

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 23.

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CONTENTS

	<i>Pages</i>
Comments	8, 19, 32, 45, 55, 68 80, 92 , 104, 115, 128, 140
Disciple whom Jesus loved, The	121
Editorials.	1, 13, 25, 37 , 49, 61 73 , 85, 97, 109, 121, 133
John, The Gospel according to 1. —2. 1 1	1
2. 12—3. 36.13
4.	25, 44
5.	37, 55
6.	49, 68
7, 8.	61, 80
9, 10.	73
11, 1 2	86
13—17.	98
18. 1—19. 37	110, 127
19. 38—20. 18.122
20. 19—21. 25.134
Moses, References to	133
Notes (by J. M.).	21, 23
Notices.	9, 56, 128
Questions and Answers	9, 21, 32, 56, 69 , 81, 92 , 105, 115, 128, 141
Romans, Notes on 10, 22 , 34, 46, 57, 70 82 , 93, 106, 118 , 129, 142
Thomas called Didymus	109

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VOLUME 23.

JANUARY, 1955.

EDITORIAL.

We give a cordial welcome to new contributors, and to those now resuming. We trust the Lord will enable all to continue throughout the year, and that the result will be spiritual enrichment.

Several of our contributors have commented on the profound implications of the apparently simple title the "Word." The apostle John deals, in childlike simplicity and economy of words, with subjects of deep mystery. Consider, for example, the opening of his first epistle, "That which was from the beginning..." Such language, by its seeming inadequacy, suggests the great ineffability of its Subject. John, who wrote inspired Scripture, followed the example of the Lord, who used simple language and illustrations to teach profound mysteries like the new birth (John 3) and eternal life (John 4. 14). If we use such Christlike wisdom, we may win souls for the Lord.

J. B.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

(Chapter 1. 1 to 2. 11).

From Hamilton, Ont. —John introduces his Lord with majestic simplicity by asserting **His** Deity, focussing our attention on the essential character of the Word.

The Word, who is the only begotten Son (1. 14), the Son of God's love (Colossians 1. 13; John 17. 24), was before all things (Colossians 1. 17; Proverbs 8. 22, 23, 26). He, the Maker of the **ages**, is the beginning of the creation of God (Revelation 3. 14; Proverbs 8. 27-31, 30. 4).

John points us beyond time, stating by the Holy Spirit, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* Finite minds cannot comprehend such truth, but our spirits are lifted **as we** consider the glory which He, who is the eternal Wisdom, had with the Father before creation. He, who ever was the Father's delight, and whose delights were with the sons of **men** (Proverbs 8. 23-31; John 17. 5), the eternal Word, became the incarnate Word, dwelling among chosen **men** so that His glory was manifested to them.

Verses 11-13 lift us again from that which is physical to that which is spiritual, for **as many as** receive the Word are a new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5. 17). Believing in His name, they become children of God, and if children, heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ Himself (Romans 8. 16, 17). In Him **was** life, and **He came** that they might have life (John 10. 10). This is life eternal that they should know the only true God **and** Jesus Christ (John 17. 3). *A. Dorricott, J. Meikle, W. Thompson.*

From Crowborough. —The Gospel according to John **was** written to prove to faith that **Jesus** is the Son of God (John 20. 31). John takes **us back** to eternity past, and introduces **us** to Christ **the** co-eternal Son of God **as the** Word. **Just as** words are a medium to express our thoughts, so Christ, the incarnate Word, is referred to **as the One who came** to declare,

or tell out, God (John 1. 18). Christ **was** both the Light and Life of **men**. The darkness of sin in this world could not apprehend that Light.

The disciples and John the Baptist witnessed **that** Jesus is the Son of God. Even Nathanael, who was doubtful at first, **had** to admit this **same** truth. Christ's first sign in Cana of Galilee **was** performed with the express purpose of manifesting His glory. Both His words and His works declared Him to be the Son of God with power. *J. Robertson,*

From Greenock. —John's treatment of the incidents of Christ's earthly life is pre-eminently selective (John 20. 30, 31; 21. 25). The prologue seems to divide itself naturally into two parts: (1) verses 1-5, which deal with the eternal Deity of the Word, and (2) verses 6-18, which deal with the days of His flesh. Although the word "history" might be to the latter, it cannot be applied to the former, which relates to the existence of the Son of God, who, being God, is eternal and ever-present, and **can** have no "history."

Verse 5 presented some difficulty **as** to its exact implication. "Shineth" **is** action continuing into the present, while "apprehended" **seems** to denote action completed. Is it a general statement (1) on the relationship between light and darkness, or (2) that those in the darkness simply could not comprehend, or understand, the light when it appeared among them, or (3) that, while they themselves remained unilluminated by the light, **they** were unable to overcome or extinguish it? [1]

We gather from Matthew 3. 13-17 that John **was** acquainted with Jesus before **he** baptized Him. On account of the relationship between their mothers (Luke 1. 36-44), it **is** not unlikely that they were familiar with one another. Yet it was not until he had seen the Holy Spirit descending upon **Him as a** dove, that John realised that Jesus was the Son of God (John 1. 33, 34). [2] This is in keeping with the fundamental principle that no one can know Jesus **as** the Son of God apart from divine revelation (Matthew 16. 16, 17).

Verses 29-34 seem to stand chronologically **40** days at least after the baptism of Jesus (Mark 1. 11-13). Again some time elapsed between Peter's first contact with the Christ and his **call** to be **a** fisher of men, John 1. 35-51 having taken place before John was delivered up (John 3. 24), and Mark 1. 14-20 after.

It is worthy of note that the testimony of the disciples in this passage is in every **case** based on their knowledge of the Scriptures (1. 41, 45, 49). The title, "King of Israel," used by Nathanael, **seems** to be **a** divine title rather than that appropriate to David's line. **He seems** to have seen in Christ the literal fulfilment of Zephaniah 3. 15: "The King of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee." *S. Johnston.*

EXTRACTS.

From London, S. E. —Practically **all** the best informed commentators are agreed that "Word" (or *logos*) designates **a** real subsisting Being, and not an attribute, **as** wisdom or reason. Speaking recently concerning the word *logos*, a noted classical scholar said, "Traditionally it is translated 'word'; but it is 'talk' or 'speech: *sermo* rather than *verbum*. It is the most characteristic word in the Greek language... It lies **at** the root of philosophy, science, religion. Everything in the world has **a** *logos*, it says something, means something; God Himself has His *Logos*: **He** is saying something." It is not surprising, therefore, if there **is** great difficulty in fully knowing and fully conveying the **sense** of the term *logos*.

Verse 9 provides a measure of difficulty, because there are two possible methods of punctuation, deciding whether it is the *light* or the *man* coming into the world. The weight of evidence *seems* to be overwhelmingly on the side of the punctuation which gives it *as* the light coming into the world. The Lord Jesus was the true Light. **He** lighteth every man; through all darkness and desolation He shines on and illumines all men. Through Him, God " giveth to all life, and breath, and all things " (Acts 17. 25). [3]

F. L. E.

From Barry. —We had a difference of opinion on the matter of the " Light. " Some thought the " light of men " is spiritual light and that only, and so throughout the portion. Abel, Enoch and Abraham were divinely illumined men who had experience with God and shed their light around them. Verse 9 presents no difficulty if it is taken to agree with Timothy 4. 10, "The Saviour of all m e n . . . " Others thought that the light (1. 4), is the light of natural life, for verse 4 *seems* to be linked with verse 3 which refers to the work of creation. [4] We know that man fell and continues in sin, yet this darkness of sin and death did not overcome the light. There *seems* nothing in the text to suggest that the light of verse 4 is in any way different from that of verse 9.

This Light was coming, heralded by John, to manifest Himself to His own, but they that were His own received Him not. John bears a four-fold witness to the Coming One: as the light (1. 7), *as* to His pre-eminence (1. 15), *as* the Lamb of God (1. 29), and *as* the Son of God (1. 34). *E. S. T.*

From Cardiff. —The early verses of John 1 contain much vital truth clearly expressed concerning the Word, Jesus Christ the Son of God; there is revealed in rapid succession His eternal nature, His intimate association with the Father, His Deity, His creative work and His incarnation. In verses 12 and 13 we are introduced to Him *as* One to be received, and to the new birth, and " the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. "

The miracle in Cana of Galilee gives very important lessons in a simple setting. Much depended on obedience: " Whatsoever **He** saith unto you, do it. " Not all the water was turned to wine, *as* some have supposed [5]. Compare " the servants which had drawn the water knew, " with " the water now become wine. " It is evident that in the obedience of faith the servants drew water and bare it to the ruler of the feast, and in the bearing the change took place.

A. G. Stockwell, J. McFarlane.

From Melbourne. —Our thoughts are also carried back to Genesis 1. 1. " In the beginning God (Elohim) created the heaven and the earth. " Here is the triune God acting in the work of creation; and, in the light of John 1. 3, together with Proverbs 8. 30, and Colossians 1. 16, the eternal Word is identified *as* the One through whom the work of God in creation was wrought; when **He** spake, it was done. " In Him was life. " This life was not derived *as* in the *case* of man; **He** was the Source of life.

At the marriage feast natural laws were set aside, and at the word of Him, who at Creation spake and it was done, water—apart from the fruit of the vine and the natural processes—became wine equal to the best juice of the grape.

M. McF., T. W. F.

From Birkenhead. —John identifies the Word with the only begotten Son of God. If the Lord Jesus was the Word eternally, **He was** the Son of God eternally. " The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father,

He hath declared Him. " This is His unique relationship with the Father, and His place eternally. " Declared " is translated " rehearsed " in Luke 24. 35, i. e., they told out something of which they had prior knowledge. In contrast, John the Baptist is described as a man that came from God. " The life was the light of men " (1. 4). " Life " and " light " normally convey two different ideas [6]. John the Baptist was not the Light (1. 8). This Light is the Lord Jesus Christ, and the man who receives life from Christ will get light also.

In this portion, John begins to count the days of the Lord's ministry up to the third day, on which was done the first sign in Cana of Galilee. This is in contrast with the seven days associated with creation and the law, for the Lord Jesus is now presented as the One coming into this world to give life for the new creation and for the making of a new covenant. This work is significantly associated by John in many passages with the three days of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord, as for example, the early announcement in Chapter 2. 19 " Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. " **D. B., N. A.**

From Hereford. —In Genesis, before God commenced to bring order out of chaos, He called forth light; in John 1 we find that, before spiritual darkness could be dispelled, it was necessary for the Light to come forth from God. Being God, and having come forth from God, He came with knowledge of God, knowledge that illuminated the hearts and minds of those that received Him (17. 3). John saw the Spirit descending as a dove upon the One, whom he was to proclaim as " the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. "

It would appear that Philip saw in the Lord the Person to whom John the Baptist had borne witness. Nathanael was doubtful, but heeding the words, " Come and see, " he came and his doubts quickly disappeared, when he found himself in the presence of One who knew him even before Philip called him. **J. O. Tidmas.**

From Kingston-on-Thames. —In the opening words of John 1 we have the Word, who ever was. In verse 3 we see His Creatorship; through Him all things were made, which the apostle brings before us very clearly in Colossians 1. 16, 17. " In Him was life " (1. 4), and He is the true Light (1. 9), which lighteth every man coming into the world. If any man is to receive Life or Light, it must come through Christ. Verse 10 proves the darkness in which the world was, and men knew Him not; and verse 11 proves the darkness of His people (the Jews), for they received Him not. A child of wrath may become a child of God, simply by receiving Him (Christ) or believing in His Name (1. 12). **J. W.**

From Willington Quay. —The answers John the Baptist gave when questioned as to his own identity are ample evidence of the instruction which he received in the wilderness. In his testimony there is no evidence of self-aggrandizement. The other three Gospel writers give God's testimony from the open heaven concerning His Son; this is not found in John's account.

We would understand the " morrow " of verses 29, 35 to be the same day, and that the " morrow " of verse 43 was the day following, but that the "third day" (2. 1) did not follow consecutively on these two days, as the forty days temptation intervened. [7] **K. R.**

From Knocknacloy. —In chapter 2 we have the first sign that Jesus did, when at the marriage feast He changed the water into wine. This miracle caused His disciples to believe on Him. Was this the disciples' act of initial faith in Him as the Christ? Were they unbelievers before this? Or does it mean that their faith was the more strengthened? [8]

In exercising His divine power thus, Jesus manifested to His disciples His glory. Even in His earthly, lowly guise as a man the disciples saw in Him the glory of the only begotten from the Father, because their minds and hearts were enlightened by God as to who He was. We remember the testimony of Peter (Matthew 16. 16), and how the Lord told him that such knowledge was from the Father. How blessed indeed it is that we also, who know Him as our Saviour, may see in Him something of His glory!

William Woods,

From Atherton. —John the Baptist came to bear witness of the Light. John was the lamp that burneth and shineth, but his light paled before the One who was greater than he. His light was derived, but the Lord Jesus is the Light. A query arose over verse 3: can we say that One Person of the Trinity had more responsibility than another in the work of creation? [9]

D. H. Butler, G. Sankey.

From Portstewart. —Jesus, as Son of God and Messiah, was made known to John by divine revelation, God's way of making Himself known to men. John the Baptist was of a priestly family and came in the Spirit of Elijah. His cry, "Make straight the way of the Lord," was in accordance with Hebrew custom in preparing the way for notable persons, that the path through the wilderness might be cleared of obstruction. It may be significant that John preached beyond Jordan. He was the prophet preparing men for the new dispensation. Baptizing those of Israel who believed, he pointed them to Christ, the Messiah. Nevertheless, many of Israel failed to recognise Him as such.

From Liverpool. —The Greek for "Word" is *logos* and means (1) a thought or concept [10], (2) the expression or utterance of that word. The incarnate Word is the expression of God's thoughts and purposes toward us; in the Son of God we see the heart of God revealed.

"The light which lighteth every man," some thought, speaks of eonscience [11].

The marriage in Cana was blessed with the presence of the Lord Jesus. We should never be where we cannot have Him as Guest of honour. The six water pots were ready for His use, and suggest so should we be. They were by divine operation filled with wine. We should be empty and clean, so that we may be filled. Six would suggest man's limitations.

A. Fairhurst (Jun.), A. H.

From Edinburgh. —This first portion of the Gospel according to John can be summed as "The witness of God... concerning His Son." In it we have (1) the witness through John (the apostle) that Jesus is the eternal Word of God (1. 1), the Creator (1. 3), the Lifegiver (1. 4), the Man (1. 14); (2) the witness of the Lord Himself that He is the Son of Man (1. 51); (3) the witness of Nathanael that Jesus is the Son of God (1. 49); and (4) the witness by His first miracle that Jesus was God-sent (5. 36). In addition to these, we have the full witness of John the Baptist that his mission was to bear witness to the Light (1. 8), and that

Jesus was the Pre-existent One (1. 15); the Lamb of God, the Sin-bearer (1. 29); the Son of God (1. 33); and the One on whom the Spirit descended (1. 32).

John took a lowly place when he confessed that he was unworthy to unloose the latchet of the shoe of the coming One. Yet, of him the Lord said that among them that are born of women there is none greater than John.

A. M. Hope.

From **Glasgow**. — "In the beginning " takes us back to Genesis 1. 1, where we read that God created the heaven and the earth. The Word was in being at that time, and did not come into existence then, as some teach. The Word was fully God in essence and attributes; so all that is involved in the term " God " is true of the " Word. " In these verses we see His perfect and unquestionable Deity, which He clearly manifested while here upon earth. Because of this claim the Jewish Sanhedrim condemned Him to death: in their judgement He was guilty of blasphemy. If it were not that He was delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, they would never have had their desire fulfilled.

Fred Harvey.

From Innerleithen. — "The Word became flesh " (1. 14). This same One by His word brought into being the universe and whatever else is entailed in Genesis 1. 1. Solomon said of Him, "Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee, " and yet He limited Himself so, as to be born of a woman. Laying aside His glory, He laid hold of the seed of Abraham. The Son of God was made for a little while lower than the angels. He partook of flesh and blood, "that through death He might (bring to nought him that had the power of death. " He tasted death. But "God is Spirit" (John 4. 24, Mg.); in the light of this it is well to connect the words—"put to death in the flesh" (1 Peter 3. 18). We believe that this was only possible because "the Word became flesh. "

W. B., J. B., F. W. S.

From Toronto, Ont. —Verse 9 brings before us the Lord Jesus as the true Light, the spiritual Light. Please read John 3. 19-21. This verse refers not to the man who comes into the world, but to Christ, since the world was in the darkness of sin, and He who was Light came to dispel the darkness in all who would believe on Him.

John's witness in verses 19-28 we took to refer to John, as he compared his lowly position with the exalted One who was "made for a little while lower than the angels" (Hebrews 2. 9, R. V. M.), and for whom he came to witness. He was but a "voice" (Mark 1. 3; John 1. 23). "He confessed... I am not the Christ; I am not (Elijah)": nor yet the prophet (20-21). This witness seems to be exclusively meant for Israel nationally.

Verses 29-34 we took to refer to the world-wide aspect of Christ's ministry. Verse 29 in particular emphasizes the all embracing provision of the Lamb of God. It was suggested, however, that wherever we have mention of the Lamb of God, the expression refers initially to Israel [12]. *N. K.*

From Southport. —The people saw, as they supposed, the Carpenter, Jesus of Nazareth, go to John the Baptist to be baptized by John in the Jordan. There John saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him (Matthew 3. 16), and hence the certainty of John's witness, "I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (1. 33,

34). **Not** only did John bear witness of Jesus of Nazareth **as** the Son of God, but also **as** Saviour. Many believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, **because** of John's preaching, and these the Lord views **as** sheep in a fold. John is the porter, who opens the door to the Lord, who, after calling His sheep by **name**, leadeth them out (John 10. 3). **We see** examples of such **sheep**-like ones in Andrew and another (John 1. 37). The testimony of Andrew was, "**We** have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ) (verse 41), but Nathanael's question, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" may arise from the knowledge that the King should come from Beth-lehem Ephrathah (Micah 5. 2).

We can take encouragement from the testimony of John the Baptist, who, although he did no sign, caused many who lived beyond Jordan to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, **because all** that John said concerning Him was later observed to be true (John 10. 40-42). *W. S. Holden.*

From Wembley. —Testimony to John was mainly derived from Isaiah. The Lamb of God was to remove the sin (singular) of the world, that is, man's defection from God. The witness of John **was** unmistakable, culminating with "this is the Son of God." Two disciples of John were at once attracted to Jesus, and they followed **Him**: they wanted to know more, and they were readily welcomed by Jesus. Andrew soon brought the good news to his brother Simon. Philip, one of these first disciples, received **a** direct call from the Lord. Philip did not argue when Nathanael queried **as** to how the Messiah could come from Nazareth, but invited him to come and see. Nathanael's doubts vanished when the Lord greeted him **as a** true Israelite without guile. To Jacob the **name** Israel was originally given. Nathanael gave **a** full declaration to the Lord: "the Son of God" and "King of Israel." Such were the thoughts of this true Israelite. It is difficult for us to appreciate the impact upon the disciples of the discovery that the Messiah, who had been awaited for centuries, had now been revealed. *A. D. M.*

From Wigan. —The mother of Jesus was at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. She had kept the sayings she had heard, pondering them in her heart, from before His birth (Luke 2. 19). And now circumstances had arisen which, she must have thought, befitted the hour of His glory. But not for this hour was **He** born: that hour was yet to come (verse 4, see John 12. 23, 27), and then grief and sorrow would burn into the soul of this woman. At the marriage **He** addressed her **as** "woman," the title by which **He** addressed her when, later, He committed her to John (John 19. 26). "This beginning of His signs did Jesus" (2. 11) should silence those who would suggest that during His boyhood Jesus worked miracles: for here was the first sign. *J. H.*

From Cowdenbeath. —"The Word became flesh" (R. V.). By **a** voluntary act **He** became what He was not previously, i. e., **Man**, yet remained who **He** ever was, i. e., God. When **He came**, the world failed to recognize its Creator, and Israel refused to receive their Messiah, but there were the few who saw His glory. This unique glory is that of the only begotten Son of the Father. The relationship of Father and Son is **an** eternal relationship. This begetting is **a** profound mystery to human minds, for although **He** is begotten, yet **He** is without beginning. The nature and attributes of Deity are His, even **as** they are the Father's. Grace and truth came by Him. They belonged to Him, **and** it **was** impossible that His

characteristic should not be manifested. In contrast Moses gave what **had** been given to him.

The marriage in Cana declares the same truth. His address to Mary was "Woman" and not "Mother." As Son of God He had no mother, and as Son of Man He had no father. Although His time to commence His public ministry had not arrived, He graciously acted to relieve the situation by turning the water into wine. He was not bound to produce wine by the same process which, as Creator, He had given to men. By His spoken word He produced from water wine of the finest quality and flavour, thus manifesting His divine power. *J. Bowman.*

COMMENTS.

[1] (Greenock). —"Shineth" is the present tense, "It is of the essence of Light to invade the realm of darkness," both in a physical and spiritual sense. "The darkness apprehended (or overcame, aorist 2 tense, which simply states a fact) it not." It would be a fearsome consideration, if darkness could overcome light, and still more fearsome, if the prince of darkness could overcome Him who is "the Light." —*J. M.*

[2] (Greenock). —I doubt whether this is the correct way of putting the knowledge of John the Baptist. Prior to the Lord coming to John to be baptized he had borne witness to Him that His greatness was such that His shoes he was not worthy to bear; and this coupled with the **fact** that he said he had need to be baptized by the Lord, shows, I think, that John viewed the Lord as much more than man. **But** as a witness, and we might say the Lord's chief witness who was to identify **Him** and point **Him** out to Israel, his testimony could not rest on knowledge acquired through others, **but** on the direct knowledge of revelation. **He** says "I knew (*oida*, saw) Him not. "; "upon whomsoever thou shalt **see** (*oida*) the Spirit descending"; "I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (John 1. 33, 34). —*J. M.*

[3] (London). —It is too much to say that Christ the Light who came into the world "illuminates all men." This was His purpose, as He is also the Saviour of the world in character, but all men are not saved, nor are all men illuminated. —*J. M.*

[4] (Barry). —It is neither physical light, nor natural intelligence, which springs from the human spirit which is different from the spirit of the beast (Job 35. 11), but is that Divine Light, which is the Word, who illuminates created intelligences with the knowledge of God, and in John 1 man in particular is in view. —*J. M.*

[5] (Cardiff). —If all the water was not turned into wine, which part was, and which was not? and again, what value is in the statement that the water pots contained so many firkins apiece, and that they were filled to the brim? For myself, I have no doubt whatever that the Lord turned all the water into wine, not simply that which was drawn for the ruler of the feast. What about the wine for the guests? —*J. M.*

[6] (Birkenhead). —Artificial light is not life, but sunlight is life to animated creation on earth. —*J. M.*

[7] (Willington Quay). —Clearly, I think, the temptation is prior to verse 29, for following His baptism the Lord was led into the wilderness. See Mark 1. 12. —*J. M.*

[8] (Knocknacloy). —If they were His disciples (as they were), then they were believers. —*J. M.*

[9] (Atherton). —No. God "created all things" (Romans 11. 36; Ephesians 3. 9; Revelation 4. 11), through the Word, the Son (John 1. 3;

Colossians 1. 15, 16; Hebrews 1. 2, 10-12), and by the Spirit (Job 33. 4; 26. 13; Psalm 33. 6). —*J. M.*

[10] (Liverpool). —Scholars tell us that, though "logos" in the sense of reason (*kolá logon*) is frequently found in profane authors, it is only found once in the New Testament in this sense (Acts 18. 14). —*J. M.*

[11] (Liverpool). —The Light which lights every man is Christ Himself. Man is not enlightened by his conscience, but man's conscience needs to be enlightened by the Incarnate and the written Word of God. —*J. M.*

[12] (Toronto). —Not at all. Note the words, "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,"—of the **world**. John's Gospel presents Christ as the Saviour of the world. —*J. M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question from Melbourne. —What knowledge did the Jews have concerning the ordinance of baptism? Should we understand from John 1. 25 that they would have expected the Christ, or Elijah, to baptize?

Answer. —Alford in his commentary says, "When men were admitted as proselytes, three rites were performed—circumcision, baptism, and oblation; when women, two—baptism and oblation. The baptism was administered in the day-time, by immersion of the whole person; and while standing in the water the proselyte was instructed in certain portions of the law. The whole families of proselytes, including infants were baptized" (How like this Jewish practice of baptizing families is the practice of Exclusive brethren in their household baptism, a wholly unscriptural practice). It is easy enough to see how from their practice of baptism they would associate Christ, Elijah or the Prophet. See also their various baptisms in Mark 7. 4. —*J. M.*

Questions from Glasgow. —(1) Do John 1. 14 and 2 Peter 1. 14 refer to the same fact? (2) Are the three days of John 1. 29, 43; 2. 1 consecutive? (3) "These things were done in Bethany" (John 1. 28), but Matthew 3. 1 says the wilderness of Judaea. Please explain.

Answers. —(1) Peter calls his body his tabernacle, as Paul does in 2 Corinthians 5. 1, 4. The Lord, the Word, became flesh, and in the flesh He tabernacled (aorist tense stating the historical fact of the Lord's earthly sojourn) among us. The answer is Yes, clearly understanding that man is not in being apart from when he appears at birth in this scene, whereas the Word, an eternal Being, became flesh at His birth. (2) Yes, I understand so. (3) There was a Bethany beyond Jordan and another near to Jerusalem. It was common in Bible times, as also in our day, for different places to have the same name. —*J. M.*

NOTE: —It is, I think, true that in John 1 will be found a greater number of names of the Lord than in any other chapter of the Holy Scriptures. Here is a galaxy of precious descriptions of the Lord, each one with a preciousness and content of its own: —The Word (the Maker of all), the Light, the only begotten Son, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the Christ (the Messiah), the Prophet, the Lamb of God (the Bearer of sin), Jesus of Nazareth, Rabbi (Master or Teacher), the King of Israel, the Son of Man. —*J. M.*

NOTICE: CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

From now on papers should be sent to Mr. Baird at his new address: 15, Brunstane Road, Joppa, Midlothian, Scotland. It is important to use the full address.

NOTES ON ROMANS.

CHAPTER 7.

Verse 1: *Or are ye ignorant, brethren (for I speak to men that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth ?*

Law, **whether the** Mosaic or any law of **men**, applies to **man** during his earthly lifetime. **On** such **as** may be guilty of the worst of felonies, if they die before **the** arm of the law reaches them, law cannot impose any penalty. Every transgression of the law of God, **we** are told, received a just recompense of reward (Hebrews 2. 2).

Verses 2, 3: *For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man.*

Here Paul **uses what** he calls "the law of the husband" to force home the truth that death **frees** those who have been under law, so that they are no longer under law but under grace (Romans 6. 14). A married woman is bound to her living husband, but his death breaks the marriage bond, so she is not an adulteress if she remarries (it **seems to me** that there is no need to render the Greek word *chrematizo*, translated "called" here, as "divinely called," and this is also so, I judge, in Acts 11. 26. "Called an adulteress" and "called Christians," describe the habit of life of these persons respectively, and are correct definitions). The breaking of the marriage bond **by** divorce would destroy the whole of Paul's argument.

Verse 4: *Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God.*

There is no need to conclude that Paul's similitude means that the **law was** the husband, and those under the law the wife. In Paul's simile the husband dies and the wife lives: this would mean that the law dies and those under the law continue to live. **He** states the opposite to this in his application, when he says, "**Ye** also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ." So it is not the law that dies but those under the law. What he is showing is, that death frees from the law, and nothing else. "The body of Christ" is the Lord's own body which was hanged on the tree. Christ **was** born under the law (Galatians 4. 4, 5), and **He** died under the law, meeting the law's just demands against those for whom **He** died. Believers who were once under the law were made dead to the law by the body of Christ yielded up in death on the cross (Hebrews 10. 10). "**We** have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were holden" (verse 6). The object of this is, that they might be joined to Another, even the risen Christ, with a view to bringing forth fruit to God. The joining here is a permanent union with the living Christ that death cannot affect. Bearing in mind the thought of the similitude of husband and wife, the fruit expected of such a union is not only the reproduction of the life of Christ in us, with all its blessed virtues, but also the begetting of a prolific issue **as** at the beginning, when each created thing bore fruit after its kind. The subject matter here in the similitude of husband and wife should not be confused with that set forth in Ephesians 5. 22-33, where it is Christ and the Church which is His Body. There is no thought of fruitbearing in Ephesians. Then again, the marriage of the Church, the Bride of the Lamb, is yet future (Revelation 19. 7, 8), but our being joined or married to Christ, in Romans 7. 4, is a present experience, not a future one. Now it is the *individual* experience of each believer to be joined to Christ, the future marriage of the **Bride** is a collective experience.

Verses 5, 6: *For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were holden; so that we serve in newness of the Spirit, not in the oldness of the letter.*

"When we were in the flesh" signifies the condition of believers prior to regeneration. Paul says in Romans 8. 9, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." At the time of regeneration Jewish believers died to the law, to that wherein they were holden. "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" stirred up the sinful passions which are native to the flesh, which brought fruit unto death, the exact opposite of the life of Christ in the believer, which brings forth fruit unto God. Spirit should be printed with a capital S, for it signifies the Person of the Holy Spirit. Service now is not on the old principle of the letter of the law, to which a man without faith, enslaved to that legal system, might conform outwardly. God's servants now serve in the new power of the Spirit, the words of the Old Testament having come to life in him through faith in Christ.

Verse 7: *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet (lust):*

This part of the chapter (verses 7-25) is an answer to the question, "Is the law sin?" Paul shows that sin resides not in the law, but in man. It is by the law that sin is unveiled, "for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3. 20). When Paul's conscience was enlightened by the law, then sin became active.

Verse 8: *But sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting: for apart from the law sin is dead.*

Sin here is original sin which is inherited by all members of the human race. When the law said, "Thou shalt not covet," sin at once resisted and wrought all manner of coveting. Two opposites met, sin and God's holy law; and the law stirred up sin to activity. To be dead does not mean that a thing or person does not exist. Both death and life describe states of existence, not existence itself. The entrance of the law was like putting vinegar into a tumbler of water in which is bicarbonate of soda; immediately it effervesces. The rebellious character of sin was not felt until the law said, "Thou shalt not covet," and immediately sin was stirred into violent action and produced all manner of lusting.

Verses 9, 10: *And I was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; and the commandment, which was unto life, this I found to be unto death:*

"I was alive apart from the law once": "I" here is Paul in childhood, before the commandment of the law awakened him to the consciousness of sin. Here Paul describes his own experience and lays bare for examination those deep and secret workings of the conscience. In comparatively happy unconsciousness of the sinfulness of sin (verse 13) Paul lived in early life. He tersely states his after experience thus—"the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." When sin comes to life in the sinner, the sinner dies, he is dead through his trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2. 1), and from henceforth he is without strength to help himself (Romans 5. 6). Divine quickening with Christ (Ephesians 2. 4-6) is by the Spirit and word of God. The commandment of the law was unto life: for "the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall

live thereby" (Romans 10. 5). Thus, instead of being unto life, **Paul** found it to be unto death. Paul, who **was a sinner by nature** (Romans. 5. 19), **became a sinner by practice.**

Verses 11, 12: *For sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me. So that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good.*

Paul **here answers** his own question, "Is the law sin?", by saying, "The law is holy." Sin is deceitful (Hebrews 3. 13). Paul says that through **the commandment sin beguiled him and** through it slew him. **Here is a repetition** of the story of **Eden's** garden, with this difference; the beguiler **was not sin** in Eve, but the serpent, the old serpent **the devil.** **He** so beguiled her that she ran right against **the commandment, as upon a drawn sword, and the fatal judgement fell—**"in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2. 17). Her **answer** to the LORD was, "The serpent beguiled **me, and I did eat.**" The commandment **was like the law, holy, just and good.** How subtil are both sin **and Satan as** they wait for the occasion to do their deadly work!

Verse 13: *Did then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might be shewn to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good; that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful.*

The law which is good cannot slay the good. But, alas, there is none good, no, not so much **as* one** (Romans 3. 12). The law discovered the sinner to himself; it showed sin in him to be sin, **and** the commandment which is holy revealed that sin is exceedingly sinful in God's sight.

Verse 14: *For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

We know (*oida*, intuitive knowledge, not acquired from what is external, in contrast to *ginosko*, which describes what is acquired or learned), **Paul** says, that the law is spiritual, but in contrast, he says, "I **am** carnal." "I" here is emphatic, **and** refers to Paul himself. Mankind is sold to slavery in sin **and** under its dominion. The nature of Adam **was** completely changed by disobedience. Such a change, in part, **takes** place when sin revives in **an** individual, for from that moment he turns away rebelliously from God, for death has taken place. God alone **can** convert or turn the sinner back again by the life-giving **message** of the gospel, **and** by this **means** he is freed from the slavery of sin.

Verses 15, 16, 17: *For that which I do I know not: for not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do. But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good. So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me.*

Now **as** one whose soul is freed from sin, yet with sin still dwelling in his flesh, he says, "that which I do I know not" (*ginosko*, he has not learned **and** is ignorant), he is acting at the dictates of another, that is, of sin in him. His mind which is **renewed** hates sin, yet such is sin's deceitfulness in the complexity of his present constitution, he hates what he practises **and** does what he would not do. In this Paul says that he consents unto the law that it is good. Then he points out the **cause** of his so acting, "So now it is no more I that do it, **but** sin which dwelleth in **me.**" Such words could not **be** written describing **an unregenerate man** either **under** or not under the law. An unregenerate **man** does not hate sin, nor **can** such a difference **be made** between himself **and** sin in him. —**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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EDITORIAL.

We regret that, not long after writing the London contribution for this issue, our brother Aubrey Reeve departed to be with Christ. We extend to his loved ones our united sympathy, and with them we take comfort from the assurance of the Lord's soon return.

In His dealings with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman (John 4), the Lord's method of teaching is worthy of note. It is direct and progressive. The issue **is** never confused: even when the Lord uses illustrations or parables, **the** intention is clear. Accordingly, the meaning of the new birth is developed so as to lead to more and more profound concepts. Birth begins life: the new birth begins the new life, and that which is born resembles its source (3. 6). Thus, even in spiritual re-birth, the law of Genesis applies—"after its kind" (Genesis 1. 11, 12, 21, 24). Normal living creatures develop, feed, respond to stimuli, and are productive. If we have been born anew, we should manifest spiritual progress, feed on the living word, respond to the Spirit's leading, and should bear fruit Godward. **J. B.**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

(Chapter 2. 12 to Chapter 3. 36).

From Wembley. —The opening verses of this portion refer to the Lord's first recorded visit to the Temple after His baptism in the Jordan, and we have here the first cleansing of His Father's house. There was nothing sinful in the selling of animals for sacrifice: this was provided for in Deuteronomy 14. 23-26. The sin was that the buying and selling took place within the Temple precincts. The moneychangers were presumably changing into local currency the moneys of those Jews who had come from far-off lands. There is no provision in God's word for this money-changing, as it was not God's will that His ancient people should seek their fortune outside the land, which He had given Abraham. The action which the Lord took to cleanse the Temple of these undesirable elements was: — to wield a scourge of cords upon the animals, who made for the open street, closely followed by their owners, who saw their livelihood going; to overturn the tables of the moneychangers, who would be too intent on picking up their money to be able to take action against Him; to command those who sold doves to "take these things hence." His words to all were "make **not** My Father's house a house of merchandise." Surely this warning is just as appropriate in these days of the spiritual house. When the Lord went to the Temple at the close of His ministry, He found the same conditions once again. It is not unlikely that the priests were not averse to the presence of the dealers. On this last occasion He said of the Temple, "**Ye** make it a den of robbers" (Matthew 21),

The Jews, having witnessed these zealous actions, asked for a sign. The Lord's reply caused them considerable thought, because they read into His words that **He** would rebuild the material Temple in three days,

whereas Herod's workmen had taken 46 years. The Lord's statement obviously made a profound impression on some of them, because it was used during His trial by false witnesses (who misquoted His words), and again by scoffers, while He was on the Cross.

K. H. R.

From Kingston-on-Thames. —John the Baptist was a remarkable man. The Lord Jesus said that he was much more than a prophet (Matthew 11. 9), and that "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." In Matthew 3. 2, 3 John is described as preacher of the kingdom of heaven, and in Mark 1. 2 as the Lord's messenger. Although **he was** so highly esteemed, he was **a** very humble man, and **was** fully prepared to keep in the background **and** allow the Lord to have first place, **as** John himself said, "**He** must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3. 30): hence John's joy was fulfilled. Is there not here a lesson for us? We should not seek any honour for ourselves; **as** the apostle Paul said, "Far be it from **me** to glory, save in the cross of **OUT** Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6. 14).

Finally, it was **a** great honour to John when the Lord Jesus said of him, "**Ye** have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness unto the truth" (John 5. 33).

W. H. Humphris.

From London, S. E. —Nicodemus began with: "Rabbi, **we** know that Thou art **a** teacher come from God." Possibly Nicodemus was there **on** his own account, but this opinion of Jesus may have been shared by his fellow rulers [1]. If this was so, then the malice and bitterness of their hearts is manifested in that they sought His death.

"Seeing" the kingdom involves knowledge of a spiritual kind; the natural man can neither receive nor discern the things of the Spirit, and knowledge of this spiritual kingdom is **a** result of the new birth. "Born anew" is preferable to "born again," since "anew" expresses more closely the thought of "from the very beginning," which is the meaning of the Greek word [2]. It indicates a completely new start, a new life, for "if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." The grown man must be as a little child in order to learn of the kingdom of God.

"Entering into" the kingdom seems to suggest something more than *' seeing," although we hesitate to say that the two conditions are additional to being born anew; they indicate rather what the new birth means. Being born of the Spirit clearly indicates the baptism of the believer in Holy Spirit, which first took place at Pentecost, and which now is effected by faith in Jesus Christ [3]. But, to what does the water refer? Is it an allusion to the baptism of John, which called for repentance, and was a preparation for the coming of the Messiah (who was to baptize with the Spirit)? Or has the water some other application? [4]

In John 3. 14 the Lord compared His work with the act of Moses in the wilderness. The brasen serpent was made in the likeness of the fiery serpents; even so Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh. In the brasen likeness of the poisonous serpents there was no poison; and in Christ **was** found no sin. **A** look at the uplifted brasen serpent meant **a** healed body; even so faith in Christ brings **a** healed soul and life eternal.

Some commentators break off the Lord's discourse here, for the following reasons: allusion to Nicodemus is dropped, the past tense is used, the Johannine phrase "only begotten" is used, and they assert that John often continues the Lord's discourses with additions of his own. **We** have difficulty in accepting this view [5].

A. Reeve.

From Willington **Quay**.—Casting out of the money-changers (2. 15) happened also on another occasion, nearer the Lord's crucifixion. God forbid that any to-day should **seek** to profit by any dealings relative to God's house and His people. In John 2. 17 we read that the disciples remembered the written word, and later (2. 22) they were able to recall the Lord's spoken word.

Perhaps Nicodemus would **be** in the group mentioned in John 2. 18: Christ does say to him (3. 12), "If I told you earthly things..." His was a great blessing, when he **came** to Jesus by night. The woman of John 4 **came in** the heat of the day, and the disciples knew the blessing of the Lord early, "when day was now breaking" (21. 4). Those who seek Jesus and commune with Him have unforgettable experiences, be it night or day.

From John 3. 17 we **see** that God needed not to send **His** Son into the world to judge it; **He** will do that in a coming day, but the Son **was** sent that the world might be saved.

Verses 22-30 caused us to reflect that two companies were baptizing at this time—the disciples of the Lord and the disciples of John. The baptism of John appears to be limited to repentance and a looking for the coming **One** (Acts 19. 3). **We** wondered whether this baptism continued after John's decease, and **if it** reached as far as Ephesus, or whether these believers in Acts 19. 3 had been baptized by John himself and, before they could be taught about the Comforter by the Lord (John 14), had travelled as far afield as Ephesus [6].

C. B.

From Birkenhead. —Nicodemus, a ruler, was doubtless a man who was looking for the kingdom of God, with God's Anointed on the throne. The message of John the Baptist, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven **is at hand**," **must** also have been within his knowledge. It **is** to such an one that the Lord speaks, declaring the true spiritual nature of the kingdom. The **new birth**, or being born from above, **is** necessary before a **man can see** the kingdom of God. The word "**see**" here **is** perceiving, or seeing with the understanding, not merely seeing with the natural eyes. The new birth opens up to the believer the spiritual ability to **see** something of the purposes of God in redemption. The second word of the Lord about the new birth—"Except a man be born of water and the Spirit"—has been greatly misunderstood by many through wrongly identifying the "water" here with baptism in water. Nowhere in Scripture **is** baptism in water said to be the means of the new birth, but consistently the word of God **is** likened unto water. This **is** clear from the Lord's words to the woman of Samaria, "The water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life." See also John 6. 63, Ephesians 5. 26, Titus 3. 5, 1 Peter 1. 23. From these scriptures it is evident that the new birth **is** the work of the Spirit of God using the word of God in begetting a new life in the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. The believer's subsequent response to the word and will of God, in obedience thereto, **is** that which brings to him the experience of entering into the kingdom of God (Matthew 28. 18-20, Acts 2. 40-42, Romans 4. 17).

Does John 3. 13 suggest that the Lord was Son of **Man** in heaven? Could we put this title alongside "the Son of God" (John 1. 18; 3. 16)? [7] Newberry translates this, "even the Son of Man whose place **is in** heaven." Some teach that the Lord was Son of Man before **His** incarnation. This **is** not so. The words "which **is** in heaven" are not found in many MSS. and are of doubtful authority, as indicated in R. V. M. It **was** suggested this phrase may be a comment by John, the writer, after the resurrection; **if** so, the meaning **is** clear.

P. R., N. A.

EXTRACTS.

From Liverpool. —The One, who at the marriage feast at **Cana** of Galilee manifested His glory, in the temple manifested His righteous anger with those who were making His Father's house a house of merchandise, for the temple was still the house of God in these early days of the Lord's ministry: as yet the words, "Your house is left unto you desolate" had not been spoken. His disciples, witnessing no doubt in wonder His actions and words, were caused to remember the words of the Psalmist, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up." They were, evidently, students of the word written aforetime. Confronted with these things, the Jews were forced to ask a question which showed their appreciation of the claim implied in the words "My Father's house," and their words reveal their attitude to what was in fact a revelation of His Deity. It was His Deity that was in question (2. 18). His claim to Deity and His perfect answer (2. 20) were two of the accusations brought against Him at His trial (John 19. 7, Mark 14. 57, 58). In the resurrection of the Lord Jesus we have a sign which, above the many that manifested His Deity, shows to all finally and conclusively that His claims were right.

John 3. 36 sums up John's ministry. He had been sent by God to bear witness of the Light that all men might believe. *J. Wannop, A. H.*

From Edinburgh. —The first verse of our study refers to Capernaum, which reminds us that great privilege brings great responsibility (Matthew 11. 23, 24).

The Lord's words, "My Father's house" indicate His Divine Sonship, and John 2. 19 indicates His power over death.

"Many believed on His Name" was the outcome of many Jews hearing and believing the spoken word and seeing His signs. Rejection and Calvary lay before His reigning. His omniscience is seen in John 2. 24, 25; He knew the motives of the human heart, for He had created man.

In our study of chapter 3, we found difficulty in determining what was spoken and what was written. Since the Lord Jesus Christ always referred to God as "Father," when He spoke of Himself as being sent from above [8], and when speaking of God's love He used the word "Father," we suggest that verses 16-21 were written by the apostle John. Again, while we were uncertain as to where in this chapter John the Baptist ended his testimony, we thought that verse 36 could not have been spoken by him, as his message was only for Jews and did not embrace the Gentiles [9]. John the Baptist spoke with assurance and definiteness concerning the Lord Jesus. Likewise, we should also be able to speak of Him with assurance, but we must first "learn of Him." By so doing, we will take our true place, and will be girded with humility. "All authority" and "all things" are vested in Him. What a day it will be when men bow to that authority!

J. Paterson.

From Southport. —Nicodemus came to Jesus by night with his knowledge ("we know"). Christ answered Him according to his need, "Ye must be born again." Christ also said that, apart from the new birth, he could not see the kingdom of God (John 3. 3); and again, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (3. 5).

The thought here of entering reminds us of Israel of old, who entered not into the promised land, because of their unbelief. They died in the wilderness, and only their children and Joshua and Caleb entered. They that do the works of the flesh shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5. 21).

Thomas Brown.

From Bradford, Halifax, and Leeds. —This was probably the first passover after the beginning of the Lord's ministry, but the things that were being done in the temple, contrary to the will of God, would be known to the Lord Jesus for He would have seen them each time He visited Jerusalem. In Luke 2 we read of such a visit, when He was but twelve years old.

We linked the words, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (2. 19), with the Lord's words to the scribes and Pharisees, "There shall no sign be given... but the sign of Jonah the prophet" (Matthew 12. 39). Was the kingdom of God established at this time? If so, would Nicodemus be able to enter? (See John 7. 38, 39) [10]. The Lord Jesus represented Himself as the great Sacrifice by an illustration well known to Nicodemus. Verse 14 seems to end the conversation, and we thought that the apostle John by the Spirit's guidance, wrote verses 16 to 21, as also verses 31 to 36 [11].

D. B. R.

From Derby. —It is significant that, both at the commencement and at the close of the Lord's ministry, He should have to act as He did in regard to the cleansing of the temple. On many occasions He denounced the Pharisees for their hypocrisy and self-righteousness. His words to them were severe, and only on one other occasion do we read of His being angry (Mark 3. 5).

The character and purpose of John's Gospel (John 20. 31) is very evident in chapter 3. The keyword seems to be the word "believe." Nicodemus sought to see Jesus to inquire more fully into His teaching. As to the need for being born again he asked, "How can a man be born when he is old?" He, as a teacher, was not able to understand these things, yet Ezekiel 36. 26, and other Old Testament Scriptures, ought to have enlightened him if he but had the spiritual understanding.

E. W.

From Atherton. —It is not surprising that the Lord had so little confidence in many of those who believed on Him: there were sometimes ulterior motives in their seeking after Him (John 6. 26. See also Jeremiah 17. 9).

Nicodemus may have witnessed the temple incident. There is no doubt that some word, or work, had made an impression on him, and we would suggest that his approach to the Lord was sincere. Nicodemus, like many others in Israel, was looking for the setting up of an earthly kingdom, but his thoughts were rudely shaken by the words of the Lord. The new birth was a new doctrine to him, but it was essential that he should accept it, if he would see the kingdom of God. We suggest that it is not an earthly kingdom the Lord refers to but a spiritual (John 4. 24).

There was some difference of opinion concerning the kingdom of God and the water. Some said the gospel of the kingdom of God, which was preached (Mark 1. 14, 15), would include such words as were spoken to Nicodemus, and that the water was the water of baptism [12]. The change in the dispensation was subsequent to this (Matthew 16) [13]. This was not generally accepted, and it was pointed out that, although Israel was given an opportunity to accept the Messiah through the preaching of the twelve and the seventy, here the Lord was dealing with a seeker after the truth, who was directed to the water of the word and the new birth, which is essentially bound up with the truth of the Church which is His Body [14]. It is significant that John should make a precious allusion to the Church and Christ. Here we see full possession, the Bride joined eternally to the Bridegroom, never to be separated.

G. A. Jones, D. H. Butler,

From Greenock. —There was some difference of mind **over** Nicodemus coming to the Lord Jesus and saying what he did. Is it possible to associate Nicodemus with the later verses of chapter 2? "Many believed on **His** Name"; was Nicodemus actually a believer receiving further instruction at night? [15]. Does "them" of John 2. 24 refer to the believers of verse 23? [16]

The Lord Jesus' answer to Nicodemus (John 3) starts at verse 5. Are we correct in saying the answer ended at verse 21? [17] Although we realise that John wrote this Gospel many years after these things took place, we find it hard to understand how the Lord Jesus in speaking to Nicodemus (and here we assume that Nicodemus was not then a believer) should **use** such words **as** in John 3. 13. *G. Millar.*

From Glasgow. —In the story of Nicodemus we get a view of what was taking place in the council of the rulers. Whatever caused him to come by night we are not told, but he is to be commended above others in that he came for himself, and as a result heard some of the most simple yet profound statements of the Son of God, which have ever since been life-giving words to myriads. Well might the teacher of Israel take the place of the learner in the presence of the Teacher from heaven, and say "How can these things be?" Heavenly birth alone can open the mind to understand the things of heaven. Not only did the Lord Jesus unfold to Nicodemus this new order of things, but He told of heavenly love, which not only brought Him down to save, but entailed the lifting up of the Son of Man on the Cross, "that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life."

It was thought that John 3. 16-21 are the words of John, the writer of the Gospel, rather than the words of the Lord to Nicodemus. How closely the Gospel is linked with the acknowledgment of the authority of the Son of God is again seen in chapter 3. 35, 36. *R. Shaw.*

From Melbourne. —Nicodemus was, we believe, an honest and perplexed man. We suggest that the reason for the night visit was that he wanted a quiet talk with the Lord. It would appear that he was greatly concerned about the kingdom of God. Prior to the death of the Lord, the kingdom of God was taken away from Israel, and now the nucleus of the kingdom was in those humble disciples. It could be seen only by those who were born from above.

John, having fulfilled his mission, recognised that he must give way to the Greater, whose shoe latchet, he said, he was unworthy to unloose. Whilst in prison, John apparently had doubts lingering in his mind about the One he had so faithfully served [?]. So he sent to the Lord who, in turn, sent the messengers back to tell John the things they had both seen and heard. John was satisfied. *L. F.*

From Nottingham. —It is somewhat difficult to understand why John continued to baptize after the Lord had been made manifest publicly, and had commenced His public ministry. However, John's reply to those who came to question him about this reveals a self-abasement which stands as a distinctive feature of this truly great man. John, as the friend of the Bridegroom, rejoiced at the sound of the Bridegroom's voice. We of this dispensation, forming part of the Bride, stand in even closer relationship than did John, and the thought of the Bridegroom's beckoning call is something which should fill us with joy in even greater measure.

Some discussion centred on John 3. 34 in regard to the gift of the Holy Spirit. It was thought that what is implied is that there is no limit to the number of individuals to whom the Holy Spirit might be granted, and likewise no limit or restriction as regards the filling of individuals by the Spirit, this latter being dependent upon the spiritual state of the recipient. [18].

We wondered if there is any significance in the changing of the verb in the last verse from believing to obeying. We observe that "obeyeth not" is rendered "believeth not" in the R. V. margin [19]. *J. M.*

From Hereford. —It is a sad reflection on the Jews that the cleansing of the temple in the early days of the Lord's ministry had to be repeated in the closing days of His life here upon earth. The Jews asked Him for a sign to show His authority. They could not, however, plumb the depths of the Lord's answer. So great was the impression these words made on the Jews that, three years afterwards, they were used by the false witnesses in seeking to produce evidence of guilt (Matthew 26. 61, Mark 14. 58). The Lord's words were also used by those who taunted Him whilst He hung upon the cross (Mark 15. 29).

As the star, which has shone in the blackness of the night, wanes when the daylight increases, so the great witness, John the Baptist, was prepared to decrease as the sphere of ministry of the One who was the Light of the World increased. Jealousy, which could not find a place in the heart of John, may have found a place in the hearts of his followers. There appears to be no connexion between the dispute with the Jews about purifying and the matter of baptism, but John's disciples voiced their feelings concerning the success which attended the Lord's ministry. John's reply showed his greatness, and rightly earned for him the commendation of the Lord (Luke 7. 28). John reminded his disciples that he had said that he was not the Christ, but only His messenger, and the friend of the Bridegroom, and as such, his joy was fulfilled by hearing the Bridegroom's voice.

R. Tidmas.

COMMENTS.

[1] (London, S. E.). —What Nicodemus said was, "Rabbi, we know" (*aida*, to see by the eyes of the understanding enlightened by revelation, a revelation which comes by the new birth only). To this the Lord replied, "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see (*oida*) the kingdom of God." —*J. M.*

[2] (London, S. E.). —The Greek word *anōthen*, has been variously rendered in English and foreign versions by "again," "anew," "from above." Each of these ideas conveys the truth, and describes a birth of the Spirit, as distinct from that which is born of the flesh. The word *anōthen* literally means "from the top," "from the beginning," "from above." —*J. M.*

[3] (London, S. E.). —"Born of the Spirit" must be clearly distinguished from being "baptized in the Holy Spirit." If the apostles and others were not born again until Pentecost, how could they be taught to call God "Father" by the Lord? Baptism in the Holy Spirit is something additional to the new birth, though it happens, now that the Spirit is given, at the same time. —*J. M.*

[4] (London, S. E.). —To us now, being born of water and of the Spirit, is the same as Titus 3. 5, "According to His mercy He saved us, through

the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. "*Paliggenesin* means a being born again, new birth, regeneration. —*J. M.*

[5] (London, S. E.). —So have I a difficulty in accepting the view that we have the Lord's words to verse 15, and then the commentary of John from verse 16. Indeed verse 16 is a continuation of the Lord's discourse, it being joined to the previous verse by the conjunction " for. " Likewise verse 17 is linked to 16 by the same conjunction. —*J. M.*

[6] (Willington Quay). —It is impossible to say how the twelve disciples in Ephesus or Apollos came to be instructed in the way of the Lord as far as the baptism of John. —*J. M.*

[7] (Birkenhead). —It is a safe course not to be dogmatic on scriptures where there is a doubt whether we have the actual words given or spoken, as is the case with the words, " which is in heaven. " If we should accept these words as spoken by the Lord, then the truth is what is stated in John 1. 18: " The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father. " In John 6. 62 we have the opposite thought, that of the Son of Man ascending from this world to the Father; certain were privileged to see the early stage of that ascent (Acts 1. 9-11). It seems clear enough, I think, that in the Lord's thoughts the Son of Man was the Divine Son of the Father, for the personality of the Son of God and Son of Man was God, God the Son. He has of course two natures, being the only begotten Son of God, and being also begotten of Mary. —*J. M.*

[8] (Edinburgh). —See John 8. 42, " For I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. " See note [5]. —*J. M.*

[9] (Edinburgh). —There seems no reason to doubt that John 3. 36 with the previous verses was spoken by John the Baptist. Surely the Jews needed to believe as well as the Gentiles. —*J. M.*

[10] (Bradford, etc.). —In the Gospels we have a period of transition; the old Covenant service which was given to Israel, was still recognized by God, and the temple was still His Father's house. At the same time we have the Lord saving men and women and gathering them together to be the nucleus of the new nation, which we see in the Acts and the epistles, which was to take the place of Israel as the people of God. In the kingdom of God which was established in Israel at Sinai the new birth was not a prerequisite to being in and of that kingdom, but the Lord in His words to Nicodemus spoke of a higher phase of the kingdom of God, which demanded a new birth, with which went new sight, by which men were to see that God's Son was Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Corinthians 1. 9), the basis of a new Fellowship. It was the Father's will, who was going to take the kingdom from Israel, to give it to the little flock (see Matthew 21. 43; Luke 12. 32). If Nicodemus followed on with the other faithful ones, he would find a place in the kingdom of God with the Lord's other disciples. See references to this in the Acts and epistles. —*J. M.*

[11] (Bradford, etc.). —See Comments [5] and [9]. —*J. M.*

[12] (Atherton). —Both wind and water are referred to in this passage, wind, the Spirit, and water, the word. —*J. M.*

[13] (Atherton). —There was no dispensational change until the death and resurrection of the Lord, though there was a change in the teaching, which was preparatory to the new dispensation. " The law and the prophets were until John: from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached " (Luke 16. 16). —*J. M.*

[14] (Atherton). —See Comment [3]. —*J. M.*

[15] (Greenock). —There **is** not the slightest encouragement to the thought that Nicodemus was an enquiring believer. Had he believed that the Lord **was** the Messiah, he would not have called Him a Teacher, nor could **he** have shown how truly he was in the dark by his questions. —*J. M.*

[16] (Greenock). —Yes. Surely it is one of the elementary truths of Scripture that **we** should not trust in man, even though he is a believer (See **Jeremiah** 17. 5-10). We cannot even trust our own hearts. —*J. M.*

[17] (Greenock). —See Comment [5]. —*J. M.*

[18] (Nottingham). —Though the words "unto Him" in the A. V. are not **in** the Greek, yet they give the sense of the passage. There was no measure in which the Spirit was given to the Lord. —*J. M.*

[19] (Nottingham). —"Obeyeth not" describes a person who knowing the truth relative to the Son of God refuses to be persuaded by it. It is described as unbelief in action. —*J. M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question from Kingston-on-Thames. —Is "the beginning" of John 1 the same **as** in Genesis 1, or does it go beyond it?

Answer. —Genesis 1. 1; John 1. 1; 1 John 1. 1; I am disposed to think refer to the same beginning, which is either the act of God or a point in times eternal. —*J. M.*

Questions from Kingston-on-Thames. —(1) Who is "the bride" (3. 29)? Or is this a figure relating to the friendship between the Lord and John? (2) It was suggested that John 3. 31-36 are the words of the apostle John. Is this so?

Answer. —(1) The Church which is Christ's Body is the Bride. It is not a mere figure of speech; true friendship existed between the Lord and John. (2) I judge they are the words of John the Baptist. —*J. M.*

Questions from Atherton. —(1) "He giveth not the Spirit by measure" (3. 34). Do these words apply only to the Lord? or are they of general application? (2) John 3. 36 is usually accepted as the present gospel message. How does this fit in with John's message to the Jews?

Answer. —(1) To the Lord. Note the words of the verse, "For He (Christ) whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God," and in connexion with His speaking the words of God, the Spirit was not given by measure for such a work. (2) It truly presents the gospel message and John the Baptist was a great gospeller. —*J. M.*

Questions from Melbourne. —(1) Is there any thought of baptism in the "water" of John 3. 5? (2) What was the difference between the baptism of the disciples and that of John?

Answer. —(1) See Comments [4] and [12]. (2) John's baptism was that they should believe on Him which was to come after him, that is, on Jesus (Acts 19. 4). When Christ came His disciples were baptized because they had believed on Him, **as** is the case to-day. —*J. M.*

Note. —It is clear enough to any reader of this portion of John's Gospel (and from other portions of Scripture also), that the Lord knew that He had come to die, and hence never made or could make any offer to Israel, which implied the setting up of His millennial kingdom. Note the facts here stated, (1) the destruction of the temple of His body (John 2. 19), (2) His being lifted up on the Cross as the brazen serpent was lifted up (3. 14, 15), and (3) that He had not been sent to judge the world but to save it (3. 17). —*J. M.*

NOTES ON ROMANS.

CHAPTER 7.

Pollok, the poet, in his " Course of Time, " page 101, puts **the** matter of the struggle of the **man** renewed by God's Spirit and **sin** in the flesh thus:—

" Emblem of strength and weakness ! loving now,
 And now abhorring sin; indulging now,
 And now repenting sore; rejoicing now,
 With joy unspeakable, and full of glory;
 Now weeping bitterly, and clothed in dust;
 A man willing to do, and doing not;
 Doing, and willing not; embracing what
 He hates, what most he loves abandoning;
 Half saint, and sinner half; half life, half death;
 Commixture strange of heaven, and earth, and hell. "

Whilst Paul says that it was not he himself that does the wrong, but sin in him, this does not relieve him of blame, for though the **cause** is sin in his flesh, he cannot be treated **as** a lunatic who is not responsible for his actions. His course is that of Job who said, " I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes " (Job 42. 6).

Verse 18: *For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not.*

The personal pronouns " I, " " me, " " my " refer undoubtedly to Paul (and he typifies believers in general), and not to a sinner, or a believer prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). **He** is showing that a believer **in himself**, however much he might will the doing of good, has not the ability to do good. Paul is preparing the ground in chapter 7 for his arguments in chapter 8, in which the Spirit is mentioned about 18 times. Prior to chapter 8 the Spirit is mentioned but once (5. 5). No good can be done by the believer except he is empowered by the Holy Spirit. **He** cannot even call Jesus Lord but by the Spirit's power. " No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit " (1 Corinthians 12. 3). The resistance of sin in the flesh is so powerful, that but for God's enabling power by the Spirit the believer could do nothing. This is the teaching of all Scripture: " Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD " (Zechariah 4. 6). " **He** delighteth not in the strength of the horse: **He** taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man " (Psalm 147. 10). " My grace is sufficient for thee: for My power is made perfect in weakness " (2 Corinthians 12. 9). " I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth **me** " (Philippians 4. 13). One might quote scriptures *in extenso* to prove the hopelessness of the saints and servants of God apart from the power of God. Believers may **will** with their renewed minds, but the power **to do** good does not reside in themselves, but in the quickening power of God's Spirit. " It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing " (John 6. 63), is an axiomatic truth.

Verses 19, 20: *For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise. But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. "*

Here again Paul restates what he said in verse 17 **as** to the cause of evil, he says that it is because of " sin which dwelleth in me. " What is true of the wicked is true of sin in the flesh of a believer: " The wicked are like the troubled sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters cast up mire and dirt " (Isaiah 57. 20). How calm the believer's thoughts would be, but for this ever-present, restless evil within ! Sin stands up to challenge

every good thought that emerges from the believer's mind and seeks to neutralize it. As we have before said, that though wrong-doing arises from sin which dwells within, the believer cannot exonerate himself from blame; hence sorrow, repentance and confession must ever characterize him during all his earthly life.

Verses 21, 22, 23: *I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members.*

Here Paul says that he finds the law governing this state of things existing within him, which is—"that, to me who would do good, evil is present." This is the law of sin which is in his members, which is ever present to war against the law of his mind, which delights in the law of God. His renewed mind is the inward man, the regenerate man, the man who is freed from sin and is no longer in the flesh, a saved man's true self. He looks upon his members as one suffering from cancer might look upon his body afflicted with this dread disease. What can he do to rid himself of this malignant affection? Nothing! But how his mind longs to be free from the cancer which wars against him and deprives him of health and activity! There are two laws in the cancer patient, the law of his mind which agrees with perfect soundness and health, and the law of cancer which directs all its deadly working to the destruction of its host. Even so it was with Paul, in a moral sense, as he saw the law of sin in his members. The following verses show this longing for perfect health and eternal youth.

Verses 24, 25: *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I myself with the mind serve the law of God; and with the flesh the law of sin.*

"The body of this death" is the body in which sin dwells, which brings to the believer so much of wretchedness and unhappiness. Though he as to his soul is redeemed, redemption has not yet reached his body, and in this he groans being burdened (Romans 8. 23). Will deliverance reach him? Assuredly it will through Jesus Christ our Lord. In anticipation of the glad day of relief, he thanks God. Paul long ago left the body and is wretched no more. He served the law of God with his mind, his true self, but with the flesh he could do no other than the flesh will ever do, serve the law of sin. For the glorious deliverance, at the Lord's coming, from the body of this death we look and long and wait!

CHAPTER 8.

Verses 1, 2: *There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.*

We have seen in chapter 7. 7-25 the complete answer to the question, "Is the law sin?" Then we have seen too the stern and accurate analysis of what man is by nature, and also what he is after regeneration, that sin is in the evil nature he inherited from Adam, and that it still resides in his flesh after he is born again. In chapter 8 we see what the believer is in Christ Jesus. Passing from chapter 7 to chapter 8 is like a train passing out of the gloom and darkness of a tunnel into glorious sunshine. In Christ Jesus the believer stands free from condemnation, for in his Substitute, who suffered in his stead, he emerges from prison, where he lay condemned to death through sin, into glorious liberty. He is legally free, not by the law of Moses, but by a new law, the law of the Spirit of the life in Christ

Jesus. No power in heaven, earth, or hell, **can** now charge him with sin. "It is God that justifieth; who is **he** that shall condemn?" (Romans 8. 33, 34). And **as** if to force home **the** truth of **the** freedom of the believing sinner from sin's consequences still further, Paul adds, "It is Christ **Jesus** that died, yea rather, that **was** raised from the dead." Here is life, the life in Christ Jesus who was raised from the dead. It is glorious to contemplate that **we** are free with the Spirit's law on our side. **We** are not **as** those who have escaped from sin's dominion: we are not fugitives, but legally free men.

We may think that in some **cases** the changes made in the Revised Version were unnecessary and uncalled for, but we cannot fail to be delighted with the elimination of the words of verse 1—"who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," **as** found in the Authorised Version, words which fittingly find their place in verse 4. In Christ Jesus we **are** free from condemnation, not because of our walk, that is, our behaviour, but by our faith in Christ Jesus through the law of the Spirit, and through that law **we** are free from the law of sin and of death which is still in our members (chapter 7. 23).

Verse 3: For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

"What the law could not do:" it could not conform the persons under it to what it demanded, **because** it had nothing to work upon in sinful flesh, and when once the commandment of the law had slain the sinner it was powerless to impart life to the dead. "For if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law" (Galatians 3. 21). But no law which made exactions on man **as** he is by nature could avail anything. Condemnation and death were by the law, but freedom from condemnation and life are in Christ Jesus. In view of the helplessness of the law, God sent His own Son, One who is like Himself in nature and holiness, not in sinful flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh. There is and was no sin in Him (1 John 3. 5), and He did no sin (1 Peter 2. 22). "For sin" (See Hebrews 10. 6, 18; 13. 11 where the **same** words are used.) means "as a sacrifice for sin." By the sending of His Son and by the Son's death for sin, God has condemned sin in the flesh. This is sin in its root, **as** rooted in the flesh, in which the roots of sin like a cancer have spread and corrupted man in heart and mind and all his members. The fundamental doctrine **as** enunciated by the Lord is, "Ye must be born again." Man is sinful in his nature, hence all his works are sinful. The Lord again said, "The corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matthew 7. 17). Such is the seeming paradox, that sin in the flesh is condemned, yet the believer who **is** in Christ Jesus is not condemned.

Verse 4: That the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit

Here is the reason for the condemnation of the flesh in the previous verse; it is condemned **as** a useless thing. The power to fulfil the righteous requirement of the law is the power of the Spirit. What is this just requirement of the law? It is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God... and ... thy neighbour **as** thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets" (Matthew 22. 37-40). "Love therefore is the fulfilment of the law" (Romans 13. 10). The flesh knows only the love of self, and if others are loved it is largely for the gratification of self, **but** love, the requirement and -essential meaning of God's law, can only **be** fulfilled by the Spirit'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 Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL.

One of the difficulties in interpretation of typical teaching lies in the fact that the **same** symbol may not always represent the same thing. Admittedly, it is difficult to think of leprosy as symbolising anything other than sin, incurable, deep-rooted and loathsome; but, on the contrary, whereas leaven in the Scriptures may have unpleasant references, such as the hypocrisy and wrong teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 16. 6, 12; Mark 8. 15; Luke 12. 1), and the leaven of malice and wickedness (1 Corinthians 5. 8), it cannot be regarded as an evil thing in illustrating matters concerning the kingdom of heaven and of God (Matthew 13. 33; Luke 13. 20, 21). In both cases the principle involved is the same, the leaven, hidden in the dough, works secretly but effectively to produce a complete and unmistakable change (1 Corinthians 5. 6). Again, it does not follow that, because John 7. 39 indicates that the rivers of living water refer to the Holy Spirit, water always speaks of the Holy Spirit. In the interpretation of a type, there may be in the context elements as significant as the type itself.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were diggers of wells, and Isaac restored the wells of his father Abraham (Genesis 26, John 4. 5, 6, 12). They knew the seriousness of being without water to refresh and to sustain life. The water of the word sustains and refreshes us spiritually: constant supply is vital. In these last days men are forsaking the well that quickened and refreshed their fathers, and the evil of the age proceeds apace. Let us not depart from the Faith and the tried and proved Scriptural teaching of those who have gone before us in the Lord. If we do so, we shall be in **danger** of forsaking the Fountain of Living Waters for broken cisterns (Jeremiah 2. 13).

J. B.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

(Chapter 4).

From Southport. —The contrast between the story of the religious Jew, Nicodemus, and the sinning Gentile woman of Sychar, is striking. With him the Lord discussed **the need** for the new birth, with her **He** discussed **the** worship of **the** true God. The Lord's long journey, in which **He met** this poor woman living in sin, affords a lesson for us. It is indeed true **that** God desires that all **men** should be saved, and come to the knowledge of **the** truth (1 Timothy 2. 4).

The Lord drew lessons from that which lay to hand, the water, **the** well and the spring. The world had **left** the woman unsatisfied, but **He came** into her life to fill her heart with true joy and satisfaction. So **we see** wrought in this poor sinning woman conviction, conversion and confession.

A remarkable feature of this story is the fact that it was to this Gentile woman that the Lord first spoke of Himself as the Messiah, the Christ. She in turn was the means of bringing many from her city to Him for salvation. The fundamentals of the true worship of God for this dispensation are laid down here in the dialogue between the Lord and the woman. God can only be worshipped in spirit and in truth (1 Peter 2. 5; Hebrews 13. 15). Compare and contrast Mark 7. 7, 8, which was spoken to the Jews.

The heart of the Lord was set on doing the will of God His Father, and on the blessing of a believing sinner. It was a foretaste of a great harvest to come; "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal (4. 36).
T. R.

From **Derby**. —It was thought by some that at first the Samaritan woman was in no way interested in eternal things, and that her early conversation was void of seriousness. With this view was linked the thought that the woman's question about the place in which to worship was just an evasion of possible other unpleasant questions to be put to her by the Lord Jesus [1].

In her favour it was remarked that, once the Lord had shaken her complacency by His revelation of her life, she testified to her acquaintances in the city. It was noted that they were men, as though she were outcast.

Others were inclined to view the woman's attitude more leniently. They admitted that it seemed that the woman was an outcast, but felt that there was in her a desire for a fuller life. She was ready, on meeting One who seemed to her to be a prophet, to seek from Him knowledge of the way to God. She certainly led **many** to the One who is the Way. *S. C., N. B.*

EXTRACTS.

From **Wigan**. —The Lord decided to leave Judaea and go into Galilee. He could have travelled either east of Jordan through Decapolis or west of Jordan through Samaria. He chose the latter way, although it involved passing through a country whose people for long years had been antagonistic to the Jews.

The king of Assyria peopled Samaria with five nations from the East (2 Kings 17. 24-41), who, even after a priest had instructed them in the ways of the Lord, continued to worship their own gods. They had built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim and, although this was destroyed in 130 B. C., they still worshipped there. They accepted the Pentateuch only, and were unenlightened by the further revelations through the prophets.

The woman at the well was unwilling to pursue a line of discussion abhorrent to her, and therefore broached the subject which was the perennial source of dissension between Jews and Samaritans. What did the Lord reply to her query as to which place was the right one in which to worship God? In words which convince one so absolutely at first hearing of their divine origin, He enunciated an eternal principle, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The hour would come, indeed was now here, He said, when geographical distinctions affecting worship would disappear. It was not a matter of a choice between Gerizim and Jerusalem. Worship must rise to a higher plane, where the only demand of God is that it must be offered in spirit and truth.

It was no accident that the woman began immediately to talk of Messiah. Words such as these, she felt, were the kind which would certainly come from Messiah's lips. Then the revelation came—"I that speak unto thee
am He."
R. B. P. M,

From Kingston-on-Thames. —We have, foreshadowed in this narrative, the purpose of God to reach out to all men with His compassion and love; for although the Lord had specifically instructed His disciples, when sending them forth, *not* to enter any city of the Samaritans (Matthew 10. 5), yet He Himself passed through Samaria, perhaps with the express purpose of meeting the Samaritan woman.

His words to her clearly show that He is Divine. Who but Deity could speak of being able to give living water (4. 10), which would become a well of water springing up unto eternal life (4. 14)? Yet He was truly human also—"wearied with His journey."

It is remarkable that the Lord should choose this woman, not an Israelite nor one of His disciples, to reveal truths hitherto not made known. Such are God's ways; not to the wise and understanding, but unto babes does He reveal His ways (Matthew 11. 25).

F. E. Jarvis,

From Edinburgh. —"He must needs" (4. 4) tells us that the One with whom we have to do was fully alert to what was taking place. It was not only for the sake of one: He foresaw a great harvest (4. 39). Within the bosom of this woman sorrow and repentance were at work. Jesus broke the silence by asking for a drink, and the woman was more occupied with the idea of saving a long journey to draw water than to realise the import of His words. The truth that each believer is indwelt with the Holy Spirit and that the fulness may overflow and reach out to others is proclaimed. Ere this could be revealed to her, she must be brought to admit her need and also the character of Him who spoke to her.

True worshippers worship in spirit and truth (4. 23, 24). Worship must be in spirit and truth: and collective worship is to take place only in the house of God (the Fellowship) on earth to-day. All believers are living stones, having been born from above. Believers builded together become a spiritual house in which God is worshipped; and worship is of highest importance in the service of God's house: for God desires those in a proper condition and position to be His worshippers. We worship the Father through the Son and in the Spirit. Let us therefore value the first day of the week, when we can enter into the presence of God to worship Him.

T. Hope.

From Cardiff. —In the past those who worshipped God did so in one centre, Jerusalem (4. 20): God had legislated only for one place. This ruled out the Samaritan claim that in Gerizim God could be worshipped. Having reached the woman, the Lord proceeded to the matter of worship and indicated that, until that time, Jerusalem was the divine centre, but that henceforth the Father would have worshippers not located in one geographical spot but widespread, worshippers testifying at Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. It is interesting to notice that, both with Nicodemus and with the Samaritan woman, the Lord led up to the truth of worship **and** service.

M. A. J.

From Ilford. —The theme of this portion is worship, i. e., the rendering of homage or service to God. The Jews had precise instructions (Deuteronomy 12) as to the destruction of places used for profane and idolatrous worship, and as to the choosing of a place for worship **of** the LORD. The

serious nature of disobedience to this command is emphasized by the many references to " the sins Jeroboam the son of Nebat, wherewith he made Israel to sin. " He sinned in setting up places for worship at Beth-el and in Dan.

The Lord Jesus Christ here teaches the house of God is now no longer located geographically, but is defined in doctrine and practice. As in the days of Jeroboam, it is to-day a grave matter to sin against the light given.

G. J. Butlin.

From Coatbridge. —The Lord, knowing that the woman of Samaria had been drinking at a polluted well, the well of this world with all its lusts and vices, which can never satisfy the unquenchable thirst of the flesh, spoke of living water which becomes a well of water springing up unto eternal life in him that drinketh. The woman said, " I perceive that Thou art a prophet, " but a prophet would have been of no use to her, just as a teacher would not have availed Nicodemus. The Samaritan woman and the nobleman (4. 46) both worshipped God, but in different ways. (There is no idolatry here.) Their worship had tradition, but it did not go back far enough, i. e. to Moses. Such is the condition of Christendom today.

A. G. Keates.

From **Liverpool**. —The importance of John's ministry is seen in that the Lord left Judaea for Galilee when He knew that the Pharisees had heard that He was making and baptizing more disciples than John. In no way would the Lord detract from John's ministry, though John himself was in no doubt as to his lessening part in God's purposes (3. 30).

On His departure for Galilee the Lord must needs go through Samaria. This was an unusual route. Was there any need to go this way ? [2] Was there any need for Him to stop at the well ? [3] It was the woman's need that brought Him there, her need that brought Him footsore and weary by a route which would ensure His being there at the time she came out with her waterpot. Genesis 24. 11 reveals that the normal time for women to draw water was the evening, and so suggests that this woman was at the well at an unusual hour (mid-day), because conscience was playing its part; This was the day of her visitation.

In this incident the Lord has set us an example as to our place in the fulfilment of His words of a later day (Acts 1. 8): " ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria. " The gospel is not to **be** bound or limited.

K, Home, A. H.

From Nottingham. —The manner in which the Lord dealt with the woman by the well stands in marked contrast to His method of handling Nicodemus. We might have been inclined to reverse the mode of approach, having regard to the characters of the individuals concerned, but the Lord knew exactly the need of each and how best it could be met. True spiritual discernment is a highly desirable quality in those who seek to engage in private testimony. Certain features stand out with crystal clarity: —the consuming desire of the Lord to be doing the will of His Father and to be accomplishing His work; the exceedingly high value He placed on a human soul; the need to win souls; and the desire of the Father to be worshipped by true worshippers.

J.

M.

From **Willington Quay**. —In His conversation with the woman at the well, we see the Lord Jesus using natural things to illustrate spiritual truths. That the woman continued to associate His remarks with the water in the well, bears out the truth of the fact that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto Him (1 Corinthians 2. 14).

In reply to the disciples' question, "Hath any man brought Him ought to eat?" we again see the Lord Jesus using natural illustrations in teaching spiritual lessons. The principles which the Lord taught in connexion with sowing and reaping are very instructive. Small beginnings can have far-reaching effects. First the woman believed, then many of the Samaritans believed on Him because of the word of the woman, and then many more believed because of His word.

K. B.

From **Crowborough**. —"He must needs pass through Samaria." This is the "must" of necessity, and involves the "must" of Luke 2. 49, Luke 4. 43 and John 9. 4, where it means "It behoveth." In His conversation with this woman He was about His Father's business. He was preaching the good tidings, and He was working the works of Him that sent Him. In pursuing His wondrous mission, and in seeking to do the will of His Father, which He said was His meat, He met this poor sinful woman. The Lord Jesus was ever hungry to do the will of His Father; and, in contrast to the many disciples being made (3. 26, 4. 1), it is just as necessary and important to win this one sinful soul at Sychar's well.

It is remarkable that the Lord Jesus should converse with the woman about worship and of the desire of the Father. The fact that He seeks true worshippers, who should worship in spirit and truth, takes us back in thought to His discourse with Nicodemus, and also reminds us of the words of Paul in Philippians 3. 3, ". . . who worship by the Spirit of God. . ."

J. H. B.

From **Portstewart**. —The woman at the well belonged to a race of people who could call Israel's fathers theirs, and looked on the God of Israel as their God. Consequently they looked for the Messiah who was to come [4]. The Samaritans worshipped in Mount Gerizim and the Jews worshipped in Jerusalem, but Jesus pointed out that then, and in the future, "neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father." To worship in spirit and truth demands, firstly, a correct spiritual condition, also the correct spiritual position. Contrary to the belief of some God is not worshipped as "our Father," but "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." **We "worship the Father"** (4. 23). **A. T. Gault.**

From **Cowdenbeath**. —The Samaritans were aliens and strangers in the land of Israel, and also to the covenant of God (2 Kings 17. 24, 29). The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans; hence the question (4. 9) "How is it that Thou . . . askest drink of me . . . ?" The Lord used natural objects to illustrate spiritual matters, because the woman knew nothing of the life-giving spring, the eternal life which was vested in Him (John 17. 2). She little understood the meaning of His words, and was not prepared for His way of dealing with her deep spiritual need, but the Lord sustained her interest to tell her that this water that He can give springs up in the heart of the one who receives it, into eternal life. Verse 14 illustrates what happens, when a sinner comes to Christ, who satisfies his need.

The woman knew the Jewish claim that God should be worshipped at Jerusalem. But she stated that her fathers worshipped in this mountain, Gerizim. The Lord's answer to her indicated a change in the dispensation. The word here used for worship is also used in other scriptures referring to the Lord being worshipped by men, e. g. the wise men (Matthew 2. 11), the leper (Matthew 8. 2). The Lord, being truly God, was entitled to receive the worship of men. In collective worship, there is offered divine service (Hebrews 12. 28), which is offered only to the Father (Ephesians 1. 3; 1 Peter 1. 3). The Samaritan worship was wrong, but the Jews had divine legislation for worship and the Samaritans could be saved from the worship in Mount Gerizim by following the Jew's way. The time was approaching when the material house would pass away, to be replaced by the spiritual house.

The Lord's discourse with the woman seems to have enforced the conclusion that He was the Messiah. The Samaritans also seem to have claimed the same hope as the Jews concerning His coming.

Iain T. H. Hunter.

From Wembley. — "He came therefore again..." (4. 46). These opening words remind us of the journeyings of the Lord, since He left the village of Cana. We know that He went to Capernaum after the first sign, and from there to Jerusalem, where He drove the sheep and oxen from the temple, and also did various signs (2. 23). Now He has returned to Cana, where He met a woman by Sychar's well, and where many believed on Him (4. 89).

Upon His arrival at Cana the Lord was met by a nobleman, who was in residence at Capernaum, and whose son was sick. This king's officer addressed the Lord as "Sir," or "Lord," which shows us the respect that this man, who no doubt had authority himself, had for the Lord.

The Lord said, "Thy son liveth," and it is recorded that the man "believed the word" (4. 50). This means he believed that his son was cured. "His servants met him" (4. 51) suggests that he made it common knowledge in his house that he was going to Cana to seek the help of Jesus. He must have related to his household all the story of his encounter with Jesus in Cana, for we read that he and all his house believed. We would take this to mean that they believed that Jesus is the Son of God.

Cyril A. Bartlett

From Glasgow. — Resuming His journey, the Lord Jesus came into Galilee, to Cana, where He made the water wine. A certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum, came to where the Lord was and besought Him that He would come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. The Lord knew all men and could tell the very thoughts that were passing through their minds (see Luke 5. 22; John 2. 24, 25). To the nobleman Jesus said, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe" (John 4. 48). This man was not like the centurion, who had full faith in the Lord and said, "Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee: but say the word, and my servant shall be healed" (Luke 7. 7). To the nobleman the Lord said, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." The man believed the word, and went on his way to find that the fever had left his son immediately the Lord had spoken (4. 53). This

second sign, that **Jesus** did, having come out of Judaea into Galilee (John 4. 54), reminds **us** of Peter's words on the day of Pentecost: "**Jesus** of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you **by** mighty works and wonders and signs " (Acts 2. 22). **J. B.**

From Atherton. —The Lord, in dealing with the woman of Sychar (the **same** as O. T. Shechem—Genesis 33. 18; Acts 7. 16) [5], drew the distinction between true worship and formality, whether it **be** of **Jews** or Samaritans, whether in Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim. **We see** the important part the Holy Spirit has **in** our approach to God: " They that worship Him (God) **must** worship in spirit and truth. " This is impossible apart from the help of the Holy Spirit (Philippians 3. 3) [6],

What right had the Samaritans to call Jacob their father ? They had no right: these people were brought into the cities of **Samaria** by the king of Assyria, and were not related to Israel (2 Kings 17. 24-33, 41). Some, however, thought they were an admixture of Israel and the nations, **but** **we** were unable to find a scripture to support this view.

As **we** considered the second sign **we** wondered what **was** the meaning of verse 48 [7]. It **was** suggested that the nobleman evinced great faith, and the Lord **was** seeking a further manifestation of his faith. Another thought **expressed was** that this was a challenge to the nation. There **appear to be** three **stages** in the **man's** faith: (1) he believed **Jesus** would help him, (2) he believed the word that **Jesus** spake, and (3) he believed, and also his whole house. This last, we believe, refers to eternal salvation.

G. Sankey, D. H. Butler.

From London, S. E. —John here shows how truly the Lord **was** Man, **subject** to the physical limitations of mankind, and also **as** a Being with divine powers. **As** a **Jew**, **He** could claim kinship with the Samaritans on the ground of the common fatherhood of Jacob, **and** it is not a coincidence that the **scene** is **set by** Jacob's well [8]. As the conversation developed the woman **became** more mystified **as** the Stranger laid claim to powers which even Jacob had not possessed. The scene is a reflection of what happened to the Lord throughout His life then, **and** of what happens to-day. His **message was** misunderstood **by** everybody, even **by** His disciples.

The term " Father, " **used by Jesus** here, does not **appear** to refer specifically to the relationship between Himself and God the Father, for the possessive " **My** " is not **used** [9]. Is not worship the proper response of the creature to the Creator ? According to Philippians 2 every **created** being will acknowledge **Jesus** Christ **as** Lord, to the glory of God the Father; **but** believers now have **access** to the Father through **Jesus** Christ, the **Way**, the **Truth**, **and** the **Life**. Perhaps the blessing among the Samaritans, recorded in the **Acts**, sprang from the **seed** sown here **by** the Master.

Their conviction **was** so enlightened that they **saw** in the Lord, not the Saviour of the Samaritans or of the **Jews**, **but** " the Saviour of the world. " It is remarkable that the Samaritans should have this understanding of the revelation of God in Christ, while the disciples, even after the resurrection, thought of God's rule **as** limited to ancient Israel.

The disciples were not to regard their labours **as** isolated efforts producing startling immediate results, **but** rather **as** part of God's continuous purpose. **We** have only to consider the immensity of God's purpose in redemption to realise the poverty of our own contribution, in the sphere of service where God has placed **us** (4. 88). **D. G. Evans,**

COMMENTS.

[1] (Derby). —It is ever a great difficulty to assess the depths of heart exercise from a person's words. The Samaritan woman regarded the Lord at the first as a Jew, but as the conversation developed she revealed that she was one of those whose hope was in the coming of the Messiah, "When He is come, He will declare unto us all things." —*J. M.*

[2] (Liverpool). —From a Biblical map the road north from central Judaea was through Samaria, passing by Jacob's well, leaving Sychar on the right and mount Gerizim and Ebal on the left. This seems the regular and shortest route to reach Cana to which He was going. There is, I see, another road a little to the west of Jordan and running parallel to it. —*J. M.*

[3] (Liverpool). —There are two reasons given; the Lord was wearied with His journey and sat thus by the well, and the disciples had gone into the city of Sychar to buy food. —*J. M.*

[4] (Portstewart). —Being a Samaritan, she was not a descendant of Jacob, though she spoke of "our father Jacob." She was a descendant of those whom the Assyrian king Shalmaneser brought from Babylon, etc., to people Samaria (see 2 Kings 17. 24-41). —*J. M.*

[5] (Atherton). —Shechem or Sychem is not the same place as Sychar; the latter is to the east of the former. —*J. M.*

[6] (Atherton). —The word rendered worship in Philippians 3. 3 is not that rendered worship in John 4. 23; the latter is *Proskuneo*, to bow down, to prostrate oneself, the former is *Latreuo*, to render divine service. —*J. M.*

[7] (Atherton). —What the Lord said was characteristic of people of His day (1 Corinthians 1. 22) and, generally speaking, people of all time. —*J. M.*

[8] (London). —It was the woman who spoke of "our father Jacob." See note [4]. —*J. M.*

[9] (London). —Certainly "the Father" refers specifically to His relationship to "the Son," and to no other person. It shows the relationship which exists, and ever existed, between these Persons in the Godhead. See Matthew 28. 19; John 5. 26; etc. —*J. M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Questions from Kingston-on-Thames. —(1) Does the word "spirit" in the phrase "spirit and truth" (4. 23, 24) refer to man's spirit? or should this read "Spirit," and refer to the Holy Spirit? (2) In his account of the crucifixion John gives the sixth hour as the time when Pilate handed the Lord over to the Jews (19. 14). Mark says Jesus was crucified at the third hour, and Matthew says darkness covered the land from the sixth to the ninth hour. Does John use a different system of time from the others, so that the sixth hour (4. 6) was not mid-day, as is often suggested, but some time much earlier?

Answers. —(1) "In spirit" here is set in contrast to bodily bowing or prostration, which may be merely formal. It signifies that a true worshipper must bow his essential, spiritual being before the Father, this he is empowered to do by the work of the Holy Spirit within him. (2) The Jews reckoned their 24-hour day from 6 p. m. to 6 p. m.; night was from

6 p. m. to 6 a. m., and day from 6 a. m. to 6 p. m. Thus Mark, following Jewish time, says that the Lord was crucified at the third hour, which would be 9 a. m., western time. The Roman civil day, like western time, began at 12 midnight. If John follows Roman time (and there is uncertainty about it), then the sixth hour was 6 a. m. He says that it was " about " the sixth hour, so he is not speaking exactly. It may be that after this Pilate sent the Lord to Herod Antipas, and there were other preliminaries before the solemn procession set out for Calvary where the crucifixion took place at 9 a. m. —*J. M.*

Questions from Atherton. —(1) "Others have laboured" (4. 38). Who are these ? (2) Were the Samaritans baptized with the baptism of repentance ? (See Matthew 10. 5). (3) Was it essential for the nobleman to go his way (4. 50), before the child could be healed ?

Answers. —(1) The "others" are the Old Testament prophets in particular (See Acts 10. 43). (2) There is no mention of the Samaritans being baptized. If they were, then they would be baptized as those who had believed on Christ, not as, in John's baptism, believing on Him who was to come (Acts 19. 4). (3) It was proper that the nobleman go his way, because his son lived, and there was no need for him to continue beseeching the Lord to come to Capernaum and heal him. The son was healed by the Lord when the Lord told the father to go home. —*J. M.*

Questions from **Glasgow**. —(1) Please explain *when* the Lord sent forth His disciples (as in 4. 38). (2) Who were the others who laboured ?

Answers. —(1) The Samaritan woman was a specimen of many who from the words of the prophets had heard of the coming of Christ, and in some sense were waiting for Him, though meanwhile, as she had done, had sunk into sin and sorrow. The Lord is not referring to either the sending of the 12 or the 70, these events were later than this, but to the sending of men in this day of grace to reap fields sown by men in past years. (2) See question (1) from Atherton. —*J. M.*

Note. —In these chapters, John 3 and 4, we are confronted with the same truths as those which were placed before Israel at Sinai, (1) kingdom truth, in that they would become a kingdom of priests, if they obeyed His voice and kept His covenant, and (2) on their confessed obedience to the terms of the covenant, God revealed His purposes relative to His dwelling place in the Tabernacle, which was His Sanctuary. See Exodus chapters 19—25. The command " Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve " (Matthew 4. 10), could only be fulfilled in connexion with His house. In John 3 the Lord spoke to Nicodemus of the kingdom of God, which demanded, first of all, a new birth, and then obedience to the Lord's will, as it does to-day. The very idea of a kingdom demands the subjection and obedience of a king's subjects, and such can only be rendered to the Lord by those who are born again. Nicodemus knew of the kingdom which God had established in Israel, (for was he not himself a ruler of the Jews ?) but here by this Stranger was presented something higher than that which had been established in Israel. To the Samaritan woman the Lord spoke of worship. Here was a kingdom and worship envisaged, already commencing, but more fully to be manifested in the disciples gathered together in Jerusalem and elsewhere, under the Lord's sovereign authority, a holy and royal priesthood, as 1 Peter 2 speaks of, who should worship and serve the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. —*J. M.*

NOTES ON ROMANS.
CHAPTER 8.

Verse 5: *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit*

Spirit here should be printed with a capital, as in the A. V., and not with a small s, as in the R. V., for it signifies the Holy Spirit. The Lord said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3. 6). The person who is not born again cannot ascend by education or culture to spiritual things, he can only engage in carnal things, and, if he would be religious, he can only engage in a carnal religion. He must be born again before he can mind the things of the Spirit.

Verses 6, 7: *For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace: Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be:*

It is clearly explained why the mind of the flesh is death, because it is enmity against God, who is the Source of life. This mind is utterly hostile to God, causing man to be the enemy of his Maker. The mind that hates the Giver of life is shut up to no other course than that of death, destruction and death in this life, and the misery of the second death, the lake of fire, in that which lies beyond time. Paul in his quotations from the Old Testament, in Romans 3. 10-18, shows the mind of the flesh which has turned man into ways of perversity and wickedness. He says,

" The poison of asps is under their lips;
Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: •
Their feet are swift to shed blood;
Destruction and misery are in their ways;
And the way of peace have they not known. "

No wonder, when this is the natural state of men, that Satan easily won to his side the people of Israel, who cried to Pilate to crucify the Lord. The mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be. "Sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3. 4), hence man is a lawless, rebellious creature; it is in his nature to rebel against God. But in contrast to this violent enmity in man against God is the mind of the Spirit, which is life and peace. The world knows only death and peace, the peace of the stricken battlefield and of the graveyard. Isaac Watts sang truly: —

Like flowery fields the nations stand
Pleased with the morning light,
The flowers, beneath the mower's hand,
Lie withering ere 'tis night.

Into the heart of whomsoever He may come, the blessed Spirit brings by His quickening power and presence life and peace. This is His mind and the mind of God's redeemed also.

Verses 8, 9: *And they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.*

Those who are in the flesh are such as have not known the regenerating power of God's Spirit, who are yet in their sin and sins (John 8. 21, 24); such cannot please God. This brief statement, "cannot please God," condemns all unregenerate professors, whether popes, prelates, bishops, rabbis, and all ministers of all religions; such mere religious professors cannot please God, with all their flocks of unregenerate people. All such

are in the flesh. This is not the flesh **as** to the physical organism of the human body, but the flesh **as** to a sinful, corrupt nature. The person who is born again is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, because the Spirit of God dwells in him. This translation from the flesh into the Spirit took place when the person was born again, at which time he was also delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His (God's) love (Colossians 1. 13). "In the Spirit" here is a permanent experience, whereas, "in the Spirit" in Revelation 1. 10; 4. 2; 17. 8; 21. 10 is intermittent. Finally, **we** are told that those who have not the Spirit of Christ do not belong to Christ. This explains why such cannot please God; they are not believers in Christ; not redeemed **by** His precious blood; not forgiven; they are yet in the power of Satan and of darkness. The Spirit of Christ here is the Spirit of God, the blessed Holy Spirit.

Verse 10: And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

The riches of the mystery of the Body of Christ which comprises all believers of this dispensation of grace, of which Christ is the Head, is, ⁴⁴ "Christ in you, the Hope of Glory" (Colossians 1. 27). The premise of Paul's argument in this verse is—"if Christ is in you," then certain results follow from this **as** to the believer's body, not his soul or self. Sin and the Spirit are contrasted here, not the believer's own spirit. **Because** Christ is in the believer by the Spirit, the body is **dead because** of sin, **but** that **same** body is quickened, **made** alive by the Spirit to **be** used now, first of all **as** His habitation or temple: "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6. 19). The body is dead through sin, and the believer is **dead** to sin (Romans 6. 11). The Spirit is life **because** of righteousness, that is, righteousness given or imputed to the believer. What follows in the next verse implements what is said in this verse.

Verse 11: But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

There can **be** no resurrection apart from death. Sin has done its work (verse 10), and "the body is dead on account of sin." Then follows the association of the raising **up** of the Lord by God with God quickening the mortal bodies of believers by His Spirit who indwells them. The quickening of the believer's body is a present experience; it **is** by God's Spirit who dwells in them, and not by the sound of the trumpet **at** the Lord's coming (1 Corinthians 15. 51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4. 16, 17). It has in **view** not only the **fact** that **at** the time of quickening the believer's body **became** a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6. 19), **but** that Spirit-quickened body is to **be** presented to God **as** a living sacrifice (Romans 12. 1), which is holy, **as** quickened **and** sanctified by the Spirit, and is thus acceptable to God; it is our reasonable **service** (*latreia*, divine service), and is the beginning of all such service. In the believer's Spirit-quickened body God is to **be** glorified (1 Corinthians 6. 19, 20).

Verses 12, 13: So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: For if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

We are debtors, not to the flesh, **but** to God, for the sending of His Son and His Spirit, and all the blessings which have come to **us** in consequence. From the flesh **we** reap nothing **but** misery. Why should the believer live after the flesh? If he does, he **must** die, for the mind of the flesh (its desire and aim) **is** death. **But** if **we** mortify, not the body, **but**

the deeds of the body, its actions and practices, which arise from the flesh, then we shall live. But whence comes the power by which this is to be done? It is by the Spirit, the Cause of every victory the believer wins over sin and self.

Verses 14, 15: *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

This does not describe how persons become sons of God; that is dealt with in Galatians 3. 26: "Ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus." Such believers as may live after the flesh do not show what they really are by the new birth, but those who are led by the Spirit of God manifest their true character, that they are sons of God. "Children of God" describes those who are born again, but "sons of God" implies more than the new birth, it signifies likeness to God, the Father who begat them. The Lord said, "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons (the A. V. incorrectly gives "children" here) of your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5. 44, 45). The disciples who were born of God were to be like their Father in character, which would be shown in the things that they did. It is impossible to be like God unless there has been a change in nature by a new birth. The spirit of bondage or slavery was that under which the Jewish people were to the law; the law could be nothing but slavery to an unregenerated man, but to the believer with a changed nature in the past the law was one of joyous freedom, as see Psalm 1. Again, "Oh how love I Thy law! It is my meditation **all** the day" (Psalm 119. 97). Under the law the Jewish people were vainly serving God night and day (Acts 26. 7), seeking to attain to what is unattainable by the works of the flesh. In contrast to the spirit of bondage, the believer has received the Spirit of adoption (of son-placing), and at the coming of the Son of God those who are sons of God will enjoy in redeemed bodies the place that is truly theirs through grace. Meantime **the** Spirit teaches them to call God, Father. Here Paul uses two words for father, the Hebrew *Abba*, and the Greek *Pater*. In any language, the word for "father" is the name the Spirit teaches the believer to use in addressing God. Sweet name and sweet relationship!

Verses 16, 17: *The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him.*

Here the word children is used, not sons as previously, for solely on the ground of the new birth the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. We have this inward assurance of the Spirit that we are God's children, and this assurance nothing else can supply. Faith grasps the facts of Scripture, but assurance is of the Spirit. If we are God's children then we are heirs of God, this is the universal rule of heirship. But we are not only heirs of God, we are joint-heirs with Christ. The abundance of such grace to guilty undone sinners humbles us in the dust. Who are we that we should be joint-heirs with Christ? There is **a** wealth in such words that is beyond our minds to conceive even in **a feeble** way. If we fail to suffer with Christ this will not affect our being children and heirs, but suffering with Christ is joined to being glorified with Him, and this is something more than being heirs. Heirship rests solely on relationship, but being glorified with Him is the result and reward of suffering with Him. The believer in Christ has much in view, but he that suffers with Christ **has** more.

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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EDITORIAL.

Bible Studies is a Scripture *study* magazine, consisting mainly of papers expressing the results of the joint studies by fellow-students of the Holy Scriptures. Taken seriously, such study is no light task. It should involve much prayerful reading and research in private, the effect of which will be **seen** in the discussion and reflected also in the written contribution. Careful study should lead to exact knowledge, and for this effort is required. Here **we** touch upon a matter in which, we fear, some of our contributors may not **be** reaping the full benefit of our united study. Many very inaccurate quotations reach **us** each month. There is danger in inexact knowledge, and it will be to the profit of our contributors themselves, if they check carefully every quotation and make certain of accuracy in word and punctuation. Attention to such detail may increase appreciation of good things otherwise unnoticed. The fact remains, that real study is hard work; but hard work always pays good dividends. The Preacher said, **** much study is a weariness of the flesh "** (Ecclesiastes 12. 12). Do we ever feel the strain of our study? Bodily, perhaps yes; but spiritually matters are otherwise, for, with God's blessing, from study of the word of God **we** derive spiritual strength, courage and hope. There is joy in contemplation of the revealed mind and will of God. ***' How sweet are Thy words unto my taste I yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth ! "** (Psalm 119. 103). **J. B.**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

(Chapter 5).

From Cardiff. —**The** study of this subject caused our thoughts to turn upon the great mystery of the triune God, " Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. " This mystery is beyond human understanding **and** must **be** accepted by faith. The Lord **Jesus made** the claim to equality with God while He was here upon earth, when He said, " I **and** the Father are One, " **and** " He that hath **seen Me** hath **seen** the Father. " These words roused the hatred of the **Jews**, who **saw** in them equality with God. From verse **19** onward the Lord **Jesus speaks** of the intimacy that existed between the Father **and** the Son, **and** reveals that **He** is the Son of God with power. **He** spoke not only of that power whereby **He** was able to raise the **dead**, while **He was** on earth, **but** also the power by which the dead shall be raised in the last day (5. 25, 28, 29).

The opening verse of **1 Timothy** tells of two Persons, God our Saviour **and** Christ **Jesus** our hope; but in **Titus 2. 13** **we** are encouraged to look for the blessed hope **and** appearing of the glory of our great God **and** Saviour **Jesus Christ [1]**. Here **we see** the equality existing **between** the Father **and** the Son.

In **Hebrews 1. 5** **we** have this **statement** of God, " I will **be** to Him a Father, **and** **He** shall **be** to **Me** a Son "; **and** in **Hebrews 1. 8**, " of the Son **He** saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever **and** ever. " This **mystery** is very great; **we** recall the solemn words of the Lord, " The Father hath given all

judgement unto the Son; that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father " (John 5. 22, 23). Let us remember the words of Thomas as he fell at the feet of the risen Lord, saying, " My Lord and My God. " The Lord Jesus said to His disciples ere He left this scene, " Ye believe in God, believe also In Me. ⁹* Let us give Him His rightful place in our hearts and lives, remembering that He it is who commands the worship of angels (Hebrews 1. 6) in heaven, and also commands the absolute obedience of men on earth, for He is the very effulgence of the glory of God, the very image of His substance.

From Knocknacloy. —The Lord Jesus claimed directly to be the **Son of God**. He called God His Father, and for this cause the Jews sought to kill Him. They did not believe in the triune God, their conception of God being that of a single Person, and so, when Christ claimed to be His Son, they could not accept this [2]. He therefore sought to prove to them the truth of this wonderful fact. He spoke of the love of the Father for the Son hi shewing Him all things that He Himself doeth, and in consequence the Son was able to perform wonderful works, such as they had just seen in the case of the man at Bethesda's pool.

He then set forth the truth that He Himself is the Source of life (5. 25). Many around, who were dead in their trespasses and sins, were hearing His voice and receiving life, which only He could give [3]. Therefore He says to them, " Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth. "

John the Baptist had borne witness that Jesus is the Son of God; God Himself bore witness to the same; and the works which He did spoke the same truth, and also the Scriptures. He had previously told them, " If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. * Here were four indisputable witnesses bearing witness that He was indeed the Son of God, and this is in keeping with the law, which says that " at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter be established ** (Deuteronomy 19. 15).

His wonderful discourse ends with the Lord shewing how the writings of Moses and His own testimony to Himself as the Son of God stand together: a word indeed for critics to-day, who profess to believe Christ and His words and yet deny the truth of the writings of the Old Testament books.

William Woods.

From Glasgow. —The chapter may be divided into three portions, viz., verses 1-9, 9-18, and 19-47, which may be termed the Sign, the Sequel and the Sermon.

The Sign consists of the miracle of the healing by Bethesda's Pool. The man had been within sight of cure for a long time, but because of human weakness was unable to gain the cure he sought. We note in this connexion that the pool had five porches, which number is often associated in Scripture with human weakness in the face of divine power. " Sir, I have no man, " shows the helplessness of the sick man, to which the life-giving words of the Master stand in sharp contrast. We can readily see the parable of a sinner, helplessly and hopelessly moving on to eternal death, with Christ the Saviour appearing, to give life and hope.

The Sequel is concerned with the fact that the sign was performed on the sabbath, and that the man was instructed to carry his bed in contra-

vention of the Mosaic law, as interpreted in Nehemiah 13. 19 and Jeremiah 17. 21. The Jews, failing to realise that He was Lord of the sabbath, were incensed by the command given by the Lord to commit what was, to them, a breach of the sabbath. The phrase, " My Father worketh even until now, " is interesting as showing that although God has rested from His work in creation, He has not rested from doing good at all times. (See also Matthew 12 and Luke 6, 13, 14).

The Lord's words are taken up with showing the integration of purpose and work of the Son with that of the Father in two ways, viz., the raising of the dead and the execution of judgement. The power to quicken is note-worthy in association with what God did in Genesis 2. " The LORD God . . . breathed into his (Adam's) nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. " Man cannot impart life to a dead thing: he can only transmit to posterity the life that God originally gave. Christ has power to quicken the dead; and evidence of His Deity is seen in the various resurrections He effected during His ministry.

It is a blessed thing to learn that " He that heareth my word (*i. e.*, heareth unto belief), . . . cometh not into judgement, but hath passed out of death into life. " The believer is here shown to be a present possessor of eternal life imparted by Christ on His being heard unto belief, and, although the full revelation of that possession will not be till a coming day, the believer can rest assured of eternal salvation as though that day had already arrived.

J. J. P.

EXTRACTS.

From Nottingham. —The man at Bethesda did not ask the Lord to heal him. It seems that he could see no solution for his case other than the pool. How like many to-day! who seek salvation from that which can never save them. The Lord said, " Ye will not come to Me, that ye may have life. "

In this chapter the Lord clearly states His relationship with God the Father. It was the will of the Father that this man should be healed. Christ was in absolute harmony with that will, and so " what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner. "

We noted the words " Jesus findeth him " (5. 14), which seem to show the Lord's care for the one who had been healed. We do well, if we have newly born-again ones laid upon our hearts, and have towards them a shepherd care.

It was considered that the reference to them " that have done good " and " that have done ill " (5. 29) does not refer to good or bad works, but to those who accepted or rejected the testimony of God concerning His Son [4].

J. Balcombe, R. Hickling.

From Wigan. —This chapter deals with the last recorded incident in the first year of the Lord's ministry and the third sign in John's selection of signs. The miracle showed clearly two main points, (1) the love and grace of the Lord for a poor, hopeless and helpless man, and (2) that the Lord had in Himself divine power.

From verse 19 we have the Lord's answer to the rulers' objection and criticism in three distinct ways: I. By claiming equality with His Father (5. 19-29), (a) on the ground of doing the same works as His Father, and (b) on the ground of being able to raise the dead and give them life. This life is twofold: (1) Verses 25-27 speak of people being made alive from spiritual death, and (2) verses 28-29 speak of the future time when all

that are in the tombs shall be raised bodily to face God, either as Redeemer or as Judge [5]. II. By referring in verses 30-87 to witnesses to the truth of the claim of equality. He declined to witness of Himself, but claimed the witness of John, of His works, of His Father and of the Scriptures. III. By turning on His critics (5. 38-47) and stating that the reasons for their rejection of Him were: (a) their own ignorance of God, (b) the fact that His word was not abiding in them, (c) that they did not know His love, and (d) that they were content to receive glory from their fellow-men, and did not seek the glory which comes from God. *N. B., N. M.*

From **Edinburgh**. —The man at Bethesda had been in his infirmity for 38 years, that is, from before the Lord came to earth. "Jesus saw him . . . and knew." It makes all the difference when we have contact with the Omniscient and Omnipotent One. It was so with this sick man, for by his faith he was made whole. The healing of the man evoked the persecution of the Jews for it demonstrated that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God (5. 36).

Among the "things concerning Himself," which are disclosed to us in this chapter, is the truth of the Lord's Deity. He speaks of "My Father" (5. 17), and "the Son" (5. 19), and of the love of the Father for the Son. On another occasion He said, "Thou (the Father) lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17). He was the eternal Son of God: and we have further witnesses as to this: (1) John the Baptist (5. 33), (2) the Father (37), (3) His own works (36), and (4) the Scriptures (89). They all testified of Him who came in His Father's name to bear witness unto the truth. Then, as to-day, many were unwilling to accept the truth, and yet the truth ever stands, and ever shall, whether we are willing to **accept** it or not. *J. Paterson, A. M. Hope.*

From **Greenock**. —That all judgement has been given to the Son is evidence of His equality with God. God is the Judge of all the earth (Genesis 18. 25), and the Judge of all (Hebrews 12. 23). Care should be taken to distinguish between pronouncing judgement (the finding of the Judge) and executing judgement (the carrying out of the sentence). The former could never be delegated to an inferior, although the latter might be. We take verse 22 to refer to the weighing of men's actions and the pronouncement of the judgement, so that all men may see that the Father's honour is bound **up** with the Son's. *S. Johnston.*

From **Wembley**. —Can we honour the Son even as we honour the Father, if we do not own Him as equal with the Father before the world was? "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father" (1 John 2. 23). Even as "God manifest in flesh," He was still on an equality with God. We know a little of His Person and work, but we must take care not to pretend to know all that is involved in the union of Humanity and Deity in the Person of the Lord. The union is inscrutable. "No one knoweth the Son, **save** the Father" (Matthew 11. 27). *W. H. Bartlett.*

From **Bradford, Halifax and Leeds**. —We wondered why Jesus healed one in a crowd. Perhaps because the man was in extremity and consciously helpless. Perhaps because the Father chose this one man in order to bear witness to His Son (see verse 36). At the same time, Jesus seems deliberately to have healed people on the sabbath day in order to challenge the Jews, to provoke them, not to enmity, but to fresh thought. We have so many **of**

these healings on sabbath days recorded because they brought out this interesting clash between the legalistic minds of the Pharisees and the freedom of the Spirit in our Lord Jesus.

We differed as to whether the raising of the **dead** in verse **21** was equivalent to the passing from death unto life of verse **24**, or referred to the miracles of the raising of Lazarus, the son of the widow of Nain, etc. We agree that verse **25** seems to contain both the idea of a present spiritual resurrection and of a future physical resurrection [6]. *M. G. H.*

From Manchester. —The question of healing on the sabbath raises an interesting point (5. 17). In the beginning God rested on the seventh **day**; He rested in the sense of enjoying the fruits of the finished work of the creation. This rest was broken by the entrance of sin, and hence "My Father worketh even until now" (5. 17). There was no sabbath for God or His Son as yet, and so our Lord could continue His good work without interruption. The sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath. In verses 19-24 there is constant emphasis on the divine unity and equality of the Father and the Son. It hardly seems correct to say "Son of man," because our Lord lived as a Man among men (5. 27) [7]. The fundamental difference between the weakness of human character and the perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ as a Man precludes such a comparison. That He knew and understood man's frailty is undoubtedly true, but we should bear in mind that His temptations (by Satan) were entirely from without, whereas those of men are also from within. *R. T.*

From Crowborough. —Although the Lord Jesus never expressly claimed to be equal with God, His very words and works showed Him to be so. Never for a moment, as a man, was the Lord Jesus other than the Son of God. Even as the suffering victim upon the Cross, He was the Giver of life and upholder of all creatures. Although the Jews believed God, they would not accept the truth of the Sonship of Christ. The Lord said, "Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8. 24). *B. V. F.*

From Atherton. —The Jews, ever on the watch for sabbath breakers, soon found fault with the man for carrying his bed on the sabbath, but he justified his action by stating that he was obeying the command of the One who had healed him; yet, he had made no attempt to acquaint himself with One who had been so gracious to him. When he did eventually find out that it was Jesus who had healed him, he told the Jews. This seems a very ungracious action: it resulted in further persecution for the Lord Jesus. How different from the man of John 9! (See John 9. 30-33.)

It was thought that verse 32 is linked with verse 33 and refers to John; some, however, thought that verse 32 refers to the Father. The importance of each witness was stressed. John, the last of the prophets, was the lamp that not only burned, but shone. The Lord's works were a manifest token of the divine power within Him. The witness of the Father would perhaps refer to the Old Testament writings (Isaiah 42. 1-3) [8]. The Lord frequently referred to the writings of Moses, and we thought of the types and shadows there presented in such a remarkable way.

J. Bullock, D. H. Butler.

From Melbourne. —It is one of the fundamental principles of the Christian faith that the Son is equal with God. It is emphasized by such scriptures as Philippians 2. 6. In whatever sense the angels—created

beings—were called **sons** of God, there was no equality implied with the Son who is the "only begotten." Evidences of His equality with God were manifest through the working of such miracles as in verse 9, which were designed to attract the attention of the people of Israel. Some were led to acknowledge that "no man can do these signs... except God be with him." The role of the "Son of Man" as the Servant did not lessen His equality. The Jews, whilst recognising and rejoicing for a time in the witness of John, had now, by reason of their eyes being blinded by hatred and jealousy, rejected the Son of God. **L. F.**

From **Willington Quay**.—As to the healing property of the water of the pool of Bethesda, we thought that, as only the first was healed, it contained no special minerals or salts, for the value would then have been to all who bathed in the water. Also we were hesitant to accept the marginal insertion, as it does not seem to be in the original, nor does it seem to be in keeping with the general trend of divine healing found in the Scriptures: healing was either to the individual or to the many (compare Numbers 21. 8, ***every one that is bitten***).

The Lord is able to quicken the spirit of a man, and also the flesh of a man: He did both whilst on the earth, and both are referred to here. Verse 24 is spiritual and verse 28 refers to the body that lies in the grave. Verse 29 links up with Revelation 20. 13 primarily, but the saints will hear His voice before this (1 Thessalonians 4. 16).

We see that the Son hath been given all judgement (5. 22), authority to execute judgement (5. 27), to have life in Himself (5. 26), and works to accomplish (5. 36). **C. B.**

From **Hereford**. How dreadful is the result of sin! For thirty-eight years the man at the pool of Bethesda suffered for wrong doing. He went to the place where he thought he could be healed, but his malady robbed him of the healing he sought—he was always too late to avail himself of the troubling of the waters. The Lord knew his case. In answer to the Lord's question, "Wouldst thou be made whole?" the sick man acknowledged his need of someone to help him. The word of command was then spoken, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." On seeing him later in the temple, the Lord warned him against committing sin again. It was suggested that the man showed an ungracious spirit, because he told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. The Lord Jesus, by asserting that the healing He did was the work of God, incurred the wrath of the Jews, because He called God His Father, making Himself equal with God.

J. O. Tidmas,

From **Cowdenbeath**.—The healing of the man at Bethesda brought the Lord into conflict with the Jews, an instance of the perversity of men. Instead of looking on the healing as a miracle, they regarded it as a violation of the law. In verse 17 the Lord shows His authority for His action; as God is not bound **by** the law of the sabbath, neither is **He**, for the Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath. In this reply it is implied that **He** is equal with God, for **He** called God His Father, and claimed the same exemption from law. Verse 19 shows the perfect oneness of the Father and the Son. The Son did nothing **of** Himself; in all things **He** must act in accordance with the **will of God** [9].

From Portstewart.—At the creation of all things, the Son was the One through whom life was given. At the creation of Adam God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, and man became "a living soul." "Living" here means "never dying," something which will live throughout the endless ages of eternity [10]. When the Son became manifest as the Man Jesus of Nazareth, He was still the Life-giver, though His Deity was veiled.

Some thought that verse 29 is of a general nature; rather than two definite resurrections, the verse speaks of the classification of all mankind into two distinct groups—"the saved" and "the lost," members of each group being raised at different times [11]. Whether raised for "life" or "death," they are raised by Christ, as the Source of life. (See 1 Corinthians 15. 22). *A. T. Gault.*

From Liverpool.—At a word from the Son of God (for such the things He wrought declared Him to be—John 20. 30, 31)—the sick man of Bethesda was made whole. No course of treatment, internal or external, was needed: a moment sufficed to put right sin's result in this man's case (5. 14). It is noteworthy that the man was next found in the temple, God's House, where every redeemed one should be, in His house to-day. It was there that the Lord revealed Himself to him.

We notice how quietly the Lord worked, no ceremony or show; there was nothing boastful in His way of working the works of Him who sent Him. "Behold My servant, . . . He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street (Isaiah 42. 1, 2; John 5. 13).

We saw ourselves among those who have passed out of death into life (5. 24). Some diversity of opinion was found on verse 25. Some held the dead here to be those who were physically dead and raised, such as Lazarus, and the son of the widow of Nain. Others thought that this verse enlarges upon verse 24 and speaks of the spiritually dead responding to the voice of God's Son. The words, "they that hear," seem to imply that there may be those that would not respond to this voice (Ephesians 2. 1) [12]. The expression "all that are in the tombs" leaves none in the tombs, and points to the final resurrection (Revelation 20). *A. H.*

From London, S. E.—The Jews were under no misapprehension as to the Lord's meaning in His claims to eternal Sonship and equality with God (5. 19-23, 30; 10. 33). Here we can see the unity of purpose and work between the Father and the Son. There was never any thought or act that differed. There is equality in doing, equality in knowledge, equality in authority, and in life-giving power, and yet there is also His perfect submission to the will of the Father which sent Him (5. 30). See Isaiah 52. 13; 42. 1. "As the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself" (5. 26). Verse 24 gives us the formula for life, the hearing ear, hearing our Lord's word (6. 63), the believing heart, accepting by faith Jesus as the Son of God. Verse 25 refers to those who are dead in sins [13]. Verses 28, 29 refer to the second resurrection. Thus, through all the phases of man's life, the voice of the Lord either brings life eternal or judgement eternal. *G. A. Reeve.*

From Barry.—At the "House of Mercy," which Bethesda means, a multitude of the sick gathered for healing at the pool of five porches. The sick man had learnt the lesson that of himself he could do nothing. He sought healing from the pool, but he was helpless, and rendered so by his own sin (5. 14). So when the Great Physician came his spirit was ready for

His healing, the weak received strength, and later on he was found in the temple. There he acknowledged the Source of his blessing though as yet he knew not who it was that healed him. The physical healing took place **at** Bethesda, **but** the fuller knowledge of the Lord was gained in the house of God. *E. S. T.*

Chapter 4.

From **Brantford (Ontario)**. —The conversation between the Lord and the Samaritan woman reveals some very precious points regarding worship. The words "true worshippers" suggest that there may also **be** false worshippers. We recall the Lord's words, "In vain do they worship Me." True worship primarily has to do with the heart, its condition and out-pouring. It is our privilege to **be** associated with God's people, who have the lofty privilege of being true worshippers. We noted that in verse **23** the words "Father" and "worshippers" are twice linked together. Some may suggest this would justify our worshipping God as our heavenly Father [14], but **we** would definitely say that the Lord's words indicate that He who should **be** the object of our worship is His (the Lord's) Father, and that in our worship it is not in order for us to address God as our heavenly Father, **but** as the God **and** Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. *James Bell,*

From **Melbourne**. —The Lord, in journeying northwards towards Galilee, seems to be opening up the door of faith and hope to the Samaritans. It is worthy of note that the woman came to the well at an unusual time of day, possibly to avoid coming in contact with other women. In our day of modern transport it is difficult for us to appreciate that the Lord travelled on not too smooth roads by foot, in this instance, approximately 30 miles.

The Samaritans were a mixed race, having a mixture of ideas regarding worship. Some were idolators, some had a vague appreciation of God, and knew that the Jews said that Jerusalem was the place where men ought to worship.

The point had now been reached where place had no special merit as a place of worship (**4. 23**). Under the old covenant there was that about the form of worship that might appeal to the senses, but under the new covenant there is the bowing of the spirit. Worshipping involves the offering of spiritual sacrifices and firstfruits. *L. F.*

From **Hamilton, Ont.** —The ancestry of the woman at the well takes us back to 2 Kings **17**, where we read of Israel's disobedience and the displeasure of Jehovah that resulted in the nation of Israel being taken captive, the land of Samaria being subsequently peopled with strangers sent in by the king of Assyria. The woman's knowledge of Jacob and of God no doubt starts from the fact that the king of Assyria sent Israelitish priests back to Samaria to teach the people the law of the God of the land.

It is also interesting to note that the location of the meeting between Jesus and the woman, could possibly be the place of the blessing and the curse of Deuteronomy **27**. The mountain referred to by the woman was Mount Gerizim, the mountain of blessing. The Samaritans had known the curse of being despised by the Jews these many long years. Now they were to know the great blessing that comes through faith in Christ: "Now we believe... and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world." A short time later Samaria was again visited by Philip the Evangelist, and, as we read in Acts **8. 8**, there was much joy in that city. *N. Mackay.*

COMMENTS.

[1] (Cardiff). —Note that in Titus 2. 13 (R. V.) one Divine Person is in view. Jesus Christ is our great God and Saviour. It should not be read as in the A. V., " the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. " The same is true of 2 Peter 1. 1, where the A. V. reads, " God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. " It should be read as in R. V., " Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. " —*J. M.*

[2] (Knocknacloy). —Though the apostate Jewish people in the Lord's time were largely Unitarian, and no doubt are so to-day, it was not always so in Israel. The prophets heralded the coming of a Messiah who was God, as see Isaiah 40. 9-11, and other prophecies. —*J. M.*

[3] (**Knocknacloy**). —Those in John 5. 25 were physically, not spiritually, dead persons. In verse 24 the Lord had spoken of the spiritually dead passing from death into life, through faith in Him. But those of verse 25 are physically dead people, such as Lazarus of chapter 11, who are symbolic of all such as will share in the various stages of resurrection of saints prior to the millennial reign. Then the resurrection of verses 28 and 29 is that which precedes the judgement of the Great White Throne (Revelation 20. 11-15). —*J. M.*

[4] (Nottingham). —Had such as have done good been believers in Christ, faith in Christ being regarded as " a good work, " then they would not have been at the Great White Throne. Note what is said in Acts 10. 34, 35 and also Romans 2. 6-16. No person can do good in God's sight who has not first repented of his sins. John 5. 28, 29 should be read in the light of the scriptures cited above and also with Revelation 20. 11-15. —*J. M.*

[5] (**Wigan**). —See Comment [3]. —*J. M.*

[6] (**Bradford**, etc.). —See Comment [3]. —*J. M.*

[7] (Manchester). —The Lord is not called Son of Man because He lived as a Man among men, but because He was and is Man, being born of a woman. He partook of human (not divine) nature by His birth in Bethlehem. Moreover there is no definite article before " Son of Man " in John 5. 27, showing that all judgement has been delivered to One who is Man, that is His character. —*J. M.*

[8] (Atherton). —I am of the opinion that the Father's witness was at the Lord's baptism in Jordan. —*J. M.*

[9] (Cowdenbeath). —The Lord in this verse is speaking on the subject of His equality with the Father, and not as the incarnate Son, the Servant of Jehovah, doing God's will on earth. There is and can be no independent action in the Godhead. The same works as the Father does, the Son does, and the Spirit does. The Persons of the Godhead ever act in unity. —*J. M.*

[10] (Portstewart). —" To exist " or " to be " is something different from "to live. " Existence and life are not equivalent; neither do death and non-existence, mean the same thing. Life signifies a certain state of existence, and death also signifies a state of existence. That men shall remain for ever in being, whether in pleasure or pain, in the enjoyment of salvation or in the endurance of punishment, there can be no doubt whatever, but the redeemed shall be in life and the wicked in death; who can doubt this with the Scriptures before them ?—*J. M.*

(Portstewart). —See Comments [3] and [4]. —*J. M.*

(Liverpool). —See Comment [3]. —*J. M.*

(London, S. E.). —See Comment [3]. —*J. M.*

(Brantford). —God *the* Father is the Object of our worship, not *our* heavenly Father, as our friends truly point out. We pray to *our* Father in heaven. —*J. Mi*

NOTES ON ROMANS.
CHAPTER 8.

Verse 18: *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward.*

"The sufferings of this present time" (season): season implies limitation in time. Paul thinks of the time-limit that God has put to the suffering of His saints in this scene. It is but a little while, but the glory is for ever. The reward of suffering will be so infinitely greater than what the suffering merits, that the suffering is not worthy to be compared with the glory: we might say—all this glory for so little suffering!

Verse 19: *For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God.*

God is at present preparing the sons for the coming kingdom. Then will come the time of their adoption, when in redeemed bodies they will be glorified. Following this will be the revelation of the sons of God, who are God's hidden ones at the present time, and for this revelation the creation waits. The grandeur of this revelation will surpass all human thought. The Lord will come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed (2 Thessalonians 1. 10).

Verses 20, 21: *For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.*

When Adam fell, not only did the human race fall in him, but all earthly creation which was placed under his lordship fell with him. God said, "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over all cattle, and over all the earth" (Genesis 1. 26). Creation here excludes the angels who were not within man's dominion. Also it does not include the human race, the most part of which is not waiting for the revealing of the sons of God, and will be in revolt against Jehovah and His Christ prior to the coming of the Son of Man. The creation does not include the vegetable and mineral kingdoms, but means all animal life which was placed under mankind, which was subjected to vanity, not of its own will. This animated creation is indeed born to a vain life, to fear and pain and death, the one **part** of creation making a prey of the other. God subjected creation to vanity in hope of the millennial day, when the second Man, the last Adam, will be in control, as Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2 show. Then a change will take place in the nature of the beasts, as is described in Isaiah 11. 6-9; 65. 20, when the Branch shall reign, the Branch that was to grow out of Jesse's root. Then creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. What a freedom the glory of the children of God will bring to this distraught earth!

Verse 22, 23: *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

The whole creation is plainly the animal creation which suffers pain and groans. May we say what we said in the former verse, that creation here does not include mankind? For instead of mankind being delivered

from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God, mankind will be brought before the Lord for judgement, and perchance the most part be cast into eternal fire, as Matthew 25 and other scriptures show. In the common groan of animated creation we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit join as we wait for our adoption, which will take place when the Lord comes to the air for His saints. The firstfruits of the Spirit are the earnest of our inheritance (Ephesians 1. 18, 14). When we have been adopted (placed as sons), when our bodies have been redeemed, we shall never again say with Paul, "O wretched man that I am!" (Romans 7. 24). The groan shall be changed for a song, as was the case with Israel, when redeemed from the bondage of Egypt they sang by the Red Sea.

Verses 24, 25: *For by hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

This is variously rendered by translators as, "in hope were we saved," or, "we were saved with this hope in view." It means that we were saved in a state of hope, with the day of adoption and redemption filling our hearts, and the fear of hell for ever gone. We were not saved by hope, but by faith. But faith which comes by hearing (that is, hearing the message of the gospel) brought its friends hope and love with it. They came to abide, not to be sojourners for a night. Hope lifts our drooping spirit and causes us to anticipate what faith assures us is a fact, that the glory of God will dawn and drive away the sorrows and tears and fears of the present night. Hope patiently awaits that day!

Verse 26: *And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered;*

Hope helps our weakness; from what mental infirmity does that human being suffer from whom all hope is quite gone! Hope helps us, and in like manner the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, for Paul says that we know not how to pray as we ought. He was a great praying man who wrote this. Paul has taught us more about prayer than any other New Testament writer; but as he thought of our Father, the great God of heaven, and poor ignorant mortals seeking to speak to Him, he knew that we did not know how to pray as we ought. But the blessed Holy Spirit is our Advocate and Helper, and He makes intercession from our hearts, not with words, but with groanings that cannot be uttered. Thus the creation groans, we groan, and the Spirit also groans in intercession for groaning saints.

Verse 27: *And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is in the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

We make mistakes in prayer, but the Spirit ever makes intercession according to God's will. "The Spirit searcheth all things." "The things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2. 10, 11). God who is the Searcher of hearts, as He listens to the groaning of the Spirit from the hearts of His saints, knows (*oida* "knows," not "learns") what is the mind or desire of the Spirit. What gracious provision this is to meet the need of saints!

Verses 28, 29, 30: *And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren: and whom He foreordained, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.*

This is a glorious and majestic **passage** of Scripture. It touches upon the sovereignty of the Eternal God, who does according to His own will in heaven and on earth, and none can stay His hand or dare say to Him, "What doest Thou?" His attribute of mercy in electing grace is **as** just **as** His merciful provision for men in His saving grace. There can be no unrighteousness with God. **He** said to Moses of His sovereign will in mercy and grace, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy" (Exodus 33. 19). Were **we** in God's stead and **as** wise **as** He, we should have acted exactly **as** He has done. But men in their blindness and rebellion challenge God in His dealings with the creatures of His own creation, and challenge His righteous acts, and presume that they could sketch a better plan than He. The whole divine movement of things, of which **we** know so little, **set** in motion **by** God has the good of those that love God **as** its objective. Those that love **Him** are His called ones, called with an effectual calling, and according to His purpose. The salient features of this great movement are outlined in the following verses. Back into the depths of eternity and the counsels of Deity the mind of the apostle travels **as** he dictates to Tertius; "For whom **He** foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that **He** might be the Firstborn among many brethren." To God the countless **ages** yet to **be** are **as** truly present **as** the things that now are. **He** "calleth the things that are not, **as** though they were" (Romans 4. 17). It **was** such a God of inscrutable knowledge and wisdom that foreordained those that **He** foreknew, not determining His course according to acts **as** they transpire. God works according **as** He has purposed, and how thankful those should **be** who are His called ones according to His purpose. They are not His according to their own purpose, or Paul himself would never have been amongst His called ones, and neither would **we**! The object **He** had in those whom **He** foreknew and foreordained **was** that they should **be** conformed to the image of His Son. Then we have this **vast** panorama in the fulfilment of divine purpose stretching from eternity to eternity (verse 30)—foreordained, called, justified, glorified, all spoken, of **as** though they were accomplished facts. Foreordination and glorification are **facts** pertaining to eternity, calling and justification are events in time.

Verses 31, 32: *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?*

What can **we** say? for if God who has called and justified **us**, fore-ordained and glorified **us** with so great glory **as** that **we** should **be** conformed to the image of **His** Son, who can possibly **be** against **us**? Everything in this view presented here **must be** on our side and working for **us**, and above all, God is for **us**. **We** can only thank Him for such grace so abundantly bestowed, of which **we** are altogether unworthy. Having given His Son, only begotten and beloved, for **us**, **He** will give **us** all the rest. All things else are small in comparison with His unspeakable Gift. **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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In the day of the restored remnant of Israel " they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading " (Nehemiah 8. 8). Knowledge and understanding of the word and will of God are very desirable, and to that end we must read, read, and keep on reading the Scriptures, both publicly and privately, and like the people of that day we must be attentive (Nehemiah 8. 3). An important essential is a detailed and extensive knowledge of the word of God, for scripture interprets and illumines scripture. Knowledge of the books and God's guidance gave Daniel understanding of the word of the LORD by Jeremiah concerning the times in which he lived (Daniel 9. 2). The Lord Jesus, by His complete knowledge of Moses and the prophets, warmed the sad hearts of two disciples by interpreting the things concerning Himself (Luke 24. 27). Again, in early apostolic times, the Spirit used Philip's knowledge of the Scriptures to reach the Ethiopian. The inspired Scriptures, after quoting the passage the Ethiopian was reading, record his questions (Acts 8. 34). There is hope of progress if questions and difficulties arise. It is the able student who has difficulties: absence of questions may mark lack of appreciation. Wrestling with difficulties is profitable; and in our efforts to resolve them we should seek the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into the truth. For the good things we have learned we should be truly thankful: let us hold them fast. "Abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of" (2 Timothy 3. 14).
J. B.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

(Chapter 6.)

From Barrhead **and** Paisley. —The sign of the feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle which all four Gospel writers record, and in each the narrative is different. John adds fresh details about Philip, Andrew, the boy, about the danger from the enthusiasm of the crowd, and differs from the others in describing the Lord as taking the initiative in asking how the multitude might be fed, because he desired to prove Philip. One is apt to be surprised at Philip's lack of faith, until one realises how faithless we all are as disciples. Philip had observed many manifestations of Christ's almighty power, yet, when faced with this particular problem, he could think of no other solution than the natural resources at hand. The brief flash of faith in Andrew's suggestion is lost in his afterthought, "but what are these among so many?" As on other occasions the Lord brought His divine power into action only when human means had proved ineffectual. " Man's extremity is God's opportunity. "

From this miracle we learn at least three things. (1) The Lord is concerned for the masses of humanity. (2) The Lord can from little effect much. How often we forget that little is much if God be in it! (3) The

Lord is careful that nothing be wasted. The little that He has given us should be used well, and nothing wasted. We should treat our possessions as being given to us on trust from God.

It would appear that John recorded this miracle to lead up to the discourse on the True Bread. The people sought only physical nourishment and not spiritual. The Lord was able to supply both. When they asked the Lord for a sign, they referred to God's gift of the manna, which the Lord used as a symbol in the discourse. The manna could not prevent death, but the True Bread giveth the life over which death has no power. The bread which God now gives is for the life of the world, and is Christ's flesh.

The eating of the flesh and the drinking of the blood of the Lord (6. 54) is symbolic. It has been erroneously interpreted as giving virtue to the bread and wine of communion as a means of eternal life. No such thought is contained in the passage, nor is there any thought of the Remembrance. In verse 56, however, it would seem that the thought is one of communion or feeding on Christ to sustain the spiritual life of the believer [1].

J. M. Gault.

From Hereford. —From Mark's account of the feeding of the five thousand, we learn that the Lord, before feeding them with natural food, fed them with that which was spiritual. We see in the Lord's action, His compassion in contrast to the indifference of the disciples, who would have sent the multitude away (Matthew 14. 15, 16). It appears that Andrew may have had some hopes that the Lord would do something with the loaves; and yet it seemed to him too much to hope for. We cannot help but notice the orderly manner in which the multitude was fed: this would, of course, make for ease in distribution. As the disciples received from the Lord, so they were able to give to the people. We too must continually come to Him, that we may be a blessing to others.

Lest the ordinary people should unwisely take precipitate action and make Him king, the Lord withdrew. He did not wish them to make Him king because of the loaves which they ate; but He desired that through the sign they might believe that He was indeed the True Bread from heaven. They asked for a sign that they might see and believe (John 6. 30), yet He had given them a sign which they had seen and yet believed not (6. 36). The discourse was a notable one: as a result of it many of His disciples turned back; their love for Him, having been put to the test, failed.

The Jews still held to material things. The woman of Samaria said, " Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw " (4. 15): likewise they said, " Lord, evermore give us this bread " (John 6. 34). Their fathers had died, though they ate the manna in the wilderness, but if they would eat of the Living Bread from heaven they would live for ever. The Lord told His disciples that what they had failed to realise was that " It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life " (6. 63).

R. Tidmas.

EXTRACTS.

From **London, S. E.** —The apostle John, perhaps because he wrote last and looked back in greater perspective, has, under the Spirit, a rare gift of presenting the Lord Jesus Christ. Chapter 6, although it contains the story of two different miracles, discussion with the multitudes, the Jewish leaders and the disciples, appears to be a complete whole under

the title " I am the Bread of Life. " The Lord, as typified in the manna given to Israel in the desert, (1) came from the Father (6. 32), (2) came out of heaven (6. 33), (8) was given for the life of the people (6. 51). (4) The Bread of Life, in contrast to the manna, brought everlasting life (6. 51). (5) The would-be recipients of life, again like Israel with the manna, had to take the Bread (6. 85), and (6) eat of it to benefit thereby (6. 54), and this clearly entails belief in Christ (6. 35). (7) Finally, there were those who walked no longer with Him (6. 61), reminding us of Israel's words, " Our soul loatheth this light bread. "

The sign of the walking on the water may seem unrelated to this theme, but one link at least may be found in Mark 6. 52, which states that the apostles (although so lately returned from their missionary tour) " understood not concerning the loaves, but their heart was hardened. " It seems to have needed an experience more intense than hunger to cause Peter, for example, to realise his need of Christ as the all-sufficient Provider. He had to feel himself sinking in the water and his Master's uplifting power, before there came from his heart, " Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that Thou art the Holy One of God. " In very truth he had eaten of the Bread of Life.

C. L. Prasher.

From Kingston-on-Thames. —A great multitude followed the Lord, because they beheld the signs which He did on them that were sick (John 6. 2). The fact that the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand {John 6. 4} would also account for such a large company gathering together. Little did the disciples realize how that multitude would be satisfied with food under such circumstances. Their faith was being tried, and Philip was working out the cost in a material sense (John 6. 7). We may perhaps think that Philip was lacking in faith, but how often could it be said of us, " O ye of little faith " ?

The Lord knew what He would do: He had compassion on the multitude (Matthew 14. 14), and welcomed them, and spake to them of the kingdom of God (Luke 9. 11). Having thus ministered to their spiritual need, He then provided for their temporal need. " He satisfieth the longing soul, and the hungry soul He filleth with good " (Psalm 107. 9).

W. H. Humphris.

From Southport. —The LORD made Himself known as I AM to Moses (Exodus 3. 14). Jehovah and I AM come from the same root, and imply self-existence, uncreated and eternal, significant name of Him who was, and is, and is to come, the Alpha and Omega, who inhabiteth eternity. In John 6. 35 we hear the very One that spake " I AM " in the days of Moses. His walk across the rough seas in strong winds and darkness presented no difficulty, because He was far more than the Carpenter: **He is the eternal I AM.**

J. G. Hindle.

From Bradford, Halifax and Leeds. —" Five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many ? " " The things which are impossible with men are possible with God " (Luke 18. 27). Does not the feeding of the five thousand present yet another marvel of God's way with mankind ? The lad's small contribution was used by the Lord Jesus to the glory of God. It reminds us of His acknowledging the poor widow's two mites (Mark 12. 42),

The disciples would **keep** coming back to the Lord for more supplies: so **must we be** always coming to Him, **if we are** to **bring** blessing to others. With the Lord there is inexhaustible store. " **He** satisfieth the longing soul, **and** the hungry soul **He** filleth with good " (Psalm 107. 9).

It was thought that the whole chapter centred round verse **63**, the truth of which **is** brought before **us** throughout this Gospel. *D. B. R.*

From **Wigan**. —The unbelieving Jews sought to belittle the miracle of the **feeding** of the five thousand in comparison with the giving of the manna, which provided for the **need** of the whole of God's ancient people. They **needed to be** reminded that the **One** who **met** their **need** in that day **was** the **same** One who sent down out of heaven the Bread of Life, which if **a man** eat thereof he would live for ever (**6. 51**). Our thoughts were directed to the **sad scene** in Numbers 21. Israel yearned for the delicacies of Egypt, **and** loathed the **manna**. The repeated claims **by** the Lord Jesus that **He was** come down from heaven brought forth murmurings from the Jews, who **saw** nothing greater **in Hun** than the supposed Son of Joseph the carpenter. The One, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom **and** knowledge, **was** viewed through their unbelieving eyes **as** a root out of **a** dry ground, having no form nor comeliness **and** no beauty that they should desire Him. *H. Caldwell.*

From Crowborough. —The **feeding** of the five thousand shows what God **can** do with that which **we** give to Him. The boy **gave** his all, **and** Jesus **used** it to the blessing of the people. God desires to bless people to-day through **us**, **if we** will put all at **His** disposal.

The discourse on the Bread of Life presents to **us** Christ of whom **we** eat. The **manna is** a type of the Lord Jesus in that it sustained life **and** **came** down from God [**2**], *S. Robertson.*

From Atherton. —The Lord often tested the disciples. Philip **and** Andrew come prominently into view three **times in** this Gospel (chapters **1, 6, 12**). There does not appear to **be any** faith **in** Philip's reply, **but** Andrew **seems** to have had some thoughts concerning the Lord's power. Perhaps there was **a measure** of doubt in his words, "What **are** these among so many?"

The value of the divine employment of type **and** shadow is emphasized in the discourse that followed. The people referred to the manna, **and** the Lord took up this type of Himself to illustrate the contrast **between** the material **and** the spiritual. The Father **is** the Giver **in** both **cases**, of the **manna and** of the Son from heaven.

Verse **37** brings before **us** divine election, **and** the **sinner's** free will in a voluntary acceptance of the Bread of Life.

We saw **in** the incident on the lake the Lord's love **and** care for His own, **and** also **a** picture of the Lord's coming again. (Compare verse **21** with Psalm 107. 29-31.) Nothing **can** hinder His coming.

G. A. Jones, D. H. Butler.

From Manchester. —One might **be** tempted to ask why Philip **was** singled out to **be** proved (**6. 6**). **He was** a disciple of whom **we** know little, **and was** possibly one who kept **in** the background... This episode would

serve as a reminder that all God's people are liable to be proved. Compare Peter's proving in chapter 18.

The two references to the same thanksgiving (verses 11, 23) seem to emphasize the fact that thanksgiving and praise are essential in Christian life.

From physical matters the Lord turned to spiritual matters. Having shown His power to the people, He then gave forth the good news that He is the "Bread of Life." It is from Christ that we draw strength: we must have the "Living Bread" or perish.

The stumbling of the Jews on factual aspects of His sayings is explained in verse 63: "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life." The whole of His teaching to the Jews was on a heavenly basis, yet they analysed it on a worldly basis. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" (6. 63). **R. T.**

From Liverpool. —The disciples' words reveal their assessment of the situation. In face of their acknowledged incapacity, the Lord gave instructions to have the people seated, and He took the loaves and fishes, and gave thanks to His Father. He then gave to His disciples (Matthew 14), who in turn gave to the multitude. We noted the importance of giving thanks at all times for that with which God in His grace supplies us daily. The testimony borne in so doing will speak to men and glorify God.

This remarkable scene shows that Christ is sufficient for all men. The food received from Himself by His disciples, and distributed to these hungry men and women, typifies God's word. The limitations of our faith can be seen here too. There is a danger of our limiting God by what we can do, or what we think might be done, but with God all things are possible.

The stormy elements reveal again another natural reaction on the part of the disciples as the rising wind and sea tossed their boat. The sight of Jesus walking on the sea some distance from land and coming towards them, quickened the fear in their hearts. But His words shewed His perfect understanding of their feelings, and His loving concern to calm their fears: "It is I; be not afraid." Fear forgotten, they willingly received Him into the boat. Such is the difference He makes to troubled hearts **affected** by the storms of life. **A. Fairhurst, AM,**

From Edinburgh. —It would seem that the Lord desired to be alone with His disciples, but the multitude, like sheep without a shepherd, followed Him, and He had compassion on them. As far as can be seen the only food there consisted of five small loaves and two fishes, not of the richest, but in His hands it was ample to meet the need of every one. He was teaching the disciples as well as the people: whether the word comes to saint or sinner it is sufficient for the need.

Meantime the multitude followed Him, and He taught them to work for that which abideth. We should choose heavenly rather than earthly things, because only the heavenly will abide.

In spite of all that had been revealed, the Lord could say with sorrow, "Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" [3] He had the words of eternal life, yet some could only see Him as the carpenter's son. **W. Muirhead.**

From Nottingham. —The incident of the walking on the water (6. 16-21) was considered to be a vivid picture of the coming again of the Lord. The disciples had rowed about five and twenty furlongs, so that they were in the midst of the sea (Matthew 14. 24). Another Gospel (Mark 6) tells us that it was the fourth watch of the night. It was at the dark hour before the dawn that everything was contrary. Then He came to them. One day He is coming to the air for us, and the Scriptures indicate that in that day things will be contrary for those who are Christ's, and the day will be dark indeed (2 Timothy 3). Those in the boat were amazed and afraid, when they saw the Lord coming to them, but let us be ready and watching for His coming.

It was observed that the references to the Sea of Tiberias, and to the twelve (6. 67), give some indication of the comparatively late date of this Gospel. The city of Tiberias was built in the Lord's lifetime, and it was afterwards that the Lake of Galilee became known as the Sea of Tiberias. Also the writer makes no previous direct reference to the twelve disciples, but in this reference to the twelve he seems to assume that his readers would already know through previous writings who the twelve were.

F. Allen, R. Hickling.

From Glasgow. —In the feeding of the five thousand it is mentioned here (6. 11) and also in the accounts in Matthew (14. 19), Mark (6. 41), and Luke (9. 16), that the Lord Jesus publicly gave God thanks for the loaves ere they were eaten. In this He has left us an example. It is comely for us, even in public, quietly to bow our head and give God thanks for our food. Some of us felt that, unless the giving of thanks was the turning point of the miracle, it is difficult to see why it is mentioned again in verse 23.

We wondered if there was a continuous act of breaking the loaves until the need of the multitude was met. We judged this to be so, because of the description in Mark 6. 41 [4].

The Lord Jesus speaks of Himself as the Bread that satisfies for ever, "the Bread of God" (6. 33), the "Bread of Life" (6. 35), "the True Bread" (6. 32), "the Living Bread" (6. 51), and "the Bread which cometh down out of heaven" (6. 50). He that cometh to Him shall not hunger (6. 35); and we rest on His promise, which says, "if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (6. 51). Many thought that the initial partaking of the Lord Jesus, "the Living Bread," is at conversion: "if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." There should also be a subsequent continual partaking of Him as the Bread of Life, when "he that cometh to **Me** shall not hunger" [5].

J. H. P.

From **Cowdenbeath**. —The Lord's appearing to the distressed disciples amidst the storm was yet further evidence of His divine power. Never before had such a thing been known, that a person should walk upon the sea. We are reminded of the Scripture, "The sea is His, and He made it" (Psalm 95. 5). When the disciples received the Lord into the boat, they were probably half-way across, and yet how soon, miraculously, they were at the land. The presence of the Lord in times of difficulty sweetens our bitter experience.

In verse 35 we have the principle of human accountability; men are responsible to come to Christ as the source of life eternal: and in verse 87

we have the truth of divine election. The two are complementary and should not be confused.

There is perfect harmony between the will of the Father and the work of the Son (6. 87, 38). Present possession of eternal life does not exempt believers from physical death; it is the will of the Father, however, that these should be raised again. There was some questioning as to the meaning of the term, "the last day." What did the Jew understand by this term? It was thought by some to refer to the Lord's coming as Son of Man and the consequent resurrection of Old Testament saints; others thought that the Lord was using language which the multitude could appreciate and understand (John 21. 24) [6].

In verse 57 we have the unique title, "the Living Father." God is the source of life (Genesis 2. 7), and from Him came the Life-giving One.
R. Ross.

(Chapter 5.)

From Hamilton, *Ont.* —In Genesis 1 we see the Giver of Life at work as He breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living soul, and in John 1 we see the Father working through the Son from the very beginning of things: "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men."

The Father and the Son are in complete accord in creation, and also in redemption. The Lord Jesus, while here below, revealed His power to give life: He restored the widow of Nain's son, and raised Lazarus, already four days in the tomb. He laid down His life that He might impart to dead souls, dead in trespasses and in sin, the life eternal

C. Meikle, D. Beck.

COMMENTS.

[1] (Barrhead and Paisley). —The Greek words for eating and drinking are identical in verses 54 and 56, *Trogon* and *Pinon*, present participles of the verbs *Trogo*=I eat, and *Pino*=I drink. Whatever these words mean in verse 54, they mean the same in verse 56. If they signify the once-for-all eating and drinking of the believing sinner in verse 54, showing the character of the eater, one who eats (equivalent to *Pisteuon*, present participle of the verb *Pisteuo*=I believe, verses 40. 47; see also *Pisteuon* in John 3. 16, etc., "believeth"), then they signify the same in verse 56. If the present participles *Pisteuon*, believeth, and *Trogon*, eateth, mean communion, continuous believing and continuous eating, are we not in a very perilous state, and can we allege that we *have* eternal life, if the having eternal life rests on the continuous exercise of faith? In my opinion *Trogon* and *Pinon* do not signify communion, continuous eating, in verse 56.
—J. M.

[2] (Crowborough). —In contrast to the Manna, the Lord, the Bread of God "giveth life unto the world" (John 6. 33). The Manna sustained life already given. —J. M.

[3] (Edinburgh). —It is important to note that the word in John 6. 70 is "devil," not "demon." —J. M.

[4] (Glasgow). —Whilst Matthew 14. 19 simply tells us that the Lord broke the loaves after He had given thanks, Mark 6. 41, Luke 9. 16, say that He broke down the loaves or broke the loaves into pieces. John does

not mention the breaking, but simply the distribution of the broken pieces. It would take the Lord some time to break the loaves into pieces, for one piece or more to be given to each hungry person of the thousands present. — *J. M.*

[5] (Glasgow). — "Cometh" here in Greek is the present participle, the same as "believeth" in this verse (John 6. 35). See Comment [1] above. This coming is characteristic and does not imply a continuous coming. Note "cometh" in verse 50 in reference to the Lord: "This is the Bread which *cometh* (present participle) down out of heaven." The Lord was not continuously coming down from heaven. — *J. M.*

[6] (Cowdenbeath). — The last day is the day of the Lord, which precedes the day of God. The day of the Lord commences with the coming of the Son of Man and is more than a thousand years in extent. — *J. M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question from Melbourne. — Does "in spirit and truth" (4. 24) refer to human spirit?

Answer. — It is the bowing of the human spirit by such being wrought upon by God's Spirit, in contrast to mere bodily bowing or prostration. — *J. M.*

Question from Nottingham. — Does the Lord refer in John 5. 29 to the resurrection prior to the Great White Throne, or does He refer to both it and the raising of the Church at His coming to the air?

Answer. — It refers to the resurrection prior to the Great White Throne, not to the resurrection of those in Christ. — *J. M.*

Question from Edinburgh. — Difficulty was experienced in interpreting John 6. 52-58, especially verse 54. Help on this passage would be appreciated.

Answer. — Eating and drinking of Christ are equivalent to coming to and believing on Him (see verses 35, 37, 40, 47, 54, 56). Eating, drinking, coming, believing are present participles. See Comments [1] and [5] in this issue. — *J. M.*

NOTICES.

1. Many papers are still being sent to Mr. Baird's former address. As the period of postal re-direction is now nearly ended, there is the danger that such papers may not be delivered. Please see that all correspondents are informed of the present address: 15, Brunstane Road, Portobello, Midlothian.

2. Late arrivals are on the increase, and this is not in the best interests of all concerned. Contributors in the British Isles should try to post their papers not later than the 18th of each month. Late papers may miss publication.

3. Some correspondents fail to state the source of their papers. Each paper should have its source indicated, and it is advisable to begin with "From". Post-marks and writers' signatures provide unreliable evidence of source.

4. In some papers the lines are so close together that the work of editors and printers is rendered unnecessarily difficult. Please space your lines widely enough to allow easy reading and inter-lining.

Co-operation in these matters will be of considerable help.

NOTES ON ROMANS.

CHAPTER 8.

Verses 33, 34: *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; Who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

He that would lay anything to the charge of God's elect has God to reckon with, not them. Their justification is not their own work, but His. Who can condemn those whom the just God of heaven has justified? His act is not one of passing over sins, but of putting them away for ever (Hebrews 9. 26), having laid them on His own Son (Isaiah 53. 6; 1 Peter 2. 24). "It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead"; this is the just basis of justification (Romans 4. 25). He is at God's right hand making intercession for us. The Holy Spirit is an Advocate (verse 26), and Christ Jesus is another Advocate at God's right hand (verse 34). See John 14. 16-18, etc.; 1 John 2. 1, 2.

Verses 35, 36, 37: *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we were accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.*

Who can separate us from such divine and eternal love which led Christ to die for us and rise again to intercede for us upon God's throne, such love as foreordained us to be with Christ and to be in His image for evermore? Shall all the evils of a wicked and antagonistic world (John 15. 19-21; 16. 33), and all the persecutions of the devil as a roaring lion? (1 Peter 5. 8). Nay, these things should but drive saints the more to the bosom of Eternal Love to find their solace and healing for all their sores. The answer of true and loving hearts is:—

"For Thy sake we are killed all the day long;
We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

Suffering saints and martyrs endured all for Christ's sake. Let the world, the devil and demons do their worst, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. His love nerves the feeble arm, makes the heart steadfast, and the face like a flint to dare all for Him. His love conquers!

Verses 38, 39: *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

With these words Paul closes his majestic survey of the triumph of divine grace in the justification, security, and glorification of all the subjects of that grace. He runs the flag to the top of the mast, and we hear the rolling song of victory which shall resound throughout all eternity. His words sweep through the universe of created things, both present and future, and with a shout which echoes and re-echoes he declares his unshakeable faith that nothing can separate saints from God's love which is in Christ Jesus. He cites both beings and things capable of causing separations; we mention but one, that which heads the list—death. Death, the enemy, is the last of the enemies of the human race to leave the field (1 Corinthians 15. 26; Revelation 20. 14); what separations it has caused! **But** here it is defeated by God's love in Christ. Its cold clammy hand can never

intrude here and wrest one saint from divine love. God's love, the greatest power in the universe, yields its trophies **and** treasures to none. The saints are the treasure and pearl for whom the Lord gave His all to obtain (Matthew 13. 44-46).

Chapter 9.

Verses 1, 2, 3: *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh:*

Here the apostle turns to the sovereignty of God in His dealings with Jew and Gentile, dealing with such matters as are dealt with in part under the subject of the kingdom of heaven in the Gospel according to Matthew, which is the most dispensational of all four Gospels. Therein we see the distinct change in His dealings with men on earth, as He turns from Israel to His purpose amongst the Gentiles, both in connexion with the Church which is His (Christ's) Body (Matthew 16. 16-18), and in His disciples making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28. 18-20). This last scripture should be contrasted with Matthew 10. 5-7.

Paul speaks the truth in Christ, in the new relationship (2 Corinthians 5. 17) of men to Him who is Himself the Truth (John 14. 6), and the faithful and true Witness (Revelation 3. 14), his conscience bearing witness in the Holy Spirit, that is, his conscience informed and uncondemned concerning the inward facts of which he speaks. His trouble is his brethren, the Israel people, about whom he has great grief and unceasing sorrow of heart. His words may be best rendered—"I was wishing that I myself were an anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake." This does not refer to any wish he had prior to his conversion during his days as a rabid, persecuting Pharisee, but to what he feels now in his great grief over his brethren. He, in his selfless love of his brethren, abandoned as he was to their well-being, was wishing to be accursed from Christ, if it could have been possible that that would have meant the restoration of Israel to divine favour. We need not seek to lessen the awfulness of what he speaks about when he uses the words "accursed from Christ." Moses and Paul are the only men who spoke somewhat similarly as they thought of the fearsomeness of the sin of Israel (Exodus 32. 31, 32; Romans 9. 3). Whence came such love? In the one case from Jehovah, the everlasting Lover of Israel, and in the other from Christ who died for that people. Paul has spiritual kinship with another race (1 Peter 2. 9), but according to the flesh the Jewish race were his brethren, his kinsmen.

Verses 4, 5: *Who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*

Here is a list of distinctions with which no race or nation after the flesh could vie. In His sovereignty and electing grace God had chosen the seed of Abraham His friend (Isaiah 41. 8; Deuteronomy 4. 37; 10. 15), and exalted them in His favour above all the great nations, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon. They were Israelites, the sons of a man who received the unique title of "a prince of God." Israel was God's son, His firstborn (Exodus 4. 22); his was the adoption. His too was the glory, the Shechinah glory of the Divine Presence in the house of God. The covenants were theirs also, the Abrahamic covenants, the Sinaitic, the Levitical, the Davidic, especially

that which pertained to the promised Messiah, and **if** there be any others, **the covenants were** theirs. Theirs too **was** the giving of the law, **and** with this **was** associated the service of God. No other nation could serve God **as** Israel could, but there **was** ever the opportunity of strangers joining themselves to the LORD and being incorporated in the nation of Israel. Israel **was** a kingdom of priests, constituted such on the ground of confessed obedience to the LORD. The promises were theirs also, promises of present good through obedience, and of future glory through the Messiah. "Whose are the fathers;" "The glory of children are their fathers" (Proverbs 17. 6). What nation could look **back** to men of such nobility of character **as** those from whom the Israel people sprang? None! "**Of** whom **is** Christ **as** concerning the flesh." This **is** last but not least of the honours associated with Israel. By that race the Saviour entered the world, born of a woman, born under the law. But besides being of Israel according to the flesh, "**He is** over all, God blessed for ever." God and Man are one Christ. The text of the A. V. and the R. V. give, I judge, the true translation and apply "who **is** over all, God blessed for ever" to Christ, and not to God, as an ascription of praise.

Verse 6: *But it is not as though the word of God hath come to nought. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:*

Israel means, "a prince of God," the name first given to a man who had dealings with God, but this was not true of all who sprang from him. The true Israelites were only a part of all those who descended from Jacob. The true Israel were spiritual men and women.

Verses 7, 8, 9: *Neither, because they are Abraham's seed, are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed. For this is a word of promise, According to this season will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.*

Abraham had many descendants both by Ishmael, the son of the Egyptian bondwoman, and by Keturah's sons, but the children of the flesh are not children of God, for the word of promise **was** concerning Sarah's son—"In Isaac shall thy seed **be** called." So that **we see** that the word of God has not come to nought in Israel, despite the fact that Israel nationally has been **set** aside for the present, for from the very beginning God chose **but** a part of Abraham's descendants. Why this **was** so **is** bound up in the inscrutable wisdom of God, who works **His** sovereign counsels according to **His** own perfect will.

Verses 10, 11, 12, 13: *And not only so; but Rebecca also having conceived by one, even by our father Isaac—for the children being not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. Even as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.*

Here **we** have something further concerning the truth of election. In connexion with Abraham, God chose **but** a part of his seed. In Isaac's twin sons **we** learn that works have nothing to do with election any more than they have to do with salvation. Election **is** not of works, **but** of **Him** that calleth. **We must be** careful in this **matter** of election that **we** do not fall into the error of those "who by making our faith **as** foreseen by God the **cause** of our election, affirm **it** to **be** out of works." Election **is** not the result of either faith or works foreknown by God. Election rests on the sovereign will of **Him** who calls. Thus **it was** that before **Rebecca's** sons were born

and had done neither good nor bad, it was said to her, "The elder shall serve the younger," and what applied to her sons applied to, the nations that sprang from them. Though the words spoken to Rebecca are in Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament, what was said to her was because of a fact not stated until Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" (Malachi 1. 2, 3). God's election rests on God's love. "Because He loved thy fathers, therefore He chose their seed after them" (Deuteronomy 4. 37). God's hatred of Esau need not be viewed as bitter animosity, but simply the rejection of Esau, and, in contrast, the election of Jacob. Esau and his descendants brought God's displeasure upon themselves later because of their ways, and for this they will bear their own punishment. That need not have been had they bowed to the will of God in His sovereign choice of Jacob.

Verses 14, 15: *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.*

Is there, can there be, injustice with God? It is impossible, indeed it is unthinkable. Can God who is Love act toward His creatures otherwise than in love, except they rebel against Him, bringing upon themselves just judgement? He who so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son has the good and the well-being of the world at heart. An unjust God would be a God who would corrupt and destroy Himself. Such is not the God of heaven, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In infinite pity He has mercy and compassion on whom He will. Moses bore witness to His integrity when he said,

44 The Rock, His work is perfect;
For all His ways are judgement:
A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,
Just and right is He" (Deuteronomy 32. 4),

Few men, if any, have been on such intimate terms with God, **and** his personal testimony is of the greatest importance. God cannot do wrong. It is impossible! Here we must rest in this matter of election.

Verse 16: *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy.*

Here no doubt we have the scenes of Genesis 27 envisaged. The aged and blind Isaac sent Esau to bring him venison such as his soul loved, **and** in turn he promised to bestow the firstborn's blessing upon him before he died. Esau in the hunt pursued the deer to bring his father the venison, but before he returned, Jacob, at his mother's instigation, had obtained the blessing of the firstborn from his father. It was not of him that willed (Isaac), nor of him that ran (Esau), but of God that showed mercy (to Jacob). He needed mercy for the lies he told, when he said, "I am Esau thy firstborn," and when Isaac questioned him, "Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am" (Genesis 27. 19, 24). Many seem to begrudge Jacob God's mercy whilst they accept mercy in a full cup themselves. Often have I wondered how the transactions of Genesis 27 could have been otherwise. Isaac was in the wrong, so also was Rebecca in her plan to prevent her husband from making a tragic mistake. Esau was in the wrong in seeking the firstborn's blessing after he had sold his birthright, and Jacob was in the wrong in that he followed the course of deception and lying at his mother's suggestion. But over all the wrongs shine the merciful ways of God in electing grace acting according to His own perfect will. 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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EDITORIAL.

Parenthetic **Statements** in the Gospel according to John.

The parenthetic statements in the Gospel according to John are all significant and relevant, and therefore should receive some attention. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines parenthesis as " Word, clause, sentence, inserted into a passage to which it is not grammatically essential, " and Fowler's "Usage" insists that parentheses should be relevant. Students of the Scriptures sometimes assert that certain passages, though not so indicated, are parenthetic, but we shall here confine our attention to parentheses in brackets. Though these all amplify the main record, they differ in type, and this month we shall look at some which interpret words not of Greek origin.

"Rabbi" (1. 38) is interpreted as "Master" (or "Teacher" Mg.). Strong's Concordance says that "Rabbi" is of Hebrew origin and is an official title of honour. In the Gospels we find some applying it, as a mode of deferential address, to the Lord Jesus and to John the Baptist (3. 26); and the Pharisees loved to be so addressed (Matthew 23. 7). This title of honour and deference **is**, therefore, by no means uniquely applied to the Lord. While "Rabbi" is interpreted only once in John's Gospel, "Messiah" occurs twice and is explained in both occurrences (1. 41, 4. 25). This may mark its greatness and its unique application to the Lord Jesus. Strong's Concordance gives "Messiah" as of Hebrew origin; the Hebrew original, which occurs in Daniel, means "anointed" and can be applied only to a consecrated person. Other parentheses in this category refer to "Peter" and "Cephas" (1. 42) and to "Siloam" (9. 7): and we pause only to remark that here in the New Testament we have teaching by type, a marked feature of the Old Testament.

In contrast to these words, "Gabbatha" (19. 13), "Golgotha" (19. 17) and "Rabboni" (20. 16) have no associated parentheses. The Jews applied the term "Gabbatha" to Roman tribunals in Jerusalem (see Strong's Concordance), and it may here be set in opposition to the Roman term "The Pavement." The use of "Golgotha" for "the place of a skull" may, like "Siloam," be another case of typical teaching implied in a name, and parentheses may have been omitted because, through its association with the Lord's death, it is of sufficient importance to have a place in the main argument. "Rabboni," of Chaldaic origin and meaning "Lord," would seem to excel "Rabbi," and, as it acknowledges the Lordship of Christ, merits a place in the main narrative. His Name is above every name, and we confess Jesus Christ as Lord (Philippians 2. 9). **J. B.**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

(Chapters 7 and 8.)

From **Edinburgh.** —In chapter 7 we find men's various opinions as to who the Lord Jesus was: we also find from His own words who He actually was. Men's thoughts, however, are truly much lower than God's thoughts, and we cannot depend on what men say and think. They

said concerning Him (1) " He is a good Man " (7. 12), (2) " He leadeth the multitude astray " (7. 12), (3) " Thou hast a demon " (7. 20 Mg.), (4) " This is . . . the Prophet " (7. 40), (5) " This is the Christ " (7. 41), and (6) " Never man so spake " (7. 46). In spite of all the opposition of men, He was faithful to His Father in making known to them the truth of His coming forth from the Father into the world: men's thoughts will never alter the true and real facts concerning His Person and work. He spoke of Himself, time and again, as being sent from the Father. He came as sent from His Father, and was to go to the Father (7. 16, 28, 33). Within the scope of the " little while " (7. 33) much is included as regards the things which He began both to do and to teach: the Cross itself was within that " little while. "

The Lord's brethren believed not on Him, though later they were among the hundred and twenty (Acts 1).

His " time " (7. 6) we take to be the time of His going up to the feast, but " His hour " (7. 30) we understand to refer to the hour of His apprehension in the garden [1].

His words on the last day of the feast (7. 37) are the solution to man's problem today. Graciously He intreated men to come unto Him and know true satisfaction by drinking at the well of salvation.

The men sent to take Him were arrested by His words, and their testimony of Him was true. If the words of Christ fail to move us, what else can ?

J. Paterson.

From Toronto (Ont.). —We have brought before us in John 8 (commencing at verse 12) the witness of the Lord Jesus Christ to His eternal Deity and His relationship with the Father. The Pharisees immediately opposed the Lord's claims by bluntly asserting that His witness was not true. Their claim (8. 33), to be by natural generation Abraham's seed, was of no consequence in that their spiritual father was the father of lies, the devil (8. 44). To be a child of Abraham was not sufficient; a correct heart attitude toward the Lord was necessary. The rich man in Luke 16 was a child (Greek, *Teknon*) of Abraham, yet he was in the place of the lost. He was not a son, because he bore no resemblance to Abraham. Such were the Pharisees: they claimed to be Abraham's seed, but their sinful ways manifested the character of Ishmael, the son of the bond-woman. We felt this to be the force of verse 35. Ishmael, born after the flesh, was born in bondage; Isaac, the son of the freewoman, the son of promise, was free. Eventually the " bondservant of sin " was cast out, since he had to give place to the son of the freewoman. The Jews fully realised the import of the Lord's words and were incensed against Him and sought to kill Him (8. 40). As a nation they were under bondage to Rome, and were also in bondage to Jewish ritualism.

As though thoroughly to convince the Jews of His Deity, He announced Himself as the eternal I AM (8. 58). At such a wonderful revelation, we would have expected a worshipping multitude at His feet: instead, they took up stones to cast at Him.

N. K.

EXTRACTS.

From **Wembley**. —The word " because " appears eight times in John 7, and the whole cause of the conflict of opinion could be centred in the fifth " because " (7. 29): " I know Him; because I am from Him, and He sent Me. " (See also John 1. 18.) Here then was the great question, Is this Man the Christ ? We divided their opinions into three groups.

(1) Those who showed favour towards Him (7. 12, 31, **40**, 41, 46).
 (2) Those against Him were the **Jews** and His brethren (7. 5), and others (7. 12, 20, **36**, 41, 48). (3) Those in doubt (7. 26).

The sayings of the people contradict one another in John 7. 27, **42**. In the latter verse, great is their error, for they knew not, or remembered not, that Christ was born in Bethlehem. The unbiased opinion of the officers (7. 46) stands in contrast to the wavering opinion of the people, and the envy of the rulers and Pharisees. *N. F. Toms.*

From Barry. —We have a glimpse in John 7 of the truth of John 1. **10**, 11, " He came unto His own, and they that were **His** own received Him not. " This unbelief was shared by **His** own brethren. It was in such an attitude of unbelief that they spake to **Him** concerning **His** going up to the Feast of Tabernacles.

Verses 25, **26** seem to teach that it was the rulers of the Jews rather than the common people who sought **His** life. The Lord Jesus went amongst the people and spake openly. Verse **10** seems to relate to **His** entry into the city, rather than **His** actual presence there, for **His** time was not yet come. We find **His** public entry in John 12.

The Feast of Tabernacles was one of the three occasions in the year when all the males of God's people had to appear before **Him** in the place of the Name. In this light the Lord's brethren might expect **Him** to go up also. Perhaps verse **8** would satisfy them as to the Lord's intention of being at the feast. *C. J.*

From Glasgow. —The Lord Jesus, we are told, walked in Galilee, not in Judaea, for the Jews sought to kill Him. At this time **His** brethren, who did not believe on Him, began to taunt Him. Satan sought thus to afflict the Lord by **His** own family. This incident shows that relationship of flesh and blood is not the means of the knowledge of the Christ; this comes only by revelation from the Father (Matthew 16. 17).

The Feast of Tabernacles is here called a feast of the Jews, whilst in Leviticus **23** it is called a set feast of the LORD (see Deuteronomy 16. 13).

On the last day of the feast, which was a great day, a day of solemn rest, they were so taken up with their carnal ordinances and rituals that they failed to see that they had come to the end of the Law and Prophets, which were until John the Baptist. They should have been rejoicing in the promise of God, in the Christ in their midst, but they failed to see God's goodness, which should have led them to repent and to accept the Christ. *F. Harvey.*

From Kingston-on-Thames. —The Lord's brethren told **Him** to depart into Judaea in order that **His** disciples might behold the works He performed (7. 3), and said, " **If** Thou doest these things, manifest Thyself to the world. " That **His** brethren did not believe on **Him** would indicate their slowness of heart to believe that He was the promised One. Jesus said, " Believe **Me** that I am in the Father, and the Father in **Me**: or else believe **Me** for the very works' sake " (John 14. 11). Christ asked **His** disciples, " Who do men say that the Son of Man is ? And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah: and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. " Asked by the Lord, " **What** think ye of the Christ? Whose Son is **He** ? " the Pharisees said, " The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call **Him** Lord, . . . If David then calleth **Him** Lord, how is He **His** Son ? "

The statement " I am the Light of the world " **was** a bold assertion to make. The Psalmist said, " Send out Thy light and Thy truth; let them lead me. " In the days of **His** flesh the Lord said, " This **is** the judgement, that the light **is** come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. " The statement, " Before Abraham was, I am, " speaks not simply of pre-existence, but of **His** eternal Being in **which He is** one with the eternal Father.

W. Dawn.

From Crowborough. —The signs that the Lord did were having a marked effect on public opinion, and the chief priests thought it advisable to have Him arrested, and sent officers to take Him. This prompted the Lord to tell them that very soon He would be out of their reach and power. He then laid claim to the authority to give the Holy Spirit to those who come to Him.

Wrong opinions had been formed because of ignorance **as** to the place of **His** birth. He had lived in Nazareth and Capernaum after the return from Egypt, and Bethlehem had been forgotten. The chief priests and rulers had forgotten about Jonah, who belonged to Gath-hepher, which was between Cana and Nazareth.

S. S.

From Halifax, Bradford **and** Leeds. —John 7. 1-5 shows the attitude of the Lord's own brethren, of His own family. Evidently **His** brethren sought the manifestation of earthly glory, when they urged Him to go up to the Feast of Tabernacles; but that was not the Lord's way: He was intent on glorifying **His** Father.

It was important that the story of the adulteress should be brought in where it **is** to show the Jews (who claimed that the people who knew not the Law were accursed, 7. 49) that they were as bad as the rest. The Lord often took up contemporary events and used them in a spiritual sense.

J. R. Butler.

From Southport. —The people who accepted the Lord Jesus as the Christ reminded us of Peter's well-known declaration in Matthew 16. 16, " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, " and of Martha's words, " I have believed that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God. "

Many today remind us of those who were uncertain about **Him** (7. 12, 26, 46): they say that **He** was a good man and a wonderful Teacher, but they will not accept **Him as** the Christ, the Son of God. Others, even today, say that **He is** not the Christ (7. 12, 8. 13); **He** was a perfect example sent by God to show us how we should live, but **He** was only a **man** and not the Son of God. Alas ! for such **as** say so ! **B. H.**

From Atherton. —The Jews' estimation of the Lord was not very high: nevertheless, **He** had been taught of God (Isaiah 50. 4, 5), taught in seclusion, helped and fortified by prayer, guided and instructed by the Holy Spirit; and **His** ear was opened morning by morning. But, although Christ learned God's will as perfect Man, we are not unmindful of the fact that **He** was Divine, the Son of God.

The attitude of those who brought the woman to the Lord was wrong. They brought the woman; but where was the man ? The Lord, knowing the wickedness of their hearts, treated them according to their deserts. They fell into the pit which they had dug for the Lord, ensnared with the words of their own mouth. The Lord looked round for witnesses, but they were gone. **He** then extended mercy to the sinner, but at the same time made it evident that **He** disapproved of her wrong-doing: " from henceforth sin no more. "

The word "followeth" (8. 12) has the thought of accompanying. There is no danger of being in the darkness, if we accompany Christ (Psalm 16. 8).

Some of the Lord's words in John 7 and 8 are tragic, for, alas ! some will seek the Lord but will not find Him (7. 34, 8. 21-24). There is a glorious opportunity, if they had only given heed to the words of Isaiah 55. 6, 7.

G. Sankey, D. H. Butler.

From Wigan. —At the time of the feast the multitudes would be in Jerusalem, and this would provide another opportunity for the Lord to preach good tidings to the poor. He went up in secret (7. 10), but not in fear; for in the midst of the feast He spake openly (7. 26). The point is that His entry into the city was not in public; the time for His public entry was not yet come. The mind of the multitude was confused, and their opinions conflicting, His birthplace had been forgotten (7. 41), but the Lord did not correct this error, nor a second error into which they had fallen (7. 52). We note that He coupled Himself with His Father, but they knew neither Him nor His Father (8. 19), so they missed the way of life. For "this is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send" (17. 3). The many only saw in Him a good Man from Galilee (7. 12); a wonderful Teacher (7. 46; Matthew 7. 28, 29); or a prophet, but not the Son of God. The discussion between the Lord and the Jews (8. 31-58) sums up the national attitude to Him as the Messiah. He told them the truth, backed by the testimony of the prophets, and by the evidence of His signs. They rejected the counsel of God (Luke 7. 30) and exchanged the truth of God for a lie? (Romans 1. 25). In contrast to the lying character of Satan (8. 44), the Lord witnessed of Himself as the Truth. **J. H.**

From Cowdenbeath. —The Jews regarded the Lord Jesus as a law-breaker, yet they circumcised on the Sabbath to keep the law of Moses. The Law which they professed to keep condemned them, for it said, "Thou shalt not kill," and they had murder in their hearts towards Him (7. 19).

The genuineness of the narrative concerning the woman taken in adultery is disputed by some. Would the Lord contradict the teaching of Moses? Would He uphold it and give them cause to report Him to the Romans? As if to dissociate Himself from that sordid scene, He stooped to write. They pressed Him for an answer, and under pressure He answered with consummate wisdom. While He again stooped and wrote, with shame and confusion of face they one by one departed.

"Who art Thou?" This direct question the Lord would not specifically answer. He replied that from the beginning of His ministry He had sought to make that plain. The Cross would fully reveal His identity (8. 28).

The Lord began (8. 31) by addressing believing Jews, but there were others also in the company who were certainly not believers (8. 37), and they raised the query of verse 33, and the subsequent discourse is with those Jews. A person becomes a believer through hearing the word and receiving it (8. 30). The matter of discipleship is not a rounded-off transaction. Abiding in the word makes a person truly a disciple. Such an experience will lead to a person coming to a knowledge of the truth and knowing the freedom that the truth brings. The Jews in the audience did not understand what the Lord meant by His statement that the truth would make free. They claimed to be Abraham's seed and declared that they had never been in bondage to any man. They could not have meant freedom from political bondage, for at that time they were under the Roman yoke.

There are other types of bondage. We can be brought into bondage by sin. We were sin's bondservants prior to our conversion, but we should no longer be in such bondage (Romans 6. 6). This is a personal matter affecting the individual life. There is also the possibility of being bondservants of men; this affects our service in fellowship with others.

J. K. D. Johnston.

From London, S. E. —The Lord's words amazed His hearers, especially as they had not known Him as One taught in their centres of learning. His teachings were from the Father, who gave Him the tongue of them that are taught (Isaiah 50. 4), and thus He could refute His hearers' arguments. As it has ever been with the Lord's word, there were believers and rejectors. "So there arose a division in the multitude because of Him." Even the officers, though not believers, answered the priests and Pharisees as to why they had not arrested Him, saying, "Never man so spake."

John 7. 53—8. 11, is indicated as being omitted by most ancient authorities; but the Lord's dealings with the woman and her accusers are in keeping with His righteousness and His forgiving love. The woman had broken the Law, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. The Pharisees, who would have condemned the woman, were left speechless, and the Lord made them to know that they likewise were sinners (8. 7), but the woman received the assuring comfort of the Lord's forgiving grace.

Geo. Pain

From Paisley and Barrhead. —The logic of John 7. 27 at first glance seems faulty, but the meaning might simply be that the Jews thought the Christ would appear in some miraculous way and in regal glory.

Palestine at that time was notorious for its magicians, sorcerers and soothsayers; nevertheless, there were those who were greatly impressed by the signs which He did and who were almost persuaded to accept Him as Messiah (7. 31).

The soldiers who were sent to take Him were sternly rebuked by the chief priests and Pharisees when they appeared without Him. The reason they offered must have sounded weak to the priests and the soldiers alike, but it was indeed the true explanation: "Never man so spake" [2]. Nicodemus' argument (7. 51, 52) shows clearly that the conniving of the leaders of the Jews at the death of Christ did not have his approval.

The Lord's statement, "I go away," was wrongly interpreted as death by suicide, and their questioning gave the Lord an opportunity to impress upon them that they were of this world while He was from above. It is cheering to note that some responded to the words of truth that proceeded out of His mouth (8. 30).

There is some doubt in the original as to the word "Samaritan" (8. 48) [3]. It was the most despicable name they could call Him at the time (Samaritans being hated by the Jews).

W. Terrell Jr.

From Manchester. —The Lord's brethren seem to have become believers after the Lord's resurrection (Galatians 1. 19; Acts 12. 17, 15 13; 1 Corinthians 9. 5, 15. 7). The brethren of the Lord did not dispute that He had done mighty works, but they felt that, if He was really what He claimed to be He should make a public demonstration. This may have been prompted by the same misplaced solicitude which His mother showed at Cana, for the reply of the Lord recalls the words spoken there (2. 4). If the falling away of many half-hearted ones (6. 66) took place before this, it is easier to understand the challenge put forward by His brethren. His insistence upon following His own course is in keeping with a principle found in this gospel (7. 30, 2. 4, 8. 20, 12. 23, 13. 1, 17. 1).

The same thought appears in Matthew 26. 18; Luke 13. 32, 33. From early times John 7. 8-10 has caused perplexity. This probably led to the textual variant "not yet" for "not," which is found in many MSS. A feasible explanation of the words as they stand is that Jesus would not make His Messianic entry at this feast [4].

"How knoweth this Man letters, never having learned?" Many commentators take the words in their literal sense. The point of the question is bewildered admiration rather than disdain. It was the insight and the knowledge displayed in His interpretation that impressed His hearers (Mark 1. 22).

R. Bowden.

From Hereford. —The Jews, who were rebellious against the Law given through Moses, marvelled when they saw One whose very life was permeated by the word of God. He did not glory in this difference in His life, which was evident to the Jews, but sought to show that the glory was of God. In seeking to give glory to whom it was due, the Lord claimed this was evidence of His truthfulness, and, although He knew His words would not be received, He said, "And if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be like unto you, a liar: but I know Him, and keep His word." If the Lord had accepted the glory they were prepared to accord Him for His works, He would have been acceptable to the Jews, but because He claimed God as His Father they hated Him.

J. O. Tidmas.

From Willington Quay. —When at Jerusalem the Lord was confronted on the one hand with the multitude and on the other with the chief priests and Pharisees. The multitude apparently listened to His teaching with an open mind and sought to base their opinions of Him upon the signs that He did and on the words that He spake. Many of the multitude believed, but others remained in a quandary. In contrast the chief priests and Pharisees sought to refute His teaching, and bring about His destruction by intrigue, but without success at this time.

Whilst a measure of doubt is associated with the portion John 7. 53—8. 11, there is nothing in the incident which is at variance with what the Lord taught and practised. It was as a Saviour He had come, not as a Judge.

K. R.

From Liverpool. —Psalm 69. 8 reveals prophetically the attitude of the Lord's brethren according to the flesh, "I am become a stranger unto My brethren, and an alien unto My mother's children."

The Jews sought Him, not as the Teacher of truth, but as the One who by the things He had spoken had offended their pride and self-righteousness, and who, according to them, had made blasphemous claims. They sought Him that they might kill Him.

In the midst of the feast, the Lord went to the temple. His teaching there reminds us of Deuteronomy 18. 15-18: "I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him."

The Law (Deuteronomy 22) decreed stoning for any guilty of adultery; and the Pharisees, setting the woman in the midst of the company and requiring the judgement of the Lord Jesus on this matter, quoted the Law. What ensued was indeed to their chagrin; His answer was to stoop and without a word write with His finger on the ground. Their continued questioning evoked the reply: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." He stooped and wrote again. What He wrote we do not know, but the effect was that they went out one by one, from the eldest to the last. He confounded His enemies and critics, and manifested His grace (1. 16, 17).

Alan P. Sands, A. Horridge.

From Birkenhead. —What John said in chapter 1 about the Life being the Light of men, is here confirmed by the direct words of the Lord **Jesus**, "I **am** the Light of the world" (8. 12). These two things were inseparable in the teaching of the Lord. The light not only enables the heart to believe unto righteousness, but illuminates the mind also to give believers an understanding of the Lord's will, and enables them to walk in the light, in fellowship with God and with one another.

We had some difficulty in understanding the scathing words of the Lord, addressed apparently to those who had believed on **Him**. Some thought that the Lord's words (8. 31, 32), addressed to the Jews who had believed, were answered by others in the crowd, who had remained unmoved but were prepared to argue, and it **is** these whom the Lord is dealing with in the remainder of the chapter. Others thought that the believers here were like those in chapter 2, who in Jerusalem at the feast had believed on **His** Name, but the Lord did not trust Himself to them. They had not understood that the Lord was teaching those who had believed on **Him** the need for abiding in **His** word, **if** they were to be **His** disciples (8. 31, 32).

N. A.

(Chapter 6.)

From Hamilton (Ontario). —God in a past day fed the children of Israel with the manna from heaven (Deuteronomy 8. 3): He, not Moses, gave them bread out of heaven. The manna came down from heaven, reminding **us** of the Lord's Deity. It was found upon the ground, telling **us** of His lowliness **and** humility. The Lord Jesus took upon Himself blood and flesh that **He** might yield up **His** life upon the Cross. Unbelief blinded the eyes of the multitude to the true Bread.

After such a wonderful miracle, the Jews had the boldness to murmur against Him. They did **as** God's people Israel had done, when they said, "Our soul loatheth this light bread." **We** are exhorted: "Neither murmur ye, **as** some of them murmured, and perished" (1 Corinthians 10. 10).

The Lord's words to the disciples, "Give ye them to eat" were similar to the words of Elisha, and no doubt were to prove their faith in Him. In their own insufficiency they failed to recognise the power and glory of their Lord and Master. Nevertheless the disciples were the channels of blessing used by the Lord to feed the multitudes.

M. Vanderwater, T. Ramage.

COMMENTS.

[1] (Edinburgh). —I **am** of the opinion that the words, "My time **is** not yet come" (7. 6), and, "My time is not yet fulfilled" (verse 8), have a much deeper significance than simply to apply them to the Lord's time for going up to the Feast of Tabernacles. Note, the subject under discussion with **His** brethren was: "If Thou doest these things, manifest Thyself to the world" (verse 4). Where was **His** manifestation to the world? **We** find **Him** some time after John 7 charging **His** disciples "that they should tell no **man** that **He** was the Christ" (Matthew 16. 20). Then, perhaps later than Matthew 16, we have the Jews saying, "How long dost Thou hold **us** in suspense? If Thou art the Christ, tell us plainly" (John 10. 24). Well **He** knew that when **He** publicly affirmed that **He** was the Christ, the Son of God, **He** would be condemned by the Jewish rulers (Matthew 26. 63-68; Luke 22. 66-71), but before His manifestation to the world **as** the Christ in His condemnation and

crucifixion He had His life work to complete, in the words His Father had given Him to speak and the works He had given Him to do. His brethren were of the world and could share in its pleasures and plans, but He was not of the world, and at last the Cross manifested the gap which lay between Him and the world, and between His disciples and the world also. Note also the frequent reference by the Lord to His hour. —*J. M.*

[2] (Paisley **and** Barrhead). —It was officers (temple officers), not Roman soldiers, who were sent to take the Lord in John 7. 32, 45, 46. —*J. M.*

[3] (Paisley **and** Barrhead). —There does not seem to be any doubt that John says that the Jews called the Lord a Samaritan (the only recorded instance of this), a term of contempt. —*J. M.*

[4] (Manchester). —See Comment [1], Note 8. 28, the Lord's manifestation to the world, as to who He is, is connected with His crosswork. The Cross divides mankind into two vast groups, those who believe in Him, who is the " I am " who died there, and those who do not. —*J. M.*

[5] (Birkenhead). —These were Jewish believers who had not, like the apostles and others, cast in their lot with Him as His followers or disciples, so He spoke to them of abiding in His word and being true disciples. The Lord viewed them, even though they were believers, as part of the Jewish nation, Abraham's natural seed indeed; but the nation to which they belonged sought to kill Him, and Abraham's children had turned after the devil and were the devil's children, which was evidenced in their doing his works. The issue before these Jewish believers was: Would they abide in His word, or would they continue to adhere to the chief priests and Pharisees and the Jewish nation? They would, like many others, have to make their decision whether to be on the Lord's side or that of His enemies. —*J. M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question from Kingston-on-Thames. —Does the Lord's assertion " I am the Light of the world " refer essentially to His Deity?

Answer. —Truly this is so. No one but one who is God could be the Light of the world. He is not *a* Light, but *the* Light, the definite article is used, and the pronoun *I* is emphatic. There is no other Light but the Lord. —*J. M.*

Question from Paisley **and** Barrhead. —Does the New Testament " I am " have the same force as that of Exodus 3. 14 V

Answer. —Yes. It is not " Before Abraham was, I was, " but, " Before Abraham was, I am. " This describes His eternal Being, not merely pre-existence. —*J. M.*

Question from London. —What is your thought as to the placing of the incident *re* the woman in John 8. 2-11?

Answer. —Authorities say that John 7. 53—8. 11 appears in no Greek MS. earlier than the sixth century, and it is not quoted as by John the apostle before the last half of the fourth century. It is thought, therefore, by many not to form part of John's Gospel, but to be an interpolation. We cannot reject the voice of scholars skilled in the art of textual criticism. Certain have thought the narrative to be genuine, forming part of the traditional teachings handed down by the apostles and those that accompanied with the Lord. Alford says, " Our conclusion on the data must I think be, *to retain the passage*, as we retain Mark 16. 9 ff., with a distinction from the rest of the text. " The profound way in which the Lord dealt with the woman and her accusers seems to bear on the face of it the truthfulness of the narrative. After listening to the voices of scholars, this is my simple way of satisfying myself. —*J. M.*

NOTES ON ROMANS.
CHAPTER 9.

Verses 17, 18: *For the scripture saith to Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might shew in thee My power, and that My name might be published abroad in all the earth. So then He hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth.*

We have here Paul, as it were, giving personality to scripture, as he does in Galatians 3. 8, in the words, "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith." In Pharaoh we see one of those proud, rebellious characters, who are prepared to fight even against God Himself. He said, "Who is the LORD, that I should hearken unto His voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, and moreover I will not let Israel go" (Exodus 5. 2). As early as Exodus 4. 21, God said, "I will harden his heart, and he will not let the people go." This fearful hardening of heart came true (Exodus 10. 20, 27; 11. 10, etc.), but there seems no doubt that this king whom God raised up had a strong resisting heart. It says, "Pharaoh's heart was hardened (strong)," and, "Pharaoh's heart is stubborn (heavy)" (Exodus 7. 13, 14), and he made his heart yet more heavy or stubborn (Exodus 8. 32; 9. 34, etc.). There seems to be an interlocking in these chapters in Exodus of Pharaoh hardening his heart and the LORD hardening it. The purpose of God in raising Pharaoh was that the name and power of Jehovah should be spread abroad, and what happened to Pharaoh had a voice for other proud men and nations. See 1 Samuel 6. 6, where the Philistines remembered those events long years after they happened in Egypt. Job said, "He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against Him, and prospered?" (Job 9. 4). "For God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against Him? For He giveth not account of any of His matters" (Job 33. 12, 13). God has not explained to us why He has mercy on some, and why He hardens others; such matters rest in His sovereign will, which is impeccably just, and even in His severity He has good as the ultimate goal.

Verses 19, 20, 21: *Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He still find fault? For who withstandeth His will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus? Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?*

Pharaoh in the Old Testament and Judas in the New were evidently men who loved the course that they pursued; God did not make them wicked, but being the men they made themselves, they were suited for the work they did. Balaam loved the lure of wrong-doing. God cannot be charged with wrong-doing, as though men were merely His tools in the doing of evil. If this were the case, then the question might properly be asked, "Why doth He still find fault?" Why indeed? It is not ours to question supreme Wisdom, and say, "Why didst Thou make me thus?" If the Divine Potter from the common clay of humanity has made a man a vessel to dishonour, to follow a lowly course and vocation, let such a man fill it to the glory of God, and not drink the poisonous draught from ambition's well, and seek to mount to wealth and fame on the rungs of the ladder of wickedness, deceit, self-seeking, and lose his soul in consequence. Was not this the deception of Eve, who thought to mount higher by disobeying God? God makes men as He will. "The rich and the poor meet together: the LORD is the Maker of them all" (Proverbs 22. 2). Job said, "If I did despise the cause of my manservant... Did not He that made me in the womb make him?"

And did not **One** fashion us in the womb ? " (Job 31. 13, 15). God never made **man** to do wickedly **that He** might **then** destroy him. That would be a reproach against **man's** Maker, who is Love. **We must**, I think, be careful to distinguish between a vessel **made** unto dishonour, and vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction. God does not make a vessel on purpose to destroy it. This would make the Creator more foolish than **His** creature man, who does not make vessels simply to destroy them, which would be wanton **waste** of time, work and material.

Verses 22, 23, 24: *What if God, willing to skew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction: and that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He also called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles ?*

God, because He says of Himself that **He** is slow to anger and plenteous in mercy (Exodus 34. 8), has often endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath that were fitted unto destruction. This is seen in the two specimen cases already cited—Pharaoh and Judas Iscariot, but we can see other like cases in the Scriptures: Jeroboam and Ahab, Annas and Caiaphas. Not the least of those with whom God endured in longsuffering were the people of Israel, with whom both prophets and apostles and the Lord Himself pleaded, and warned them of coming judgement. At last it fell, and they were slain in their tens of thousands, the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed, and a remnant was carried captive amongst the nations. Divine rule in the kingdom of heaven is seen in entreaty and also in the judgement which befell them, as outlined in Matthew 22. 1-7. God showed His wrath after much long-suffering, and He also made known the riches of His glory, glory which is to be seen in His mercy and grace (Exodus 33. 18, 19), upon vessels of mercy. These were such as had believed from among the Jews and Gentiles, who had been called through the gospel of His grace, whom Paul describes as being foreordained, called, justified and glorified (Romans 8. 30).

Verses 25, 26: *As He saith also in Hosea, I will call that My people, which was not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall be, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there shall they be called sons of the living God.*

Here Paul uses scriptures from Hosea 2. 23 and 1. 10 (which describe the restoration of the ten tribes which revolted against Rehoboam, and whom Jeroboam led into idolatry in the worship of the golden calves), and applies them to what was happening in his day, in the saving grace which believing **Jews** and Gentiles had known. **He** does the **same** in Romans 15. 9-12, making quotations from 2 Samuel 22. 50, Deuteronomy 32. 43 and Isaiah 11. 10, scriptures which apply to the Millennium, and applies them to the time then present, when **Jew** and Gentile praised God together in the **same** Fellowship. The **same** principle is also seen in **Peter's** application of the Joel prophecy (Joel 2. 28-32) to the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). There will be a further outpouring of the Spirit before the **day** of the Lord.

Verses 27, 28, 29: *And Isaiah crieth concerning Israel, If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that shall be saved: for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, finishing it and cutting it short. And, as Isaiah hath said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had become as Sodom, and had been like unto Gomorrah.*

When a people depart from God and His word they never all return. For the greater part of Israel's history in the Old Testament only a remnant was found associated with the house of God. From the time of the Exodus until the days of Rehoboam was just over 500 years, and from Rehoboam to Christ almost 1, 000 years. Then, when Judah and Benjamin were carried to Babylon, only a remnant came back to Jerusalem to build the temple and the city. There was but a remnant of the Jews saved in Paul's day—" a remnant according to the election of grace " (Romans 11. 5). Our own day is a day of remnant testimony. And when Israel is restored at the coming of the Son of Man only a remnant will be saved then also (Zechariah 13. 7-9). The Lord will swiftly fulfil His word in righteousness. It is nevertheless a blessed fact that Israel was not to be at any time as Sodom and Gomorrah, which were left without any that escaped. Lot and his family were dragged out of Sodom, for they did not belong to that wicked city. Those who appreciate a day of remnant testimony find much comfort in such thoughts concerning a small remnant.

Verses 30, 31, 32: *What shall we say then ? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith: but Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at the law, Wherefore ? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works. They stumbled at the Stone of stumbling;*

The Gentiles which did not pursue righteousness (they had no standard of right as the Jews had in the law), attained unto righteousness, that is the righteousness which is out of faith. But in contrast, Israel, pursuing their law of righteousness, did not attain to it, for it was impossible for the natural man to fulfil the law's requirements, " for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified " (Romans 3. 20). They sought righteousness by works, not by faith. The result was that they stumbled at Christ, the Stone of stumbling and Rock of offence. Instead of resting on this Stone, they stumbled against or collided with Him. This collision was fatal to them. The gospel message was, " Believe and live, " and this they would not accept.

Verse 33: *Even as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offence: and he that believeth on Him shall not be put to shame.*

Here we have the words of Isaiah 8. 14 joined to 28. 16. The Stone of stumbling is substituted for the Corner Stone, elect, precious, blessed Stone of rest for all tempest-tossed souls, and also for a people in their struggles to reach Zion; but sad indeed it is for those who stumble at **Christ**, for if they are broken upon Him there is none to restore them, for **He** alone is the great Physician. **His** words to John the **Baptist's** disciples are apposite: " Blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in **Me** •• (Matthew 11. 6).
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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EDITORIAL.

Parenthetic Statements in the Gospel according to John.

This month we shall consider briefly three parentheses in John's Gospel, which might be described as giving the "Jewish background" in the days of the Lord's sojourn on earth. The first of these—"For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans" (4. 9)—enables us to sense the contempt implied in the application of the word "Samaritan" to the Lord Himself (8. 48), and also to appreciate why the Lord's use of the word so affected the Pharisees, for it brings into bold relief the compassion of the kind Samaritan (Luke 10) and the gratitude of the cleansed Samaritan leper (Luke 17).

While it was the LORD'S will that His people should be separate from the nations, the Jews erred in showing hatred or contempt. Those who today by the grace of God constitute the house of God should maintain their separation from the world and from religious sectarianism, and should do so without pride or haughtiness. They should manifest, as concerning themselves, humility; towards men, love and a reaching out with the gospel and the truth; and towards God, faithfulness and gratitude.

The next verse we have in mind is John 7. 22, in which the Lord, keeping strictly to the legal tenor of the argument, referred to circumcision as being enjoined by the Law through Moses. The parenthetic reference to the fathers makes it clear that this was no mis-statement. So far as the Jews were concerned, circumcision began with Abraham and was also included in the Mosaic law. The danger was that, great as the Law was, the keeping of it might degenerate into empty conformity without any thought of the covenant of God and the promises to Abraham.

Our last verse is John 19. 31. Those responsible for the death of the Lord Jesus here concern themselves about a sabbath, a high day: as with circumcision, so with the sabbath—conformity without spiritual life or vision. They sought on the day of the Preparation to remove the blot of the cross on which a righteous Man had died, a blot which ever remains, for they shall yet look on Him whom they pierced (19. 37; Zechariah 12. 10).

Mere formality is empty of joy and blessing, and this Jewish background should warn us of the disastrous results of holding a form of godliness and denying the power thereof (2 Timothy 3. 5). *J. B.*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

(Chapters 9 and 10.)

From Brantford, Ont. —Our discussion centred mainly around the term "fold" and whom it contained. There were two views. (1) The "fold" was the nation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit the Porter. (2) The "fold" was John's disciples, and, therefore, all in it were baptized with John's baptism. John the Baptist was the Porter. All Israelites were regarded

as sheep—" I was not sent **but** unto **the** lost sheep of **the** house of Israel. " **Were** all **the** Lord's **Jewish** disciples baptized into John's baptism ?— " Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold. " If the fold is John's disciples, then the other sheep could **be** in Israel **as** well **as** in the Gentile nations, for all Israel did not obey John [1]. When did the thieves **and** robbers start their activity ? Whoever the Porter **was**, he **was** superseded **by** the Lord Himself, for **He** said, " I **am** the Door. " The going **in** and going out imply a fold. Therefore **we** have a flock **and** a fold **in** view, though they have separate and distinct thoughts behind them. " This fold " (10. 16) may not refer to John's fold, but to the fold that the Lord has made **and** in which **is** His flock, ready to be united to others.

A. Sproul.

From Crowborough. —The disciples, seeing that the Lord looked on the blind man, **asked** " Who did **sin** . . . that he should **be** born blind ? " They sought to establish a connexion between the **man's** affliction **and** some act of sin, but the Lord **Jesus** declared the reason for the **man's** blindness; " that the works of God should **be** made manifest in him. " Looking on the **man** in his darkness was the Light of the World, who anointed his eyes with clay and **sent** him to wash in the pool of Siloam. The result was that his darkness was dispelled. **His** neighbours asked him how his eyes were opened. Taken to the Pharisees, who asked him the **same** question, he answered a little differently. To the neighbours he said " and I received sight " (9. 11), but to the Pharisees " and do **see** " (9. 15). The Pharisees **were** divided after this **as** to who **He** **was** who had done this deed, but without hesitation the **man** said, " **He** is a prophet. "

The simple faith of this **man** and the truth of his words were too much for them. What he said **was** based on **an** actual **fact** that had **taken** place in his life (9. 25). The **Jews** were unable to refute the truth of this **argument**, so they cast him out, **but** the Lord **Jesus** found him, and with his eyes he **saw** the Light of the World. Soon the eyes of his soul **saw in Him** the Son of God; and he worshipped **Him**,

The fact that this **man** **was** born blind **is** significant (9. 32). **Of** all the **cases** of blindness recorded **in** the Gospels, to whom the Lord **Jesus** gave sight, this **is** the only one described **as** blindness from birth. **J. H. B.**

From Liverpool. —The collective pronoun " we " (9. 4) joins Christ and His disciples together **as** fellow-workers **in** the work of God. The works must **be** done " while it **is** day " [2]. Some thought this " day " to **be** limited to the earthly life of Christ; " while I **am in** the world " **was** quoted **as** supporting this. Others thought that the " day " **was** this day of grace [3].

John 9. 6, 7 describes what might **seem** to some a repulsive **act**, making the clay of the spittle, **but** the blind **man** hastened in faith to obtain the blessing of sight. **We** **saw** in this incident the work of the Creator, who created **man** from the dust of the ground.

The true Shepherd character of the Lord **Jesus** is **seen** in the words "finding him " (9. 35). The Pharisees' question, "Are **we** also blind ? " introduces **us** to chapter 10, where **in** simple language the Lord spoke to the Pharisees and revealed Himself **as** the Good Shepherd. The fold of the sheep (10. 1) **we** understood to **be** Israel [4], the porter who opened to the Shepherd (Christ) **being** John the Baptist. Israel heard Christ's voice, **and** some recognised **His** voice **and** responded. **His** own sheep **He** called by **name**, and led them out; all **His** own followed **Him** for they **knew His** voice.

Christ is the Door (10. 9). Salvation is to be had only through Him. Christ is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life. It was not taken from Him; He laid it down voluntarily (10. 18). Compare Psalm 22. 1-17. The hireling (typical of the Pharisees), having no real love for the sheep, would not jeopardise his life. Christ, in love for His sheep, gave His life. The wolf we thought spoke of the evil one, Satan, the Adversary (Isaiah 50. 8; Acts 20. 29). Ezekiel 34 we thought could have been in the mind of the Lord, when He spoke the words of John 10. 8. We noted particularly Ezekiel 34. 11, "Behold, I Myself, even I, will search for My sheep, and will seek them out. " " Other sheep " (10. 16) we took to be Gentile believers [5], and "one flock" we understood to be the people of God. We thought also of those in our day who are " under shepherds, " and considered their responsibility to the Chief Shepherd, and our responsibility to them.

Finally, we considered the three aspects of the Shepherd character of the Lord Jesus: (1) the Good Shepherd, who laid down His life (John 10); (2) the Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13. 20); and (3) the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5. 4), a title connected with His coming again, and with rewards.

A. Horridge.

EXTRACTS.

From Barry. —" Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind " (9. 32). " The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me... to proclaim... recovering of sight to the blind " (Luke 4. 18).

When the Master sent out the twelve, He gave power to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons (Matthew 10. 8), but there is no mention of the restoring of sight. Yet in His message to John in prison He refers first to the blind (Matthew 11. 5). Is there any significance in this ? [6].

How could this man be responsible for this blindness through his own sin ? There is danger in fitting our problems into a common pattern, for when, as the disciples found, they do not fit, we are perplexed. The evidence of the finger of God being on the man is plain. He was no ordinary blind beggar: his statements (9. 30-32) show a surprising knowledge of the word and purposes of God. Here is a man marked out for a definite purpose.

E. S. T., J. D.

From Bradford, Halifax and Leeds. —In the sixth sign we have continued the contrast between darkness and light, a further proof that " He that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God " (3. 21).

The truth that cleansing must come before spiritual sight can be given was brought to our notice: " Go, wash " (9. 6, 7) and " came seeing. "

The man was soon confronted with questioning and opposition. It is a good thing when new-born children of God are asked to prove the foundation of their faith. The man gave his simple expression of his practical knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, a knowledge that quickly deepened: " The Man that is called Jesus " (9. 11), " He is a prophet " (9. 17), " If this man were not from God, He could do nothing " (9. 33), and " Lord, I believe. And he worshipped **Him** " (9. 38).

D. B. R.

From **Willington Quay**. —John 9. 4 tells us of the night that is still to come, when no man can work; but that is not so yet, as there are those who labour in the vineyard, etc.

To the Pharisees the issue was clouded by this healing having taken place on the sabbath. For them the works of God (9. 3) would not occur on that day, because He rested on the sabbath and hence they were to do no work then. But the Lord says, " We must work... while it is day, " that is, as opportunity presents itself, and the day must not offend, if the work be the work of God.

The man's straight talking with the rulers resulted in his being cast out of the place of worship. Perhaps he said more than was required. He gave his testimony, which was highly commendable, but then he proceeded to dispute with them. The Lord then found him in the outside place, and the man worshipped Him there. The chapter begins with natural blindness and concludes with spiritual blindness. The Lord spoke to Nicodemus of spiritual birth; to the woman, of spiritual water; in John 6. of spiritual bread; and here, of spiritual sight.

C. B.

From **Kingston-on-Thames**. —Jesus made the clay and anointed the blind man's eyes: in olden times a medicinal value was attributed to saliva for treatment of eye troubles. This is a similar case to that of the blind man of Mark 8. 23. It may be that Jesus used this method to assist the weak faith of the man through finding that something external was being done for him.

He was told to go and wash in the pool of Siloam—a test of obedience. He did so, the result being that he returned seeing. This is in contrast to Naaman, who resented the simplicity of the means by which his cure was to be effected (2 Kings 5. 11-13).

It would seem very selfish of the man's parents in that they evaded the matter, and put the responsibility on their son: they would not commit themselves, because they feared the Jews (9. 22). We are reminded of the words in Psalm 27. 10.

W. H. Humphris.

From **Southport**. —The blind man (John 9) was cast out of the synagogue because he rightly refused to confess to the Pharisees that the Lord Jesus Christ was a sinner. The Pharisees would not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, neither would they allow others to do so (Matthew 23. 13).

With this act of the Pharisees fresh in the minds of those listening to the Lord, He told them of the True Shepherd. The porter speaks of John the Baptist, who came preaching the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins and baptized many followers, who formed a group of people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1. 17). The Lord likened these people unto sheep having entered through a door into a fold. The Lord Jesus Christ too entered through the door (baptism), opened to Him by John the Baptist. There He called His own, and they knowing His voice followed Him. We see two examples of such men in John 1. 37, Andrew and another. The Lord spoke of false shepherds who, not wishing to enter through the door, tried to enter the fold by climbing up some other way. Did not the Pharisees refuse to repent at the call of John the Baptist and try to enter the fold by their good works? The Lord spoke of them as those that steal and kill (10. 10); the happenings recorded in chapter 9. show the Pharisees to be of such a character. The sheep did not hear the thieves and robbers; this causes us to think of Theudas and Judas of Galilee who drew some men after them (Acts 5. 36, 37), but their numbers were small compared with the number of the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 4. 4).

W. S. Holden.

From Nottingham. —The Lord directed His listeners' minds to Himself as the Good Shepherd who layeth down His life for the sheep. Our thoughts went to the burnt offering, with its antitypical teaching, whereby we enter the fold and stand accepted upon the merits of the sacrifice of Christ.

John 10. 16 speaks of other sheep not of this fold. We thought that these were Gentile believers who with the Jewish believers were to become one flock having one Shepherd. This we would regard as the little flock of Luke 12. 32, with which is associated the kingdom of God. There is much to be learned from the fact that the Lord preached faithfully to all, albeit He knew that only those who were His sheep would believe in Him. He preached; a few here and there believed, but the great majority did not: and so it is today.

From Glasgow. —The teaching of the Lord Jesus in John 10 seems to have a definite connexion with the healing of the blind man of John 9. Was not this a case similar to that spoken of in Ezekiel 34. 16, where the Lord says, " I . . . will bind up that which was broken " ? The parable of chapter 10. 1-6 would remind the Pharisees of their false standing as those who should have cared for the sheep. They came to John, the porter of the fold, but heard from his lips strong words, " Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come ? " (Luke 3. 7). They failed to enter in by the door, the baptism of John, but sought to climb up some other way. By contrast, the Shepherd, whom John identified, having opened the door to Him that He might enter the fold, did not despise the door, but said to John, " Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness " (Matthew 3. 15).

The Shepherd is also now the Door (1. 35-49) to a new fold into which have entered Andrew, John, Simon, Philip and Nathanael, and others through Him now enter into this fold, a place of security and pasture. The Shepherd Himself laid down His life for the sheep; and He defeated their greatest foe, the Devil himself (Hebrews 2. 14). The Shepherd kept those sheep who accompanied with Him, and in prayer to His Father He said, " I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled. " *R. Shaw,*

From Wigan. —It is noteworthy that the Lord spoke to the Pharisees in parable form (10. 1-5), an unusual feature in John's Gospel. Not unexpectedly, they failed to understand, although the natural truth of His remarks was plain enough. We wondered whether the Lord wished, in the first place, to indict the Pharisees as the false leaders of the Jewish nation, who plundered the people and robbed God, and, in the second place, if He intended to draw attention to Himself as the Shepherd of the sheep, who was recognised by the porter, John the Baptist, and who would lead out from the national fold the individual sheep who would know His voice and follow Him. Certainly He left no room for misunderstanding as He exclaimed once, " I am the Door of the sheep " and twice, " I am the Good Shepherd. " By contrast He taught that, whilst the thief came to steal, kill and destroy, He came to save.

Once more it is the same tragic story. These privileged Pharisees heard at first hand of the blessed relationship between each sheep, the Good Shepherd, and the Father. They learned in advance of His death and resurrection, and of the one flock (not one fold) and one Shepherd, yet they failed to recognise their privilege. They believed not, because they were not His sheep.

From Hereford. —There are similarities between the miracles performed on the man at the pool of Bethesda and on the man born blind. Apparently, no appeal was made by either; Jesus, as He passed by, saw them (5. 6; 9. 1) and His heart of tender compassion went out to them. Further, both miracles were performed on the sabbath, the Lord justifying His actions by saying that the works of Him that had sent Him must be done while it was day, and that when He was in the world, He was the "Light of the World."

It is delightful to see the progression in the blind man's acknowledgment of the Son of God: (1) "The Man that is called Jesus" (9. 11), (2) "He is a prophet" (9. 17), (3) "If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing" (9. 33), (4) and in answer to the Lord's question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" he replied, "Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him." Truly, in the presence of Him who was the Light of the World, the works of God were being worked, for the Lord said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (6. 29).

One of the results of this sign was the condemnation of the Pharisees by the Lord (9. 41). They had resolutely condemned the blind man, and yet they, who had asked for a sign, when the Lord gave them one, refused to believe. They saw (naturally) and yet they had become blind (spiritually), because they deliberately shut their eyes (9. 41).

R. Tidmas.

From Edinburgh. —To open the eyes of a blind person was a thing unknown in the experience of man upon the earth. But there was a purpose behind this work of the Lord Jesus; there was also a reason why it is recorded in the Scriptures (20. 30, 31), namely, to manifest the power of God.

Neighbours, acquaintances and the Pharisees saw that sight had been given to the blind man, and they began, as man in his puny reasoning ever does, to ask questions. But faith acts in a different way. We cannot reason out the workings of the Infinite God, but we can accept them, as God intends we should, by faith. Little wonder the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith" (Luke 17. 5)! More faith will bring with it a fuller appreciation of the works of God. John 9. illustrates the principle that light precedes life. This is seen in Genesis 1 and John 1. Light must penetrate darkness before life can be manifested (John 8. 12).

A. M. Hope.

From London, S. E. —The Lord Jesus is the life of man and the light of man; and He manifested Himself as such in John 9 by a notable miracle. Here, again, His revelation of Himself as the world's light brought judgement on those who hated the light, and blessing to those who loved and walked in it (9. 35-41).

The blind had been leading the blind; the Pharisees were false shepherds, feeding themselves and not the flock. He who is the light of the world is the True Shepherd, the Good Shepherd, whose own the sheep are. Here we have the first mention of His laying down His life. He would also take it again (10. 17). Here, too, is mentioned the great primal covenant between Him and His Father of the gift of eternal life which He would bestow on His own sheep, and also the absolute unity between Himself and His Father (10. 25, 29, 30).

J. D.

From Paisley and Barrhead. —The general mind regarding John 9. 4, 5, was 'that the works referred to were connected with the Lord while here on earth; and, while here, He was the Light of the World. After He went back to God the world's dark night set in: "The night is far spent" (Romans 13. 12).

The indefinite and indecisive testimony of **the man's** neighbours may be accounted for in **two** ways: (1) the **change** wrought in the **man**, and (2) fear of the Pharisees.

The testimony of the blind **man himself**, however, was final—"I **am** he." The unbeliever may do much to discredit and **bring** into disrepute the believer **in** Christ, but he can never rob him of **an** experience with God at conversion.

Nowhere in the Scriptures does God give His sheep eternal life on a temporary basis, or in any way conditionally upon holding fast to Him (10. 27, 28). Some would direct us to Hebrews 6. 4-6, which has to do with the life of service of the eternally saved persons. *W. Terrell Jr.*

From Atherton. —Despite the sad ending of chapter 8, the Lord continued His acts of mercy and lovingkindness and **met** the **need** of the man born blind (John 9). The question put by the disciples was a burning question at that **time**. Calamities of this nature were generally considered to be the result of sin committed by those immediately concerned (Exodus 20. 5, John 5. 14). The Lord's answer makes it quite clear that this was not a question of sin, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him, or, as Weymouth gives in his margin, "God's mercy should... in him."

It **was** asked **if** spiritual blessings were generally given with **the** Lord's acts of healing. This incident was quoted **as** an exception, the spiritual blessing coming later [7].

The fold **was** a walled enclosure having a door, barred at **night** by the porter, and opened by him when the shepherds came to lead forth their sheep. It was generally thought that John the Baptist **is** here pictured **as** the porter, the door speaking of the baptism of John, and the sheep those who had received John's baptism. The thief **is** one who acts by craft (Luke 20. 20); the robber **is** one who acts by violence (John 8. 59).

John 10. 9 shows the activity of **life** in Christ, activity which gives expression to the abundant **life** to be known and enjoyed in Him.

J. Bullock, D. H. Butler.

From Cowdenbeath. —The Pharisees evidently believed that the man, because of his blindness, was born in sins. Their doctrine was not **in** keeping with the words of David, who spoke what was true of himself and **all** others beside, "I was Shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive **me**" (Psalm 51. 5). The disciples were possibly influenced by the Pharisees' teaching; hence their question (9. 2).

The entering (10. 9) **is** descriptive of an act of faith, and we would judge that this **is** also true of the "going in" and the "going out," which are associated with the finding of pasture. This speaks of the believer's further experience, which he may have **as** he reads the word of God and feeds upon it by faith. Similarly, the Lord speaks (10. 10) of what **is** initial and what is experimental. The sinner receives **life** by faith in Christ, and the believer knows the abundance of life **as** a further continuous experience, which also **is** the result of faith.

A place among the sheep **is** gained by entering through the door. A place in the flock **is** gained by listening to the Shepherd's voice. All sheep, **alas**, are not **in** the flock because **all** are not obedient to **His** teaching. The flock **is** called **the** "little flock" (Luke 12. 32) and unto it the kingdom is given. It **is** also called the "flock of God" (1 Peter 5. 2), and needs to be tended by under-shepherds.

Being accused of blasphemy, the Lord directed the Pharisees to the Scriptures and showed that certain ones were called gods because the

word of God came to them. In contrast, He stood in relation to God not simply as One unto whom the word had come, but as One whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world. His was a unique relationship. His claims to Deity were substantiated by His works. He was not only sent by God, He Himself was God, and knew a perfect oneness with the Father.

James Bowman.

(Chapters 7 and 8)

From Hamilton, Ontario.—Apparently the title " I AM " is similar to Jehovah and more personal than God. As to His Person, God gave to Moses His revelation to the people in the name " I AM THAT I AM " (Exodus 3. 14). We note first from this that a Being is revealed, who refers to Himself as " I, " therefore having personality; the " AM " without doubt denotes existence. This may be understood better by considering Isaiah 57. 15, " the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity. " Since eternity is the habitation of the I AM, He is presented as One of timeless existence. There is no change in Jehovah. James speaks of Him as "the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning" (1. 17). His perfection is seen here as well, nothing will be added to and nothing will be taken from " I AM " or Jehovah. What He is today He will always be; what He purposes today He will carry through; what He promises today He will provide. This perfection demands power: man has not the power to say that what he is today he will be tomorrow, but the I AM has that power.

We accept " the Light of the World " as a title of the Lord, Jehovah the Light of the world. In " lo, I am with you always, " it may be that what is meant is that as the I AM was present with Israel in the fire and the cloud during their journey, so He now as the I AM is present with us always, giving us strength for spiritual progress.

Keith Dorricott, Basil James, R. Dryburgh.

COMMENTS.

[1] (Brantford). —The R. V. in John 10. 16, "One flock, one Shepherd, " is correct, not " one fold, one Shepherd, " as in the A. V. The fold is that in which the sheep are placed for protection. Flock is a noun of multitude and shows sheep united under the control and care of a shepherd. Israel was a flock not a fold, and the same was true of John's disciples. " The fold of the sheep " of John 10. 1 describes that in which the sheep whom John had baptized were awaiting the coming of Christ the Shepherd. John was the porter and the door was baptism. The Shepherd came to John and was baptized, and thus entered the fold, out of which He called His own, and they followed Him. Henceforth, He, and not baptism, was the Door of the sheep. The scribes, Pharisees and elders, etc., were the thieves and robbers. —*J. M.*

[2] (Liverpool). —The A. V. says, " I must work, " the R. V., " we must work " ' I am doubtful about " we " in the R. V. Without attempting to be critical, I think the A. V. best suits the context, " I must work the works of Him that sent Me. "—*J. M.*

[3] (Liverpool). —Man must have light to do his work, and the day of one's life's opportunity, in which the work of God must be done, will be followed by night, the time of darkness and rest, when man's work is o'er. This, I think, is the meaning of the Lord's parable here. —*J. M.*

[4] (Liverpool). —No, Israel was not the fold of the sheep. See comment [1]. —*J. M.*

[5] (Liverpool). —The " other sheep " are others that were not in the fold where John was the porter. No doubt these include Gentiles, but there are other sheep who were not of John's fold. —*J. M.*

[6] (Barry). —Every kind of disease and affliction from which men suffered is not necessarily mentioned. The worst cases are specifically mentioned in Matthew 10. 8, the dead, lepers, and demon-possessed. The lesser cases of blindness, lameness, etc., I judge are implied. —*J. M.*

[7] (Atherton). —Was it not here a gradual dawning of spiritual light, as in the case of the blind man of Mark 8. 22-26, where his natural " sight came in stages " ?—*J. M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question **from** Atherton. —In answer to the Jews' question (10. 24) the Lord gave irrefutable proof of His Messiahship. Does their action following the Lord's answer prove the insincerity of their question ?

Answer. —It seems clear enough that the Jews were not sincere, because when He told them, immediately after, that He and the Father were one, they took up stones to stone Him, because they regarded His claim to oneness with God as blasphemy. See John 10. 29-33. —*J. M.*

Question **from** Brantford. —We had difficulty as to the setting of John 10. 34. Could we have help ?

Answer. —" Gods " in Psalm 82. 6, from which the Lord quoted in John 10. 34, is *elohim*, and this plural Hebrew word, though generally used of Deity, is used of angels, in Psalm 8. 5, Hebrews 2. 6-8, and of man, by the serpent (Genesis 3. 5, and note God's words in Genesis 3. 22). It is used of the judges of Israel (Exodus 21. 6, 22. 8, 9). In Psalm 82. 6, John 10. 34, it refers to the people of Israel to whom the word of God came. The people of Israel were well pleased to think of themselves *as elohim*, but when the Lord claimed to be God they would stone Him whose works spoke abundantly in testimony of who He was. —*J. M.*

Question **from** Kingston-on-Thames. —Does John 9. 3 give the sole reason for the man's blindness ?

Answer. —Yes, and we were born blind that the works of God in grace might be manifested in us too. What grace !—*J. M.*

Question from Bradford, etc. —Are there two folds in John 10. 1-6 and 7-18 ?

Answer. —"This fold" of verse 16 refers, I judge, back to verse 1, to the fold of which John was the porter. Christ is the Door of the fold now, out of which no one can be taken, though sheep and lambs may be taken from the flock. See 1 Samuel 17. 34, and note that the lamb was taken from the flock. —*J. M.*

Question from Paisley **and** Barrhead. —Who are the " we " of John 9. 4 ?

Answer. —See Comment [2]. —*J. M.*

Question from Hereford. —Does the Lord refer in John 10. 1 to false Christs (Matthew 24. 24, Mark 13. 22), men like Theudas and Judas of Galilee (Acts 5. 36, 37), or to the Pharisees themselves ?

Answer. —He is referring to the Pharisees, scribes, elders, and priests. "All that came before Me are (not 'were' or 'shall be') thieves and robbers" (John 10. 1). —*J. M.*

NOTES ON ROMANS.

CHAPTER 10.

Verses 1, 2: *Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.*

Paul here lays bare the longing of **his** heart for **his** brethren's sake, **as** in chapter 9. **3**, where **he** says that **he** could wish that **he** were accursed from Christ for their sake. They were **a** burden on his heart **as** he beheld their misguided and hopeless zeal which could never bring them rest or salvation. Their zeal was misdirected because they rejected the Messiah, who alone could give to them through faith in Himself what they sought—righteousness and peace. Paul could but supplicate on their behalf that they might be saved, for the problem of the hardening of Israel **was** too profound even for his grasp of divine mysteries. **Once** he himself **was** in **a** plight similar to that in which they now are. If zeal could **be** accounted for righteousness (and some people vainly think so) then Paul and Israel would have attained to it; but righteousness is not to be had that way.

Verses 3, 4: *For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth.*

Israel's was bigoted zeal. Their own righteousness **came** into collision with the righteousness of God. *Jehovah Tsidkenu*, the LORD is our righteousness, **was** unknown to them, and they would not submit to the plain words of Holy Scripture. The lament of the publican, "God, be merciful to **me a** (the) sinner, " never escaped their lips, **but** at all costs they would maintain the attitude of the Pharisee: "I thank Thee, that **I am** not **as** the rest of **m e n . . .** or even **as** this publican " (Luke 18. 9-14). They rejected the righteousness of God offered to them in Christ, and sought to establish their own righteousness, even though **as** law-breakers they were under the curse of the law (Galatians 3. 10). The Scriptures shut up all under sin (Galatians 3. 22). The law's end, issue or goal, the one door of hope for Israel and all men, was Christ, in whom all believers are justified.

Verse 5: *For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby.*

Moses said to Israel that the law "**is** your life " (Deuteronomy 32. 47). It was necessary **as a** moral code to regulate their lives **and** conduct towards God and men. But the law **was** fatal to them when **it was** applied **as a** means of their acceptance by God in things eternal. God could never accept **a** man, **a** sinner, on the ground of his own **deeds**. The law of the Burnt Offering should have taught Israel this; that if they were to be accepted by God then they were accepted by God on the ground of the Burnt Offering that was accepted for them (see Leviticus 1). Only by death and blood-shedding can God accept man. Such is the voice of the gospel now. The gospel of God's free grace teaches saved sinners how to live to please God after they have been forgiven and accepted in Christ (see 1 Timothy 1. 9-11; Titus 2. 11-14). Such **was** the function of the moral law, to teach forgiven and accepted **men** through **sacrifice** how to live afterwards. Mercy and truth were ever united in God's dealings with men, mercy through sacrifice, and truth to guide **men's** erring footsteps.

Verses 6, 7, 8: *But the righteousness which is of faith saith thus, Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven ? (that is, to bring Christ down:) or, Who shall descend into the abyss ? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead,) But what saith it ? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach:*

Of old, the people of Israel who stood beyond Jordan and heard Moses repeating the law, which had **been** given at Sinai to their fathers who had perished in the wilderness, were told that the law **was** in their mouth **and** heart, **and** that there was no need for any one to **ascend** to heaven or go over the **sea** to bring it nigh to them (Deuteronomy 30. 11-14). They had **been** under the instruction of the law during their wilderness journey of forty years, **and** no doubt many of them had heard God speaking from the top of mount Sinai. So **was** it with the Jewish people whom Paul had in view when he wrote of the word **of** faith being in their mouth **and** heart. They **knew** the Scriptures which were replete with promises and prophecies concerning the Messiah, **and** all that **was** necessary was faith in these living Oracles, and these living words would quicken their souls into life. "Hear, **and** your soul shall live" was the message of Isaiah (Isaiah 55. 3). The word of faith presents no humanly impossible tasks, such as to ascend to heaven to bring Christ down and to bring about the incarnation, or to descend into the abyss to bring up Christ in resurrection; simple faith in the word of the message of life is all that God requires and all that He allows. The sinner needs neither to feel, nor see, nor do, anything in order to be justified by faith. In the gospel the weakest, most hopeless and sinful of God's creatures can find peace and joy in believing. Greatly privileged are those who have the word of faith in their mouth and heart, but happier are those who have received it by faith. Great privilege brings great responsibility !

Verses 9, 10: *Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

Paul continues the thought of the word being in the mouth and heart. Confession is a matter of the mouth and belief is with the heart. There is no mention of confession in Peter's message to Cornelius (Acts 10. 43), or in Paul's words to the Philippian jailor (Acts 16. 31); the message in each case was one of believing in the Lord Jesus; both were Gentiles. But here Paul has Jews in view when he speaks of confession, for to confess the hated name of Jesus as Lord Jesus and so to acknowledge Him **as** God, even God the Son, none but a true Jewish believer would do. No such bitter antagonism existed in the hearts of Gentiles to Jesus of Nazareth. What they needed was to know who Jesus is and what **He** had done for them. Less than faith in Him who is the Lord Jesus, whose Deity as the Son of God is established in His being raised from the dead, is not saving faith.

Verses 11, 12, 13: *For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be put to shame. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon Him: for, Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.*

The words of Isaiah 28. 16 quoted here say, "He that believeth shall not make haste." Haste means to hurry. How great was the hurry of

the five foolish virgins in that parable of the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 25. **1-18 !** Even in their hurrying they were too late and had to bear the shame of a shut door. The believer who rests on Christ the precious Stone of sure foundation, who is even now laid in the heavenly mount Zion, has no need to hurry or worry, for his name is written in heaven. Here Paul turns from the consideration of the Jew to the universal character of the gospel. God's provision is for Jew and Gentile alike, " for the same Lord... is rich unto all that call upon Him. " This is similar to Peter's words in connexion with the call of the Gentile Cornelius—" Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all) " (Acts 10. 36). He is universal Lord, hence He is a universal Saviour. In His sight there is no distinction between men, for " whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. " These words are found in Joel 2. 32, and there they have special reference to the time of the great tribulation which precedes the great and terrible day of the LORD. Jehovah will work deliverance for His suffering and believing people when He returns to mount Zion, not only of Israel but of all nations, for it is whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be saved. Here the Spirit through Paul applies the words of Joel to that salvation of verses 9, 10, of which Paul is writing. Note that Jehovah of Joel 2. 32 is the Lord Jesus of Romans 10. 13; this is just one of the proofs of the Lord's Deity which lie like gems upon the sacred page.

Verses 14, 15: *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed*} and how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things !*

Here Paul quotes from Isaiah words which have reference to the time of the Lord's return to Zion, and to the beauty of the feet of Him that publishes peace and salvation, and who says to Zion, " Thy God reigneth " (Isaiah 52. 7-10). But also beautiful are the feet of those who are sent by the Lord to preach the gospel today. He was Himself sent from God, and how beautiful were His feet as He went about preaching and doing good ! He has authority in heaven and earth, and He said, " Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. " Some put a full stop after " nations, " but there is only a comma, for the sentence carries on and says, " baptizing them... teaching them to observe all things " that the Lord commanded (Matthew 28. 19, 20). The Lord's commission is covered by the complete sentence in these two verses. Preachers must be sent if men are to hear and believe the gospel.

Verses 16, 17: *But they did not all hearken to the glad tidings. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report ? So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

" They did not all hearken. " This has ever been so—" some believed ... and some disbelieved " (Acts 28. 24). The Lord in the Parable of the Sower spoke of the " wayside " hearers, and of the " good ground " hearers. If there is to be the hearing of the saying or report of Christ there must first be the preaching, and faith cometh by hearing.

BIBLE STUDIES

Editors:

J. Miller, Jas. Martin, A. T. Doodson, J. Baird, G. Prasher, Jr.

SYLLABUS FOR 1956

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY.

<i>Month</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>References</i>
January..	The end of the journey..	.. 1, 2, 3.
February..	The LORD, He is God..	.. 4, 5, 6, 7.
March..	All the commandments..	.. 8, 9, 10.
April	The blessing and the curse	.. 11. 26-82, 27. 9-26, 28, 29, 30.
May	The chosen Place	.. 12, 14. 22-27.
June	A holy people	.. 7. 1-11 , 13, 14. 1-21, 26. 16-19.
July	Gifts to God and men..	.. 14. 22-15. 28, 26. 1-15.
August..	The feasts of Jehovah..	.. 16. 1-17.
September	Priests and prophets	.. 13. 1-5, 18.
October..	The song of Moses	.. 31, 32.
November	The blessing of the tribes	.. 33. 1-12.
December	The blessing of the tribes	.. 33. 18-29.

The references given are not the only portions which may be referred to, but simply indicate the character of the subject. It will be noted that Moses refers repeatedly to certain subjects. It is not intended to discuss all the incidents referred to in the historical portions, particularly in the January subject. The emphasis is on the end of the journey. It is also impossible to include the exhortations of chapters 19 to 25 regarding conduct.

Special articles will be welcomed but not more than one will be published on each subject; for example: The authenticity of the Book of Deuteronomy, The cities of refuge.

Papers should not exceed 500 words and should be written on one side of the paper, with a margin of 2 inches.

All papers on the above subjects should be forwarded to: —

Mr. J. BAIRD, 15, Brunstane Road, Portobello, Midlothian, and should reach him by the 20th of the month, about six weeks before the issue of the magazine.

All other papers and general correspondence should be sent to: —

Mr. J. MARTIN, 86, Whitley Crescent, Wigan, Lanes.

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thesmlonia, 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.

Parenthetic Statements in the Gospel according to John.

One of the more obvious and simple uses of parentheses is to supply detail without confusing the trend of the main passage. Parentheses of this type in the Gospel according to John are significant and helpful. John 6. 23 clears up an apparent discrepancy between verses 22 and 24. In John 21. 7, 8 the parentheses lend vividness to the portrayal of the effect of the Lord's appearance on the scene when certain of the disciples had gone back to their old worldly occupation, from which they had been called that they should be fishers of men. John 11. 80 explains the movements of Martha and Mary and of the Lord Jesus. Is it not significant that Mary had to go to the same place as Martha to meet the Lord and seek His aid? Again, John 19. 42 relates to the urgency under which the disciples worked when they laid the Lord's body in the tomb. On account of the Preparation of the Jews the tomb was commended by its nearness, but God was working in fulfilment of the Scriptures, and according to His will the Lord Jesus was "with the rich in His death" (Isaiah 53. 9).

May we here digress to point out that, in the two incidents by the Sea of Tiberias (John 6 and 21), men were fed with bread and fish by the Lord Jesus; same place, same food, same Giver. We reflect that the gospel is preached to lead men to a saving knowledge of Christ, but the preaching of it brings joy to disciples who hear. The message that brings life to the unsaved also sustains believers.

Unaware of what had happened, the ruler of the feast at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, having tasted the "water now become wine," gave an unbiassed and definite testimony as to the good quality of the wine (2. 10); but, if any should doubt the genuineness of the sign wrought by the Lord, John has cited acceptable witnesses—"the servants which had drawn the water" (2. 9). The testimony of the ruler of the feast gains strength from his ignorance of the work of the Lord in changing the water into wine, but the strength of the servants' testimony lies in their knowledge of what they themselves had done. This strong presentation of the case is in keeping with John's careful arrangement of facts and his effective presentation of evidence concerning the Christ. John sets forth the witness of others, John the Baptist (1. 19), the Lord's works (5. 36), the Scriptures (5. 39), the witness of the Lord and of the Father (8. 14, 18), and finally claims that his own record is the true witness of a disciple of the Lord Jesus (21. 24).

A writer who portrays persons and events in bold outline is liable to pass over minor details, and it may happen that misleading gaps in the argument may result: but we must remember that, as a writer of inspired Scripture, John was moved by the Holy Spirit. His bold and rapid style can, therefore, be no error; it is eminently suited to John's purpose of convincing men that Jesus is the Christ. These things were written "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His Name" (John 20. 31).

J. B.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

(Chapters 11 and 12.)

From **Atherton**. — This second last of the seven of the Lord's signs recorded by John is in sombre contrast to the first, which occurred at a marriage; here the scene is one of death.

The Lord had a special regard for this family, hence the message, " Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick. " The Greek word *phileo*, used here for " lovest, " is the same as that used in reference to the disciple whom Jesus loved, and suggests friendship of an intimate kind. Often those most loved by Him are most tried; and patience in trial is necessary (James 5. 10, 11; Job 23. 10).

In the raising of Lazarus, three major issues arise: (1) that the Son of God might be glorified thereby (11. 4), (2) that the disciples might believe (11. 15), and (8) that the multitude which stood around might believe that He was the sent One (11. 42). As to (1) the Deity of the Lord is involved (Romans 1. 4). His title as Son of God is the equivalent of His being called God, as are the terms Son of the living God, Son of God, and the Word. The Lord ever had the strengthening of the disciples' faith (2) before Him (see 2. 11). Faith is essential in the disciple pathway; without it, failure and disaster will ensue, for we walk by faith, not by sight. The Lord's love and concern reach out to all (8), for He willeth that all men should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

In the sequel (John 12) the sorrowing ones are seen with the Lord, tears wiped from their eyes. Martha served (Revelation 22. 8) and Lazarus sat at meat; in a day to come His saints shall feast with Him. Mary took the exceeding precious ointment (equivalent to nearly twelve months' work at a penny per day) and lavished it upon her adorable Lord, which reminds us that we shall adore and worship Him eternally. Mary prepared His body for burial, and the Lord commended her (Mark 14. 9).

G. A. Jones, D. H. Butler.

From Nottingham. — " Lazarus, come forth. " The voice of the Son of God rang out, and Lazarus came forth from the dead. One day the same One will shout, and then the dead in Christ shall rise (1 Thessalonians 4. 16).

In John 11 we see foreshadowed that glorious morning, when those who are alive at the Lord's coming will, together with the raised ones, meet Him in the air. That Lazarus came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes is significant, showing that he did not come forth by his own strength.

The tarrying of the Lord before He left to go to Bethany (11. 6) was because the sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God (11. 4).

It is instructive to notice that although the Lord was about to perform a miracle of the highest order, His prayer in public to God was short {11. 41, 42}. " Short prayers in public, long prayers in private. "

We felt that John 12. 1-8 is a picture of the scene in the glory to come. Martha gave earnest service, Mary loving adoration, and Lazarus experienced sweet communion: service, worship and communion will be our experience in eternity.

But into this scene come the evil thoughts of Judas Iscariot. This is true in our experiences here; for the presence of sin **may** sometimes mar happy communion. Things carnal may spoil spiritual joy.

The multitude cried, "Hosanna" (**save us** now), but they had not understood the Lord's purpose. Liberation from the Roman yoke **may** have been in the thoughts of many, and the incident of chapter 6. 26 is brought to mind. From" the human point of view the Lord's life was drawing to a **sad** end, **but** with God the Cross was the great triumph. **By** it the prince of this world was to **be cast** out (12. 31), and there too were the judgement of the world, the glorifying of the Father (12. 28), and the fulfilment of Genesis 3, 15.

R. Hickling.

From Wigan. —We spent some time over the incident of anointing with spikenard.

In Luke 7. 36-50 a woman, a sinner (graciously unnamed), is portrayed anointing the Lord's feet in the house of Simon, a Pharisee. This is, in our mind, quite a different incident from that recorded in John 12. 2-8 (and parallel portions, Matthew 26. 6-13, Mark 14. 3-9). Incidentally, **we** express the strong opinion that the sinner of the city (Luke 7. 37) **was** not Mary Magdalene (Luke 8. 1-3), **as** has been erroneously suggested by many, including John Bunyan. Comparing the synoptic accounts in Matthew 26 and Mark 14 with John 12, **we** observe that (1) both Matthew **and** Mark place the incident in the home of one Simon the leper in Bethany, but John places it in Martha's or the home of Lazarus; (2) in Matthew and Mark the woman is unnamed, in John she is Mary of Bethany, whom we know **as** sister to Martha and Lazarus; (3) Matthew and Mark indicate an anointing of the head, while John states she "anointed the feet of Jesus;" (4) Matthew and Mark show that the disciples, or some of them, grumbled, while John notes that **Judas**, only, raised objection to the "waste." **We** suggest that these differences can **be** reconciled: (1) Simon may have been father of Lazarus, or it may have been that Lazarus and his sisters were at a feast in Simon's house. (2) By omitting to record the name of the woman Matthew and Mark are quite compatible with John's record. (3) The process may have been the breaking of the vessel over His head and the anointing of His head, followed by the anointing of His blessed feet and then wiping them with her hair. (4) Others murmured their complaint, but Judas spoke out, rashly [1]. The *times* were more difficult to reconcile. It would **appear** that John gives "six days before the passover" **as** the time of the Lord's arrival in Bethany, not the time when **He** partook of the supper. Matthew (26. 2) and Mark (14. 1) appear to fix the time of the incident as two days before the passover, but even then the phrasing is not definite **as** to that. There **may be** other explanations: some hold that John, usually precise in time-fixing, times the **supper** as six days before the passover, and Matthew **and** Mark are writing with a retrospect view, particularly **as** regards the betrayal by Judas.

The rest of chapter 12 indicates, most surprisingly, the various attitudes to the Lord: from **verses 1-36** we have the attitude and judgement of various groups of individuals: the common people (9), the chief priests (10), a great multitude (12), His disciples (16), again the multitude (17), the Pharisees (19), and the Greeks (20). Then **we** have the apostle John's conclusions in **verses 37-43**, followed by a solemn statement by the Lord concerning Himself (12. 44-50).

EXTRACTS.

From Wembley. —The religious leaders of the Jews, apart from a few notable exceptions, still refused to believe that the Lord Jesus was the promised One. At a previous time of crisis, when John sent his disciples to ask "Art thou He that cometh ? " the Lord pointed to the raising of the son of the widow of Nain; also the leaders of the people said, " If Thou art the Christ, tell us plainly " (John 10. 24); so the raising of Lazarus is to be the final proof of His Divine origin and Sonship. If they are not prepared to accept Him after this evidence of His power, they never will.

The Sadducees, who did not believe in resurrection, would find it very difficult to explain away how a man, who had been dead and buried for four days, could live again, and had to admit, " all men will believe on Him. " So angry were they, that they sought to put Lazarus to death as well as the Lord. Verses 41 and 42 show that the Lord Jesus associated the act of resurrection with His Father, with whom He was in constant communion, an example we would do well to follow.

Why did Jesus weep ? Was it on account of the sisters' sorrow and the general sadness for one greatly loved ? or was it because of their unbelief ? [2].

A. C. H.

From Glasgow. —The outcome of chapter 11 is seen in chapter 12, when the Lord was given a royal welcome into Jerusalem as He rode upon the colt the foal of an ass, in fulfilment of the scripture which saith, " Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt " (John 12. 12-15; Zechariah 9. 9). Voices shouted His praise, but many shouted for His death a few days later. Now He was hailed as the One that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel.

The council of the elders gathered and discussed how they might put Him to death, but these things were all known to the Lord: there was nothing hid from Him. At this time He said, " Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say ? Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour " (John 12. 27).

J. Rae.

From Barrhead and Paisley. —One of the aims of John in writing the Gospel is to present Christ as the Author of Life to whom it has been given to have life in Himself and to raise up whomsoever He will. John alone of the Gospel writers records the raising of Lazarus. This miracle appears to have occurred shortly before the final events. It probably was intended to be the final miracle of His life (apart from His own resurrection).

The Lord's statement that the sickness was not unto death appears to mean that the ultimate end of the illness was not death but resurrection. The faith of both Mary and Martha limited the power of Christ to healing: " If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. " Even Martha's brief flash of faith, like Andrew's in chapter 7, is lost in her afterthought. Her statement concerning the resurrection of the last day betrayed, perhaps, a vague knowledge of resurrection.

The Lord's words, " Thy brother shall rise again, " were followed by the profound statement of verses 25 and 26. The resurrection of dead saints and the changing of the living are revealed there.

The grief of the sisters seems to have had an effect on the Lord, and it was a sacred moment when He wept at the tomb. Truly the Son of God can enter into every pang that rends the human heart.

J. M. Gault.

From Hereford. —When the disciples finally understood that Lazarus had died, their spirits drooped and Thomas said, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him," although the Lord had said that He would awake him out of sleep. Lazarus had been four days in the tomb, and death must have wrought great havoc in his body. Yet at the word of command Lazarus was quickened and his body was delivered from death and he lived again. Although bound hand and foot he came forth. We read subsequently that Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with the Lord. This miracle proves that the Lord Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life, and gives hope to those that believe on Him that even though they die they shall live again.

J. O. Tidmas.

From Southport. —Martha's faith wavered somewhat, when the Lord said, "Take ye away the stone" (11. 39), for she said, "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days." The Lord had said unto her, "Thy brother shall rise again" (11. 23), and "I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." The Lord's quickening (life-giving) power has to do with both the natural and the spiritual life, both are included (5. 21). Later Jesus separated them, speaking of the gift of spiritual life first (5. 24), and then of quickening as to a body condition (5. 28).

Thomas Broom.

From London, S. E. —The silence of Scripture on Lazarus¹ reaction after resurrection shows that there are certain matters which God does not reveal. We vainly ask: Could he give an account of his soul's experience in Sheol? Martha was a true believer in Christ (11. 27). Despite her statement in verse 22, that in verse 39 and the Lord's answer to her (11. 1 40) rather indicate that she did not anticipate the immediate resurrection of Lazarus. What was true of Martha was also true of Mary prior to the raising of Lazarus, but her deeper appreciation of the Lord was shown by her higher level of service after the raising of her brother. Perhaps she alone of the disciples of the Lord in these pre-Calvary days realised that He would, like her brother, die, but also that He would be raised again. Her offering of spikenard, unlike that of another Mary, was not too late (20. 1).

The very act which confirmed the belief of the disciples (11. 15) only hardened the heart of Judas, as is evidenced by his attitude to Mary's delightful offering. The juxtaposition of verses 1-9 and 10, 11 in Mark 14 rather indicates that it even precipitated his dastardly agreement with the chief priests.

The majority of the rulers were blinded by the fact that the Lord was getting the people's favour instead of them (12. 19). They feared also the reaction of Rome (11. 48). Those who did believe as a result of the miracle dared not confess it, for "they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God." The remarkable prophecy of Caiaphas seems to have been a deciding factor in the formal acceptance by the Sanhedrim that Christ must be killed. God unfolded His purpose even to His enemies.

It seems likely, although not stated, that the request to see Jesus by the Greeks was inspired by the spread of news of Lazarus. We are not told that Jesus did see them. His chief mission was to the Jewish nation. However His discourse with Philip and Andrew is in keeping with the "resurrection" theme. The grain of wheat, if it die, beareth much fruit. The Greeks and all other nations will share in the resurrection and life-giving power of this **same** victorious LORD JESUS CHRIST.

C. L. Prasher.

From Kingston-on-Thames. —John's is the only Gospel which records the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and possibly when he penned the words, Lazarus had passed a second time through the vale of death and was awaiting resurrection in a glorified body.

This chapter demonstrates forcibly the Deity yet perfect humanity of the Lord Jesus. His shout called forth from the tomb one dead four days (11. 39), yet His heart was touched, and He groaned in the spirit and was troubled as He beheld the sorrow of the occasion. Such experiences in the life of the Lord have fitted Him for the wondrous office He now bears, as High Priest, One that hath been touched with the feeling of our infirmities; and one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4. 15).

Suffering, pain and death have always been a great problem. Still the question, "Why?" is often asked. Fundamentally, of course, all these things are the outcome of sin, but not always the direct consequence of a particular sin. While we must never charge God with causing sin, which is the result of man exercising his free will in disobedience, God in His foreknowledge uses even suffering, etc., to His glory. This incident is helpful in revealing this seeming paradox.

The expression "sleep" used by the Lord in speaking of death (11. 11) is also used by the apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4. 13 to describe the dead in Christ. There is a close parallel between the truths that are foreshadowed by this incident and those elaborated by Paul in his epistle to the Thessalonians.

Some thought that the Lord's words to Martha (11. 25, 26) conveyed the truth of the raising of the dead in Christ, and the changing of those that remain alive at the Lord's coming. Others, however, understood this verse to refer to being dead spiritually (dead in trespasses and sins), and being made alive spiritually, which life is eternal. This interpretation hinges on the Authorised reading, "though he were dead," instead of the revised version, "though he die" [3].

F. E. Jarvis.

From Crowborough. —The raising of Lazarus may be typical of the voice of Christ to the spiritually dead. Lazarus was bound with the things that spoke of death. The Lord said (11. 44), "Loose him." He was restored to life and usefulness.

The Lord Jesus showed that in death believing ones merely sleep in Him, and physical death is but the entrance to His immediate presence. Death for the Christian is but the end of mortality, imperfection, and suffering.

Three times we read of Mary at the feet of Jesus, in bright days listening to the words of grace that proceeded from His lips, in sorrowful days she knelt at His feet for comfort (John 11. 32).

B. V. F.

From Willington **Quay**. —The discourse between the Lord and His disciples, following His declared intention of returning to Judaea, shows the great difference between their outlook and His. They were blind and ignorant as to the purposes of God, but His words and works were ever in agreement with the mind of the Father. Consequently, whilst he that walketh in the night stumbleth, no harm could befall the Lord Jesus who truly walked in the day. Thomas, though expressing noble sentiments, evidently spoke to his fellow disciples with a sense of foreboding.

We wondered whether the change in Lazarus' condition took place when they rolled away the stone (11. 41), this being followed by the Lord giving thanks to His Father, and then crying, "Lazarus, come forth" [4],

Lazarus, a living testimony to the power of the Lord Jesus, attracted the attention of the chief priests, who, having already taken counsel that they might put Jesus to death, sought to do likewise to Lazarus. " A disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord. " **K. R.**

From **Edinburgh.** —The return to Bethany was, from the human standpoint, dangerous; so much so, that Thomas foresaw death coming upon all (11. 16). But the Lord, the Omniscient One, fully knew the pathway that lay before Him.

The Lord spoke of Lazarus as " *our friend.* " Hence Lazarus must have been an acquaintance of the disciples, and they must have had feelings of sympathy towards Martha and Mary on hearing of the death of their brother.

By this great work the Lord revealed Himself as the Resurrection and the Life. At His command, the stone was taken away. Then, before this multitude from Jerusalem, the Son spake to His Father, thereby showing that He was sent from the Father. At His voice the dead one came forth.

The prophecy of Caiaphas concerned the death of One for the nation of Israel, but John has added (11. 52) the wider purpose that lay behind the death of Christ (Titus 2. 14). **D. Meldrum,**

From Cowdenbeath. —God caused the high priest to prophesy that One was to die for the nation; this was in opposition to the false ideas prevailing among the rulers of Israel. It was the divine purpose by the death of Christ to unite into one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

Six days before the passover the Lord was again in Bethany among that little company who had been witnesses of the glory of God. A supper was prepared for Him, with Martha occupying the role of servant. Lazarus also was present, but Scripture is silent as to his conversation. Mary occupied the lowly place: she entered more fully into what was before the Lord and anointed Him for burial. John alone names Mary as the one who anointed the Lord's feet; the other Gospels describe the anointing of His head. He also names Judas as the murmurer against her gracious action.

On the morrow after the supper, the Lord entered triumphantly into Jerusalem amidst the people's shouts of " Hosanna " (save us). They little realised that before the week had run its course He would have accomplished His great mission on earth: to the consternation of the Pharisees, the whole world was gone after Him.

The Greeks here **are** Gentiles, worshippers of the true God as revealed to Israel. Perhaps they realised that Israel's worship was by divine order, but that it had then lapsed into formality.

The conflict between unbelief and the truth went on in the hearts of the multitude (12. 34), revealing their condition. The Lord did not directly answer their question, for their need could not be met by the formal answer to a question. He simply pressed on them the speedy passing of the opportunity which they then had. " While ye have the light, believe on the light. " **Iain T. H. Hunter.**

From Portstewart. —The resurrection of Lazarus was the last of the recorded resurrections which Jesus enacted, and it may be helpful to note the three different stages of the work of death at the time of resurrection. Jairus' daughter was dead, or " asleep, " but a few hours [5]; the son of the widow of Nain was already on the way to the grave; and Lazarus was dead four days. The Lord has power over death in all stages: at the rapture

of the Church there will be saints in all circumstances as above, as well as those who are alive and remain.

At the graveside of Lazarus it should be noted that Jesus called with a loud voice and specifically mentioned Lazarus.

Martha said that she knew her brother would rise again at the last day. We would suggest that this "last day" resurrection is that referred to in Daniel 12. 2.

At the supper in Bethany there were people present who could be placed in three categories: (1) resurrected dead, Lazarus, (2) living persons who had not yet died, and (3) One who was incorruptible and immortal, Jesus. This we thought may speak of the feast at the marriage supper of the Lamb. At it will be (1) those who had been asleep in Christ and who shall be raised to incorruptible bodies, (2) those who shall be alive at the Lord's coming and who will put on immortality, or bodies of immortality, and (3) the incorruptible and immortal One who saw death but not corruption, died yet remained immortal [6].

A. T. Gault.

COMMENTS.

[1] (**Wigan**). —Possibly the complaint began with Judas and was taken up by others. Complaints usually begin with someone, but **may** spread to many. —*J. M.*

[2] (**Wembley**). —The cause of His weeping in John 11. 35, was what He saw, as in verse 33, the weeping of Mary and of the Jews. The Lord was acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53), but His grief was caused by the grief of others. He bore griefs and carried our sorrows. He had none of His own. The R. V. marg. says that He troubled Himself, their trouble was His trouble. —*J. M.*

[3] (**Kingston**). —The truths of John 11. 25, 26 are what Paul explained to the Corinthians (and to us) in 1 Corinthians 15. 51-54. —*J. M.*

[4] (**Willington Quay**). —The change took place with Lazarus when the Lord said, "Lazarus, come forth." This is proved by John 5. 25. —*J. M.*

[5] (**Portstewart**). —The Lord said of the daughter of Jairus, "She is not dead, but sleepeth" (Luke 8. 52). —*J. M.*

[6] [**Portstewart**]. —The marriage supper of the Lamb will be a much bigger company than the Lord (the Bridegroom) and the Church (the Bride). Compare Matthew 25. 1-13 with Isaiah 25. 6. A bride is not called to her own marriage feast. —*J. M.*

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

Question from Kingston-on-Thames. —Is not 11. 4 rather unusual, since the Lord elsewhere stated that He sought not His own glory, but the glory of His Father?

Answer. —This is so, but note what it says, "This sickness is not unto death, **but** for the glory of God." But how was God glorified? He was glorified in the Son. The principle is clearly set out by the Lord in John 17. 1. "Glorify Thy Son," the object of this was, "that the Son may glorify Thee." Again, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him" (John 13. 81). God would not have been glorified had the Son not been glorified. Hence the Lord truly said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby" (11. 4). The Lord never sought glory which would end with Himself, but in every phase in which He is glorified it is that glory may redound to God. —*J. M.*

NOTES ON ROMANS.

CHAPTER 10.

Verse 18: *But I say, Did they not hear? Yea, verily, Their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.*

In contrast to the law in the past, which was commanded in Horeb for all Israel (Malachi 4. 4), and for such strangers as joined themselves to the Lord and His people, for there was one law for the homeborn and for the stranger that sojourned amongst God's people, the gospel is a universal message to all men without distinction. Paul here quotes from Psalm 19. 4 as to the universal message of the heavenly bodies which announce to men on earth the glory and greatness of God the Creator, so that they might fear Him. See Colossians I. 6, 23 and Acts 1. 8 as to the universal character of the gospel.

Verse 19: *But I say, Did Israel not know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy with that which is no nation, with a nation void of understanding will I anger you.*

This quotation from Deuteronomy 32. 21 has in view the departure of Israel from God, and of God bringing into His favour Gentiles who believed, who were no nation, and previous to believing were a foolish people void of understanding. These Gentiles with believing Jews formed the people referred to in Romans 9. 24-26, who were beloved of God and sons of the living God. The object of provoking the Jewish people was, as Paul says in Romans 11. 14, that some might be saved. Alas, oftentimes it wrought the other way, for in their mad jealousy they sorely persecuted Paul. See Acts 13. 44-46; 14. 1, 2, 19, 20.

Verses 20, 21: *And Isaiah is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought Me not; I became manifest unto them that asked not of Me. But as to Israel he saith, All the day long did I spread out My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

Here we have the striking contrast between Gentile and Jew; the Gentile finds a Saviour that he never sought after. Many of us are in this category of finding a Saviour that we never sought. But how thankful we are now since grace has opened our eyes! We can sing:—

"Thy love it was that sought me
(Thyself unsought by me)."

But of Israel it remains true unto this day, that God spreads out His hands to a disobedient and gainsaying or contradicting people, who seek material rather than spiritual prosperity, and who seek satisfaction in a religion of mere externals. But it shall not be always so, for "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid" (Zephaniah 3. 13).

NOTES ON ROMANS.

CHAPTER 11.

Verse 1: *I say then, Did God cast off His people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.*

Had God cast off His people, then Paul himself would have been thrust away also, for he was an Israelite, a descendant of him who was made a prince of God, and also of him who is called the friend of God. He was also

of the tribe of Benjamin, the son of the right hand. Complete national rejection of Israel could not **be true**, for there **was** an elect remnant of which Paul was one.

Verses 2, 3: *God did not cast off His people which He foreknew. Or wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elijah ? how he pleadeth with God against Israel, Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, they have digged down Thine altars: and I am left alone, and they seek my life.*

His people whom He foreknew must, I judge, **be** of such **as** are alluded to in Romans 8. 29, whom He foreknew and foreordained to **be** conformed to the image of His Son, who are illustrated **by** those who did not bow the knee to Baal in Elijah's time. How contrary **was** Paul's attitude to Israel, **as** expressed in Romans 9. 1-3; 10. 1, to that of Elijah ! Paul prayed for their salvation, but Elijah pleaded against them. What Elijah said **was** true indeed, **but** he was pleading with One who loved Israel with an everlasting love, who **were** also " beloved for the fathers' sake. "

Verses 4, 5, 6: *But what saith the answer of God unto him ? I have left for Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. But if it is by grace, it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.*

Elijah's words **were**, " I **am** left alone, and they seek my life, " **but** in God's electing mercy **He** had reserved to Himself seven thousand men who had not worshipped Baal. It will **be** a surprise to many in the coming **day** when the saints are revealed, " when **He** (the Lord) shall come to **be** glorified in His saints, and to **be** marvelled **at** in all them that believed " (2 Thessalonians 1. 10). Elijah who **was** out of touch with the Lord's gracious purposes in backsliding Israel **was** quickly relieved of his office, and Elisha **was** called to take his place. **Yet** such **was** the high regard God had for His prophet that he **was** taken to heaven in a whirlwind, and he will come again to earth **as** described in Malachi 4. 5 and Revelation 11. 3-13. As in Elijah's **time**, even so in Paul's day, there **was** a remnant elected according to grace. Here again is that inscrutable mystery of divine election, that there is no human merit whatever in God's electing grace. Then, **we** may ask, Why election **at** all ? Election does not mean that God in His foreknowledge knew beforehand who would believe the gospel and therefore He chose such: this would mean that faith **was** a meritorious **act** by which certain persons qualified to **be** of God's elect. Election **rests** solely on God's sovereign choice, which in no way impugns the justice of God or cancels out His love for all mankind. **We** on earth who know in part **must** not challenge One of infinite knowledge **as** to His acts. **He** does according to His own will in heaven and on earth.

Verses 7, 8: *What then ? That which Israel seeketh for, that he obtained not; but the election obtained it, and the rest were hardened: according as it is written, God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this very day.*

What did Israel seek for **but** obtained not ? Evidently, from Romans 9. 30-33 and 10. 3, 4, it **was** righteousness, which could never **be** obtained **by** works. This righteousness the elect remnant obtained by faith. The rest were hardened in their unbelief against Christ and the gospel; by the law of the consequences of the sin of unbelief they **were** hardened (Hebrews 3. 13). God did not harden them, **save** in the **fact** that sin reaped its own penalty. This was according to the certain law of results of long-continued backsliding from God, as will **be** seen in the passage in Isaiah 29. 9-14 from

which Paul quotes, that the punishment for such a course was spiritual stupor, blind eyes **and** deaf ears, which Paul said continued unto this **day**. Who of God's elect will not bow **and** adore God for His electing grace, as well as His saving grace ? for **but** for grace our case would have been far otherwise than it is.

Verses 9, 10: *And Devoid saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them: let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow Thou down their back alway.*

This is a quotation from Psalm 69, **and** from such quotations as those of verses 9, **and** 21, we know it to be a psalm of the sufferings of the Christ, to whom they gave the vinegar **and** the gall, **and** who prayed, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. " **But** those against whom Messiah **prayed** were not ignorant in acting towards the Lord, for they knew that they were acting contrary to their own law when they judged **and** condemned Him in the dark. They also sought false witnesses against Him. The betrayal by Judas is referred to in verse 25, as is also the betrayal **and** murder of the Lord by Israel's leaders (Acts 7. 52). Whoever should dine in fellowship with them would find their table **but a snare and a trap**; that table was a stumblingblock, even as Christ was a stumblingblock to them. In their blindness they would go on to the end under their sins, **and** the burden of law-keeping, as slaves at their weary, unending task, seeking peace **and** finding none. We **can but** shudder at the doom of such sinners who went on stubbornly in their self-chosen path. **Man** is ever morally accountable for his deeds to God. Judas **and** Pilate, Annas **and** Caiaphas, will for ever bear the responsibility of their acts in the train of events that led on to the crucifixion, **and** so will all **men be** responsible for what they have done.

Verse 11: *I say then, Did they stumble that they might fall ? God forbid: but by their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy**

Here we have the national stumbling of Israel at the Lord, the Stone of stumbling, for Peter said, "They stumble **at** the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed " (1 Peter 2. 8). With Israel there **can be** no national stumbling in such a sense that they will never **be** restored to divine favour. **By** their trespass salvation is come to the Gentiles; the object of this being to provoke Israel to jealousy so that they might **be** stirred **up** to **repentance and** to regain nationally the position they had lost in the favour of God.

Verse 12: *Now if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness ?*

Their fall is their trespass or offence, **and by** that the unsearchable riches of Christ are open to the Gentiles **and** to the world (Ephesians 3. 8). **But** if the Gentiles have gained much through Israel's loss, their fault or failure, **and** consequent impoverishment as a scattered people, how much more shall **be** their fulness, their plenitude ? What blessings shall then **be** for the world **and** the Gentile nations when Israel shall **find** their true place as a blessing in the midst of the earth ! (Isaiah 19. 24). Who **can** measure the blessing that will flow to the world with the Lord dwelling in the midst of a restored Israel ?

Verses 13, 14: *But I speak to you that are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I glorify my ministry: if by any means I may provoke to jealousy them that are my flesh, and may save some of them.*

The object of God stirring Israel to jealousy, in verse 11, was with a view to their national restoration, **but** here, in verse 14, it is **Paul** stirring

them to jealousy as an apostle of Gentiles, as we see in Acts 22. 21, 22, when he said, "**And** He (the Lord) said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles. And they gave him audience unto this word; **and** they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live." Though the jealousy of the Jews was bitter at the thought of the Gentiles being brought into God's favour, Paul did anticipate that some of those that he called his flesh would be saved as the result of seeing the Gentiles richly blessed with the joy **and** peace of God's salvation.

Verse 15: *For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*

This is not the reconciling of individual believers through the death of God's Son (Romans 5. 10), but the reconciling of the world by the casting away of Israel. A complete change has taken place in God's dealings with the world; He is dealing directly with the world without Israel, the custodians of His law, in between (Romans 3. 1, 2). We have seen the casting away of Israel, but what will the receiving of them back be? It will mean a great spiritual quickening for Israel, as is set forth in the vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37. 1-14), and a great resurgence of spiritual life in the world in general, the like of which has never been seen on earth. Life from the dead, indeed!

Verse 16: *And if the firstfruit is holy, so is the lump: and if the root is holy, so are the branches.*

In the first statement regarding the firstfruit and the lump, we have a reference made to Numbers 15. 17-21, to the offering of the first of their dough, so that if that heave offering of the first of their dough was holy, then the rest was sanctified also. The parable is repeated in the holy root and the holy branches. Who are signified in the firstfruits of dough and the holy root? They are, I judge, the men of faith from Abraham onward, the fathers of the Israel people to whom the word of God came (Hebrews 1. 1). Those who followed after, right to Paul's time, who bore like character to those men of faith, were the lump and the branches. But, alas, as Paul said in Romans 9. 6, "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel."

Verses 17, 18: *But if some of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a wild olive, wast grafted in among them, and didst become partaker with them of the root of the fatness of the olive tree; glory not over the branches: but if thou gloriest, it is not thou that bearest the root, but the root thee.*

The branches were not cut off, they were broken off in judgement, and branches from the wild olive were grafted in among the natural branches to be fellow-partakers of the root and of the fatness of the olive tree. The branches which were broken off were the unbelievers of Israel, and the branches that remained were such as were believers in Christ, the elect remnant of verses 5 and 7. The grafts from the wild olive were the believers of the Gentiles. The believing Jews and Gentiles drew by faith their oil from the promises of God, such as were given to the fathers (the root) of the Israel people. From such fathers the Gentiles claimed by faith spiritual descent (Galatians 3. 7). The Gentiles had nothing to glory in for their place of privilege through the governmental dealings of God both with Israel **and** with them. The Gentiles had been greatly blessed through Israel's trespass, **but** said Paul, "It is not thou that bearest the root, but the root thee." *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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EDITORIAL.

Parenthetical **Statements** in the Gospel according to John.

At the judgement seat of Christ each man shall have his praise from God (1 Corinthians 4. 5) and each shall receive the things done in the body (2 Corinthians 5. 10). With unerring accuracy God ascribes to each one the deeds done in the body, and a man's deeds are permanently associated with him. By this means, John, Spirit-led, leaves us in no doubt as to the identity of Nicodemus by referring to his first coming to Christ (7. 50, 19. 39). Similarly, in our present portion, the speaker (Judas) in John 14. 22 is cleared of an unworthy deed by the very brief parenthesis "' not Iscariot. " God's record is beyond challenge; and when the Lord shall come we shall each meet our *own* works, and will not receive the reward of another: there can be no error. Let us not be unmindful of the fact that our deeds and thoughts are all known to God, and that " by Him actions are weighed " (1 Samuel 2. 3).

In parenthesis John says, " Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples" (4. 2), and it would seem that the Lord made this a general rule in His work upon earth. Making disciples and baptizing them in water is the work of disciples of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 28. 19): the Lord baptizes in Holy Spirit (1. 33).

Doctrine and interpretation of the Scriptures as well as practice must conform to certain general principles. One principle to be borne in mind, in Scripture study is that " the Scripture cannot be broken " (10. 35), and was used by the Lord with compelling effect when His Deity was being denied by the Jews. With His perfect knowledge of the Scriptures He selected a scripture which could not but silence His enemies, especially in the light of a reminder of the infallibility of the inspired Scriptures.

Finally, consider John 1. 14, where a parenthesis is set in one of the greatest things ever written. In the opening paragraph of his Gospel John sets forth as factual and axiomatic the eternal Deity of the Word and His work as Creator of all things, and the noble grandeur of this passage is maintained when John proceeds to the Lord's incarnation and rejection (1. 10-14). The greatness of this theme, the mystery of godliness (1 Timothy 3. 16), leaves John struggling for utterance, for, while he must record the condescending grace of the Lord, he must also remind us that even in the days of His flesh He manifested the glory of His Divine Sonship, a glory which He never relinquished.

Some tend to treat parenthetical statements as of almost negligible importance, and some (unbelievers) go so far as to dismiss certain passages of Scripture as mere glosses. We trust our few brief remarks will encourage interest in parenthetical statements in the Scriptures: they are worth most serious consideration.

J. B.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

(Chapters 13—17).

From Birkenhead. —In this account of the last passover feast the presence of Judas is **as** an overhanging cloud, until the relief of his departure into the night. But this background of doubt and dark design **makes** all the brighter the words and acts of the Master on this memorable occasion.

This opening **scene** of the Lord's passion, described by John in short dramatic clauses, moved on through those ordinances, first old, then new, to that long and moving discourse with His disciples on that passover night, the night of His betrayal. All except Peter were speechless with amazement, but the Lord left them in no doubt that **He was** setting before them the perfect example of humility. How well Peter remembered this lesson is clear from his later exhortation, "gird yourselves with humility, to serve **one another**" (1 Peter 5. 5). Not only **so**, but he learned the important spiritual teaching contained in the Lord's words, "He that **is** bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." This "bathing" is the washing (or laver) of regeneration with the water of the word (Ephesians 2. 26, Titus 3. 5), which is seen in type in Leviticus 8. 6, where, in the consecration of Aaron and his sons, Moses first washed them all over at the laver. This **was a** once for all washing, never ceremonially repeated on them again; but daily they washed their feet at the laver **as** they served in the tabernacle. This latter washing is typical of the believer's daily **need** of cleansing from defilement in his life and walk {1 John 1. 7-9). Those who have known the regenerating power of the word of God are baptized in one Spirit into one Body, and are eternally in Christ (1 Corinthians 12. 13), and the daily cleansing enables them to walk in happy fellowship with the Lord and yoked with Him in service for, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me" (13. 8).

In the sadness of the betrayal the Lord's thought was for the disciples that they should be forewarned about it, both by His own words, "One of you shall betray Me," and also by the scripture, "**He** that eateth My bread lifted up his heel against Me." This **was** that they might have brought home to them the shame of a false and traitorous friend, and that their faith in Him might be strengthened. "From henceforth I tell you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I **am He**." (13. 19).
A. H., N. A.

From Kingston-on-Thames. —Although the Lord Jesus knew "that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that **He** came forth from God, and goeth unto God," yet His heart **was** not filled with pride. The Lord of all creation stooped down in an act of unparalleled humility and washed the feet of men who were shortly to forsake Him, one to deny Him, and another to betray Him. Although **He** knew that **His** hour was come when He should suffer at the hands of men and of God, His thoughts were for the well-being of His disciples.

There were two lessons which the Lord **was** trying to impress upon the twelve by this incident. One was that it should be **a** joy to imitate Him and in figure wash one another's feet. The other lesson was that those who have experienced once for all the cleansing power of the blood of Christ still need their walk to be cleansed day by day. This is accomplished by the cleansing power of the word of God.

The Deity of Christ stands out **in these** chapters **as it does** throughout John's gospel. His omniscience **and His nearness** to the Father **are** particularly stressed.

When Satan sowed the seed of evil **in** the heart of Judas, **it** found fertile soil **in** which to grow, so that before long it was possible for the devil himself to enter the heart of the traitor (John 13. 27). The evil work of Judas was necessary in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, but that did not affect his personal responsibility. **He** had a free will and chose the wrong path.

After Judas had gone out to do his foul work, the Lord Jesus spoke to **His** disciples in a more intimate manner. His love and tenderness **and** solicitude for their welfare in their imminent trial are manifest. Thomas and Philip were not afraid to confess their lack of understanding of the Deity and Sonship of the Lord, and so provided the occasion for these wonderful truths to be explained more fully for their enlightenment and ours. The oneness of the Son with the Father **is** made quite clear: "**He** that hath seen **Me** hath **seen** the Father," and again, "**I am** in the Father, and the Father in Me." **But** on the other hand **He** also said (John 14. 28), "The Father **is** greater than I." There **is** no contradiction here, but the full implication of these truths **is** beyond the capacity of the human mind to grasp. "Without controversy great **is** the mystery of godliness; **He** who was manifested in the flesh." **L.** **B.**

From Cowdenbeath. —It would appear that chapters 13 and 14 were spoken in the upper room, and 15, 16, and 17 on the way to the garden [4].

Fruit-bearing and service are seen here (John 15). The vine has only one function, that is, fruit-bearing. The branches can only bear fruit **if** drawing sustenance from the vine. Unfruitful branches are **cut** off and **cast** away. **It is** a solemn possibility that a person can unfit himself for the service of God. Paul kept this before him, lest after preaching unto others he himself might become a castaway (1 Corinthians 9. 27). The secret of fruitfulness **is** abiding in Christ. The thought of abiding **is** prominent in this chapter. We have the thought of the believer abiding in Christ and of Christ abiding in the believer, both aspects **as** viewed here are conditional and dependent upon Christ's words abiding in the believer. The true disciple **is** fruitful and in bearing much fruit glorifies God. The World **sees** the hall mark of discipleship in our love one toward another. This **is** one of the Lord's commandments (John 13. 34). The degree of intimacy between the Lord and His disciples depends upon their obedience to **His** commands.

He had spoken to them of **His** going away and this had **made** them sorrowful. In chapter 16 **He** tells them that it is expedient (profitable) that He should go away in order that the Comforter might come. The sending of the Spirit can be ascribed **as** truly to the Son **as** to the Father (16. 7, 14. 26), because there **is** perfect harmony of action between the Father and the Son.

The work of the Spirit is twofold. In relation to the sinner, **His** work **is** to convict in respect of sin, of righteousness and of judgement. **He is** in the believer to **guide** into all the truth and glorify Christ. Things which the Lord had taught **His** disciples and which they had soon forgotten or not fully apprehended were brought to their remembrance by the **Spirit**.

Chapter 17 records the words of the eternal Son **as He addressed** the Father in prayer. The disciples were indeed privileged to hear that prayer

which contained so many requests on their behalf. **We** should note the way **in** which the Lord Jesus addressed His Father throughout the prayer. There **is** no vain repetition of the name Father, but its use is with definite purpose and association with the context. *James K. D. Johnston.*

EXTRACTS.

From Wembley. —John does not mention the disagreement among the disciples as to who was the greatest, but he is the only one to describe the practical answer that the Lord gave them to **last** for all time.

The example that the Lord gave was not an isolated occurrence: it **was** a signal, outstanding sample of a prevailing principle. He did not stoop low to serve once and serve no more, nor did the act of service lower His position, it underlined the tremendous gap between the thoughts of man and of God, between worldly greatness and true greatness. The sequel was the separation of the one person (Judas Iscariot) who would never accept divine principles and who had allied himself with the other side. Whatever the significance of the term " then Satan entered, " it could not happen to **a** true believer. It shows **a** state of spiritual emptiness that gave the owner vacant possession. *L. B. H.*

From Willington Quay. —Chapter 13 shows what was in the hearts of **the** Lord Jesus and **His** disciples: **His** heart was filled with love, and here **we** see the expression of it in **a** most remarkable way. But in that moment of the Lord's deep humility and grace, Satan also found **a** place in the heart of Judas Iscariot. This was not yet evident to the disciples, **as** they credited Judas with high motives (how deceived they were !); they thought that he was going from the upper room to buy something for the poor. The heart of Judas was fertile ground for the thoughts of Satan.

Water (a type of the Holy Spirit) had been carried to the upper room by **a** man " bearing **a** pitcher. " This water was used to wash the disciples' feet: this type holds true for all time.

It would seem, we suggest, that Peter asked John quietly to ask the Lord just **whom** He meant, and John leaned back to look into the face of Jesus and ask **Him**, receiving **as** an answer the sign of the sop. The others did not connect the gift of the sop with the Lord's remark " One of you shall betray Me " (13. 21). The Lord pointed out Judas by the gift of the sop. Judas, in his turn singled out the Lord by **a** kiss. The two were diametrically opposed from the moment of the sop being given; and He who knew all said, " That thou doest, do quickly. " *C. B.*

From Crowborough. —Chapter 13 **is** a sad one, yet it contains many precious lessons for us. **We** find in the Lord washing the disciples' feet the humility of the Son of God. John 14. **3** tells us who He was and where **He** came from, and throws into relief the act that follows. We should be humble. We need our feet to be washed in **a** spiritual sense each day, **if** we are going to keep our walk clean. This can only be **if** we come to the Lord and confess our sin, and by the application of the Word to our ways.

It **is** evident that Judas listened to Satan's whisper first of all (13. 2), **and** then Satan entered into him (13. 27). This led to his base betrayal of the Lord Jesus. Let us beware of entertaining in our hearts thoughts suggested by Satan.

We do well to ponder the words of our beloved Master, "Love one another; even as I have loved you... By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples."

J. Robertson.

From Edinburgh. —The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, etc. This rich cluster **is** to be found in the words of the Lord to His own: He speaks of My love (15. 10), My joy (15. 11, 17. 13) and My peace (14. 27). The first of these is conditional. The second can be fulfilled in us, and the third comes to us as a gift. Our once for all salvation from sin secures for us eternal joy and peace. After the Lord spoke of "My joy," "My peace" and "My love," He spoke to His Father of "My joy" and "My glory" (17. 24).

Four times the Lord gave the disciples the commandment to love one another. We may have fallen short in the new commandment, just as Israel failed in the great and first commandment and the second like unto it (Matthew 22. 38, 39). Let us apply the Lord's words and commandment, that we may display the fruit of the One whom He has sent to indwell us.

J. Paterson.

From Wigan. —That "the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" **is** borne out in John 13. **As** we contemplated the Lord's act of condescending grace in washing the disciples' feet, the words of Paul came forcibly to us: "Doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself" (Philippians 2. 3). The Lord Jesus counted it not a prize to be on equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a Servant. His laying aside **His** garments would speak to us of the voluntary laying aside of the glory that **He** had with the Father before the world was (Mark 9. 3, Ecclesiastes 9. 8). When the task of washing the disciples' feet was completed, He took His garments and sat down again. This directed our thoughts to Hebrew 1. There the One who took the lowest place **is** seen in the position of pre-eminence, far above all principality and power. The Servant of servants in John 13 **is** seen in Hebrews 1 **as** King of kings and Lord of lords.

The disciples were forewarned (15. 19) concerning the world's attitude and hatred. The world rejected and crucified the Son of God, and the hatred shown towards **Him** will likewise be shown in smaller measure to **His** followers. "If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye; because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you" (1 Peter 4. 14)

H. Caldwell

From Nottingham. —When the Lord washed **His** disciples' feet Judas Iscariot was still with them. The one who soon was to betray his Lord was a witness of, and participant in, this event. How would **he** feel, knowing what he knew, when the Master ministered to him? Would his conscience be pricked at the thought of his evil schemings? The Lord had early made it clear that Judas had a demon [1]. The evil force had been at work and soon we see it bearing fruit in his planning with the Jews to betray the Lord. Now, Satan having already entered into the heart of Judas, we find the force of evil intrigue rising to its height, and when Judas left the upper room Satan had complete possession of Him. It **is** difficult to understand how the other disciples could be apparently unaware of the part Judas was going to play (13. 29).

After the conversation between " the disciple **whom Jesus** loved " and the Lord **and** the clear indication of **the** passing of the sop, it **seems** curious that so much uncertainty was, **in** the disciples' minds, still attached to the betrayal. It **is** suggested that the conversation between the Lord and the disciple **was** of a private nature **and was** not known to **the** others (13. 25).

Note, the Lord's words **as** Judas left: "Now **is** the Son of **Man** glorified, **and** God **is** glorified in Him" (13. 31). Men and the world were seeking to destroy Him, but **in** **His** crucifixion **He was** to be glorified, not defeated, **and** God **was** to **be** glorified **in** **His** work. *R. Hickling,*

From Liverpool. —>⁴ **Ye** are clean, but not all. " The words, " not all, " **we** understood to **mean** " not all of you. " Judas **was** unregenerate, never born **again**. Never once do **we** read of Judas addressing Jesus **as** Lord; "**no man can** say, Jesus **is** Lord, but **in** the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12. 3).

** I have given you **an** example, that ye also should do **as** I have done to you. " The higher we may be **in** God's service within **His** house the greater the **need** for humility. Tasks there will be; and feet-washing demands grace (Galatians 6. 1), lowliness of mind and humility of spirit. It **is** not a task exclusively for brethren, **as** Paul shows **in** 1 Timothy 5. **9, 10**, but **is** certainly the task of a servant. " If ye know these things, blessed are ye **if** ye do them. "

We considered the word "chosen" (13. 18) and its application here. It **was** used by the Lord Jesus **in** **His** foreknowledge, **and** does not imply any choosing of some to the exclusion of others **as** touching salvation. Judas had equal opportunity with the eleven to believe. The **same** verbal, physical **and** miraculous evidence **was** his, yet he had never received Christ **by** faith. We realize that there **is** a **sense** in which God **did** choose individuals, but **again** this **was** according to **His** foreknowledge **as** to their response to the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2. **13, 14**).

Judas repented too late, **and** even then he sought not **the** Lord's forgiveness. Esau sought repentance, diligently with tears, but **he** found **no** place of repentance (Hebrews 12. 17). *A. Horridge.*

From Manchester. —Chapters 13—17 give a detailed account of what the Lord Jesus Christ **said and did** in the upper room, **and** yet there **is** no mention of the " Remembrance. " This surprising omission **is** the more remarkable because the apostle John enjoyed close communion with the Lord (13. **25**).

The hatred of the world **is** inevitable for those who love the Lord Jesus Christ (15. 18). They have been chosen out of this world (15. 19) to **be** a people **set** apart for God. All who follow **Him can** expect suffering and tribulation from the world, **and in** John 16. **1-6** there **is** a warning for those who might stumble. Separation **is** clearly pointed out **in** these chapters, —separation from the things of the world, e. g., " not **of** the world " (17. **14-16**).

There **is** a future place for all God's people (14. 1-3), where the Lord Jesus Christ **will** receive them unto Himself. The Lord Jesus Christ **came** to show forth the glory of God **and** to **manifest** the great love of God towards **His** people on earth (17. 24-26). *R. T.*

From Hereford. —Of the happenings of that last evening which John selectively records, the importance of the dialogue and prayer of chapters 13 to 17 is emphasised by frequent references to "these things" (14. 25; 15. 11, 17; 16. 1, 4, 25, 33; 17. 1, 13), and "these words" (18. 1). What are "these things," which the Lord spake only to His own? He spake of His return to receive us unto Himself, that we may be where He is; of loving Him and keeping His commandments; of the abiding presence of the Father and the Son in consequence; of bearing fruit and abiding in His love; of the separation God has made between the world and His children; of the world's hatred and persecution; of the Holy Spirit's work in the world and among the Lord's own; of His resurrection and service for us before the Father's face.

Four times He spoke of the sending of the Comforter; three times He called Him the Spirit of Truth; three times He spoke of three Persons of the Godhead in the same sentence (14. 16, 14. 26, 15. 26).

Many of the things which the Lord had spoken to His disciples are mentioned again in the prayer of chapter 17, indicative of His continued care for us right on to the present time. On earth He began both to do and to teach; in heaven His work on our behalf goes on, and the great all-pervading purpose of His words and His work is that the unity of love which is in the Godhead may also be among the children of God—"that the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them, and I in them." *E. H. Merchant*

From Southport. —The Lord knew that the hearts of His disciples would be troubled. The storm, which was to fall upon Him, was gathering to the full, and even then His perfect love sought not its own (1 Corinthians 13. 5). Over all is the precious promise, "I come again": the Lord Himself shall come (1 Thessalonians 4. 16).

Notice the verses (14. 14, 15) which set forth what the Lord will do for those who ask anything in His name, and what we will do if we love Him.

It was in infinite wisdom and love that the Lord Jesus Christ, when He left His loved ones, sent the Holy Spirit to be with them (and us) for ever (14. 16). Here and in the following chapters we have the personality of the Holy Spirit, and also His work: "He shall teach you all things" (14. 26); "Whom I will send" (15. 26); "He shall bear witness" (15. 26); He will convict (16. 7, 8); and He shall guide (16. 18). So we have the other Comforter, One like the Lord Himself, to be with us and in us until the Lord shall come again for us. *T. R.*

From London, S. E. John 13-17 occupies a very short space of time before Christ was crucified. To John's enquiry Jesus said that he to whom the sop would be given was the one to betray Him. Judas, one of the twelve, was our Lord's enemy. The giving of the sop at a supper was a custom, and indicated friendly affection (Psalm 41. 9). "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you" (13. 34). This theme of reciprocal love is found in all five chapters. The oneness of the Father and the Son is expressed in John 14 and 17, and because of that unity the love of the Father and the Son is bestowed upon His own.

John 14 and 16 bring to the disciples the promise of the Lord to send another Comforter to take His place, as he was about to depart from them to go to the Father. The Lord Jesus described the Holy Spirit as (1) the *Parakletos*, one called alongside to help (translated Advocate in 1 John

2. 1), (2) the Spirit of Truth, whose work is only for born **again** ones: the world cannot receive Him, (3) the Comforter, the Teacher who brings to remembrance, (4) **the** Spirit who glorifies Christ and shows that which is of Christ to **us** (John 16. 12-15), and (5) who convicts the world of **sin**, of righteousness, **and** of judgement (John 16. 7-11). *G. A. Reeve.*

From Atherton. —John 13 brings before us the love the Lord Jesus had for **His** own: "He loved them unto the end" (13. 1), **i. e.**, to the uttermost or furthest extent. This, however, does not refer to **a** point in time.

The statement of His divine origin (13. 3) enhances **His** amazing condescension in doing the office of a Bond-servant. "Supper being ended" (A. V.) Alford renders " Supper having been served. " Washing would probably precede the meal [2]. It may have been some disagreement among the disciples that constrained the Lord to interpose in such **a** striking way: **we must** keep before **us** the fact of the Lord's example (1 Peter 2. 21-25) [3].

Chapter 13 brought sorrow to the disciples, but in chapter 14 the Lord sought to comfort them, with the promise of **His** coming again and the mansions He has gone to prepare, and with the promise of another Comforter.

The vital point **in** fruitbearing **is** the link between the vine (Christ) and the branches (us) (Romans 11. 17-21). If that link **is** broken there will be no fruit, and our usefulness for God will have ceased. Three expressions are used: bearing fruit, bearing more fruit, and bearing much fruit, evidence of the spiritual growth which the Lord desires in each one of **us** (15. 16).

The Lord repeatedly mentioned the world, the place where sin abounds, with consequent sorrow, tribulation and death. In heaven, where the Father dwells, sin **is** absent and joy, happiness and life abound. The Son of God came: the world hated Him, and it will hate us also; this **is** the reproach of Christ. To seek the world's friendship **is** wrong (James 4. 4).

The terms Father, Holy Father, and righteous Father, are worth noting (John 17). The Lord used Father when speaking of Himself, Holy Father, when speaking of **His** own, and righteous Father, when speaking of the world.

J. Bullock, D. II. Butler.

COMMENTS.

[1] (Nottingham). —It says nowhere that Judas Iscariot had **a** demon, or was **a** demon. It does say in John 6. 70, "One of you **is** a devil" (*Diabolos*). Judas Iscariot was devil, in character, but not **the** devil. The word in this verse **is** not *Daimon*, demon. One sometimes hears what our friends say, and young men and others should take note of the error. —*J. M.*

[2] (Atherton). —The washing of the disciples feet by the Lord was after the Passover feast, and before the institution of the Remembrance by the Lord. Judas Iscariot was present at the Passover and when the Lord washed the disciples' feet, but went out shortly after that. —*J. M.*

[3] (Atherton). —Luke 22. 24 supplies the reason why the disciples would not wash each other's feet. They were too proud to do the menial work of a slave. But the Lord though He knew that the Father had given all things to Him, and that He came out from God and was returning to God, arose and did the slave's work of washing their feet to make the feet of the bearers of good tidings beautiful upon the mountains, **as well as** to **suit** them to partake of the Remembrance, that which is of first importance in service Godward and testimony manward. —*J. M.*

[4] (Cowdenbeath). —I think the probability **is** that though they arose from the supper, the Lord continued to speak to **His** disciples standing in the upper room prior to their going forth over the brook Kidron (John 18. 1). —*J. M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question from Kingston-on-Thames. —John 18. **28** would lead us to suppose that the Jews kept the Passover on the day of the crucifixion. Was the supper of John 13. **2** a ceremonial meal which preceded the actual feast? or did the Lord and His disciples keep the Passover at a different time from the rest of the nation?

Answer. —The supper was the Passover supper. The day of the Passover began about 6 p. m. (our time) and continued till the following evening at the same time. The Lord kept the Passover at the earliest possible time. The Jewish leaders had not kept it when on the next morning they delivered the Lord to Pilate. See John 18. 28. —*J. M.*

Questions from Willington Quay. —(1) Was the sop normally bestowed as an act of favour by the host? Into what would it be dipped? (2). " My Father's house. " Is this a place in the heavens, or **is** it composed of individuals?

Answers (1). —One has said, "This giving the sop was one of the closest testimonies of friendly affection. " This **is**, I think, the correct view of this incident. It **is** thought to be a piece of unleavened bread dipped in gravy or broth. (2) " My Father's house " **is** in heaven, and, I would think must be a place, for in it are " many abodes " or " abiding places, " and the Lord said that He would prepare " a place " (*Topos*) for them. At the same time, having regard to the R. V. reading of Revelation 13. **6** where those that dwell in heaven are called God's Tabernacle, it may be well not to be dogmatic. —*J. M.*

Question from Liverpool. —What are the " works " and " greater works " in John 14. 12?

Answer. —Signs or miracles wrought upon the sick and dead were for the purpose of proving the Lord's Deity and the divine character of the words **He** spoke. **His** works and words had in view the establishing on earth of a world-wide testimony in the churches of God to Himself and God the Father in the power of the Spirit. In the bringing this testimony into being and maintaining it was something greater than even raising the dead. —*J. M.*

Questions from London. (1). —How can we as disciples wash one another's feet? (2). Is there a special sense in which the Holy Spirit, as the * Spirit of Truth, " cannot be known by an unbeliever?

Answers. —(1) The washing of the disciples' feet by the Lord was quite evidently a symbolic act, from what **He** says in John 13. 10 of bath-washing and basin-washing. **He** alone does the bathing in the laver of regeneration, but we may use the washing-basin, to cleanse defilement from our ways by the word. Spirit-given ministry in lowliness of **mind** is one of the ways in which this washing may be done. Much washing may also be done in private conversation of a spiritual kind. (2). The Spirit cannot be known to unbelievers save that **He** convicts them of **sin**, righteousness and judgement (John 16. 8-11) and **He** bears witness to Christ (John 15. 26, 27). —*J. M.*

NOTES ON ROMANS
CHAPTER 11.

Verses 19, 20: *Thou wilt say then, Branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; by their unbelief they were broken off and thou standest by thy faith. Be not highminded, but fear:*

God's dealing in judgement with unbelieving Israel should have a salutary lesson for all Gentile believers. Unbelief was the cause of the Jews being broken off, and faith the reason for the Gentiles being grafted in. Those who have but a dead faith are in great peril that they may cease to occupy the privileged place of drawing upon the fatness of the olive tree. "Thou standest by thy faith." It should be clearly seen that neither in the Vine (Christ), nor in the Olive (Israel's privileged place in the past) is there permanency, whatever the believer's state may be. These trees in their parabolic teaching do not set forth the eternal relationship of believers in Christ to Christ. Branches from the Vine can be removed if the person seen as a branch does not abide in Christ (John 15. 6). Alas, men gather many such branches these days. In view of the grave danger of not standing by faith, Paul says, "Be not highminded, but fear."

Verses 21, 22. *For if God spared not the natural branches, neither will He spare thee. Behold then the goodness and severity of God toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*

If God spared not the natural branches because of their unbelief, can the Gentiles expect better treatment if they cease to have a living faith? Surely not! God's goodness descends like dew upon men of faith, but His judgement falls upon the sin of unbelief in whomsoever it may be (see Hebrews 3. 12, and note the context). The question is ever one of—"if thou continue in His goodness. ** As we look back over the centuries, and then over the lands where once the light of the gospel clearly shone, surely we can see the effects of men not standing by their faith. Over these lands the dark shadow of Mohammedanism is cast, and also the dark shadows of Roman and Greek churches (so called) are also cast; and we can clearly discern how terribly the words of the apostle have come true, "Thou also shalt be cut off." Unbelief brought its fearsome recompense. Lands that once basked in the sunshine of the gospel now sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. But what of Britain, so long blessed with the hearing of the word? The tide of faith is, alas!, on the ebb, and ebbing quickly.

Verses 23, 24: *And they also, if they continue not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wast cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and wast grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?*

Here Paul contemplates the time when a believing Israel will be grafted into their own olive tree. God and God alone is able to do this. He will pour out on the elect remnant of Israel in a coming day "the Spirit of grace and supplication"; and through their grief and tears "they shall look unto Me whom they have pierced: and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son" (Zechariah 12. 10). Wonderful, indeed, will be (so often called) "that day" of repentance and restoration. If God is able to graft wild olive branches in a good olive, contrary to nature (grafting is usually the other way about, grafting good scions upon a wild stock), how much more shall He graft believing Israel into their own olive tree to draw once more as of old upon the richness of the promises of God to which they have been alien so long! There is no doubt also contemplated here the grafting in of individual believers of Israel into their own olive tree during this dispensation of grace.

Verse 25: *For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in;*

"The **fulness** of the Gentiles" during this dispensation of grace, **which** ends **with** the Lord's coming for the Church (Ephesians 3. 2-8; 5. 22-33), should not **be** confused with "the times of the Gentiles," **which** began **with** Nebuchadnezzar **and** will end with the coming of the Son of **Man** in judgement **and** for the deliverance of Israel (Luke 21. 24-28). The fulness of the Gentiles **is in** this dispensation of grace, but Israel's fulness (Romans 11. 12) **is in** the Millennium, in the "dispensation of the fulness of the times" (Ephesians 1. 10). It **is** in this present dispensation that the mystery of the hardening in part of Israel finds its place.

Verses 26, 27: *And so all Israel shall be saved: even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: and this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

All Israel does not mean all the Jews, for, alas, that prophecy of the Lord will have a **sad meaning** for many: "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). Many shall, alas!, fall a prey to the blandishments and deceptions of the antichrist. But all Israel, the repentant, believing and persecuted Israel, shall know deliverance by the Divine Redeemer of Isaiah 59. 16-21, from which portion Paul quotes. Deliverance both from their enemies and from sin will be theirs, **and** His covenant will be with them—of **His** Spirit upon them and **His** words **in** their mouth—which will continue from generation to generation. God's word shall be **in** their mouth, **in** the mouth of their seed, and their seed's seed from henceforth and for ever. What a Deliverer and what a deliverance! (Isaiah 59. 20, 21).

Verses 28, 29: *As touching the gospel, they are enemies for your sake: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake. For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance.*

Here **we** have set side by side the facts that Israel **as** a people are both enemies **and** beloved, but such opposites are easily grasped from Paul's clear exposition. They are enemies, **as** touching the gospel; this fact is clearly **seen in** the book of the Acts. But, Paul says that they were **enemies** for the sake of the Gentiles, the believing Gentiles of this dispensation of grace. But God **can** never forget the pleasure **He** found **in** their fathers: "The LORD had a delight **in** thy fathers to love them, and **He** chose their seed after them" (Deuteronomy 10. 15; 4. 37). That election remains, though, alas, many, many of them are not in the election of verses 5, and 7. God, who ever does the thing that **is** right, can never change **His** mind about **His** gifts and calling, therefore the election referred to in verse 28 **is** irrevocable.

Verses 30, 31, 32: *For as ye in time past were disobedient to God, but now have obtained mercy by their disobedience, even so have these also now been disobedient, that by the mercy shewn to you they also may now obtain mercy. For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all.*

Here Paul restates **in** other words what he said earlier **in** this chapter; "By their **fall** (trespass) salvation is come unto the Gentiles" (verse 11), so that the Gentiles obtained mercy by Israel's disobedience. Thus also may the disobedient of Israel find mercy even as the Gentiles had: for all, Jew and Gentile, **are** shut up unto disobedience, that God might have mercy upon all. Though Israel **is** in part hardened, there **is** ever a way for them to come individually to Christ the Crucified and **find** peace and pardon **in Him**. If men are doomed they write their sentence with their own hand, for God's

desire is to have mercy upon all. Paul says in another place that it is His will that all men should be saved, and in proof of this He has made provision in the Man Christ Jesus for all. See 1 Timothy 2. 3-6.

Verses 33, 34, 35, 36: *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been His counsellor ? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again ? For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things. To Him be the glory for ever. Amen.*

With this soul-inspiring doxology Paul brings to a close this Spirit-taught treatise on divine election, the most wonderful on this subject in the entire book of God. References to this subject lie here and there in the Scriptures, but here alone the case is stated in clarity, yet with a profundity that draws forth those words from the apostle's spirit, " O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God ! " We shall ever feel as the apostle did, as we meditate on this mysterious truth of election. In doing so our feeble yet enlightened minds are seeking to plumb to the depths of the Divine Mind that designed such matters before the world began. It is well to have adoring hearts as we contemplate the infinite depths of divine wisdom, and to remember the words of Paul in an earlier chapter, " O man, who art thou that repliest against God ? " The answer to the three questions—" Who hath known the mind of the Lord ? Who hath been His counsellor ? Who hath first given to Him ? " is, NONE ! "Of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things; " all things created by Him are moving unto Him inexorably, and we the redeemed are moving toward Him gladly. And now with bowed hearts before the God of election we say, " To Him be the glory for ever, Amen. "

NOTES ON ROMANS.

CHAPTER 12.

Verse 1: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

Paul, having outlined to the Romans in the previous chapters the mercies or compassions of God, exhorts them by these very mercies, as providing a sound reason why they should give or present their bodies as one would a sacrifice at an altar. But in contrast to the slain unreasonable beasts which were offered on the altar, the offering here is living, holy and acceptable to God. There can be or ought to be no withdrawing of what has been given to God, what has been sacrificed to Him, for the offerer's own use thereafter. The living bodies of saints are acceptable to God, because they are quickened by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8. 11) in resurrection power (Ephesians 1. 19, 20; Philippians 3. 10, 11). This offering of the living bodies of saints is their reasonable (*Logiken*) divine service (*Latreian*). This reasonable service is service rendered by saints whose reason or mind has been enlightened by God, and is in contrast to the service the priests of old rendered to God according to the law of a carnal (*Sarkikes*, fleshly) commandment (Hebrews 7. 16). It is reasonable, intelligent service rendered to God on the highest plane. No real progress can be made in holy Christian living until the body is presented to God, for all the works of saints are done through the body (2 Corinthians 5. 10); hence this exhortation comes first in the list of exhortations contained in this intensely practical chapter.

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.

Our fellow-students of **the Scriptures** will now have **had** ample time to examine **the syllabus** for **1956**, and **we ask** their attention to certain matters affecting **Bible Studies**.

The syllabus covers most of the book of Deuteronomy, and, **as** in the current year, the portions **are** usually lengthy, but there is **a** difference. In **the** syllabus for **1955** several topics are **suggested** for **each** month and correspondents are **free** to write on one or more; but for **each** month in **1956** only one general subject is named. The coherence of the magazine **as a whole**, and **the** standard of the papers will gain, if correspondents **keep the main subject** clearly in view and relate their thoughts to it.

Most months some papers contain **much** narrative and re-statement of **the** portion under consideration. Our very limited space allows only a minimum of narrative passages, which we are frequently compelled to delete or abbreviate, and papers **suffer** through this regrettable but necessary-deletion. It will **be** for the good of all concerned if re-statement and bare narrative are avoided. These are not expressions of **study**, though **a little may** at times **be** necessary for **the** true setting of **a** thought. For a magazine like **Bible Studies** it is better to **set out the pros and cons** of **a** difficulty, or to render **a** clear distinction between things **that** differ, or to **set out** in order an important teaching derived from the portion. A terse record of **such** study will best meet our needs.

"Corners" **are** not all organised in the **same way**; but, we assume, all will have something after the nature of **a** programme for **the** year. **We suggest that** this yearly time-table be constructed to allow for holiday periods, regular conferences, etc. If this is effectively done, there should **be** fewer late papers, and also **the** seasonal decline in the number of papers submitted will, at least, **be** mitigated. The present issue is **a case** in point. Only twelve papers were received, although both in January and April twenty-three papers were published. **We feel that** consistent regularity of **study** and contribution would **be** more profitable for our fellow-students and for the magazine. "Let **us** not **be** weary in well-doing: for in **due** season **we** shall reap, if **we** faint not" (Galatians 6. 9). **J. B.**

THOMAS CALLED DIDYMUS.

It is well known that **each** of the four Gospel writers presents **the** life of the Lord **Jesus** in his own characteristic **way**. Now, in developing his grand **theme**, **each** of **them** has also incidentally provided portraits of some of **the** apostles, and here again the four records show interesting similarities and divergences.

Let **us**, for an example, examine **what** is recorded about Thomas. **Matthew** (10. 8), **Mark** (3. 18) and **Luke** (6. 15) make only **the** one bare mention of Thomas, when **they** list **the** names of **the** twelve, and beyond **that** there is no further specific reference to him. **John's** Gospel, so far **as** Thomas

is concerned, is in marked contrast to these three. He does not give a list of the twelve, though he records the call of some of the apostles, but he does record four incidents in which Thomas figures, two occurring before the Lord's crucifixion (John 11, 14) and two after the Lord's resurrection (John 20, 21); and it is not until after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus that John specifically says of Thomas, "one of the twelve." Further, in three of these incidents the name Didymus is added, a term used only by John.

In the story of Lazarus (John 11) and when the Lord was comforting His disciples (John 14) Thomas comes to the fore and manifests a measure of the impulsive leadership and of the devotion so characteristic of Peter, but after the resurrection (John 21) Thomas is seen following the example of a stronger leader: leaders appreciate stronger leaders. Today the Lord needs leaders, who must ever follow their great Leader.

Of the four incidents involving Thomas the best known is that in John 20, which records the failure of his faith immediately after the resurrection. His faith had so weakened that he could not believe that the Lord was risen unless on the evidence of sight. The Lord, having granted him this evidence, and having heard from him the confession, "My Lord and my God," rebuked him saying, "Be not faithless, but believing."

The R. V. margin indicates that Didymus means twin. There is no evidence as to the identity of the other twin, and it would be idle to speculate. This much is certain: John's portrait of Thomas is marked by human failure and weakness. If we search our hearts and review our lives, we shall find that in this each of us bears a twin-like resemblance to Thomas called Didymus. Our disciple experience includes devotion and failure, a faith that ebbs as well as flows; and, when our faith weakens, we may be content with the blessing that comes to those that believe because they see, and thus we may miss the greater blessing that is for those who see not but believe (20. 29).

J. B.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

(Chapters 18. 1—19. 37).

From Glasgow. —In chapter 19 the apostle John returns to his usual way of adducing evidence to show that Jesus is the Christ. In his record of the scenes of the Cross, he records four incidents with the words, "That the scripture might be fulfilled," as though to underline the fact that the fulfilment of these prophecies identified Him as the One of whom the prophets had spoken. This evidence is indeed strong.

Verse 30 is worthy of note as indicating that the Lord Jesus voluntarily gave up His life. Being unlike all human beings, of whom death ultimately takes hold, the Lord Jesus was immune from death, which as Romans 5. 12 shows is the direct result of sin. He had no sin. He said, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (10. 18). In verse 30 we see that laying down. This is further underlined by the surprise of Pilate (Mark 15), and the apparent surprise of the soldiers (19. 33), that He was dead already. As though to leave no doubt a soldier with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith there came out blood and water, a fact which John alone records.

The blood and water are significant in that they indicate the condition of the blood in the body of the Lord at the time of the piercing. An explanation of why there should be blood and water is proper to medical men, but we suggest that it is intended to show that the Lord was truly dead at that moment, and that there is some parallel between this blood-

flow and that seen at the altar when victims were slain. There, blood was allowed to flow to declare that the life had been sacrificed to make atonement for the sinner. The punishment of sin is death, which is shown to have taken place in the pouring of the blood. The Lord died a sacrificial death for the sin of others, thereby fulfilling the typology of the sacrifices. The shedding of blood is an evidence of death, as seen in the Old Testament from Genesis 4 onwards, and the importance of such evidence may be the reason why the apostle John has been so specific in verses 33 to 37 of this chapter.

J. J. P.

From Cardiff. —We felt how very little we could enter into the Lord's sufferings which are so graphically foretold in Old Testament prophecy. It was a critical time when the Lord went forth over the brook Kidron, moving forward to Calvary with resolution, knowing that the purposes of God in the salvation of man must be fulfilled in Him and at the same time fully aware of the things that were to come upon Him. Many years before, David, a rejected king, had passed over this same brook, and now a far greater King, even God's anointed, was passing over, rejected indeed by men. His was a dreadful experience: Peter's denial, Judas' betrayal, forsaken by all, the travesty of justice, the howling mob seeking His life, the jibes and taunts of the rulers, and the rough treatment from the Roman soldiers. We were impressed by the Lord's dignity and complete self-control as He faced His accusers and answered the charges that they brought against Him. We thought of the care He had for His own when He said to those who came to take Him, "Let these go their way," and also of how careful He was that all Scripture concerning Him should be fulfilled. But when we considered His suffering at the hand of God, and the agony of His soul in Gethsemane and upon the cross, we realized the love of God toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

C. W.

From Willington Quay. —In contrast to the secrecy which surrounded the schemes and plots of His enemies, the Lord's going to Gethsemane was very open. It was not to a hide-out that He took His disciples, but to a place well known to Judas. His question, "Whom seek ye?" and His reply "I am He," show how unnecessary was the band of armed soldiers.

Although the band only knew Him as Jesus of Nazareth, their involuntary act of going backward and falling to the ground was evidence of the divine power He possessed. This incident reminded us of John 20. 31, "But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."

In the mock trial before Pilate, the hollowness of the Jews' case is clearly seen. Unable to obtain details of the charge which they brought against the Lord, Pilate questioned Him as to His kingship, possibly hoping that in so doing he might bring to light any threatened insurrection.

He was a King, He had a kingdom and also servants, but not of this world. The fact that they were not of this world removed any suggestion of insurrection against the power of Rome. That the Lord will in a future day set up His Messianic kingdom upon the earth is clear from Scripture, but today His kingdom is still not of this world. A true appreciation of this fact, with its many implications, should be our aim.

We see in Pilate a man in a quandary. He certainly showed weakness and was readily intimidated by the threats of the Jews, but we know that the Lord was delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

The soldiers mocked the Lord Jesus, having crowned Him with thorns, the curse of the earth, **and** having clothed Him with a purple garment, they feigned obeisance to the " King of the Jews. " It is good to know as Saviour the One who that day suffered such shame and degradation, but who will in a coming **day** be manifested in all His power and glory as the King of kings and Lord of lords. *K. R.*

EXTRACTS.

From Nottingham. —The Lord rebuked Peter when he lifted his sword in the Lord's defence (18. 11). The Lord Jesus was about to complete the work given to Him by His Father in times eternal. The Lord's action in staying the sword was a demonstration of the truth that He stated: " My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight " (18. 36). How can we understand the grace revealed in 18. 12, 13, where we see Him taken, bound and led away ? Consider 17. 2, " Thou gavest Him authority over all flesh. " That He should allow men to do these things although their lives were held in His hand is beyond our comprehension [1].

It would seem that Pilate had quite a strong sense of justice, for it is said, " Upon this Pilate sought to release Him. " He seemed to revolt against punishing the Lord without first having found fault in Him. But he desired the friendship of Caesar more than that he should free the Lord.

In Pilate's refusal to alter the title he had set upon the Cross of the Lord, we see the overruling hand of God working so that the true title of the Lord should **be** displayed to all around. *F. Allen, R. Hickling.*

From Cowdenbeath. —John in his presentation of the scene in the garden of Gethsemane refers not to the sufferings and agonies of that scene but rather brings out the calm, majestic, princely character of the Lord.

The Lord was led away bound to stand before the highest tribunal of the Jews, charged with the blasphemy of making Himself equal with God. He was questioned by Annas concerning His teaching, although during the years of His ministry His identity had not been hidden. His work, His walk, His matchless wisdom, marked Him as the Messiah, but the chief priests and the scribes turned away from Him in the blindness of their carnal indignation, and He was sent to Pilate as one worthy of death.

Pilate asked, " Art thou the King of the Jews ? " The charge which Pilate now wished to prove was one of sedition and treason. If this prisoner before him was a King, then he was a threat to Caesar, and must be removed. Pilate did not know that standing before him was the Eternal King (Psalm 29. 10) manifested in human form. The Lord's first advent was not to establish His earthly kingdom, but that He might become a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, and provide eternal redemption by His sacrificial death at Calvary.

Pilate's question, " What is truth ? " (18. 38) may have been asked in contempt, for he seemed satisfied that the prisoner before him did not in any way endanger Roman government, and consequently was innocent of the charge brought against Him. Hence he sought to release Him. Had Pilate been sincere in his quest for truth, had he sought it as Nicodemus did (John 3), the Lord would not have hesitated patiently to explain to him the nature of truth. Pilate turned his back on the truth.

The rejection of the Lord by His own people was in accordance with divine purpose. It was not by chance that they gave Him a cross instead of a throne. The highest height of Israel's guilt was reached when they crucified their King.

From **Crowborough**. —One who had companied with the Lord Jesus, heard His gracious words of wisdom, and had seen His mighty works, had turned away and was ready to betray his Master for a paltry sum of money. Others were sleeping instead of watching. In the garden the dread reality of His soon coming ordeal bore heavily upon the Lord (alone yet not alone), and His purpose of heart was sorely tried.

From the garden He was taken by an armed band, and the hatred and malice of the human heart were revealed in the treatment of those unjust and wicked men toward the silent Sufferer. The psalmist has said that God maketh the wrath of man to praise Him.

With all human comfort and consolation gone, the Lord Jesus must know the hiding of God's face, a curse upon the Cross. Such was the price He was willing to pay that He might redeem us. S. S.

From Kingston-on-Thames. —John speaks of Gethsemane as the place whither Jesus resorted with His disciples (18. 2). Power and strength for God's work begin with prayer. The Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard for His godly fear (Hebrews 5. 7). For the Lord Jesus Gethsemane was a place of suffering, mentally and physically, for His sweat became as great drops of blood falling to the ground (Luke 22. 44).

"The Son of Man goeth, even as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born" (Matthew 26. 24). Judas Iscariot, after the passover feast, left the upper room to consult with the chief priests (Mark 14. 10). Jesus, in appointing the twelve apostles, said, "Did I not choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil" (John 6. 70). As God raised up Pharaoh as a vessel unto dishonour, so He raised up Judas also, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled (John 13. 18).

Pilate cared not for such accusations as the Jews brought against Jesus concerning their law, and wishing to appease the multitude, released Barabbas and delivered Jesus to be crucified. Pilate was easily swayed in his judgement, fearing lest his friendship with Caesar might be broken, and also his patched-up friendship with Herod (Luke 23. 12). *W. Dawn.*

From Brantford, Ont. —John does not give details of the Lord's betrayer. The other Gospels speak of Gethsemane, but John refers only to "a garden," and to Judas as knowing the place: he makes no reference to the kiss. John speaks of the Lord being brought to Annas then to Caiaphas, who, though he expressed prophetic truth regarding the Lord's death (11. 49-52), condemned Him.

To Pilate the Lord said, "He that delivered Me unto thee hath greater sin," and "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." This was a challenge to Pilate, which brought forth the question, "What is truth?" Pilate was convinced, and is convicted, for he was banded by worldly ambition.

The Lord Jesus was brought forth, and led away to Calvary, where they crucified Him, and there we see the fulfilment of Psalm 22. 18, "They part My garments among them, and upon My vesture do they cast lots". Yet another scripture remained to be fulfilled, for knowing that all things were now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, the Lord Jesus said, "I thirst." When all the types of His work were fulfilled, He cried, "It is finished," and bowed His head and **gave up** His spirit. *Frank Lorenz.*

From **Wigan**. —Because the Jews had no real accusation against the Lord Jesus, Annas asked Jesus of His teaching, no doubt seeking to entrap Him in His replies. But had not Jesus spoken openly for about three years? Could they not find fault with His ministry? The only way that they could charge Him was by misinterpreting His words concerning the temple and also because He claimed to be the Son of God.

When they took Him to Pilate, not having any charge that they were certain could carry the death penalty, they insinuated that they had already judged Him and found Him guilty, and only wanted Pilate to sanction His execution. Pilate was a morally weak man and by the wiles of the Jews was persuaded eventually to condemn the Lord to death even though on three occasions he declared that he found no crime in this Man.

The deciding factor came when the Jews resorted to blackmail, pointing out that Pilate was allowing a man to set Himself up as King in spite of Caesar, and was thus not acting for the good of the Roman Empire as a governor ought. When Pilate saw his own position in danger, his mind was made **up** and he sentenced Jesus. *N. M., N. B.*

From Hereford. —The words and actions of the Lord Jesus reveal how utterly devoted He was to the will of His God; His will was to obey His Father.

In John 13. 1, 3 the Lord's death is viewed as departing unto the Father, and as going back to God from whom He had come. But the awful certainty of humiliation, of suffering, of being made sin and being forsaken by His God, are now the dread forebodings of His heart and mind. Can we ever think highly enough of the Man who knew all these things that were coming upon Him, yet went forth to submit to the betrayer, the soldiers and the officers? This was His Father's will, and He was obedient, even unto death.

Of His own will He went out to Golgotha to die, bearing the cross for Himself (19. 17), because the Father had sent Him to be the Saviour of the world, and He must die or else the whole world must perish. He was devoted to His God, and shame, scourging, spitting, mocking, and even the suffering of death, were not too much for *His* obedience. This **is** the obedience of Christ by which we are justified (Romans 5. 19). Can He require anything from us, and we refuse to obey *Him*? By God's help let us be imitators of Christ in this matter of obedience to the will of God, cost what it may.

E. H. Merchant.

From Edinburgh. —The portion opens with all going into the garden where the Lord Jesus often went to pray. Judas knew of the place. Many today know of the place, but never seek the Lord: they know of Calvary, but never realise that it was the Saviour of the world who was there. So, not to seek the Saviour, but to hurry Him to His death, came Judas and a band of soldiers. This company sought and found Him; but they never saw in Him more than a Man who troubled Israel.

The mockery of the trials is vividly pictured. The Lord was hustled from one to another of His judges, yet the Spirit has seen fit to give in detail the circumstances which marked Peter out for future greatness. He used his sword, and then fled with the rest; but he turned again and followed afar off. Then, having looked in at the door, stood in the door, sat at the fire, his courage failed again and he denied His Lord. But Peter repented in tears, and his fall changed his outlook and made him fit to be a leader of God's people. Let us remember Psalm 1: walketh, standeth, sitteth: if we fall, let us rise, humbled and strengthened, to continue in the Lord's service.

Pilate dismissed the case lightly and, having scourged Him, handed the Lord Jesus over to his soldiers: but even his unfeeling heart was touched and he sought to release Him. Having started lightly, he found he had to continue to the end. Many today begin by lightly dismissing the Saviour's call, and continued dismissal hardens their hearts and they pass off this scene unsaved.

T. Hope,

From Atherton. —John does not mention the sorrow in the garden; but in chapter 18 he displays the Omnipotent One, the eternal I AM, as He came forth of His own free will to lay down His life.

During the course of the Lord's trials there were times when He replied to questions; at other times He answered nothing. We thought that this would depend on the nature of the question. When the Lord's Deity or works were questioned He gave answer, but spake not a word in His defence. The Lord knew exactly when to speak (Ecclesiastes 3. 7).

The first paragraph of chapter 19 presents to us the last of the Lord's trials, of which there were six. Three before the Jewish leaders, two before Pilate, and one before Herod, and the Lord suffered bitterest scorn and reviling at each trial. His tormentors were ruthless for not only had He to endure the scourging, a cruel Roman method of examination (Acts 22. 25), but He must also endure the crown of thorns, the purple garment, the reed for a sceptre, the buffeting, the spitting and the plucking of the hairs from His face. Pilate, as he led the Lord out (a picture of suffering), hoped to appeal to their compassion: "Behold, the Man!" But their response was, "Crucify Him." Is it possible that Pilate accepted the Lord's claim to kingship? for he said, "Behold, your King!" See 18. 37, and note Pilate's firm refusal to amend the superscription (19. 19-22). Despite this, Pilate was a coward, who condemned a guiltless Man because of the fear of man.

G. A. Jones, D. if. Butler,

COMMENTS.

[1] (Nottingham). —The Lord's present lordship over all flesh (all mankind) is seen in His saving (Romans 10), and giving eternal life to all believers in Him (John 17), and also in these believers being made disciples or followers of Him (Matthew 28). The complete subordination of all to Himself awaits the day of His coming back to earth. Thus it is that the Lord's suffering at the hands of man becomes the pattern for all who would follow Him, but, thank God, we shall never suffer at the hand of God as He did. In this latter phase of His suffering He suffered for us. —J. M.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question from Willington Quay. —Hebrews 9. 22 is often associated with the blood that flowed from the Lord's pierced side (19. 34). As the Lord had already cried, "It is finished," and was in fact dead when His side was pierced, is the association of these two scriptures incorrect? If so, is it necessary, in order to justify the said association, that the Lord's blood should have been shed before He gave up the spirit?

Answer. —The Lord had already poured out His soul unto death and made intercession for the transgressors, as was prophesied in Isaiah 53. 12, before the soldier pierced His side. He was already dead when the soldier did this, hence the work of atonement was completed prior to the blood and water issuing from the spear-wound. —J. M.

NOTES ON ROMANS

Verse 2: *And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

More correctly it **means** "do not fashion yourselves" in an outward guise which is related to the outward fashion of the **age**, and bears no relation to the inward life of the saint renewed **by** divine grace. "The fashion of this world passeth **away**" (1 Corinthians 7. 31). Note the difference between **Schema**, fashion, and **Morphe**, form. The believer is to transform himself, **but** this is only possible through his mind being renewed. This renewing process is **by** communion, **by** the reading of and meditation in the word of God, and **by** prayer. The eyes of an enlightened mind **by** seeing Christ **take** in His image, **but** the natural eyes take in the likeness of the world. We need to be like Jehovah's servant: "Who is blind, **but My** servant? or deaf, **as My** messenger that I send?" (Isaiah 42. 19). He was blind and **deaf** to the sights and sounds around him. It is only thus that we may prove what is God's good, acceptable and **perfect** will. Here is the secret revealed why so few, so very **few**, saints advance in the will of God. An unworldly life **is** vital to the proving what God's will is. So many vainly seek the amalgamation of flesh and spirit, and of Christ and the world.

Verse 3: *For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith.*

The grace which **was** given to Paul was that **by** which he **was** an apostle, **a** preacher and teacher; hence with the authority given to him through grace, he admonished each man with **a** view to sobriety of mind and not to think of himself more highly than he ought. The measure of faith which God had dealt to each was to **be** the measure of their estimation of themselves. Both faith and grace are given according to the measure of the gift given (Ephesians 4. 7).

Verses 4, 5: *For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: so we, who are many, are one Body in Christ, and severally members one of another.*

The **same** truth is more fully **stated** in 1 Corinthians 12. 12-31, as to the functions of the human body, which are **used by** the apostle to illustrate the diverse gifts given to the saints. All are one body in Christ, and severally are both members of Christ and of one another, complementary parts of one whole. This similitude describes the closest relationship in which human beings are viewed united together. It **is** closer than family relationship, or any association of mankind whatever. Alas, **because** of the working of the carnal mind, this **is** not seen in operation **as** it might and should **be**. **But** the **time** will come when all that is of the flesh will **be swept away**, and then the members of the Body and Bride of Christ shall function **as** God designed that they should. **But** Paul does not contemplate the **future** in what he writes; he visualizes the **members** performing their **due** functions now.

Verse 6: *And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith;*

Gifts to **members**, that **is**, what members are divinely endowed with, differ; here **it is** the **gift** of prophecy. Which **is** the correct sense of the verse—"according to the proportion of our faith," or "according to the analogy of the faith"? Both views are upheld **by** different authorities. I **see** no reason to change from the literal translation of the passage—"the

analogy of the faith. "One **who** prophesies is one who conveys a message from God; that message must be in agreement with the words of the faith already given. It **may be** a new application of the truth or fresh light thereupon **as** fitting a peculiar set of circumstances, but it **must not be** at variance with the rule laid down in the former words of God.

Verses 7, 8: *Or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry; or he that teacheth, to his teaching; or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting; he that giveth, let him do it with liberality; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*

Four kinds of gifts are envisaged, prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation. In Ephesians 4. 11, the gifts given by the ascended Christ were five, that is, the men in whom the gifts reposed, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. It is clear, I think, that the apostolic gift is not before the apostle in Romans 12, nor **yet** that of the prophet. Prophecy here is the same, I judge, **as** in 1 Corinthians 14, and has in view the delivering of a **message** from God; not some new thing outside the range of what has been already given, **but** in agreement with the faith understood and accepted by the saints. Then there may **be** a ministry which does not come under the heading of prophecy, nor yet is it actually teaching, that is, the taking of a portion of the Scriptures, opening **it up** and showing what **it** means, and, **if** need be, repeating it till **it** reaches the minds of the hearers and brings enlightenment to them. There may **be** in ministry that **use** of the word which applies more to the heart than to the mind, ministering to the support and comfort of saints in the trials **and** troubles of the daily life. Then there **is** the man that **is** given to exhortation, the man who does himself what he exhorts others to do, a pattern **man** in action. Exhortation fails **in** effect when the character of the scribes and Pharisees **is** in evidence: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' **seat**: all things therefore whatsoever they **bid** you, these do and observe: but do not **ye** after their works; for they say, and do not" (Matthew 23. 2, 3). Then there **is** the gift of the giver, one to whom God has given **as** a steward more than He has given to others. He **is** to give with liberality, that **is**, with simplicity and purity of mind. "Many will intreat the favour of the liberal **man**: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts" (Proverbs 19. 6). The ruler (one who takes the lead) **is** to rule with diligence. Some **are** born to rule and some to **be** ruled. There should **be** no slackness in divine rule, *' **Be** thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks" (Proverbs 27. 23), but how much more important it **is** to "tend the flock of God"! (1 Peter 5. 2). Then there **is** the man who shows mercy. This is to be done with cheerfulness (*Hilarotes*). This Greek word is that from which the English word "hilarity" is derived, but we should not suppose that there is any show of animal **spirits** **as** is implied **in** the **use** of the word **in** English. Cheerfulness **is** the opposite of that pseudo-piety, which treats a repentant offender **as** though he were a creature of a different kind.

Verse 9: *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*

Love should **be** real, sincere, unfeigned. "My little children, let **us** not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in **deed** and truth" (1 John 3. 18). The Greek word for "abhor" **is** derived from a word which means "to shudder." The thought **is** that evil **is** to **be** viewed with the utmost abhorrence and detestation, **but we** are to cleave, or glue ourselves to that which is good, and not to seek to **be** released from it, **as** a man cleaves or is glued to his wife (Matthew 19. 5).

Verse 10: *In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honour preferring one another;*

In love of **the** brethren (*Philadelphia*) we are to show that warm-heartedness that love of the brethren implies. Our attitude to each other is **to be** the opposite of mere formality. "In honour preferring one another"; this is what Paul wrote about to the Philippians when he said, "each counting other **better** than himself (Philippians 2. 3).

Verse 11: *In diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;*

There is no word for business in the Greek, **as** in the **A. V.** Many are diligent enough in their business who are slothful in the Lord's things. The diligence is to **be** in the Lord's things, and there are **few** things more detestable than to **see** one slothful in things eternal. The Christian is to **be** fervent, hot, boiling. The Lord said to the Laodiceans that they were neither boiling, nor cold, **but** in that insipid **state** of being lukewarm " (Revelation 3. 15, 16).

Verses 12, 13: *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing steadfastly in prayer; communicating to the necessities of the saints; given to hospitality.*

Closely allied to fervency of spirit is the thought of rejoicing in hope. The Christian pitches his tent toward the sunrising (**Numbers 2. 3**), and should **be** living in the joy and hope of the Lord's coming. This joyousness is of great assistance in tribulation, for who can endure tribulation better than he in whom the hope of the coming of the Lord is burning brightly? "Our light affliction," Paul **says**, "is for the moment" (2 Corinthians 4. 17). To continue steadfastly means to attend constantly to, unremittingly. It is said of those in the church in Jerusalem that they continued steadfastly in the prayers (**Acts 2. 42**), and prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit the disciples "continued steadfastly in prayer" (**Acts 1. 14**). Communicating to the needs of the saints **was** a prominent phase of the Fellowship **at** the beginning, for "they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according **as** any man had need" (**Acts 2. 25**). Hospitality means to show love or kindness to strangers. "Forget not to shew love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13. 2).

Verses 14, 15: *Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep.*

Who can bless their persecutors, **but** those in whom the Spirit of Christ is? Paul's words are an echo of the Lord's, "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you" (Matthew 5. 44). The Church of Rome curses those who reject her doctrines and her sins, **but** the followers of Christ are not to curse. It is easier to rejoice with the rejoicing ones than to weep with the weeping ones. The Lord did both; He attended the marriage in Cana, and wept with Martha and Mary over the death of their brother (John 2. 1-11; 11. 35).

Verse 16: *Be of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits.*

The thought here is: have the **same** feeling one toward another, the **same** kindly disposition. "Things" do not necessarily mean neuter, abstract things. Things here, **I judge**, to **be** persons. Condescend and go with lowly persons: **as** the **A. V.** renders it, "condescend to **men** of low

estate. " Our feelings are not to **be** set upon those that are high and **be** forgetful of the lowly. And certainly if we are **to** condescend to the lowly, it ill becomes us to be wise in our own conceits, that is, to have feelings that centre ourselves upon ourselves, and live in a palace of our own opinions and exalted notions as a self-conceited king.

Verses 17, 18: *Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought for things honourable in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men.*

Retaliation is not allowed to the Christian soldier; his wrestling is not against flesh and blood (Ephesians 6. 12). It is neither honouring to God nor to himself for the Christian to be embroiled in strife. " If it be possible " does not mean that the Christian may retaliate if his patience becomes exhausted. His part is one of peace, but his enemy may not leave him in peace. If there is no peace, it arises not from him but from his enemy.

Verse 19: *Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto Me; I will recompense, saith the Lord.*

Dealing with adversaries and persecutors is the Lord's work, and He can do it infinitely better than **we** could ever hope to do. Thus **we** are not **to** avenge ourselves, but **to** give place to God's wrath. God knows when and how to recompense, and He will recompense. He says so.

Verses 20, 21: *But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Here Paul quotes from Proverbs 25. 21, 22. Solomon adds, "And the LORD shall reward thee." God has ever been kind to His enemies, for such were **we**, and if **He** had dealt with **us** other than in kindness (Titus 3. 4-7), where would **we** have been and how should **we** have fared? The grace which He has shown to us is now to be shown through us. **We** cannot drive enmity out of the hearts of men, but it may be burnt out **by** heaping coals of fire upon their heads. The Christian has one way **of** overcoming evil in others and that is **by** doing good to those that hate him, and praying for them that despitefully use him (Luke 6. 27, 28). **We** have an example of this in Paul and Silas in the prison in Philippi and their treatment of the jailor afterwards.

NOTES ON ROMANS

CHAPTER 13.

Verse 1: *Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God.*

After dealing in chapter 12 with Christian conduct before God, towards saints, and among men in general, Paul now comes to the attitude of saints and their responsibility to the civil authorities, called here the higher authorities. The Christian's attitude to the state is one of subjection. Subjection is not quite the equivalent of obedience. Subject the Christian **must** be, but should the state go beyond its divinely appointed sphere **and** make some statute or order which involves the Christian in disobedience to God, then the obedient saint must obey God, and at the same time seek a way of escape so that he may continue to serve God with a good conscience. If such relief is not forthcoming, then he must maintain his loyalty to God and bear the consequences. We are truly thankful that in our times such cases

are few. In Britain we live under a very benign form of government, for which we both pray and give thanks to God. The apostle says that there is no authority **but** of God, and authorities are ordained of God. The moral and spiritual condition of the men in authority, or whether it is an autocratic or democratic form of government, does not enter into the matter. The Christian is called upon to recognize and **be** subject to the government that is in control of civil matters as being of God.

Verse 2: *Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgement.*

Daniel's attitude to the decision of Nebuchadnezzar, relative to the appointment of his daily portion of the king's **meat** and wine, is worthy of imitation **by** all who **may be** involved with the state in matters of conscience toward God. His decision **was fixed** as to what he would do, that he would not defile himself, **and** he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. He suggested **an** alternative course and he found favour with the prince of the eunuchs, and this enabled him to live with **a** good conscience toward God. How definite he was, **yet** how wise in the course he adopted, and how humble also ! With him there **was** no resistance to authority nor withstanding God's ordinance. God had **a** different **way** of delivering Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. They refused to become idolaters **at** the command of Nebuchadnezzar, **and were** cast into the fiery furnace. The fire liberated them from the bonds that bound them, **but** did not singe **a** hair of their heads. This taught the king **a** lesson which he proclaimed to all lands. **See** Daniel chapters **1** and **3**. The Christian should abstain from disobedience. Certain judgement will follow resistance.

Verse 3: *For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power ? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same:*

This is the normal course of civil government, to deal with evil doers. The Christian should be **a** pattern subject whose good living is known to the authorities. It has been so of true Christians **all** down the centuries. **Of** old Daniel's enemies said of him, "**We** shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, **except we** find it against him concerning the law of his God "**"** (Daniel 6. 5); **a** very worthy commendation !

Verses 4, 5: *For he is a minister (Diakonos, deacon) of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister (deacon) of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, **but** also for conscience sake.*

Though God gave no law to Gentile peoples, **yet** the law of right and wrong written in their hearts, to which their conscience bears witness, finds its place on their statute books (Romans **2. 14, 15**). Consequently the administrator of such is called the minister of God for good to the Christian who is law-abiding, **but** if he should turn to evil ways then he has to **be** afraid, for the sword (the emblem of authority and justice) borne **by** the minister of **God** will fall in wrath upon the evil doer. The Christian is not to **be** in-subjection simply because he is afraid of the wrath of the civil magistrate, but for conscience sake, for to **be** lawless is to **be** disloyal to God, who is **a** Cod of law and order.

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" (**Act* 17. 11**).

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EDITORIAL.

For a few **years** now the special contributions feature of *Bible Studies* **has** lapsed. **We** believe that many would like to see it revived: editors too would be happy to **see** a lively and active interest in it. To a great **extent** a magazine can only be what its contributors make it: hence **we** would encourage brethren, especially younger brethren, to avail themselves of this opportunity to exercise themselves in written ministry (1 Timothy 4. 6).

The subject of a special contribution should relate definitely to the book of Deuteronomy, but should not be one of the topics listed for month by month "corner" study. The Scriptures contain subjects which **can** scarcely receive adequate treatment **in** "corner" papers, and this **is** where special articles serve to enrich *Bible Studies*. It would be a good plan to read through Deuteronomy now (more than once, **if** possible), and note subjects that appeal. Now a special contribution should not be a few random thoughts lightly strung together: this **is** relatively unprofitable to writer and reader alike. The preparation of an orderly presentation of a subject is very profitable to the writer; the next stage would therefore involve searching the Scriptures for further information and, when suitable material has been gathered, setting it in order (Luke 1. 3). The resulting article may then be helpful to the reader (Proverbs 11. 25).

Possibly non-publication of previous articles **is** deterring some from writing. Please don't let this hinder you: labour on. Bear in mind that, while we desire to produce a sound and readable magazine, one of our **main aims** is to encourage serious *study* of the Scriptures and also **exercise** in relevant written ministry. In an article the main qualities desired are soundness of doctrine (Titus 1. 9, 13, 2. 1, 2, 8), depth of thought, **and high** spiritual tone. Though we are not over-concerned about literary quality, **we** should remember that **we** are dealing with the Lord's things; **and they** are worthy of our best labours and choicest expression. So then, brethren, let 1956 be marked by a determined effort in special articles. J. B.

THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED.

Of the four Gospel writers Matthew and John companied with **the** Lord from the baptism of John until the day that the Lord **was** received **up**. (Acts 1. 21, 22). Their Gospels are therefore first-hand eye-witness accounts **and** would have afforded vain **men** opportunity for self-display; **but**, led by **the** Holy Spirit, **these man** say very little about themselves. **Matthew** names himself only twice, **at** his call (9. 9) and at the sending forth of **the** twelve (10. 3), while John never mentions himself by name. **Such self-effacement** became the **men** who recorded the life of **the** Lord **Jesus**, **and** is worthy of emulation by all who preach Christ, who sought not His own glory **but** the Father's.

That John **was** prominent among **the** disciples is provable mainly from Mark **and** Luke. There John is associated with Peter **and** James **at** the raising of Jairus's daughter (Mark 5. 37, Luke 8. 51) **and at** the Lord's

transfiguration (Mark 9. 2, Luke 9. 28, and also Matthew 17. 1). Mark further joins these three men at Gethsemane (14. 33); also, according to Luke, Peter and John were sent to make ready the Passover (22. 8). Though such evidence is decisive, John does not use it to elevate himself, but he does show Peter as pre-eminent among the apostles. True, his portrait of Peter is marked by human failure; but John is not unloving in his candour. For, while reclining in Jesus' bosom, he willingly conversed with Peter (13. 23): also when they two were summoned to the empty tomb, John admits himself to be in like case with Peter in his failure to understand things written aforetime concerning the Lord. Further, in describing the arrest of the Lord, John says, " Simon Peter followed Jesus, " but (in kindness ?) does not add " afar off " as do the other Gospel writers. And yet again, at the Sea of Tiberias, it was to Peter that John said, " It is the Lord " (21. 7). It would appear that, in the will of the Lord, these two men, the impulsive Peter and the loving John, enjoyed a position of eminence among the apostles.

When he must refer to himself, John uses phrases like " that other disciple, " etc., and also " the disciple whom Jesus loved. " He is the only Gospel writer to use this latter phrase: it is no mere vanity, for it accords with recorded events. John obviously found great joy and peace in the Lord's love, and valued highly the near place he enjoyed. It was he who wrote, " There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear " (1 John 4. 18).
J. B.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

(Chapters 19. 38—20. 18).

From Portstewart. —The burial of our Lord was at the hand of two disciples, and His body was laid in a clean tomb outside the city walls of Jerusalem, antitypical, we believe, of the clean place outside the camp, where the priest took the ashes of the burnt offering (Leviticus 6. 11).

In the resurrection we see Christ as the first-fruits of them that sleep, past, present and future; for His is the first resurrection which entailed no return to death. He is the first of the resurrection of the just, participators in which will never die again but will go into everlasting life.

The Lord's ascension was divided into two parts, we suggest. His official entry into heaven was that which took place forty days after His resurrection. It was then that " he led captivity captive. " But on the resurrection morning He spoke to Mary and said, " Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father. " Yet later in the same day He allowed disciples to take hold of Him by the feet to worship Him. Therefore some event must have taken place between these two actions, and we would suggest that He ascended to His Father, that as in the offerings, the Father might have the first portion.

On the cross the Lord committed His spirit to God. This spirit, we would suggest, is not the Holy Spirit. As a man the Lord had spirit, soul and body. Today, in the presence of God, the Lord is Man, with spirit, soul and body, whilst on earth the Lord was guided by the Holy Spirit as well as having a spirit.
A. T. Gault

From Hereford. —In noting the fulfilment of Old Testament Scriptures in connexion with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is delightful to see the overruling hand of God with regard to the burial of His Son: " They made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death " (Isaiah 53. 9). It is pleasing to see Joseph of Arimathaea

and Nicodemus, two disciples who were not very prominent during their Master's lifetime (John 19. 38), now being used of God for the accomplishment of His word. What John and Luke say about these two men is worthy of note. John records that Nicodemus had the courage to speak out when the Pharisees were annoyed, if not angry, when the officers, whom they had sent to take Jesus, returned without Him (John 7. 50-52). Luke records that Joseph was " a good man and a righteous, " and, in parenthesis, " He had not consented to their counsel and deed " (Luke 23. 50, 51).

Although on several occasions the Lord had plainly told His disciples concerning His death, burial and resurrection, they had failed to realise the full import of His words. Mary, when she found the tomb empty, thought that the Lord's body had been taken from it and laid in another place. Howbeit, whilst Peter and John went home after finding the tomb empty, Mary remained and " was standing without at the tomb weeping. " Great was Mary's reward in being the first to whom the Lord shewed Himself after His resurrection. Great too must have been her joy as she told the disciples, " I have seen the Lord. " The appearing of the Lord to Mary must have been of a personal character, for the public testimony to the fact of the Lord's resurrection was the portion of the brethren (1 Corinthians 15).

JR. Tidmas.

From Wembley. —The Lord said in triumph on the cross, *' It is finished, " and the resurrection is the proof of that triumph. The empty tomb was the evidence to both friends and enemies of the great fact of resurrection.

John commences his narrative of the resurrection with the visit of Mary Magdalene to the tomb at dawn. In Mark it is stated that Mary was accompanied by Mary the mother of James, and Salome. These women were bringing ointment. On the way they were discussing the problem of moving the great stone from the door of the tomb, so that they were evidently unaware of the armed guard and the seal, which were intended to prevent any access to the tomb. The terrorised guard had fled when the angel appeared and removed the stone. The angel did not come to let the Lord out of the tomb, but to let the disciples in, for had it remained sealed the Lord's subsequent appearances could have been discredited.

Seeing the stone removed, the women assumed that the body of the Lord had been stolen, and Mary Magdalene hurried back to the city to give the mistaken news to Peter and John. Meanwhile the other women entered the tomb and saw the angels, who said that the Lord was risen; but they were afraid and told no one. Peter and John hurried to the tomb, but they saw no angels there. Peter was puzzled for he could not understand how the body could have been taken and the clothes remain undisturbed. John saw and believed, so that John was the first to realise the resurrection.

Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb after Peter and John had gone; and, peeping in, she saw two angels, but she was unable to appreciate the situation. The Lord came to Mary, but until He used her name she did not recognize Him. Relief of mind overcame her and she fell at His feet. The Lord had to say, " Touch Me not, " for there were other things to do; the Lord had to go to His Father, and Mary had to take the news to the disciples. Mary now had a very different message from that which she had given to Peter and John previously.

A. D. M.

EXTRACTS.

From Cowdenbeath. —Having asked permission of Pilate, Joseph of Arimathaea obtained possession of the Lord's body, and he and Nicodemus anointed it with spices brought by Nicodemus and wrapped it in linen cloths.

It was not the apostles who were destined to discharge this last loving service to their departed Lord and Master, but two of the "builders," leaders in Israel, that the scripture might be fulfilled, "and they made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death" (Isaiah 53. 9). We doubt if they really knew that they were fulfilling the scripture in so acting.

Different Greek words are used to describe the observations of John and Peter. The word for "seeth" (20. 5) denotes simply voluntary observation (Strong). This did John. Peter, on entering, "beholdeth the linen cloths lying." "Beholdeth," signifies an earnest but more continued inspection, to perceive. (See John 4. 19). John also then entered and "saw" (Gk. *eido*, by implication to know), and believed. The evidence before them was an orderly array of grave cloths, obviously untouched by human hands. This negated immediately Mary's thought that the body of the Lord had been removed by human instrumentality. Two views were expressed on 20. 17. (1) There were two ascensions to the Father; (2) others favour the view set forth by the late S. Burrows (B. S. 1941, p. 85), which is based upon Westcott's translation of the Lord's words to Mary [1]. **R. Ross.**

From Liverpool.—It would seem that Mary's tears delayed the Lord's ascent to the Father. To Mary the death, burial and removal of the body of the Lord was like a total eclipse, and it is indeed lovely to think that for her sake the Lord graciously and purposely delayed His ascent to heaven. We thought this to be the case on account of the difference between the Lord's words to Mary, "Touch Me not" and the statement, "They . . . took hold of His feet" (Matthew 28. 9). It would seem that between these two incidents He ascended to His Father.

The resting of the ark on mount Ararat typified this wonderful event; a new beginning was entered upon from that day typifying this resurrection day. Psalm 24. 7, 8 would, we thought, foreshadow His ascension.

When we see the Lord, we shall be like Him, for we shall be conformed to the body of His glory (1 John 3. 2, 3, Philipians 3. 20).

From Southport.—Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea who kept their friendship with the world, then found the love and courage to ask for the body of Jesus and bound it in a linen cloth with precious ointment. Such was the simple burial of Him who covereth Himself with light as with a garment (Psalm 104. 2).

John 20. 17 marks the beginning of a new era. "The Lord is risen indeed": this is the basis upon which God can have a people that will serve and worship Him in spirit and truth, not having here an abiding city, but a people who may know much of heavenly peace and power. **J. G. Hindle.**

From Wigan.—The Lord's enemies, whose thoughts were motivated by hatred, though they did not believe yet remembered that He had said, "After three days I rise again" (Matthew 27. 63). No power, authority, or guard can prevail against God or say, "What doest Thou?" (Daniel 4. 35), and on the third day the message was, "He is not here; for He is risen . . . Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matthew 28. 6).

True to His word God did not suffer His holy One to see corruption (Psalm 16. 10). God who quickeneth all things (1 Timothy 6. 13) raised up Jesus, according to the working of the strength of His might (Ephesians 1. 19, 20). He whose body was laid in Joseph's new tomb Himself descended into Hades (Acts 2. 27), the lower parts of the earth (Ephesians 4. 9), and in resurrection led captive all those who had died in faith, whom death had bound, and brought to nought him that had the power of death that is the Devil (Hebrews 2. 14, 15, Revelation 1. 18).

In baptism we associate ourselves with Him in His death (Romans 6), that in resurrection life we may shew forth the virtue of His resurrection (Philippians 3. 10). It would seem from Ephesians 2. 5, 6 and Colossians 2. 13 that in the quickening of Christ God associates all those who put faith in Him as quickened with Him and raised together with Him. This spiritual quickening (when we were dead through our trespasses) is to be followed, when the Lord comes, by the quickening of our bodies (Philippians 3. 21).

J. H.

From Bradford, Halifax and Leeds. —Joseph of Arimathæa was chosen of God to handle the precious body of the Lord Jesus Christ, " who poured out His soul unto death. " Surely God had found pleasure, even in this man who was a disciple secretly ! But there came the time for him to go boldly to Pilate, asking him " that he might take away the body of Jesus. " The estimated value of Nicodemus's gift at today's pound value is one thousand pounds. We wondered at such a weight of spices. Why should such an amount be necessary ? It was noted at this stage how ignorant men were regarding the Scriptures concerning the Lord's resurrection. This was unknown even to the disciples, for " as yet they knew not the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead " (20. 9).

D. B. R.

From Birkenhead. —In John's account, though Mary Magdalene alone is spoken of as coming early to the tomb, she links herself with the other women who came with her bringing spices, as recorded in the other Gospels, when she says, " We know not where they have laid Him " (20. 2). Later, she uses the singular personal pronoun " I, " when speaking to the angels and to her unrecognised Lord: this suggests that she was then alone.

We questioned just what it was that John believed (20. 8), when he entered into the tomb after Peter. At first sight it would appear that it was the report of the women he believed—" They have taken away the Lord. " But it seems evident that what he *saw* not only confirmed that the body of the Lord was not in the tomb, but also that He had come out of the cloths and the napkin without disturbing them. This gave both Peter and John clear evidence that the Lord had risen from the dead, even though the scripture had not at that time been brought home to them. There was no effort at a search for the body, for the disciples went away again to their own home, as Luke tells us, " wondering at that which was come to pass. "

D. H., N. A.

From Glasgow. —The Jews remembered that the Lord Jesus had said in His lifetime, " Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. " Though they did not understand what the Lord meant, they obtained a guard of Gentile soldiers in case His disciples should come and steal away His body, and then the last error would be worse than the first. But God manifested His power in that He raised His Son from among the dead. This act, we judge, agrees with Paul's declaration that He was " declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead " [2]. In the Psalms we read that it was not possible that He should be holden with the pangs of death. The Lord Jesus by His resurrection hath brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel, having abolished death [3].

In the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, lies the foundation of the believer's salvation, both now and for that glorious day when the Lord Jesus shall come to the air. Then shall we receive the end of our faith even the salvation of our souls. We are assured in the Scriptures that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day, according to the Scrip-

tures. " Men crucified the Lord **out of** the hatred of their hearts, **but** God brought good out of it; **He was** delivered **up** for our trespasses and raised again for our justification. *Fred Harvey.*

From Crowborough. —The numerous appearances of the Lord **Jesus** to **men** after His resurrection were not imagination: **He ate** with them, talked with them, **and** some touched **Him**. The **circumstances** were different, **and He** manifested Himself **even** to some who were not prepared for the **fact** of His resurrection.

The resurrection of the Lord **Jesus** infused new life into these men and women, who **a** short while ago **seemed** to have lost all hope. The cold, hard **facts** of the crucifixion and burial were real to them, **and** weighed them down. The teaching of the resurrection of Christ **was** in the forefront of the preaching **at** Pentecost. If Christ had not been raised then there could **be** no salvation, for death would still **be** reigning: **but** Christ is risen and "grace reigns through righteousness... through Jesus Christ our Lord " (Romans 5. 21). The Holy Spirit was given **by a** resurrected Saviour, "the promise of the Father " (Acts 1. 4). Again and again Peter refers to the resurrection of Christ **in** his preaching. The resurrection **made** them bold, these obscure, unlearned **and** ignorant men, to preach with such power that thousands believed; " with great power **gave** the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord **Jesus** " (Acts 4. 33). *J. H. B.*

From Willington Quay. The faith of Joseph of Arimathaea and of Nicodemus **was** manifest to all in their identification with the Lord **Jesus** in **His** death: hitherto they were **secret** disciples. The body of our Lord **was** laid in the tomb of another **man**: **He** took the place of others in death. **Often** in the Old Testament **Scriptures** we read of **a man** " being gathered unto his people "; **but** the Lord **was** in **a** tomb wherein **man** had not previously lain: **He** had no predecessor.

Elsewhere **we** learn that Mary was anxious as to who would roll **away** the stone; **but** she found, **as many** have found before **and** since, that her **difficulty** **was** solved for her. **It** is characteristic of the Lord **Jesus** that, ere **He** presented Himself to the Father, **He** first comforted the weeping woman: her distress **was** His care. *C. B.*

From London, S. E. —Joseph means " increaser " **and** Arimathaea ⁴⁴ height": Joseph in heart rose to **a new** height of love to the Lord. Nicodemus knew of the holy **and** sinless **nature and** life of the Lord **Jesus**. **He came** with **an** ample gift of pure, rich **and** costly embalming spices, ⁴⁴ myrrh **and** aloes. " Thus **was** the Lord lovingly laid **in** the **new** tomb, **in** all that would speak of undefiled **purity and** sweetness (Luke 23. 50-56; Isaiah 53. 9).

We feel that there **can** be little doubt that the disciples were led of the Holy **Spirit** to keep the Remembrance on the first **day** of the week, in **view** of **His** glorious **and** victorious resurrection on that **day**. The glory of **His** resurrection bore to their hearts the joy of the anticipation of **His** soon return (1 Corinthians 11. 26). 1 Corinthians 15 deals with the believer's resurrection **by** **virtue** of the **verity and** glory of the risen Lord **Jesus**. Well might **we** exult in the words, ⁴⁴ **but** thanks **be** to God, which giveth **us** the victory through our Lord **Jesus** Christ" (1 Corinthians 15. 57).

Geo. S. Pain.

From Nottingham. —The Lord's **day** is not the **same day** as the Sabbath, which, **we** understand would extend from **Friday 6** p. m. (our reckoning) until Saturday **6 pan**. The Lord's **day** is the first **day** of the week; the Lord **was raised** on the first **day** of the week.

Some difficulty seems to arise when the various accounts of the resurrection are compared. Matthew 28. 1 states: " as it began to dawn, " Mark 16. 2, "when the sun was risen, " and Luke 24. 1, " at early dawn, " but John 20. 1 says, " while it was yet dark. " The explanation may lie in the fact that the journey was commenced before daylight, while the sun had arisen when they arrived at the tomb. Certainly we see here the anxious desire of Mary Magdalene and " the other Mary " to go to the tomb. They rose in the early hours with the object of anointing the body of the Lord Jesus.

The reverent attitude of John, it was considered, is manifested by his steadiness on reaching the tomb, while Peter's greater impetuosity is demonstrated by his going into the tomb. Let us reflect how keen would be the interest of Peter in view of his denial of the Lord and his subsequent repentance.

J. Balcombe, R. Hickling.

From Atherton. —It was thought that Nicodemus, and possibly others, would need to assist Joseph in taking down the body of the Lord from the cross. " He came therefore, and took away His body " (19. 38) should be read along with verse 40, " So they took the body of Jesus. " We see in these two men the principle that men should work together in the work of the Lord. When men are divinely linked together in collective testimony, it is dangerous, under certain circumstances, to seek to serve alone. We are linked together to work together, and harmonious working should ever be our exercise and prayerful endeavour.

The Lord is the firstfruits of the resurrection. This first day (20. 1) is the day from which we begin to reckon the seven sabbaths to Pentecost. Possibly on this day the high priest would be waving the wave-sheaf of the first-fruits before the Lord (Leviticus 23. 10 and 11), and Christ, the first-fruits from the dead (1 Corinthians 15. 23) was fulfilling the type by presenting Himself before the Father.

J. Bullock, D. H. Butler.

Chapter 18. 1—19. 37.

From **Hamilton, Ont.** —The cross of Christ is the foundation of redemption, and the supreme evidence of God's wisdom, love and righteousness. It shows the love of God, for God proved His love towards us in that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5. 8, 1 John 4. 9, 10). It satisfies the righteousness of God. Previously God in patience had never visited sin with full punishment, and thus, because of His forbearance, His righteousness appeared to have been questioned. But this patience was only in view of the coming cross. There the righteousness of God was satisfied and the Just One became the Justifier of all those who believe in Jesus. Through it, too, righteousness became a gift from God, valid as a plea by the justified (2 Corinthians 5. 21).

Through the cross of Christ, God has acquired a people for His own possession, " to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God " (Ephesians 3. 10).

In His suffering on the cross Christ showed obedience, even to the death of the cross, that many might be made righteous (Philippians 2. 8, Romans 5. 10): He learned obedience by the things that He suffered.

A. Dorricott.

COMMENTS.

[1] (Cowdenbeath). —The various uses of the Greek word *Aptomai* do not help us much in determining what is meant by its use in the word "touch" in John 20. 17. Why should He object to Mary touching Him then, if He was not immediately returning to His Father, for He allowed the women to touch Him later, as in Matthew 28. 9? I think there is much to be said for the view on the point expressed by Dr. Luxmoore in his "Bible readings on the Gospels." —*J. M.*

[2] (Glasgow). —See "Notes on the epistle to the Romans" chapter 1 for remarks on this statement. —*J. M.*

[3] (Glasgow). —In what sense has the Lord abolished death? Consider the force of the word *Katargeo* as used in 2 Timothy 1. 10. —*J. M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Questions from Atherton. (1) Was John absent from the cross for a time? (see John 19. 26, 27—"from that hour.") (2) In view of Luke 3. 2, John 18. 13, 19, 24, and Acts 4. 6, were Caiaphas and Annas officiating as high priests at the same time?

Answers. —(1) "From that hour" refers to the time when, at the Lord's word, John took the Lord's mother to his "own." "Home" is in italics in John 19. 27, and "his own" implies providing all that a son should for a mother. There is no indication in the words "from that hour" that John was absent from the cross. (2) Yes, I judge the words of the R. V. would show this to be the case, "in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas" (Luke 3. 2), though at the time of the Lord's death Caiaphas was acting high priest. John 18. 13 says that Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas, was high priest that year. —*J. M.*

Question from Nottingham. —In view of the A. V. reading of 18. 24, is it thought that 18. 13-23 deals with events that took place in connexion with Caiaphas or Annas?

Answer. —It seems that verses 13-23 describe what took place before Annas. —*J. M.*

Questions from Cowdenbeath. —(1) Why did the disciples have difficulty in recognizing the Lord in resurrection? (2) On which day of the week was our Lord crucified?

Answers. —(1) It says in Luke 24. 16 that "their eyes were holden that they should not know Him." (2) According to Jewish reckoning a part of a day was reckoned as a day. Thus the Lord was dead part of Friday, Saturday, and part of Lord's day. The probability is that the Lord died on Friday. —*J. M.*

Question from Hereford. —Did the Lord have any earthly abode after His resurrection?

Answer. —No, I judge not. Of what happened between His appearances to His disciples nothing is revealed. —*J. M.*

NOTICE: URGENT.

Papers are still being sent to Mr. Baird's former address, with consequent loss of time. This is adding *unnecessary* difficulty to editorial work. Please note the correct address: Mr. John Baird, 15, Brunstane Road, Portobello, Midlothian, Scotland.

Verses 6, 7: *For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.*

Christians in the early centuries of the Christian era were looked upon as belonging to a secret society which might be dangerous to the state, but here is a paragraph, in an epistle written by the chief man amongst the churches of the Gentiles to Christians in the Imperial city as to their conduct to the state, which for its clarity as enjoining subjection to the state, observing its civil institutions, and honouring its officials, could not be improved upon. The perusal of this could not but gain the approval among all who were right-minded of Roman rulers (alas, they were not all such!) or those in authority in any state. State officials are spoken of as being ministers (*Leitourgoi*, public officers, or persons of property called to do some public duty at their own expense) of God, who attended continually on the maintenance of civil order. The Christian is to render to all their dues, taxes on persons, property, etc., and customs on goods, also they are to fear and honour those in office.

Verses 8, 9, 10: *Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law.*

The Christian is to be scrupulous in the matter of debt. Debts, these days, owing by both individuals and governments are reaching to fabulous figures. Debts are incurred without any real conception of how payment is to be made. The Christian is not to abandon the simple statute of the simple life, "Owe no man anything." Debt can have a most damaging effect on Christian testimony. One thing is excepted—"save to love one another." Here is a debt which should be continually being paid, but we shall never reach the day when we shall have paid all. The statutes of the law, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not steal, and so forth, were framed within that all-inclusive statute of man's relationship to man, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Therefore the law in its essential meaning was Love, which finds its happiness in another's good; it must do good. Love cannot work ill, therefore it is the fulfilment of law. James calls "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" "the royal law," "the perfect law," and the "law of liberty" (James 1. 25; 2. 8, 12). What a change it would bring to this poor, weary world if this law were obeyed! We should have a world without armies, without police, without cheats, rogues, and criminals. The Christian is to be a pattern man in the world as it is.

Verses 11, 12: *And this, knowing the season, that now it is high time for you to awake out of sleep: for now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*

The Christian should be as a man who awakes and rises while it is yet dark to await the coming of his Master, who comes bringing salvation, a salvation which, as Peter says, is ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1. 5, 9). This salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed.

Should the Lord find us sleeping when He comes, then, assuredly, we shall be ashamed before Him (1 John 2. 28). Nineteen long centuries have rolled by since Paul dictated these words, "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand, "a long time in the history of men, whose lives are but a few decades, but the rolling centuries are but a drop in the ocean of eternity. How near to the dawn of the day we may be now ! Is not the sky in the realm of human affairs beginning to show signs of coming daybreak ? I think so ! Let us then cast off the works of darkness as a dismal cloak suited to those who live in the shadows and who move about like bats in the darkness, and, in contrast, put on the armour of light of a heaven-clad warrior.

Verses 13, 14: *Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

The Christian is to walk honestly, as in the day. Thieves usually emerge, as wild beasts from their dens, at night to do their evil works. The Christian is a son of the light and of the day. His conduct is not to be the night life of the shameless and profane, in revelling, drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, of which the world is not less full now than in the apostle's time. Neither is he to be a man of strife and jealousy, jealousy which burns up the inward peace and holiness of a believer's life. He is to be as **a man** clad with the Lord Jesus Christ, living Christ over again in his life among men, and making not provision for "fleshly lusts", lusts, which Peter says, " war against the soul " (1 Peter 2. 11).

CHAPTER 14.

Verses 1, 2, 3, 4: *But him that is weak in faith receive ye, yet not to doubtful disputations. One man hath faith to eat all things: but he that is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest the servant (Oiketen, household servant) of another? to his own lord he standeth or faileth. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand.*

I think that *Asthenounta te Pistei* should be rendered " weak in the faith, " and not that the man is a weak believer, " weak in faith. " The man in view here is one who has not entered fully into the dispensational change in regard to eating, that the Lord had made all meats clean (Mark 7. 14-23), and that the difference between meats had been removed, the difference that the Levitical law made. Peter was told, " What God hath cleansed, make not thou common " (Acts 10. 9-16). The weak brother was to be received to the enjoyment of fellowship, and the matter of eating was not to be made " a bone of contention, " " decisions of doubts " or reasonings. The " one man, " possibly a Gentile, has grasped by faith the teaching of the faith for this dispensation regarding eating, and can eat all things, but the " weak " man, possibly a Jew, is not clear as to the dispensational change, and having a weak conscience, apprehensive lest he should defile himself, limits his eating to herbs. The weak brother is not to be despised, nor is the strong to be judged that he is daring in eating all things. Let not the non-eater

judge the eater, for God **has** received him, **the** eater. Who art thou, **the** non-eater, with the **weak** conscience, that **judgest** the household **servant** of another? His responsibility is to his own lord **and** to no other. Whatever may **be** thought of his actions in eating, that he should not **be** regarded as **one** that **serves** the Lord, seeing that he eats things that are **deemed** to be unclean by the other, yet his Lord is able to make him to stand.

Verses 5, 6: One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, unto the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

One man judges one day to be holy, another judges every day to be holy. The **man** who keeps the seven-day festival of unleavened bread, in its spiritual significance, regards every day to be **a** holy day (1 Corinthians 5. 8). There is no command **in** this **New** Covenant dispensation which demands the observance of **a** day, as the sabbath **was** observed in the past. **On** this matter of the observance of **a** day each **man** is to **be** assured in his **own** mind. But if **a** day is esteemed above another, then that day is to **be** regarded **as** unto the Lord. Equally so is this to **be** the **case** in the matter of eating. **He** that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, and gives God thanks, and he that eateth not the things which he **deems** to be unclean, **but** only herbs, also eateth unto the Lord, **and** gives God thanks. Thus Paul settled the **vexed** matter of days and eating at the beginning of this dispensation when Jewish believers were emerging from the shadows of the law into the clear light of the teaching of Christ, of **Him** who is the Substance of the shadows **of** the past.

Verses 7, 8: For none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

The central fact in life is, "**We** are the Lord's." **We** are His for He **made** us, but this is not the **sense** in which **we** are His here; **we** are His by right **of** purchase. **He** has bought **us** with His blood (1 Corinthians 6. 19, 20; 7. 23; Revelation 5. 9). **Hence** it is that not one of **us** lives or dies to himself. If **we** live, **we** live unto Him, and if **we** die, **we** die unto Him, for to Him **we** truly **and** eternally belong. **We** are His purchased bondservants, **and** whatever may have been the religious upbringing and training and in consequence the conscientious scruples of each, He, the Lord of **us** all, has designed **a** way whereby strong **and** weak may dwell together in harmony, neither infringing the liberty of the other.

Verse 9: For to this end Christ died, and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

We know that the Lord **Jesus** is Lord **as** a Divine Being, **even** as the Father is Lord, **and** the Spirit is Lord. **But** here the Lordship of Christ rests upon the **fact** that **He** died **and** lived again. **He** said in the mountain in Galilee, "All authority hath been given unto **Me** in heaven **and** on earth" (Matthew 28. 18). Peter said, "God hath **made** Him both Lord **and** Christ, this **Jesus** whom ye crucified" (Acts 2. 36); **and** the Lord said to John in Patmos, "Fear not; I **am** the first **and** the last, **and** the Living **One**; **and** I **was** (became R. V. M.) dead, **and** behold, I **am** alive for evermore, **and** I have the keys of death **and** of **Hades**" (Revelation 1. 17, 18). Living **and** dead are under **His** authority, but in this verse it is the redeemed living **and** dead that are in view.

Verses 10, 11, 12: *But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgement-seat of God. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, to Me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.*

Paul here repeats in the form of a question what he said in verse 1 about despising and judging one another in the matter of eating. Why should they judge each other, for they **must stand** before God's judgement-seat? Paul wrote to the Corinthians that it was a small matter with him that he should be judged **by man's judgement** or **man's day** (R. V. M.), for **in the day** of Christ, the day of His coming again, the Lord will **bring** to light the hidden things of darkness **and** make manifest the counsels of the heart (1 Corinthians 4. 1-5). The judgement-seat of God is the judgement-seat **{Bema, tribunal, not throne}** of Christ (2 Corinthians 5. 10). Before that **we must stand, and** there bow the knee **and** make confession, **and** give account of ourselves, each of **us**. Here in verse 11 **we** have another of those witnesses to the Deity of the Lord, for " Lord " here **is** God **and** Jehovah of Isaiah 45. 21-23. If this over-powering **fact** had laid hold on the Roman **saints** (**and** on us) there would have **been** less despising **and** judging of each other.

Verse 13: *Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block in his brothers way, or an occasion of falling.*

This is a **prime** consideration **in** our **way** of life, that **we** do not stumble each other **in** what **we** do. Paul struck the correct note when he wrote to the Corinthians **and** said, " If **meat** maketh **my** brother to stumble, I will **eat** no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble " (1 Corinthians 8. 13). Earlier in this chapter he said, "**Meat** will not commend **us** to God: neither, if **we eat** not, are **we** the worse; nor, if **we eat**, are **we** the **better** " (verse 8).

Verses 14, 15: *I know, and am-persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died.*

Paul first **states** the doctrine **in** this dispensation, that all **meats** are clean, nothing **is** unclean of itself. Then **as** to the **use** of **meats**, complete freedom **is** given that one **can eat** this or that **as** one pleases. **Meat** is only unclean to him that accounts it to **be** unclean. Such a person eating what he **deems** to **be** unclean would defile his conscience. In the eating of **meats** one who had knowledge **was** to **be** careful that he did not grieve his weak brother, lest he should destroy him. The preservation of his brother, not the satisfying of his own appetite, **was** what mattered. If he walked in love he would **be** careful of his brother's conscientious scruples. " Destroy " here **is** a form of the **same** word as " perish " (*Apollumi* or *Apolluo*, see also 1 Corinthians 8. 11) in John 3. 16. In Romans 14. 15 it is **used** in the **same** sense as in Matthew 16. 25 and John 12. 25, "**He** that loveth his life loseth (*Apollumi*) it. "
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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EDITORIAL.

We desire to thank our contributors for their continued support, of *Bible Studies* in the form of contributions. In the course of the year we have been enabled in the grace of God to publish about two hundred and ten papers and extracts on the Gospel according to John, and no fewer than thirteen " corners " sent in ten or more papers. This, we feel, reflects credit on all interested in *Bible Studies*, for we are not unaware' of the difficulties under which some " corners " work. We have tried to publish each month an interesting and representative statement of all the thoughts sent to us, and this has entailed cutting most of the contributions to extracts. Though an increase in the number of contributions would mean more severe excisions, we nevertheless ask all our contributors to meet for study as often as possible and to contribute as regularly as possible, for we are convinced that the major benefit to be derived from *Bible Studies* lies in close and unremitting study of the Scriptures. We would, therefore, solicit your continued steadfast labours with us, that we all may be the better fitted to serve the Lord and for the furtherance of His kingdom. " Beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord " (1 Corinthians 15. 58). We pray the Lord will bless you in your study of the Scriptures, particularly in your reading of Deuteronomy in the coming months. J. B.

REFERENCES TO MOSES IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

Apart from specific quotations, there is much Old Testament background in the Gospels, e. g., references to the feasts of the Jews and to the sabbath; and it is interesting to observe how the four Gospel writers differ in their choice of Old Testament quotations and allusions. The Old Testament writings witnessed concerning the Coming One (5. 39), and Moses and the prophets wrote of Him (1. 45). Moses himself was a type of the Lord Jesus as Leader, Prophet and Mediator; and in John's Gospel there are clear allusions to Moses in relation to the giving of the law, to his actions and to his writings.

The law of God was given through Moses to Israel (1. 17); and the Pharisees, who called themselves disciples of Moses (9. 28), would have applied it in all its rigour in judgement on the adulteress (8. 5) and in their demand for valid witness as to the Lord's authority (8. 17). Their attitude was one of unbelief, and therefore Moses through the law became their accuser (5. 45-47). Indeed, though they professed obedience to the law, which said, " Thou shalt do no murder " (Exodus 20. 13), such was their hatred that, ere His hour was come, they were already seeking to kill the Lord Jesus (7. 19, 22-23). The just and good law from God would have heard Him before passing judgement (7. 51); but, at the Lord's trial before Pilate, the Jews wrested the law, saying in falsehood, " We have a law, and by that law He ought to die. " We can well understand, therefore, why the men of Israel were cut to the heart, when Stephen charged them with the betrayal and murder of the Righteous One (Acts 7. 52, 53).

The acts of Moses foreshadowed the works of the Lord. Moses set **up** a serpent so that the **sinning** and suffering Israelites **might be** healed; **but, in** that it **was** the Lord **Jesus** Himself who **was** raised **up** on the shameful cross to die for our sins (3. 14, 15), there is **an** element of contrast **between** Moses and the Lord Jesus. The type was wondrously excelled in fulfilment. The **same is** true with regard to the **manna** which **was** given through Moses (God being the true Giver); the Lord **Jesus** Himself **is** the Bread of Life (6. 31, **32**, 49-51).

From the writings of Moses (Exodus 12. 46, Numbers **9. 12**) John culls the command, "**A** bone of **Him** shall not **be** broken" (19. 36), which confirms the prophetic nature of the writings of Moses and is in complete agreement with Paul's teaching, "our Passover..., Christ" (1 Corinthians **5. 7**).

We commend prayerful consideration of John's **use** of the Old Testament. We **must** be able to handle aright the Old Testament writings, if **we** are to emulate, even in a small way, the example of Apollos, who "powerfully confuted the Jews, . . . *shewing by the Scriptures* that **Jesus** was the Christ" (Acts 18. 28). **J. B.**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

(Chapter 20. 19—21. 25).

From London, **S. E.** — "**Jesus** manifested Himself. " After the resurrection it appears that the disciples did not "**see Jesus** " **except** inasmuch as **Jesus** appeared unto them. "**His** body after the resurrection **was** only visible by a distinct **act** of **His** will" (Trench). " By the phrase, ⁴ **He** manifested Himself, ' it is made clear, that **if He** had not willed, and had not manifested Himself in **His** condescension, **He** would not have been seen " (Chrysostom).

Each of the three manifestations **seems** to have a very distinct object. The object of the first appearing (20. **19-23**) **was** to reassure the disciples in readiness for their mission of testimony. They were to " forgive sins, " just **as** they were to **save** souls, instrumentally by the preaching of the gospel after the Holy Spirit **was** given [1]. The second appearing (20. 26-29) **was** to reassure Thomas, who was absent on the previous occasion. Only thus could unity among the disciples **be** secured. At the third appearing (21. 1-23) the Lord Himself refreshed them in festal joy. The **Master's** meal was prepared for seven disciples—the complete and perfect picture of endless joy.

Many have tried to lay great emphasis on the number **153**, **but** these attempts are not very impressive. The significance **is** hardly in the particular number, but rather in the **fact** that numbering **is** a divine attribute (Matthew 10. 30), and that all happens according to pre-ordained purpose and the will of God.

When the Master signified to Peter the manner of death by which he should glorify God, **He** indicated that Peter would **be** unwilling to die; " and carry thee whither thou wouldest not " (21. 18). This reluctance to **face** death is quite natural, **if we** look upon death **as** an enemy, to **be** eventually abolished. The following two quotations should help to clarify the point raised. " Whither thou wouldest not: **He** is speaking of the sympathy of our nature and the anguish of the flesh, and of the unwillingness of the soul to **be** sundered from the body " (Chrysostom). " It cannot **be** meant **by** the bearing * whither thou wouldest not, ' that there should **be** any reluctance on the part of Peter to glorify God by his death, except indeed the reluctance

which there always is in the flesh to suffering and pain (Ephesians 5. 29); a reluctancy in his case, as in his Lord's (Matthew 26. 39). overruled by the higher willingness to do and to suffer the perfect will of God. In this sense, as it was a violent death, — a death others chose for him, — a death from which flesh and blood would naturally shrink, it was a carrying ' whither he would not ' ; though, in a higher sense, as it was the way to a nearer vision of God, it was that toward which he had all his life been striving " (Trench).

F. L. E.

From Melbourne. — The appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ to His own in the room with the shut door indicates that there were no limitations to His resurrected body. Prior to the Cross He had manifested this fact, for, when they would cast Him over the brow of the hill (Luke 4. 29), He passed through the midst of them, and they were unable to hold Him. The two men in white who spoke to the disciples (Acts 1) emphasized " this same Jesus " (A. V.). His was a material body of flesh and bones (Luke 24. 39).

The showing of His hands and His side took all doubts from their mind, even as those wounds will speak to Israel in a coming day, when " they shall look unto Me whom they have pierced: and they shall mourn " (Zechariah 12. 10). The marks of the Cross were a testimony to all that He had been raised from among the dead—indisputable evidence. Thomas, on hearing of the report, said emphatically, " Except I shall see . . . " He saw and believed, but we do not read of Him thrusting his hand into the wounds; seeing was sufficient.

Those things, i. e., His appearing in the midst of a closed room, and the wounds in His body, were to be grasped by faith. Things incomprehensible to the human mind can be grasped by faith. From beginning to end divine truth is revealed to faith.

The resurrected and glorified Lord is Man in the Glory.

We felt that John 20. 23 is related to Matthew 18. 18 with regard to the binding and loosing.

P. W. A.

From Southport. — In this portion we see the restless Peter returning to what he left behind him when he was called to following the Lord (Luke 5. 1). It would appear that he could not wait for directions from the Lord, and he turned from catching men to his worldly occupation. Not only did Peter turn his back on his Master's calling, but he took six others with him. Already we see two warnings for ourselves.

After toiling all night, they had caught nothing. When morning arrived and a Man hailed them from the beach, they had to tell this sorry story. How far they seem to have strayed in so short a time ! for they all failed to recognize the Lord. Do we always recognize the voice of our Lord and Master?

When the Lord demonstrated His power over the fish of the sea, one disciple realised that the Man on the beach was none other than the risen Lord. When Peter was told who this Man was, he girded his coat about him, because, like Adam, he dared not face his Maker naked.

The general opinion about 21. 9 is that the Lord also manifested His power in creating the fire, fish, and bread, thereby showing His power over the living and the dead. But some suggested that the Lord may have brought the wood, fish and bread and made the fire.

We all agree that once more the wonderful power of the resurrected Lord Jesus is here seen and also His wonderful methods of dealing with His erring servants. It was, as usual, to needy people that the Lord revealed Himself.

B. H.

EXTRACTS.

From Atherton. —The Lord's appearances after His resurrection were strictly limited to His own. With what delight shall we see Him, and behold the indelible marks of His passion!

The Lord repeated the salutation, "Peace be unto you." Can we learn a practical lesson here? Instead of speaking cutting words to or about one another, we should be prayerfully exercised to speak peace to one another (Ephesians 6. 23, 24; Galatians 5. 15).

Judas had the bag. It possibly went with him. The disciples erroneously sought a means of livelihood, and consequently they took nothing after a long night's toil. The Lord would teach them to depend upon Him.

"Lovest thou Me more than these?" might be read thus to give the correct sense: "Lovest thou Me more than these love Me?"

Peter made the mistake that so many have made before and since, being concerned as to what another should do. The Lord said, "Follow thou Me." The Lord's command is intensely personal. First, He speaks to us alone. Then, hearing His voice and responding, we may rightly be concerned for the welfare of others. To use other Scriptural language, the Lord would say first, "Look to thyself," and then "Consider one another" (Galatians 6. 1; Hebrews 10. 24).
G. A. Jones.

From Nottingham. —"Lovest thou Me more than these?" Three times Peter was questioned about his love for the Lord perhaps to remind him that he had three times denied his Lord. Love for his Lord was vital to his spiritual well being. Later, in a trance, he saw a sheet let down three times out of heaven, and thrice he heard the voice from above. The "thou" of 21. 16 is emphatic.

"More than these," was this the fishes, the fishing, or the disciples? [2].

The action of the Lord in breathing on His disciples would seem to be a symbol of that time, then still to come, when at Pentecost they were to be clothed with power from on high. The Greek word translated "breathed" implies, it was considered, a single act; so that it would seem the breathing was on the disciples collectively and not individually.
R. Hickling.

From Edinburgh. —We suggest that the Lord's manifestation to the ten disciples took place in the upper room. At any rate, it was, we are told, behind closed doors, and we mark the way in which He was made known unto them. He stood in their midst, where all could behold Him, and said to them, "Peace be unto you." Some judged these words to be merely a form of salutation, while others thought they were spoken to allay the distress of mind and heart in which the disciples were at that time. Then, the disciples saw the marks of His cross-work for the first time. They looked upon Him (blessed moment!) and they rejoiced to see Him. We pause here to think of our seeing Him for the first time.

At the manifestation of the Lord at the sea of Tiberias there were together Peter, Thomas and Nathanael (whose names are mentioned) with James and John and two other disciples (whose names are not given). Peter had said of Him and to Him, "Thou art the Christ"; Thomas had said, "My Lord and my God"; and Nathanael, "Thou art the Son of God."
A. M. Hope.

From Cardiff. —We found much comfort in the study of the Lord's appearances to the disciples after His resurrection. John does not record all the appearances; they were for the establishing of the apostles in the great work which lay before them (Acts 1. 3, 8). The resurrection is fundamental to the Christian faith. Peter (Acts 10. 40, 41) informs us that He was made manifest, not to all the

people, but to witnesses chosen before of God. The first appearing (John 20. 19) **was** to the ten together, who had been scattered **in** accordance with the Lord's words (16. 32; Matthew 26. 81). Thomas failed despite the previous evidence of his love (11. 16); he was then willing to die with Him: **but** faith prevailed and he confessed, " My Lord and my God. " **We** are reminded of the words of David, " Thou art my Lord: I have no good beyond Thee " (Psalm 16. 2).

T. J. Follett.

From Kingston-on-Thames. —It must have been a wonderful surprise to the disciples when the Lord first appeared in their midst, for the doors were shut for fear of the Jews; **and**, no doubt, the thought of the Lord visiting them was very far from their minds. In order to confirm **His** identity, **He** showed unto them **His** hands, and **His** side (John 20. 20). **No** wonder they were glad when they saw the Lord!

Alas ! how often our faith wavers ! We are similar to Thomas, and need **to** have our faith renewed. Like Thomas, too, we shall know **Him** by the print of the nails in **His** hands.

W. H. Humphris.

From Crowborough. —The Lord Jesus twice on the **same** occasion said to the disciples, " Peace be unto you. " It may have been years afterwards before the disciples appreciated the fulness of **His** words, who had made full and lasting peace by the blood of **His** cross, through which we know peace beyond anything known before.

Peter had a lesson to learn. Tenderly the Lord taught him that the headstrong way of the old nature must be overcome.

B. V. F.

From Wigan. —After a night of fruitless toil on the deep, the disciples drew near to the shore and heard the query, " Children, have ye aught to eat ? " In response to **His** command, " Cast the net on the right side of the boat, " they obeyed and, to their amazement, enclosed a multitude of **fishes**. John with **his** keen spiritual perception, said, " It **is** the Lord, " and Peter cast himself into the sea. **On** coming to the land, they saw a fire and **fish** laid thereon, and with fear **in** their hearts they responded to the Lord's invitation, " Come and break your fast. " This wonderful miracle **is** similar to the one recorded in Luke 5. 1-9.

The word " manifest, " used here on a few occasions, **is** very interesting. In modern speech, a ship's manifest **is** the document which enumerates the cargo carried. What a manifestation of fulness and power and blessing is vested in **Him** who later said, "All authority hath been given unto Me **in** heaven and on earth. "

May our " manifest " at the judgement-seat of Christ be such that we shall hear the welcome words, " Well done, good and faithful servant : . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. "

L. Latimer.

From Brantford, Ont. —Each time the Lord appeared **in** the midst of the disciples, **His** first words spake peace to them. Peace was the word **He** left with them ere He went to the Cross. **His** breathing upon them reminded us of Genesis 2. 7; in doing so He bequeathed the Holy Spirit, who was given at Pentecost to lead the disciples in their witness for the Lord. This was the promise of the Father. We associated the forgiving and retaining of **sins** with Matthew 18. 18 and 1 Corinthians 5. N. S.

From Glasgow. —In **His** lifetime upon this earth, the Lord Jesus **had** spoken to **His** disciples concerning **His** death and resurrection, that they might be comforted in **His** absence: "A little while, and ye behold **Me** no more; and again a little while, and ye **shall** see Me. " It **is** evident by their query that they understood not what He meant by this saying, because they said, " **What** is this that **He** saith, A little while? **We** know not what **He**

saith. " The Lord's words were apparently forgotten, for, shortly after **His** death, the disciples were **gathered** together in **the** upper room sorrowful, and the doors were shut for **fear** of **the** Jews. It was in this place, and to hearts filled with sorrow **and** fear, that the Lord **Jesus** appeared with the **sweet** and soothing words, for **He** said to them " Peace be unto you " (20. 21). At first they were all afraid, and thought they **saw** **an** apparition, but the Lord to assure them said, " . . . it is I Myself: . . . for **a** spirit hath not flesh **and** bones, **as** ye behold **Me** having. "

At the third manifestation there was **a** change of scene. The disciples should have been **at a** mountain **in** Galilee, **but** instead they went **a** fishing. Peter here had led the others astray. Disobedience brings disappointment: and, although they were capable fishermen, they toiled all night and caught nothing.

We judge that by these manifestations the Lord Jesus desired to prepare the disciples to **be** living witnesses to testify, at Jerusalem and unto the uttermost parts of the earth, that Jesus not only died, but that **He** also rose again on the third day. In Acts we read that with great power the apostles **gave** witness of the resurrection of Jesus. *Fred Harvey.*

From Paisley and Barrhead. —Some thought that the receiving of the Holy Spirit (20. 23) **was** not the **same as** we have in Acts 2 at Pentecost; the response of the disciples differed on these two occasions. To the end of this book we **see** no revelation of the Spirit's power in these men; on the contrary, if any trend **is** apparent, **it is** towards backsliding. But according to Acts 2 the disciples received power at Pentecost **by being** filled with the Spirit, and spoke **in** tongues **as** the Spirit gave them utterance. Others thought that the Holy Spirit, **as** given in John 20 lay recumbent within the apostles until Pentecost [3]. John 21. 15-17 reveals two important points, the onerous responsibilities of **an** under-shepherd, and **a** vital condition for his task—**a** love for the Great Shepherd, and, consequent upon that, **a** love for His sheep. *W. Terrell (Jr.).*

From Willington Quay. —Peter failed **in** quickly resorting to fishing. **His** capacity for leadership caused others to follow him. Their night's toil **was** fruitless, **as** all effort must surely be unless it has the Lord's blessing. The futility of their own efforts stands **in** sharp contrast to the results obtained when they obeyed the Lord's command. The judgement-seat of Christ will reveal what **we** have sought to accomplish **in** our own strength **as** against what **was** done in keeping with the mind and will of the Lord.

Peter had been called of the Lord to catch men, and the Lord further instructed him **as** to his responsibility **in** feeding and tending the Flock. *K. R.*

From Manchester. —The Lord's words, " Peace be unto you, " were not **a** mere customary greeting; but **He** offered the disciples peace in their hearts **and** consciences. They had failed Him, sadly **and** inexcusably, but **He** could forgive them their doubts **and** weakness. (Compare Romans 5. 1).

" Receive **ye** the Holy Spirit. " The Lord was to give to them the Holy Spirit, **and** through the Spirit they were to reach to higher heights than their greatest dreams. Once the Spirit of the Lord has touched ordinary **men** they are quickened. How abjectly the disciples had failed **and** yet, once the Spirit entered them, how daring **and** valiant they became !

Thomas's test **seems** crude: **He** was **a** matter-of-fact type of person, sincere enough to face facts **and** accept them, however grim **and** dark (11. 16). Any doubts the others may have had were settled when **He** took the bread **and** gave it to them. *R. Bowden.*

From Liverpool. —The promised rejoicing of John 16. 22 was fulfilled when, on the evening of that glorious first day of the week, Jesus came and stood in **the** midst of **the** disciples.

"Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" asked the scribes and Pharisees, and the implication is indeed true. No man, not even **an** apostle, could do so, this being the divine prerogative.

Matthew 18. 15-18 must be read in association with John 20. 23. These verses deal with discipline in **a** church of God, and Matthew 18. 18 shows the solemn responsibility given to overseers in the matter of judgement. 1 Corinthians 5 gives us **an** example of the application of these principles. The brother who had been put away, the cause of much sorrow and tears to Paul and the saints there, was later to be forgiven. Righteous judgement had been carried out, and, repentance being shown, forgiveness and restoration were the right course (2 Corinthians 2. 5-11). There **is** no ground at all in Scripture for the confessional **as** practised by some: we rest upon 1 John 1. 9; 2. 1, 2.

While chapter 20 closes the presentation to all **men** of "the Christ, the Son of God" (20. 31), and states the purpose for which these things were written, chapter 21 is a special chapter for disciples; "Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples" (21. 1). There were lessons to be learned, and Peter particularly was in need of vital instruction with regard to **service** and the motive that should direct and govern it.

Feeding the lambs, tending and feeding the sheep of the flock, were to be Peter's future occupation. Though still **a** fisher of men, he was to be also **a** shepherd over the flock of God. *A. Fairhurst, Jr., A. H.*

From Hereford. —John 20. 21 indicates that the Lord was sent by divine commission, and **He** came to them at that time to send them forth **as** a collective testimony, breathing on them and saying, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." They were to wait **in** Jerusalem for the promise of the Father (Acts 1. 4, 5). **We** thought 20. 23 applicable to the time when churches of God would exist and overseers would act together in forgiving or retaining. (See 1 Corinthians 5, 2 Corinthians 2). **We** did not think it was individuals forgiving sins.

The manner of the Lord's appearing was the **same** on both occasions. The disciples were within, the doors being shut, and Jesus came and stood **in** their midst. Acts 1. 21 says that the Lord Jesus went **in** and went out among them. This refers to **His** shepherd work before the cross. Here **He** is **in** the midst of them, proving that **He** still has **a** shepherd heart.

What was the purpose of Peter in throwing himself into the **sea**? Though John had said, "It **is** the Lord," it **is** evident that they did not **seem** sure about this, yet Peter obeyed the Lord by drawing the net to land. This eighth sign was to prove to them beyond doubt that the Lord was risen indeed, and that **He** is the Son of God. *H. Jefferson.*

From Cowdenbeath. —To forgive is **a** divine prerogative (Mark 2. 7). Therefore the Lord's words to **His** disciples cannot **mean** that they were empowered to do this thing. **We** believe John 20. 23 teaches truth similar to Matthew 18. 18. The forgiving and retaining are akin to the loosing and binding.

Previous to the incident recorded in John 21, Peter had **seen** the Lord in resurrection (1 Corinthians 15. 5), and, no doubt, **as** **an** erring disciple he had been restored. The details of that interview are not recorded. It was private to the Lord and Peter, **as** are all matters of individual confession and restoration. From **a** consideration of certain **facts** **we** feel it would **be** unfair to Peter to condemn him **as** **a** **man** who acted out of touch with his

Lord. (1) He had been restored. (2) The disciples were in Galilee at the Lord's bidding (Matthew 28. 7). (3) The Lord did not reprove Peter for going fishing. (4) His eagerness to reach the land first is not the action of a man ashamed. (5) His readiness to obey the Lord's command to bring the fish shows him as a man who was willing to serve [4],

Two different Greek words for "love" are used in this passage. In His first and second questions the Lord used the word *Agapao*, which means love which can be directed by the will, hence, devotion. In each of his three answers Peter used the word *Phileo* which means to have affection for, to be dear unto. In His third question the Lord used the same word as Peter. In effect, therefore, the Lord first asked Peter if he was more devoted to Him than were the other disciples. Peter, although he had compared his devotion with that of the rest (Mark 14. 29), ignored the comparison, and, avoiding to speak of devotion at all, simply answered by saying that the Lord was dear unto him. The question was put to him again without reference to the other disciples. Still Peter would not speak of devotion: he had learned his lesson. Then the searching, final question. Was the Lord really dear to Peter? Peter winced. Did the Lord doubt his love? The charge He gave him proved He did not. Peter made no boasts about his devotedness, but without shame or fear confessed his love to the Lord. The Lord knew of Peter's love and knew too, of the devotion which Peter would show in his life of service, a devotion which would take him to a martyr's death.

James Bowman,

COMMENTS.

[1] (London, S. E.). —This is a most incorrect interpretation of the forgiveness of sins in John 20. 23. Nowhere in the New Testament did any of the apostles exercise the authority of this verse in the forgiveness of the believing sinner. See Acts 10. 43, 13. 38, 39, and other scriptures, where the apostles clearly showed that the forgiveness of sins was through faith in Christ on the part of the sinner. Forgiveness in the New Testament is set forth in three ways, (1) the forgiveness of the believing sinner, (2) the forgiveness of the child of God (1 John 1), and (3) the forgiveness of those in church fellowship whose sins of a public nature affect the testimony of the church. See Matthew 18. 15-18, especially verse 18. See also 1 Corinthians 5, and the forgiveness by the church (and the apostle Paul) indicated in 2 Corinthians 2. 5-11. Only in this last (3) sense do the words of John 20. 23 apply. Note that the forgiveness in (3), verse 23, is connected with the apostles being sent in testimony, and the forgiveness or retaining of sins is in connexion with such testimony where sin intruded amongst those in testimony. —*J. M.*

[2] (Nottingham). —"More than these," "these" refers to the disciples not the fish. —*J. M.*

[3] (Paisley and Barrhead). —The Lord breathed upon His disciples in John 20. 22, but they did not receive the Holy Spirit until the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). This is clear enough from what He said to them in Acts 1. —*J. M.*

[4] (Cowdenbeath). —We do not share the views here expressed by our friends. The call of Peter and the others, in Luke 5. 10, 11, and their whole-hearted response thereto was clear enough that what they had left they should not return to. Again, the fact that their own efforts to obtain fish proved fruitless was a voice loud enough, both for them and for us, and in contrast the Lord provided both by fish on the charcoal fire and in their net that He was their provider, and that His will for them lay in another

direction, for they had been commanded to go to a mountain in Galilee, where they received their world-wide commission, and not to the sea to fish. Fishing was a lawful occupation for others, but not for them when the Lord's command was so plain as to where they should be. Further the Lord's personal dealing with Peter, for he was the leader of the rest, shows who were to be fed, the lambs and sheep, and that the feeding of themselves was not to be the first and chief concern of the apostles.

The emphatic assertion of Peter, " I go a fishing, " was but the old self-assertive nature, to which the Lord refers in 20. 18, so manifest in Peter in his youth, rising again. —*J. M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Questions from Liverpool. —(1) Please explain the difference between John 20. 1, " while it was yet dark, " and Mark 16. 2, " when the sun was risen. " (2) Did the Lord Jesus ascend to heaven on the morning of His resurrection ? (3) Does Hebrews 9. 12 refer to this ascending and entering heaven ?

Answers. —(1) The answer is probably that it was dark when Mary started out to go to the tomb, but by the time that she and the others reached the tomb the sun had risen. (2) See comment [1] on Cowdenbeath's (Nov.) paper. (3) It may be that both His ascension on the resurrection morning and His ascension forty days afterwards are in view. The high priest of old entered twice into the Holy of Holies on the day of atonement. —*J. M.*

Question from Melbourne. —Did the disciples actually receive the Holy Spirit when Jesus breathed on them (20. 22) ?

Answer. —No, this is clear from Acts 1. They received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). —*J. M.*

Questions from Manchester. —The power to remit or retain sins clearly supposes judicial authority. (1) Was this given only to the disciples present (20. 23) ? (2) would Thomas be included ? (3) Is such authority still operative today through overseers ?

Answer. —See comment [1] on paper from London and the view expressed by Liverpool and others. (1) and (2) To all the disciples. (3) Yes. —*J. M.*

Question from Crowborough. —Could help be given on John 20. 23, please?

Answer. —See comment [1] on paper from London. —*J. M.*

Question from Cowdenbeath. —Who are indicated by the " we " in John 21. 24?

Answer. —I am of the opinion that the " we " refers to John. When the queen issues a proclamation she uses " we " instead of " I. " John ever wished to be obscure. —*J. M.*

Question from Paisley and Barrhead. —Would it be right to compare Matthew 16. 18, 19; 18. 15-18 with John 20. 23 ?

Answer. —It is very wrong to confuse Matthew 16. 18, 19 with Matthew 18. 15-18; these scriptures relate to two entirely different things, even as they refer to two entirely different churches, the Church which is Christ's Body, and the church of God. It is correct to connect Matthew 18. 15-18 with John 20. 23. —*J. M.*

Question from Hereford. —Do the words " more than these " refer to the fishes and the nets, etc. ?

Answer. —"These" refers to the disciples, not to the fishes or the nets. —*J. M.*

NOTES ON ROMANS.
CHAPTER 14.

Verses 16, 17, 18: *Let not then your good be evil spoken of: for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men.*

Let not your good, your holy living **and** liberty in Christ, be blasphemed by scrupulous wranglings over the matter of meats, which **are** of little consequence. "Meats for the belly, **and** the belly for meats: but God shall bring to nought both it **and** them" (1 Corinthians 6. 13). Food they needed, but what each ate was **a** matter of liberty, and tolerance **was** to be exercised by each toward the other. The kingdom of God, that privileged sphere of divine rule, which had once **a** place in Israel, until they finally rejected God's Son, **was taken** from them and given to the little Flock of the Lord's disciples (Matthew 21. 33-43; Luke 12. 31, 32), and is characterized by righteousness. This the Lord showed in Matthew 6. 31-33, "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall **we eat?** or, What shall **we drink?**;... But seek ye first His kingdom, and **His** righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Righteousness is the doing of what is right according to God's revealed will, **and** the kingdom of God is here viewed **as** the doing of God's revealed will by His gathered people, His little Flock. **An** isolated believer cannot do God's will in isolation. **He** must be gathered together with others into one (thing) (John 11. 51, 52; 17. 11, 19-22; Acts 1. 14, 15; 2. 41, 42). With the doing of God's will is allied peace **and** joy in the Holy Spirit. Who **can** have greater **peace** and joy than those who know that they are doing what God has commended to be done? **We** may groan because of the fact that in our flesh dwells no good thing (Romans 7. 18; 8. 23), but **at** the **same** time **we** may stand fully assured in all the will of God (Colossians 4. 12), and be **in a state of peace** and joy in the Holy Spirit. The kingdom of God is the sphere of service to Christ. "**He** that herein serveth (as **a** bondservant) Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of **men.**" **A** comparison of references to the kingdom of God elsewhere in the **New Testament** will show clearly that righteousness here is not imputed righteousness. Compare 1 Corinthians 5. 11-13 with 6, 9, 10. In 1 Corinthians 5. we have **a** brother who is guilty of fornication whose **act** has disinherited him of his place and portion in the kingdom of God. **See** also Ephesians 5. 5.

Verses 19, 20: *So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another. Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.*

Peace and mutual upbuilding of each other upon their most holy faith (Jude 20) **was** to be the **aim** of saints together in assembly life. Paul wrote to Timothy about certain who were **puffed** up, "doting about questionings **and** disputes of words, whereof cometh **envy**, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings of **men** corrupted in mind **and** bereft of the truth" (1 Timothy 6. 4, 5). Such **men** if allowed to follow this course of conduct would drive **peace** from any community. Edification or upbuilding is to be the keynote of assembly harmony, not overthrowing the work of God **in** any. Here Paul repeats what he said in verse 14, that all things are clean, but to him that eateth what is offensive to his conscience, such is evil to him that does it.

Verse 21: *It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.*

The eating of meats is no **great** difficulty in our **day**, as would be the free use of wine or other alcoholic drinks. Though there is no such command as, "Thou shalt not drink alcoholic beverages," yet care is **needed** that no one is stumbled by their **use**, and that no example is given to younger people of impressionable **age**, that spirituous liquors **may be** taken with impunity. The wise words of the mother of king Lemuel to her son are worthy of consideration, "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes to say, Where is strong drink? Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgement of any that is afflicted" (Proverbs 31. 4, 5). "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, . . . At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (Proverbs 23. 31, 32). **We** are not in any way dealing with the matter of wine as to its proper use, as in 1 Timothy 5. 23.

Verse 22: *The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God. Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth.*

There **may be** things that one **can** do privately, that one would not do before fellow-believers, **because** of their **effect** upon them. The **test** is, **Can we** in faith **and** with a good conscience do such **and** such things before God? **If** our heart condemns **us**, then **we** should desist. **We must** not do things in secret that are wicked **and evil**; if **we** do, then **we** are on the straight road to destroy ourselves. **Happy** is the **man** who **acting as** his own judge does not condemn himself in what he approves of. A good conscience is of the utmost importance to a believer. The **end** of Paul's charge to Timothy was, "Love out of a pure heart **and** a good conscience **and** faith **unfeigned**" (1 Timothy 1. 5).

Verse 23: *But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

Whatever **we** are in doubt about, the wise **and** proper course is not to **act** until **we get** light **and** assurance. To **act** in doubt is to **act** with a condemned conscience. It is unwise to **act** on the faith of others. It was sin for **the** doubter to **eat**, **and** Paul lays it down as a general principle, I **judge**, that whatever is not of faith is **sin**.
J. M.

CHAPTER 15.

Verses 1, 2, 3: *Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us please his neighbour for that which is good, unto edifying. For Christ also pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell upon Me.*

All the excellencies of Christian conduct spring from Christ. The bearing of the infirmities of the weak, **and** pleasing one's neighbour (not in everything as men-pleasers—Galatians 1. 10) in that which is good, unto edifying, have origin in the **fact** that the Lord pleased not Himself. Indeed, had it **been** self-pleasing **He** sought, **He** would not have **been** found on earth **at** all. **But** in seeking God's glory, **and** man's good, in His lowly earthly life, the reproaches wherewith **men** reproached His Father fell upon **Him** **and** they broke His heart. Great was **His** sorrow, for **He** loved both God **and** man. **Blessed** Mediator!

Verse 4: *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

Confirming the reference **he had** just made to Psalm **69. 9**, regarding the reproaches of Christ, **the** apostle says that **what was** written aforetime **was** written for our learning. How diligently **He** who is **the** Divine Word, **and** **the** Divine Wisdom, learned **the** Scriptures, in His humanity, in His days on earth! "Morning by morning," **He** said, "**He** wakeneth Mine ear to hear as they that are taught" (disciples, R. V. M.). In consequence of this **He** said, "The Lord **GOD** hath given Me the tongue of them **that** are taught" (Isaiah **50. 4**). Here **is** mystery, that "the Wisdom of God" (Luke **11. 49**) "**advanced** in wisdom" (Luke **2. 52**), a mystery, perchance, **we** shall never understand, but so it **was**. It is by the Scriptures that we know a little (oh, so little!) of patience (endurance) and comfort (encouragement), and it is by **the** Scriptures that we have any hope at all. May **we** be taught of God and learn more of the inestimable worth of Holy Writ!

Verses 5, 6: *Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus: that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Here the Divine Author of the Scriptures, the God of patience and of comfort, who **has** imparted to **His** living word patience and comfort, stands behind His word to implement every prophecy **and** promise **He has** given. Paul desires that this Blessed **One** would give **them** to be of one mind one with another, "not necessarily **an** identity of opinion **in** all details, but a community of sympathetic kindness." This quotation **seems** to **me** to convey what the apostle means. Paul wrote somewhat similarly to the Philippians, "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be of **the same** mind, having **the same** love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind **each** counting other better **than** himself" (Philippians **2. 2, 3**). **The same** mind that Paul desires to **be** in the Romans is governed by the words, "according to Christ Jesus," according to that mind which **was** in Christ **Jesus** (Philippians **2. 5-11**), ever lowly and ever seeking the well-being of others. The object of this unanimity of mind was to find its expression in ⁴ that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God **and** Father of our Lord **Jesus** Christ. "Glorious issue and end of being of **the same** mind, of one accord, and having one mouth!"

Verse 7: *Wherefore receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God.*

The receiving here is the **same as** in chapter 14. **1**, receiving to **the** enjoyment of mutual fellowship, for wranglings over **meats** would **drive** fellowship from assembly life. How did Christ receive **us**? certainly not to doubtful disputations. **He** received **us as** the father received the prodigal of Luke **15**, to the enjoyment of the **fatted** calf **and** all the other endowments which love bestowed upon the once-lost sinner. Christ received **us** in a **manner** that will ever redound to the glory of God.