**, and when the sabbath and other statutes will be observed **in a right spirit**, not only by Israel, but by **all nations**.
A. G. S.

From London, S. E. —The sabbath had its beginning in creation when God rested on the seventh day from **all** His work, and blessed and hallowed that day (Genesis 2. 3). It is **a** fact that the One who walked the roads of Palestine, the Son of Man, was the same whose power was displayed **in** creation (see Proverbs 8. 22-31; John 1. 1-3). He **is** the Lord of the day which **He** blessed.

The fourth commandment, given at Sinai to Israel, was: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." The day was also to be **a** day of refreshing to their beasts of burden, and to their servants (Exodus 20. 10). It was **a** day for the people of God to delight themselves **in** the LORD, not to do their own pleasure (Isaiah 58. 13, 14). They could find rest and joy **in** the service to the LORD.

If there was one day more than any other when the burden of the daily round and common task was lifted, it was on the sabbath. It was indeed meant to be **a** day of refreshment for soul and body. "The sabbath was made for man, and not **man** for the sabbath" (Mark 2. 28). Thus the Lord's words amplify the Old Testament Scriptures.

How far the Jews had missed the mark concerning this is shown by their attitude to the Lord's miracles on the sabbath day, recorded in the scriptures under review. His reply to their query in Matthew 12. 10 strikes right home; if the needs of domestic animals have to be met on the sabbath **as** on other days, how much more important is **a** man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath.

If there was one day **in** the week more than any other when it was fitting to do good, it was the day that God had blessed and hallowed. The result of the Lord's mighty works of healing was glory to God and blessing to **man** (Luke 13. 16, 17). With so much infirmity and weakness confronting Him, the Lord's heart of compassion was touched. There was no rest for Him. John 5. 17 states: "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." Thanks be unto God that **He** continued in **His** work until it was finished, so that there might be **a** sabbath rest for the people of God (Hebrews 4. 9).
E. W. Peel.

EXTRACTS.

From Hereford. —The Lord Jesus taught the true **meaning** of the sabbath, as He moved amongst **men** and women, weary and heavy laden with their **sin** and sickness. In the lives of probably thousands of people to whom **He** brought divine grace and power, the sabbath acquired **a** new meaning, or rather, it became invested with meaning for the first time. Hitherto the seventh day had been **an** all-too-frequently recurring **series** of oppressing regulations and prohibitions, and the original divine purpose **of** rest seemed to mock the people **as** they groaned beneath the heavy burden bound upon them by lawyers, Pharisees and scribes.

But **all** this was miraculously transformed by **Him** who **was** sent "to preach good tidings to the poor... to proclaim **release** to the captives... to set at liberty them that **are** bruised." It is significant that **in** so many of the recorded miracles of healing, restoration and blessing took place on the sabbath—truly "**a** sabbath of rest" to many who had long forgotten what the sabbath meant. For **38** long years the impotent **man** had known no rest of body or conscience, but now by divine mercy and power he takes up his mattress and walks once more, enjoying the sabbath **as an** experience of both body and soul. To him the bed was no burden; **alas** that to the Pharisees it made him **a sinner**!

Strangely enough, it is understood that the Jews had **in** their traditions a saying very **similar** to the Lord's words that "the sabbath was made for **man**, and not **man** for the sabbath," but how little expression was given to this **in** their practices. The Lord Jesus, on the other hand, showed very clearly that the sabbath was intended by God to be a day of blessing **in** rest from unnecessary secular labour, so that **man** should be free to enjoy fellowship with his God. The

sabbath was thus to be a means to an end, for man's blessing; the Pharisees made the keeping of *their* sabbath laws an end in itself, and in so doing took **away** its blessing. How true in this respect that " I restored that which I took not away, " yet this **matter** of sabbath-breaking was a major offence to the Pharisees, and we see that, following the above miracles, they took counsel together, even with the officers of the hated Herod, how they might destroy Him. Truly — "Ye hypocrites " **I**
E. H. Merchant.

From Glasgow. — There was no charge brought against David, neither from those in his day or from the Lord, when, being hungry, he entered into the house of God when Ahimelech was high priest, and did eat the Shewbread which was not lawful for him to eat. In the law it is written, " Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. " The priests in the temple transgressed this law, yet were guiltless, for their God-given work demanded seven days per week. Truly the mercy of God is seen over all His works.

The Lord was no transgressor of the sabbath in any of the miracles or mighty works which **He** wrought. It was on the sabbath day **He** entered into the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. The Pharisees were watching Jesus whether He would heal on the sabbath day. The Lord knew well the thoughts of His adversaries. He had offended their pride already on a previous occasion, and that concerning David when **He** said, " **Have** ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him ? " In this instance in the synagogue, **He** asked the audience a simple question: " What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man of more value than a sheep ! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day " (Matthew 12. 11, 12). This was another addition to those wonderful cures which the Lord Jesus had already wrought, when **He** said to the man in the synagogue, " Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, as the other. "

A lovely work indeed was that which the Lord performed on the man at the pool of Bethesda ! Whilst there were multitudes lying in these five porches, yet the Lord singled out this man and left the rest. " Arise, take up thy bed, and walk, " were the healing words that left the lips of the Lord. It was not long until the man was challenged by the Jews for carrying his bed on the sabbath day. His answer to the Jews is worthy of note when he said, " **He** that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. " *J. Rae.*

From Birkenhead. — In the **matter** of the keeping of the sabbath the principles of the Lord and those of the Pharisees were in opposition, in the same way as nature will always clash with an imposed artificiality. They held that God had said that there must be no work done on the sabbath, and that the commandment was absolute and inflexible. **He** said that the sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath, and, above all, " The Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath. " **He** said that they were prepared to pull a sheep or an ox out of a pit on any day of the week, and if they could show mercy to animals then they could point no finger at somebody who brought mercy to men, except the finger of jealousy.

The miracle at Bethesda's pool was performed on a sabbath. There is a bluntness of pure faith in the reply of the man to the Pharisees, the faith breakers, when they said, " It is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed. " There was no breaking the freshness of his trust. " **He** that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed. "

John 5. 18 gives two reasons why the Pharisees hated the Lord. The first was because **He** broke the sabbath. Did He break the sabbath and yet not sin because of His knowledge of the true, not physical basis of the law; or was it merely their material conception of the sabbath law that He broke ? [The Lord's judgment on the matter of what was permissible to do on the sabbath day is clear— " Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day " — J. M.] *L. H.*

From Edinburgh. —Before the Lord entered the synagogue in which He healed the man who had a withered hand, the Pharisees had accused His disciples of doing what was not lawful on the sabbath, and the Lord had reasoned with them, showing that the disciples were guiltless and declaring that the Son of Man was Lord of the sabbath. The presence of the man with the withered hand following upon this called forth the question from the Pharisees in their desire to accuse Him, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?" On this, as on other occasions on which they were watching Him that they might accuse Him, the Lord answered the Pharisees by referring to what they would do in certain circumstances on the sabbath. By answering in such a way, He put them to shame, and rendered them unable to answer His words. By His answer He showed that it was lawful to do good on the sabbath, that works of necessity were right and that works of mercy were right and commendable on the sabbath as on any other day. By His works He showed that He was Lord of the sabbath. He had justified His disciples for satisfying their hunger on the sabbath, and their hunger was for meat which perisheth. His meat was to do His Father's will (John 4. 34). Should not He satisfy His hunger?

After seeking that they might accuse the Lord of doing what was not lawful on the sabbath, the Pharisees showed how perverted they were by doing what was not lawful on any day, by taking counsel against the Lord, how they might destroy Him.

James Paterson.

From Ilford. —The four miracles considered under this heading all exemplify the Pharisees' hatred of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His divine knowledge of all their schemings. He proved by His loving actions His feeling for His stricken fellow-men and, moreover, the miracles He performed testified to His divine origin. Christ's advent ushered in a new dispensation of things, and the ceremonial observances of the Mosaic law were being superseded. The Lord came not to break the law, but to fulfil it, and the attitude of the Pharisees indicated their misapprehension of its true meaning. The Lord's claim to be Lord of the sabbath identified Him as being equal in authority to the Giver of the law of Sinai. As the Lord Himself indicated in John 5., He was not breaking the sabbath, and the context clearly shows that it was lawful to do good on the sabbath. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work," He could assert, and we know that Christ pleased not Himself. His miraculous healing on the sabbath had the sanction of His Father. Their Oneness was complete. God's entire dealings with the human race are merciful in character, and Christ personally exemplified this during His short life down here, and God was glorified in Him.

A. G. J.

From Cardiff. —The development of the Lord's teaching and the increasing bitterness of the Pharisees in connection with the sabbath miracles may be briefly considered. The many cures which the Lord must have effected on the sabbath day recorded in Luke 4. 31-41, served to declare and reveal the true spirit of the gospel of the Kingdom of God (verse 43). [Was not the sabbath day past at 6. 0 p. m. ? It has been suggested that the multitudes came to him "when the sun did set" because they would not then be breaking the sabbatic instructions.] In the three miracles recorded in Matthew 12. 9-14, Luke 13. 10-17 and 14. 1-6, we see the Lord laying stress on the good and benevolent purposes of the sabbath. "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice" (Matthew 12. 7) is the principle. The ordinance of the sabbath may have belonged to that law which was given in Sinai, but now a higher (and yet more easily attainable) standard was being set up by the One who perfectly fulfilled God's law. The sabbath was for man, and the Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath. The Pharisees considered that when they condemned Him for healing on the sabbath day they were carrying out the law and exercising righteousness and justice. They were greatly mistaken, for Jesus took up the question as the Reformer and Lord of the Sabbath. Such a position in relation to a divine and sacred institution gave Him unique pre-eminence, and He was able to silence them (Luke 14. 6) on their own premises and trivial exceptions. The Lord goes still further, however, in John 5. There was universal agreement that the sabbath originated in God's resting from all the work which He had created and

made, on the seventh day. The narrow **and** altogether disproportionate interpretation held by **the Jews of this rest was** undermined when **the Lord** revealed that God's work **in another sense is ceaseless** and, **as the Father, so the Son.** " My Father worketh even until now, **and I work.** " This **was** the climax. This **last** statement threw **all** their stringent stipulations on the subject to the ground and placed the Lord's actions on such **a high plane as** to be unassailable.

It was part of the tradition of the Pharisees that nothing of **a medical kind** should be done on **a sabbath day**, and thus we read in the **case** of the man with the withered hand that they " watched " the Lord (Mark 3. 2). The man's **case** could have waited, but it **seems** evident that they expected **Him to effect a cure.** **Jesus** knew their thoughts, and knew too that they had no intention of paying any tribute to His miraculous power and infinite goodness, but only wished to **be able** to accuse **Him of a breach of the law of the sabbath.** The Lord did not concern **Himself** with any preliminaries, but straightway said to the man, " Stand forth. " Every eye was turned upon **Him.** Fearlessly **He** asks them a question: " Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm ? to save a **life**, or to kill ? But -they held their peace. " The challenge could not be taken up. To refuse to heal the man would have been evil; to heal would only have been doing good. The sabbath **law** would surely not admit of the doing of evil. It would say in its proper spirit, " I desire mercy, and not sacrifice. "

In summing up the teaching to be derived from the sabbath healings, we can note that the law places special emphasis on the humane purposes of the institution and extricates it from the ridiculous trivialism of the Jews. In doing so **He** has the authority which rests with **Him as Lord of the sabbath and Son of God**, and this position is unassailable. **We** are reminded of James 1. 27, " Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father **is** this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.... " *Martin D. Follett.*

From Yeovil. —These miracles continue to prove the Deity of the Lord, but they were done on the sabbath. The Jews observed the law in its **legal** aspect. Thus the Jews condemned the Lord for healing on the sabbath. The sabbath day was made for man's benefit.

The object of doing these **miracles** was to enlighten their minds as to what was lawful and also that the Lord Jesus was the Lord of the sabbath. The Lord Jesus gives the example of David, thus showing how **a divine law** was suspended because of necessity.

In each of these miracles **He** speaks to those present before performing the miracles. The letter was observed, but the spirit of the law was lost sight of. The miracles the Lord Jesus performed were necessary. The law prohibited servile work on the sabbath. **His** answers to the Pharisees showed **He** was Lord of the sabbath, and they were instructive and to the point. In passing through the fields Jesus did not condemn his disciples for eating **in** the fields. Yet the Pharisees did. The Lord did not reprove them, because **He** was Lord of the sabbath. **He** was the maker of the law and so could alter it **if necessary.** *S. J. J.*

From Manchester. —Christ declared that **He** came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it (Matthew 5. 17), so **His** defence before those who accused **Him** of being **a law-breaker** must be examined with care.

In the first place consider the incident when the disciples plucked and ate the ears of corn. The Pharisees were aware that they could not **accuse** these **men** of stealing (Deuteronomy 23. 25), yet they did think they had **a concrete case** of law-breaking, because it had been done on the sabbath. The Master with perfect repartee quotes two parallel examples.

(1) **He** refers back to David **their father**, on whom they looked **as** their perfect example. When food was unobtainable he actually ate Shewbread. God did not punish **Him** for this, and neither would the Pharisees suggest that he had wrongfully broken the law.

(2) Priests profaned every sabbath, **as** they performed the many duties connected with temple service. They were not accounted law-breakers* because such work was essential in carrying out a higher service. This example might not

have seemed relevant had not our Lord added, referring to Himself, " One greater than the temple **is** here " (Matthew 12. 6). This implied that **as** the **priests** were guiltless because of the high service they performed, so were His disciples who were ministering to Him, the **One** greater than the material temple.

It **is** necessary to **eat in** order to live. Possibly these hungry disciples who lived full lives of **service**, had hardly **time** to prepare or **even eat** meals. In circumstances comparable to the examples quoted they did not break the law, by plucking and **eating** the corn.

In Matthew 12. 8, Mark 2. 28 and Luke 6. 5 the expression occurs, " The Son of **Man is** Lord of the sabbath. " Although some consider this to refer to **man** generally, **we** do not hold that view. For **if** this **is** allowed, then it would be inferred that **man** must be lord of the sabbath to do with it **as** he wills, and this **is** surely not **in** the mind of the Lord. We know of only one translation where " son " **is** spelt with a small " s. " [The Son of Man here **is** the Lord and no other. This title belongs exclusively to the Lord. —J. M.]

It **seems** definite that Christ **is** speaking of Himself as Lord of the sabbath. God accomplished the work of creation **in six** days and hallowed the seventh as a day of rest (Genesis 2. 3). He gave the law to Moses **in** which he decreed that the sabbath be kept holy as a special day of worship. Therefore, it **was** to the Lord **Jesus—as** God—to whom worship was due on this day. In this **sense He** was Lord of the sabbath; as God it was **His** prerogative to do with the sabbath **as** He would—though we know that as **man** he kept the law.

From a study of the foregoing incidents it **is** evident that Christ **is** hinting at the transition from the age of the law to the dispensation of grace. Matthew 12. 7 and Mark 2. 22 are relevant here. He revealed that a sincere and honest heart reverence for Him, was of more account than a life shackled by a formal dogma. He was preparing **men** for the time when the law given by Moses should be superseded by grace and truth. Not that the old law was to be scrapped, but rather that it should give place to the higher law of the faith. To-day believers in Christ do or abstain from doing things, not by reference to the Mosaic law, but by examining their own conscience before **Him** [in the light of the New Testament revelation. —J. M.]. Thus Paul refused to judge persons who kept the sabbath or feast days, or those who observed neither, for said he, " **Let** each **man** be fully assured in his own mind " (Romans 14. 5). All this the Saviour only hints at, for fuller revelation of the law of grace was not to be given until after His death.

N. L. C.

From Southport. —Before dealing with the miracles, the incident recorded in Matthew 12. 1-8 gives some teaching regarding the sabbath. The Pharisees did not appear to realise that the offering of the sabbath sacrifices **in** the temple was really doing work on the sabbath, a thing which was good **in** God's sight, and also in the sight of the Pharisees, who did not consider this to be profanity. Further the Pharisees allowed circumcision on the sabbath day (John 7. 23). It was noticed that the title the "Son of Man" was used in connection with **His** being the Lord of the sabbath, for as a true Servant He kept the law in respect of the sabbath, thus fulfilling **His** attestation.

The miracle of the healing of the man with a withered hand **is** given in all the first three Gospels. Each account states that it was a sabbath, but only Luke tells us that **it** was a sabbath other than the one in which the disciples picked the ears of corn. The miracle was performed publicly; indeed the Lord said, " **Rise** up, and stand forth in the midst " (Luke 6. 8), as He wished to use this as a lesson regarding the sabbath day.

The next two miracles are only recorded by Luke. In both cases the Lord quietens **His** adversaries, after the miracle in Luke 13., and before in Luke 14. It was noticed that the Lord called the woman " a daughter of Abraham " (Luke 13. 16); it was suggested that the woman had faith, for Abraham had great faith.

In John 5. 17 the Lord said " My Father worketh even **until** now, and I work. " How does this **agree** with the **statement** that God made heaven and earth in **six** days and rested on the seventh day? When **sin** entered into **man**, by the serpent, God had to work to remove sin, and the Lord Jesus also worked. When the

Lord Jesus Christ had finished His work and put away sin, then He could rest, which also meant that God could rest. *

Is the thought of the Lord Jesus being the Lord of the sabbath similar to the expression that He that giveth the law is greater than the law? [It is not a question that the Lord is greater than the law or than a day, but that He who is Lord hallowed one day from the rest of the days of the week and gave command what was to be allowed on that day in agreement with human needs, for the sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath. Man was greater than the sabbath day. In giving command relative to the sabbath the Lord ever regarded that it was lawful to do good on the sabbath day. It is said that the Jews in their, strict and censorious legality discussed the lawfulness of eating an *egg* laid by a hen on the sabbath. In their misguided and ultra-righteousness they would have stopped the whole course of nature. This the Lord never contemplated, but as Lord of the sabbath commanded what would be a benefit and blessing to men. —J. M. I.

W. S. Holden.

From **Wigan**. —We suggest that the lessons in these miracles will elude us unless we first have a clear understanding of the divine purposes for which the sabbath was instituted. Indeed we believe that apart from this necessary background there might arise traces of sympathy for the Pharisees, who, on the surface of the matter, seemed only concerned with the rigorous recognition of a divine ordinance. Old Testament Scriptures represent God's appointment of the sabbath as being intended in the first place as a day of rest, in accordance with the divine example in the creation. On this day all were to suspend work, even down to the humble bond-servants (Exodus 20. 10). Surely this could only be construed as being of benefit to all the people! In its second aspect the sabbath was to be holy to the Lord (Exodus 31. 15); a time when hearts and minds were to be directed upward and Godward. Again we must assert that this is an exercise from which man receives the principal benefit. The one feature of the sabbath which might be deemed awe-inspiring was the penalty of death, fixed for the failure to set aside the seventh day.

Now we have the interesting picture of the Lord Jesus who had come from God as the Son of Man, fulfilling the law and making it honourable. The One who had given the law was now to show in His life the most complete fulfilment of the divine ordinances ever seen in Israel's history. In this He is immediately found at cross-purposes with the Pharisees and other self-appointed leaders of the Jews. The result of this clash of the Lord's authority with that of men, is to establish His divine identity, to expose the false piety of His future mortal enemies, and to give the most perfect interpretation of the divine mind. The source from which our conclusions are derived are four of the narratives of miracles performed on the sabbath day.

In two miracles (Luke 13. 10-17, and John 5. 1-9) the patients of the Lord's skill have previously suffered long, weary years, the one 18 years, the other 38 years and both are utterly helpless. This is no time for questioning as in the other two narratives, and with His heart drawn out to them in pity, the Lord acts instantly and heals them both. In connection with these two latter miracles we suggest that the Lord's sabbath teaching in the synagogue should be borne in mind, that He had been sent "to proclaim release to the captives... to set at liberty them that are bruised... to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4. 18). It will be observed that in this particular instance the Lord is engaged in teaching on the sabbath when the poor infirm woman is before Him. Then, in complete contrast to the shallow profession of His critics, the Lord Jesus fulfils His teaching by transmitting His power to these miserable victims of sin.

To sum up, we see that the Pharisees committed these grave errors because they failed to appreciate that "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2. 27). Yet we believe that their trouble can be traced further than the question of the sabbath. The Lord so often refers to them as hypocrites, but the height of His condemnation is found in that condemning description that they are like unto whited sepulchres—completely lifeless.

J. H. Ollerton.

BIBLE STUDIES.

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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REMARKS.

Any supposed looseness in the observance of the sabbath by the legal-minded Pharisees **was** looked upon with great disfavour. The day was undoubtedly one of great importance for God's earthly people. A day of rest was necessary for them, their servants and their cattle. It was one of the statutes of their law and found its **base in** the fact that God in Genesis 1. and 2., **in** the work of Creation, wrought **six days and rested** the seventh. That day was hallowed. There **is** no other reason than this for the division of time **into** periods of seven days. The lights **in** the firmament were "to divide the day from the night; and let them be for **signs**, and for seasons, **and** for days and years" (Genesis 1. 14). Time, **as** to days, months, years, is regulated by the heavenly bodies, **as** are also the seasons, but weeks come from the days **in** which God wrought and rested. This order was passed on to Israel **and** found its place amongst the oracles promulgated from Sinai, in Exodus 20. It is the second longest statement of the decalogue.

It **seems** evident that long before the days of Israel and Exodus **man** observed these weekly periods of seven days. Noah in the ark sent forth the raven and the dove in seven-day periods (Genesis 8. 10-12), and God spoke of sending the flood seven days after He had spoken to Noah (Genesis 7. 4, 10), **SQ** that we may rightly speak of the sabbath, **as** of circumcision, "not that it **is** of Moses, but of the fathers" (John 7. 22).

But whilst **in** the natural course of things the sabbath was to be kept **as a sacred and** necessary duty, there were events which called for some modification in the observance of that day of rest. For instance, the entrance of **sin** into the world **demande**d some modification of the rest God had prepared **and** provided for **His** people. A day of rest **did** not stay the restless, unceasing energy of **sin** in the human heart. Priests had no day of rest. The altar fire burned with equal vehemence that day **as** on all other days. There was work to be done on that day which could not **be** done on any other day of the week. Every sabbath day the twelve **new** loaves were to **be set in** order on the table **in** the holy place of the sanctuary, **and** the other loaves which were removed were to be eaten by Aaron **and** his sons **in a** holy place. Though the priests wrought **in** the house of God, in the services of that house before **a** God who had commanded that Israel should rest that day, they were accounted guiltless **because** of the continual **need** of God's people, **and** perhaps for other reasons also. Here then was a breaking **of the rest** of the sabbath which **was** nationally recognised **as a** proper thing. **Besides** this **was** the unwritten law of necessity **and** mercy, the law which goodness **writes**, for it **was** lawful to do good on the sabbath day. There **is a** saying that **necessity** knows no law. This **must** of course not **be** carried too **far**, nor **must**

necessity write a law for other circumstances which would abrogate existing law.

David may eat of the Shewbread once, but that once offers no precedent for his doing so again. Some legal-minded persons might not even admit the necessity of doing something once that appears to be conflicting with an accepted mode of procedure, lest that once should become a precedent for others. The Pharisees saw no necessity for the sick to be cured or the needy disciples to pluck and eat the ears of corn. They were well themselves, and they were also well fed, and the groans of the sick and the pangs of hunger of others never moved their hard hearts nor modified their ceremonial religion. **One can** believe anything about religion of this sort after the happenings of Calvary. Here was sabbath keeping and ritual at its worst. —

"The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the, bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away" (John 19. 31).

Then followed the atrocities of the breaking of the robbers' legs, but Christ, seeing He was dead already, had the soldier's spear thrust unto His side **instead**, for thus the scripture in Zechariah 12. 10 was to be fulfilled. And again, no **bone of Him was** to be broken (Exodus 12. 46; Psalm 34. 20). Those Sabbatarians, those religious men, what cared they for the anguish of the three sufferers, and especially the Sufferer on the middle cross, as long as their religious susceptibilities on that holy day were not offended by the sights of a public execution? This was where their misguided, religious zeal landed them. Add pain to their pain and woe to their woe, but let us as holy (?) men be free from lifting one **little finger** in our ancient and nice religion to help the sufferers in their distress, and let us keep our sabbath! Not so was it with the Lord to that weary dying cry, "Jesus, remember me." It was human distress that brought Him from high heaven to give relief to a race crushed in the toils of the serpent. This mighty Lawgiver crashed through statutes that had served their day, but were unsuited to the day of grace. "Ye have heard it was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you." He approached to us and with man He dwelt full of grace and truth. Let us hold fast to truth, but let us see to it also that in so doing we are not losing our grip upon grace. It is easy for us to get out of balance and to magnify grace at the expense of truth, and, contrariwise to magnify truth at the expense of grace. In the Lord was an even balance which was derided by the men of His time. His judgments which were scorned in His day are seen to be just and equitable by men of all time.

As it was human need that brought the Lord from heaven, so it was human need that caused Him to perform miracles on the sabbath. It was on a sabbath that He entered the porches by the pool of Bethesda. Here was a mass of humanity rotting away. There lay there a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered, waiting and waiting, and often waiting in vain. The cures were few and the periods of healing uncertain. Yet they looked upon the face of the waters for the omen of the healing power. Alas, they looked down—down to the pool, and, presumably, never looked up. But this day one looked up upon the face of a Stranger whose kindly voice greeted his ear, "Wouldest thou be made whole?" said the Stranger. But it was the sabbath! If the angel broke the sabbath and troubled the pool would he have joined the crush and the rush of weary sufferers in the general endeavour for to be cured? Surely! The Stranger listens to his story of hope and helplessness, and then with a power far beyond what the waters ever knew when yielding to an angel's touch, He said, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk" (John 5. 8). The word struck his disease a fatal blow and the man now well took up his bed and departed.

The Jews never forgave the Lord for this (see John 7. 23; 9. 16; 11. 37). In far off Gentile Galilee He might amongst an ignorant people carry on His work and perform His cures, but to do so in holy Jerusalem under the very noses of the aristocracy of the Jews was a thing unpardonable in their eyes; and worse still, to heal on the sabbath day. If He broke their sabbath then they would send Him into eternity (John 19. 31) that they might keep their sabbath. "For this cause did the Jews persecute Jesus, because He did these things on the sabbath" (John 5. 16).

So well grounded were the Jews in their law that even such signs as the Lord did, though they disturbed their outward life to some extent, left their heart untouched and unmoved. The reason for the Lord's signs effected nothing in them, that is in the leaders of the nation.

"Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing may have life in His name" (John 20. 30, 31).

Now a word about the Lord's day. We all know that the Lord's day is not the sabbath day; that was the seventh day (the modern Saturday), but Lord's day is the first day of the week. It was on the first day of the week that the Lord rose from the dead, and on that day also the disciples came together to break bread (Acts 20. 7). The first day of the week is not to be an ordinary day of the week to the Christian, it is the Lord's, or Lordly, day, a day of outstanding importance. On that day the Lord has designed that the prime functions of His people should be performed in His remembrance, in association with which we have service both Godward and manward, for in the keeping of His remembrance we show forth the Lord's death till He come. All that can be done on ordinary days should be excluded, and that day, in the privileges it affords, should, in my judgment, be held dear to our hearts. The Lord's presence should be known in its sanctifying influence on that day, in such measure as is possible, after the fashion of the first day when He rose from the dead. He Himself was in their midst. To forget this on the first day of the week will have a most harmful effect on spiritual life and our experience of the Lord's presence, probably, the rest of the week. —J. M.

JESUS THE PROPHET.

God said to Israel through Moses, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee (Moses); and I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him" (see Deuteronomy 18. 15-19). Moses was unique among prophets in many respects, but especially in this: "And Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Exodus 33. 11). "And He (Jehovah) said, Hear now My words: if there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make Myself known unto him in a vision, I will speak with him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so; he is faithful in all Mine house: with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches; and the form of Jehovah shall he behold" (Numbers 12. 6-8).

Jesus is not only like Moses in these unique respects, but is far greater than Moses, because:—

1. Jesus dwelt in the bosom of the Father, and saw God, saying, "Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He (Jesus) which is from God, He hath seen the Father" (John 6. 46). But Moses never saw the face of God (Exodus 33. 20, 23).

2. Each thought, word and deed of Jesus' whole life was the thought, word and deed of the Father, Their communion being unceasing and perfect, because Jesus was sinless. Jesus could say what was never true of Moses, "I and the Father are one," *i. e.*, one in all things: and, "He (the Father) that sent Me is with Me; He hath not left Me alone; for I do *always* the things that are pleasing to Him" (John 8. 29).

1, 900 years ago the Jews were rightly expecting the Prophet like unto Moses, as is seen by their questions (see John 1. 21). Also a number of Jews believed the truth, *i. e.*, that Jesus was the Prophet foretold in Deuteronomy 18.: "When therefore the people saw the miracle which He did, they said, This is of a truth the Prophet that cometh into the world" (John 6. 14); "Some of the multitude therefore, when they heard these words, said, This is of a truth the Prophet" (John 7. 40).

There are two outstanding characteristics of the true as compared with the false prophet:

1. He speaks the words of God. God says in Deuteronomy 18. 19 that the

Prophet like unto Moses will speak " My Words "; " The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath My word, let him speak My Word faithfully. What is the straw to the wheat? saith Jehovah " (Jeremiah 23. 28).

2. What he speaks comes to pass. God says, " When a prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah hath not spoken" (Deuteronomy 18. 22).

Let us now apply these two principles to Jesus and His words. He said again and again that He had not come in His own name in order to give His own teaching, but in God's name to speak God's words: " My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me " (John 7. 16); " For I spake not from Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He hath given Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak The things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto Me, so I speak " (John 12. 49, 50). " They said therefore unto Him, Who art Thou ? Jesus said unto them, Altogether that which I am even speaking unto you " (John 8. 25), *i. e.*, " I **am** altogether that which in My words I represent Myself as being; My Person is My teaching " (Winer). The Greek adverbial phrase translated " altogether " (" from the beginning " in A. V. and R. V.) is unique in New Testament, and probably its correct translation should also be unique, as above, or " absolutely, " " essentially, " " fundamentally " (as given by Alford, Darby, Rotherham, Westcott, Winer, etc.). Alford says, " When Moses asked the name of God, ' I am that which I am " was the mysterious answer; the hidden essence of the yet unrevealing One could only be expressed by Self-comprehension. But when God manifest in the flesh is asked the same question the answer is ' I **am** that which I speak, ' *i. e.*, what He reveals Himself to be, that He is. " These words of John 8. 25 are very wonderful: Jesus not only spoke the Word of God, but lived it, for He **is** The Word of God, *i. e.*, He **is** the living Sum and Substance and Fulfilment of all God's words in the Old Testament and New Testament. " In the beginning was the Word . . . and The Word **was** God And The Word became flesh " (John 1. 1, 14). " And His (Jesus') name is called The Word of God " (Revelation 19. 13).

At different times of human history God has given different commands, *e. g.*, to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses. (See Genesis 2. 16, 17; 9. 1-17; 26. 5; Exodus 20., etc.). Certainly God gave new commands through Jesus, but if, as we are seeking to show, Jesus is the Messiah, and the Prophet like unto Moses of the Old Testament, God expressly commanded Israel, " Whosoever will not hearken unto My words, which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him. "

The prophecies of Jesus are always in accordance with the prophecies of the Old Testament, though in the New Testament God's eternal purposes are more fully revealed, and some things hitherto hidden are now made known to men.

Prophecies of Jesus already fulfilled.

1. His rejection and crucifixion. This again and again He foretold from the beginning of His public ministry (see John 2. 19-22; 3. 14; 12. 32; 13. 18, 31, 32; Matthew 16. 21; 17. 22, 23; 20. 18, 19, etc.).

2. His betrayal through Judas (John 6. 64, 70, 71; 13. 11, 18, 21-26. See Psalm 41. 10).

3. His denial through Peter (John 13. 36-38).

4. His resurrection from the dead on the third day (Luke 9. 22; 18. 33, etc. See Psalm 16. 10).

5. His ascension into heaven (John 6. 62; 20. 17. See Psalm 110. 1).

6. The taking away from Israel of the Kingdom of God because of the rejection of their Messiah and King (Matthew 21. 37-43).

7. The destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple, which took place in A. D. 70, about forty years after Jesus' crucifixion (Matthew 22. 6, 7; 24. 2; Luke 19. 41-44; 21. 20-24). (See Daniel 9. 26 which foretells the three events in their right order. 1. The death of the Messiah. 2. Destruction of Jerusalem, 3. And of the Temple. This prophecy makes clear the Messiah must have come over 1, 800 years ago).

8. The expulsion of Israel from their land and their world-wide scattering, during which **time** the Gentiles will rule **in** Jerusalem **and in** the land (Luke 21. 24). (See Leviticus 26. 27-29 and Deuteronomy 28. 58-68; the terrible **curse**s of God of these two chapters have for nearly 1, 900 years fallen upon Israel **because** of their national **sin** of blasphemy **against** the **Name**, i. e., their denial of the Divinity of **Jesus Christ**. Israel **curse**d **Jesus**—" He that is **hanged** is **accused** of God "—and their national **judgment** has **been** that of the **man** who " blasphemed the **Name** **and** **cursed** " **in** Leviticus 24. 10-23).

9. During the **time** of Israel's rejection the Gospel of God will be proclaimed throughout the world, not so that any nation may become Christian, but that individuals out of **all** nations (*i. e.*, Jews and Gentiles) may **be** saved from the punishment **due** to their sins, **and** may be brought together into " assemblies of God " to form " the Kingdom of God " **and** the " holy nation " of the Christian dispensation (Matthew 21. 43; 22. 8-10; 28. 18-20; Luke 12. 32; 1 Peter 2. 9, 10). *Note.* —*The constitution and the laws of this new Kingdom of God are given in the New Testament from the book of the Acts to The Revelation. Jesus did not teach the Christian faith to the nation of Israel, but only to His disciples after His rejection as King and after His Resurrection.* (See Acts 1. 1-8).

10. The writing of the New Testament Scriptures **and** their world-wide distribution. This is clearly implied **in** Jesus' words concerning the woman who anointed Him with **exceeding** precious ointment (costing over £10) **and** who the disciples **said** was wasting her money: " Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached **in** the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her " (Matthew 26. 13). The **New Testament** has been translated into over one thousand different languages (more than any other book ever written), and has truly gone out into " the whole world "; and so it is that everywhere **men** have learned about the loving act of this woman, **an** act done privately **inside** a house which ordinarily would never have been known to any except those present.

Jesus also made clear how the New Testament would be written, *i. e.*, through the Holy Spirit, who, **He said** to **His** disciples, " shall teach you all things, **and** bring to your remembrance all that I **said** unto you. " . . . And **He** shall declare unto you the things that are to come " (John 14. 26; 16. 13). Thus the whole of the New Testament is the teaching of Jesus (and not primarily the teaching of Paul or Peter or John: the last book is " The Revelation of Jesus Christ, " **and** not of John, **as is** often said: see Revelation 1. 1). The teaching of Jesus is the teaching of God, *i. e.*, is the Word of God, **and** was communicated to the **New Testament** writers through the Holy Spirit, exactly **as in** the **case** of the writers of the Old Testament.

Prophecies of Jesus not yet fulfilled.

1. The closing of this Christian dispensation is by **His** return to the air (not to the earth), whither all Christians will be caught up to meet **Him** (John 14. 3; 1 Thessalonians 4. 15-17). Enoch was translated without dying (see Genesis 5. 24). (*Note.* —*Following this event the unfulfilled seventieth week of Daniel 9. 24-27 (i. e., a period of 7 years) will run its course, when once again Israel and the Land of Israel will become the spiritual centre of the world. Jesus' instructions as to how His disciples in Judaea are to act at this time are given in Matthew 24. 9-22).*

2. The coming of the Antichrist. Jesus said, " I **am** come **in** My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come **in** his own **name**, him ye will receive " (John 5. 43). The Jews have believed **in** many false Messiahs, but **in** the last sentence of the above verse Jesus refers to the last **and** the worst false Messiah, **in** whom they (with the exception of a remnant) will believe. In the middle of the 70th week of Daniel 9. 24-27 this Antichrist **and** world-wide **king** will enter the re-built temple **in** Jerusalem (see Daniel 9. 27; Matthew 24. 15; 2 Thessalonians 2. 3-4), coming **in** his own **name** **and** **setting** himself forth as God, **and** **demanding** the worship of all **men** on pain of death (see Revelation 13. 1-8, 15-17).

3. Jesus' return to the Mount of Olives (at the close of the 70th week) when **He** saves the Remnant of Israel who believe **in** Jesus **as** their Messiah (Matthew 24. 29-31; Luke 21. 25-28; Joel 3. 9-16; Zechariah 13. 8—14. 15). After destroying the Antichrist and all the enemies of the Jews, the **King** of Israel will

reign in righteousness over the whole earth for one thousand years (Revelation 20. 4). Then there will be universal peace, " for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea " * (Isaiah 2. 2-4; 11. 1-9).

There are other prophecies of Jesus not yet fulfilled, prophecies reaching beyond the end of time **and** of the millennial reign of the Messiah into the ages of eternity. Then there will be a new heaven and a new earth, when " the sea is no more, " and when God " shall wipe every tear from their eyes (of the redeemed); and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more; the first things are passed away. " Then there will be a " new Jerusalem, " " and the throne of God and of the Lamb (Jesus) shall be therein: and His servants shall do Him service; and they shall see His face (not " faces "—compare Genesis 1. 26); and His name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever " (see Revelation, chapters 21. and 22.).

From the foregoing we believe it has been clearly shown that Jesus spoke the words of God and that His every word has ALWAYS come to pass; that He is no false prophet, but the greatest of all prophets, " declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done " (Isaiah 46. 10), thereby proving He is none other than God the Son. * A. F. ATKINSON.

(From " The Chiefest among Ten Thousand ").

1

THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!

The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

From Vancouver. —That the Jews were zealous to keep the sabbath was evident, a result, perhaps, of the work of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 13.). His zeal had no doubt a great influence lasting till the Lord's time. It is also noted that they did not turn again to idol worshipping after the return from Babylon. The Lord came to a system that was outwardly white and beautiful, but like sepulchres inwardly was filled with rottenness. The weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith were left undone. Sacrifices were good, but only as the worshippers were in the right condition. The sabbath was good, but only as the keepers pleased God.

What did the Lord require of His people? The answer is given in Micah 6. 8, " To do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. " In Romans 11. 8 we read that God gave them a spirit of stupor. Such is manifestly seen in the Pharisees' condemnation of the Lord's works on the sabbath day.

In the sermon on the mount, one and another of the things of the law were superseded with, " But I say unto you. " He spake with all the authority of the Son of the Living God. One greater than Jonah, than the temple, than Solomon, than Abraham was present. In so acting contrary to the blind guides of His day, the Lord Jesus in no way broke the sabbath in the eyes of His Father. *H. McL.*

From **Brantford, Ont.** —In the miracle concerning the man with the withered hand, the Pharisees tried to make a test case, to try the Lord Jesus regarding His attitude to healing on the sabbath. The Lord refers to their own lives, and reminds them of how they would act with one of their sheep, and compares the value of a sheep with that of a man. Then He heals the man showing it is lawful to do good on the sabbath.

Again in Luke 13. 10-17 the Lord healed a woman who had suffered from a spirit of infirmity for 18 years. As He taught in the synagogue on the sabbath day He saw this needy woman. Here again the ruler of the synagogue was indignant about the miracle, but the Lord showed to the Pharisees that their principles were wrong, and although they practised some strict rules in their synagogues, yet at home they would help their cattle. But the more important things concerning humanity they put aside. As He reasoned the Pharisees were put to shame, but others rejoiced in that good had been done.

J. J. Thomas.

Further miracles linked **with** challenges of the **Lord's** divine authority.

From **Edinburgh**.—On the occasions mentioned in the first two scriptures quoted, the Pharisees took up a strong attitude against Jesus and classified Him definitely as a servant of Beelzebub. The challenge was clear and immediate, and the Lord was not slow to respond. He went straight to the heart of the matter and clinched it with the words, "Then is the kingdom of God come upon you." His logic was unanswerable and the Pharisees were silenced. The binding of the strong man can be compared to the death of Christ, the three days of strife, and His glorious resurrection in which He led captivity captive (Psalm 68. 18), having spoiled the strong man's goods. The obvious conclusion that the tree is known by its fruit was the death-blow to the Pharisees, because Christ manifested the works of God, and, therefore, must be of God. It does not do for a man to leave all evil and to assume strength to resist the evil one. Unless the heart is filled with Christ and His love, such a man will be bound more tightly by sin and his latter phase will be worse than the former. Here is our lesson. We have been saved and swept clean, not to remain empty, but to be filled, heart and soul, with love and the desire for Christ and His way, with love and the desire for service with and for Him in the gospel, in ministry, according to the gift He has given us, and highest phase of all, in Holy Priesthood capacity. Only as our hearts are filled with such things can the evil one be kept out and our latter state be better than the former.

The obvious need of the palsied man, spoken of in Mark 2. 1-12, and the ability of Christ to meet, that need, has been stressed many times in the preaching of the gospel. In this case again the Pharisees saw only the outer side and not the inner. The man's greatest need was not of a doctor, but of a Saviour, and this need was met first and foremost. There was no doubt in the mind of the man when he heard the words, "Thy sins are forgiven." As the murmuring arose, the Lord looked at the Pharisees and silenced their criticism by healing the body of the sick man. The reason for this was that they might know that the Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins. It is good to note that *all* who witnessed this miracle, and this surely included the Pharisees, gave God the glory.

The miracle related in John 9., shows simple faith and simple obedience resulting in the manifestation of the works of God: "I am the Light of the World." This was literally true in the case of the blind man, for Christ lighted up his whole being. So, in our case, now that the scales have been removed from our eyes, let us see that He lights up our whole being, that the works of God may be made manifest through us, even that the neighbours may marvel. The change **must be** manifest in many ways. *Thomas Hope.*

From Hereford.—There must have been few days during the Lord's ministry in which He did not come in contact with human suffering, but in Matthew 12. the spectacle was brought before Him in one of its wildest and most terrible forms—a demoniac, both blind and dumb!

It appears from the Lord's words in verse 27, "By whom, do your sons cast them out?" that there existed among the Jews certain forms of exorcisms which to a certain extent, at any rate, were successful. There were some, too, in the day* of the apostle Paul (see Acts 19. 13-16). The miracle caused a burst of unconcealed admiration—they openly debated whether He who had such power could be any other than their expected Deliverer. The Pharisees, however, could not deny that a great miracle had been performed, and since it did not convert, it only hardened and maddened them.

In trying to dissipate the deep impression which the miracle had made on the minds of the amazed spectators, the Pharisees directly challenged the Lord's divine authority. In a few words the Lord shattered their hideous suggestion, He showed them how absurd it was to suppose that Satan could be his own enemy.

We have the positive side of the matter in verse 28, that the authority which **He exercised must be superior and contrary** to Satan, that **it was** in the Spirit of that God, against which they had blasphemed, He cast out demons, but that the kingdom of God had come upon them. They deliberately shut their eyes and

their ears that they should not apprehend the divine authority by which He was casting out demons.

Then the Lord, in plain language, tells them that it was only from evil treasures hid deep in their hearts, that these evil sayings could be produced.

The scribes and Pharisees, thus baffled by this stern rebuke, seek to justify themselves by asking to see some great, indisputable sign of His authority. To such an appeal, made only to insult and tempt, not from hearts of faith, but out of curiosity and hatred, the Lord turns a deaf ear. No sign should be given, save in prophecies which they could not, yea, would not understand.

Robert Tidmas.

From Yeovil. —In these four accounts of miracles of the Lord Jesus, the real attitude of the Pharisees and leaders of the Jews comes to the surface. The miracles of the Lord Jesus were of such a character, that they were bound to admit that it was a supernatural power by which they were performed. We have the wonderful healings of body and mind being performed and the ordinary people enjoying and rejoicing in these blessings.

On the other hand, the leaders were so hardened and blinded that they attributed these things to the work of Satan. There can be no excuse for this. Miracles were performed, the result of which was only blessing to those concerned. In attributing these works to Satan, the Pharisees were guilty of the highest degree of blasphemy, that against the Holy Spirit. This is what the Lord Jesus says of their attitude, and reveals to them and to us the solemn truth that for such a sin there is no forgiveness, either in this world or in the next.

They had been accusing Him of blasphemy, but were guilty of the thing themselves in the worst degree. This indicates the serious position to which these men had come. They are contrasted with the men of Nineveh, who were great sinners, and yet truly repented. But these men apparently were beyond repentance, and so judgment fell later in A. D. 70, the result of challenging the authority of the Son of God, which was so clearly manifest in the miracles He wrought.

A. S. Glover.

EXTRACTS.

From Birkenhead. —Down the ages of Jewish history there had been many prophets. Many true messengers of Jehovah had appeared; many false imitators who looked for notoriety had come. In all Syrian religions the supernatural gifts of prophecy are prevalent and are received with veneration by the masses, but in general are looked upon with suspicion by the more learned. In the East at the present day the mullah, or doctor of Moslem law, looks with contempt upon the dervish or illiterate "man of God." At the time of the Lord Jesus there was already in circulation the proverb that "the scholar is greater than the prophet."

In Deuteronomy 13. is given the law concerning false prophets. Such deceivers may even give signs and wonders as evidence of their prophetic ability, but if they incited the people to seek after other gods they were to be put to death. This penalty was to fall also upon those prophets who presumed to speak in the name of Jehovah without having received a divine commission (Deuteronomy 18. 20).

> It is clear that the distinguishing between true and false prophets was no easy task to those coeval with them.

Posterity will prove the predictions of the true seer to be correct, but his contemporaries obviously cannot apply this test. As both the divinely commissioned and the impostor may work miracles, by what criterion is the truthfulness of the alleged prophet to be determined? [Deuteronomy 13. 2, 3 supplies the answer. Any prophet who arose must speak in keeping with past revelation made by other prophets. —J. M.]

If we bear in mind the vast numbers of false prophets which had arisen, and the fact that the true prophets were so often champions of the common people and opposed the tyranny of the ruling classes, it is not difficult to understand the great resentment which the Lord Jesus aroused in the religious and political leaders of His day. This One who had burst upon the Jewish world from the obscurity of Nazareth was stealing from them the allegiance and respect of the

multitude. Their authority as interpreters of the divine law and of the Talmudic tradition was being challenged. The former this new Teacher **set** in a new light; He amplified it; indeed in measure He abrogated it. The latter **He** rejected **as** being the mere tradition of men and accused it of making void the true law.

If we without bias try to place ourselves in the position of a strict and learned Jew of that time we shall see more clearly the problem which confronted the orthodox. Are the claims of this Man, a **mere** Galilean peasant, to **be** accepted? Is **He** the Son of God, with power derived as **He** says from God Himself? or is this the blasphemous assertion of an impostor? These words which, uttered **in** the Galilean dialect, 'fall upon our ears, are they a new revelation from God or are they frankly heretical?

Some sceptic scribes ask for yet another sign (Matthew 12. 38), but, for the mere satisfaction of unbelieving criticism or idle curiosity, none **is** immediately forthcoming. One miracle though is predicted, the greatest of all—the resurrection after three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12. 40).

The fulfilment of this last great sign must surely quell all doubt. The believing heart sees in **Him** the full manifestation of divine authority and the embodiment of divine power. W. R., N. A.

From **Brantford**, Ont. —The record of God's chosen people **is** very poor with regard to their treatment of those sent to them. Much righteous blood was shed. Unbelief **is** their besetting sin, and the root of all their troubles.

The Pharisees made it their business to be at hand, not to see and hear for good, but that they might catch Him in His talk. The unbelief of their heart led to blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. The teaching of the Lord that **He** was from heaven, equal with God and the Messiah, was the stone over which they stumbled. Thus we see unbelief in full flower.

God and the Son made things evident and proper in all ways. Surely a seeking soul would, through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, accept His testimony! No doubt there were many persons in Israel who were puzzled over the strange words and sights they were hearing and seeing day by day. It **is** heartening to think of Nicodemus, as he thought these things over, and came to the conclusion that the Lord Jesus was a Teacher come from God, and that God was doing these works through Him. This earnest seeking soul received Him. However, the all-important work of the Spirit is the only means by which any can understand divine things.

It seems to us that in the miracle in Matthew **9**, the people marvelled at two things—the fact that One in their fashion and likeness could forgive sins on earth, and that He was able to do such mighty works. Thus they glorified God. God was glorified in the Son, and **we** rejoice at any manifestation of acceptance of God's testimony and Messiah.

The account in John **9** **is** refreshing to read. The blind man knew more than all his teachers. His godly confidence, keenness and eagerness are outstanding. In his words to the Pharisees he bore good testimony, and showed an enlightened mind, and later to the Lord he showed an eager heart to know more of **Him** who gave him his sight.

The question of the Lord's divine authority, and thus His Deity, **is** a very • serious matter. To-day on every hand this point **is** denied through the working of the evil one, even as in the Lord's day. All dear children of God need to be very clear on this truth of God. *Alex. Sproul, Hiel Wood.*

From Glasgow. —When the Lord cast out the demon, as recorded in Matthew **9**, **12**, the completeness of the healing was manifest in the eyes of those who witnessed the miracle. So profound was the effect on the multitude that they openly acknowledged, "It was never so seen in Israel."

The effect on the Pharisees was different. Despite the evidence of the Deity of the Lord which was thus revealed, they refused to recognise **His** authority and sought to establish their own authority. They loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.

They could not, however, deny the power of God thus revealed; but in the perversion of their hearts they ascribed that power to Beelzebub. The Lord then showed that this was the kingdom of God in opposition to the kingdom of darkness: it was the working of the Spirit of God delivering men from the binding power of Satan. He brought to bear on the Pharisees, the weight of their guilt, in that they rejected His authority and blasphemed against the Holy Spirit. He showed them the corruption of their hearts. A Gentile nation and a Gentile queen with less opportunity of knowing the will of God, would condemn that generation.

In the healing of the man sick of the palsy, the Lord deals first with the question of sin. It may have been that the man's sickness was related to sin. The scribes, in disputing the words of the Lord, rightly ascribed the authority to forgive sins to God. What they failed to realise was that the God of Israel was in their midst. . .

J. R. (Jun.).

From London, S. E. —The direct challenge in Mark 2, results in a clear demonstration of the Deity of Christ; although it left the Pharisees unconvinced, they were by no means unmoved, for even they are amazed and glorify God after seeing the palsied man raised.

Let the salient points now be assimilated and examined. During a discourse by the Lord with sundry people, a litter is lowered beside Him from the roof. A man lies upon it, sick of palsy. No word is spoken to the Lord, but He *sees* their faith. Then the Lord speaks, not as they expect, but He says, " Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. " Seemingly, by reading between the lines, the Lord then continues His discourse. Gradually the Pharisees' cogitations allow them to see the import of that statement He thus made. Here follows an indication of Christ's Deity, because He discerns their thoughts. This no ordinary man can do. Then in reply to their unuttered exclamation He asks whether is easier, to forgive sins or restore the body. To their minds the answer is elementary; but is it? To human ideas the second part was more difficult because it depended on a physical act, whereas the first was only words. To spiritual ideas the first was greater, for God in His creative power could easily perform the physical recovery, but the spiritual deliverance could not be accomplished by divine power merely, but required the work of Calvary's tree. The Pharisees seem to need the miracle as a proof. So the Lord performs it, but He stipulates at the outset that the miracle is to show them that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins. If the man's paralysis was caused by sin, only forgiveness could grant restoration (see John 5. 14), and as the Pharisees had determined that only God could forgive sins it can be shown that Christ is God.

Reginald Wood.

From Kilmarnock. —It has already been noted in our studies that one purpose of the miracles that the Lord performed was that we might believe that **He was the Son of God** (see John 20. 31). No doubt many of those who witnessed them put faith in Him, but many of the Pharisees especially refused to acknowledge Him as such. It was quite evident to the blind man of John 9. that Jesus was from God, and he marvelled that the Pharisees did not recognise this also. He, however, had received spiritual eyesight, and put faith in Jesus as Son of God, while the Pharisees remained spiritually blind because they refused to allow the " Light of the World " to enlighten their darkened minds.

In the case of the paralytic of Mark 2. we read, " Jesus saw their faith. " It was made manifest by their works, for had they not believed that Jesus could cure him, they surely would not have troubled breaking up the roof and letting him down before Jesus. No doubt their action was pleasing to the Lord (see Hebrews 11. 6), and He said, " Son, thy sins are forgiven. " He met the deeper need first which caused reasoning in the hearts of the scribes then present. It is evident they did not express their thoughts, but the Lord showed His divine power in knowing their hearts. They professed to acknowledge that God only could forgive sins, but they refused to believe in Jesus as divine. To prove His authority He cured the paralytic, who went forth before all, causing glory to God.

A. G. S.

From Ilford. —In the first two scriptures **the man** in question was demon-possessed, and this fact gave **the Lord** the greatest opportunity He could have of showing the divine authority which had been given **Him by His Father**.

The two miracles are similar, **in** that the **Pharisees** accuse **Him** **in** both instances of casting out demons by **the** power of Beelzebub. We have no record **in** the first instance that the Lord took up the challenge, but **in** the second the **Pharisees** are once **again** shown the falsity of their arguments.

It is plain logic that **if** the Lord cast out the demons by the power of the prince of demons, then **He** was undoing the work of Beelzebub, which the Lord **v** **refers** to as a kingdom divided against itself. If then they were not cast out through the power of the prince of demons, the power by which they were cast out must have been far greater, even that of God.

In Mark, the Deity of Christ **is** **again** challenged. The question of forgiveness of **sins** arises. The man who was sick was told: " Thy **sins** are forgiven thee. "

In all the miracles which we have before **us** **in** this month's subject, we **see** the ultimate result **is** that God may be glorified through the works of **His** Son. It is noticeable, too, that the ordinary people understood the teachings and appreciated the works of Christ **far** better than the Pharisees, whose minds were biased because they could see that the glory which they so much desired **in** the eyes of the people was being given to another.

E. H. Jarvis.

From Atherton. —In Matthew 12. 22 we get the case of the **man** who was not only dumb but blind as well. At the miraculous healing of this poor one the multitudes, **as** **in** the former case, express amazement. The Pharisees **again** criticise and challenge the authority by which **He** works. This time they say **that** by the prince of demons He casts out demons. The Lord's answer to this challenge **is** complete, and covers the former accusation against Him. More than that, the very serious charge of blasphemy which **He** brings home to them crowns **it** all. This would **seem** to settle for ever what **is** the unpardonable sin, *i. e.*, the **sin** against the Holy Spirit of God. It was considered that this **sin** could only be committed by **an** unsaved person, **seeing** that there **is** no forgiveness for it, " neither **in** this world, nor **in** that which **is** to come. " It stands **in** contrast to the " **sin** unto death, " which is definitely applied to the believer (see 1 John 5. 16).

Another essential feature of the true Messiah **is** **His** equality with God (see Isaiah 9. 1, 2 and 6). This equality the despised **Nazarene** often claimed **and** manifested (see John 5. 17, 18; 10. 30-33), **as** **seen** **in** the healing of the sick of the palsy. The greater need of the **man** was that his **sins** should be forgiven; this was by far the hardest task of all to accomplish, but for the omniscient Son of God it simply required **an** **exercise** of faith on the **man's** part, and **He** was able to do the rest. Further, **as** the Lord dealt with the question of the **man's** **sins** at once, the scribes challenged **His** authority to forgive **sins**. This **is** rightly the sole prerogative of God, and bespeaks divine authority and power **only**. They judged the Lord had assumed this divine authority. The simplicity of **His** statement, " Thy sins are forgiven thee, " was misunderstood by them. They in their hearts charged **Him** with blasphemy, attributing to Himself a power belonging only to God. But He, perceiving their thoughts, replied to their challenge with the words, " Whether **is** easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy **sins** are forgiven; or to say, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk ? " The immediate effect of His final words to the palsied **man** amazed them all, and they glorified God saying, " **We** never saw it on this fashion. "

In the miracle of John 9. several things stand out. First is the cause of the calamity upon this afflicted **man**. Who did **sin** ? Oftentimes uncharitable folk **are** apt to attribute calamities and sicknesses* even amongst the Lord's own, to some fault or failing, rather than that God might be glorified thereby. How many miss the purpose of God **in** sickness or adversity, by murmuring, complaints, and despondency, instead of bowing to **His** will, and **seeking** that **His** purpose **in** them might have fulfilment, meanwhile being joyful **and** content therein until **He** grants deliverance.

In this group of miracles we have challenged:

- (1) The Spirit by which the Lord accomplished **His** miracles.
- (2) **His** own authority (not just **His** ability).

- (3) The Person giving Him that authority (they said Beelzebub and not God).
- (4) Authority to heal.
- (5) Authority to forgive sins.
- (6) His sinlessness.

An explanation of Matthew 12. 27 was sought. It was suggested that " the sons " here referred to, were the disciples who themselves cast out demons; some of whom (namely, the apostles) will sit to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Reference was also made to the practice among the Jews with respect to casting out demons (*vide* Acts 19. 13-16). **G. A. Jones.**

From Hamilton, Ont. —The miracles under consideration show the perfect oneness between the Father and Son. Yet while they display His wondrous power and grace in bringing untold blessings to sinful men, they also manifest the hateful attitude of mankind, especially that of the religious scribes and Pharisees towards Him. His kind words and works should have been sufficient to silence and convince them that He was the sent One from the Father. His signs were so many and so great that they admitted: " If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation " (John 11. 47).

Many are the mighty works which the Lord performed in Capernaum, but very outstanding is the miracle of the palsied man. It is worthy of note that the Lord Jesus commended the faith of the four men by whom he was borne. It is clear from Matthew 9. that the Lord Jesus as Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins; this was His grand prerogative. There need have been no question as to His Deity, or His authority, for in this miracle we have conclusive proof that He was God manifested in the flesh, not merely man, the son of David, as they saw Him (Matthew 12. 23), but in reality Himself very God. His words were the words of God, His works were the works of God. Even the demons knew who He was and testified to **His** holy character (Mark 1. 24). **T. Ramage.**

Questions and Answers.

Questions from Atherton. —(1) Were the sabbath day miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ *limited* to works of *healings* ?

(2) At what stage in dispensational history did the law cease to exist in so far as it applied to the nation of Israel ?

Answer (1). —It is evident that the Lord justified His disciples for plucking and eating the ears of corn on the sabbath. This **was a** justifiable **work of necessity**, as was also David's act of eating the Shewbread. The Lord's recorded miracles on the sabbath were all **works of mercy, i. e.** acts of healing, emphasizing that **it was** lawful to do good on the sabbath. Men acted mercifully to their cattle on the sabbath, but the strict Pharisees would not countenance the Lord acting thus towards men. They justly earned the descriptive title—" Thou blind Pharisee !" (Matthew 23. 26).

Answer (2). —The question that our friends propound is impossible to answer, as we do not understand what they mean. In God's dispensational dealings Israel nationally has been cast away and a new people were brought into divine favour, a people who were no people became the people of God (Romans 9. 24-26). Such a people are not under law, that is Moses' law, but under law to Christ. Israel nationally in their blindness and hardness continued to adhere to the law of Moses, and do so to this day, rejecting the Messiah and the New Testament Scriptures, and will continue so to do till divine light reaches them, and then in repentance they will look on Him whom they pierced. Our friends should recast their question and make plain their meaning. —J. M.

Question from Kilmarnock. —It is evident from Mark 9. 38-40 that there were others beside the apostles who had the power to cast out demons. Would Matthew 12. 27 Have reference to these persons ?

Answer. —" Your sons " of Matthew 12. 27 I do not understand to refer to the apostles, but to Jewish exorcists. **If** these cast out demons by the power of God, why should the Lord be accused of casting them out by the devil's power ?—J. M.

BIBLE STUDIES.

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, In that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scripture* daily, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11).

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THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Further miracles linked with challenges of the Lord's divine authority.

From Vancouver. —When the person, demon possessed, blind and dumb (Matthew 12. 22), was brought to the Lord Jesus and delivered from his evil plight, the multitudes in amazement said, " Is this the Son of David ? "

The Pharisees, however, always waiting to seize an opportunity of laying a charge against this Man, were confounded by His acts of power. Had their eyes been opened to see Him, in the light of all that the prophets had spoken, they would have bowed and acknowledged Him as the long-awaited 'Messiah.

They were envious when they beheld His magnetic power drawing the multitudes, and their dignity was injured by His words which were like sharp arrows aimed at their hearts of unbelief (see Matthew 12. 1-14). To give vent to their hatred and envy, they sunk to lower depths in their corrupted thoughts by saying, ** This Man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of demons " (Matthew 12. 24).

By thus speaking they insulted Deity, for they not only spoke of the **Lord** Jesus as a mere man, but called the Holy Spirit the " prince of demons. " By the Spirit of God He had cast out demons, and this very fact indicated that the kingdom of God had come unto them.

In the full light of such a wondrous revelation of God in His Son, accompanied by signs and wonders, the Pharisees became guilty of the unpardonable sin of which the Lord spoke on that occasion. He first revealed the inconsistency of their suggestion (verse 24), by stating the established principle that every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. So that, by their own statement, Satan would be casting out Satan, which would result in division, a condition which did not exist in the Satanic kingdom. Satan's kingdom ever remains a united force for the ultimate destruction of men's lives whenever possible.

The Lord Jesus, therefore, threw back the challenge of the Pharisees against His divine authority, as in their puny wisdom and faulty reasoning they sought to nullify the effect on others of His acts of power.

The Lord's plain and irrevocable statement as to the magnitude of the Pharisees' guilt in verses 31, 32, placed them beyond the reach of divine forgiveness. The tree is known by its fruit. They had brought evil things out of their evil treasure and by their words they shall be condemned.

The incident in John 9. of the man who was born blind, and who received sight, became the subject of contention and dispute amongst the Pharisees. Because the miracle was wrought by the Lord Jesus on the sabbath day, it gave the Pharisees ground (as they thought) to prove that this Man was not sent from God. The miracle itself was an established fact on the testimony of the man himself, and being unable to deny this, they sought another means to repudiate the divine authority of the great Healer.

The result was that the Pharisees, instead of gaining ground with their propaganda against the Lord, were left quarrelling among themselves, while God received glory, and another disciple was made, in the person of the man who testified thus: " One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. "

In his case also, the miracle was twofold, for he not only received natural sight to behold with wonder the things around him for the first time, but to see in this Stranger none other than the eternal Son of God.

The faithful testimony of the once blind man made him a social outcast from the Jews (John 9. 24-34), but he was happy to believe in and worship the wondrous Person whom he now addressed as Lord (verses 35-38).

R. Armstrong.

The feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand.

From **Wigan**.—In considering the place that this subject occupies in the miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ, we find that the Lord's disciples themselves have provided the link with our last month's study—the challenges to the Lord's divine authority. On the occasion when He warns them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, an influence which they must have experienced in common with all the Jewish nation, their thoughts at first turn to the bread for which leaven is used, and later, to the loaves which were increased, not by the chemical action of yeast, but by the surge of divine power through the Lord Jesus. The antidote to the subtle working of the Pharisees, we suggest, was that the disciples should practise implicit faith in the Lord's divine power and authority, with particular regard to their own later service. This leads us to offer the important observation that the two miracles of feeding were performed by the Lord Jesus for the special benefit of the disciples and to instruct them to this end. The three principal characters in these wonderful scenes are the Lord Himself, the disciples, and the two multitudes. Whilst the moving power is the Lord's, and the happy beneficiaries are the people, yet the disciples' part in the two acts is that which seems for us most noteworthy, even though it may not be immediately obvious. Other teaching is undoubtedly presented in these miracles, but we have based our study on this conclusion.

It is very remarkable that, among all the miracles hitherto performed by the Lord Jesus, these are the first with which the disciples as a body are permitted to be associated. The lesson we would draw from this fact is that it was intended by the Lord to further increase their faith, and also to establish an important divine principle which we describe later. Doubtless the disciples must have previously extended their confidence in the Master as they witnessed the gradual manifestation of His miraculous power, yet we all understand how this process must have been quickened as they were invited to participate in these miracles by dispensing the food. At this point we recall the Lord's initial promise to them that He would make them fishers of men if they would follow Him. In such service faith in the Master would be the impelling force as opposed to the realism of the Mosaic economy. Calvary of course would introduce love in their hearts later. Consequently the Lord is slowly schooling them from the old to the new. The desert, the approach of night, the supplies so ridiculously small for such a multitude (Matthew 14.); all these are factors which prompt their thought, " Send the multitudes away. " The Master surprises them with the counter-

command, " Give ye them to eat " (are these words not a paraphrase of the great commission in Matthew 28 ?). The Lord now wondrously provides bread and fish for probably **8, 000** from the lad's five loaves and two fishes. It **is** left to the disciples, however, in both miracles, to hand out the divinely provided food, for " He **gave** the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. "

Surely **we see** here the divine principle disclosed. Although angels are ever ready to **be** employed in heavenly service, the work of proclaiming the glorious gospel **must** always be that of redeemed mortals. Like the disciples of that day, **we** are the humble agents for transmitting the heavenly blessing to mankind around, whether by prayer or proclamation. What condescending grace that God should entrust such a tremendous work to failing sinners!

It has been remarked by some that the Lord **Jesus** could **quite** easily have provided the food without any loaves or fishes. Had the Lord done so we should not have marvelled any the more, **because** we realise that divine power **is** infinite. That the Lord should take up human provisions, even from a lad, makes the teaching clearer. Correlated with the thought that the disciples are those whom God **uses** to bless mankind, **is** the lesson that God will also **use** whatever **gifts** or possessions may **be** ours, no matter how small or limited. In the estimation of all, the lad must have seemed the most insignificant present, until the need arose for his loaves and fishes. **We** can only imagine his amazement **as** the Lord multiplied many **times** what was once His own. Who can predict the potentialities of sanctified gifts in the Lord's redeemed ?

Unfortunately, like ourselves, the disciples are woefully slow to apprehend these teachings. In Matthew 15. we discover them in a parallel situation, **but** with one notable difference. This time it **is** the Lord who first raises the **matter** of food for the multitude. (Incidentally **He** shows for our emulation that the attitude of mind towards the world should **be** one of compassion.) Is it the Lord's intention to test their faith ? If this **is** the **case** it **is** found more **scarce** than the food needed for the multitude. Nevertheless, the loaves and fishes are sufficient under the Lord's power to satisfy all present, and again there **is** a surplus. In this connection we have noticed the Lord's care that the food over should **be** collected up (John 6. 12), but we are not certain what the Lord Jesus intended to convey. Undoubtedly it implies order, care and continuing attention in **His** service.

This lesson of faith in Himself **is** so highly important that the Lord soon tests **His** followers again. In Matthew 16. **8-10**, the passage with which **we** began, the proving **seems** to **be** so accidental. Describing the menace of the Pharisaic teachings, the Lord **causes** them to **remember** that they have come without bread. In view of the two miracles so recently performed the Lord's condemnation **seems** regrettably necessary. " **O** ye of little faith.... Do ye not perceive, neither **remember** the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up ? "

The materials used by the Lord Jesus remind **us** of a later event which we would judge to **be** the sequel to all these happenings. The multitudes, which had enjoyed to the full the free bread and fish, have since added their voice to the cry, " Crucify **Him**. " And so the wondrous Provider died. For the disciples it also meant the death of their fondest hopes and the disappearance from their minds of **His** exhortations to faith in Himself. Now the wheel has turned full circle; the potential fishers of men have returned to their old business. In this their foretaste of testimony without the Lord's physical presence among them the light of witness utterly disappears. In John **21. 12**, **as** they fish in Galilee, the Lord calls them quietly, " Come and break your fast, " and it **must** have been a cutting reminder of events gone by **as** the Lord gives them bread and fish. How gracious and patient of the Lord to desire their service still, and to say: " **Feed My** lambs "; " **Tend My** sheep "; and " **Feed My** sheep " !

In conclusion we see clearly that faith in the Lord Jesus is not a once-for-all decision of the mind, but a continuing attitude for every disciple. Equally true is the fact that all faith must be proved, and in the trial will either fail miserably or be happily confirmed. May we fully recognise the warning that "without faith **it is impossible to be** well-pleasing unto Him." *J. H. Ollerton.*

From **Brantford, Ont.** —There are very striking similarities between the two events. Both occurred in desert places, and the Lord was surrounded by many people. In each case there was a humanly inadequate supply of loaves and fishes; both times the people were commanded to sit down. While the account of the feeding of the 5,000 is found in all the four Gospels, the feeding of the 4,000 is only found in two Gospels. It seems that the 5,000 who were fed were for the most part from the region about Capernaum; that is, they were Jews (Luke 9. 10). We take note of the fact that while the power of the miracle was Christ's, with no man needed to help, yet He was gracious to make use of the provisions that were present, and also the hands of the disciples to minister. How God can utilize that which we bring to Him, no matter how small it may seem, and can multiply it! No one ever sits down at His table of Living Bread without arising satisfied, unless he refuses that which is given. He said, "I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall not hunger" (John 6. 35).

The 5,000 would have made Him king by force (John 6. 15). How they would have liked to have a leader like Him, who could so create food at will! But we hear the great Searcher of hearts say: "Ye seek Me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves." How much there is to teach us to bring ourselves and our service to Him, and place them in His hand for blessing! Rest and food in Him and through Him are still precious. Yet He is interested in the multitudes, as Matthew 14. 15 shows. "Pity to the wretched moved Him."

We contrasted the compassionate Lord Jesus with the disciples who would have no doubt sent them away. Faith must and can overcome all our circumstances. They did not reckon with the One whose power fed Israel for 40 years, and who sent the ravens to feed the prophet. He could easily say, "Give ye them to eat."

The more we give, having received from Him, the greater the increase. Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but God gives the increase. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5. 6). There are plenty of people who are hungering and thirsting after money, fame, power and material benefits, but to those who seek Him the promise is sure, "They shall **be** filled." **N.** *Sproul.*

EXTRACTS.

From Ilford. —The first miracle is unique in that it is the only one God has seen fit to record in all four Gospels. Each account agrees with the others, but in some cases additional information is given, and a different aspect of the Lord's work presented. [What of the ear of Malchus?]

We see how the Lord and His disciples had been very busy prior to the miracle, and also that they had just received the sad news of John the Baptist's death (Mark 6/30-32). The Lord therefore told them to come apart with Him and rest awhile. But they had little rest in the time that followed. The people followed after them, mainly to see the signs which the Lord performed (John 6. 2). The Lord had compassion on them, because they were as sheep without a shepherd, and although no doubt weary in body, He welcomed them (Luke 9. 11), and used this opportunity to teach them.

The second miracle presents a very similar instance, but a few additional points are worthy of note. **We see** from the **fact** that the people had **been** with the Lord for three days (Matthew 15. 32) how **He must** have captivated their attention. Oh that **we** should know more of the **Spirit** working in us, that **men and** women would flock to hear of Him !

It **was** also pointed out that **it was** remarkable that the disciples had apparently forgotten the previous miracle, so that they knew not whence to obtain food for the people. **We** should not judge them, but **be** more careful ourselves that we do not forget what the Lord has done for **us**. Finally, we **see** the people **again** abundantly filled, and this would **cause us** to think of Ephesians 3. 20, that **He is** " able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. "

F. Jarvis.

From Glasgow. —In the history of the children of Israel, when they were **in** the wilderness, God was **seen as** the real source of sustenance **in** that **He** prepared a table for them **in** the wilderness by sending them **manna** from heaven. In the **scene** before **us** we have God **manifest** in flesh, the Bread of Life, both **seen and** heard **in** their midst. The place **was** a wilderness, or **desert**, where there **is** no source of supply, and **we find** God **again** supplying the temporal needs of the people. The lesson behind such **signs is** that they might repent **and** turn their hearts to Him who not only sustains life, **but** Himself **is** the Bread of Life. **He** could give life, **as He** said, **His** flesh for the life of the world (John 6. 50).

Could we say that the lesson **we** must learn from the words of the Lord **Jesus** to the multitude, " Sit down, " ere **He** supplied their need, was like **man in** his **sin** to-day, who must take that humble place at the feet of Jesus ? Not only **is** Christ able to meet his need, but **He** has a boundless supply for all who come thus.

As we read Matthew 14. we might say that the Spirit specially brings Jesus before us, for we **see** that Herod, the worldly king, **is** concerned as to who this Jesus **can be**. The world's king **is** exalted **in** all his glory, while Israel's **King is** rejected. **But** we know that salvation to Israel could only come through the Lord **Jesus being** lifted up, not on a throne, but on a cross. **We read in** John 6., where we have the **same** narrative, " The bread which I will give **is** My flesh. " The bread spoken of here **is** for the sinner who has learned his need of Christ, and who partakes of **it** by believing **in Him** as Saviour. **Hence** the exhortation: " Work not for the **meat** which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for **Him** the Father, even God, hath sealed. " " This is the work of God, that ye believe on **Him** whom **He** hath sent " (John 6. 27-29).

Jas. Gartshore.

From Kilmarnock. —It is interesting to note the **circumstances** that led up to the feeding of the five thousand. Just previous to this, the Lord sent out the twelve to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, and empowered them to heal the sick, and gave them authority to cast out demons. Mark 6. 30 tells of their return to the Lord Jesus, evidently elated by what they had done **and** taught. **He** who had sent them forth now says, " Come ye yourselves **apart** into a desert place, **and** rest awhile. " Perhaps **He saw** they were physically in need of a rest, for " **He** knoweth our frame, **He** remembereth that **we** are dust. " Sometimes **He** lays **aside** His servants from active service, to allow them **time** to learn the lesson **He** would teach them, and they should never look on this **as** wasted **time, because** **He** is always with them **in** the desert. Luke 9. 10 tells **us**, " They withdrew apart to a city called Bethsaida. " Apparently there were two Bethsaidas; one on the north east side, **and** the other on the **west** side of the Lake of Galilee. Dr. Young says that the former **was** where the miracle **was** performed. Evidently they **did** not **get** much rest, **as** the people **saw** them going **and** followed them, and " **He**

welcomed **them** and spake to them of the Kingdom of God. " Although their spiritual need **was** His first concern, He **did** not forget their temporal need, and while the disciples would have sent them **away**, the Lord said, " Give **ye** them to eat. " It **was** impossible for the disciples to do this out of the small supply of loaves they had, **but** the Lord **was** about to manifest His divine power in feeding the multitude, and there, before them all, **He** looked **up** to heaven, and blessed and brake the loaves, thus acknowledging the source from whence every blessing comes.

There **was** no possibility of explaining this notable sign **as** the result of natural causes, **but it was** a sure proof of the Lord's Divinity, and **it** so impressed the people that they said, " This **is** of a truth the Prophet that cometh into the world " (John 6. 14; compare Deuteronomy 18. 15). It **is** noticeable that there **is** no mention of scribes or Pharisees being in the company, and possibly this may account for the common people wishing to make the Lord King (John 6. 15); but that could not be, **as** the leaders refused to acknowledge **Him** **as** their Messiah. A. G. S.

From Atherton. —Both miracles indicate **the** Deity and humanity of the Lord **Jesus** Christ, in **a** special **way**. He being God and Man not only **exercises** divine power, but being man, **He** **was** moved with compassion in **His** heart. Reference **was** made to the **fact**, that **as** God, **He** **was** compassionate **too**, since one of the attributes of God **is** " a God full of compassion " (Exodus 34. 6).

The Lord sought first to meet the **greater** need, the spiritual, and began to teach them many things. **We** read that **He** welcomed them, healed them, and began to speak of the Kingdom of God. With Christ the soul's need **came** first, indicating to **us** a great divine principle. The question **was** raised **as** to where the multiplying of the loaves took place, with the Lord or **as** the disciples distributed? It **was** said that the Lord alone had the inexhaustible store; **as** **He** brake up the loaves, there **was** always bread and fish in **His** hands, the lesson to **us** being that before we can give to others **we** must first receive from Him, and must continually go to **Him** for fresh supplies.

We read that the people ate and were filled, and **we** had our thoughts directed to the great needs of man being supplied; it **was** suggested that this would speak in **a** **measure** of God's salvation. On the other hand it was thought that salvation **is** not intended to be included in this miracle; **as** to **its** typical teaching this miracle speaks of divine grace to the people. **He** **met** their need rather than saved them. They all ate and were filled, but in the spiritual sense that does not obtain; they all received the bread, but did not all eat of the spiritual bread. It **was** evident that the people **came** for what they could get, and after they had been fed there was no spiritual change in their condition (see John 6. 26).

Reference was made to the spiritual teaching of the Lord in John 6. 53. This indicates men taking to themselves the value of the death of the Lord. **But** verse 56 goes beyond the receiving of eternal life; note the words, " Abideth in **Me**, and I in Him. " In verse 57 we **see** the Father interlinked with the Son in purpose, **as** in the type of Abraham and Isaac, of whom **we** read twice, " So they went both of them together " (Genesis 22. 6, 8).

The greatness of the miracles **is** enhanced not only by the fact that the multitudes' need **was** met by so little, but by what remained over, for it **is** evident that there **was** far more left than the Lord began with. **We** noticed **a** contrast in the baskets used. The twelve baskets were hand-baskets, but the seven baskets in the feeding of the four thousand were large baskets, large enough in some **cases** to hold the body of **a** man (see Acts 9. 25). What remained over was for the disciples and the Lord, and **was** not left with the multitude. This **is** indicative of the portion for the Lord and for **His** stewards; on the other hand, it **was** said that the Lord Jesus did not perform this miracle to supply **His** own physical need, for **He** could manage without this food, for **we** remember the Lord's own words in John 4.: "I have meat to **eat** that **ye** know not of. " **G. Sankey.**

From Yeovil. —From these two scriptures we see two miraculous banquets. Although the initial provision was so small, " All ate and were filled. " Indeed, there was enough and to spare. Compare Psalm 37. 19.

It was suggested that in the first miracle, where there were twelve baskets of fragments collected, there was one for each of the disciples. The Lord knew there was more work to be done, and He therefore provided the necessary material (Matthew 28. 19). There are others needing to be fed, and for those that are Christ's, the food He provides firstly in Himself and also in His Word is not scanty, but enough and to spare. The parable of the prodigal son is interesting in this connection. In Elijah's day a similar miracle was performed, but 2 Kings 4. 43 bears out how unstintingly God provides. It is the same divine power in evidence as is witnessed in the natural realm. This is the Lord's doing; only His power could accomplish such miracles. One lesson to be gleaned from these miracles is that we should give thanks to the great Provider. God is a God of adding and multiplying.

Further illustrations showing how God provided in Old Testament times are seen in the cases of the children of Israel, the widow woman and her son at Zarephath, and the feeding of Elijah by the ravens at the brook Cherith. These illustrations, with the two miracles considered, also provide a further important lesson for us that where there is a need God uses the material at His disposal. He is the all-sufficient One. How sad to think of the lack of faith on the part of His disciples (see the record in John 6. 5-14), and later as recorded in Matthew 16. 5-12; how quickly they had forgotten **His** power !

S. J. J.

From Edinburgh. —It is man's responsibility to give the Lord what he has, and the lad who had the loaves and fishes gave Him them all. What faith ! As was the case in all He did, the Lord Jesus did this act in fellowship with the Father and the Spirit. " Looking up to heaven, He blessed. " He also brought His disciples into fellowship with Him. He " brake and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. " In His hands the loaves were sufficient to fill the multitude, and so gracious was His provision that, when all were satisfied, there remained twelve baskets full of pieces which He had broken, but which they did not require. In John 6. 14 we read that when the people saw the sign which He did, they said, " This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world. " This miracle was a sign to them that He was the fulfilment of God's promises to Israel, the One who was able to satisfy the need of all their twelve tribes, as He would have done if they had owned Him. As it was, those who did own Him were blessed and satisfied. Further, it points to that time when the twelve tribes of Israel will own Him, speaking of the blessing that yet awaits them.

In chapter 15. we find that in His compassion the Lord shouldered again the responsibility of feeding the multitude who had continued with Him three days, fasting. His doing so was in keeping with the words of the psalmist (Psalm 145. 15, 16), " The eyes of all wait upon Thee; and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desires of every living thing. " On this occasion again, the Lord supplied more than the multitude could use. In the same bountiful manner He has provided for our spiritual need to-day. We may feed upon the Word of God, deriving sustenance therefrom and distributing to others, but never can we exhaust it. There is, as throughout the generations of mankind there always will be, more to follow, for those who are willing to receive it.

John A. H. Robertson.

From London, S. E. —Although Jesus had withdrawn Himself to the desert place for quietness, having heard of the death of John the Baptist, and in consequence was sad at heart, for He was a man with like emotions to ourselves, nevertheless when He saw the multitudes seeking Him He had compassion on them that were sick, and healed them, and spake unto them of the Kingdom of God.

So eager were they to see and hear Him, that even food was forgotten, but He who bountifully provides for all His creatures is present with them. If we, like them, tarry with the Lord, listening to His word, we too would receive blessing, greater than we can comprehend. (See Psalm 81. 10 and Malachi 3. 10).

The marginal rendering of the words " sit down " is " to recline. " The Lord fed them in comfort. It was in a place where there was much grass (Mark 6. 39, John 6. 10). The meal was well arranged and they sat down in orderly companies. The Lord gave thanks, then He broke the bread and the disciples distributed. The disciples were servants, and the men were the guests. God is still working through human agents, bringing the bread of life to the multitudes. He satisfieth the longing soul.

In Deuteronomy 18. 15 we read the words: " The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him shall ye hearken. "

The Greater than Moses was standing before these people, demonstrating His power. He was the true bread sent down out of heaven. John, recording the same miracle, says, " When therefore the people saw the sign which He did, they said, This is of a truth the Prophet which cometh into the world. " They would have taken him by force and made him King, but Jesus withdrew again into the mountain.

We may find an analogy to these miracles in that which happens year by year in the fields—a grain of corn multiplies itself many times. It is one of God's every day miracles. Praise should flow from our hearts as we consider Him who became as a grain of wheat in the ground, and was raised again by the power of God to become the Firstfruits of them that are asleep. *E. C. Leamy.*

Question and Answer.

Question from Glasgow. —What lesson can we learn from the twelve baskets full which were left over after all were satisfied? Some suggested it was to meet the needs of the disciples.

Answer. —There may be many lessons in this fact, but one especially is the fact that there is that scattereth yet increaseth more and more, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet which tendeth only to penury. If we give we'll get. The disciples would have sent away the hungry multitudes, but by giving them to eat they had more left than they had to begin with. *J. M.*

A question has been asked as to whether it is still justifiable to term the local meeting "The Young Men's Corner," and also as to whether it is the magazine to which the term "Bible Studies" applies. Strictly speaking the answer to the second question is, Yes. With regard to a term for those studying the subjects, there are cases where sisters are present when matters are discussed, and in such a case we could no doubt refer to a "Bible Study Circle" except when the subjects were being discussed at a normal assembly meeting, but in other cases only brethren are present. In the latter case I see no reason for not using the long-standing term "Young Men's Corner," which was used to describe both those who met for discussion and also the portion of "Needed Truth" which was set aside for them. *A. T. D.*

BIBLE STUDIES.

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, In that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scripture* daily, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. II).

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EDITORIAL.

It will be remembered that God's purpose **in** allowing the people of Israel to suffer hunger in the wilderness was, to teach them the very important lesson " that man doth not live by bread only, but by every thing that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live " (Deuteronomy 8. 3). The importance of this experience and lesson cannot be over estimated. " Pride, fulness of bread, and prosperous ease " were the roots from which the sin of Sodom sprang (Ezekiel 16. 49), but in the wilderness God humbled His people and suffered them to hunger so that **He** might **be** able to teach them what Sodom in its prosperity and ease never learned, and went to destruction. Eating and drinking is the pursuit of the Gentiles, the Lord said, but God's people should have the higher **aim** in life, even the kingdom of God. " Seek ye first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things (that pertain to eating and drinking, etc.) shall **be** added unto you " (Matthew 6. 33). The kingdom demands that we listen to the " things pertaining to the kingdom of God, " of which the Lord spoke to His disciples during the forty days after the resurrection (Acts 1. 3), and of which Paul also spoke in the synagogue in Ephesus and later in the school of Tyrannus, when he had separated the disciples from the synagogue (Acts 19. 8, 9).

It is said that the Lord taught the multitudes, which were as sheep without a shepherd, many things prior to feeding them with the five loaves and two fishes, no doubt impressing upon them lessons of the greater need of the soul.

When **He** returned to the synagogue in Capernaum, followed eventually **by** the multitude which **He** had **fed** near to Bethsaida, He applied the meaning of the parable of the miraculous feeding in His ministry, as recorded in John 6. **He fed** them that they might know that **He** was Himself the living Bread which had come down from heaven to give life unto the world. Such as came to **Him** would never hunger and those that believed on **Him** would never thirst. There was indeed in the most tangible form the answer to the soul's need. Their fathers **ate** the manna in the wilderness and died nevertheless, though it was angels' bread, **but** the man who **ate** of Christ, the true Bread, would never die. Eating here is **by** faith, for faith is the mouth of the soul.

The natural minds even of disciples found it difficult to take in the Lord's words, so they said, " This is a hard saying; who can hear it ? " When **He** further **added** that " the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you **are** spirit, and are life, " **it** seemed as though **He** was taking away all they had held dear previously. Their birth and genealogy, their descent from Abraham and their fathers, their rich and great ancestry, seemed all to disappear before the teaching of this Man. **He** showed that faith in Himself was the one thing that mattered, and all else was profitless. They were offended in **Him** and went back and walked no more with **Him**, strange as **it** may seem after such a demonstration of Himself being the Bread of God in the feeding of the five thousand. *J. M.*

THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

" I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles. "

From Hamilton, Ontario. —The Jews and also the Lord's disciples were not able to grasp the fact that Christ, in addition to being a light to His people, was also given as a light to the Gentiles. Christ Himself made this quite clear from such scriptures as John 10. 16, where He mentioned the " other sheep. " [What fold did the Lord allude to in this passage in John? Are the " other sheep " necessarily Gentiles?—J. M.]. The prophets clearly showed that the Christ was to be light to both Jew and Gentile. We find the light appearing to men in Matthew 4. 14-16 in fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah 9. 1, 2. We noted that the place where Christ began His public ministry, or to be set forth as the light of the world, was " Galilee of the Gentiles. "

We found that God always intended that all men should have some knowledge or enlightenment concerning Himself, and under the law this light was entrusted to Israel, who were in turn to be a light or witness to the Gentiles. They, however, allowed their light to become dim, so that God had to make Himself known to the Gentiles through the judgments He brought upon His people.

Following on the continued failure of Israel, Christ was manifested as the True Light, to bear personal witness before all men. The ministry of Christ, while primarily amongst the Jews, was not exclusively so, for we have a few recorded instances of Gentiles being blessed with His healing power. While these may have been few in number, the multitudes who heard Him speak must have contained a percentage of Gentiles, as there were many nations represented in Palestine in those days. The full flood of the light of Christ, however, was only released in Acts 13. 46, 47, when the disciples went to evangelise the Gentiles. We to-day are enjoying the light that was then made known, even to such as sought it not (Romans 10. 19, 20).

We noted especially that Christ personally through His word constituted the Light. We must have Him and His word in our hearts if we are to have light.

Jas. M. Weaver.

From Glasgow. —In this month's study we have brought before us three simple narratives, yet they contain a profound wealth of truth. The astounding feature of these incidents is the faith of the individuals concerned, who were in each case Gentiles, strangers from the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

Each person brought before us gave the Lord Jesus a place in his heart which Israel as a nation denied Him. When we think of this, well might we perceive a fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah: " Yea, He saith, It is too light a 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 " (Isaiah 49. 6). The Lord Jesus in each incident not only rewarded the particular individual's faith, but also openly rebuked His own people, who should have accepted Him as their Messiah. We find in the first narrative a centurion who truly was a picture of humility. We judge that Luke's account gives a more detailed record, for he says that the centurion confessed to the Lord that he was not worthy to come to Him, much less that the Lord should trouble Himself to come under his roof. It is little wonder that the Lord exclaimed in the hearing of the people, " I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. " One important fact about this man is that he is commended by his Jewish friends, for they said, " He is worthy that Thou shouldest do this for him: For he loseth our nation, and himself built us a synagogue. " From verse 6 we have a great contrast in the centurion's words, " I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof. "

The centurion received a much greater commendation from the Lord Himself than ever his Jewish friends gave him, because the Lord commended him in the sight and hearing of all, and also to other generations, for his great faith.

When we come to the Syrophenician woman we see another display of great faith, yet in a different aspect. In this call for mercy by the woman we see the Lord drawing out confessions from her heart. This was necessary, for grace

could not **be given** at the expense of truth, neither could truth be received at the expense of grace, for our God is **a just God**, and judgeth righteously the thoughts and intents of every heart, and with **Him** is an even balance. So the Lord, who came to tell God out fully, waits patiently for the confession from the heart of this woman, and in due season receives it. Like the centurion, this woman had no claim on the Son of David, so she has to learn that she cannot appeal as though she belonged to Israel. So He answered her not **a word**, **yet nevertheless did not** reject her call for mercy. The disciples who had **at** this time little spiritual discernment would have the Lord to send her **away**, **but** the Lord, who knoweth the hearts of all, **is** just, searching and trying the reins of her heart. So the woman again speaks, saying, " Lord, help me. " The Lord Jesus this **time** begins to **reveal** the truth of God which He **came** to fulfil, and answered the woman, " It is not **meet** to take the children's bread and cast **it** to the dogs. " So this woman learns from the truth revealed to her that as **a Gentile dog** she is outside the promises of God relating to Israel. **But even at** that she could not **be** frustrated, so in an intelligent reply she **said**, " Yea, Lord: for even the dogs **eat** of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. "

Thus the Lord Jesus had now drawn from the woman's heart that which He had **waited** patiently for, and could say: " **O** woman, great is thy faith: **be it** done unto thee even as thou wilt " (Matthew 15. 28).

When **we** come to the last incident **we** find that ten lepers **came** to the Lord to **be** recovered of their leprosy, and the Lord immediately told them to go and show themselves to the priest; because of their obedience they were all cleansed while on their way to the priest. **But** one of the ten, when he saw what had happened to him on the way, returned to the Lord to **give** thanks.

So **we** judge from these three individuals in our narratives that **we** have a type of the Gentile nation which God referred to in the parable of the vineyard, which would **be** given the kingdom of God, bringing forth fruit in their season, in contrast to the nine lepers who were **a fitting type** of the nation of Israel who rejected their Messiah.

We might well liken our Lord Jesus to the fruitful bough **by** the fountain. His branches ran over the wall and thus the Gentiles, who **were** outside the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, partook of blessings from the Lord. The chief priests, scribes and Pharisees, as the archers, sorely grieved **and shot at Him**, and persecuted Him; **but** to the glory of God His bow abode **in** strength (Genesis 49. 22-24). *Fred Harvey,*

From Cardiff. —Our **immediate** re-action to the title chosen as applicable to these miracles of the Lord was to turn to Acts **26. 23**: *' How that the Christ must suffer, and how that He first by the resurrection of the **dead** should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles. "

Was there justification for using the Isaiah scripture in this suggestive way? At first **we** thought there **was** none, particularly in the light of Acts **26. 23**. First thoughts are not the best and truest oftentimes, and in perusing several scriptures in connection with the miracles of the Lord toward those outside of the covenant people, **we** were forcibly reminded that out of the **fifty** or so recorded miracles performed by the Lord, only **a few** Gentiles were the subjects of His grace and power. [There will **be** general agreement that Isaiah 49. **6** does not **find** its complete fulfilment in the three recorded miracles which brought blessing to Gentiles during the Lord's earthly ministry. **But it** is perfectly legitimate to link those miracles under the title **in** the syllabus, since they are **a definite** example of the way in which the Lord was also given to bring light to the Gentiles. **We** can surely have no doubt about this when **we** consider how the Holy **Spirit** applies the prophecy of Isaiah **9. 1, 2** to the Lord's going to dwell in **Capernaum** (Matthew 4. 14-16). —G. P., Jun.].

If **we** can briefly consider the **matter** of the Syrophenician woman (Matthew 15.), **it** seems very evident that the nations were of secondary importance **and** that any **act** performed by **Him** in the case of **a** Gentile was an exception. [Secondary importance ? It is said somewhere that the last shall **be** first. —J. M.].

These instances were **but** preludes to the larger **mercy** in store; the first drops of the gracious shower which should eventually water the earth. This seems emphasised as we consider the Syrophenician woman. She finds in Him **at** the first encounter a very different person from that gracious Helper and Healer which report had probably described to her. The **One** who anticipated the needs of others (John 5. 6), now withdraws Himself from hers:

" **But** He answered her not a word. *"

We realise that **He** who " knew what was in man " was drawing from her that lively exhibition of faith which will always remain an inspiring example to us, together with her humility of mind., The disciples were wearied with her persistent crying. He reproves her by saying:

" I was not sent **but** unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel "

(verse 24).

This seems to set the seal of hopelessness on her suit. The time was not yet (to quote the words of another) for others to intermeddle with the meal: let the children have enough.

" It is not **meet** to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs " (Matthew 15. 26).

What a large canvas the Spirit of God through Isaiah seems to work upon in the verse,

" I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles " (Isaiah 49: 6).

We meditated upon this verse not only with regard to those few instances where His divine power was manifested to those beyond Israel's pale, but also in connection with the glorious fulness of that One who said, " When I am in the world, I am the Light of the world. " He who banished death and darkness, to the Jew **so** enshrouding, and of whom the wisdom-lover knew nothing in his wisdom, became indeed

* My salvation unto the ends of the earth. " M. A. J.

EXTRACTS,

From **Edinburgh**. —It is evident that while God separated Israel to be unto Him a peculiar treasure from among all peoples, His purposes included the Gentiles also. All the earth is His (Exodus 19. 5); He created it. He loved the world, and when He planned the way of salvation, it was the salvation of the world He sought. When He called Abram out from his country and kindred and told him that He would make of him a great nation, He said, "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed " (Genesis 12. 3). Speaking through Isaiah of His purpose in Christ, He said, " It is too light a thing that Thou shouldst 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 " (Isaiah 49. 6; see also Isaiah 52. 10). Simeon, when in the Temple he received the Lord Jesus into his arms, blessing God, said, " . . . Mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel " (Luke 2. 30-32). Further, the Lord Himself said, " I am the Light of the world " (John 8. 12). His actions in the three miracles we are considering were in keeping with those words which had been spoken concerning Him.

Immediately He heard of the sickness of the centurion's servant, the Lord said, " I will come and heal him. " The centurion's answer displayed a great depth of humility, a remarkable knowledge of the Lord., and remarkable faith in His power to heal, even with a word. In it he also acknowledged the Lord's authority. At his faith the Lord marvelled. Not even in Israel had He found faith so great. With such faith in evidence, He made known that many from the east and the west would come and would sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom would be cast out into the outer darkness.

' By these miracles the words of prophecy concerning the salvation of the Gentiles were confirmed. Ere He ascended into heaven, the Lord commanded His disciples to go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded them. In the Acts of the Apostles we

read of this being carried out. Paul said to King Agrippa, " Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that He first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles " (Acts 26. 22-23). He wrote also to the Ephesians, ". . . How that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words . . . which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ **Jesus** through the gospel " (Ephesians 3. 2-6). *John A. H. Robertson.*

From Kilmarnock. —When the Lord stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth, He did not read from Isaiah 49., which foretells of Jehovah's Servant being a " light to the Gentiles, " because His message was primarily to the Jewish nation. The three incidents before us this month give, as it were, a forecast of blessing that was to come to the Gentiles later on.

The news of the Lord's healing power had spread abroad, and He was in the far north in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. Wherever He went He saw the effect of Satan's work, and here a woman of Canaan cried after Him in her distress, because of her daughter being vexed with, a demon. The disciples would have sent her away, but the Lord, who at first gave her no answer, made known to her that she had no claim on Him as Son of David, and that she was in the outside place, being a Gentile. The Lord had come into the world to make known the grace of God, but the truth must be maintained. Her need was great, and she was willing to take the place of a " dog, " and as such claimed a blessing. The Lord could now act in grace, and because of her faith granted her request, thus showing that although not of Israel's race, she was the object of God's love and care.

In the case of the centurion, it is not clear whether he came to Jesus himself or not, but we think the narrative in Luke 7. gives fuller details. We noted that evidently he was a rich man, and had a practical interest in the Jewish nation, for he built a synagogue for them, although he was a Gentile. He was also in a position of authority under the Roman government, and yet he was a very humble man. As he thought he was unworthy that Jesus should enter his house, or even that he should go himself to Jesus, he sent a message with the elders of the Jews, " beseeching Him that He would come and heal his servant. "

Because of the position he was in, he could give the word of command and he was instantly obeyed. He judged Jesus as being also under divine authority, and believed that if He said the word his servant would be healed. He thus manifested great faith in Jesus, which caused the Lord to marvel. We seem to see here the truth of what the apostle Peter said on his meeting with Cornelius: " God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to **Him** " **A. G. S.**

From Yeovil. —The gospel is to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. This is a principle foreshadowed in the Old Testament, and shown out in full in the New. It may have been thought it applied to the spoken word only, but in the miracles of the centurion's servant, the Syrophenician woman, and the Samaritan leper, we clearly see that the Lord was willing and able to heal all who came to Him, of whatever race, provided they exercised faith in Him.

This we have in these cases, particularly in the case of the centurion. As he was stationed in Palestine, a foreign land to him, he evidently heard of the Man called Jesus. He must then have inquired further, and had possibly taken the trouble to see and hear Him when he could, and most likely some miracles performed by Him. All that he saw and heard appealed to his candid mind, and proved to him that Jesus was One who had divine authority. The result was that when his servant fell ill, he went to Jesus with the utmost confidence that He would be able to heal his servant. Here was strong faith exercised in the Son of God, so much so, that when He saw it He marvelled at it. It was so different from the unbelief He found in Israel. It is only recorded twice that the Lord "marvelled";

once at the strong faith of this Gentile centurion, and once at the unbelief of the people in His own district, when it was so great that He could do no miracles there. This shows the condition of heart of the people of Israel, who would not hear His word or believe the miracles they saw Him do. This eventually led the "sons of the kingdom" to be rejected, and "many" (the Gentiles) to be received in. For Israel sought not the blessing by faith as did this Gentile man.

Austin S. Glover.

From **Atherton**. —The three narratives brought before us seem to be, with the inclusion of John 4, the only recorded instances where the Lord Jesus comes in contact with Gentiles, and in each of the cases wondrous faith is exercised. How refreshing this must have been to the Lord Jesus! Apart from a few individuals, who accepted Christ, there was from the Jews nothing but revilings and unbelief, but here amongst outside peoples, there were hearts willing to receive Him. To the centurion He says, "With no man in Israel have I found so great faith" (R. V. M.); to the woman, "O woman, great is thy faith"; to the leper, "Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger? (or alien)." The centurion's words, "I am not worthy," seem to be outstanding; probably the Lord had not heard the like of this before. This, together with his later testimony to the Messiah's greatness, "Only say the word," stamps him as one willing to yield himself to the claims of the Lord Jesus. It was pointed out that here we have a man who implicitly "believed that what the Lord said He was able to perform. In view of the man's great measure of faith, the Lord sees and comments upon the fact that the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out. He sees the firstfruits of the great Gentile harvest. In the woman of Matthew 15. we see the apparent hopelessness of the case, but she still came, appealing and asking as it were for the overflowing blessings of the children at a feast, content to be filled in the manner of a dog. She, like the centurion, had a true estimation of the One she besought. Truly she was in the apostle Paul's words "a child of faith," though not of the stock of Abraham (Romans 4. 11), and as such was entitled to the blessing of God, which is toward all men through Christ Jesus. We noticed the apparent slowness of the Lord Jesus in answering the woman, and it was suggested, in view of His remarks in verses 24 and 26, that the Lord did His utmost to convince her that there was no chance for her case. But over against this it was asked whether there was ever an incident of the Christ turning away one who sought grace from Himself, whether Jew or Greek. Why then the Lord's remarks as quoted above? It was remarked that the woman in verse 22 had no right whatever, being a Gentile, to call upon Christ as "Son of David," and in reply to this first plea, He answered her not a word. How different her approach in verse 25! "She came and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me."

G. Sankey.

From **Hereford**. —It is good to realise, as we consider this subject, that whilst the Lord could say of Himself, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," His power and manner of life were such that it could be truly said of Him, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men."

The centurion used the mediatorial services of Jews, and the leper who was a Samaritan joined his plea with the pleas of the nine Jews, whilst the Canaanitish woman appealed directly to the Lord as Son of David. We wondered whether the Lord's silence had anything to do with the manner in which she appealed to Him, seeing she was a Gentile. His apparent refusal to help tested her faith, for she wrestled earnestly with the Lord, as Jacob of old wrestled with God. It was the humiliating position she accepted, even that of the little dog under the master's table, that won for her those victorious words: "O woman, great is thy faith; be it done unto thee even as thou wilt."

In the case of the ten lepers it is to be noted how the misery and dejection wrought by leprosy removes caste, for here was a group consisting of nine Jews and one Samaritan. It is also to be noted that as fresh pure blood courses through their bodies, the Samaritan, being beside himself with a real healthy joy, turns back to glorify God, and to thank the Lord for his cleansing. The nine, being

bound by tradition and ceremonial law, suppressed any thankfulness that might have arisen in their hearts, and consequently lost a blessing similar to that accorded to the Samaritan.

The actions of the centurion showed his humility, the Canaanitish woman humbled herself, whilst the humiliating state of the lepers was self evident. Humility, plus faith in the power and willingness of God, can overcome all difficulties. *J. O. Tidmas.*

From **London, S. E.** —This prophecy from Isaiah 49. 6 was ever in the mind of God, who knew that His Son would be rejected, yet that fact was the means by which not only Israel but all the earth should be enabled to see this great light. The Lord Himself was aware of this, and in His healings confined Himself to His own. Indeed, He said to the Canaanitish woman, " I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. " But He was ever responsive to genuine faith, and our three portions show us the mercy drops falling before the full showers to come. In John 12. 23 how pleased He was when He was told that certain Greeks desired to see Him! It was a foretaste of the countless multitudes who down the ages would seek after Him. Matthew 8. 5-13 brings before us a Roman centurion at Capernaum, where the Lord's fame was well known. He had heard, and faith cometh by hearing. Luke tells us how the elders of the Jews spake of him, saying he was worthy. Creature merit is not to be decried, [I have ever thought that grace did not require " creature merit; " if it does, then grace is no more grace. — J. M. J. and no one who " loveth our nation " but could find acceptance with God (c. f. Cornelius). But here it was backed up by faith, and what great faith ! Notice the word " also " in verse 9. He knew of the Lord, as well as hearing of Him. Such works as He did could only be done by someone who had behind Him a great authority, and an authority which was used to say " Go, " to diseases of all kinds, and " Come and see " to those He would have near Him. Notice too how readily the Lord went, saying, " I will come and heal him. "

The case of the woman of Matthew 15. 21-28 gives us a strange and unusual presentation of the Lord, who seemed deaf to a cry for mercy, and slow to exert His saving power to one in great need. It was not necessarily because she was a Gentile, as He looked forward in anticipation joyfully to their fulness (Luke 13. 29). It was because she approached with a false plea [She did not come with a false plea, but she addressed Him as Son of David who had come to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel. When she became as a dog in her need, an outsider, she got what she sought. — J. M. J., as though to claim the children's bread, though but a Gentile dog. The middle wall was not yet broken down (Ephesians 2. 14). She must take her rightful place, having no plea except the greatness of her need and the riches of His mercy. Such was her faith that she did so, and was accepted. The centurion and this woman are the only two who were commended for the greatness of their faith (Luke 17. 11-19).

The case of the ten lepers is wonderful too as regards the *one* who returned. All cried for mercy. He not only heard but saw them in their terrible plight. He did not heal them, but told them to go and show themselves to the priests. Earlier on He healed and sent to the priests; here He reversed the order. "As they went, they were, cleansed. " Their going was the going of faith. Under the divine economy only the priest could pronounce them clean, if they were so. Therefore, they must have argued that healing was to come by obedience, and so it was. Then an astonishing thing happened. *One of them*, finding he was clean, returned to give thanks. Only one out of ten ! The Lord would seem to have been astonished too.

How the Lord appreciates and values gratitude, and misses it when it is not expressed ! He missed the common courtesy when in Simon's house. Are we not in danger of being among the nine rather than with the one ? Let us not be unthankful. *H. J. Owles.*

From **Wigan.** —" In thy seed shall *all* the nations of the earth be blessed " (Genesis 26. 4). When we recall this promise made by God to Abraham, it makes us realise that God in His foreknowledge knew that His own chosen people, the Israelites, would one day betray His trust in them, and reject the Messiah, and

that henceforward He would build up the Church consisting of souls redeemed by Christ's blood, of every tongue and tribe and nation. Such reflection should fill us with deep thankfulness that poor worms of the dust such as we (cp. Ephesians 2. 11-16) should have been chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.

That the Lord Jesus Christ was not welcomed wherever He went on His earthly sojourn is manifest from the Gospel writings; likewise His claim to be the Messiah was doubted by many. The hatred of the ruling classes towards Him is outstanding, and the apathy and backsliding of individuals, and indeed of some towns and districts too, filled the Lord Jesus, with sorrow (see Matthew 23.). But people of Gentile blood who lived on the borders of Israel, or sojourned in their midst, of times gladdened the Lord's heart with their remarkable faith and sincere desire to know more of Him. The three cases cited in the syllabus reveal a faith greater than any the Lord had seen exhibited in a Hebrew. The culminating point of Israel's rejection of God's Son was when the* Lord Jesus, completely innocent, was taken out and crucified. Well might God speak with righteous wrath in the parable of the householder: "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

But let us consider another aspect of this matter. Could a God of love have stood aside and seen the numerous Gentiles of the earth pass downwards to a dark eternity without proffering them a hope or chance of salvation? The Good Shepherd in loving tenderness said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd" (John 10. 16).

In Romans 11. the apostle Paul likens God's rejection of the Jews to the breaking off of some of the branches of an olive tree. Branches of *a*, wild olive are ingrafted, speaking of the admission of the Gentiles into God's plan of salvation. God promises that if the broken branches (i. e., the Jews) continue not in unbelief they shall be grafted in again. Here we perceive that Jew and Gentile stand on common ground, depending for eternal salvation on the redemptive work of Christ upon the Cross. [If the grafting in of the branches of the wild olive is the salvation of believing sinners of the Gentiles, what does it mean in Romans. 11. 22, "Thou also shalt be cut off"? This must be the cutting off of saved persons, hence it would mean the falling-away doctrine. This is quite plainly not the teaching of Romans 11. —J. M.] **R. B. P. Martin.**

From Brantford, Ont. —The three incidents for our study this month are in fulfilment of that precious promise of prophecy in Isaiah 49. 6. In each particular case they were Gentiles who became the recipients of God's blessings, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Truly to them the Lord Jesus appeared as a great light in their dark world. As Gentiles they sat in the region and the shadow of death. Their cases, apart from contact with the Lord Jesus, were hopeless. As Gentiles they had no legal claim upon the Son of David. His mission in the first place was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He could have refused to answer the cries for help from Gentile ones. But in His mercy and love He dispensed blessing to those Gentiles who had faith in His name. Many Gentiles who had dark forebodings as to their present and future state have seen the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Of ourselves, as Gentiles by birth, we may say: "We were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord." In our case the scripture in Isaiah has been fulfilled. He has become Light unto us.

Question and Answer.

Question from **Kilmarnock**. —From your reply to our question in July B. S. are we to understand that the man referred to in Mark 9. 38-40 was a Jewish Exorcist? The Exorcists in Acts 19. 13, etc., attempted, but did not cast out the evil spirit.

Answer. —It is impossible to say who the person was in Mark 9. 38-40, whether a backsliding believer or otherwise: not that it matters very much, for it was the name of Christ and not the godliness or personal power of the persons who used it (as we learn from Acts 3.) that was what mattered. So it seems to me. Sometimes the Lord allows evil workers a certain amount of liberty to mimic His work, as in the case of the¹ magicians of Egypt, but later their folly became manifest to all. So it may be as between the cases in Mark 9. and Acts 19. —J. M.]

BIBLE STUDIES.

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11).

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THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

" I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles. "

From Vancouver. —In Isaiah 49. 6 we have a statement concerning those who are embraced in the divine purpose of the manifestation of the Lord **Jesus as** Jehovah's servant. "It is too light a 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." We learn from this that Gentiles who were "strangers from the covenants of the promise" had a definite place in the purposes of divine love, and the Spirit uses Isaiah to foretell the blessed fact. The Lord Himself is the One in whom the early prophecy concerning Joseph has fulfilment. "Joseph is a fruitful bough, A fruitful bough by a fountain; **His** branches run over the wall. "

When the Canaanitish woman met the Lord Jesus (Matthew 15. 21-22), she at first besought **His** mercy as the Son of David. Addressed thus by a Gentile woman the Lord gave no reply, the reason being supplied by **His** words to the disciples, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. " Although **He** longed to bless her, He could not do so until she recognized her position. The Lord was also the Son of Abraham according to the flesh, and as such **He** was able to give fulfilment during **His** ministry to the prophetic word in Isaiah 49. 6, and bestow blessing upon Gentiles who sought **His** mercy.

We see the effect of the Lord's words on this Gentile woman, for she came and worshipped Him, saying, " Lord, help me. " She was in dire straits, for her daughter was grievously vexed with a demon. Still there seemed to be no help forthcoming, for the Lord told her it was "not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. " She was fully prepared to accept the position of an outcast and a stranger, as evidenced by her words, " Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. " By taking the lowest place she obtained divine blessing. An instructive lesson indeed ! She left the scene of her meeting with the Lord, a happy woman, commended openly by the Lord for the full measure of faith displayed, and reached home to find her daughter already healed.

In view of Gentiles upon whom the Lord wrought miracles, and who received the blessings of faith, the question arises as to what became of these believers after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles in Acts 10. through the vision of Peter in the sheet let down from heaven, makes it plain that no Gentile believers received the Holy Spirit until that time [The exceptional treatment of the Samaritans does not affect what is said here. —J. M.], and therefore excludes the possibility of any such being associated with Jewish believers prior to that occasion. [I do not know that we can say this positively. Acts 11. 19-21 probably comes before Ch. 10, in

point of time. —S. B. J. The "five hundred brethren" of 1 Corinthians 15. 6 and the "hundred and twenty" of Acts. 1. 15, are the disciples of the Lord's ministry, but in view of Acts 10. there were no Gentiles amongst them. Exchange of thought on this question would be helpful. [Peter's words to Cornelius in Acts 10. 28 make clear that a new movement was on foot. Gentile strangers could come to Israel to join themselves to the Lord, but it was unlawful for a Jew to join himself to any of the Gentiles. "Ye yourselves know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation; and yet unto me hath God shewed that I should not call any man common or unclean." This matter is further expounded in Acts 11. 1-18, and it is evident that the Jewish brethren of Peter, who raised the issue with him of his going to Cornelius, saw the great change that had taken place in the dealings of God with the Gentiles, for it is said, "And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11. 18). In the light of this and other considerations, we conclude that the 500 brethren to whom the Lord appeared after His resurrection were of Jewish nationality. Then again, though the 120 had their names recorded as forming a definite company of people who were bent on carrying out the Lord's will, to tarry in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit was given and to be Christ's witnesses henceforward, the 380 had not so acted, and were not of that definite number who formed the nucleus of that which later was spoken of as the Church of God in Jerusalem. —J. M. J. [I agree that the 500 and the 120 were Jews, but I know of no reason for supposing that *all* the 120 were included in the 500 or that the command to tarry in Jerusalem was given to the 500. —S. B. J.]

R. Armstrong.

Miracles wrought **for** the special instruction of "them **that**
companied with Him."

From Atherton. —Having in previous studies considered miracles in general relation to physical restoration, how good it is to see miracles effected by the Lord Jesus with the object of having a direct bearing upon the spiritual life of His beloved disciples, another indication of the Lord's concern for those who accompanied Him. How true it is that Christ, besides performing miracles to meet physical needs, supplied also that which was necessary for spiritual condition, and to this end the Lord Jesus performed this series of miracles before His disciples! That instruction for the disciples was necessary we cannot doubt, for we remind ourselves that as Moses was shewn the pattern of the Tabernacle in the Mount, being instructed how he must erect it, so also these men, who would eventually lay the foundation of God's House, must receive instruction (see Acts 1. 1-3).

The narrative of Luke 5. 1-11 brings home to each of us the wondrous power of the Son of God. These fishermen, with all the experience of their arduous calling, fall back with amazement as they witness the result of the Lord's words: "Let down your nets for a draught." How true of Him, He spake and it was done! From Simon it brings words of contrition, "I am a sinful man, O Lord," but a yet greater and more important message must they grasp: "From henceforth thou shalt catch men."

The storm on the lake reveals to us man's helplessness, and surely to the disciples is revived the truth that they are dependent upon the Almighty, and not on themselves. With Christ asleep in the boat all must be well, and surely the disciples had need of this assurance, in view of what lay before them (see, for example, Acts 4. 27-29). Many a storm was weathered by faith through the experience and instruction received in this storm, although, possibly many of the lessons that the Lord intended to convey to their hearts would not be understood until a later date. For example, the miracle recorded in Matthew 14., being closely allied to that in Matthew 8., would undoubtedly strengthen their faith and trust in their Lord. It is suggestive that later on those disciples, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, would joyfully recall the time when Christ stepped into the boat, and they were immediately at the land whither they were going. They would look forward to the time of His return, that they might be in the desired haven of rest.

The finding of the shekel in the mouth of the fish may have impressed Peter with one or two lessons; for instance, where principles of truth are not involved, as in this case, to give none occasion of stumbling (1 Corinthians 10. 23 to 11. 1). How precious to see the association of the Lord with Peter ! " That take, and give unto them for Me and thee. "

The cursing of the fig tree brings home some solemn truth concerning Israel. It was said that this tree normally bore fruit three times per year, but on this occasion it bore nothing but leaves. How true of Israel as a nation, having had ample opportunity to bear fruit, yet there was nothing seen but ritual **and** formality.

The action of Peter in striking the servant of the High Priest is quickly condemned by the Lord Jesus. An outstanding principle, brought home to each of our hearts during recent years, is seen here. The weapons of the Christian warfare are not carnal, nor must violence be used even in defence of those we love. The motive of Peter in acting as he did can plainly be seen, but nevertheless the Lord Jesus sternly rebukes him, according to John's account—" The cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it ? " (John 18. 11). It seems that Peter unknowingly had come into conflict with the divine will of the Father Himself. Surely we see the lesson that Christ gives to Peter, that he had no right whatever to interfere in a matter of this nature.

The last miracle of all takes us back to the beginning: " I go a fishing. " Perhaps the disciples had some doubt as to where the provision for the future would come from. The words, " Come ye after Me, and I will make you fishers of men, " had been forgotten. So it was necessary for the Lord to renew their commission, and He again demonstrated how necessary it is to have the power of God in our fishing. That the Apostles learnt the lesson was seen at Pentecost, when the nets were let down amongst the multitudes, and three thousand were saved.

It was said that the Lord wrought these miracles to prove that He was the Son of God. The query was raised as to whether the disciples truly believed that Christ was the Son of God. Some thought that in view of their slowness to grasp the wonderful things He did, they had not got a firm grasp of this wonderful truth, but that at Pentecost when they were filled with the power of the Spirit, then they grasped fully that He was the Son of God. On the other hand, mention was made of the testimony of Peter in Matthew 16.: " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. " In view of the Lord's reply, " Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven, " it was thought that they had a firm grasp of this truth; furthermore, their continued presence with **Him** seems to strengthen this fact.

G. Sankey.

From Kilmarnock.—The miracles before us, unlike those we have already considered, were not witnessed by the people publicly. The disciples had seen the Lord's divine power in healing the sick, but now they were to witness it over the elements.

The Lord often taught the people on the shore of the lake, and Mark 4. 1, tells us that He sat in a boat and the multitude on the land. When even was come, He said to His disciples, " Let us go over unto the other side. " Evidently worn out in body, the Lord lay down on a cushion in the stern, and was soon fast asleep, thus manifesting His humanity. Meanwhile a storm arose. Some at least of the disciples were fishermen, and no doubt had encountered many a storm, but this one baffled them. Luke says, " They were filling with water, and were in jeopardy. " We believe this storm did not arise by chance, and it may be, with God's permission, Satan had caused it in an attempt to destroy the Lord. It was not the first time that he had attempted this (see Matthew 2. 13 and Luke 4. 29). It was no doubt a test of the disciples' faith, and was a means of showing the Lord's divine power in " ruling the raging of the sea " (Psalm 107. 29), and while they marvelled, their faith would be strengthened. God allows trials to arise in the experience of His children in order to prove them, and that they may prove Him. The Lord had manifested His divine power before the people in feeding the five thousand, and at even " He constrained

His disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before **Him** unto the other side. " This **time** they were alone, and Jesus was on the mountain praying, and saw them " distressed **in** rowing, for the wind was contrary. " How this illustrates the position of **His** people now, wrestling with the powers of evil! It is encouraging to remember that **He** is still watching. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. So the disciples found as they saw **Jesus walking** on the sea, a miraculous sight, which caused them to cry out **in** fear. But the Lord's words, " **Be** of good cheer: it is I, " calmed their troubled hearts. Here **He** proved that **He** was indeed the **One** " who treadeth upon the waves of the sea " (Job 9. 8), and assured the disciples that **He** was **in** truth the Son of God. There, **is** no suggestion in the inspired record that the water was congealed; we think the words of Matthew 14. 24 and 30 indicate the opposite. As it was the fourth watch, and visibility was bad, **Peter's** bold action showed his love for the Master, although his faith failed him. With us, as God's children, " the night is far spent, and the day is at hand, " and the Master's word is, " **Yea**: I come quickly. "

In John 21. the Lord again manifested **Himself** on the shore of the Lake of Galilee. After the Lord was risen from the dead, **He** was not continually with the disciples, and apparently the sea had a great attraction for Peter, and at his suggestion he and six others "go a fishing." They were experienced fishermen, and there is no indication of a storm, and evidently there were lots of fish in the lake, but " that night they took nothing. " There is surely a lesson here for those who would serve the Lord **in** the gospel. Everything may be **in** order, but **if** the power of the Spirit is not manifest their labour will be **in** vain. It was a disappointing night, but the Lord was on the beach although they knew **Him** not, and manifested **His** thoughtfulness by having a fire, bread and fish ready for them. It was not until they obeyed the Lord's instructions to " cast the net on the right side of the boat, " that **His** miraculous power was seen, and **He** was recognised by John. Peter had denied that **He** knew **Him** shortly before, but now he was ready to confess his fondness for **Him**.

As we read of the miracle in Matthew 17. 27 we are reminded of **Him** who was rich, yet for our sakes became poor (2 Corinthians 8. 9). We are not certain whether this tax refers to the half-shekel we read of in Exodus 30. or not, as they were sons of Israel who were to pay this, whereas **in** the case before us the strangers or aliens were liable. [See the contribution of our Cardiff friends below, which is undoubtedly correct. The Lord gives the illustration to establish a principle. The circumstances of the illustration are incidental and must not be imported into the actual situation otherwise the Lord would claim for **Himself** sonship to the kings of the earth which is unthinkable. All that emerges from the illustration is the principle that a son is not subject to the king's tax. Even the plural " sons " has no bearing as to whether the Lord claimed exemption for **Himself** only or for **Himself** and **His** disciples, though on other grounds the latter is probably correct. —S. B. J. However, it would appear that neither the Lord nor Peter had the money, and to save them from stumbling the authorities the Lord manifested **His** divine power **in** causing a fish to provide the shekel. Here again **He** gave an example of what **He** taught as the " rule of the heavens " in Matthew 5. 42, and we are also reminded of the exhortation in 1 Peter 2. 13-14, " **Be** subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. " A. G. S.

EXTRACTS.

From Hamilton, Canada. —The main issues in the miracle recorded in Matthew 17. 27 seem to be the necessity of being subject to the higher powers, and of rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. But let us not forget the rest of the verse: " unto God the things that are God's. "

In the miracle of Luke 22. 50-51 it was suggested that the use of the sword was **in** fulfilment of the scripture, " **He** was numbered with the transgressors. " [This is rather a serious view to take of this quotation from Isaiah 53. 12; it would make the Lord to be the cause of **His** disciples becoming transgressors, **in** that **He** commanded them to procure swords so that they might break the law. Surely this is not the meaning of this quotation. The Lord was numbered with the transgressors **in** that he was crucified with those who had broken the

law of their own volition, not merely with the two malefactors but with all such like. —J. M.]. But the actual miracle of restoring the ear **seems to be** the last act of the Lord to prove to those who took Him that He was unworthy of death, and a last proof to **His** disciples before He died that He **was** their Lord and Master and the Son of God. Perhaps also, that although **He** was about to die **as He** had so often told them beforehand, **He** was still the One who had resurrection power, and could not only restore the ear but would **be** restored Himself by the power of God; **as** the Lord was about to die, it also foreshadowed a new dispensation—that of grace. The sword **was** a thing of the past, and must be for ever put into the sheath, and instead of a life for a life it **was** to be the law of the second mile [this is straining the scripture, I think], love to enemies, and grace and mercy instead of judgment.

In the last portion (John 21.) it was suggested that there was a special lesson for Peter in the miracle. The number three seems to be prominent, which may have been used to remind Peter of thrice denying the Lord. This **is** the third time the Lord appeared after **His** resurrection, and in the following portion He asked Peter three times, " Lovest thou Me ? "

But there **are** lessons here for the other disciples, and for **His** disciples to-day. **We** find that when **His** word was obeyed the fish were caught; we think of the disciples at a later date going forth at the word of the Lord and in the power of the Spirit with the gospel net; what a mighty catch of men resulted !

N. McKay.

From Hereford. —In the miracles wrought by the Lord for the instruction of His own, we see that, although the other disciples were present, Peter figured prominently. **He** seemed to take the premier place. It **is** probable that they looked to him **as** their leader. Many of the miracles centred around Peter and the Lord.

The disciples had much to learn, and in Matthew 8. the Lord taught them by a mighty miracle. The Lord was in the ship with them, asleep on the pillow. **He** was tired after a hard day's work, and **He** had retired to rest. Fear arose in their hearts when the storm arose, because their faith failed to rise above it. In a quiet calm voice **He** replied, " Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith ? " They were fearful because they were not full of faith. It is interesting to notice that in verse 24 there arose a great tempest, and in verse 26 there arose a great and majestic Person, and there was a great calm. The miracle **He** performed was used to teach them their need of much faith. They had a little, because they realised that **He** would and could save when appealed to. It also taught them that all things were subject unto Him, even the mighty elements. **He** desired their hearts to be subject unto **Him** too. With faith comes obedience.

In Matthew 14. 22-23, the Lord constrained **His** disciples to enter into the boat, while He went to pray. This was one of the secrets of **His** power. **He** was there on the mountain practically all night, and in the fourth watch, when it was nearing dawn, he appeared. Again we hear the cry of fear. But the Lord speaks in re-assuring terms and cheers their hearts. Peter, in his characteristic boldness, rises and challenges the Lord, and at His invitation steps out. The Lord here was teaching Peter by testing him. We often say that Peter took his eyes off Jesus, but the Scripture does not say so. [Though it does not specifically say so, it **is** surely implied. **He** could not look on two objects at once—the Lord and the effect of the wind on the sea. Surely when he saw the wind he did not see the Lord at the **same** time; hence his failure to walk on the sea. When our faith **is** overcome by circumstances in that measure we must fail, but faith would enable us to walk high above circumstances however adverse and turbulent they may be. —J. M.]. When he saw the effects of the wind he was afraid, and, beginning to sink, he cried, " Lord, save me. " In Matthew 8. it was: "Save Lord; we perish, " a collective cry; here it was a personal cry.

The tribute money of Matthew 17. 24 consisted of two drachma. It was not paid to the Roman government but to the Jewish collectors, for the use of the temple service. It was permitted in the law of Moses that in numbering the people half a shekel should be received (Exodus 30. 11-16). They asked Peter whether Jesus was in the habit of paying taxes for the support of the temple. Peter said, perhaps hastily, ** Yea. " Jesus knew what he had said; hence His words to Peter. The disciples were the true sons of the Kingdom, and although they were not obliged to pay the tribute, they did so lest the people should be stumbled. If Jesus knew that the first fish to come up would have such a coin in its mouth, it was absolute proof of omniscience. If He created the coin for the occasion, and placed it there, then it was proof of divine power.

*H. Jefferson**

From Glasgow. —The journey across the lake is placed by Mark and Luke after a series of parables commencing with that of the sower. The company of disciples in the ship, tossed on the waves, seems typical of the Lord's people passing through this world, tossed by the tempest of the world. But having Him always with them, the personal application is one of comfort and strengthening of faith in danger and doubt. They were of little faith in that they were afraid of perishing while they had on board the slumbering Saviour. They were not faithless, for they had recourse to that Saviour to help them.

In Mark 11. 12-14 He was hungry. In all the enthusiasm no one had thought of His need. The rejection of the Servant-Son is evident in this. The fig tree is the emblem of the Jewish nation. He came looking for fruit and found none. The fig tree was punished, not for being without fruit, but for proclaiming by the voice of those leaves that it had fruit; not for being barren, but for being false; and this was the guilt of Israel, so much deeper than the guilt of the nations.

From John 21. we learn that the disciples returned to their occupation of fishing, probably as a means of livelihood during the time which the Lord had appointed them in Galilee. The disciples must have been powerfully reminded of their former call. Their present part was not to go fishing themselves; on the other hand this is the third time Jesus appeared. The miraculous draught of fishes took place by His power, but the net did not go to pieces. It was different before His death and resurrection; then the net broke. There are blessed spiritual lessons here. He is seen as Lord over His own. He can direct our service as He directed the disciples in casting the net at the right side of the ship. He provides for the need of His servants, as He did then in preparing a breakfast for them (verse 9). He restores His servants who fail, as He so graciously restored Peter, and gives a higher and a better service.

W. R. Wallace.

From Vancouver, B. C. —Some of the greatest works of the Lord Jesus were performed before the gaze of only a few of His disciples. Both the fact of the Lord Jesus appearing after His resurrection, and the miracles He wrought then, were only for His disciples to see. They were to be witnesses of what they saw and heard. The vision on the mount, when His glory was seen, was reserved for proclamation after the resurrection (Matthew 17. 9).

The Lord looked after the faith of His followers that it should be increased, and faith is only increased as He reveals Himself to the believer. Often He can only reveal Himself as the circumstance is passed through by the disciple, in which extremity he learns that the grace of the Lord Jesus is sufficient.

No doubt the disciples would be very reluctant to awaken the Lord Jesus from His well-earned rest. It was only in their extremity, as they thought, that they awoke Him, to see Him display His majestic power as the Son of the Living God. The Source of all peace, brought not only peace to the troubled elements, but further peace to the hearts of His chosen, as they saw in Him the power of God working on their behalf.

In the incident where the Lord tells of the shekel in the fish's mouth, He shews His knowledge of all things. This impressed the disciples very much as to the manner of Man He is. That the Lord knew all things was the culminating fact that sealed the faith of disciples that He came forth from God. "By this we believe that Thou earnest forth from God" (John 16. 30). This had fully impressed Peter, as he said to Him after the resurrection: "Thou knowest"; "Thou knowest"; "Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love thee" (John 21. 15, 16, 17).

The Lord Jesus shewed by His mighty works which the Father had given Him to do that all things were in subjection to Him, whether on the land, in the air, on the sea, or under the sea. His works were enough and sufficient to reveal Himself as the Son of the Living God, the One in whom we must put our faith. "I manifested Thy Name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world" (John 17. 6).

H. McL.

From Cardiff.—It is both fortifying and inspiriting to realise that the Lord desires us to derive from His words and actions on earth an intimacy with His Person and teaching which will help us to understand the difficulties and trials which are part of the disciple pathway. There is no doubt that needs of present-day disciples were close to the heart of the Lord when He wrought the miracles which are before us this month. He not only encouraged and instructed His disciples, but He looked onward over the expanse of years which has now elapsed, and thought of us, who are but a handful of followers, and intended that we should know the joy and blessing which comes through a careful examination of His wondrous works.

Three of the miracles, at least, are replete with deep and instructive teaching.

1. *The Calming of the Storm.*

Here a great truth is immediately seen, namely, the combination of the Deity and the Humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the unity of these two natures in His person. "There arose a great tempest... but He was asleep." A little before this, the Lord had been teaching the multitudes on the land at length and was now weary and exhausted with His labours—His humanity. He rebuked the winds and the sea and thus exercised the command which He has over God's creation as God's Son—His Deity. "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still" (Psalm 107. 29).

It is also clear that this miracle would teach us

(a) That we must expect trial in our lives.

(b) How we should behave when passing through trial.

Our trials are as surely and as likely to come upon us as on other men, and they may be so sudden as to swamp us immediately (Matthew 8. 24). The confusion, disorder and rebellion which exists in this world through the entrance of sin will bear down upon us and cover us as much as the waters covered the boat where Jesus lay. We may find that the Lord does not come to our aid immediately. He may wait His own time to interpose on our behalf. He may not help until, in sheer dependence upon Him alone, we cry out unto Him for our relief. **But** let not our cry have faithlessness as its foundation. Let it not be through terror and fear or in a spirit of rebuke, questioning the omniscience and love of our Master. Let it be with calmness and confidence in God, humbly acknowledging His all-sufficiency and omnipotence in every circumstance. The Lord delights in being trusted and we cannot place too much faith in Him. We know the answer to Agur's question—"Who hath gathered the wind in His fists? Who hath bound the waters in His garment?" (Proverbs 30. 4)—and we need not fear.

2. *The Stater in the fish's mouth.*

Much of the teaching contained in this miracle will be lost unless we realise the significance of the half-shekel. The half-shekel [Gr. *didrachma*] was the atonement money (Exodus 30. 11-16) paid by every Israelite over twenty years of age for the ransom of his soul, and appointed for the service of the tent of

meeting. It **was** a payment peculiar to the nation of the Jews. It was not a civil capitation such **as** the tribute money of Matthew 22. 19, nor was it the tax gatherers who came to Peter and enquired about his Master's payment. "Doth your **Master** pay the half-shekel? " **is** not the harsh demand of a hated Roman officer, but the ordinary enquiry carried out by those who *received* the half-shekel. It **is** therefore **requisite** that we regard the Lord's attitude to the payment of the half-shekel, not in the light of **His** earthly descent **as** Son of David, but in the light of **His** Sonship, Son over **His** Father's House. As Son of David, **He** would **be** obliged to pay the sum, but **as** the Son of the God for the service of whose Temple the half-shekel **was** being paid, "the sons are free" (verse 26). The Lord's conversation with Peter has no meaning at all **if** it does not mean that **as** Son of God **He** **was** not obliged to pay the money. [But the Lord did not say, "Therefore the Son **is** free," but "Therefore the sons are free," **He** **views** all who were sons, and being sons were therefore free of the imposition of taxes. Sons may give **gifts** and bring offerings, but sons are not taxed. This marks out this dispensation in which all men of faith are sons, **as** one in which no taxes are imposed, such **as** the tithe, the income tax of the past dispensation, the half-shekel, the temple **tax**, imposed when Israel were numbered. Sons lay by in store to give without specifying any amount. What freedom! and what opportunity! —**J. M. J.** **He** who **was** the spotless One, the One who **was** to atone for human guilt and pay the ransom for our souls could not correctly give a ransom for His own soul. In **His** picture of the relations between kings of the earth and their sons the Lord has to **use** the plural number for **His** picture to be correct, but the analogy **is** clearly with the picture of God and His relationship with **His** only begotten Son. Without question the Lord **is** here asserting **His** Deity and eternal Sonship, one of **His** purposes perhaps being to remind Peter of the full implications of this truth which he had a little while before confessed (Matthew 16.). **We** read that when Peter came into the house where Jesus was, after his being accosted, *'Jesus spake *first* to him... " This was a sign of the Lord's omniscience, which itself **is** a divine attribute. And again in the miracle itself, of course, we **see** **His** Deity. Peter must surely have remembered his earlier confession when he carried out the Lord's instructions **as** to the means whereby the **stater** was to **be** obtained. Psalm 8. 6 here has its fulfilment—"Thou madest **Him** to have dominion over... the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea, whatsoever passeth through the paths of the **seas**."

Having grasped this essential point in the passage, we approach verse 27, and a wonderful lesson **is** found therein. It **is** that true greatness always springs from humility and self-effacement. The Lord has brought to Peter's mind the **fact** that **He** **is** exempt from payment of the half-shekel, and then goes on to express **His** willingness to forego that right of exemption, even though it was divine, lest such punctilio should cause anyone to stumble. Here **is** an example of meekness and consummate wisdom. **His** right was unquestionable, and its foundation was the great truth of **His** eternal Sonship, but **He** waived it for the sake of those who could not **as** yet understand **His** claims. The Apostle taught the saints **at** Rome, "It **is** good not... to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." It may be hard to learn this lesson, but we must remember that love and grace must always condition the exercise of any right we may have. It will be more pleasing to God **if** we forego a right and thus preserve a brother from stumbling in his weakness. "For Christ also pleased not Himself" (Romans 15. 3). It should be realised, of course, that where our responsibilities toward God and where God's rights are at stake, we should be committing sin not to protect them. But let us study carefully the conduct of the Lord here, and seek to carry out the principle **He** would teach us. Our testimony for Christ in the world will be the stronger, and our influence among fellow-saints the more marked, **if** we show the grace amongst all of sinking our own opinions and submitting to circumstances and conditions with which we do not entirely approve, lest others stumble.

M. D. Follett.

BIBLE STUDIES.

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11).

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REMARKS.

It has frequently been pointed out from Genesis 1. 1 in the words, " In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, " that we have here the Trinity (God, **Elohim**, plural, meaning more than two) in unity of action, for " created " is a singular verb. The Persons of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, never act independently of each other. What the Father does, the Son does, and what the Son does, the Spirit does. This is clearly stated by the Lord when He claimed equality of action with the Father, " My Father worketh even until now, and I work " (John 5. 17). Equality of action, in that **He** described God as **His** Father, showed to the Jews that He claimed equality of Being with God the Father, for in that **He** called God **His** own Father He made Himself equal with God. This correct deduction of the Jews the Lord defends in John 5.

What might be deemed to be a description of weakness in One who claimed full Deity is the mark of true Divinity: " The Son can do nothing of Himself. " This strikes at the root of any independent action by the Persons of the Godhead. Independence here is impossible. Each Person is a vital part of the One Divine Being, and none can act without the others. The Lord further amplifies **His** statement with the words, " But what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever **He** doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner. " The works that the Father does are the self-same works that the Son does, not other works similar to and which are a copy of the Father's works. If that were so then you would have the Father's works and the works of the Son, two different and distinct sets of works. But " these, " in the words " these the Son also doeth in like manner, " shows that the works of the Father and the works of the Son are identical.

In Isaiah 51., 52. and 53. the Lord Jesus is called " the Arm of Jehovah. " The Arm of Jehovah which smote Rahab (Egypt) and pierced the dragon (Pharaoh, a type of the Devil) (Isaiah 51. 9), is the same that was destined to grow up before Jehovah as a tender Plant (Isaiah 53. 1, 2). As the Lord is spoken of as Jehovah's Arm, the Holy Spirit is spoken of as " the Finger of God " (Luke 11. 20) by which He wrote the law (Exodus 31. 18). The heavens are the works of **His** Fingers (Psalm 8. 3), for Job 26. 13 tells us that " By **His** Spirit the heavens are garnished. " As a man works by his arm and with his fingers, so God works by **His** Arm and with **His** Fingers.

When the Lord Jesus became Man He did not become merely man. He was not like the prophets merely, men who were as nothing apart from the Spirit of God and the power which the Spirit imparted to them. In **His** incarnation **He** had emptied Himself and taken the form of a bond-servant. In **His** manhood the Lord was weak and dependent, but of such manifest weakness the apostle

Paul strangely speaks as " the weakness of God, " when he says that " the weakness of God is stronger than men " (1 Corinthians 1. 25). Paul has just been speaking of Christ crucified, and no doubt he intends to convey to us that never was God weaker than in a crucified Messiah, but that manifestation of divine weakness is stronger than men, for Christ is the power of God, as He is the wisdom of God.

The Lord came to earth to -do the Father's works as a Man amongst men. What He saw the Father doing He did, these not apart from the Spirit, but through the Spirit, as He had ever wrought prior to His incarnation. But it was of vital importance that He as Jehovah's Servant, in the new relationship to God and in the responsibility He had undertaken, should be guided and empowered by Jehovah's Spirit. His works were the Father's works (John 5. 36) as His words were the Father's words (John 12. 49). Isaiah clearly foretold that Jehovah would put His Spirit upon His Servant: " The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD " (Isaiah 11. 2, see also Isaiah 42. 1; 61. 1). This fact He gladly and graciously acknowledged in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4. 16-19). How vital this was to His testimony to Israel! If it were true that He was the One of whom Isaiah spoke, then to refuse Him and His message was to reject the work of God. This we know the leaders of Israel did, calling the Spirit which was upon the Lord Beelzebub. This was an Unpardonable sin; but if you examine the matter you will see how drastically the leaders of Israel had cut away the ground from beneath their own feet. How could they possibly believe in a Man who was devil-possessed, whose actions must for ever bear the mark of the evil spirit that they said possessed Him? But to all believers it was entirely different; they saw in the Lord One upon whom the Spirit of God was; One whose every act and word bore the Divine impress of God's Spirit. They saw this Spirit-filled Man emerge from the sacred page of Isaiah's prophecy.

We cannot go too far in the inter-relationship of the Lord's Divine Sonship and that which belongs to His servant character. We must be careful that we do not seek to dissect, the Person of Christ and with cold and clear vision to sort out what we think belongs to His Deity and what to His Manhood. God and Man are One Christ. Though He did the Father's works and cast out demons by the Spirit of God, He nevertheless said to the leper who said, " Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean, " " I will; be thou made clean " (Matthew 8. 2, 3). His will was free and untrammelled, yet He wrought in perfect and complete harmony with His Father God and the Eternal Spirit. Before such an One we bow and wonder and worship.

- J. M.

ON MIRACLES.

Elsewhere we pointed out that miracles were not wrought because of the godliness of the persons through whom the miracles were wrought. This is shown clearly by Peter in the healing of the impotent man, when he said, " Why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? " (Acts 3. 12). The miracle was wrought in order to back home the testimony of the apostles to the Person, power, and Name of Jesus of Nazareth. The miracles wrought by the apostles were but an extension of the miracle-working of the Lord during the days of His flesh. By means thereof the witness of Christ was established beyond denial on the part of all honest and sincere persons. The maliciously inclined and Satan-empowered would deny anything and they were ready to cry " Beelzebub " when they saw the Lord's power over the forces of evil; they would even kill the Cleanser of lepers, and Restorer of sight to the blind rather than allow Him to continue His gracious and beneficial work. So also was it with His followers whom He left to continue as His testimony on earth. He gave them His Spirit, His word and His works. The testimony of Jesus was their testimony and thus His kind acts were theirs. Miracles were not wrought to proclaim the godliness of the apostles or the saints, to direct men's eyes to them, and for them to be the wonders of the age, but they were wrought by these failing men, weak instruments that the Lord had chosen, whom the Spirit empowered that men might believe in and follow Christ.

Following the ascension of Christ to heaven the little band of the faithful were filled on the day of Pentecost with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit indwelt each saint individually, and the Spirit dwelt in them collectively. They were collectively the Temple of God, and the body of each saint was temple of the Holy Spirit. These facts we learn from 1 Corinthians 3. 16, 17; 6. 19.

"By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people" (Acts 5. 12). Then "Stephen, who was not an apostle, full of grace and power wrought great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6. 8). Philip too wrought signs in Samaria (Acts 8. 4-8) casting out unclean spirits, and healing the lame and the palsied. From 1 Corinthians 12. in connexion with the gifts of the Spirit we learn that there were those, besides the apostles and such outstanding men as the deacons of Acts 6., who wrought miracles. But all such signs and wonders were for the confirming and proving to men the divine character of the testimony which had been brought into being by the Lord. The testimony was the pillar and ground of the truth, the house of God, the temple of the Holy Spirit, where God dwelt and where His word was to be found.

This testimony was what the Tabernacle in the wilderness had been in its day. Stephen said, "Our fathers had the Tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, even as He appointed who spake unto Moses, that he should make it according to the figure that he had seen" (Acts 7. 44). The testimony was the tables of the law which lay in the Ark of the testimony, which in turn was placed in the Holy of holies of the Tabernacle of the testimony. That Tabernacle was the House and Temple of Jehovah. This testimony continued till the Lord left the House of God in Jerusalem saying, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthews 23. 38). In the rejection by Israel of the Son of God, God left His dwelling place there, henceforth throughout this entire dispensation of grace to have no house and to indwell no house made with hands (Acts 7. 48), yet to have a house composed of living stones, as Peter figuratively speaks of the House of God in 1 Peter 2. 4, 5. The House of God must ever be the pillar and ground of the truth; it must bear true testimony to Him who is the truth, who was manifested in flesh—the Mystery of godliness, and, indeed, great in that Mystery!

The time came when miracles ceased and the question has often arisen in the minds of thinking people as to why this was. The Scriptures do not help us in the matter of when miracles ceased, as also they do not show when the House of God ceased. We do see that the testimony in the closing days of the apostolic period was menaced from within and without by an uprising of evil doctrine. Paul in Acts 20. 29, 30 prophesied of the coming evil: "I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." He also wrote to Timothy of such days as were coming upon the testimony: "The Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4. 1, 2). Such days came. The gathering storm of heresy did burst upon the testimony of the Lord. Winds from all quarters hurled themselves with tempestuous force upon what had been established by the Lord and His apostles. The closing picture drawn by the unerring pen of the Holy Spirit in Revelation 2. and 3. shows a weak testimony, and in certain places so decayed, and so corroded by evil doctrine that the Lord is at the point of disowning it altogether. Is such a testimony so ineffective to be confirmed by the divine proof of signs and wonders? And again we may ask a further, and perhaps more important question, was it fitting that the Lord should confirm by miraculous evidence the different groups of believers who had seceded and were teaching and promulgating doctrines which were destructive of the faith and in some cases most dishonouring to the person of the Lord? Ecclesiastical history gives an account of some of the errors taught at the close of the first century of the Christian era. In Revelation 2. we have certain of the evils of those early days, such as the teaching of Baalam, and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. To have established such evils by enabling such evil workers to perform miracles would have tended to lead even the faithful astray, and would

also have destroyed the fundamental reason for the giving of signs, namely, to establish the divine witness in the doctrine of the Lord and His apostles. God having established the testimony and given the divine pattern which is to be copied throughout the entire dispensation, we have that in the New Testament which can measure, and either prove or disprove, any testimony which may claim to be of God.

(To be continued.) J. M.

A study of the Lord's methods and the principles upon which blessing was bestowed.

From Ilford. —The Lord was here on earth as Man, and although He was truly Divine, He did not exert His own power [apart from the Spirit] to perform His miracles. His source of power was from on high, from God the Father (Acts 10. 38), and the power was by the Spirit of God (Matthew 12. 28) [See February issue, p. 20.]

We see from scriptures such as Matthew 8. 3, Mark 7. 33, and 8. 22-26, that the Lord did use means or performed an external action in the curing of some cases. It was wondered why these external actions were performed, and also why in some cases the Lord charged the person who had been healed, to "tell no man," since, we have seen from previous studies that one of the objects of the miracles was to bring glory to God, and to manifest the Lord's divinity. One would have thought that the telling to others of the great work performed would have caused glory to be brought to His name. However, it was pointed out that these miracles were in no way dependent upon the external actions performed. Also, the curing of the diseases could in no way be accounted for from a purely medical or psychological point of view, since the cures were so immediate and complete. They were entirely miraculous.

Further, we see from Matthew 8. 1-4; 9. 27, etc., how faith on the part of the individual concerned is necessary and is always amply rewarded, whether it be in the cases mentioned or in the matter of salvation. In the example given in Mark 6. 56, the Lord could perform no miracles owing to their unbelief, and also in Luke 23. 8-9 no response was forthcoming just to satisfy the idle curiosity of Herod. It was necessary for blessing that the persons should realise their need and the Lord's ability to meet it. So it should be with us; we should seek the help we need, in prayer to God, having faith that our requests will be granted (Hebrews 11. 6).

J. E. Jarvis.

From Yeovil. —(a) *The source of power.* It is clear from a study of this part of the subject that God was the source of all the power that flowed through the Lord Jesus. In Acts 10. 38 we get a concise description of His miracles and the source of His power, where Peter says, "Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him." We see here that it was God who "anointed Him," and was "with Him."

In addition, we note that His power to heal was closely bound up with the Holy Spirit. He said, "I by the Spirit of God cast out demons," and it is stated above that He was anointed with the Spirit. This then leads us to the thought that in most cases when miracles were performed the Trinity was in operation. This suggests that in the miracles the whole power of the Godhead was manifested. We read that in many cases "He healed them all," showing that all the resources of the Godhead were available to heal the sick in whatever numbers they came. None ever went away disappointed.

(b) *Various means used.* We see in many of the miracles of healing that the Lord Jesus touched the person, often touching the afflicted part. Contact seemed necessary, although He could and did heal with a word, both in the presence of the person and also at a distance. He associated Himself with and identified the trouble.

(c) *The reward of faith.* Under this heading we have proved the truth that "all things are possible to him that believeth." In the cases quoted there was no doubt in the minds of those who came to the Lord, that He could heal them. Their faith was real. We have noted that the Lord was anointed with

power. This was always available for men; it needed but faith to bring it to them.

(d) *The fruitfulness of unbelief.* This is the converse to what has gone before. The Lord was able and willing to bless people in every way, but unbelief hindered Him in His work. It has been said quite truly, that unbelief ties God's hands.

A. S. Glover.

From Edinburgh. —The words of the Lord Jesus which we read in Matthew 12. 25-37 were spoken in answer to a denial by the Pharisees of the true source of His power. The Pharisees had rejected Him, refusing to believe that He was the Messiah, and had taken counsel against Him, how they might destroy Him (verse 14). When the multitudes which saw Him heal a man possessed with a demon, blind and dumb, were amazed, and said, "Is this the Son of David?" the Pharisees, wishing to turn them against Him, attributed His power to Beelzebub. The Lord, by His answer, shewed that it could not be by Satan that He cast out demons, and therefore it could be only by the Holy Spirit that He cast them out. He was God (John 1. 1), and by His divine power He performed all His miracles.

The healing of the nobleman's son (John 4. 50) and of the centurion's servant (Matthew 8. 13), shew that the Lord did not always use a means of healing that was visible to man. The power of His word was sufficient, the power which awakes the dead soul of man (John 5. 24-25). In many cases, however, He did use some visible means of healing, such as those mentioned in Matthew 8. 3, Mark 7. 33 and 8. 22-26, shewing us His power to use whatever means He may choose to effect His purposes.

In nearly every miracle of healing the Lord Jesus performed, there is evidence of faith on the part of the person healed, or on the part of those who besought Him on the sick one's behalf. The Lord's words on several occasions show how important was this faith, e. g., "According to your faith be it done unto you," and, "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

On the other hand, where there was no faith, the Lord did not do miracles. In His own country, we read, He could do no mighty work, save that He laid His hands on a few sick folk, and healed them. And He marvelled because of their unbelief. Neither would He do miracles merely to satisfy the curiosity of men as is shewn in that when Herod questioned Him in many words, He answered him nothing.

John A. H. Robertson.

EXTRACTS.

From Glasgow. —When the ravages of the adversary upon the human race have to be successfully disannulled, it required the work and energy of the Triune God as depicted in Acts 10. 38. Here we have the Sent One of the Father, Jesus of Nazareth, anointed by God with the Holy Spirit to go about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil.

In considering the source of the Lord's power we have revealed for us the unity of the Godhead, yet each fulfilling their several part and purpose. In Matthew 12. 28, the Lord claims His work to be by the Spirit of God. Although He Himself was the agent, yet behind it all was the power of the Spirit of God in the manifestation and establishment of the kingdom of God. This particular phase of the Lord's work is very instructive and enlightening to us, even in our own day, in that the hall-mark of the kingdom of God is the power and presence of the Spirit of God. Luke 5. 17 shows another aspect of the Lord's work. Herein we have the remarkable statement that the power of the Lord was present to heal. This word "Lord" is given by Newberry as "Jehovah," thus suggesting, perhaps, God the Father working in the Servant Jesus of Nazareth. In Luke 8. 46, a third source is revealed, even that which was from within Himself. The touch of His garment by the hand of faith, released, like a stream, virtue to heal, virtue which responded to the touch of a needy soul amidst the great press of the multitude. Thus these three co-ordinated sources were used to the blessing of men and women. [We need to be very careful in our choice of words to describe the work of Father, Son and Spirit. While we understand what our friends mean, such a phrase as "three co-ordinated sources" is to be avoided as it looks too strongly in the direction of tri-theism. The Father heals, the Son heals and

the Spirit heals, but there are not three healers, **but One**—God. We see in the opening words of this **issue** that the Father creates, the Son **creates** and the Spirit creates, yet there are not three Creators but One—God. —S. B.]

The Lord **seems** to accentuate the operation of healing in some **cases**, conspicuously in **Mark 7. 33** and **8. 22-26**. **Herein** the act is done privately and with action related to the need. Whether there is a spiritual **significance** or not one cannot tell, but in both **cases** it was done at the request of those who presented the otherwise unable person before the Lord. Perhaps this **caused** the Lord to demonstrate, whereas in other **cases** at the **seeking** of personal healing and faith the cure was bestowed without action [this suggested explanation hardly appears to be adequate in view of John 9. 6-7.

The blessing which the Lord **dispensed** as the Sent One of God to the lost sheep of the house of Israel was bestowed upon the multitudes of **men and** women who were favoured to have been found in the flow of this **stream** of blessing, but we feel that such events as recorded in **Luke 4. 40-41**, witnessed to **His being** from the Father, whereas the touch and **seeking** of the heart of faith individually led to the **annexing** of a soul eternally in the bundle of life with Himself (e. g. * in **Matthew 8. 1-4**).

Mark 6. 5-6 shows the dignity of our Lord in refraining from **using His** power to obtain the **fawn** of **men**, or to satisfy their curiosity. Even when a **sign** would have undoubtedly restrained their vehemence the Lord nobly held **His** peace and **His** hand of power. As a result **He** was scoffed and **jeered at**, thus revealing the hatred of their hearts wherein dwelt **unbelief and** not faith.

T. McIlreavy.

From Kilmarnock. —When the Lord **Jesus** was baptised by John the Baptist, we read that "the Holy Spirit **descended**... upon **Him**" (**Luke 3. 22**), and chapter 4. 1 says, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness"; **again** in verse 14: "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee." It is noteworthy that when **He** stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth **He** read from Isaiah 61.: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me." It would **seem He** thus acknowledged that this was the source of **His** power in the work that lay before Him, and **He** was so filled by this power that the touch of faith brought forth the power to heal, as in the **case** of the woman with the **issue** of blood (**Luke 8. 48**).

While this was the source of **His** power it was not always manifested in the **same** manner. The leper of **Matthew 8.** was quite sure of the Lord's **ability** to make him whole, but doubted **His willingness**, **but** the Lord immediately touched him and he was cleansed. In the **case** of the two blind **men** of **Matthew 20. 32**, **He** got them to **express** their need by asking, "What will ye that, I should do unto you?" while with the two blind **men** of **Matthew 9. 28**, **He** tested their faith by asking, "Believe ye that I **am** able to do this?" While we do not doubt the Lord's ability to cure even with a word, we wonder why the blind **man** of Bethsaida did not **see** clearly with the first touch of the Lord's hands. Might it be a lack of faith on his part? From the various **means** the Lord **used** in healing we are reminded of the different ways the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of men, convicting them of their **need as sinners** and turning them from darkness to light. **He** uses the word as a two-edged sword to arouse the conscience, in some **cases** like the Philippian jailor, while with others their heart is gently opened to receive the word of truth, as in the **case** of Lydia. A. G. S.

From Atherton. —In the first phase of our subject we **need** to consider two important truths, namely, the humanity and the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. **His** humanity introduces to us Jehovah's Servant, who was empowered by the Holy Spirit to work the works of God. Are we then to consider that this alone was the **case**? Was it that **He**, like other servants of the Lord who had gone before Him, was entirely **dependent** upon the divine working of the Holy Spirit, and impotent and powerless in Himself? The answer is found in that **greatest** of all truths, **His** eternal power and Deity, "For in **Him** dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (**Colossians 2. 9**).

His glory He laid aside **in** becoming **man**, yet He came in the full power of **His** Deity, and used such power **in His every** act of goodness. It would **be** wrong to contemplate that the Lord acted **in His** own power on some occasions, and **in** the power of the Spirit on others. In the works that the Lord did we **see** the Trinity acting **in** unity, that **is in** complete and corporate action. Never was there at any time, nor could there be, any independent action on the part of either Father, Son, or Holy Spirit. A most remarkable and helpful word **is** used by the Lord in John 5. 19: "The Son can do nothing of Himself." This refers to **Him** as Son of God, for here we have proof, as also in the context of this passage, of the equality in purpose, power, and action between the Father and the Son. "My Father worketh until now, and I work" (verse 17); "I and the Father are one" (John 10. 30). Therefore the Lord acted in the power of **His** divine Sonship, and also as Jehovah's Servant in the power of the Holy Spirit, at one and the same time. [Some of our friends would do well to take note of this paragraph.—S.B.]

It **is** quite evident that the Lord's methods in the out-working of **His** miracles were distinctly varied, and diverse as the objects of **His** mercy. Whether we consider the extreme case where the great Healer effected the cure of the centurion's servant without even going to the locality, or the various steps necessary **in** the restoration of the deaf man who had also an impediment of speech, we must inevitably conclude that such variation of means used was according to **His** all-wise skill and knowledge as the "Great Physician." It would have been a very simple matter for **Him** to speak the word in every case of sickness and disease, and thus impart health and strength to all and sundry. But **in** some cases He touched the individual (Matthew 8. 3); others touched **Him** (Luke 8. 45); others obeyed and were blessed (John 9. 6, 7); to some appeals for mercy He responded immediately (Luke 8. 41, 42), but others had to wait until He thought best to act (John 11. 3, 6); some did nothing at all to receive a blessing (John 6. 10, 11), whereas others were called upon to exercise a measure of faith (Matthew 12. 13 and Mark 9. 22-24). Again, certain miracles were done with the greatest publicity (John 11.), whilst others were either absolutely private or semi-private (Mark 7. 33, Luke 8. 51). Yet all was done to the glory of God, and the Lord Jesus never elaborated where it was unnecessary, nor did **He** deal in any wise too abruptly with any of the creatures of **His** hand.

In Luke 4. 38, 39 Peter's wife's mother was stricken down suddenly and utterly prostrated with a great fever. He **rebuked** the fever. It was asked **if** there **is** any special significance in the word "rebuke." The general thought was that it expressed **His** absolute authority and control over all things, whether men, demons, or the elements.

.. *J. K. Southern.*

From Manchester.—After having delighted in the detailed descriptions of many of the miracles recorded by the Holy Spirit, we do well to review the fundamental principles of divine working which may be discerned from an examination of the miracles of the Lord as a whole.

The varied manifestation of the Lord's miraculous power **is** both impressive and instructive. On considering the vast range of divine workmanship in creation, one Psalmist was urged to exclaim: "O LORD, how manifold are Thy works!" It **is** with a similar feeling of wonder and reverence that **we** meditate upon the scope and variety of the Lord's "mighty works and wonders and signs" **as** recorded in the Gospels.

There was nothing stereotyped about the Master's dealings with individuals who came to **Him in** their need. **He** handled each with perfect understanding, and with a view to assuring spiritual blessing through faith **in His** Person, **as** well **as** the physical blessing which was often the first object of their desire. Divine handiwork in every sphere **is** characterised by that **same** variety of expression, which **is** to-day illustrated by the Holy Spirit's dealings with individuals both **as** to salvation and discipleship.

Yet throughout the many and varied miracles recorded **in** the Gospels, there runs the uniform principle that without faith it **is** impossible to be well-pleasing unto God. The Lord commended the outstanding faith of some, and graciously

encouraged others who seemed to lack assurance. The faith of the disciples was deliberately tested to emphasise the supreme importance of this spiritual quality in those who would be fellow-workers of God. The same principle abides, as He who is Prince and Saviour works out His purpose in the salvation of men. The sinner must know repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: the disciple must "live by faith, and if he shrink back, My soul hath no pleasure in him. " " G. P., *Junn.*

Questions and Answers.

Question from Hereford. —Was the fire of coals in John 21. miraculously produced or was it used by other fishermen ?

Answer. —That the Lord could produce a charcoal fire and also fish and bread miraculously, none of us who believe in His Godhead can doubt. But how the fire was produced, and where He got the bread and the fish, we do not know. He has not seen fit to tell us. There the matter must rest. He rarely, if ever, tells us "how" He does things. He wants us to have faith in Himself, rather than that we should spend our time trying to follow Him into the realm of mystery in which He does His wondrous works. Indeed it would be impossible for most of us, with our limited mental capacity, to follow Him there. Suffice it that we trust in Him with a loving confidence. —*J. M.*

Question from Glasgow. —What did the Lord mean when He said, "Therefore the sons are free" ?

Answer. —The implication of the Lord's deduction from Peter's answer to His question is that those who are sons, meaning sons of God, are free from any toll or tribute. In a past dispensation sons differed nothing from those who were bond servants (see Galatians 3.), all were under toll, the tithe, the temple tax, etc., but in this dispensation in which we are sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, we are free from all such taxation. At the same time it is a son's privilege to give, and it is in the light of His unspeakable gift that sons should give (see 2 Corinthians 9., especially verse 15). —*J. M.*

Questions from Vancouver. —(1) John 6. says that they were going to Capernaum; Mark 6. says to Bethsaida. Were they going to Bethsaida after Capernaum, as they moored off the shore of Gennesaret ? or did they change their plans ?

(2) Does the statement in John 17. 6—"Thine they were," suggest more than just their Creator ?

Answer (1). —Where the Lord fed the five thousand was at Bethsaida (Luke 9. 10), and from that Bethsaida the Lord constrained the disciples to go before Him to the other side to Bethsaida (that is, Bethsaida of Galilee), the city mentioned in association with Capernaum in Matthew 11. 21, and Luke 10. 13, 15. There were two Bethsaidas (see Young's Concordance). Though the Lord was going to Bethsaida, it seems clear that He first of all visited Capernaum, and for some reason not clear to us, that though the Lord constrained the disciples to enter the boat and go before Him to Bethsaida, it says in John 6. 17 that they were going over the sea unto Capernaum. We are loth to conclude that this was disobedience on the part of the disciples, and we cannot say if the Lord's plans were altered. In any case, when the Lord entered into the boat it says, "Straightway the boat was at the land whither they were going" (John 6. * 21). After this the Lord is found in the synagogue in Capernaum (John 6. 59). If any of our readers have light on the question we shall welcome their help.

Answer (2). —"Thine they were" are part of "whatsoever Thou hast given Him" (John 17. 2). All belong to God by reason of creation, but not all whom God has created have been given by God the Father to the Son; hence, I judge, "Thine they were" does not refer to creation, but rather to election. They were God's by His sovereign electing grace, and such as were God's He gave to the Son. —*J. M.*

ERRATUM.

Page 84 of September "Bible Studies"—in Question from Kilmarnock, alter "express" to "exorcist."

BIBLE STUDIES.

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, In that they received the word with til readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures dally, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. II).

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ON MIRACLES (*contd.*).

In these late, closing, evil **days** of this dispensation **we** have those who claim to be able to perform miracles of healing, and, in consequence, they glibly call the gospel they preach " a full gospel. " Their doctrine, alas, is not the doctrine of the apostles, **and** their practices are, to say the least of it, a disgrace to Christianity and to God, who is not a God of confusion, but of peace; as in all the churches of the saints. A Christian, only a week or two ago, told **me** of a scene she witnessed in one of these people's meetings for " the Breaking of the Bread. " Whilst the bread was going round, a young woman got **up and** professedly **engaged in** speaking in tongues, followed by a **man in** another part of the assembled company. Such was the confusion that obtained that the breaking of the bread had to be suspended until these effusions were over. Such speaking **in** tongues would be **put down to** the Holy **Spirit's** direction **and** energy. One has to conclude that either the assembled company **were far in** error **in** the matter of the breaking of the bread, or the speakers **in** tongues were not under the control of the **Spirit** of God. Both could not **be** right. They could both **be** wrong, **but** both could not **be** right. For myself I have no doubt whatever that those who spoke **in** tongues, professedly, were not under the control of God's Spirit, **but** under the control of **an** evil spirit, **and** the speaking **in** tongues was just Satanic mimicry of that miraculous gift of the first century of this era.

This error arises, **in** so far as the speakers **in** tongues seek to make this the same miraculous thing as in, say, Acts 2. **and** 1 Corinthians 12., from a complete perversion of what is taught in 1 Corinthians 12. 13, 30. In verse 13 **in** the Revised Version **we** read, " For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or **free**; **and** were all **made** to drink of one Spirit. " Note with care the two " **alls** " in this verse—" **we** were **all** baptized, " **and** " were **all** **made** to drink. " Then note verse 30: " Do all speak with tongues ? " Did **all** saints speak with tongues in the apostles' day ? The answer is **an** emphatic—**NO** ! This is proved in verse 10—" to another divers kinds of tongues. " This shows that different gifts were **given** to different people. Please read verses 7-11 **and** this will become abundantly evident. All saints had not the **gift** of tongues, **but** all were baptized in the Holy **Spirit** and so became members of the Body of Christ. To speak with tongues was no evidence whatever that such persons **and** only such **were** baptised **in** the Holy Spirit.

The modern speaking with tongues of the Catholic Apostolic Church, the Pentecostal Foursquare movement, the Apostolic Church, and others, is a Satanic travesty of that evidence of the Holy Spirit's coming and work in the first century of this era. No women ever spoke in tongues in the **days** of the apostles, for the simple reason that the Holy Spirit never **gave** such a **gift** to a woman, and for the further reason that women were not permitted **by** the Lord to speak in public when the church **was** assembled. "Let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak" (**1 Corinthians 14. 34**). Not permitted **by** whom? **we** ask. Some **say**, who will have women speaking publicly, that these are **just** Paul's words. He did not permit women to speak. To treat the Holy Scriptures in the Pauline epistles thus would mean that **we** can play **fast** and loose with all Paul's writings just **as we** wish; and **if we** do so with Paul's, will **Peter's** escape like treatment? or **John's**? or **Jude's**? **But** let the advocates of women speaking, and women speaking in tongues, hear Paul out in **1 Corinthians 14**, on the authority that lies behind the instruction he gives. "If any man thinketh himself to **be** a prophet or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which **I** write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord" (verse **37**). What Paul says **as** to women being silent in the churches **is** the commandment **of** the Lord. **But** what have we in this "tongues movement"? Women, perhaps more than men, are found babbling incoherent sounds which are put down to the work of the Holy Spirit, whilst **at** the **same time** that **same** Holy Spirit caused the inspired words. **to** be written • "Let the women keep silence in the churches." **Are** we to believe the Bible or modern human practices? practices which **are** based on the complete perversion of **1 Corinthians 12. 13** where it says that all believers in the church of God in Corinth, both such **as** spoke in tongues **and** such **as did** not, were baptized in the Holy Spirit. **We must**, for we are forced to the conclusion by the words of Holy Writ, **assert** definitely and unequivocally that the modern speaking **in** tongues is of the evil one **and** not the work of God's good Spirit.

Now let **us** return to the matter of the ceasing of miracles. **We** have already **stated** that the Holy Scriptures do not **assist us** in this **matter as** to when and for what reason these **signs** ceased, **as** the Scriptures do not reveal when the divine testimony in the churches of God ceased. The last sight **we get** of divine testimony in the **first** century **is** that given in Revelation chapters 1, to 3, of the seven churches in Asia. Most of those churches were in a poor spiritual condition; evil doctrine, self complacency, and loss of first love, **besides** other things, combined to pervert assemblies which had been planted by God's servants in brighter and **better** days. In certain cases the Lord was **at** the point of disowning them, except they repented. There the scene closes and the curtain falls. But we may ask, What would happen **as** to miracles **if** the Lord, through their failure to repent, carried out the inevitable, the disowning of such churches? Miracles had been given, first of all, to prove the Lord's Deity and the divine character of **His** testimony (John the Baptist wrought no signs). Miracles were wrought to establish the divine testimony in the churches of God which the apostles were instrumental **in** bringing into being. If miracles had continued to be wrought by men who apostatised from the faith, who taught perverse things (Acts **20. 29, 30**; **1 Timothy 4. 1-3**), then God by **His** Spirit would **be** putting **His** seal upon that which was the work of Satan. In these circumstances the very foundations would **be** destroyed and what could the righteous do? (Psalm 11. 13). Did not God chide Jehoshaphat with the words: "Shouldst thou help the wicked, and love them that hate the LORD?" God established a testimony **in** the days of the apostles which remains the test of the work of all who would bring God's children together **in** church fellowship. If **it is** not according to this pattern which was **attested** by miraculous **evidence** given in the **New Testament** Scriptures, then all who fear the Lord will do well to withdraw from all who build after man's pattern whatever the pretension be, and **it is** mere pretension, of speaking with tongues or working miracles, **as** in professed faith healing campaigns, for such are not of God. The last days are foreshown to **be** days of great evil and those who would **be** saved from such evil can only **be** by adhering to God's faithful word.

THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

A study of the Lord's methods and the principles upon which blessing was bestowed.

From Vancouver. —*The source of His power.* In the Lord Jesus dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2. 9), and while He sojourned among men in this form He revealed divine power in His miraculous words and acts. The power of the Spirit of God was manifested through His perfect humanity; but the **same** mighty power which called the *cosmos* into existence, and holds the mighty orbs of the universe in their appointed courses, lay at His command in the days of His flesh.

In Matthew 12. 28 the Lord announced, " If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. " The Pharisees could have no clearer proof than His mighty works, which showed that the kingdom of God had come.

The scriptures given in this study clearly show the Father, Son and Holy Spirit acting as one in the Lord's mighty works. In Matthew 12. 28 the Lord spoke of the Spirit of God as the One through whom the power came. In Luke 5. 17 we read of those who came to Him from " every village of Galilee and Judaea and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was with Him to heal. " Newberry gives the marginal reading of " Jehovah. " This is the Eternal One, whose healing power was so freely dispensed to all who came to Him. [Why Mr. Newberry should say " or Jehovah " is not clear to me. The word here is *Kurios* — Lord. —J. M.]. Isaiah spoke of this when he said, " Surely He hath borne our griefs (sicknesses) and carried our sorrows " (pains); (Isaiah 53. 4). Yet how few had their eyes opened to behold in Him the Messiah! Then we have the occasion recorded in Luke 8. 43-48, when the poor woman made her way to the Lord in the crowd and touched the border of His garment, and was healed of her infirmity. Hers was the touch of faith, and because of this fact the Lord said, " Someone did touch Me: for I perceived that power had gone forth from Me, " Here He spoke of the power as proceeding from Himself. Then in Acts 10. 38 Peter tells of " how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him. "

Nicodemus recognised the source of the Lord's power when he confessed in His presence, " No man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with Him " (John 3. 2, A. V.). Never were men on earth so privileged as those who witnessed the power of God through the Son, and great will be the judgment of all who failed to receive Him as the sent One of God. " It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for these. " Great knowledge brings with it great responsibility.

Various means used. By touching with His holy hands the parts of the persons affected by disease and infirmity, the Lord came into personal contact with the dreaded results of sin. " He put forth His hand and touched the leper " (Matthew 8. 3), yet He was unaffected by the disease. Ordinary men coming in contact with leprosy became unclean; hence the woeful cry of " Unclean ! unclean ! " caused them to pass by at a safe distance. Strange experience indeed for a leper to be touched by a Man before whose power the disease vanished !

We note the Lord's close association with the deaf and blind, for He put His fingers into the ears and eyes of both, resulting in complete restoration of these faculties.

The reward of faith. Those **who were affected by disease and infirmity in the time** of the Lord's sojourn were for the most part social outcasts, **yet** they were the ones in whom faith shone brightly. Their need was so great that their faith in His power to heal them **was** unshakeable. It resembles the simple faith of the little child. If the multitudes who sought to silence the blind man on the road to Jericho had possessed his faith, great would have been their blessing that **day**. **But** their lack of any sense of need caused their lack of faith in **Him** who **came** to bless.

The fruitlessness of unbelief. "And He could there do no mighty work, save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And He marvelled because of their unbelief" (Mark 6. 5, 6). **We** learn from this scripture that even the power of God can be hindered from operating because of unbelief. This can arise from two sources; one where **we** would most expect to find **it**, in the world amongst the unregenerate; **but** also amongst the redeemed of the Lord, the last place **we** ought to find it. Because of this solemn possibility, **we** are warned in Hebrew 3. 12 about an evil heart of unbelief. **We** observe that this condition existed amongst the people where the Lord had **been** brought up, and where **He** was well known, people upon whom rested great responsibility.

We are persuaded that where there is lack of faith, unbelief is sure to follow. **We** are told that "the just shall live by faith," and anything short of this renders **it** impossible to **be** well-pleasing to God. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

R. Armstrong.

From Brantford, Ont. —When **we view** God manifest in the flesh, as **He came** to bless, full of love and tenderness, **we** find that the blessings **He** bestowed were not lavished on persons indiscriminately. Each miracle performed had some particular object in view. Persons afflicted with the various ills which affect mankind, and who in faith sought His aid, found One both able and* willing to help. Such expressions of heart as, "If thou wilt, Thou canst make **me** Glean," were rewarded by **Him** who knoweth the hearts of all men.

Over against this **we** note such portions as Mark 6. 5, 6 where **we** learn that even in His own country there were many sick folk who still considered **Him** to **be** the son of Joseph the Carpenter. His power to heal such was not available because they did not believe on **Him**. In like manner miracles were not performed to satisfy mere curiosity, as in the case of Herod (Luke 23. 8).

The various means used in blessing no doubt depended on the circumstances of each particular case. The measure of faith displayed would in most cases **be** the deciding factor. The object in the various methods was to bring about the **greatest** glory to His Father and blessing to the afflicted. **We** recall the case of Naaman. **He** had faith that Elisha could heal him, **but** the means used were totally different from what he expected. The Lord knows best how to heal, and so to some **He** merely said, "Thy faith hath saved thee." From some, like the man of John 9., he required an outward manifestation of faith. The hearts of onlookers in some cases **may** have prompted the Lord to **act** in a way which could **be** beneficial to them. A very thorough test of faith is to **be** found in the reply of Matthew 9. 29, "According to your faith **be it** done unto you."

James Bell.

From Hamilton, Ontario. —How great is our faith to-day? To the disciples in Mark 4. 40 the Lord Jesus could say, "How is **it** that **ye** have no faith?" What great things for God **we** could do **if it** could **be** said of us as of Stephen in Acts 6. 5: "A man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." Our power

for God to-day depends on our faith. How great was the faith of our Lord Jesus in prayer! Even before Lazarus was raised in John 11. 41 He could say, " Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest Me. " * This brings to our minds the words in James 5. 15: " The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise them up. "

In various ways the power of the Lord Jesus was manifested. In Luke 8. 36 the woman who was cleansed had only to touch Him, while in the case of Peter's wife's mother it is written in Matthew 8. 15 that the Lord Jesus touched her and the fever left her. Again it is noticeable that the Lord Jesus did not need to be present to manifest His power, for in John 4. 50 He could say to the nobleman, " Go thy way; thy son liveth ": the son was healed that same hour. Another way in which the Lord manifested His power is seen in John 9. 7, when He spat upon the ground and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. He might have healed him there, but rather He said to Him, " Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. " **R. D. {Jr. }, R. D. (Sr.).**

From **London, S. E.** —Matthew 8. 3. What the Lord's touch could mean to a leper who has become an outcast of society, crying continually, " Unclean ! " lest any should approach him, is beyond our imagination. In compassion the Lord put forth His hand and touched the leper and healed him. He need not have touched him: He could heal by speaking the word, but His love and compassion overflowed, and this man got what he asked for. With what gratitude he must have gone away !

Mark 7. 33. Here was a man who was deaf and dumb; he could not hear the words uttered by the Lord Jesus, and could ask no boon for himself; but the Lord had compassion on him. He took him aside from the multitudes. The man could read pity in those eyes, and could see how He sighed as He looked up to heaven.

Mark 8. 22-26. The Lord takes the blind man by the hand and leads him out of the town. Perhaps this poor man had little faith, and during the walk hand in hand with the Lord his faith was strengthened that he might receive a blessing. The Lord anoints his eyes with spittle. It was not the sort of treatment the man might have expected, and after the first treatment he can only see men as trees walking, but the Lord applies His hands a second time and full sight is restored.

E. C. Leamy.

Comparison and contrast between the Lord's miracles **and** those recorded in the **Acts and** the Revelation.

From **London, S. E.** —God's miracle-working power has been displayed throughout all time. There is no limit to what He will do in response to fervent prayers and great faith; He is always strong on behalf of His own. Even of recent years He has worked wonders in response to the prayers of such men as George Muller, Pastor Hsi, Hudson Taylor and C. T. Studd [And in the case of many lowly people whose experiences have never been published. —J. M. 1. But these men never claimed that God had entrusted them with the gift of healing, or working of miracles. They may have possessed in striking manner the gift of faith, but they would have strongly repudiated the claim that they themselves were " workers of miracles. " God answered their prayers, a vastly different thing from God having entrusted His servants with power to work miracles.

In this year's study, we have discerned that according to Scripture, the miracle-working power has been entrusted to humans in three fairly clearly defined epochs:—

1. Moses and his successor, Joshua.
2. Elijah and his successor, Elisha.
8. The Lord **Jesus** Christ and His successors, the Apostles.

It will also **be** entrusted to the Two Witnesses, in a future time, thus making four distinct epochs. To do **justice** to this month's **subject**, it **seems** necessary to contrast these four in tabulated form.

<i>Period.</i>	<i>Moses and Joshua.</i>	<i>Elijah and Elisha.</i>	<i>The Lord and His Apostles.</i>	<i>Two Witnesses.</i>
Purpose.	To prove that Moses had been sent by God and that Joshua was his successor. Ex. 4. 8 ; Deut. 31. 8.	To prove that Elijah was God's sent servant. 1 Kings 18. 36. 2 Kings 2. 14, 15.	To prove that Jesus was the Christ, Jehovah's Sent One. Heb. 2. 4 . John 20. 80, 31 .	To prove that the Two Witnesses were sent by God. Rev. 11. 3-7.
Period in Israel's history.	Recognition as a nation. Ex. 3. 10 .	Revival and turning back to God. 1 Kings 18. 37.	Presence of Israel's Messiah. John 7. 31 .	God's warning to reject Anti-Christ. Rev. 13.
Specific time.	Introduction of the dispensation of the law. Ex. 20.	Introduction of the dispensation of the prophets.	Introduction of the dispensation of the Son. Luke 16. 16 .	The law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah) testify to the kingdom of Christ.
Distinctive feature.	Judgment (in the main), <i>e. g.</i> , the 10 plagues.	Power. James 5. 17, 18.	Love. Acts 10. 38.	Testimony. Rev. 11. 7 .
Discontinuation.	No evidence of them being continued when Israel was established in the land.	Later prophets did not work miracles <i>e. g.</i> , John the Baptist. John 10. 41.	Paul seemed to lack permission to cure :—Epaphroditus, Phil. 2. 26 ; Trophimus, 2 Tim. 4. 20 ; Timothy, 1 Tim. 5. 23 .	After the Two Witnesses, no evidence of miracle-working power .
Satanic counterfeits.	Magicians of Egypt. Ex. 7. 22 . Jannes and Jambres. 2 Tim. 3. 8 .	Prophecy. 1 Kings 18. 29(?)	The Devil. Luke 4. 5 . Matt. 4. 8 .	The Beast. Rev. 13. and 14.

From this tabulation **we suggest** that:—

1. Scriptural miracles are chiefly connected with Israel.
2. They take place **at** the inauguration of specific movements.
3. They **cease** when their mission is fulfilled.
4. **It** is reasonable to conclude that the working of miracles **by** the people of God is not according to the Divine purpose **at** the present time.

*In comparing the miracles recorded in the Acts with those performed by the Lord, it is noteworthy that they were all successful, instantaneous and perfect. Contrary to so many spurious miracles, they were not narrated as isolated events, but were included in the warp and woof of other narrative, giving authentic names of places and people (e. g., Acts. 28. 6, 7, Melita and Publius). Chiefly wrought in association with Israel, the vast majority of them were actually performed in Palestine itself; when performed in Gentile lands they seem to be closely linked with, and as a testimony to, Israel, often in the very presence of antagonists (Acts 19. 11, 12). * In both the Gospels and the Acts, the power was the same—" in the name of Jesus Christ " (Acts 3. 6), the source was the same—" by gifts of the Holy Spirit " (Hebrews 2. 4), and the witness was the same—; -* God bearing witness " (Hebrews 2. 4). The three words used in Acts 2. 22 to describe the Lord's miracles, are identical with those used in connection with the apostles in Hebrews 2. 4: mighty works (powers), wonders and signs.*

[But see verses 10 and 17, also Acts 28. 1-0. I feel that the special emphasis on Israel fails so far as the Acts is concerned. —S. B.]

Contrasting the Lord's miracles with those of the apostles, two striking facts emerge. With the solitary and difficult exception of the cursing of the fig tree, the Lord's were miracles of good, whilst the apostles executed miracles of judgment (Elymas—Acts 13.; Ananias and Sapphira—Acts 5.). Also, the Lord revealed His power over the elements by stilling the storm, and over inanimate things by using five loaves to feed 5, 000, whereas the miracles recorded in the Acts are confined to the human body (Mark 16. 17, 18).

However, the most striking contrast is observed when the *Lord's miracles are set opposite those of the Two Witnesses*. In contrast to the delightful words of *grace* which proceeded from the mouth of the Christ, *fire* will proceed from the Two Witnesses; through gracious works the Lord *fed* the people, but the Two will *devour* their enemies. The former gave His back to the smiter; the latter will kill those who desire to hurt them. With bounteous power, the Lord Jesus gave an abundance of food and drink, but the Witnesses will withhold the rain and contaminate the water; grace turned water into *wine*, but judgment will turn water into *blood*. *Life and healing* emanated from Christ; *death and plague* will proceed from the Witnesses. The Lord desired *mercy* and He Himself was merciful; the Two Witnesses will desire *vengeance*, and they themselves will torment.

As we contemplate solemnly the time of torment to come, it is ours to rejoice that the Lord Himself shall descend soon to take us from this troubled earth to be for ever with Him.

" Amen: come, Lord Jesus. "

F. L. E.

From Birkenhead. —The miracles wrought by the disciples share with the Old Testament miracles the characteristic that they were not performed by the personal power of the men themselves, but were the manifestation through those men of divine power. In many cases the apostles spoke to God or performed the miracles in His name. In Acts 3. 6 Peter healed the beggar in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, a proof to the crowd that the Man who had carried His cross outside the city not so long before, and had passed out of their sight and minds, was alive again and powerful, because there is no power in the name of a dead man.

There is no miracle in the Acts like the quelling of the wild waves of the sea of Galilee, and that is an indication of the vital difference between the Lord's working and that of His disciples. The power that was in Him was His own, and was expressed directly in His actions, Whilst the disciples were merely the conveyors of a power far greater than their own.

So the apostles were able in faith to perform miracles **by** the power of God. Why can **we** not perform similar miracles to-day? There are **a few** scriptures which bear on the question, **but** the most direct is probably Hebrews 2. 1 to 4. The power to perform miracles was evidently bestowed upon the apostles as **a** token to those around of the divine source of their mission. It is not surprising that the people were not astounded **by** these powers, when it is remembered that the Lord Himself had spent the three years of His ministry in performing **greater** and more wonderful things without stirring very deeply the consciences of the great majority of the men who saw them. Until the canon of scripture was complete **it** was ordained **by** God that there should **be** special gifts bestowed upon His people, partly as **a** distinguishing mark, partly, as in the gifts of tongues and prophesying, for the guidance of the saints, **but** now that **we** have the complete Word of God, there are no longer these special gifts among us. *L. B. H.*

From Glasgow. —In John 5. 9 and Acts 3. -we find two men who are both in much the same helpless condition, and are both looking to man to help them, **but** find they are no better¹ off. Both must have been well known for their helplessness, for it is said of one that he was thirty and eight years in that condition, and of the other that he was lame from his mother's womb, whom they laid daily **at** the door of the temple. Both confessed and **gave** God the praise for being healed of their diseases.

Matthew 8. 28 tells of two possessed with demons, coming forth out of the tombs, and so exceeding **fierce** that no man could pass that way. **We** can well compare Acts 16. 18. where Paul and Silas were troubled with **a maid** who was possessed with **a** demon. In both cases the evil spirit acknowledged the authority of our Lord, who alone was able to control them.

From Mark 5. 39 **we** learn that Jairus' daughter is **dead** according to all outward evidence, **but** the Lord says, " She is not **dead, but** sleepeth. "

In Acts. 20. 8 **we** see **a** young man taken **up dead** according to all evidence, and again all are reminded as in the case of Jairus' daughter that the life was still in him. In both cases all mourn the loss, **but** they are asked to exercise-faith as to restoration, and what **a** great reward is granted to them !

Luke 4. 38. Jesus enters into the house where Simon's wife's mother is holden with **a** great fever, and those who know His great power beseech **Him** for her. When she is cured, she rises **up** and ministers unto Him. Acts 28. 7 tells about **a** like case, **but** in vastly different circumstances, for **we** see the apostle Paul exercising power to cure all diseases brought to him. *Jas. Gartshore.*

From Kilmarnock. —In Mark 16. 15 **we** have the Lord commissioning the eleven apostles to go into all the world, and preach the gospel, and **He** enumerates the various signs that will follow them that believe. They had witnessed the Lord performing many miracles, and now they were to carry on similar work in His name.

In the Acts of the Apostles there are many instances given of miraculous works. Chapter 2. tells of their being filled with the Holy **Spirit** and " speaking with other tongues, " causing the multitude from many places to marvel. Some of them mocked saying, " They are filled with new wine, " thus attributing the Holy Spirit's work to the work of the flesh, like those who attributed the Lord's power to the devil.

In chapters 3. and 4. **we** **get** the account of the lame man being **cured** by Peter and John. **We** note that Peter does not take any **credit** to himself, **but** directs the people to the **fact** that **it** was faith in Jesus' name that had **made** this man strong. **He** thus used the incident to illustrate the **greater** work of giving spiritual life to them, and in his defence before the rulers he so convinced them of the power of Jesus' name that they could not deny it.

When considering these signs and wonders performed by the apostles we are reminded of the Lord's words in John 14. 12 " 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 the Father.** " " While the healing of the body was a great work, would it not be a greater work to turn men from darkness to light (see Acts 26. 18). Would this be what the Lord referred to ? [This matter of the " greater works " is one of difficulty. The apostles wrought similar works to those of the Lord; they healed the sick, and Peter raised the dead in the case of Dorcus. The Lord turned men from darkness to light, as also did the apostles by means of the gospel. But what can be greater than this ? I am disposed to think that what the Lord refers to is the apostles' work in the establishing of a divine testimony in the church of God in Jerusalem and the churches of God in Judaea and elsewhere, which were the direct result of His return to the Father and the sending of the Holy Spirit. The great feature of a past dispensation was the establishing of a divine testimony in Israel, and the outstanding fact which followed the Lord's ascension was the divine testimony that came into being through the instrumentality of the apostles. All miracles were less than this, and all divine blessing flowed out to men through the churches of God, which, viewed as a whole, formed God's dwelling place, His house.—J. M. J.]

During Paul's experience he performed many miracles from the time he caused Elymas to become blind (Acts 13. 11), until he healed the father of Publius of a fever (Acts 28. 8). It was the work of the Holy Spirit through Paul that caused Elymas to become blind, just as it was in the power of the Spirit that the Lord Jesus cured the blind when upon earth. The cases of Elymas and Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5. 5, etc.) manifested the power of the Holy Spirit in judgment, in contrast to the Lord's miracles which were all in blessing (with the exception of the cursing of the **fig** tree). A. G. S.

From Atherton. —The miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ are unique. As to points of similarity we noted by way of illustration the following miracles wrought by the Lord, and also by His disciples:

The Lord.

- (1) Raising from the dead Lazarus and widow's son at Nain.
- (2) The woman bent with infirmity (Luke 13. 10-17).
- (3) The man possessed with demons (Luke 8.).

The Disciples.

- (1) Eutychus and Dorcas,
- (2) The impotent man (Acts 3.).
- (3) The girl with spirit of divination.

We considered one or two outstanding miracles wrought by the Lord, *e. g.*, the changing of water into wine, and the feeding of the five and four thousands. It might be argued that these miracles were outside the power of any other than the Son of God, but we need to take into account that the power of the Holy Spirit working through the disciples was unlimited. The Lord Himself said, "The works that I do, ye shall do also" (John 14. 12). We suggest that had the need arisen (*e. g.*, for wine **at** a wedding, or for bread in the desert) the disciples would have been able to work such miracles. We need also to be mindful that all that the Lord and the disciples did was entirely within the scope of divine purpose. This important factor is clearly seen when we consider two miracles wrought by the disciples which the Lord in the days of His flesh could *not* do.

(1) The raising of Dorcas. The soul of Dorcas was brought from heaven*, and thus the raising of Dorcas and the raising of Lazarus are unlike in this connection. Departed souls went to heaven only from the time of the Lord's ascension, although we believe that Old Testament saints were taken from hades to heaven at the Lord's ascension.

[The Scripture **does** not **say** so, and it **is** wise to be silent on such a matter. We can only discern the physical signs of death. See a valuable note by A. T. D. in B. S., 1985, p. 40. —S. B. J]

(2) The judgment on Ananias and Sapphira. There we see power to judge placed in the hands of a man—a miracle of judgment the like of which the Lord never did upon earth, for did He not say, "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" ? (John 12. 47).

It is noteworthy that the Lord Jesus Himself tells beforehand of the miracles to be wrought by the disciples (John 14. 12), and also those still to take place recorded in the Revelation.

Many of the miracles in Revelation are to be wrought by angels. These are narrated in detail, unlike the miracles of the Two Witnesses. Yet it is very clear that the latter will work many miracles. They have power "to smite the earth with all plagues, as *often* as they desire" (Revelation 11. 6). Then, too, we see the Lord again manifesting His almighty power in the sharp sword that proceedeth out of His mouth (Revelation 19. 15). "And the rest were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse" (verse 21). This number will undoubtedly be a very vast company. **G. A. Jones.**

From Yeovil. —There were several miracles performed in the days of the apostles. Those recorded in the Acts were performed by Peter, Stephen, Philip and Paul. The specific instances of miracles performed by the apostles seem all to be confined to those of healing [Except in such cases as Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5. 1-11) and Elymas (Acts 13. 6-12)—J. M.], whereas those performed by the Lord Himself cover a much wider sphere. Nowhere is it recorded that the apostles multiplied food, although we are told that Paul hungered (see Philippians 4. 12), but the Lord Himself was able to multiply food on several memorable occasions (*e. g.*, Matthew. 14. 15-21; 15. 31-38). It is also recorded in the Old Testament in the case of the pot of oil (2 Kings 4. 1-7).

One characteristic seems to mark the miracles of healing performed by the Lord and the apostles, even the matter of faith on the part of the recipient or those interested in the person who needed healing. Hebrews 2. 4 refers to the signs and wonders of the Acts, and this scripture shows that although the apostles were used to perform miracles, God was the Author, operating through the Holy Spirit. Certain miracles which are yet to be performed, recorded in the Revelation, are shown to be by Satanic agency (cf. Revelation 13. 13, 14 and 16. 14), but even though so powerful, God Himself will still wield His almighty power as chapter 19. 20 indicates. **S. J. J.**

From Ilford. —In studying the Lord's miracles it has been generally evident that in nearly every case blessing ensued as a result and, moreover, witness was borne to His divine nature and inherent power. "Power belongeth unto God," and as God in human form arrayed, the Lord wielded divine power in the performance of the miracles which characterised His dealings with the human race while He was upon this scene. His disciples, however, had no power of themselves. It was a derived power. In Acts 1. 8 the apostles were told that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit was come upon them. The miracles that were performed by their instrumentality were part of their witness, and as such show definite similarity to the miracles of the Lord. "The very works that I do, these bear witness of Me," He could say, and there can be no doubt that the miracles recorded in the Acts of the Apostles testify to the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. A further point of similarity is that whether the miracles were those of the Lord or His disciples, faith was necessary on the part of the person benefited. This is ever God's way. Faith is the one necessary thing on our part if the divine miracle of new birth is to be operative in us.

It was noticeable when studying the Lord's miracles that He was beset on every hand by those who would **seek** to hinder and interfere in the outworking of His omnipotence. Christ was regarded by the scribes and leaders of the people as a perverter of the people. Hindrances of every kind were also **put** in the way of the apostles and they were even warned to **cease** preaching concerning Christ, in whose name such wonderful miracles had been wrought.

When we come to the Revelation we have a symbolic presentation of much that is future and the record embraces much of a miraculous nature. We have God's power exhibited as opposed to Satan's power—two mighty forces—the one for good, the other for evil. Here again witness seems to be the purpose in view. Insistently there is the call to give heed to the **message** contained in the stupendous happenings of those days. "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." The mighty events that still lie ahead as they unfold should serve as a warning and testify to the accuracy of the Scriptures. Faithfulness of no mean degree will then be necessary when Satan's worst is done upon this earth in opposition to **Him** who shall at last take **His** power and reign. A. G. J. (Jun.)

From Edinburgh.—In comparing these groups of miracles we see, running throughout each, the **same** theme, namely, the glory of God. In connection with the raising of Lazarus, in answer to Martha's words, "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days," Jesus said, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" (John 11. 39, 40). Further, after Lazarus was raised, many believed on the Lord **Jesus**, thus bringing glory to God in the person of **His** Son. When the son of the widow of Nain was raised (Luke 7. 11-17) the people glorified God, saying, "A great prophet is arisen among us: and, God hath visited His people." The lame man of Acts 3, having been made whole, glorified God. The effect of this miracle upon the people gave Peter a wonderful opportunity to bring home to them the truth that the Christ whom they had rejected was raised. Glory was brought to God in that many of them that heard the word believed (Acts 4. 4). Similar results were brought about by the healing of Aeneas and the raising of Dorcas (Acts 9. 32-43). In the Revelation we see the **same** theme. In the hour in which the two prophets who had been raised from the dead went up into heaven in the cloud there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven (Revelation 11. 11-13).

Let us now consider the contrasts between these groups. One purpose of the Lord's miracles was to shew Israel who He was. In His miracles **His** divinity was clearly shewn. Who could raise the dead but the Originator of life Himself? The miracles recorded in the Acts were done by men in the name of Jesus Christ and shewed, not the power of those who performed them, but the power of the One **in** whose name they were performed. Peter said, "Why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? . . . By faith in **His** name hath **His** name made this man strong" (Acts 3. 12-16). In the Lord's miracles, mercy and grace are shewn, but in the miracles recorded in the Revelation, judgment. In connection with the two prophets, in Revelation 11. 5, 6, we read, "And if any man desireth to hurt them, **fire** proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies: and if any man shall desire to hurt them, in this manner must he be killed. These have the power to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall desire." The downfall of Babylon (chapter 18.) will be another miracle of judgment. Men have cast God and **His** Son aside, making nothing of God's claims upon them, refusing to have God in their knowledge, but God's glory must have first place, it cannot go into the background.

James Paterson.

Questions and Answers.

Questions from London, S. E. 5. —(1) Revelation 11. 4. —" These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth. ** What is the meaning of this verse? Does it prove that the Two Witnesses are re-incarnated?

Answer (1). —I would understand, taking the generally accepted view that the two witnesses are Elijah and, probably, Moses, that these prophets have been raised from the dead, but not raised as the dead of this dispensation will be raised—in incorruptible bodies. They will be raised in bodies in which they will be slain by the beast at his coming up from the abyss. I would judge that their bodies will be as that of Lazarus; and it will be remembered that the chief priests took counsel to put Lazarus also to death. —*J. M.*

Question (2). Mark 11. 18. " It was not the season of figs. *' Seeing the Lord knew it was not the season of figs, why should He hope to " find anything thereon " ? All the other miracles were those of blessing, why did the Lord introduce one solitary miracle of cursing?

Answer (2). —The reason was that the fig tree puts forth its leaves after its fruit. The fact that it had leaves was the evidence that it was bearing fruit. But, alas, it was all out of season, and was like Israel, in which there was abundance of profession, but there was no vital life or fruitbearing in that nation. " Nothing but leaves, the Spirit grieves! " The cursing of the fig tree was a token of what was coming upon Israel, for " the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost " (1 Thessalonians 2. 16). —*J. M.*

Question (3). —What is the significance of the two stages in this miracle (Mark 8. 22-26), and also of the Lord's three actions in Mark 7. 31-37?—

- (a) Putting His fingers in the man's ears,
- (b) Spitting,
- (c) Touching the tongue.

Answers (3). —Where the Lord has not told us His reasons for acting as He did, it is vain to attempt, so it seems to me, to answer our friends' questions. Because all men are different from each other, bodily and mentally, each it seems must be healed differently. Variety is the law of the universe, hence we must expect human experience to be different, and our experiences at the Lord's hands are all different, though there may be a measure of similarity in some cases. There I must leave the questions, but I would be glad to hear the opinions of wiser men. —*J. M.*

Questions from Atherton. —(1) (a) Would it be necessary for the disciples always to do their miracles using the words in ** the name of Jesus Christ? (b) Was the mention of the name Jesus Christ of Nazareth done only as a testimony to the Jews?

Answer (1) (a) Colossians 3. 17 says, " Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do *all* in the name of the Lord Jesus. " This gives character to the word or deed. (b) The fact that they must use the Lord's name shows that it was vital to the act, as well as being a testimony to all who heard the words used.

Question (2). —Can we speak of the works of God wrought apart from angelic or human instrumentality as " miracles " ? Dr. Luxmoore, we note, in " Bible Reading on the Gospels " speaks of the resurrection of the Lord " as the greatest miracle of all. "

Answer (2). The word " miracle " may be a translation of one of two Greek words, *Dunamis* — power and *Semeion* — sign. Both words are used in Acts 8. 13 in connection with the work of Philip. In Numbers 14. 22 God speaks of the signs (miracles, A. V.) which He wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness. Moses in Deuteronomy 11. 3 speaks of God's signs and works. Surely the " Burning Bush " was a miracle, and I should agree with Dr. Luxmoore regarding the- Lord's resurrection. —*J. M.*

BIBLE STUDIES.

Editors:

John Miller, James Martin, A. T. Doodson, S. Burrows, and G. Prasher, Jun.

SYLLABUS 1946.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, VIEWED DISPENSATIONALLY.

- January. CHRIST THE KING OF THE JEWS.
(His genealogy, Herod, the **Magi**, Bethlehem, Egypt, Nazareth).
Matthew 1. and 2.
- February. JOHN THE BAPTIST.
(His ministry and mission to Israel). Matthew 3.; 11. 1-19;
14. 1-12.
- March. NAZARETH TO CAPERNAUM, AND THE SERMON ON
THE MOUNT
(To whom it primarily applies, and the general application of
its teaching). Matthew 5. -7.
- April. THE SENDING FORTH OF THE TWELVE.
(To whom, their message, and similar work taken up by others
in the future). Matthew 10; 24. 14.
- May. MY SERVANT and the SIGN
(also the unpardonable sin, and the condemnation of that
generation in the judgment). Matthew 12.
- June. PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.
(What it is, and wherein lies the difference between the
kingdoms of heaven and of God). Matthew 13., etc.
- July. THE CHANGE OF THE DISPENSATION
(Making all meats clean, see Mark 7. 19 and Acts 10., the
Canaanitish woman, Caesarea Philippi, " My Church, " the keys
of the kingdom of heaven). Matthew 15. -16.
- August. THE TRANSFIGURATION AND THE COMING KINGDOM.
(The coming of Elijah, John the Baptist as the greatest in the
kingdom of heaven, and principles of forgiveness). Matthew
16. 28—18.
- September. THE ENTRANCE AS KING INTO JERUSALEM AND THE
REJECTION BY THE JEWISH NATION. Matthew 21. -23.
- October. FACTS RELATIVE TO THE COMING OF THE SON OF
MAN AND THE END OF THE AGE. Matthew 24. -25.
- November. THE BETRAYAL AND CRUCIFIXION AND THE
ACCUSATION IN THE SUPERScription ON THE
CROSS. Matthew 26. -27.
- December. THE SENDING FORTH OF THE ELEVEN IN CONTRAST
TO THE SENDING FORTH OF THE TWELVE.
Matthew 10. 5, 6; 28.

In the study of Matthew's gospel dispensationally, the character of divine testimony during the time of the ministry of John the Baptist and that of the Lord (especially the early part of the latter) should be noted. Resemblance between the testimony in that period during which Israel had not yet been set aside and the period after the Church, the Body of Christ, has been called into the Lord's presence in the air, when God will re-commence His dealings with the Jewish people with a view to their repentance and restoration, should also be considered, as well as the great dispensational change, when the Lord commenced to build what He called " My Church. "

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to reach him by the 20th of the month, about six weeks before the date of issue.

All other correspondence should be sent to

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