

CHRISTIAN TRUTH VOLUME 10

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A collection of articles and writings by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan from Christian Truth Volume 10, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

75 Chapters

Table of Contents

0. Christian Truth Volume 10
1. The Altars in Ezekiel
2. Always
3. Athens — Corinth: the Editor's Column
4. Attraction of His Person
5. Caleb
6. The Christian Position: in the World but Not of It
7. Clarification
8. Comparative Ministries of Moses and Paul
9. The Daughters of Zelophehad
10. Descending Love
11. D.G. Barnhouse and Seventh-Day Adventism
12. Discipline
13. The Display of Christ
14. Ephesians 1
15. Examples of Devotedness
16. The Father's Love
17. A Few Things I See by Faith in Christ
18. Friends
19. Galatians 3:24: a Reader Inquires
20. Gideon's Sevenfold Qualification for Service
21. Go in Peace: How One Woman Got Blessing
22. God Is My Father
23. God Receives Sinners Through Jesus Christ
24. God's Comforts Stay the Soul
25. God's Joy
26. God's Order
27. The Gospel of the Glory of Christ
28. Heaven Opened
29. His Delight in the Saints
30. The Hope of Righteousness
31. How to Keep the Unity of the Spirit
32. Intellegent Service
33. The Invisible
34. Israel and the West: the Editor's Column
35. Israel — Arabs — the West: the Editor's Column
36. The King in His Beauty
37. Lot's Choice: Present Advantage
38. The Gospel of Luke

39. The Gospel of Luke: Luke 20-21
40. The Gospel of Luke: Luke 3-5
41. The Gospel of Luke: Luke 6-7
42. The Gospel of Luke: Preface
43. The Man-Made Moon
44. The Man of the Pharisees
45. Man's Natural Thought Answered: Matthew 19:16-26
46. Many Mansions
47. Misuse of the Cross of Christ
48. The Most High
49. My Late Affliction
50. The Nazarite: Numbers 6
51. Palestine
52. Peace
53. Peace With Gibeon
54. Prayer
55. Israel, Present and Future: the Editor's Column
56. Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ: the Importance and Necessity
57. The Red Sea and Jordan
58. Repentance
59. Responsibility
60. Risen With Christ
61. Service and Communion: From a Letter
62. The Seven Feasts of Jehovah: the Editor's Column
63. Seventh-Day Adventism
64. The Siege of Jericho
65. Sin and Sins
66. Suez Canal Crisis — Israel Invaded Sinai: the Editor's Column
67. The Supper at Bethany
68. Sympathy and Power
69. Christ the Truth: Pilate Saith Unto Him, What Is Truth?
70. This Light Bread: Christ As the Wilderness Food
71. The Unity of the Word of God
72. Warning and Encouragement
73. We "Testify That We Have Seen"
74. Wrong Doctrine of Ray C. Stedman: the Editor's Column

Christian Truth Volume 10

The Altars in Ezekiel

Question: "Eze. 40:47; 'And the altar... was before the house.' Is this the same altar as is described in chapter 43:13-17?"

Answer: Yes, it is the burnt offering altar of Eze. 43:13. This is shown by the expression, "before the house." The "house" is the "Holy Square, called especially the House (chap. 41:13-15), 100 cubits by 100 cubits. The Holy Square is intersected at the center by the square of the inner court, the Throne of Glory the center of it." Before this house was the altar of burnt offering, placed geometrically in the center of the Altar Square, 100 cubits by 100 cubits. Chap. 40:47.

Question: "Eze. 41:22; 'The altar of wood,' etc. 'This is the table that is before the Lord.' What altar-table is this? (Table of Showbread or Altar of Incense) or is it something new altogether, and where exactly would it be located - 'before the LORD.' To what use might it be put?... If the Altar-Table is in the inner sanctuary it seems to be all that is in there -if not what else is within the Holiest of All - apart from 'the glory of the Lord'? Chap. 43:4."

Answer: This is the Altar-Table that answers to the altar of incense in the tabernacle. Note the difference in expression: The burnt offering altar was "before the house"; this altar is "before the Lord." It is in the approximate position of the altar of incense in the tabernacle. We cannot be sure as to what use it is to be put, as it was said to be made of wood, with no mention of any metal. But when the time comes, all will be made clear to those who shall use it. In the most holy place was only the "glory of the LORD."

Question: "Eze. 44:16; 'They shall come near to My table.' Is this the altar of chapter 43:13-17, or the Altar-Table of chapter 41:22?" T.M.

Answer: This is the altar of chapter 43:13-17, as is evidenced by the fact that the priests are to "offer unto Me the fat and the blood" (v. 15). This could only be on the altar of burnt offering.

Always

There are at least five things treated of in the epistles that should always characterize every believer as long as he is down here in the world.

First, he should be always confident (2 Cor. 5:6). In the opening verses of this chapter, the Apostle speaks of the knowledge that the Christian has of eternal blessing after this life, in a body suited to the heavenly condition, etc., and then adds, "Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." vv. 5-8.

What blessed assurance it gives the heart to know that all is the work of God Himself. He it is who has already wrought us for the future glory, already given us the earnest of that which He has prepared for us in heaven, even the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident. The

Spirit's presence in us gives confidence. It is through Him we know what is freely given to us of God. The world is always living in uncertainty. Tens of thousands of souls, whose conversion we should be sorry to doubt, are more or less uncertain of the blessing God has given to them. Through self-occupation, unsound teaching, and the like, they are uncertain whether after all they will arrive in the glory. The Word of God is sure and abiding; and, through the Spirit, we may and should know certainly both what we have and what we are shortly about to enjoy with Christ forever. "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:... we are confident, I say." Faith grasps the unseen, is confident, and knows that if the Lord returns for His own, we shall be found among them (1 John 3:2); or, if we should pass out of the body into the unclothed state, it is to be in His blessed presence.

Second, we should be always praying. In the epistle to the Ephesians the believer is looked at as blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ, according to the eternal counsels of God. This is our present and eternal portion in Him, through God's abounding grace. All who know and seek to hold to and enjoy this blessed place now find themselves exposed to the wiles and fiery darts of the wicked one, and the terrible assaults of wicked spirits. But God has made a provision for us in this awful conflict. We are exhorted to put on the panoply of God detailed in Eph. 6. Space will not permit us to dwell upon the different parts, but our readers would do well to consider the passage. It is all for defense, except the all-powerful weapon, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." We are called to stand fast in an evil day, and we can only withstand our mighty foes as we face them fully armed and wield the Word of God in the Spirit's power in every assault of the enemy. This we cannot do in our own strength. Hence it adds, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." v. 18. We must be dependent, always dependent. It is the Lord's battle, and it is only in being strong in Him and in the power of His might, that we can stand fast. Our foes are mightier than we are, but the Lord is almighty. To fight without Him, is but

to expose our own utter weakness; but, praying always, etc., we have One active for us who has already overcome all Satan's power at the cross.

We learn too from the same passage that we should also persevere in prayer for all the saints of God, as having part in the wondrous blessing that we have spoken of, and as exposed in the same war, to the same assaults.

Third, we should be always rejoicing (Phil. 4:4). We have seen in the foregoing that Christians have a heavenly position in Christ; and in the epistle to the Philippians we get what another has called the practical walk of a heavenly man upon the earth. There are four things, among others, that prominently characterize this epistle. There is no mention of sin throughout, showing that a Christian saved from it should have nothing more to do with it. The flesh is mentioned, but only to warn us to have no confidence in it; our path must be a path of suffering through this world if we follow Christ, and joy and rejoicing should characterize us all the way through. Paul, with Christ before his soul as his life, pattern, object, and strength, presents himself as an example in chapter 3. He was pursuing this path with indomitable spiritual energy, and had already trodden it some 30 years. With the Lord as his object and goal in glory, he rejoiced in Him, and exhorts all believers to do the same. "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." Phil. 3:1. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." Phil. 4:4.

If we get occupied with ourselves, or with others, or the world, or the trials and sorrows, and difficulties of the way, Satan will surely rob our souls of this joy. It is only as we gaze by faith on the Lord Himself where He is, who has triumphed over the whole power of the foe, and sits exalted as Man at God's right hand, that we can rejoice at all. And it is only as our souls are engaged with Him continually in the power of the Holy Ghost who dwells in us that we can answer to the exhortation practically, "Rejoice in the Lord always." This is our blessed privilege, even down here. May we know more and more of it. What will the fullness of that joy be when we see Him as He is, face to face forever!

Fourth, we should be "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." 2 Cor. 4:10. In verse 4 of this chapter the Apostle shows that "the god of this world hath blinded the minds" of unbelievers; and in verse 6 that "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Then he adds: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency [or surpassingness] of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." vv. 7-11.

This brings before us very plainly from another point of view the character of the pathway that Paul and others were called to tread in following the Lord Jesus through this world. But, nothing daunted by the power of Satan and the opposition and wickedness of men, they went on in God's power, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in their body. This was the only life they, and we who are also Christians through grace, are called to live. To serve Christ is to follow Him (John 12:26), hating our own old life, and living out in a practical way day by day the life of Jesus. He walked ever in the midst of

foes who were thirsting to take His life and who at last did so. It is the same world still, and the heart of man is unchanged, filled with hatred to God and Christ and His saints. To follow Christ faithfully, exposed His servants continually in the early days of Christianity to trouble, perplexity, persecution, and death. But light from the glory had shone in their hearts (and has shone into ours also) to give the light (or for the shining forth) of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And with this constraint, faith, in God's power, faces all and lives out practically the life of Jesus in this body till the end of our sojourn here. The Apostle adds, "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake." 2 Cor. 4:11. As it is elsewhere written, "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Rom. 8:36. The apostles always carried their lives in their hands, so to speak, being ever exposed to the injustice of time-serving men invested with authority, the bitter hatred of jealous religionists, and the violence of the lawless mob.

Through grace we live in the day of an open door which no man can shut (Rev. 3:8), and the character of the evil to which we are more immediately exposed is different, but the same deadly hatred often exhibits itself and, but for governmental restraint, would surely break loose in persecution, as in a later day it will against others, even unto death (Rev. 6:9, 10; 13:15-17).

Fifth, we should be always abounding in the work of the Lord. In that wonderful chapter, 1 Cor. 15, after bringing out so blessedly the resurrection of Christ, and of His people when He comes, the Apostle closes with the triumphant language, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," and then exhorts the saints: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Chap. 15:58. The Corinthians were in danger of being led away by false doctrine as to the resurrection. We are surrounded with all kinds of errors, from one side of Christendom to the other, and are in danger of the still deeper subtlety of the enemy coming as an angel of light and seeking to palm off evil as precious truth. The Apostle meets it firmly, uses the occasion to develop the truth more and more, and closes that section of the epistle by exhorting the saints to be steadfast, unmovable, notwithstanding the enemy's efforts; and, instead of slackening their spiritual energies, to be always abounding in the work of the Lord, cheering their hearts with the word of encouragement, "forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Satan would be very glad to see God's people give up their work and labor in despair and settle down upon their lees. Many a one has been foolish enough to listen to his lie when face to face with the power of evil, and has lost heart and sought to weaken the heart and hands of others, crying, "All is gone." 'What is this but helping Satan's work? Is Christ gone? Is the Holy Ghost gone? Is the Word of God gone? Are God's people gone? Ah! dear Christian reader, we have the same Christ on high in the glory for us as ever, the same Holy Ghost to sustain us here below, the same Word of God as our sure guide through all; and the saints of God are as dear as ever to Christ; a world is still around us full of perishing sinners over whom grace lingers to the very last moment.

Let us then bestir ourselves. Satan is in earnest, and the world is in earnest. Let us then be earnest too, for surely God is and He is for us. May we be found steadfast, holding to the whole truth of God, unmovable as a rock surrounded by the raging waves, and always abounding in the

Lord's blessed work. Let us see to it that we are in communion with Him, going forth day by day at His bidding and in His strength, to help and edify His people and to sound out the glad tidings of His grace, as He gives ability, until He comes. We shall surely find His promise true at that day, for we know already from His abiding Word that our labor is not in vain in Him.

May each believer be found always confident, always praying, always rejoicing, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, etc., and always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Athens — Corinth: the Editor's Column

In the first verse of Acts 18, two cities of Greece are mentioned by name - Athens and Corinth. They were very different in character, although located within less than 100 miles of each other. Athens was the great center of learning and philosophy, far outdistancing any other city in the world. Corinth was a dissolute and licentious place, so much so, that if a Greek turned to lead a loose life, he was said to have gone to Corinth. Its inhabitants, although they sought after wisdom, and gloried in erudition, generally wanted ease and fleshly indulgence.

The Apostle Paul visited and preached the gospel in both cities. At Athens he had to descend to the lowest point, and speak of the Creator's power and the evidences of His work, for, with all their striving after knowledge (Acts 17:21), they did not know the living God. (How often this has been true among the wise of this world.) Notwithstanding the earnest efforts of the greatest preacher of the cross of Christ, there was little fruit from his labors. Dionysius and Damaris, with a few others, believed on the Lord Jesus; but we never read of Paul's going there again, nor of an assembly being formed there. No apostolic letter addressed to saints at Athens has been left to us.

To Corinth, Paul went once and again. At first the opposition was strong, but he was encouraged by the Lord with these words: "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city." Chap. 18:9, 10. What? much people in the rich, profligate Corinth, and not in Athens? Yes, God has salvation for lost, ruined sinners; but the proud, philosophic reasoners against God knew no need. The Areopagites might speculate about the "new things" the "babbler" said, but they cared not for that which made nothing of man or his boasted wisdom. It was foolishness to them.

At Corinth a flourishing assembly was formed, and Paul addressed two long epistles to them. Various other brethren visited them, and the saints there came behind in no gift, so that they were inclined to glory in men and in the gifts which they possessed. They were carnal, however, and walked as men and had to be reprov'd for it (1 Cor. 3:3), for party spirit and strife was the evidence of carnality.

Before they were saved some of them had been "fornicators,... idolaters,... thieves,... drunkards,... extortioners," etc. - "such were some of you" - but they had been saved, washed, and justified (1 Cor. 6:9-11). "What a wonderful change the gospel brings into the lives of people! "Moral rearmament" and social reforms might effect certain changes in people's conduct, but it cannot wash and justify sinners, and transform them from within.

There was, however, a danger that, when the love of the truth had lost its power over their souls, there might be some slipping back and occasional falling into old ways and habits. This happened at Corinth, and gave occasion to the Apostle to write to them to put out a man guilty of fornication. The assembly was responsible to judge them who were within their ranks, for they were unleavened - evil had no place there. To meet this ever-present danger, the Apostle reminded them that they had been purchased at a great price, and hence they were no longer their own -

they belonged to an other whom they were to please. They now were to glorify God in their bodies and not live like the careless heathen around them - the body was for the Lord, not for self and indulgence of fleshly lusts. (1 Cor. 6:18-20.)

These warnings in the Word of God are particularly salutary in the days in which we live. Morality is at an all-time low in so-called Christian countries. People are abandoning themselves to indulgence of the lusts of the flesh and of the mind. We are living in the last days, when Christendom, by and large, is loving pleasure rather than God (see 2 Tim. 3:1-5; J.N.D. Trans.). Our dear young people (even children in grade schools) are being brought up in an increasingly corrupt atmosphere in the world, and need to be instructed, like the Corinthians, that we who are joined to the Lord are one spirit with Him. Hence all we do and allow should bear the impress of our being His: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. 7:1.

The Apostle Peter addressed the Christians, referring to their "pure minds." We need to guard our minds that they do not become defiled by the filthy conversation of the wicked, as poor Lot's was after he went to Sodom (2 Pet. 2:7, 8; 3:1). "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6:17, 18.

Thessalonica was not far removed from Corinth, and the same general moral conditions prevailed in that vicinity; in fact it was widespread in the days of the old Roman Empire, so the Apostle exhorted them: "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.... For this is the will of God,... that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor." 1 Thess. 4:1-4.

What we all need more and more is attachment of heart to the Lord Jesus - ardent affection in the soul - with the Word of God having power over our consciences. Thus we shall be able to "walk and to please God." Enoch "walked with God" and he "pleased God" (Gen. 5:22; Heb. 11:5), although he lived amid surrounding corruption and moral depravity; for the world was then heading for the flood, as now it is going on to the perils and destruction of the great tribulation and the subsequent judgment of "the great and terrible day of the Lord." Enoch so walked "three hundred years," but that was done just one day at a time. We need grace for each day as it comes - "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." "He giveth more grace," and we need not anticipate the difficulties or trials of tomorrow. We have only to "walk and to please God" today with the grace and strength supplied by Himself; it is available to all who wait upon Him.

Attraction of His Person

What attractiveness there must have been in Jesus for any eye or heart that had been opened by the Spirit! This is witnessed to us by the apostles. They knew but little about Him doctrinally, and they got nothing by remaining with Him - I mean, nothing in this world. Their condition in the world was anything but improved by their walking with Him, and it cannot be said that they availed themselves of His miraculous power. Indeed, they questioned it rather than used it.

And yet they clung to Him. They did not company with Him because they eyed Him as the full and ready storehouse of all provision for them.

On no occasion, I believe we may say, did they use the power that was in Him for themselves. And yet, there they were with Him-troubled when He talked of leaving, and found weeping when they thought they had indeed lost Him.

Surely, we may say again, What attractiveness there must have been in Him for any eye or heart that had been opened by the Spirit or drawn by the

Father! And with what authority one look or one word from Him would enter at times!

We see this in Matthew. That one word on the Lord's lips, "Follow Me," was enough. And this authority and this attractiveness was felt by men of the most opposite temperaments. The slow-hearted, reasoning Thomas, and the ardent, uncalculating Peter, were alike kept near and around this wondrous Center. Even Thomas would breathe in that presence the spirit of the earnest Peter, and say under force of this attraction, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him"!

Shall we not say, What will it be to see and feel all this by-and-by in its perfection!-when all, gathered from every clime, and color, and character of the widespread human family - out of all nations, kindreds, people and tongues-are with Him and around Him in a world worthy of Him! We may dwell in memory on these samples of His preciousness to hearts like our own, and welcome them as pledges of that which, in hope, is ours as well as theirs.

Caleb

In the sorrowful history of Israel in the wilderness it is truly refreshing to find such a one as Caleb. He is not one of the great public actors, as Moses, Aaron, or Joshua. He was one of the heads of the children of Israel, of the honored tribe of Judah, going the weary round of the wilderness with his brethren, but assuredly with lighter heart and firmer step than they. In this respect he very blessedly illustrates what the earnest of the Spirit is, and at the same time is a type of that class of "unknown," "yet well known" Christians who, apart from murmuring and strife, are steadily wending their way to that rest of which the Lord Himself has spoken to them. Historically, Caleb presents to us a feature which we find not in Moses himself. He had known Egypt for the first forty years of his life; he had trodden Canaan forty days; he had gone through the wilderness, had passed over Jordan into the possession of Canaan, and was still full of manly vigor and courage. He was one of those who, through faith, had obtained promises and was not satisfied until he was in actual possession.

"On the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt," Moses and Aaron numbered Israel in the wilderness of Sinai, "every male by their polls; from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel." (Num. 1:1-3.) Again, "after the plague" in which twenty-four thousand perished in the matter of Baalpeor, Moses and Eleazar the priest numbered Israel in the plains of Moab, by Jordan, near Jericho; "But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For the LORD had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun." (Num. 26:1, 4, 64, 65.)

While this verified the word of God, we may still ask, What hindered Caleb and Joshua from being worn out by the trial of the wilderness which had worn out all their generation? Let Caleb himself answer. "Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as He said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as

my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will

be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said." Josh. 14:6-12.

"I brought him word again as it was in mine heart." Caleb owned that it was a pleasant land which the Lord gave to the children of Israel, and his heart was set upon it. He could discern the difference between that land and Egypt - between the land which was cultivated with all the appliance of human skill, "watered with the foot," and "a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: a land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." His treasure was in the land, and there his heart was. Others esteemed Egypt preferable to the wilderness when their hearts were discouraged from going up to possess Canaan on account of the difficulties in the way; but Caleb esteemed Canaan, with all the difficulty of entering into it, as far more precious than Egypt with present ease, but with present bondage also. Canaan was in his heart all the time he traversed the wilderness. He had tasted the fruit of Canaan; his eyes had beheld it; and he need not go on the report of others as to the land - his own feet had trodden it. It was this which made him tread the wilderness with such elastic steps. Besides this, he had the sure word of the Lord's promise to support him. He knew the certain end unto which his wanderings, in company with others, must lead. As they encamped or broke up at the commandment of the Lord, he could either rest in his tent, or traverse the wilderness with the land in his heart, and say after every weary march or lengthened encampment, The wilderness time is far spent; the day of again seeing the land is at hand. As his contemporaries wasted away, how solemn must have been the admonition to his soul against the sin of unbelief; how forcibly must the rapid passing away of that evil generation have brought these words to his remembrance - "Because all those men which have seen My glory, and My miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to My voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it: but My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed Me fully, him will I bring into the land where into he went; and his seed shall possess it." Numb. 14:22-24.

Well indeed says another: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." 1 Pet. 1:8, 9. If the Spirit of God shows to us the things which are freely given to us of God, He shows them not as in the distant future, but, being Himself the earnest of the inheritance, He now glorifies Jesus, taking of His things and showing them unto us, and showing them as ours now in Him, so that we can taste and handle our own blessings. We are also solemnly warned as to the evil of unbelief in finding many an object to which we have fondly clung passing away so that bitter disappointment would ensue were it not that by the Spirit we more fully realized and were led more deeply to taste the unfailing blessings which are ours in Christ.

"Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God." It is no presumption in any of us to answer to the testimony of God to our own souls. So did Caleb, for the Lord said, "But My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hash followed Me fully." Caleb had searched the land, following the Lord his God there, when the Lord Himself was his guide and defense, and no enemy could set upon him. He had seen that the land "was exceeding good," and he reckoned on the good pleasure of the

Lord in His people. "If the LORD delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us." The soul of Caleb rested entirely on the grace and power of God which had caused Israel to triumph at the Red Sea, and had kept the spies in searching the land. The same grace and power could alone lead them into possession of the land. On this, and this alone, he reckoned. Only let his soul recognize where the Lord was, and he could see victory. But the very same principle of fully following the Lord, which made him encourage the people to go up, would hinder him from the attempt, after that the Lord had said, "Tomorrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea"; for the Lord had no delight in the people. Where the Lord was, there was both grace and power; and Caleb had to learn that grace and power for forty years in the wilderness on which he had so early reckoned, and which eventually put him in actual possession of the very part of the land which he had trodden with his feet. He fully followed the Lord through the wilderness, and knew Him there as his guardian and guide whom he had known as a mighty deliverer out of Egypt, and who had introduced him into Canaan, and enabled him to see and search the land and know its fruits.

The Spirit of God is presented to us in direct contrast with the spirit of the world. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." 1 Cor. 2:12, 13. The spirit of the world is one of restless activity and inquiry, either to find out something new or to invent some remedy against the multiform misery of man. It may take either a speculative or a practical turn, but it never discovers the satisfactory remedy. "Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts that the people shall labor in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?" Hab. 2:13. The spirit of the world is ever advancing, but never reaching its end - leading ever to that which is coming, but never yet has come. The Spirit which is of God is the very opposite.

If Caleb needed to have his heart occupied with Canaan to cheer his spirit in the wilderness, we not only need the earnest of the Spirit for the same purpose, but also to keep us from the seductive power of the spirit of the world. And this He does by showing to us the things freely given to us of God as so high and blessed that they have not even been conceived by the daring boldness of man's heart. As the earnest, He leads the soul to long to see Christ as He is, and to be like Him, and thus, too, leads in the path of fully following the Lord. To be ever with the Lord is the blessing in prospect; but to have Him ever with us now is the consequent earnest. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28:20. "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." John 14:18. How this is made good by the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost, the other Comforter! O that with purpose of heart we might cleave unto the Lord, and say in the midst of sorrowful experience, "The lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." Psalm 16:6.

"And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as He said." The Holy Spirit, as the earnest, is the Spirit "of promise," not only as being Himself the "promise of the Father," but substantiating promises to the soul. As Caleb saw his contemporaries die off day by day, how much he needed the encouragement of the specific promise of the Lord - "The LORD hath kept me alive, as He said." The Holy Ghost is the quickener, He is the earnest, and He is also the Holy Spirit of promise, thus giving special value to the Word, to the Scriptures, bringing it to remembrance, and applying a familiar text with unknown power, because such a promise or such a scripture exactly

suits the circumstances of our need.

Subjection of mind to the authority of Scripture no less distinguishes the guidance of the Holy Spirit from the spirit of the world than it distinguishes real spirituality from cloudy mysticism. The Scripture becomes of increasing value in proportion as the spirit of the age advances. As applied by the Spirit of truth, it gives the consciousness of certainty when the spirit of the world, in the freedom of inquiry, is leading into general skepticism. The result of these two conflicting spirits - the spirit of the world and the Spirit which is of God - is, that the one will lead to set the stability of created things against the promise of Christ's coming; the other, to throw the soul more entirely on His promise (2 Pet. 3). But the soul now needs establishment and encouragement; and the Holy Ghost, as the earnest, gives such a reality to the promises of God in Scripture, that the soul is enabled to set, "as He said," against all appearances of things or opinions of men.

"As my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in." All the weary round of forty years of toil in the wilderness had not impaired the strength of Caleb. He had sung that wondrous note - "The LORD is my strength." He had acted on that strength when he searched the land; and now, at fourscore and five years, he finds his strength the same. The Lord was his strength. That power is now actually manifested in strengthening the saints with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. The characteristic form of power now is endurance. It is by patient continuance in well-doing that we seek for glory, honor, and immortality. The spirit of the world is that of impatience with delay, and desire of grasping some supposed present blessing; but the Spirit which is of God, being Himself the earnest of a certain inheritance, becomes especially the Spirit of power in enabling us patiently to wait for what is ours already. It is thus that although the outer man may decay, the inner is renewed day by day (2 Cor. 4:16). The Holy Ghost keeps the eye looking on invisible realities, making them, as it were, more palpable day by day. Each day brought Caleb nearer to Canaan, which was in his heart. It is blessed indeed to see an aged disciple in whom the cravings of the mind for novelty have passed away, who has gone through, it may be, also the ordeal of worldly fascination, who has found his progress very checkered indeed, disappointment succeeding disappointment, desire dropping off after desire, yet all tending to one thing - to make him know the value of one blessed object, even Jesus.

"If so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, even as the LORD said," says Caleb. There is no doubt or uncertainty in this "if so be." It was only reckoning on the Lord's faithfulness to His promise, and on His ability to perform it, at the same time implying that this was his only ground of confidence. But with what confirmed confidence could he reckon on the Lord's being with him, whose presence had been with him when he searched the land, and whose presence had been with him while traversing the wilderness. And is it not so with the believer now? Quickened by the Spirit when dead in trespasses and sins, he has known the same Spirit as revealing Jesus to his soul as the salvation of God. He knows the same Spirit as the abiding Comforter, glorifying Jesus, taking of His things and showing them unto the soul. He knows, by the presence of the same Comforter, that God has called him unto His own kingdom and glory; and that same Spirit now shows to the soul what is the hope of God's calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

The Christian Position: in the World but Not of It

In the Old Testament God spoke to a people who, instead of being outside the world, were expressly promised the most favored position and the most abundant blessing in the world. For their guidance, the fullest political and legal directions were provided. What treatment to give to captured cities, what exemptions to make from military service, what number of witnesses to require in criminal trials, what courts to establish for disputed questions, what punishment to inflict for particular offenses - these and other kindred matters are laid down with a precision suited to the worldly character of the subject with which they dealt. As might be expected, where the righteous regulation of society was the object, strict assertion of right is the pervading principle: "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth," fairly summarizes its spirit. Indeed, such must be the spirit of any code for the equitable government of man on the earth.

But is this the code laid down for the Christian to follow? No, the Christian is "not of the world," and the directions given him are suited to his heavenly character and his association with the "patience" of Christ. He is a follower of Him who was "brought as a lamb to the slaughter," "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." How, then, is the believer to act? In just the same way. "If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." (1 Pet. 2:20-23.) Such too are our Lord's own directions. Instead of demanding an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, as the Israelite was to do, His instructions are: "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." Matt. 5:39-41.

And this, though strangely put, is no figure of speech. Paul exclaims, as though the idea was shocking to entertain: "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" It is incredible that "brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (1 Cor. 6:17.) Imagine such language addressed to a Jew! It is absolutely subversive of the whole principle on which the institutions of his state were founded - absolutely ruinous to any scheme of righteous government on earth. Why then is it urged, as an almost self-evident principle, on the believer? Because the believer is not of the world. He belongs to Christ. True, he will judge the world, and judge angels, but this will be with Christ; and if Christ waits for this time, so must he. He is not even to assert his rights now, but is called on to suffer wrong as Christ did - not to render "evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing" - not to avenge himself,

"but rather give place unto wrath." (1 Pet. 3:9; Rom. 12:19.) Is it not a sad departure from the lofty position and heavenly association into which the believer is called, for him to step down to regulate the affairs of a world where Christ has no place, and where Satan reigns as prince and god?

On the night of their deliverance from Egypt, the Israelites were told to keep the Passover beneath the shelter of the blood-sprinkled lintel. "And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand." Exod. 12:11. Could a people thus waiting for the call to depart give their time and attention to the affairs of Egypt? Had they not heard that judgment was coming? Did they not believe what the Lord had said? - "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD." v. 12. Is our position less solemn, less momentous? Are the commands to us less stringent? Is the judgment hanging over the world less real, less awful, or

less certain? The commands are identical. To the faithful servants He says, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord." Luke 12:35, 36.

No wonder that the Apostle should begin his practical exhortation to the Romans - "Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2); the word, indeed, is age, but this age means the world during the present order of things, in contrast with "the age to come," the period of Christ's blessed reign. While, therefore, it is important to distinguish between "the end of this age," and "the end of the world" - two very different epochs - it is not necessary to distinguish between the world and "the age" when used to describe the state of things in which we now live. Thus employed, the word kosmos, generally found in John, is practically synonymous with the word aion, generally found in the writings of Paul. Why then is the Christian not to be conformed to the world? For two reasons: first, because it is an evil world from which Jesus died that He might set us free - "Who gave Himself for our sins, that

He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1:4); and second, because, being associated with Jesus in death and resurrection, our relationships with this world are broken, and the ground of our glorying now is "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. 6:14. What was it that distinguished the past life of the Ephesian believers from their present life? "In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, and the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Eph. 2:2. Surely there is something most solemn and instructive in the way in which conformity to the world is here set side by side with conformity to the will of Satan.

Such then is the character of the world as gathered from the writings of Paul. But it is not by Paul alone that the world is held out as unsuited for the Christian. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses," asks James, addressing himself to those who were holding commerce with the world, "know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Jas. 4:4. And yet, what are Christians doing on all hands but bidding for popularity, courting the applause of the multitude, seeking to be the friends of the world where their Master received nothing but a cross? "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," writes the beloved disciple. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." 1 John 2:15, 16. Alas! what a commentary on this divine lesson to behold Christians rushing with all the eagerness of partisans into the strife of worldly factions,

grasping at the riches and the pleasures, the splendors and the emoluments, the powers and the applause, of a sin-stricken, Satan-governed, death-doomed world, from whose defilement they are told to keep themselves unspotted, and from whose friendship they are bidden to hold themselves aloof! And why is this? Simply because Christians have lost the sense of the heavenly nature of their calling.

In our Lord's prayer, He says: "And now come I to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." John 17:13-18. Our relationship to the world then is the same as Christ's is now. We are as much separated from it in character as He is. We are, indeed, left in it, just as He was in it. But as He did not walk by human efforts, by any fleshly or worldly means, to make it better, so that is not our object. He came to testify of the Father, to manifest the Father; and as He witnessed for the One who sent Him, so we are to witness for the One who has sent us.

Clarification

On page 79 of the April issue we called attention to the two-fold error of Mrs. E. G. White's, saying that the Lord Jesus had "the sins of a guilty world" upon Him AT His BAPTISM, and that He took upon Him "our fallen nature" when He became a man. These both are false, and strike at the very foundation of the gospel, for they affect the Person of our blessed Savior. He did not take a fallen nature; He was absolutely "holy." He had no sins upon Him at His baptism, or at any other time in His life, except during the three hours of darkness on the cross. The Father looked down upon His Son at His baptism and expressed His complete delight in Him; He did likewise at the transfiguration scene. But when the Lord Jesus as the spotless Victim was bearing sins on the cross, God turned His face from Him. He was then forsaken of God. It was God as God dealing with sin and sins, and the Lord Jesus cried out at the end of the three hours, "My God, My God, why halt Thou forsaken Me?" It was the only time that the Lord ever addressed Him as God. We would, however, guard the fact that it was the will of God that He should come and thus suffer. Another point that might be mentioned is that the Scripture never says that the FATHER forsook HIS SON.

Comparative Ministries of Moses and Paul

Moses's

A ministry of condemnation.

Graven on stones.

Commandment without power for obedience, therefore a killing letter.

Ministered with temporary glory.

Moses's face shone by reflection of the glory of God with whom he talked.

Moses obliged to veil his face.

The Israelites could not discern the purpose or end of the glorious revelation from God.

By this the natural heart is put under curse and bondage

Paul's

A ministry of reconciliation.

Graven on the fleshly tables of the heart.

Power brought by the life-giving Spirit.

Ministered with glory to remain.

Christ's ministers are changed into His image.

Paul with unveiled face spoke plainly.

We, by the Spirit, see its end, Christ Jesus, and can bear its holiness as condemning sin in Him who paid its penalty for us.

By this the heart is blest and set at liberty

The Daughters of Zelophehad

A beautiful illustration of the ways of God with His people - of His readiness to meet their every need - is found in the combination of these two chapters. In the first, the daughters of Zelophehad came to Moses with a complaint. Their father had died leaving no son, and they asked, "Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father." 27:4. Up to this time there had been no provision for such a case. The son or sons were to inherit the patrimony, but nothing had been said concerning daughters where there were no sons. Moses did not act upon his own view of the case, nor upon what others might deem fair and equitable principles, but, owning that he had of himself no wisdom, he laid the matter before the Lord. Would that we all might follow his example when we fail to discover the mind of God in any special perplexity. The Lord vouchsafed an answer immediately, saying, "The daughters of Zelophehad speak right"; and He directed Moses to "give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren," taking occasion at the same time to announce a statute of judgment for the children of Israel upon every such case that might arise.

Passing now to chapter 36, we find that another perplexity sprang out of the settlement of this question. The chief of the families of the children of Gilead come in this instance to Moses. Their concern was for the inheritance of the tribe; for if these daughters of Zelophehad "be married," they say, "to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance"; and furthermore, they proceed to say, when the jubilee arrives, the inheritance, so taken away, will be finally added to that of the tribe into which these women had married. Once again Moses receives directions from Jehovah, who commands that the daughters of Zelophehad shall marry "to whom they think best," only it must be to those of their own tribe; and in this way was the difficulty, both on the present occasion and for all future time, completely removed.

There are some important principles connected with these histories worthy of indication. The first is obvious; namely, that nothing in relation to the people of God can be settled by human wisdom. Every difficulty or perplexity must be laid before the Lord. The second is, that if we lack wisdom the Lord is ever ready to give, and to give liberally. Nothing that affects the welfare of His people is too trivial to bring before Him; and for us to attempt to act, unless we have His mind, is to usurp His place. Then third, observe that the Lord did not anticipate the difficulty. He knew it would arise, but He waited until His servant brought it to Him before He gave His mind in the matter; He foresaw the second question equally with the first, but He would have His people in constant dependence, and thus only gave the word for the moment - the wisdom as it was needed. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Last, it is beautiful to remark the ready obedience of all concerned to the word of the Lord. His word was all they craved, and obtaining it they yielded to it a willing subjection. The chief of the fathers of Gilead, the daughters of Zelophehad, and indeed the whole of Israel, obeyed the word of the Lord they had received through Moses. Truly the path of

obedience is the only way of blessing!

Descending Love

My conscience may deal with my experiences, and I may be humbled by the character and the measure of them, but my faith deals with God and His wondrous revelations. If, for instance, I have but little delight in the sense of His everlasting love to me, it should humble me; but then faith receives the fact of my Father's delight in these same thoughts of everlasting love, and I have "joy and peace in believing." There is music in heaven over the repentant sinner, and the little tiny pleasure that we, once repentant sinners, may have in God's love to us is but the echo of that music, and often the very faint and distant echo. But we must not be hanging over the echo, grieving and moaning because it is so faint and indistinct, but rather with free and happy thoughts be led from this poor and distant joy in our own hearts to the rich and full delight of that heaven where the Father's love, in spirit, brings us. So in everything, let faith be in exercise; let faith, as another instance of its way, know and allow that the ascending love is never equal to the descending. A child never loves a parent with the same intenseness that a parent loves a child; and, more than this, the parent is very satisfied to have it so. And thus with our heavenly Father. He cannot be indifferent to the state of our affections toward Him, but still He understands that His love never can and never will receive its full answer from us. And He is more than satisfied to have it so. He is in the higher place Himself, and the descending affections flow more largely, and with a richer and a more generous tide, than the ascending. With all this, then, faith deals; it takes up God's delight in His own thoughts and counsels about us - it trusts the reality and the fervency and the unrepentancy of His love, and learns that no counsels or plans of glory and of joy are too magnificent for such love.

D.G. Barnhouse and Seventh-Day Adventism

Since our first writings last year against the change of attitude toward Seventh-day Adventism in Our Hope magazine, in which its editor endorsed this cult as a basically sound Christian sect, others have joined in the great right about-face movement until they seem to vie with one another to take the lead in extolling the soundness of this basic heterodoxy. Such names as Dr. Donald Gray Barnhouse, Eternity magazine, Zondervan Publishing Company, Mr. Walter Martin, Dr. E. Schuyler English, and Christian Life magazine are in the vanguard of those who have either rushed to print favorable interviews, or have come out unequivocally in favor of outright acceptance of Adventists as orthodox Christians, and of extending to them the right-hand of fellowship. The matter has not been confined to the religious press, but it has now spilled over into the secular press with a rather full account of the workings of Messrs. Barnhouse and Martin with Eternity magazine being reported in the December 31st issue of Time magazine. Thus this gigantic whitewash engineered by a few self-appointed leaders is affecting the whole of what has been generally considered fundamental Christendom. It may well shake the whole structure of fundamentalism to its very foundations, and probably make a rift which will never be healed. Many true-hearted, devoted Christians simply cannot and will not go along with such fellowship of light with darkness.

Perhaps nothing in our generation is a clearer mark of the time of the end than this capitulation to Adventism by men who were once considered very orthodox and sound. It reminds us of the conditions that existed among the Jews, as the canon of Old Testament Scripture closed, as recorded in the book of Malachi; for then everything was in disorder and confusion, and all sense of what was right before God was lost, so that God said,

Paraphrasing and quotations from Adventist literature are in italics.

"Ye have wearied the LORD with your words.. When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and He delighteth in them." Truly the Lord's words that the leaven was hidden in the meal "until the whole was leavened" have come to pass. Evil doctrine has been at work, and the seeds of the great apostasy have been sown; in fact, they are sprouting and will bring forth an abundant crop.

It is not within our province to decide what has motivated these leaders to become defenders of a false system, but we have a duty to our readers to analyze what they have done. It is our opinion that somewhere along the line they have lost their perception, and then were led into the anomalous position of seeking to be defenders of the faith and of Adventism at the same time. The most distressing thing about the whole case is that they have written as though no one else had any right to question their judgment, and they assume to act for Evangelical Christendom at large. They have sought to close the door to discussion or dispute and demand blind acceptance of their decisions, which we are persuaded are grossly in error.

These apologists casually admit that the Adventists did at one time hold some wrong views that were serious, but state that they do not now hold them. But let us see what the Adventists themselves have to say at this time. We quote from their foremost publication, Signs of the Times, for October 2, 1956: "Adventists Vindicated." "One of the most epoch-making events in recent church history is the publication of an article on Seventh-day Adventists in the September issue of ETERNITY. It exploded in religious circles like a hydrogen bomb, and its 'fall out' is being carried on the winds of theological argument clear around the world.... They have, in fact, endured a century of slander. Now at last vindication has come." Do they say, We held error which we now repudiate and abhor? No, not at all. In this official statement they make no mention of a change of position, but rather say that for one hundred years they have been slandered, and now at last vindication has come. We may ask, Just who has changed? The answer should be apparent.

Dr. Barnhouse admits that the Adventists still hold "two or three positions" which he cannot accept, although both he and Mr. Martin insist that these are not heretical and should be no bar to fellowship between them and orthodox Christians. But let us see how the Adventists feel about Dr. Barnhouse and his "two or three positions"; we again quote from the Signs of the Times: "We hold nothing against him because he found 'two or three positions' with which he could not agree. That was to be expected. The best of Christians have differed on minor [we shall let the reader judge whether they are minor or not as we proceed] matters of theology all down the centuries, and will continue to do so till the end of time." Then with further reference to the "two or three positions" they say: "Further study of these matters in the same open-minded and prayerful spirit will, we trust, lead the good doctor and his fellow evangelicals to agree that Seventh-day Adventists have strong Biblical as well as historical evidence for the positions which they take." It is clearly evident that on these positions they have no intention of changing, but fondly hope that their newly-found friends will come all the way over to their positions.

Even if there has been some change in the official doctrines and beliefs of the Adventists from those held years ago, they cannot escape the sad history of that Christ-dishonoring systematized error. Job rightly asked, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" and correctly answered, "Not one." Job 14:4. Rank error does not perform a metamorphosis so that it gradually transforms itself into truth. Every system is the product of its own history and foundation, and blasphemy against the Person and work of Christ remains what it was. The only way out of evil is to leave it. If a saint of God finds himself a partaker of evil doctrine, he should leave it forthwith. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ [the Lord] depart from iniquity.... If a man therefore purge himself from these [in separating himself from them] he shall be a vessel unto honor," etc. 2 Tim. 2:19-21.

It is all very easy for them and their apologists to blame bad doctrines on a certain "lunatic fringe," but these heresies were held and taught by men of renown among them, and not by men only, but by a woman, Mrs. Ellen G. White, who was pre-eminent among the leaders. Will they classify her in the "lunatic fringe"? NEVER! She is still honored and revered by them as "God's messenger," and Mr. Martin defends their right to do this. Of course men have a right to do as they please in their own organizations, but the Word of God should guide in the Church of God, and they profess to be that, or in that. And the Word of God says: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak." 1 Cor. 14:34. "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." 1 Tim. 2:11, 12. Did God give instructions for His Church and then send a woman to

violate His express word? That could not be. It is vain to argue that there were women as prophets in Old Testament times, especially in times of ruin, for that was not the Church of God. Nor will it do to contend that because Philip the Evangelist had four daughters who prophesied, women are to teach, as Mrs. White did. There is not the slightest indication that these four women taught in the Church, nor that they prophesied there. No one walking in simple obedience to the Word of God would have become ensnared in Seventh-day Adventism when he learned the place of Mrs. White; he would have said, I see that Adventism cannot be of God when a woman is their greatest teacher and leader. As an aside, it is instructive to see how prominent women have been in the promulgation of heresies, as is evident in any history of the cults.

But let us proceed to look at some of the wicked doctrines which Mr. Martin says (in Our Hope for November, 1956) were "fringe views" which the "overwhelming majority never held." First we shall consider a paramount issue; namely, that the Lord Jesus "partook of man's sinful fallen nature at the incarnation." Mrs. White wrote in The Desire of the Ages, chapter 11, some fanciful speculations which she added to the Word of God (albeit God warned, "Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar") that the Lord Jesus after His baptism in Jordan bowed "in prayer on the river bank," asking God "for the witness that God accepts humanity in the person of His Son," which "angels listened to," after which they were "eager to bear their loved Commander a message of assurance" before the Father answered Him. (This is obvious error, for we learn from Mark 1:10 that it was immediately upon His coming out of the water that the Spirit descended upon Him and the voice of the Father spoke from heaven.) At this point Mrs. White clearly states her teaching regarding the nature which the Lord took, and we quote:

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. These words of confirmation were given to inspire faith in those who witnessed the scene, and to strengthen the Savior for His mission. Notwithstanding that THE SINS OF A GUILTY WORLD WERE LAID UPON CHRIST,

notwithstanding the humiliation of TAKING UPON HIMSELF OUR FALLEN NATURE, the voice from heaven declared Him to be the Son of the Eternal. John had been deeply moved as he saw Jesus bowed as a suppliant pleading with tears for the approval of the Father." (Emphasis ours.) Now here in clear, unmistakable language is the word of their "Messenger," saying two things we judge to be blasphemous - 1. that Christ had the sins of a guilty world on Him at His baptism; 2. that He took upon Him our fallen nature. We do not have to beg the question, but we say emphatically that God did not look upon His Son with delight when He had sins on Him, for in the ONLY TIME that He had sins on Him (the three hours of darkness on the cross) God turned His face from Him. To say that sins were on Him during His life and ministry is to deny the truth as to His Person, and to make God a party to looking with favor upon sin. This is a libel upon God. The second gross error is one which Mr. Martin would fain have us believe was not held by any but a fringe group, lunatic at that. But beyond all question, Mrs. White did hold and teach that the Lord Jesus took on Him fallen human nature.

Here are some other shocking quotations from Mrs. White on the same subject and from the same book: "Christ took upon Him the INFIRMITIES OF DEGENERATE HUMANITY.

Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation.... But our Savior took humanity, WITH ALL ITS LIABILITIES. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to

temptation." p. 117. "It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of His sinless life. Satan in heaven had hated Christ for His position in the courts of God. [This last sentence carries the implication that the Son was not God, but only had a high place in the courts of God, of which Satan could be envious.] He hated Him the more when he himself was dethroned. He hated Him who pledged Himself to redeem a race of sinners. Yet into the world where Satan claimed dominion God permitted His Son to come, a helpless babe, subject to the weakness of humanity. He permitted Him to meet life's peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, AT THE RISK OF FAILURE AND ETERNAL LOSS." p. 49.

Frankly, we loathe the defiling of our pages with such gross blasphemy against the blessed and HOLY Person of our Lord and Savior, but it seems necessary to actually quote these defamations in order to show that these most serious heresies have been propagated by the very highest authority in Seventh-day Adventism, and that their new apologists are mistaken. Adventism has been steeped in bad doctrine, and the corpus delicti is still within. Will Messrs. Barnhouse, Martin, and English say that the Adventists have banned all books containing such teachings, or that they have excommunicated a single person for such views? We strongly advise a faithful believer who finds himself within the folds where such heresy has been taught, and is still to be found, to "purge himself" from it, even though some current leader may attempt to absolve themselves of it.

We could refer to many other quotations from Mrs. White and others to prove our point, but those quoted should be sufficient for the purpose, and it should be apparent that we have not used "outdated quotations, mangled paragraphs, and extreme distortions" as Mr. Martin charges critics of Adventism have done. To attribute to the Holy Son of God as a man a fallen human nature, the possibility of sinning, or the danger of His eternal loss is most serious heresy. "God is Light," and LIGHT IS ABSOLUTELY REPULSIVE OF AND IMPERVIOUS TO EVIL. It is all very easy for Mr. Martin to aver that the Adventists believe in the "deity of Christ" and His spotless humanity, but this doctrine which has been widely disseminated among them, and is still within the body politic, undermines the very essentials of deity. It is of such error that the Word of God warns that to receive one who brings it, or to greet him, is to partake of his evil deeds (see 2 John).

The only way that presentday Adventism could clear itself of this and other serious heresies would be for them to publicly disavow Mrs. White, and to utterly reject her, for the error she taught is a part of her. They would have to reject her writings, not merely delete portions of them; but then there would be no reason for Seventh-day Adventism.

In the light of the unmistakable teachings of Mrs. White we were utterly amazed to read the following from the pen of Mr. W. Martin: "On the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith necessary to the salvation of the soul and the growth of the life of Christ, Ellen G. White has never written anything which is seriously contrary to the simple, plain declarations of the gospel.... No one can fairly challenge her writings on the basis of their conformity to the basic principles of the gospel, for conform they most certainly do!" This recalled a scripture from Isa. 42, where God asks: "Who is

blind, but My servant?" Perhaps Mr. Martin does not believe that to touch the Lord Jesus in the very essential of deity affects "the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith." But it most surely does, for if He had "our fallen nature," He could not be God. If He partook of the "infirmities of degenerate humanity... with all its liabilities," He lacked the very essentials of deity; and if He were not God, there is no Savior for fallen men. We would need to cry out with Isaiah, "Woe is me," and say with Mary, "They have taken away my Lord." The teachings of Mrs. White regarding the Person of Christ (not yet to name her teachings regarding the work of Christ) undermine the very foundation of the gospel. And if Mr. Martin were right, and the salvation of the soul not damaged, shall we be interested only in our salvation while we are callously indifferent to affront and dishonor to our blessed Savior? Far be the thought!

But we must not overlook another statement of Mr. Martin's regarding these things. He says that he "has no hesitation whatsoever in stating that those previous positions so widely seized upon by the ENEMIES OF ADVENTISM have been totally repudiated by the Seventh-day Adventist denomination FOR SOME YEARS." This is strictly a partisan statement, for he dares to challenge faithful Christian men who have through the years withstood rank Adventist heresy with being "enemies of Adventism." This is a slur to men of God who have dared to stand in the breach and seek to hold back a tide of evil doctrine. Many had no thought of being enemies of Adventism, but were at war with evil doctrine touching the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, no matter by what name it was called. Has one no right to be aroused when our Lord is slandered? he certainly has; and to be devoid of righteous indignation at the propagation of such heresies is to be unfaithful to Christ. There is no middle ground when His Person is impugned or His work assailed.

Next, what does Mr. Martin mean by saying that the Adventists repudiated this error for "some years"? The book from which Mrs. White's quotations have been copied was printed by the Adventist official West Coast publishing house - Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mount a in View, California - in 1956, and the book is on sale in their So. Calif. Conference headquarters book store as this goes to press. But Mr. Martin seeks to prepare the way for such criticism by suggesting that the Adventists still have many problems to be solved in various fields such as "publications" and "public relations." He seems to be acting in this field now, so perhaps in future editions of objectionable books they can quietly expunge the damaging statements, but the fact remains that Mrs. White, whom they say was "inspired" to carry the "Lord's message" to them, did teach many heresies, and she herself has not been repudiated.

Concerning the recentness of the iniquitous teaching of the Lord's possessing a fallen human nature, this heresy was defended by none other than Mr. Milton E. Kern, a field secretary of the General Conference, who by his own statement was a preacher among them as early as 1914, and should know their doctrines if anyone does. His book is still on sale in their stores in January, 1957. It was printed by no less an organization than their own Review and Herald Publishing Association, at their general headquarters, Takoma Park, Washington, D.C. This book is entitled, "Bible Reasons Why You Should Be a Seventh-day Adventist," and is an answer to a book by Mr. E. B. Jones who wrote against their false doctrines.

Mr. Kern challenges Mr. Jones's statement that all men "save Christ, have possessed the nature of evil, for all have been the offspring of their father, Adam," by replying, "But is it not true that through His mother, Jesus, also, like all mankind, was the offspring of Adam?" He further adds that

it was "only by becoming one with us could Christ act as our high priest and be qualified to pay the sacrificial penalty for our sins." pp. 8, 9. Mr. Kern even quotes the verse, "He bath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin," as though that supported the false teaching. He was not made sin at any time, except in the three hours of darkness; to say that it was so at any other time is fundamental error of the worst kind.

Mr. Kern attacked Mr. Jones for saying that Jesus "could not fail," and defended Mrs. White's blasphemy, saying that God permitted His Son to "meet life's peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss." Mr. Kern said, "Of those who, like Mr. Jones, insist that Jesus 'could not fail,' or could not sin, Dean F. W. Farrar has well said: 'Some, in a zeal at once intemperate and ignorant, have claimed for Him not only actual sinlessness but a nature to which sin was divinely and miraculously impossible. What then? If His great conflict were a mere deceptive phantasmagoria, how can the narrative of it profit us?'" Need we quote more to prove that these abominable heresies have been taught, have continued to be taught, and have been defended by leaders among the Seventh-day Adventists? We have long known this, but the new serious aspect is the effort that leading so-called fundamentalists are making to obscure the facts. Mr. Martin even takes up the cudgels for them and charges men who have dared to expose some of these facts as being "professional detractors" of the Adventists.

It is our judgment that Protestantism is passing an important milestone on the downward path to the great apostasy. When the eyes of leaders have become dim, and camels can be swallowed down like gnats, evil will come in like a flood. May God raise up men to lift up a banner against it, but our only real hope is the coming of the Lord for His own.

The Lord willing, we shall have more to say in later issues on the vital truths that are being let go.

D.G. Barnhouse and Seventh-Day Adventism

The campaign which has been spearheaded by Dr. Donald G. Barnhouse, Dr. E. Schuyler English, and Mr. Walter Martin (with their respective magazines, Eternity and Our Hope) to gain for the Seventh-day Adventists the fellowship of evangelical Christians, seems to be bearing its baleful fruit. We have just learned from San Jose, Costa Rica, that an evangelical group, the "Committee of Cooperation for Latin America," has accepted the "General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist" as an associate member. Thus the cult that has been the bane of many faithful missionaries will have acquired increased stature and influence.

We saw last month that the Adventists are still guilty of having within the body politic the very serious heresies that the Lord Jesus possessed a fallen human nature, that He was liable to sin, that He risked eternal loss, and could not see through the tomb to resurrection. Thus the very essentials of deity are removed with un holy hands. How can a faithful follower of Christ be at peace with this? What fellowship can he have with it, and not be disloyal to Christ?

In our December issue we considered the Adventists' denial of the finished work of Christ by their strange doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary, for they reject the plain statements of Scripture that He went at once to the right hand of God where He sat Himself down in perpetuity, never to rise up to deal with the question of sins again. We quoted from the works of Mrs. E. G. White (which are still on sale in their book rooms) to the effect that the sins were transferred to the heavenly sanctuary,

and that Christ was working about sins in cleansing the outer sphere, the holy place, until 1844, and that since then He is investigating sins in the holiest. Now all this is entirely incompatible with the truth of the gospel of God concerning His Son. And while Dr. Barnhouse and Mr. Martin both assure us that these views are "not heretical," and "should constitute no bar to fellowship," we judge that they are of such great moment that fellowship is impossible, and trust that many faithful men and women will feel likewise.

Next let us look briefly at the Adventists' strange, false doctrine regarding the scapegoat, for it is interwoven with their sanctuary theory. To understand the real truth as to this subject, it is necessary to have a somewhat clear view of what is taught in Lev. 16 regarding the two goats which were involved in the cleansing from sin on the great day of atonement.

Two goats (nothing to distinguish the one from the other) were to be taken on that day, and the high priest was to cast lots between them - the one for the Lord's lot, and the other for the people's lot. Both goats were to be used to "make atonement." The goat which was the Lord's lot was to be killed as a sin offering, and its blood was to be taken by the high priest into the holiest and sprinkled there before and on the mercy seat. Its blood was to make atonement for the whole congregation, and be used to reconcile the holy place because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

The other goat, the people's lot, was to be taken by the high priest after he came out of the tabernacle. He was to "lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and... send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." Lev. 16:21, 22.

The goat of the Lord's lot is a type of the Lord Jesus in His sacrifice on Calvary's cross as the One who made expiation, or propitiation, for sin and fully glorified God about the whole question of sin. The blood of the goat was placed upon the mercy seat where God dwelt among the people. There the cherubim looked down upon the mercy seat where the blood was placed. So all God's holy claims against sin were fully satisfied in the death and blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus.

The other goat - the people's lot - was not killed, but "presented alive before the LORD, TO MAKE AN ATONEMENT WITH HIM, AND to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness." This goat represents the other part of the work of the Lord Jesus; that is, His actual bearing the sins of His people, and removing them forever. While the former goat gives the type of the expiation before God, the latter gives the shadow of His substitution for sinners. There was no confessing of sins on the head of the goat of the Lord's lot, but on the head of the scapegoat the sins of the people were in type transferred by the laying on of the high priest's hands and his confessing over it the sins of the people.

Both aspects of the death of Christ are needful. God must have His holiness vindicated, and the blood must be presented before Him; but it is likewise needful for the sinner who has been brought to a sense of his guilt before God, to have his conscience set at liberty by the knowledge that Jesus bore his very own sins and removed them forever. The knowledge that God saw the blood of the first goat as it was placed upon the mercy seat was not sufficient to give the guilty

conscience peace; the actual transference of his sins to Christ to be removed forever was requisite to peace with God. To use the words of another, "It is not enough to see God has been glorified in the death of Christ; I feel my own sins before God. Then I see that He has confessed my sins; and now as Priest on high, He maintains me in the power of reconciliation made." - Notes on Hebrews, J.N.D.

Now it is precisely here that Seventh-day Adventism falls into a grievous and monstrous error. They boldly contend that "when the work of atonement in the heavenly sanctuary has been completed [note that it is not yet completed], then in the presence of God and the heavenly angels and the host of the redeemed the sins of God's people [for remember that according to Adventism they have been transferred "by the blood and by the flesh" of Christ to heaven] will be placed upon Satan: he will be declared guilty of all the evil which he has caused them to commit. And as the scapegoat was sent away into a land not inhabited, so Satan will be banished to the desolate earth, an uninhabited and dreary wilderness." - The Great Controversy, p. 658. Today they blandly disclaim that Satan has anything to do with the atonement; but remember that the scapegoat was also for the express purpose of making atonement. Evidently in their blind folly this has been overlooked.

Furthermore, remember that it was only by casting lots for the goats that any difference was made between them - they were not distinguishable in themselves. This is quite understandable if both are types of the Lord Jesus in His twofold character of the work of atonement; that is, expiation and substitution. But falsely try to make one of them a type of Satan, and insurmountable trouble ensues. Were Satan and Christ indistinguishable? and were both to make an atonement? Was it left to a matter of chance which work was for Christ and which for Satan? Far be the thought! The truth cannot be mistaken by any mind subject to the general truth of the Word of God. But those who bring their own erroneous thoughts to Scripture are sure to wrest it to their own condemnation.

Another question must show the fallacy of the Adventist heresy: Why if, as they now claim, Satan will only bear his own sins (namely, the part he played in prompting others to sin), is there any reason for transferring the guilt and sins of men to him? Men have their own guilt, and Satan has his. Transferring their sins to him is crass folly. But see this in the light of the Lord's confessing our sins to bear them substitutionally, and to remove them forever from sight and record, and the reason for the transference is evident. But, wicked thought! if Satan bears our sins, then he has a part in our atonement. Could anything lead more surely to blasphemy against Christ, and despite to His blessed work of atonement? Again, we say with emphasis, Seventh-day Adventism is permeated with evil doctrine.

There is still another fallacy in this transferring of sins to Satan, as though if it were not for him man would not sin. It is an easy way of shifting responsibility from man to Satan. It presupposes that fallen man only does wrong because Satan provokes him to it; this is error, for man himself is innately bad, and is capable of doing evil without prompting. "A corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."

Matt. 7:17. "For from within, out of the HEART OF MEN, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." Mark 7:21, 22. Furthermore, if Adventism were correct, and if man

is so weak that he only acts when pushed to do so, then why punish man at all?

There is another conclusive proof in Scripture, that man is bad and that he will do evil without the devil's promptings. When the Lord Jesus establishes His glorious millennial kingdom, and Satan is bound, there will still be overt wickedness. In Psalm 101, which "gives us the principles on which the government of this earth will be carried on by Jehovah's King" (quotation from last month's article on Psalm 94), it is said, "Morning by morning will I destroy all the wicked of the land." v. 8; A.R.V. There will be wicked persons to be cut off daily, even though Satan cannot tempt them to do evil. This does not indicate that those who are born again and thus enter into the kingdom will rebel, but Psalm 18 lets us know that when the Messiah sets up His kingdom, many will yield feigned obedience (see margin of Psa. 18: 44). Their rebellion against the beneficent reign of Christ will prove that man is bad in himself without any promptings from Satan. (Of course the Adventists will not listen to this, for they have the illogical and unscriptural idea of the Millennium as being a time when the earth will lie dormant after being burned out. But this ill-conceived doctrine provides a manufactured solution for their false teaching about the scapegoat being Satan; that is, that he will bear the sins into this burned out waste - they must make a "wilderness" for Satan to bear sins into. Does not a careful evaluation of their scapegoat theory prove that when once any portion of Scripture is distorted, then every other part which it touches must be warped to make it fit? And so the process continues!)

Adventists have been very adept at conjuring up manifold arguments to support this false doctrine. One of their number, John Edwin Fulton, says, "Christ is the high priest; and the high priest sends the goat away. Christ could not send Himself away."

- The Sanctuary and the Judgment, p. 29. This may convince some simple souls; but the first goat represented Christ, and the high priest represented Christ as He presented its blood - thus, His own blood. By Mr. Fulton's argument, this would have been impossible. We need to remember that Christ is both the offerer and the offering; He is the One who made expiation for sins before God, and the One who bore our sins as our substitute. He is represented by both goats, and by the priest in both actions. He, blessed be His name, has done it all!

The prophet Isaiah has well expressed by the Holy Spirit the language of those who know the Lord Jesus as their substitute: "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Isa. 53:5. Then as to the transference of sins to Him, it is said, "Jehovah hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." v. 6; A.R.V. In Psalm 69:5, the Lord Jesus takes the sins on Himself. Thank God, we who have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ did not have to lay our sins on Jesus, for we might have forgotten some of them. The poet has expressed this well:

"All thy sins were laid upon Him,

Jesus bore them on the tree;

God, who knew them, laid them on Him,

And, believing, thou art free."

The Adventists and their new apologists excuse this strange false doctrine of the scapegoat by referring to prominent Jewish theologians who held that the scapegoat was Satan; but when did

Jewish theologians ever see anything aright about Jesus? And regardless of who may have held this doctrine, it is error. It detracts from the work of Christ and gives to Satan one of Christ's most needful works as far as the awakened sinner is concerned. And while Mr. Martin says that "it certainly cannot be cited as a legitimate reason for refusing fellowship with the Adventists," and Dr. Barnhouse concurs, we object. It can and should. And if Mr. Martin were faithful to the Word, they would not want him; but he has compromised himself and preached in their churches. Did he attack these heresies when he preached among them? Surely not!

Furthermore, this group of errors which we have so far noticed does not stand alone; it is only a part of a whole scheme of false doctrine which is destructive of the true gospel, false to Christ, and damaging to souls.

Denial of Christ's substitutionary work AND COMPLETE REMOVAL of the sins He bore, as typified in the scapegoat, has led to the Adventist's preposterous stand that after a man's sins have been forgiven, they can be brought out and again charged to him. Such forgiving is unworthy of man, not to speak of Him who "cannot deny Himself." W. H. Branson, past president of the sect, says that after men receive pardon, if they "refuse to confess present sins, and harden the heart against the voice of the Spirit... the sins of the past" will "be charged to them again."-How Men are Saved, p. 53. Their S. N. Haskell says: "Sins are forgiven and covered when confessed, and will never be uncovered if the one who confesses them remains faithful: but if he forsakes the Lord and turns back into the world, that part of his past life which, while he was faithful, was covered by Christ's righteousness [mark, not by the blood of Christ], appears open and uncovered on the books of heaven." - The Cross and Its Shadow, pp. 77, 78. If that be true, they are not covered at all; but David described the blessedness of one who knew his sins removed, saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and WHOSE SINS ARE COVERED." Rom. 4:7.

This is only one little point in all the muddled false doctrine of the Adventists who corrupt the truth of God. May God graciously thwart the work of their apologists who would accredit them as true evangelicals, and thus help to expose precious souls to their Christ-dishonoring gospel, which is "not another," but a deception. We are sorry that we have not yet covered the blasphemous heresy which denies the consciousness of the soul after death, and that boldly rejects the eternal damnation of the lost, and that places people under the law, but space forbids at this time.

D.G. Barnhouse and Seventh-Day Adventism

(Continued from last month)

Surely the Seventh-day Adventists will tell us that Paul went into the synagogues on the Sabbath day. This he certainly did, and it was of God that he did. That was the one day when he could find the Jews gathered together, and so he utilized the same in preaching Jesus to them. The same thing was true of the Lord, and the other apostles. They had a message to deliver to the Jews, and they fulfilled it.

Adventists may well stress the Sabbath, for it is clear evidence that they do not understand the whole Christian era; they do not comprehend new creation. They are "law-keepers," and that belongs with the old dispensation. In this age of grace, God has brought in new creation through Christ dead and risen, and the eighth day is a sign of the new creation. Of this they seem to be willingly ignorant. The eighth day is the beginning of a new week, and in the types of the Old

Testament, the eighth day (the first day of a new week) has this significance. It prefigures the bringing in of something new. Lev. 23 is a case in point: everything that referred to this period of time was on the first day of a new week. Thus the Lord arose on the first day, and the wave sheaf was offered that day; the Spirit of God descended to form the Church on that day, and the type of it - the wave loaves - was carried out on that day. It was the day on which the Lord Jesus met with His disciples after His resurrection, once and again. It was the day "when the disciples came together to break bread." It was on that day the Corinthian believers were to lay by of their means for the poor saints at Jerusalem. True, the Jewish women who came to anoint the Lord's body in the tomb rested on the Sabbath day, but they were devout Jews and were living on the other side of His resurrection. Neither the Adventists nor anyone else can prove that any Christian assembly met on the Sabbath day, nor that there is even a hint in any Christian epistle that Christians should observe it; nay, rather, it is embraced in the things condemned.

Some may refer to the Lord's words in Matt. 24, "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day," as a warrant for Sabbath-keeping. But even a casual examination of the subject should clear that matter. It is the Lord's direction to the Jewish remnant (not on Christian ground) which will exist in a future day, and who will have to flee for their lives when an idol is set up IN THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM. (See Matt. 24:15-21, and Dan. 12:11, where "abomination" means an "idol" which will be set up in the "holy place" of the temple.) When the Lord gave directions for the Jewish believers to flee Jerusalem before Titus destroyed the city, He said NOT ONE WORD about not fleeing on the Sabbath day, for they were not under law. (Luke 21.) These things are all mixed up in hopeless confusion in Adventist literature, and they boldly assume positions that are really untenable. And all their talk about the Church of Rome being the beast who, supposedly, changed the Sabbath is just so much dust thrown into the air. What if Rome does take credit for such a change, that alters nothing. Why go back to the second or third century and speak of what Rome did; go back, rather, to the beginning of Christianity and learn what Christianity is, and do not annex Judaism to Christianity. When the Church has been translated to heaven, then it will be God's mind to go back to the Sabbath, and the Sabbath will be observed on earth in the Millennium. (But, of course, there is no millennial reign of Christ to the Adventists, for their weird and fantastic doctrine teaches that the earth will remain a burned out, uninhabited place for that period of time; and everything must fit their doctrine.)

Regardless of what the Adventists and their apologists may say, it is no light matter for them to bind themselves to the Sabbath. It is evidence of their whole legal system which undermines the very truth of the gospel. It is part and parcel of their Judaized Christianity, or, perhaps rather, Christianized Judaism.

Besides the more serious soul-destroying features of this Sabbath and commandment-keeping legalism, the Adventists' obsessions carry them into many hard and ridiculous situations. Their General Conference president, Mr. R. R. Figuhr, who recently visited Iceland, wrote back, "Iceland lies far to the north.... It was a new experience Friday evening to await the beginning of the Sabbath. The sun actually set at 11:46 p.m. and rose the next morning at a little before 2:00.... In the winter, of course, the opposite is the case." - Review and Herald, August 8, 1957. What a short night! Just over two hours. If he had gone farther north, to where the sun does not set in summer nor rise in winter, what would he have done? From sunset to sunset might be months long; it would either be a long Sabbath or a long period without one. And an Adventist sailing across the

international dateline might easily have two Sabbaths together, or, sailing in the opposite direction, miss one entirely. At any rate they would vary from six to eight days apart. The children of Israel, to whom the law of the Sabbath was given, had no such problems in the land which the Lord their God gave them.

We may be accused of being ungracious in our comments, but we have not treated this doctrine any worse than did the inspired Apostle when he encountered it in the Galatian assemblies. His remarks were scathing, and his denunciation strong - "let him be accursed."

There is one more phase of the Adventists' law-keeping that should be examined; namely, their "health reform" doctrine. That they are dedicated to this also, we can easily prove from their own 1957 periodicals and books. Let us notice a few statements of theirs:

"Health reform is an important part of our message.... A study of health reform fits into our evangelism as an attractive feature of gospel work." Notice it is a part of their gospel. "As we begin our study on health reform we should have a few definite objectives in mind. We should aim, primarily, to lead people away from the more health-destroying and demoralizing practices, which center in the use of unclean foods," etc. - Review and Herald, July 11, 1957. "Two years ago there was not a single Seventh-day Adventist in the town. Today there are only two families that do not have at least one baptized member in our recently organized church. Neither liquor nor lard can anywhere be bought in the village, and there is now only one pig in this town, which a couple of years ago was literally overrun with them." - Review and Herald, May 16, 1957. "Since reading and studying your Bible lessons my husband and I do not eat or have any pork in any form or shape in our home. I will observe the Sabbath from now on, as stated in the fourth commandment of God." - Review and Herald, June 6, 1957. "The Spirit of prophecy writings are quite pointed concerning the matter: 'The angel's prohibition included "every unclean thing."' " - Review and Herald, August 1, 1957. "To find comfort and consolation he often read the Koran. He became interested in endeavoring to find some Christians who did not eat swine's flesh. He was greatly disappointed many times, until one day he visited one of our Seventh-day Adventist Bible instructors.... After much study he and his wife were baptized." "Probably the most effective way to curtail the accumulation of cancer viruses is to avoid eating meat,... to eliminate meat of all kinds from their diet." - Review Herald, May 2, 1957. "In 1900 the messenger of the Lord wrote: 'It will not be long until animal food will be discarded by many besides Seventh-day Adventists.' - Testimonies, vol. 7, p. 124." - Review and Herald, May 2, 1957. "He [Christ] taught them that health is the reward of obedience to the laws of God." - The Desire of Ages, p. 824.

We are aware that the Seventh-day Adventist apologists are willing to accept their "health reform" measures as merely for health's sake, but this is only part of it. It has its roots deep in their whole legal system of Jewish bondage. Listen to this: "That which corrupts the body tends to corrupt the soul." - Mrs. White, from Review and Herald, August 1, 1957. "These are included in the reforms that prepare a people to meet the Lord. There is power in presenting these principles with a 'Thus saith the Lord.'... When the time arrives for more specific instruction (which would be preparatory to baptism and church membership) the student will then see more clearly that each successive study is a link in the chain of truth in preparation for our Lord's return.... Health instruction is an important factor in true sanctification.... Before a Christian can hope to be glorified with his Lord he must be sanctified." Then in another place, "Why was it important that God's regulations be

observed? [Answer] To shield them from ravaging disease and apostasy. Exod. 15:26. To preserve for Himself a holy people. Lev. 11:43-47. Cf. 1 Thess. 5:23. [Question] Are these health principles important in our day? [Answer] Enjoined upon all New Testament Christians. 2 Cor. 6:17, 18; 7:1. A clean church will await Christ's return." - Review and Herald, July 11, 1957.

We do not have space for more such quotations, but we are convinced from their own writings that their "health reform" is but another phase of keeping the law. What does it mean but that, when they say it is "enjoined upon all New Testament Christians"? This is different from the instructions given in Acts 15 when some Judaisers would have put the Gentile Christians under the Mosaic law. All that was prohibited was flesh containing the blood, and that has nothing to do with Mosaic law, for it was prohibited to man from the time that flesh was given him for food in Gen. 9 It antedated the giving of the law; it was a prohibition to man generally, not the Jew only. And certainly fornication was not for a Christian, as mentioned in Acts 15, for it is explained elsewhere that his body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

People who come under the power of Seventh-day Adventism are brought into legal bondage. Let their apologists painstakingly read Adventist literature - past and present; let them not be deceived by good words and fair speeches. In our last quotation from the Adventists' official paper, they plainly state that this food restriction helps prepare a people for the coming of the Lord, that it is a part of their sanctification which a Christian MUST have before he can hope to be glorified. This is diametrically opposed to the truth of the gospel Paul preached. He would withstand to the face, as he once did Peter (Gal. 2:11), those who propagate such gospel-destroying heresy. "But meat commendeth us not to God." 1 Cor. 8:8. No meat or lack of meat will sanctify the Christian, nor prepare him for glory - he is not a law-burdened Jew. Perhaps we should remember that the Seventh-day Adventists claim to be the "Israel of God." To accept their "health reform" tenets is to fall from grace, and is apostasy.

If Mrs. White and her followers know so much better than God Himself did when He gave man flesh to eat, why accept the Bible as the Word of God? Surely God would have known how bad it was. Plainly, pork and pork products and all unclean flesh are forbidden to the Adventists, and many of them even make a fetish out of abstaining from all meat. This reminds us of the warning given by the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy against those who commanded to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving of them that believe and know the truth. He calls such restrictions doctrines of demons. (1 Tim. 4.) Remember that "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." v. 4. That does not mean that some foods may not be spoiled and unfit for human consumption, or that some people through allergies or ill-health may not be able to eat certain foods; but when man's diet is put on a basis of a legal statute for sanctification, for preparing a people for heaven, or to shield from apostasy, it is to be rejected forthwith. Besides being Mosaic law, it is the doctrine and commandments of men, of which we are warned in Col. 2 It does indeed have a show of wisdom, but it is contrary to the truth of the gospel.

We say again, this "health reform" is not a matter of indifference for people who want the truth, any more than are the other gross errors of Seventh-day Adventism with which we have already dealt.

Postscript

As we go to press we have just received a copy of Eternity magazine for November 1957, in which Dr. Donald G. Barnhouse reaffirms his stand that the Seventh-day Adventists are sound Evangelical Christians. In his latest defense of Seventh-day Adventism, he lauds the simultaneous release of the 720-page book by the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists explaining their position, and a book by Mr. Walter Martin, favorably reviewing Adventism, saying: "It may be the first time in modern church history that two parties with sharp differences have prayed and talked with each other and come finally to an understanding of the areas of agreement and disagreement."

Dr. Barnhouse attempts to discredit all criticism of Adventism (except that which he and Mr. Martin are willing to concede) as entirely "out of date," or the work of those who are "willingly ignorant of the facts or victims of such prejudice that they are no longer to be trusted as teachers in this field." It should be emphasized that neither of these apologists named finds anything in the "areas of disagreement" that they consider of such vital importance as to undermine the foundations of the gospel, or to constitute a barrier to Christian fellowship.

Nevertheless, what we have been saying in this and previous issues can be verified from current magazines of the Adventists' General Conference, or from books now being advertised and sold by them. We may well ask, Just who is "willingly ignorant"?

Any true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has the Holy Spirit of God as the "anointing" with which to perceive "the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6), and he does not need Dr. Barnhouse and Mr. Martin to set themselves up to be the last court of appeal, and to act as the custodians of the consciences of other Christians in the matter of false doctrines. Dr. Barnhouse makes the bold and presumptuous statement that Mr. Martin's new book "renders obsolete every other non-Adventist book that has been written on the appraisal and criticism of Seventh-day Adventism."

Dr. Barnhouse quotes from the new Seventh-day Adventist book to show that there are 19 points of agreement between Adventists and "Conservative Christians," but this is not really so, for what Adventists mean by some of these statements and what loyal Christians mean by them are two different things. Let us examine a few of these points:

When they say, "He lived an absolutely sinless life here on earth," they really mean that He did so in spite of inheriting a sinful nature.

When they say "That the vicarious, atoning death of Jesus Christ, once for all, is all-sufficient for the redemption of a lost race," this must be taken with reservations in view of the many qualifications we read elsewhere in their books and periodicals, wherein they place great stress on things the individual must do. According to their doctrine this atoning death would not avail to those who reject their strange message of "the third angel" teaching obedience to the law, and Sabbath-keeping.

When they say "That He now serves as our advocate in priestly ministry and mediation before the Father," their whole doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary and His present examination of the records in heaven to see who are worthy of eternal life must be considered.

When they say "That He will return in a premillennial, personal, imminent second advent," they do not refer to the millennial reign of Christ on earth, as the Bible teaches, but rather to a time when, according to them, the earth will be a burned-out chaos.

When they say "That man is sanctified by the indwelling Christ through the Holy Spirit," we must remember that they claim other things are necessary for sanctification without which no one can be glorified. This we have already shown includes the abstaining from eating pork and pork products.

Dr. Barnhouse, then, quoting from the new Adventist book, lists 12 points in which the Adventists find themselves in disagreement with some while in agreement with other "Conservative Christians." In this category come the keeping of the ten commandments (Sabbath and all), their disbelief in the present existence of the soul and spirit apart from the body, their complete rejection of eternal punishment, and their teaching of annihilation which is concomitant. How can Dr. Barnhouse recommend showing fellowship to the propagators of these pernicious evil doctrines? Just who are the "Conservative Christians" with whom the Seventh-day Adventists find themselves in agreement on these "DAMNABLE HERESIES"? We do not know any such, nor would we accept them as such if they could be brought forward. Why castigate Jehovah's Witnesses for their doctrines of soul sleep and extinction of the lost and of Satan and his angels, and take to our bosom the Adventists who boldly teach the same things These teachings have put them into the company of the cults, the infidels, and the scoffers.

Dr. Barnhouse has intimated before that the Adventists were going to repudiate Mrs. White. Have they done it? NO, NO. They boldly take their same old position, and stand by her as "God's messenger." They have not the slightest thought of altering their course, Dr. Barnhouse and company notwithstanding.

In this latest defense of the Adventists, Dr. Barnhouse says that the most serious charge against the Adventists has been that they taught that "Jesus Christ had a sinful human nature," and that this has been made a large issue by one "defender of the faith" who attempted to pin this error on Mrs. White herself. Let us read what Mrs. "White has really said:

"Notwithstanding that the sins of a guilty world were laid upon Christ [this at His baptism, which is gross error], notwithstanding the humiliation of taking upon Himself our fallen nature." "It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden, but Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.... He [God] permitted Him to meet life's peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss." "In our humanity, Christ was to redeem Adam's failure. But when Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him.... It was not thus with Jesus when He entered the wilderness to cope with Satan. For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities

of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation.... But our Savior took humanity, with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation." -The Desire of Ages, pp. 49, 112, 117.

We are loath to defile the pages of our magazine with such writings as the above, but we put them here for Christians to see for themselves whether or not Mrs. White was unjustly blamed for teaching this great evil, as Dr. Barnhouse confidently avers.

Dr. Barnhouse, evidently sensing some incongruities in his position, has sought to make a way of escape for himself and Mrs. White by saying, "The original difficulty arose from the fact that Mrs. White was not a trained theologian and was largely unacquainted with historical theology.... In my opinion she lacked profundity, accuracy, and scholarship." Under any other circumstances this would be considered an affront and an insult, but in this case it is an expediency to excuse her plainly-stated false doctrines. But such pretexts will not palliate her evil, for she and her followers claim that she had the "gift of prophecy" by which she wrote "messages of counsel and warning, which we believe were just as verily from God as were the messages of the prophets in days of old." -The Testimony of Jesus, The Spirit of Prophecy, by W. E. Read (purchased in 1957). And Mrs. White said of her own writings, "It is God, and not an erring mortal who has spoken." But very plainly it would be impossible for anyone speaking by the Spirit of God to err, much less to speak blasphemous things. The unlearned and untaught Galilean fisherman, Simon Peter, made no mistakes either in his preaching by the Spirit (Acts 2), or in writing to the Jewish believers; and he surely had no theological background. The same might be said for the "herdman" Amos and many other Bible writers whom the Spirit of God used to pen divine communications.

We would that all of our readers could be "wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil" (Rom. 16:19), for there is little profit for the soul in being occupied with evil; but there is a time when we MUST "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

Jude 1, 3. It would be disloyalty to Christ to let this plot to vindicate the Seventh-day Adventists go unchallenged, for the glory of the Lord is involved, and it could lead souls to perdition.

In conclusion, we contend on the basis of the Seventh-day Adventists' current literature that they have not changed from what they were, nor have their false doctrines been altered. This is even confirmed by their own statement in an advertisement for their much publicized new book, "Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine," which says: "This treatise [is] not a 'new' pronouncement of faith and doctrine-every answer given comes from within the framework of fundamental beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists as outlined in the Church Manual." Therefore let none be deceived by sweet, soothing assurances to the contrary.

Then, we may ask, Why was this new book published if there is nothing new in it? Evidently to render a powerful assist to the work of Dr. Donald G. Barnhouse and Mr. Walter Martin in their great effort to have the Adventists accredited as bona fide fundamental, Evangelical Christians. Dr. Barnhouse says that the Adventists' answers in the new book "were hammered out with us." It is obviously designed to catch unwary non-Adventists. It certainly was not needed for their own followers, who have mountains of Adventist literature already.

And Mr. Martin's new book, "The Truth About Seventh-day Adventists," with a signed statement in the front of it from an official of the Adventists' group, is based on this "hammered out" new

Adventist book. It seems that he has worked unofficially as their public relations adviser to make the terminology of their old doctrines less objectionable, and then written his new book to back it up. Christians, beware! Beware of poisonous doctrines with innocent-looking labels! "Let NO man deceive you."

Discipline

Discipline, the discipline of a child, is healthful, and does good like a medicine. If we need it, it is the only thing for us. When, in the days of Samuel, Israel asked for a king, would it have been well for them if the Lord had given them David? The Lord had David in reserve for them; but would it have been seasonable, would it have been healthful for them if David had been given to them at once, when with a rebellious will they were asking for a king? Surely, they must first be made to know the bitterness of their own way. A Saul must be given when Israel asks a king. This was discipline, and this was the only thing that would have been healthful for them. But when they have tasted the bitterness of their own way, in pity of their misery, the Lord will bring out that which He has in reserve for them, the man after His own heart, that shall fulfill all His pleasure.

How perfect was all this! Had David been given to Israel in the day of 1 Sam. 11, the whole moral of the story would have been lost to us. But the love is the same, whether it be discipline or consolation, medicine or food.

The Display of Christ

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." 2 Cor. 4:10. It is not the demand of a certain amount of human righteousness, or the removal of certain evils that hurt the conscience and offend society; it is the living display of what Christ is before men. We should never be content when we fail to display Christ before men; as Christ is righteousness for me before God, so is He the example and standard of righteousness before men-as Christ is for me before God, so ought I to be for Christ before men. This is the way for the Christian to judge of right or wrong. We may be humbled because of failure, but we must not lower the standard.

Ephesians 1

It is certainly a blessed thing for us fully to understand the means which God has made use of, in order to bring us to Himself; but God has made known to us these things, in order that we may be occupied with the things to which we are called. It is in the enjoyment of these things that we put on the character of the Christian, and that the soul grows. They enter into our very existence; and when the heart has laid hold of them, there is much more of the Christian and of testimony in us, so that, by the power of the Holy Spirit working in us, there results a much clearer and stronger point of attraction for the world.

Those who dwell in Spirit in heaven partake of its spirit, and go on increasing in the things which they find there. They are in relationship with God; they enjoy what God has given, and that is certainly most precious; but above all, they enjoy God Himself. And here is the exceeding grace of Him who desires that we should always dwell near Him, and that we should know His thoughts and His counsels. This is what we should desire and seek after, and thus we shall understand better what is well pleasing to the Lord, and what is worthy of Him.

In Jesus Christ, the Head of the body, we are blessed with all spiritual blessings. It is there God sets us; and we know it, beloved, we know it, but more in theory than in practice.

Examples of Devotedness

The darker and more cloudy the day, the brighter do the acts of faith and love shine out, even as the dark background of a picture throws the brighter colors into bolder relief. The history of David abounds with such scenes. What makes many of them all the more striking and touching is the love and devotedness seen on the part of strangers. They shine like so many gems, sparkling and brilliant in their moral beauty.

Take, for instance, that lovely picture in 2 Sam. 15:13-23, and gaze upon the love of the Gathite stranger and exile, Ittai - a love which carried him in the path of a rejected David to share his sorrows and his trials. It is a beautiful and touching picture. Would that we had more living examples of it. The chance was given him to return, with the king's good will and favor, if he would have taken it. But no; it was not the king's good will or mere favor he desired; it was himself, and his heart could alone be satisfied in the company of David, whether in life or in death.

Jesus said, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be." John 12:26. And in Paul we see another Ittai - a devoted follower whose whole desire was to be in the path of the One who was not merely his Master, but also the engrossing object of his affections, and thus glorify Him in his body, whether by life or by death (Phil. 1:20). These men, in their devoted lives to David and David's Lord, do indeed provoke us "to love and good works" (Heb. 10:24).

Look at another picture, in 2 Sam. 17:27-29. See those strangers thinking of the needs of David and his men in the wilderness, and putting their thoughts into deeds. Oh, how much is lost to the dear saints of God through allowing their thoughts of love and kindness to rush from their minds almost as quickly as they entered, instead of seizing on the thought and giving shape to it by action.

What a contrast this Shobi, the Ammonite, presents to his brother Hanun in chapter 10:119. Machir too, of Lo-debar, who had sheltered Mephibosheth and his nurse, now comes forward to nourish David and his men. Barzillai, the Gileadite, likewise comes at this opportune moment. All of them brought of their substance for the hungry, weary, and thirsty people in the wilderness. What a cheer to David! How affecting to find such true affection, and at such a time!

Are not these dark days, and is not the true David rejected? And what innumerable opportunities there are to show forth our love and devotion to Him who has loved us and given Himself for us!

Think how such actions affect the heart of the blessed Lord. What is it to Him to see a soul in sympathy with His thoughts and heart, like these strangers with David? Surely it is as precious ointment, the odor of which fills the house, and the record of which shall never be hushed. It is the Marys who minister to His heart that shall never be forgotten; or the devoted women "which ministered unto Him of their substance" (Luke 8:3). Is this nothing to Him? Or a Gaius, well beloved, whose house was a refuge for those who went forth to serve Him, taking nothing of the Gentiles (3 John 1:7). Is this nothing? Rest assured, all this is remembered by the true David and

shall have its place and reward when He recounts His worthies and their deeds. (2 Sam. 23:8-39; Rom. 16:1-16.)

What a picture gallery is God's Word! It amply repays the student who will walk through with his Master, and examine, by the Holy Spirit's light and teaching, those beautiful characters whose portraits He has been pleased to give for our instruction and present for our contemplation, that we might be imbued with their spirit, and imitate their faith, love, and devotedness.

The Father's Love

What I want to press on you, my brethren, is the distinct present blessing which it is our privilege to enjoy, resulting from the knowledge of the love wherewith the Father loves the

Son. Well might it make the soul stagger to hear that the love wherewith the saints are loved of God is according to that which He loves Jesus - "as Thou hast loved Me." Our companionship with the Lord in glory will be the manifestation of this; then, even the world shall know it. But, without waiting for that day of manifestation, Jesus speaks in John 17 of ministering to us, by the Spirit, the present joy and comfort of it.

How is the love of the Father toward us shown, my brethren? In giving His Son to be "the propitiation for our sins." Who among us does not know this? But it is quite true that we can go on further and speak of the Spirit's enabling us to believe on and prize the Son. Who would set so little value on the power of believing in the Son, as to say that it could arise from the human heart? It is not in the capacity that belongs to "the spirit of a man" to appreciate that best and blessed gift of God - "the Son." We little prize as we ought the grace which has led us to believe. But let us go on further still. All of us know that this was not of human origin, that it came from whence Jesus came - it followed the gift. But are we not accustomed to stop there? I would speak to you of that love of the Father to the Son, in which we partake through union with the Son. My brethren, let us recollect that the grace which led us to receive the Son has only put us on ground where we have to learn more of the fullness and depth of love. The special love of the Father is ours. I am not speaking now of Christ being ours, but of that which is Christ's being ours.

Observe John 17:25, 26. Is there not here a love spoken of as resting upon us because we have believed on and love Jesus? We all acknowledge, of course, that we could not love the Lord Jesus but by the Spirit; but when we have met Him as our Savior, when we see that beauty in Him in which the Father can rest with delight and favor - the heart that rests thus on Jesus meets the full love of the Father. My brethren, have you thought of this - that resting on the Lord Jesus you are to expect a fuller manifestation of the Father's love?

We read (John 16), "I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God." What is the meaning of this? Is it to take from us the comfort of the intercession of Jesus on our behalf?

No; but it is intended to remove from the heart the feeling that the Lord Jesus is the originating cause of the Father's love. He has only given liberty to that love - made the way for it to flow out. It is a most mistaken, a most mischievous notion, that the standing of the Lord Jesus toward us is that of averting the judgment of an angry God. The love of God could not, it is true, flow out fully till the work of the Son was perfected; but the gift of the Son originated in the love of God.

Again, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." Here we see communion with the Father and the Son connected with obedience - a further joy of the Father's love consequent upon obedience.

Obedience itself must be the result of love, but then it introduces us into a fuller sense of the Father's love. Now was not this the particular kind of love in which Jesus Himself dwelt when here? For He says, "I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." What is this but the plainest announcement that we likewise, by virtue of union with Him, may so walk as to enjoy this full manifestation of the Father's love? But then the question might naturally arise in the mind, What amount of disobedience will hinder? and I would say that I believe this manifestation of the Father and the Son unto our souls will be just in proportion to our obedience. The realization of our union with Jesus at the right hand of God will work obedience in us. Then every step that we take, every act of love, every expression of love in intercession for others, makes way for this further manifestation of the Father's love. The soul urged forward by love to Him who has loved it with such a love, is introduced into a further enjoyment of love. It is one act of God's grace to urge forward the soul to obedience, another act of the same grace to meet and bless it in obedience.

A Few Things I See by Faith in Christ

In Christ promised I see the blessed purpose of God to glorify Himself in the Person of a Man, notwithstanding the utter failure and sin of Adam, and to overrule his wickedness, and to bless him in spite of himself.

In Christ incarnate I see for the first time upon the earth a holy Man without sin, a Man in whom God could find the perfect joy and satisfaction of His own heart, a Man who delighted in the will of God, even unto death. TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD.

In Christ crucified I see God infinitely glorified in the scene where He was dishonored, the power of Satan overcome by the weakness of God, the whole judgment of sin borne once forever. Man's cup of iniquity is full, too, but "The blood of Jesus Christ His [God's] Son cleanseth us from all sin."

In Christ buried I see the Man of God's eternal counsels gone for the moment into the lower parts of the earth to rob the grave of its victory and to completely vanquish him who held the power of death.

In Christ risen I see the whole power of the enemy vanquished, his greatest victory proved to be his greatest defeat, and the believer's justification, reconciliation, and everlasting salvation secured forever and ever.

In Christ glorified I see God's answer to the death of His Son, the Man Christ Jesus exalted in highest heavenly glory, being a testimony to the whole universe, angelic and human, of God's own estimate of His work and Person.

In Christ seated and crowned I see a witness that He rests from the work that He accomplished alone upon the cross once for all, and which never needs the slightest addition in any way whatsoever - a finished work.

In Christ's coming for His own I see the realization of the glorious and certain hope of every believing heart, the accomplishment of the eternal purposes of God in Christ before the world began, and the fulfillment of His exceeding great and precious promises.

In Christ manifested in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords, I see also the fulfillment of all His promises in relation to the kingdom, and the blessing of the whole creation - responsible or irresponsible - whether angelic, human, animal, or vegetable.

In Christ's giving all up at the end to God I see the glorious and eternal accomplishment of all His immutable and unsearchable counsels, purposes, plans - revealed or un-revealed - everlasting righteousness dwelling in the scene of God's eternal rest, and the eternal blessing of redeemed man.

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." 2 Cor. 9:15.

"To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen." Rom. 16:27.

Friends

We come to God first as beggars or not at all, but, once inside, God can tell us things that do not concern us. God deigns to call us friends, and I do not only go to my friend to talk to him about business, but to tell him what I have in my heart, even if it does not concern him at all. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" "I have called you friends."

It is not a matter of indifference to be treated by God as His friends; but we must be in the place first; when there, the Christian's heart gets an occupation that makes him grow. Our hearts need something to think of. Not only is our salvation settled, but God introduces us into a new world where our heart is opened and enlarged by occupation with Himself until it can take in His thoughts.

Galatians 3:24: a Reader Inquires

Question: "Will you please clarify Gal. 3:24: 'The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.' In regard to believers teaching their children, previous to their salvation, is the Mosaic law a schoolmaster to them?" P. G.

Answer: This is a greatly misunderstood verse. First, we would call your attention to your misquoting it above. It does not say "is" but "was." It is in the past tense.

Now what "was" the law? It "was" a schoolmaster unto minor children. The word here translated "schoolmaster" in the Greek original indicates a slave who acted as a tutor to children.

Next, who are meant by the minors who were under its exacting demands? Simply, and only, the Jewish people. They were under the law, but the Gentiles were not. Here Paul is writing to Gentile believers and declaring what the law was to those who were under it. He is always very careful in his use of "us" or "our," in contrast to "you" or "your"; sometimes he carefully distinguishes between "we" (the Jews) and "ye" (the Gentiles), and at times his "we" embraces believers of both Jews and Gentiles. If there is any doubt about the meaning, the context should settle it.

Now notice that the words "to bring us" are in italics in most Bibles, thus indicating that the words were not in the original Greek, but were supplied by the translators according to their judgment, which in this case was faulty. Read without the italicized words, it is simply, "the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ," or "until Christ came." The Apostle did not say that this "slave-tutor" was intended for the purpose of bringing us (or anyone) to Christ, but rather that it acted with due severity to those under it until Christ came.

The next verse (the 25th) says, "But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." He does not say, "after Christ is come," but after "faith" came. True, it is after Christ came, but the point is that it is after faith in the

Lord Jesus came. The Jews who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ after He came, died, and rose again, were no longer under the old schoolmaster, the law. They had been delivered from it by the death of Christ.

Then the Apostle goes on to say, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.... There is neither Jew nor Greek,... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." vv. 26, 28. When it becomes a matter of faith in Christ Jesus, the Jews and Gentiles share alike in the blessings of faith - they are one in Christ; and so the Apostle drops the "us" and "we" when he speaks of faith and the blessings of it. The believing Jews are no longer under the law for any purpose whatsoever; they, with the believing Gentiles, belong to Christ and are duly subject to Him.

Therefore, we affirm that the law did not bring anyone to Christ; that was not its purpose. It was added because of sin, that "sin might become exceeding sinful." Before the law was given, man was lawless, pleasing himself with no thought of living for his Creator; but when the law was given to a favored class - the Jew - it proved that man was not only lawless without the law, but a

law-breaker when it was given. It became a ministry of death and condemnation (2 Cor. 3); and Paul says that it deceived him and slew him; and he found that which was holy, just, and good proved to be unto death (Rom. 7:7-12).

The law cannot give life; but it has power to condemn all who are under it, for all have sinned. It cannot bring anyone to Christ, nor is it a rule of life for the believer.

Gideon's Sevenfold Qualification for Service

The book of Judges has a special claim upon our attention, for it is the record of Israel's failure in the land. God had brought them out of Egypt with a high hand and an outstretched arm, had brought them through the Red Sea, while He smote Pharaoh and his host and caused them to sink "as lead in the mighty waters." And He led them onward still, through the waste howling wilderness, accomplishing the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and set them in possession, under the leadership of Joshua, of the promised inheritance. They were now across the Jordan, river of death and judgment; God had rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off them at Gilgal (Josh. 5:9); and as long as they walked in obedience and dependence, no foe could stand before their face. But man invariably fails when entrusted with blessing under responsibility, even under the most favorable circumstances; and Israel was no exception to - nay, was a most striking exemplification of - the rule.

No sooner was Israel's blessing at the flood-tide mark than it began to ebb. It is true that they are said to have "served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua" (Judg. 2:7); but it is immediately added that "there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim," etc. vv. 10, 11. The consequence was that "the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel," but "nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them." vv. 14-16. Here indeed we have the two aspects of the whole book - Israel's failure, and the Lord's faithfulness. And out of God's faithfulness sprang His intervening grace, giving His people a little restoration and reviving in the midst of their departure, corruption, and bondage. The correspondency between this state of things and the present state of the Church will be apparent to all; and hence I propose to call attention to one of the most signal instances of God's intervention - I mean His raising up of Gideon to be a judge and deliverer to His people. The object before my mind in taking this instance is, that we may learn, as the Lord may enable us, what are the qualifications which God seeks (and surely also they are of His own providing) in those whom He can use for service and testimony among His people.

The 6th chapter commences: "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years." (Read vv. 1-6.) Midian was near of kin to Israel, having descended from Abraham through Keturah, his second wife; and again and again they are brought into contact with the chosen people. In the wilderness "the LORD spake unto Moses" (and Moses had married Zipporah, daughter of the priest of Midian), "saying, Vex the Midianites, and smite them: for they vex you with their wiles." (Numb. 25:16-18; 31:1-12.) But now they are in the land itself, though they had never followed the ark across the Jordan; "and Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites." How solemn the warning! But "Israel cried unto the LORD. And it came to pass when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, that the LORD sent a prophet." vv. 6-8. First, the Lord sent a prophet to bring their sin home to their conscience, and then He sent an angel to raise up a deliverer; and He finds

Gideon threshing wheat by the winepress to hide it from the Midianites (v. 11).

1. We may name this first qualification - Feeding on Christ in secret. Wheat is surely a figure of Christ (see John 12:24; 6:35). It was a time of great difficulty; idols had usurped the place of Jehovah, so that those who remained faithful in the midst of the general ruin could only worship the Lord alone and in private. So it was with Gideon; Baal had an altar in his father's house, but this "mighty man of valor" threshed wheat alone that he might find sustenance, notwithstanding the watchful eye of the Midianites. Alone in his family, and alone in threshing wheat, he gathered strength from communion with the Lord.

And, beloved friends, may we not say that feeding on Christ in secret is the fountainhead of all qualification for the Lord's service? Thus it was that Joseph was sent into exile and a prison; that Moses was sent for forty years into the desert; Paul into Arabia, etc. For it is when we are alone with Christ that we learn both what we ourselves are (that in our flesh there dwelleth no good thing), and, blessed be His name, what He Himself is, in the infinite fullness of His grace and sufficiency; and the Lord can never use us as standard-bearers until both of these lessons have been learned. More than this; not only do we thus apprehend (after we have come to the end of ourselves) the all-sufficiency of Christ for every need, but we learn also something of His unspeakable preciousness and beauty, so that we can go out afterward in His service with satisfied hearts, as well as with confidence in His infinite resources. To feed on Christ in secret is indeed the present and abiding need of all our souls.

2. The next qualification is evidently an exercised heart. "And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. And Gideon said unto him, O my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." vv. 12, 13. These words show that Gideon identified himself with the condition of his people; for he says, "Why... is all this befallen us?" etc., and that entering into their state, he bore it on his heart before the Lord. And without this he had not been qualified to be their helper. It was so with Nehemiah (see Neh. 1); with Daniel (see especially chapter 9); and pre-eminently it was the case with our blessed Lord. Take an instance or two. They brought unto Him one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech; and we are told that before He healed him, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha; that is, Be opened. (Mark 7:32-35.) Again too, before He raised Lazarus from the dead, we have the marvelous record that He wept; and that "groaning in Himself" He came to the grave - signs surely of His entering into and taking (if we may so speak) upon His spirit the condition of those to whose succor He had come - that in sympathy and grace He so identified Himself with them that He became the voice of their sorrow and grief; for "Himself took our infirmities, and bear our sicknesses." Matt. 8:17. The cross is of course the highest expression of His entering into our state, for on it He "bare our sins in His own body." 1 Pet. 2:24. The principle remains, for our power to succor others will be (not forgetting our entire dependence on the Lord) just in proportion as we have been able to enter into, and to make their sorrows or difficulties our own. It might be well to re-member this in our desire to bring saints into their true place. The Lord will use us if we are qualified for it; but to be qualified for it, we must have felt deeply the character of the evil in which they are entangled, and have mourned over it before the Lord. Hence, in the case before us, no sooner does Gideon unburden his exercised heart than "The LORD looked

upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" v. 14.

3. We now get another very important qualification - a sense of his own nothingness. He replies, "O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." v. 15. His exercises had thus not been without blessing, for he was now in the place where God's power could come upon and use him. It was so with the Apostle Paul after the exercises of heart produced by the thorn in the flesh; he was then brought face to face with his own utter impotence and want of natural adaptation for the Lord's service, and then the Lord could say to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Cor. 12:9. And all the Lord's servants must learn this lesson sooner or later - that there is nothing in themselves, in their position, or in their circumstances, which can be used for God; that, in a word, the whole of their resources and strength lies outside of themselves, in Himself - that their sufficiency is of God (2 Cor. 3:5). It is then no longer a question of what the Midianites are, but what God is, for we go to meet them in His strength. Accordingly, the Lord now said to Gideon, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." v. 16.

4. Thereupon, Gideon becomes bolder, and asks a sign that the Lord talked with him - prepares a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour, and bringing them, places his offering, at the direction of the angel, upon the rock. "Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight." v. 21. By this Gideon is made to know that he had seen an angel of the Lord face to face, and he is filled with fear. But "The LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die." And thus he obtains from the Lord a further qualification for service; namely, a soul at liberty - in peace before God. God had revealed Himself to His servant, and the effect was terror; but the terror passed away before the peace-speaking word of Jehovah. We need not enlarge upon this feature, as it is the history of every soul that is brought into the presence of God (see Isa. 6; Job 42; Luke 5; etc.), and everyone will understand that there cannot be any true or effectual service for the Lord while the soul is occupied with its own condition, until indeed it is set free, and is at home in God's presence. Thus, when the Lord Jesus came into the midst of His disciples, after the resurrection, He said, "Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." John 20:19-21. Here we have a direct connection between peace and service.

5. The immediate consequence in Gideon's case was - and this gives us a further qualification - that he became a worshiper. "Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom." v. 24. That is, he worships God in the character in which He had revealed Himself - as Jehovah who had spoken peace to his soul. The sequence is very instructive. First peace, then worship; and the lesson is, that only those who have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ can worship. What a commentary upon the public worship of our land! But now we direct attention to this - that the true servant must first be a worshiper; for indeed to go out in service before we are worshipers, is to go out in ignorance of the character of Him whom we profess to serve; to misrepresent our Lord, and to expose ourselves to certain defeat. Let us then be careful to maintain the divine order.

6. Now the Lord calls upon Gideon to act, but he must first begin at home. "And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: and build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down. Then Gideon took ten men," etc. vv. 25-27. Here we get obedience. Gideon was associated with evil in his father's house; and, as another has said, "Faithfulness within precedes outward strength; this is God's order." We have an illustration of this in the gospels. After the Lord Jesus had cast out the demon from the lad, the "disciples asked Him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And He said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." Mark 9:28, 29. So with Gideon; until he had dethroned the idol in his father's house, he could not be sent to smite the Midianites. There is ample ground in this direction, beloved friends, for heart searchings with us all. How often, when we have mourned over lack of power in the Lord's service, might we have traced the cause to some lack of obedience, of self-judgment, of separation, of faithfulness! We were weak because we had not first dealt with some idol of our hearts or households. Satan is helpless in the presence of an obedient man; he cannot touch such a one, for he is armed with a coat of mail which not one of his fiery darts can ever penetrate. It is thus that the Lord Jesus vanquished him in the desert. The reply, "It is written," foiled him in every attack. And here too was Gideon's strength, for no sooner had he received the command than he "took ten men," "and did as the LORD had said unto him" (v. 27); and in obedience he overcame, and purged his father's house - and the subsequent anger of Baal's followers did but expose their own weakness and the impotence of their god. The devil resisted in obedience is the devil vanquished.

7. Gideon is now a vessel sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and we get accordingly the crowning qualification of power. It is very instructive to note the course of the record. The vessel is now prepared for service; and immediately we are told: "Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him. And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them." vv. 33-35. Satan can never forestall God. While Gideon is being prepared, the Midianites, etc., are still; when Gideon is ready, God gathers them together for destruction. They marshal their forces to destroy Israel; but the Spirit of the Lord comes upon Gideon, and now it is God Himself against the Midianites. Ah, beloved friends, let us see to it that we never move forward against the foe except in the power of the Spirit of God.

Note another instruction. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet. This Gideon, who was threshing wheat to hide it from the Midianites, now puts a trumpet to his lips, and sounds forth defiance in the face of the foe. In like manner, the Peter who trembled before a maidservant, being clothed with power by the Spirit, charges home upon the rulers the sin of crucifying Christ. The apostles also, being filled with the Holy Ghost, spoke the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).

But we cannot pursue the subject, as we have now traced the qualifications of this "mighty man of valor" for testimony and service. He is now equipped, ready for the conflict. There will be

weaknesses and failures, doubtless; but still he is one whom the Lord can now employ. May God grant that the sevenfold qualifications of Gideon may be found in all who are engaged in His service and testimony in these closing days!

Go in Peace: How One Woman Got Blessing

"And Jesus went with him; and much people followed Him, and thronged Him. And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment. For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Whoso touched My clothes? And His disciples said unto Him, Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me? And He looked around about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth. And He said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." Mark 5:24-34.

There was remarkable simplicity in the ways of Jesus. His words also were full of deep doctrine; and the more we meditate on them under the teaching of the Holy Ghost the more we shall be convinced of the profound truth embodied in them. His heart was always as full of grace when He walked up and down this earth doing good, as when He died upon the cross; and oh! how blessed it is to trace Him in the various incidents recorded in the gospels, and to contemplate the exceeding rich and abundant grace that He manifested! It is wonderful that Christ - the only begotten of the Father - should ever have been seen in this world of sin, except in fiery judgment; but to find Him leaving the heights of glory and bliss to come into this evil world to save sinners is surpassingly wonderful.

In these verses, for our consideration, we find that Jesus was in the midst of a crowd of persons. We are told that "much people followed Him." Thousands, probably, surrounded Him. Apostles were there, and Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, was there also; but most of those who pressed and thronged Him, came only to see His miracles and to be partakers of His temporal bounty in the loaves.

It must have been deeply interesting to behold a man heal the sick, cast out devils, cleanse the lepers, and raise the dead to life. There was something attractive to the natural senses in seeing such miraculous power put forth. Jesus had just before cast many devils from a man, and was on His way to a ruler's house to raise his dead child to life. There was, I say, something deeply interesting in all this. People like to see such wonderful works. They thus made Jesus an object of interest to their minds; but, lamentable to say, they knew Him not as their Savior. They did not regard Him as the Redeemer of the lost, but as a worker of miracles.

The crowd that surrounded Jesus cared little for Him, because they knew nothing of His Person and work; and the mass of people operated rather as a hindrance to a sin-convicted, helpless one coming to Jesus. So it is now. Who, I ask, are the great hinderers of the gospel in our day? Are they not those persons who make a religious profession without a vital acquaintance with Christ

Himself? those who are content to hear about Christ, without having received Christ in their hearts as their Savior? Are not nominal Christians the very persons who cry out against brokenness of heart, repentance, the new birth, and present forgiveness of sins?

There was one person in the midst of this crowd of people in whose heart the Holy Spirit was effectually working and, as far as we know, she was the only one. So it has often been, and still is. Hundreds and thousands crowd to hear the gospel, but the heart of one only may be opened to receive it.

In the narrative we are considering, there are two points which I desire, as the Lord may graciously help, to make a few remarks upon - the work of the Spirit in the soul of the woman - the way of

Christ with this sinner.

THE SPIRIT'S WORK IN THE WOMAN. When the Holy Ghost takes a soul in hand, He teaches effectually. He uncovers the filthy rags of self-righteousness, exposes the rotten patches of self-reformation, and gives us a true knowledge of our true state before God. He is the Spirit of Truth. He convinces of sin. He lays bare the heart by so applying the written Word as to show its desperate wickedness in the sight of God's holy presence. He fastens upon the conscience the vile workings, unclean thoughts, desires, and intents of the heart.

"He never leads a man to say,

Thank God, I'm made so good;

But turns his eye another way -

To Jesus and His blood."

Now look at the woman. She not only felt that she had a disease, but that it was incurable - that no earthly resource, no human means, could heal her. She had long tried various expedients and knew what it was to suffer "many things" until she had "spent all that she had"; but the end proved that she "was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." Thus all help failed, all hope was gone. She felt that her condition was hopeless, helpless, and incurably bad. Blessed picture of the Spirit's work in the soul, though a humbling and painful process for the proud heart to pass through!

Most people around us know that they are sinners. Ask whom you will, the answer is, I know I am a sinner. But when the Spirit of God works in the heart, He teaches men that they are lost sinners, hell-deserving sinners, helpless and guilty sinners before God. Many who say that they are sinners, do not mean that they are born in sin, full of sin, dead in sin, children of wrath. It is because people do not know their real state that they, like the woman, try this or that expediency, vainly hoping to make themselves better. They go here and there, leave off some old habits, put on a measure of outward sanctity, break through certain long-accustomed ways, and adopt other lines of pursuit, hoping in this way to commend themselves to the favor of God and procure ease of conscience. Many a man blindly thinks that there is some ability in himself so to act for the future as to conceal the past. But we may be sure that if the Spirit of God is working in their souls, they will feel "nothing bettered" by these things, but that they rather grow worse; for the Holy Spirit will so open up to them the desperate wickedness and deceitfulness of their hearts that, after all

their carnal contrivances, they will feel the plague of sin worse than before.

It appears from the Scripture record that this woman in her sad condition heard of One who could cure her. "She had heard of Jesus" - she heard that He could do what men could not do.

What blessed intelligence for a poor disconsolate soul! How welcome were the tidings! She felt her plague; she had proved the failing of every human prescription; she had "spent all" and was worse than ever. Now how did she treat the report? Did she hear and not act? No. She came to Jesus. It was not the venerable Jairus, nor even ordained apostles, that she felt she needed - only JESUS, for she knew that He could heal her, and He only. Her faith beheld Him in the midst of the vast crowd, like an overflowing fountain of living water, and she felt she must drink or die. She said within herself, "If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole." She was sure there was virtue in Jesus, and that it flowed freely to the touch of faith, and have it she must. Her necessity was most urgent and imperative. Neither the press of people, nor anything else, could hinder her making her way through the crowd, till she touched His garment and had the healing virtue. She knew Christ as the giver, and she came simply as the needy receiver - she touched His garment. How blessed is this sample of faith! What discrimination was wrought in her soul by the Spirit of God, between crowding around Jesus and the touch of faith! Now, mark the result. She felt that she was healed of that plague.

Now let us consider THE WAY OF JESUS WITH THIS SINNER. It was a serious moment with the woman, as well as a precious occasion for the out flowing of the love of Him who was full of grace and

truth. Jesus was on His way to the house of the ruler whose daughter was said to be "at the point of death." But the case of this one needy woman was such a weighty matter, that Jesus called the attention of the whole multitude to it. She came behind Him to touch His clothes; but with what gracious majesty did the blessed Lord turn Himself about in the press and say, "Who touched My clothes?" It is blessed to contemplate these ways of the Lord. A sinner had proved the healing virtue of Jesus, and the attention of the whole crowd must be arrested, and the urgent journey must be interrupted for the moment, while the heart of this trembling one is established and comforted, and her Christ-glorifying testimony published. "Who touched My clothes?" asked the tenderhearted Jesus. Thus the believing sinner was singled out from among the thousands; for her soul must be further taught the deep and everlasting intimacy with the Son of God, which she had by faith been brought into. She must be made to feel that her place is not now to be behind the Lord, but to stand before Him in perfect confidence and unclouded affection. When Jesus is made known in the healing virtue of His blood to any sin-sick soul, an eternal intimacy is begun; and Jesus will show, as He did this woman, something of the dignity and blessing that His own grace has brought us into. He will make us know the things that are freely given to us of God. He will say, "Thou art Mine"; "I will never leave thee"; "I will uphold" and "bless thee," etc.

The needy woman had secretly come behind Jesus; but He will have her now stand publicly before Him. There must be dealing with Jesus, and learning the lessons of His healing grace in secret before any can truly confess Him before men. Jesus turned Himself about in the press; His voice was heard by her; His loving eye singled her out among the crowd of thousands, and the woman fell down before Him, and with a grateful heart told Him all the truth "before all the people" (Luke 8:47)-with fear and trembling, I grant, as we all feel when we first leave the long-accustomed

ranks of unbelief, and openly plant our feet beneath the earth-despised shelter of Immanuel's grace.

But notice another thing. Jesus holds up before the multitude the faith of this one woman who had so honored Him. He receives her worship, confesses His acceptance of her, and proclaims the new and everlasting relationship subsisting between them. Jesus calls her, "Daughter." This title showed her new relationship to God. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3:26. It is this that the Spirit of God now bears witness to in the consciences of believers. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom. 8:16. It is not a mere honorary title, like many distinctions of this world, but a new and eternal relationship into which God in Christ has brought us.

Jesus also told her that she was made whole, and that by faith - "Thy faith hath made thee whole." She had confessed the Lord "before all the people"; but that had not made her whole. It is important to see that it is not our tears, our sorrows, our reformations, or efforts of any kind that make us whole. No; it is Christ, and Christ alone. Scripture always directs us to the blood of Christ for peace, and it also assures us that "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 10:43. Jesus had made this woman whole. Virtue had gone out of Him. Jesus assured her that the healing was perfect - she was made whole. He cleanses and justifies them by His blood, sends His Spirit into their hearts, and assures them they shall not come into condemnation, but that they have passed from death unto life.

The last words of Jesus to the woman are very emphatic - "Go in peace." The first is a remarkable word - "Go." I often think of it. Some persons never seem to learn its force in their experience. They may be sincere believers, but they are always hanging about Christ with doubts, not knowing forgiveness of sins and present peace; they are constantly asking to be made whole, hoping to be pardoned, etc., when Christ says to them, You are forgiven; "Go." They do not credit the glorious truth of present forgiveness and liberty of sonship; they are, therefore, in bondage and fear. Jesus would have it otherwise. He says, "Thy faith hath SAVED thee; go in peace"! (Luke 7:50); as much as to say, have no more doubts, fears, or misgivings; you are made whole, pardoned, reconciled, a child of God, a sinner saved. "Go in peace."

God Is My Father

He is almighty in power.

He is perfect in His ways.

He is the God of all grace.

He is light - sees all things.

He is love - loves, because He is love.

He has understanding of all things.

He rules all things in perfect wisdom.

Love is the spring of all His ways - wisdom, the course they pursue - no power can stay His hand - thus all things work together for good, and all things are ordered with that end in view.

Hallelujah!

Peace, peace, perfect peace, since such a God is mine.

H.E.H.

God Receives Sinners Through Jesus Christ

It is deeply interesting and instructive to note the different ways by which souls in whom God's Spirit is working are led into peace and blessing. After being first awakened and groping about in the darkness, or at least the twilight, of human thoughts and ways, they all sooner or later reach the one and only door into blessing, drawn by God's Spirit to Him who says, "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." John 10:9.

Luther, after being awakened to a sense of sin by a terrific thunderstorm, and after long groping about in the darkness of the Roman system under whose instruction he was painfully and wearily creeping up Pilate's stairs in Rome to obtain absolution, and thus pardon and peace with God, heard suddenly a voice like thunder in his soul, that said, "The just shall live by faith." His painful journey was ended, and unexpectedly he found himself at the door of faith which God has opened to all poor sinners who know and feel their need.

Another well-known servant of God, who was early brought to feel his need of something for his soul more than the world could supply, had a feeling akin to despair when it occurred to him that perhaps if he could but have the precepts of the Savior continually before his eye, it would be a help to his obedience and a means of salvation. With this intention, he got two New Testaments and cut out from them all the commands and counsels he found, and pasting them on a board, placed it where he would see it frequently. But he found, alas! that to be reminded of precepts was not to keep them; to know the will of God was not to do it; and to be acquainted with the right way was not to walk in it. Indeed, he had set himself a far harder and more hopeless task than even poor Luther, long before him, had done when he set himself to work at ascending Pilate's stairs in the hope of finding peace and salvation at the top.

Things seemed to grow darker, and all efforts but helped to make matters more hopeless. One day a friend said to him, "If you want to find the knowledge of God, study the epistle to the Romans; it is there the plan of salvation is made known." Acting at once on this suggestion, he thought he would copy out the whole epistle, that he might better master the subject and become more fully acquainted with the Apostle's reasoning. He commenced his task of copying the epistle into a book and got as far as the 8th chapter. Coming to the 8th verse he wrote, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

These words arrested him, and he said to himself, "What is the use then of all my efforts? If a sinner cannot please God, how can I do anything to gain acceptance with Him?"

Then suddenly, as with a sunbeam, the thought flashed across his mind, "No, I cannot please God, but Christ has. He is the way, He is the perfect One, and this is what is meant by those words at the end of every prayer, 'Through Jesus Christ our Lord.' " "Yes," said he to himself, "God receives sinners for His sake, and He will receive me."

Like Luther's "The just shall live by faith," which came as a divine revelation to his soul, delivering him from the burden of his sins, so to him came, as a divine revelation, the blessed truth, "Through

Jesus Christ God receives sinners." On this his soul rested in undisturbed peace, and this he proclaimed to others until the Lord took him to Himself.

God's Comforts Stay the Soul

Psalm 90 to 100 are connected together and seem to me to describe the dealings of the Lord with the Jews, etc., in the latter day on the earth. But I am not going to speak of that now. We may often derive comfort from principles which we find in such portions of the Scripture.

The two principles which form the basis of this psalm are, that the workers of iniquity are allowed to lift up their heads and flourish, but that the Lord is, and will be, Most High for evermore.

There is the clear perception of this throughout. Under the temporary exaltation and prevalence of wickedness the godly are in a very tried state; the righteous suffer, but vengeance belongs to God (not to the sufferer); therefore the cry of verses 1 and 2.

To such a height are the workers of iniquity allowed to go that, in the consciousness that the Lord's throne could not be cast down, the question comes in, "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with Thee, which frameth mischief by a law?" v. 20. So completely has wickedness got place in the earth that there is a sort of question raised, whether the throne of iniquity could subsist in companionship in judgment with the divine throne. The answer is, Judgment is coming; "The LORD our God shall cut them off." v. 23. Judgment shall return to righteousness, in the place of trial and suffering.

The point on which I would dwell a little at present is the consolation of the saints during this time of trial - God's comforts.

In the first place we have the assurance, "The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity." v. 11.

Then, "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O LORD," etc. vv. 12, 13.

As to the pride and purpose of man, it is settled in a word. The "thoughts of man" are not only inferior to God's wisdom, they are "vanity." That settles the whole question. All that begins and ends in the heart of man is "vanity," and nothing else. Whatever the state of things around, though there may be a "multitude of... thoughts within," as, What will all this come to? How will that end? - every barrier we can raise, all our strength, all our weakness, whatever the wave after wave that may flow over us - the Lord's thought about it all is, that it is "vanity." All is working together to one object - God's plan, that upon which His heart is set - the glorification of Jesus, and ours with Him. Every thought and every plan of man must therefore be "vanity," because it has not this, God's object, for its object; and God's object always comes to pass. There cannot be two ends to what is going on. Let men break their hearts about it, all simply comes to nothing; the end of it is "vanity." God's object is, that "All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." John 5:24.

Take a man of the world - the shrewdest calculator, the ablest politician, or the greatest statesman - a poor bedridden saint is wiser than he, and more sure of having his plans brought about; for the heart of the simplest, feeblest saint runs in the same channel with God's, and though the saint has no strength, God has.

In this psalm we find first the tumult of the enemies, then that God has done it. So with the saint constantly in trial; he sees the work of Satan, then God's hand in it, and he gets blessing. All the present effect of these dealings of "the wicked" is, "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of Thy law; that Thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked." The pit is not yet digged; the throne of iniquity is not yet put down.

If in chastening the power of the adversary is against us, the Lord's end in it all is to give "rest from the days of adversity," etc.

I speak not merely of suffering for Christ - if we are reproached for the name of Christ, it is only for joy, and triumph, and glory to us - but of those things in which there may be the "multitude of... thoughts within," because we see that we have been walking inconsistently and carelessly in the Lord's ways. Still it is, "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord." The Lord does not chasten willingly, without a needs-be for it. And when there has been failure or inconsistency that brings chastisements, He turns the occasion of the chastisement to the working out of the heart's evil that needed to be chastened. The Lord in chastening throws back the heart upon the springs which have been the occasion of the evil. The soul is hereby laid bare for the application of God's truth unto it, that the Word may come home with power. It is taught wherefore it has been chastened; and not only so, but it is brought into the secret of God's heart - it learns more of His character who "will not cast off His people, neither will He forsake His inheritance." v. 14. What God desires for us is not only that we should have privileges conferred upon us, but that we should have fellowship with Himself. Through these chastenings the whole framework of the heart is brought into juxtaposition with God. And this establishes and settles it on the certainty of the hope that grace affords.

Look at Peter after the enemy had sifted him; though his fall was most humbling and bitter, yet by it he gained a deeper knowledge of God and a deeper acquaintance with himself, so that he could apply all that he had learned to his brethren.

The Lord gives our souls "rest from the days of adversity" by communion with Himself, not only communion in joy, but in holiness. We are thus brought into the secret of God. Circumstances are only used to break down the door and let in God. God is near to the soul when He in the certainty of love comes within the circumstances and is known as better than any circumstance.

The Lord never chastens without occasion for it, and yet, "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastened, O Lord." There is not a more wonderful word than that! I do not say that a man can say this always while under chastening, for if the soul is judging itself, there will often be anxiety and sorrow, but the effects are blessed. 'What we want is that all our thoughts and ways and actings of will should be displaced, and that God should be everything. All chastening is God's dealing with His people in righteousness (as it is said, "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work," etc.), not in the sovereign riches of divine grace. It is God's allowing nothing in the heart inconsistent with that holiness of which the believer has been made partaker. It is indeed most blessed grace that takes all the pains with us, but that is not the character it assumes.

What we exceedingly need is intimacy of soul with God, resting in quietness in Him, though all be confusion and tumult around us. When the man here had God near his heart, though iniquity abounded, it was only the means of making God's "comforts" known to his soul, as it is said, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul." v. 19. Our portion is not only to know the riches of God's grace, but the secret of the Lord - to have intimacy of communion with Him in His holiness. Then, however adverse the circumstances, the soul rests quietly and steadfastly in Him.

If we would have full unhindered peace and depth of fellowship with God and one with another, if we would meet circumstances and temptations without being moved thereby, it must flow from this - not merely the knowledge that all things are ours in Christ, but acquaintance with God Himself, as it is said, "being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." May we, through grace enabling, let God have all His way in our hearts.

The psalms that follow are the actual coming in of the Lord to judgment, not the exercises of the heart in awaiting it. Psalm 95 calls the Jews to be ready to meet Him; Psalm 96 calls the Gentiles; in Psalm 97 He is actually coming in clouds; in Psalm 98 He has wrought the deliverance; in Psalm 99 He has taken His seat in Jerusalem between the cherubim. Psalm 100 calls the Gentiles up to partake in Israel's joy and worship; Psalm 101 gives us principles on which the government of this earth will be carried on by Jehovah's King.

God's Joy

The grace and love of God are shown out first in seeking, and then in receiving the sinner. In the first two parts of the parable of Luke 15 we have the seeking; in the third, the reception by the father. One great principle runs through them all - it is the joy of God to seek and to receive the sinner. He is acting upon His own character. No doubt it is joy to the sinner to be received, but it is the joy of God to receive him: "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad" - not merely meet that the child should be glad to be in the house. Blessed truth! It is the tone that God has raised, and that every heart in heaven responds to. God Himself strikes the chord; heaven echoes it; and so must every heart down here that is tuned by grace. What discord then must self-righteousness produce!

God's Order

"I know him [Abraham], that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Gen. 18:19. Strange that in the families of so many of God's people nowadays, His instituted rule is exactly inverted - the children lead the mother, and the wife rules the husband. Nothing but evil can accrue from such a state of things.

The Gospel of the Glory of Christ

As to the difference between the gospel of the glory and the gospel of the humiliation, the latter is pure grace in God, manifested here in Christ. John's writings show God revealing Himself in Christ to man in His life down here. In Paul's writings, what we have habitually is man manifested in righteousness before God. The gospel of humiliation is perfect grace; it is God coming down to man where he is, visiting him in his condition as such a one on earth. The gospel of the glory takes "this treasure" (v. 7) and unfolds it. In Phil. 2 we have the whole line, from the time when Christ was in "the form of God" till He was on the cross, when, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death. This is the manifestation of God down here among sinners. But in the gospel of the glory man is looked at as the old man totally set aside; yet man is in glory in virtue of the complete work that redeems us and justifies us, and gives us a place in the glory. The glory is the testimony to the efficacy of the work; the humiliation is the testimony to the greatness of the love. But it is all the same gospel. The gospel of the humiliation is God in grace, whereas the gospel of the glory is man in glory, of course as fruit of grace. In the gospel of the humiliation we have God in Christ, and in the gospel of glory we have man in Christ. The latter is a glorious result of the other, no doubt, but it is a different aspect of the gospel.

Heaven Opened

We may point to the fourfold opening of the heavens, as Scripture records it. In Matt. 3 we find the heavens opened to gaze down on the Son on earth. Never before do we read of the heavens being opened excepting in vision (Eze. 1:1), but now that there was an object on earth worthy of their opening to, they were opened unto Him. In Acts they are again opened to Stephen, and to us with him (Heb. 2:9), to look up at Jesus, rejected of man, but exalted of God. Pass on now to Rev. 19 and we find them again opened to allow Him to come forth to execute vengeance on His enemies; and in John 1:51, we find them again opened to gaze on Him when, peace having been proclaimed, the angels wait on Him to do His bidding, when as Son of man He has set up His kingdom, when His will is done on earth as in heaven.

His Delight in the Saints

The connection between these two verses, as rendered in our English version, is confessedly obscure. The Lord in His pathway through this world, taking as He ever did in the perfection of His life of faith as man, the place of entire dependence and obedience, says, "O My soul, Thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art My Lord: My goodness extendeth not to Thee"; and then the next verse proceeds, "But to the saints that are in the earth," etc., as if it meant, "My goodness extendeth not to Thee, but to the saints," etc. Some years ago a well-known servant of the Lord made a suggestion which to most minds cleared up the difficulty, besides throwing a flood of light upon the mind of the Spirit of Christ. Instead of reading, "But to the saints," etc., he pointed out, that to bring out the sense it might be thus taken: "I have said to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, In them is all My delight." This makes the parallelism also complete: "O My soul, Thou hast said unto the LORD... but I have said to the saints." And the spiritual mind will instantly perceive the beauty of the passage as thus explained. There is first the lowliness of our blessed Lord as man; and second, there is His identification with, and delight in, the saints on earth.

The Lord's heart then was upon the saints. It was in them He had His delight; and this He showed when He identified Himself with the poor remnant who went out to be baptized of John (Matt. 3). He Himself was also baptized; and it was then, on His going up out of the water, that the heavens were opened, and, together with the Spirit of God descending upon Him, there was a voice from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight." Chap. 3:17; J.N.D. Trans. He found His delight in the saints, and the Father found His delight in Him. It is surely a lovely scene; and we may learn that the heart of God can only flow out to His people through Christ, and that they can only meet the heart of God in the heart of Christ.

The reader may compare Pro. 8:30, 31 - "I was daily His delight,... and My delights were with the sons of men." What wonders of grace, unfathomed and unfathomable, are contained in these few words!

The Hope of Righteousness

"The hope of righteousness" (Gal. 5:5) is not the hope of a getting righteousness, but the hope of glory which belongs to righteousness. God says, You are My children; I have brought I you to Myself, and you are going to hear about the glory of Christ, and are joint heirs with Him in it. When I think of the r apostles to whom God revealed such things as these, I think how, r with such power of God in them, they could go safely. Thus laden with Christ, they could go safely and steadily through the world; they were fully ballasted with Christ.

Have Christ in yourself. Christ everything to us enlarges the Christ in us and then we can go steadily along. If I have a full Christ in myself, then I can look safely out. If I have Christ as the center of glory in my heart, I can look out and see the glory all around.

How to Keep the Unity of the Spirit

The Holy Ghost came down from heaven personally on the day of Pentecost, and dwells in each member of Christ individually (1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 1:13, 14, etc.); and the saints, thus indwelt, upon earth, form God's habitation through the Spirit. He dwells corporately in the whole Church (Eph. 2:22, etc.). He unites each member to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17), each member to the other members (1 Cor. 12:13), and all the members to the Head. This is the Church of God-the body of Christ.

This unity has remained untouched by all the failures of the Church. It is a unity which cannot be destroyed, because it is the Holy Ghost Himself. He is the unity of the body of Christ.

The Church of God was responsible to have maintained this unity of the Spirit, in practical outward and visible oneness. In this she has failed. The unity has not. It remains, because the Spirit of God remains. It remains even when the oneness of action is well nigh gone. The unity of a human body remains when a limb is paralyzed; but where is its oneness? The paralyzed limb has not ceased to be of the body, but it has lost the healthy articulation of the body.

Still, no matter what the ruin may be-no matter how terrible is the confused and unhealthy state in which things are Scripture never allows that it is impracticable for the saints to walk in the fellowship of God's Spirit, and maintenance of the truth. It is always practicable. The Spirit of God pre-supposes evil and perilous days; still God enjoins us to endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." He enjoins nothing impracticable. We never can restore anything to its former state, but we can walk in obedience to the Word, and in the company of the Spirit of God who enables us to hold the Head. He will never sacrifice Christ and His honor and glory for His members. Hence we are exhorted to endeavor to keep the "unity of the Spirit" (not the "unity of the body," which would prevent us from separating from any member of the body of Christ, no matter what his practice). The Holy Ghost glorifies Christ, and, walking in fellowship with Him, we are kept specially identified with Christ.

In this endeavor, I must begin with myself. My first duty is to separate myself to Christ, from everything that is contrary to Him-"Let every one that nameth the name of Christ [the Lord] depart from iniquity." 2 Tim. 2:19. This evil may be moral, practical, doctrinal; no matter what it is, I must get away from it; and when I have done so I find myself practically in company with the Holy Ghost, and a nucleus for those who are likewise truehearted. If I can find such, that is, those who have done the same, I am to follow righteousness, faith, peace, charity, with them (2 Tim. 2:22). If I can find none where I am, I must stand alone, with the Holy Ghost, for my Lord. There are, however, the Lord be praised, many who have done likewise, and are on the line of action of the Spirit of God in the Church. They have the blessed promise as a resource, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20. They are practically one, as led by the same Spirit, with every member of Christ in the world who has done likewise. I do not now refer to their absolute union with the whole body of Christ, but of the practice.

The basis on which they are gathered (that is, the Spirit of God, in the body of Christ) is wide enough in its principle to embrace the whole Church of God - narrow enough to exclude from its midst everything that is not of the Spirit of God. To admit such would put them practically out of the fellowship of the Holy Ghost.

This endeavor does not confine itself to those who are thus together - one with the other. It has its aspect toward every member of Christ upon earth. The walk of those thus gathered, in entire separation to Christ and practical fellowship of the Spirit, and maintenance of the truth, is the truest love they can show toward their brethren who are not practically with them. Walking in truth and unity, they will desire that their brethren may be won into the truth and fellowship of the Holy Ghost. They may be but a feeble remnant, but the true remnants were ever distinguished by personal devotedness to the Lord who ever specially watched over them in the most tender solicitude, and associated Himself specially with them.

Intellegent Service

"He that gathereth not with Me scattereth" (Luke 11:23); that is, he that does not work according to Christ's purpose is really making bad worse. It is not enough to work with the name of Christ; no saint would consent to work without that, but if he does not work according to the purpose of Christ, he is scattering abroad. Many a saint is now engaged in rectifying and adorning the world - getting Christendom as a swept and garnished house. But, this not being Christ's purpose, it is aiding and furthering the advance of evil. Christ has not expelled the unclean spirit out of the world. He has no such present purpose. The enemy may change his way but he is as much "the god" and "prince of this world" as ever he was. The house is his still, as in the parable (see Luke 11:24-26). The unclean spirit has gone out; that was all; he had not been sent out by the stronger man, so that his title to it is clear; and he returns, and all that he finds there had only made it more an object with him. He finds it clean and ornamented, so that he returns with many a kindred spirit and thus makes its last state worse than its first.

The Invisible

The Lord has ways of weaning us from the visible and tangible, and bringing us to live upon the invisible and real. God blows out our candles and makes us find our light in Him, to prepare us for that place in which they need no candle, for the glory of God is their light, and where, strange to tell, they have no temple, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof. O that God would gradually lift us up above all the outward, above all the visible, and bring us more into the inward and unseen! If you do not know anything about this, ask the Lord to teach you this riddle; and if you do know it, ask Him to keep you to the life and walk of faith; and never may you be tempted to quit it for the way of sight and feeling.

Israel and the West: the Editor's Column

A world that had become inured to crisis after crisis since the beginning of the so-called cold war was nervously agitated over the Middle East trouble, and not without reason. Attention was focused on the impasse between the little nation of Israel and the United Nations. Israel refused to give up the positions they had seized at Sharm el Sheikh at the Red Sea inlet to the Gulf of Aqaba, and at the historic site of Gaza where Samson pulled down the temple over the lords of the Philistines. This involved not only Israel and Egypt, but all the Arab world, and the great powers, both East and West. The rich Middle East oil fields and the very important waterway at Suez were at stake, and the struggle threatened the peace of the world and could have been the spark to touch off another world holocaust.

Israel felt justified in defying for a time both the United Nations' warnings and the pressure applied by the United States, for Egypt had continued a state of war with Israel ever since the armistice was signed between Egypt and Israel in 1949; and the same great powers who were pressuring Israel had been unable to protect her from boycott, murderous raiders, and blockade by Egypt. The moral suasion of the United Nations was considerably weakened by its failure to enforce the 1949 armistice agreement and thus to protect Israel. Egypt had not only closed the Suez to Israeli shipping, but to foreign ships bound to or from Israel; they had built shore batteries at Sharm el Sheikh and thus closed the Strait of Tiran to shipping to and from Israel's port of Elath at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba (the port from which Solomon's ships sailed east); Egypt had also used the narrow Gaza strip (25 miles long and 5 miles wide) to harass Israel's Negev region by making it the supply headquarters for the Fedayeen raiders who had killed or seriously wounded 447 Israeli citizens on their own soil. Many other warlike acts were committed against Israel by Egypt, along with similar acts by other neighboring Arab states.

Russia has strengthened Egypt's hand in this matter and has aided and abetted them and other Arab states in making trouble for Israel, for Russia has been sporadically opposed to the Jews since the days of the Czars, and now has sought opportunity to make trouble for the West in that region in the hope of cutting the West off from the Middle East oil and taking it for herself. The recent crisis has really pitted East against West with Israel in the middle. It appears that Russia is today re-arming Egypt since Israel destroyed much of Egypt's Russian-made arms. She is also reported to be transforming the old cite of Resafa in the Syrian desert into a major modern air base so that 100 miles around it is now a restricted area, and is shipping many arms and jet fighter planes into Syria through the Syrian seaport of Latakia - all this in preparation for making further trouble for Israel from which Russia hopes to gain.

Little do the world's statesmen and strategists know that they are only helping to prepare the way for the things that God has foretold will happen. God has said, "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people and for My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted My land." Joel 3:2. Jerusalem is the world center as God sees it, and much sad history is yet to be made in

that vicinity.

As long as Israel's Arab neighbors steadfastly refuse to recognize Israel's right of existence as a legitimate nation, Israel will not be safe. And as long as Russia promotes Arab hostility to Israel, Israel is destined to live constantly under fear of attack, and the world's peace is in danger. The untiring efforts of certain great leaders to bring about peace in that troubled area remind us of what God said in Eze. 13 "Because, even because they have seduced My people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar: say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it. Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?" Chap. 13:10-12. As it was then, so it is now; the wall of peace they are seeking to build and repair will not stand, and God refers to those who work on it as daubers. Peace in the Middle East is not to be had by globetrotting statesmen working out a compromise here and exacting a promise there in a valiant but vain effort to preserve the status-quo. God who dispersed Israel after their rejection of their Messiah has allowed them to regather there for the further fulfillment of His purposes concerning them and the nations, and He has said that He will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone to all nations (Zech. 12:3).

The question might well be asked, What did Israel gain then by withdrawal from the Gulf of Aqaba coast and the Gaza Strip, for while she held these, her position was better than after they were relinquished. The answer to that seems quite apparent, and it also fits into the prophetic picture of the time to come.

Now that the West forced Israel to give up certain advantages without a guarantee of anything from Egypt, the West is morally obligated to see that Israel does not lose thereby. And by Israel's prolonged holding of the trouble spots, the West, and the United States in particular, were forced to go beyond their original intentions of committing themselves to secure Israel's withdrawal. When they finally withdrew, the United States was placed in a position of being implicitly bound to see that Israel did not suffer thereby. President Eisenhower wrote to Ben-Gurion that he had faith that "Israel will have no cause to regret" its decision to withdraw. Thus it may well be that Israel's diplomatic skill in delaying the withdrawal has gained a very significant victory, for they made it known that while they were not given guarantees, they withdrew with the "assumption" that they would have the freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and not be subjected to attacks from the Egyptian Fedayeen out of Gaza.

All this is very significant in the light of Scripture, for it is evident there from that Israel is due for more and more attacks from the Arabs, both North and South of Palestine.

Neither the United Nations nor the United States is going to produce peace in the Middle East by conciliatory means. Sooner or later the West must come into open conflict with the Arab world to protect Israel, and the events of the last few months have been but preliminary to the great alignment for the time of the end.

At the close of Balaam's prophecy, he says, "Alas, who shall live when God doeth this! And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish forever." Numb. 24:23, 24. This early prophecy of the end foretells of the West's

coming east to afflict the Arab world, and then later perishing as the revived Roman Empire will do at the hand of the King of kings who comes to make His foes His footstool.

Another prophetic scripture that shows the West's future involvement with Israel as their protector is Dan. 9:27. "And he [the Roman prince that will come] shall confirm [a] covenant with [the] many [the mass of the Jews] for one week [or heptad - a period of seven years]." The man who will head the revived Roman Empire will come to the aid of the Jews when they are beset by the Arabs, and he will make a concrete agreement with them - they will not have to go on "assumptions" then, but the events of the last few months are paving the way for this.

In Isa. 28, we are told that the "scornful men" who will rule in Jerusalem will say that they have made an agreement for their protection which is "a covenant with death," and an agreement with hell. (vv. 14, 15.) This is the way God describes the covenant that the head of the Roman Empire will make with the mass of the Jews in Israel, but He says it "shall not stand." v. 18. The Jews will in the main be apostate and accept the antichrist, and he will be in league with the Western "beast."

Now as we go to press, the Suez Canal has been partially reopened, and Egypt has plainly stated that Israel's shipping will not be allowed access, and that they do not intend to be bound by any international understanding that the Gulf of Aqaba is to be open for navigation to and from Elath. Also Israelis have been killed by marauders from Gaza again. So we see that peaceful gestures and concessions to Egypt have not changed their refractoriness in the least. Eventually a showdown must come between the Arabs and the Western nations who are now morally bound to aid Israel. Thus we see things taking definite shape for the days that are to follow our translation from this scene to be with Christ forever.

Surely that blessed moment is near at hand. Not one thing need take place before we hear His shout. Therefore we should not be distressed by any unrest about us, but may we be found in the attitude of "men that wait for their lord"; that is, that we have everything in readiness for His coming, so as to "open unto him immediately." (Luke 12:36.) We all know the figure used here, for we have called at homes where the occupants were not ready to open up at once; they had to do certain things before they could receive guests. May it not be so with us; may our homes and our lives be such that we would welcome that shout at any moment, for truly we may hear it at any time.

Israel — Arabs — the West: the Editor's Column

Chapter 18 of Isaiah is very interesting and instructive in view of Arab intransigence toward Israel; for the recent Palestinian struggle, and all the United Nations' resolutions, implemented by a small army in the field, have settled nothing basically. The old hostility of Ishmael, Esau, Moab, and Ammon toward the posterity of Jacob is as deep and real as ever. Almost as soon as the Israeli army withdrew from the Gaza strip, infiltrators from there began again to harass adjacent Israeli territory. The following excerpts from Arab sources will indicate their continued belligerent mood:

"Egypt is not relying on the United Nations or the United States to secure her rights. Egypt can liberate her territory from the invaders... and the fight will not be merely for Gaza or Sharm El-Sheikh, but will be a life or death struggle to settle the whole issue.... Regardless of the powers that support Israel, the world still has a chance to snap off the thorn of Israel." -Radio Cairo, Feb. 9, 1957.

"Israel is a passing cloud that currently blocks the sun, but it will not be long before she ceases to exist.... Israel will get out of Palestine... and then every Arab will cheer." - Al-Jihad, Jordan Daily, Feb. 24.

"The Arab states must triumph over imperialism and its underlings and crush Israel -and thus achieve their desired supreme unity." -Voice of The Arabs, Cairo, March 5.

"Arab nationalism is the ammunition... which we shall use against Zionist hopes.... Arab nationalism is the main ammunition in our long battle against Zionism and imperialism." -Colonel Abdul Nasser, in Cairo, March 10.

"Tomorrow, with the help of Allah, Palestine will be regained." -Al Bilad, Jordan Daily, March 11.

"We believe that Israel is the source of evil in the Middle East and in all the world, and, before the eyes and ears of the world we say openly, We are Israel's enemies." - Al Jihad, Jordan Daily, March 17.

God has promised that land to Abraham and his seed, and those who say that God is through with the children of Israel fly in the face of Scripture. They are to possess it in peace and security. What they have now is not in any sense the fulfillment of God's promise.

The Jews do not now occupy the land in its entirety; they only have portions of it. The old city of Jerusalem is very definitely in Arab hands, and the sacred temple site is defiled by a Mohammedan mosque. Such conditions certainly will not exist when they come into possession of the land from God's hand. They have done wonderful things in shaping an ordered government with modern industrial and agricultural improvements and some economic stability. We might say that the success in less than a decade is phenomenal, but yet it has not been done with faith in God and in His Christ. What they have accomplished is a credit to their fortitude and perseverance, but it will not stand. That people, "beloved for the fathers' sakes," are due for greater disappointments than anything they have yet encountered. When their true deliverance

comes, it will come to a repentant and chastened people who will accept all on the ground of God's pure mercy - not as a result of their lifting themselves by sheer determination and effort.

Neither will the West's conciliatory attitude toward the Arabs bring peace to the Middle East. It seems evident from current developments, and as indicated by the Scriptures, that the West will yet be forced to take an openly hostile attitude toward the Arabs in order to defend the Jews. Even a worldly writer recently said that in his opinion the Arabs will eventually strike against Israel on a large scale, and that with the support of Russia, so that the Western powers will have to intervene. He also predicted that the future world struggle will be decided in the Middle East in the "foreseeable future."

When this happens, and the West comes to afflict Asshur and afflict Eber (Numb. 24:24) the future head of the Western confederacy will give the Jews their land, including the old city of Jerusalem, so that the temple will again be built in the appointed place. This will be the league which the Western "beast" will make with the

Jews for a period of seven years (Dan. 9:27), and it will be very promising. What has been going on in Israel in the last nine years will be dwarfed by the mammoth aid to be given at that time. It is here that Isa. 18 comes in with the description of the great human work yet to be done to make Israel a prosperous nation. Let us read the first two verses of this notable chapter:

It should begin with the word "He," not "Woe"; it is a call to a great maritime power. "He to the land shadowing [or whirring] with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia [or rather, Cush]: that sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!"

The call is to a great power which will lie outside of Israel's former connections - beyond the rivers of Cush. The descendants of Cush settled on the Nile in Egypt, and on the Euphrates in Asia, so this great power is some nation beyond the Nile and the Euphrates, some power unknown to the Israel of Isaiah's day. It will exercise its might and resources to bring the Jews into their land; for there can be no doubt that the Jews are the people and Palestine the land which is spoken of by the prophet - their land has been despoiled by the constant washings of the Gentiles as rivers ever since Nebuchadnezzar took it in B.C. 606. They are the people who had an auspicious beginning as God brought them out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses by great signs and wonders.

It might be well to quote here the words of the great 18th century prelate, Samuel Horsley, regarding these verses: "The country, therefore, to which the prophet calls, is characterized as one which, in the days of the completion of this prophecy, should be a great maritime and commercial power, forming remote alliances, making distant voyages to all parts of the world with expedition and security, and in the habit of affording protection to their friends and allies. Where this country is to be found is not otherwise said than that it will be remote from Judea, and, with respect to that country, beyond the Cushean streams." These remarks sound very much like present-day phraseology in the matter of international diplomacy and alliances.

Next., let us read the third verse of our chapter: "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he [the head of this great Western power] lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he [same person] bloweth a trumpet, hear ye." When this great leader

espouses Israel's cause and gives their Arab opponents a severe setback, he will startle the world with the pronouncement of his policy of "Israel for the Israelites" as he throws the resources of the Western confederacy into the crusade. The magnitude of Western transportation will be at the disposal of Jews returning to their homeland. This, then, will be the great climax of man's attempting to set up Israel in their land - of human effort to do what God has promised He will do. Under such auspices and patronage great numbers of Jews from all parts of the world will return to Palestine to do great things. But what will there be of God or for God in all these great undertakings?

Nothing; simply nothing! It will be man, and the Jew, acting in independency; and we learn from other scriptures that there will be a trinity of evil at work - the devil, the "beast," and the two-horned lamb-like beast (or antichrist in Jerusalem). These will be in league to set up and deify man, and displace God from His own creation. But what will God do when all their machinations are at work on the side of an apostate Jewish people? Let us read verses 4 to 6 of our chapter:

"For so the LORD said unto me, I will take My rest, and I will consider in My dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest. For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches. They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them." God apparently sits quietly by, but He contemplates man's busy efforts. Then when everything seems about to succeed and Israel be prominently displayed before the world as that which man (not God) has done, God will show the utter folly of man's effort. After a time of great stillness, while man acts, God will bring all their work to naught. When the "vine of the earth" is about to bear fruit under man's culture, God will send the "king of the north" (of Dan. 11:40; Isa. 28:14, 15, 18-20) to "cut down the branches."

Then "It shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My name." Zech. 13:8, 9. It will then be plainly evident that man in his audacity and boldness will not be able to bring about in his own way what God has designed to do in His time and way. We may well weep for the sorrows that are yet to be accomplished upon that people while they remain in their unbelief. God is allowing the present upbuilding of Israel, but it shall not prosper to a conclusion. Then when the West finally espouses Israel's cause and throws its resources into the fray to make Israel a great and prosperous nation, God will watch, and then allow an attacking force from the north to demolish all once more.

But now let us read the last verse of Isa. 18 "In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden underfoot, whose lands the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion."

After all seems hopelessly lost, after a great desolation of that which looks promising now, and will look more so under the Roman beast, God's time will come to re-establish that people in their land under His favor. He will thus rebuke all the work of man, either to further Israel's possession of the land, or to frustrate it as the Arabs are doing and will yet do more violently. And when God brings

them back there will be no breakdown or disruption of His plans.

Let us connect with Israel's restoration under God's favor (after their repentance and weeping over what they did to their Messiah before Pilate), the 60th chapter of Isaiah:

"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows [or dovecotes]? Surely the isles shall wait for Me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because He hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in My wrath I smote thee, but in My favor have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought.... The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel." vv. 8-14.

This describes the earthly Jerusalem in the day of Christ's reign, when God's Son will sit on His holy hill of Zion, according to God's decree, in spite of the futile efforts of men to prevent it. (See Psalm 2) This will in no way alter the heavenly scene of glory which will be for the raised and glorified saints, but God's Son must be honored in this world where He was once cast out. And when that moment comes, all the resources of the earth will be put at the disposal of that people, "beloved for the fathers' sakes," but who for 2000 years have suffered as a result of that fateful cry, "His blood be on us, and on our children."

The fall of Israel has been "the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles," but the receiving of them back into divine favor will be "life from the dead." If the world at large benefited from Israel's fall, how much more will it benefit from the fullness of their blessing in the midst of the earth. Jerusalem will be the spot from which world government will be administered during the Millennium. Therefore it is evident that they have not been permanently cut off as a people, but the Gentiles of Christendom have not continued in God's goodness and favor, and they will be cut off irretrievably. What a solemn time awaits the Christ rejecters of this favored land when the "fullness of the Gentiles be come in"; that is, when the Lord gathers the Church home to His heavenly glory. (Read Rom. 11 carefully.)

Therefore, as we see man at work either to frustrate God's purposes concerning Israel, or to help build Israel, let us keep our bearings and remember that God will neither be hindered by the one, nor helped by the other. Man cannot hasten it before the time, nor can he prevent it when God's time comes. All must bend to His will and way.

"When once His word is passed,

When He has said, 'I will,'

The thing shall come at last,

God keeps His promise still."

And as His purposes and plans for the earth shall be accomplished, just as surely will all His purposes for us, His heavenly people, be fulfilled - we are to be with Christ, and like Him, and

behold His glory.

The King in His Beauty

It is a great point for us to seek to cultivate that in our souls which comes out in this psalm. The queen is occupied with what the King is Himself. We should be occupied, in like manner, with what Christ is. We are very apt to drop down into occupation with the blessings which His gracious hand bestows upon us; but in this psalm it is not what the King does, but what He is, that is dwelt upon. What the Lord values is a heart that delights in Himself.

"My heart is inditing a good matter." The margin shows the meaning of inditing to be boiling, or bubbling up. I fear we are not often in this state. It is a great thing to have the heart boiling up with love to Christ. Instead of this, we are often far from the boiling point in the measure of our devotedness to Christ. What the "good matter" is, the verse explains: "I speak of the things which I have made touching the King"; that is, what I know of Him - not what I have received from Him, but what He is to me. It is the place His blessed Person has in my soul.

Mary chose to be with Himself. She sat at His feet and listened to His words. To be near and with Him was what her soul desired. Affection for the Lord marked her condition, and her place was at His feet. She was absorbed with the Person of Christ. And did she lack intelligence? No; but it was not her object. She broke her box of precious ointment over Him, and Jesus said, "Against the day of My burying hath she kept this." Others made a feast for Him, but Mary's act was in keeping with the circumstances of her Lord. She was at the feast, yet it did not occupy her. The One for whom the feast was made did. Her heart boiled with love to Him. She was the only one there really in the current of His thoughts. The Lord by His Spirit make our hearts to bubble up with real, true love to Christ!

"My tongue is the pen of a ready writer." It is easy to speak of Christ, and to praise Him, when the heart is bubbling up with love to Him. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." If we are silent in worship and praise, it shows the heart must be empty. Christ as an object does not fill the affections. You say, The Spirit must move us to worship. Yes; but if there is not worship, it is evident you are not moved. It is quite true we are to be subject in the worship of the assembly to the leading of the Holy Ghost. So we are taught in the first epistle to the Corinthians; but in this psalm there is subjection to the Spirit of God, and withal a heart overflowing with that which it knows concerning the King. I envy the state of soul here manifested. Listen to the language: "Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips." The address is to Himself. She is so near she can speak to Him. This is further than the bride in Song of Solomon ever goes. She says much about her Beloved, but not to Him. He is to her the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely One; but the one here is so near she can speak to the King; and all slips out so easily: "Therefore God hath blessed Thee forever." In such intimate nearness there

is acquaintance with the mind of God as to His purpose concerning the One He delights to honor.

"Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O most Mighty, with Thy glory and Thy majesty. And in Thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness." There is a right

sense of the majesty of His Person. He was outraged by man, and the puny but guilty arm of man had been raised against Him in the hour of betrayal and falsehood; but the day will come when He shall ride prosperously because of truth. He was the meek and lowly One; but "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted"; and the result of His lowly grace would be His exaltation. "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: the scepter of Thy kingdom is a right scepter. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore, God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." He is anointed above His fellows; He is preeminent. Who are these fellows? Heb. 2 shows that we are His fellows: "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not

ashamed to call them brethren." He leads praise in their midst (Heb. 2:11, 12). And again we read, "We are made partakers [or fellows] of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." Heb. 3:14. He is anointed with the oil of gladness, and the precious ointment drops from the head to the skirts of His garments. In the day of Christ's glory, when He will ride prosperously, we shall be with Him, and shall share that glory; the oil of His gladness will drop on us.

"All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made Thee glad." There is fragrance in Christ, and that should come out in us. "We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ." 2 Cor. 2:15.

"Kings' daughters were among Thy honorable women: upon Thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir." When the King is spoken of, the bride is Jerusalem; so this psalm has a millennial bearing. Israel will look on Him whom she rejected and pierced, and will mourn. The Lord will save His people from their sins, and in divine righteousness give them a place in His presence. "Upon Thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir." Then will she consider, and incline her ear to Him. She is to forget her own people and her father's house. But what does this teach us? That there must be the bringing in of Christ between the soul and everything here. Nature must be distanced by Him; I must forget it. Christ must be my first object. Is He the first consideration with us? or is self and our houses, and the care of them—the family, the friend, or the father's house? The Spirit of God here says: "Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house"; and Jesus said: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." Matt. 10:37.

"So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty." He will then see beauty in thee. You will then be for Christ what Eve was to Adam; and there is the other side: "He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him." The claims of the Lord weigh with those who have Christ as their object. What joy when our souls in any measure enter into this! Christ eclipsing everything, and worship freely flowing out to Him. And

we read of the beauty of the King's daughter, that she is "all glorious within." Here are her moral adornings, graced in the virtues of Christ. His beauty is that in which she shines, and because of it He gets praise: "Therefore shall the people praise Thee."

The Lord by His Spirit keep His dear Son before each of our hearts, that we may have the sense that He is ever near and with us, and that we walk with Him. "He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him."

"My heart is full of Christ, and longs

Its glorious matter to declare.
Of Him I make my loftier songs;
I cannot from His praise forbear.
My ready tongue makes haste to sing
The glories of the heavenly King.
"Fairer than all the earth-born race,
Perfect in comeliness Thou art;
Replenished are Thy lips with grace,
And full of love Thy tender heart.
God ever blest, we bow the knee,
And own all fullness dwells in Thee."

Lot's Choice: Present Advantage

There is much profitable instruction in tracing, in contrast, the characters of Lot and Abraham. Both were saints of God, yet how different as to their walk! how different also as to their personal experiences in regard to peace, joy, and nearness to God! And there is ever this difference between a worldly-minded believer and one, through the grace of God, truehearted. In the scriptural sense of the term (2 Pet. 2:8), a "righteous man," Lot "vexed his righteous soul from day to day." Abraham walked before God.

The Lord cannot but be faithful to His people; still, He does mark in their path that which is not of faith, and Lot's trials are the consequences of his unbelief. There is one thing very marked in his course throughout-great uncertainty and obscurity as to his path and as to the judgment of God, because of not realizing that security in God which would have enabled him to walk straight forward, while there is no hesitation in things connected with this world. And it is thus with ourselves if we have not taken Christ for our portion heartily. Abraham's was a thoroughly happy life - he had God for his portion.

Lot is seen rather as the companion in the walk of faith of those who have faith, than as one having and acting in the energy of faith himself. Therefore, when put to the test, there is only weakness. In how many things do we act with those who have faith before having it for ourselves. It was thus with the disciples of the Lord; and the moment they were put to the test, there was weakness and failure. The soul will not stand when sifted through temptation if walking in the light of another.

God's personal call of Abraham at the first is mixed with a sort of unbelief in Abraham, much like the reply in the Gospel, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." He sets out, but he takes Terah his father with him, and goes and lodges in Haran (he could not take Terah with him into the land of Canaan). Now God had called Abraham, but not Terah. He left everything except Terah, and entered into possession of nothing. But he tried to carry something with him which was not of God, and he could not. It is not until after Terah's death that he removes into Canaan where God had called him. (Compare Gen. 12:1, and Acts 7:4.) "So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him.... They went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came."

Lot (though having faith) goes in the path he treads as the companion of Abraham. As to actual position, he stands with Abraham. He is truly a saint of God, though afterward we find him treading the crooked path of the world's policy.

God blesses them. The land is not able to bear them so that they may dwell together (chap. 13). They have flocks, and herds, and much cattle, and there is not room for them both - they must separate. Circumstances, no matter what (here it is God's blessings), reveal this.

They are in the place of strangers, that is clear ("the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land"). They have nothing in possession, not so much as to put a foot upon; all rests on their

valuing the promises (Heb. 11:9). They have just two things, the altar and the tent. Journeying about and worshiping God, they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Abraham confesses that he is such; he declares plainly that he seeks a country; "wherefore," we are told, God is not ashamed to be called his God. (He is never called "the God of Lot.") This acts upon the whole spirit and character of Abraham.

The land is not able to bear them that they may dwell together; there is a strife between their herdsmen; they must separate. Abraham says, "Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right." His heart is upon the promises of God, and everything else is as nothing in comparison. It might seem a foolish thing to let Lot choose - to give up to Lot - the right to do so is certainly his own; but his heart is elsewhere; his faith goes entirely free from earthly advantage.

Not so Lot - he lifts up his eyes - the plain of Jordan is well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the Lord, and he chooses it. There is nothing

gross or wrong in itself, in his choosing a well-watered plain; but it just distinctly proves that his whole heart is not set upon the promises of God. Thus is he put to the test. And thus, in the way of the accomplishment of God's purposes, character is displayed. Abraham's conduct has for its spring a simplicity of faith which embraces God's promises (Heb. 11:13), and wants nothing besides. Faith can give up. The spirit of a carnal mind takes all it can get. Lot acts upon the present sense of what is pleasant and desirable; why should he not? what harm is there in the plains of Jordan? His heart is not on the promises.

The companion of Abraham, he is brought to the level of his own faith.

But he will dwell in the cities of the plain if he chooses the rivers of the plain. It is not his intention to go into the city; but he will get there step by step. (He must find trouble in the place he has taken pleasure in.) There is not the power of faith to keep him from temptation. Where there is not the faith that keeps the soul on the promises, there is not the faith to keep it out of sin. It is not insincerity, but people's souls are in that condition, and God proves them.

Abraham's path, all the way through, is characterized by personal intimacy with God- visits from God - the Lord comes down to him and explains His purposes, so that he is called the "Friend of God" (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; Jas. 2:23); and this is not only as to his own portion, but as to what He is going to do with Sodom - the judgment He is about to bring on Sodom, though personally he has nothing to do with it, and the promise is his hope (chap. 18). So now He tells His people what He is going to do about the world. Though their hope is connected with their own views, with the promises and the heavenly Canaan, He takes them into His confidence as to what is to happen where they are not to be.

Lot, the while, is vexing his righteous soul. Does he know anything about the purposes of God? Not a word. He is saved, yet so as by fire; though a "righteous soul," his is a vexed soul instead of a soul in communion with God, vexed "from day to day" (there is so far right mindedness that it is a vexed soul). He is there before the judgment comes, with his soul vexed, while happy Abraham is on the mount holding conversation with God; and when it does come, how does it find him? With his soul vexed and totally unprepared for it, instead of in communion with God about it.

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation," and He delivers "just Lot." But, while thus vexing his righteous soul with their unlawful deeds, the men of the city have a right to say to him, "What business have you here? This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge." v. 9. You are quarreling with sin in the place of sin. They have a perfect right to judge thus. All power of testimony is lost by reason of association with the world, when he ought to be witnessing to his total separation from it; there is vexation of spirit, but not power. When Abraham got down into Egypt, he had nothing to do but to go right back to the place of the altar he had built at the first. Lot testifies, but he cannot get out of the place he is in; the energy that ought to have thrown him out is neutralized and lost by his getting into it; his daughters have married there; he has ties where his unbelief has led him. It is far more difficult to tread the uphill road than the downhill road.

Whenever the counsels of God are revealed to faith, it brings out the spirit of intercession. The word to the prophet, "Make the heart of this people fat" (Isa. 6), at once brings out, "Lord, How long!" So here, Abraham pleads with the Lord to spare the city. (But there are not ten - there is not one righteous man in Sodom with the exception of Lot.) As regards his own position, he is looking down upon the place of judgment. And in the morning, when the cities are in flames, he finds himself in quietness and peace on the spot where he "stood before the LORD" (v. 27), not at all in the place where the judgment had come, solemnized indeed by the scene before him, but calm and happy with the Lord.

The Lord sends Lot out of the midst of the overthrow. Angels warn him, and faith makes him listen. But his heart is there still. There are connections that bind him to Sodom, and he would fain take them with him. But you cannot take anything with you for God out of Sodom; you must leave it all behind. The Lord must put the pain where you find the pleasure. "While he lingered" (there is hesitation and lingering in the place of judgment, when the judgment has been pronounced; he ought to have left at once; but the place, the path, and spirit of unbelief enervate the heart), "the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city." And now it is, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." v. 17. As for the goods, the sheep, and the much cattle, he must leave them all behind. If the Lord's faithfulness is shown in saving Lot, it is shown also in breaking the links that bind him to the place. His mind is all distraction. He says, "Oh, not so, my Lord.... I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die." He has lost the sense of security in the path of faith. Such is ever the consequence of the path of unbelief in a saint of

God; he thinks the path of faith the most dangerous path in the world. Lot has become used to the plain, and the place where Abraham is enjoying perfect security and peace is a mountain. The Lord spares Zoar at his request, and lets him flee thither; but, on seeing the judgment, he flees to the mountain, forced to take refuge there in the end.

This is an extreme case; we shall find the same thing true in varying degrees. Abraham could give up (that sacrifice always belongs to faith); but there are trials to the believer, because of unbelief - because he is a believer, but in a wrong place. Lot was a "righteous man"; but, when he did not walk in the path of faith, he had vexation of soul and trouble - a righteous soul, but where a

righteous soul ought not to be. Observe his incapacity simply to follow the Lord. Observe all his uncertainty. So will it be with us; if we are walking in the path of unbelief, there will be trouble which is not our proper portion, but which comes upon us because we are in a wrong, worldly place - the trial that belongs to unbelief. We may be seeking the compassion of the Church of God when we are only suffering, like Lot, the fruit of our own unbelief- the simple path of faith having been departed from because we had not learned to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. Giving up is our proper position, simple sacrifice in the knowledge and present consciousness that "all things are ours."

The Gospel of Luke

This chapter is the beginning of a series - chapters 8, 9, and 10. Chapter 8 is the Lord's own ministry, chapter 9 is the ministry of the twelve, and chapter 10 is the ministry of the seventy. The very fact that we have the ministry of the seventy is symptomatic of Luke's Gospel. Very properly, we do not get it in Matthew. The Lord is there in contact with the Jew, and the ministry sent forth is accommodated to the Jew. Here He was more on moral ground, and human ground, and therefore He sends forth a ministry characterizing the gospel sent forth largely to the whole human family. Did you ever think it a strange thing that the kingdom of God had to be preached in this world? It is a witness against the world that God has to publish His claims in it. The Lord has not only to announce that which meets the necessity of sinners, but God's rights in the world. We find that God lays His claim to me, as well as makes provision for me. I cannot accept salvation without bowing to His claims. The Creator has to publish His rights in His own creation. What a thought! Earth in mad rebellion against its Creator! We get both these thoughts in what is called preaching the gospel, and preaching the kingdom of God. God is proposing His rights to man, as well as revealing His provision for man.

When the Lord went forth, how was He attended? By the twelve - by men that had been attracted to Him, and women out of whom He had cast devils. That is His suited train - quite a different train from that of Him who comes upon the white horse in judgment. That is a suited train too. "The armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses"; but this is a degraded company, and the more largely you sum up the account of their degradation, the more you magnify the grace of Him who led them on. It will not be so when He comes in judgment.

The chapter begins with the parable of the sower. Do you think you have found the secret of that parable? It is to expose man. The seed was one and the same, but the dropping of the seed here and there was to expose the character of the soil. The seed makes manifest the soil. There is not a heart that is not seen in one or the other of these soils. The first character is the highway; that is where the devil prevails. The second is the rock; that is where nature prevails. The third is the thorny ground; that is where the world prevails. The fourth is the good ground; that is where the Holy Ghost prevails. If you examine your heart, day by day, you will find that one of these has its pleasure with you. The business of the parable is to expose you to yourself, and to make manifest the four secret influences under the power of which we are all morally moving every hour. Take the joy of the stony ground hearer. It is well to rejoice, but, if when I listen to the claims of God my conscience is not reached, that is a bad symptom. It is the levity and sensibility of nature. How wretchedly we are treating God if we do not deal with Him in conscience! If I have revolted from such a one, am I to return to Him without conviction of conscience? It would be an insult to Him. Supposing I had insulted you, would it be well for me to come and talk to you about some light matter? We have all insulted God, and are we to come to Him with a little animal-like joy?

The thorny ground hearers are a grave-hearted people that weigh everything in anxious balances. They carry the balances in their pocket, and try the importance of everything; but the mischief is

that, as they weigh, they make the world as heavy as Christ. Are we not often conscious of that calculating spirit prevailing? In contrast with the others, we get the good ground. We are not told what has made it good, but suppose we have the devil, nature, and the world (in the first three parables), what is the only remaining influence? There is nothing but the Holy Ghost. It is very needful nowadays to testify that the plow must come before the seed basket. What makes the heart good? He that has gone forth to plow the fallow ground and sow the seed.

God could never get a blade of grass from our hearts if He did not work Himself. The heart can never have anything for God that has not gone through the process of the plow. Be it with the light measure of the eunuch, or the deeper strength of the jailer, the plow must go through the fallow ground. Those of the thorny ground talk of their farm, their business, their merchandise. Those by the highway say, Oh, let us think of it tomorrow. Then too, there is a sensibility that can rejoice under a sermon. It is happy for me that my conscience has to do with God, for when my conscience has to do with Him, then everything has to do with Him. We should try to get our hearts into the ministerial glories of Christ. Then we have Himself, because everything that passed from Him had the mark of deep truthfulness. Then, if we reach Himself, we reach God. It is the way we are introduced to God in this world. The world is full of its speculations about God, and the issue of them all is thick darkness which the wisdom of man finds impenetrable; but in Christ we find nothing less than the full glory of God. Let me take the happy path of studying Jesus. By that blessed happy path I can study the Father.

Now we come to a little passage in His life. "On a certain day,... He went into a ship," and He fell asleep. "So He giveth His beloved sleep." Now if the disciples had been wise, what would they have done? With what intent and worshiping gaze would they have looked at their sleeping Master! The musing of their hearts would have been, Let winds and waves arise; He has said, Let us go to the other side, and that is the pledge of safety. They might have gone to sleep with their Master but, instead, they look at the rising waves, and cry, "Master, we perish."

Are you often, in providence, called into company with a sleeping Jesus? He does not always manifest Himself at your side; nevertheless, He has said, "Let us go over unto the other side." His thought is on the end of the journey - yours and mine on the path. He never would have slept if He had not pledged them the end of the journey. Then, when the Lord makes good all that He had promised, they reap astonishment where they should have reaped worshiping admiration. Have you not often found it so? How often He comes down to your level when you cannot reach His elevation! The result is a poor experience instead of a bright and sunny experience. If He cannot take you up on the wings of faith to His elevation, He will come down and save you to the end, though He will show you what you have lost.

Now we get three cases together: Jesus in Gadara, in the crowd, and at the bedside. It is a series of victories. First we see Him in Gadara. Here is the strength of Satan displayed. He did not wait on faith here. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and would destroy them. In the case of the poor woman in the crowd, He waits for and upon faith. We have often marked the traces of His grace and the pathway of His glory. Nothing could meet this poor captive of Satan. Human power left him as it found him. The Lord delivers him, and deliverance in His hand is as perfect as captivity in Satan's. Yes, and something more. His restoration is more than mere restoration. Restoration would never describe the ways of God. With Him it is a bringing forth of fresh glories

from ruins. Not only was Legion cast out, but the man was impregnated with this principle, that he would be with Jesus for eternity; yet, at His bidding, would go to the ends of the earth. Is that merely restoration? What would not one give for such a mind as that! To have found a home in His presence; yet, if it be His blessed will, to go to the ends of the earth in drudging service!

Now, as He passed on, a poor woman touched Him in the crowd. He was touched by thousands, but the virtue that was in Him waited on faith. The moment faith commanded, virtue went forth. Now, have you more in Christ than a healer? This poor woman had. She did not know when she came up that she had a title to Himself. So she modestly retreated as a debtor. Very right that a debtor should carry herself with humility; but oh, Christ is more to you and me than that. The healer puts Himself into relationship. When He inquired after her she began to tremble. Her faith had measured her title to touch Him, but she was not prepared when He called her face to face to look at Him, till He said, "Daughter, be of good comfort." There is no spirit of liberty in our souls if we do not know relationship. Nature cannot trust God, but the blessed way of God is to show me that I have an interest in Himself, as well as in the saving virtue that is in Him. We have relationship now - it does not wait for glory. In spirit I walk in the family mansion now, as soon I shall personally in the glory. The woman left Him, not only with a healed body, but with a calm and satisfied spirit. Is any book so worthy of reading as the book that we call Jesus?

Now we get to the house of Jairus, and the Lord meets the power of death in its fresh victory. The poor damsel is delivered from the bands of death, as the man was delivered from the bands of Satan, and the poor woman from the bands of corruption. Oh, let us acquaint ourselves with Him, and say, "Christ for me, Christ for me!"

Chapter 9

A very important thing is suggested at the opening of this chapter. We were observing the three distinct ministries of chapters 8, 9, and 10, and that the largeness of the ministry set forth bespeaks the character of this Gospel. The Lord did not, it is true, step over Jewish limits, but He is looking at man in the Jew, and not, as in Matthew, at the Jew in the Jew. Now observe, in sending out the twelve, He told them to heal the sick and to preach the kingdom of God. They were to cure diseases and to challenge the claims of God in the face of the world. Do you think that God has come into the world, bringing salvation, to surrender His own rights to your necessities? He could not do it; and you, if in a right mind, could not wish it. The glory of the gospel is, that He is glorified while you are saved. Could you enjoy a robbery? It would be a robbery if you could get a blessing which took glory from God. You get this in the cross if you read it aright. It is the glory of the gospel that God could be just and yet the justifier of him that believes in Jesus. We get a sample of that here. He tells them, then, to take with them neither scrip, nor money, nor bread. He says, as it were, You are going forth with My message; lean on Me. No man goeth a warfare at his own charges. I will take care of your necessities, and do you let your moderation be known unto all. He says, "Whosoever will not receive you,... shake off the very dust from your feet." While there is a graciousness attaching to such ministry, there is a solemnity too.

Now let us look at Herod for a moment. Tell me, do you think you have done with sin, when you have committed it? One thing is certain: It has not done with you. The charm of sin is gone the moment it is perpetrated. That is your way of disposing of sin, but conscience which makes cowards of us all, lets you know that it has not done with you. Herod had beheaded John long

before, but now it was said of some that John was risen from the dead, and he is perplexed. Here the worm that never dies was doing its business. I am not of course determining its eternity, but the Lord in such cases lifts the veil from hell and shows us the worm at its work. Herod could not rest. How could he? - the murderer of the greatest witness of God in the world at that moment!

Now the apostles return and tell what they have done, and we have the scene of feeding the multitude. Here we get the largeness of the heart of Christ, in contrast with every human heart. Could you get a sample of the human heart more easy to love than Peter's? He was an open-hearted, good-natured man that you could easily have loved; but look at it in contrast with the heart of Christ! They said, "Send the multitude away." No, said He, Give ye them to eat. And they said, What! are we to go and buy? It was said in a sulky mood of mind, but the Lord did not refuse to go on with His sulky disciples. He met with vanity, ignorance, heartlessness, bad temper. It is a very interesting study to see how He always overcame evil with good. If my bad temper puts you into a bad temper, you have been overcome of evil. God never gives place to evil. This is a beautiful instance of it. The disciples said, Send them away. "Make them sit down," said Jesus; then, being the master of the feast, He must supply the guests.

Now, mark something of the moral beauty of Jesus' feast. He sits at the head of the table in the glory of God, and as the perfect Man. As God He puts forth creative powers, and was acting without robbery. He not only was God, but there was no form of divine glory that He would not assume - no act of divine power that He would not put forth. But He took His place also as the perfect Man. He was an entire contradiction to Adam. What was Adam's offense? He did not give thanks, but assumed to be master of all. It was a man refusing to be thankful. The Lord gives thanks. I see Him taking His place at the head of the table in the wilderness, as perfect God and perfect Man. The worship that God got in the Person of Jesus was richer incense to Him than if Adam had lived forever as a thankful man. He came to erect out of the ruins a temple for the glory of God that the creation in integrity would never have yielded.

Now the blessed God would have us know that at His table there is always more than enough. We know what it is to sit comfortably at a plentiful board. When I see very God making the feast, and very Man giving thanks, then leaving cartloads, so to speak, of fragments, what can I do but be thankful! We may, each one and all, be full and go away thankful that there is plenty for others.

Now we get a very important part in the gospel story. The Lord was in prayer, and when He arose, He asked His disciples, "Whom say the people that I am?" Let me say, there is a great deal to be found out in the style of the moment in Scripture. The very style in which an event comes out, gives it a character. That question draws out the proof that the world was rejecting Him. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." You are now in the vestibule of the mountain of transfiguration. He has ascended into heaven as the earth-rejected Son of man. If you ask, Were not all things known to God from the creation of the world? - surely they were; but these things came out in great moral glory. Man would not give Him place here, so God took Him up to heaven. "Whom say the people that I am?" And they answered, "Some say, ... Elias; and others, ... one of the old prophets." What! is that the best thought that Israel has of Me? "But whom say ye that I am?" "The world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." Let us search out the undercurrent of the spirit of Scripture, not merely track the words.

Now the Lord says to the disciples, Do not you be loving your life. Come away up to the hill with Me, and there I will show the glory. And now I will ask you, What suits the man on his way to heavenly glory? Is it money and power, and such like, he should be seeking? Judge in yourselves, Is it consistent in a man to load himself with clay on his way to a place where there is to be no clay? The Lord shows you the path, and shows you the end of the path. It is only our love of present things that makes such a lesson difficult. My whole soul seals it; would that my whole heart adopted it.

After this the Lord comes down and meets His disciples in their inability to cast out a demon. Now, on no occasion does the Lord express disappointment of heart more vividly than here. "O faithless and perverse generation." All human development in Christ was perfectly natural. I ask you, When you have been particularly happy on the mount with Christ, would not the pollutions of the earth, and the poverty and degradation of the Church, pain your spirit more, in contrast with the joy and liberty you have been tasting? The Lord had been tasting the joys of His own land, and He comes down to find faithlessness and defilement. He does not look for glory here, but He does look for the laborings and energy of faith; and when He finds Himself unhelped by the disciples, He says, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you?"

Now when they came down they were amazed at His glory, and while they wondered, He said, "Let these sayings sink down into your ears." In verse 51, He had sent His disciples to prepare His way, and the villagers would not receive Him. The disciples would have commanded fire to come down and consume them, but He rebuked them. Now, why do I put these two things together? I see, in the developments and expression of the Lord's human beauty, a man who knew both how to be abased and how to abound. It is a beautiful virtue in human nature. Paul may have learned it by severe moral culture, but Jesus learned it by the perfection of His own human nature.

How willing and ready our wretched and corrupt nature is to take advantage of a flattering moment! Jesus had not become an object of wonder and amazement, and at once He hides Himself behind a veil of deep degradation. While the rays of glory were shining still about His countenance, He says, Let this be your understanding of Me. And afterward, when they would have brought down fire upon the Samaritan villagers, He said, No. He knew how to be abased. In these ways His moral beauties shine out.

At the close, one comes and says, "I will follow Thee"; and He says, Do not you see how the villagers have treated Me? If you will follow Me, you must take part with One who has not where to lay His head. Now, mark another thing. Another comes and says, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." The sense of the dignity of His ministry was with Him wonderfully. He answers, One fellow creature may do the office of the dying to the dying, but go you and do the office of a living Savior in the world. He carried with Him a sense of His ministerial glory. Paul had it in the vessel going to Rome, and before Agrippa. There he was, a prisoner in chains and degradation, and he stands and says, I would you were like me. What consciousness of secret dignity in the midst of public degradation! "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God" - go and do My business, the business of life, and not of death, in a sin-stricken world. Now tell me, whom do you admire in this world? Do you speak well of those who do well to themselves? Do you hate the practice that speaks of men according to their standing in society? Accustom yourselves to see true glory. It shone in the carpenter's Son, in the captive at Rome, and it shines in the poor

in this world, rich in faith. May the Lord open our eyes to see God's objects in God's light! Amen.

The Gospel of Luke

We have reached chapter 10 in our meditations on this Gospel. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light."

We were observing in the progress of this ministry that we get in chapter 8 the Lord's own ministry; in chapter 9, the ministry of the twelve; and now here in chapter 10, we have the ministry of the seventy. Observe, here it is added, "Whither He Himself would come." The thing that principally strikes us in this is, that the Lord was giving emphasis and every advantage and opportunity to this His closing ministry. He would send forth precursors and follow in their track, that the cities and villages might be without excuse. He was both the Laborer in the field, and the Lord of the harvest. He may have intimated that here, in sending precursors, as great men are wont to do. He carried the sense of the dignity of the Lord of the harvest, as well as of being an earnest-hearted laborer.

Now look for a little at the commission of the seventy. He gave them full notice of what they were to expect. Nothing provokes the world like testimony. Goodness will not suffer here. "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" But if you stand in the way of righteousness against the tide of moral evil and, still more, if you testify for Christ, you may count upon martyrdom. The reason we suffer so little is that we stand so little in testimony. They were not merely to witness of courteous civility between man and man, but of the serious things existing between God and sinners. Then, though they are in the midst of wolves, let their business be that of peacemakers. In verse 7, "In the same house remain." We had this in the mission of the twelve - Do not be looking out for better fare. "What a defiling thing, to see the followers of Christ seeking to make themselves comfortable here! Let the restraining, yielding principle mark your ways. Verse 9 presents again that combination which we were looking at some time ago. Christ stands out severely for the rights of God, and He does graciously for the necessities of sinners.

They were to say, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you," as well as to heal the sick. What a terrible verdict against this world, that God has to publish His kingdom in it! A well regulated family would be insulted if you told the children to be in subjection to their parents, but that the world has to be told to be in subjection to God, only shows its true condition. "Go your ways" - here is something more than courtesy. "Shake off the dust of your feet" - an insulting kind of thing to do. Ah, this is the seriousness of the message. Let them learn, if they receive it not, in the most awful terms you can convey, how they have jeopardized themselves. In verse 17, they return and tell Him that the devils are subject to them. The moment they say this, He gets into the book of Revelation, where not only is there power to cast out devils from this body and that, but He penetrates to where, in the majesty of His authority, Satan shall be cast down. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning." In this the Lord shows Himself to be God.

Let us step aside for a moment, and ask, Have you been accustomed to think of Satan as being in heaven? We find him there in Job, in Kings, here, and in Ephesians; and in the Revelation we see him cast down from heaven. He has possession of the earth, and he is seeking to get possession of that which rules the earth. Now, the disciples come with a sample of power which is to be fully illustrated in Revelation.

Which is dearer to your hearts this moment - your relationships or your circumstances? The Lord puts these balances into the hands of the disciples: You may have power on earth, but it ought not to be so dear to you as your family place in heaven. Did it open Adam's mouth when he was made lord of all around him? No. It was not opened by a sense of property or power; it was opened when he got relationship - when he got Eve. Property ought to be nothing compared with affection. How beautifully the Lord delineates what the heart ought to be! In the day of his coronation, Adam might have rejoiced, but in the day of his espousals, his mouth was opened; his heart had its property, and he was satisfied. "Rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." See how the Lord falls into the current of their joy for a moment. We ought to drop into the current of one another's joy. Then the Lord looks up to heaven and rejoices there. If you look at this utterance, and the same in Matt. 17, you will find a beautiful contrast. There it is the utterance of a heart relieved of its burden - here, the utterance of a heart joyful with what had spread before it. Then He goes on with the joy as He turns to His disciples and says, in substance, Happy are ye (vv. 23, 24). I do not know that the Lord was ever happier than here, save - yes, let us tell it for our comfort - save when a poor, believing heart gave Him meat to eat that others knew not of. Angels may have joy over the repentant sinner, but they do not originate it; it is in their presence. It is beautiful to see God leading the joy of His creation. God leads the joy; the angels only echo it.

The Lord here gave Himself to the disciples. They returned with joy, and He entered into their joy and swelled it out. This is intruded upon in verse 25, and we see that, while the Lord can drop down to a gracious current, He knows how to meet a contrary current. You do not like to have your currents forced from their course, but the Lord puts up with it. The lawyer's intrusion is the worse for what it spoils. The Lord was rejoicing in grace, and the lawyer comes to trespass on every bit of it. The Lord turns to the intrusion at once. Now let me draw a contrast. The disciples, in John 4, beautifully took knowledge of His spirit, and stood back, holding themselves in silence. That is communion. The deepest and richest communion is often in silence. No one said, Why talkest Thou with her? Now this rude scribe knew nothing of the Master's spirit. A blessed thing to be disciples of the spirit of Christ - to know something of His mind! This man comes, and the Lord turns in divine meekness and answers at once, "This do, and thou shalt live." If the law be consulted on a question of acquiring life, the Lord shows what it will say. But the lawyer was willing to justify himself, because, the moment we are put in a legal atmosphere, an effort must be made to reduce the demands of the law. We know little of the mind of God even in legislation, so we do all we can to reduce the law to our own capacity. So the lawyer put another question, little thinking the answer he would get. The Lord indicts a parable, and He sketches, what? What was He forced to sketch? He was forced to sketch His own life and death, because His own life and death was the only illustration of neighborly love which He could get. He could not escape an illustration that exhibited Himself; I speak it to His praise. We never touch the borders of neighborly love but in the perfect life of Jesus.

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." Leaving him half dead - there was our condition. He was ruined, but still his life was in him - well for us our life was in us when we met Jesus. And by chance there passed by that way a priest and a Levite. We may take this up in two aspects. It is a striking characteristic of the impotency of the law to take up our condition; but the Lord shows too, here, that the representatives of the law did not keep what they

taught. I learn here, to the eternal confusion of all lawyers, priests, and Levites, that they have never kept what they set forth. Were they authorized to pass by on the other side? The law will never do for me a sinner, or make its abettors and assertors the thing it would have them to be.

Why is the blessed Lord of glory called a Samaritan? Because He was a stranger. A stranger from heaven has come down to show neighborly love on earth. He has come to exhibit to earth, what earth never could exhibit to itself. How did He do it? First, "He... came where he was." Who could unfold that duly! Did not the Lord do so with you? "And when he saw him, he had compassion." What is the source of all the salvation found in Him? Was there anything in you to draw it out or provoke it? No. Something in Him suggested it. The poor waylaid man was silent from first to last. Was not the poor prodigal silent when they clothed him with the best robe, and Joshua, while they "clothed him with garments," in Zechariah? There is no more blessed answer to the grace of God than the stillness of faith. Joshua, be silent while they clothe you from head to foot, and set a fair miter on your head; poor waylaid man, let Him do to you as He will. The Lord acts from Himself - at the suggestion of His own compassion. And he poured in oil and wine. He happened to have with him the very wealth that was suited to the man that lay in the road. The Lord Jesus came freighted with the very fullness that was fitted to your condition. "And set him on his own beast." He exchanged places with us. He was rich, and we were poor. He became poor that we might be rich.

Next, he had charged himself with the man, and he would look after him. That is the gospel, and that is neighborly love. Again, I say, the blessed Lord was forced on a picture of Himself when He was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" And now, how are we to act the part of the Samaritan? We must begin by being debtors to Jesus, before we can follow Him in the neighborly love - be the waylaid man before we can be the Samaritan. How simply He unfolds the story of our necessity and His fullness.

Now we pass on to the house of Martha and Mary. We see the Lord in a social scene and, as we were observing before, this is the richest table at which we have seen Him; it is the richest exhibition of the Christ of the social scene that the evangelist presents. He was here not as a rebuker or a Savior, as we have seen Him in other places, but as an intimate family friend; and by this scene He has sanctified a Christian household. The presence of Jesus to this day will take hospitality at such a place, in the person of His poor members. The Lord lifts up a picture for our admiration, and we shall have it by-and-by, for heaven itself is but an extended scene of family affection. May the Lord grant you and me to dwell in desire of it. Amen.

The Gospel of Luke

We will now meditate on chapter 11. We are tracing certain characteristics in the Lord's ministry. Here we find the minds of the disciples in what we may call a very interesting, moment. They were learning the necessity of taking the new creation place. The law never taught them that. Prayer is the expression of dependence - the law taught them independence. The soul was insensibly learning its necessities, though not formally, or dispensationally, till after Christ's death. John went beyond Moses his disciples wanted to be taught to pray. So it is, here, with the disciples of the Lord. Then, as the perfect minister of their souls, He sets Himself to teach them, and you find a form of prayer. He suits His words to their then condition. Prayer is the expression of the heart in its present condition.

Then He speaks of man going to a friend at midnight and asking for three loaves. "And he from within"; these are pregnant words! Are you "within"? It is a dangerous condition in this world. What I mean by that is, losing your sympathies with the joys and sorrows around you. So the Lord shows out God's grace on the dark ground of that man's selfishness. You have not to "ask" and "seek" and "knock"; that is importunity. But "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." See the divine readiness in answer to human necessities. Never say importunity is needed to move God. At your leisure read Dan. 10 For "three full weeks" Daniel was chastening his heart before God, and no answer was given. At the end of that time the answer came; and bow? The angel told him that as soon as ever he began to pray, he was heard; but a certain transaction that was going on in heaven, hindered the answer. He went on in importunity for three weeks, but as soon as ever he had prayed, he was heard. So you may have been praying for a long time, and getting no answer, but be sure the interval has been well employed; if not in heaven, in the chastening of your spirit. This beautifully illustrates what we get here. There is no reluctance in God - not that selfishness to be overcome that there was in the man at midnight - but there may be reasons to delay the answer, and when it does come, it may be in a way you are little prepared for. Paul prayed three times, and the thorn was not taken away; but the answer came at last, and in a way he had not expected. The thorn was left until the day of his death, but he was given grace by which he could triumph in it.

When the Lord has thus commented on prayer, he enters (v. 14) on a solemn scene. Two antagonist thoughts come up to Christ. The Lord was constantly enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself. The one set of people came to charge Him with casting out devils by Beelzebub; the other, tempting Him, sought of Him a sign from heaven; the first of these represents perverted religion; the second represents infidelity. We will look at these for a little. We have the same thing to meet to this hour. The Lord takes up the first of these: He begins to address those who say He cast out devils by the prince of the devils. Mark, here is exquisite beauty. "If Satan... be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?" He begins by the gentler argument. I wish you and I copied Him in the beauty of His style and in the truth of His substance - His style was inimitable as His substance was perfect. In answering this contradiction, He begins by showing them the folly of their thought. Would Satan be so foolish? Why are you so senseless?

Now, His argument is addressed to themselves: Let us go back to your favorite, David, when he tuned his harp and delivered Saul from the evil spirit. The carnal mind is not enmity to David, but to God. How He presses in on their consciences! "By whom do your sons cast them out?" Now; He is approaching the serious part of the matter - No doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you; therefore, take care what you are about. The very style in which He conducts the argument has a beauty and an order. He begins by the gentler argument and then goes on to the stronger, and He says, Take care; you are on dangerous ground. Then He indicts the parable of the strong man to show that it was by the finger of God He cast them out. The strong man only gets his house rifled by a stronger than himself. God alone is stronger than Satan. We have already been conquered and made slaves by the devil, so that when we get him bound in this world, God alone has done it, for no child of man could. If I see anyone stronger than Satan in this world, I have a witness that God is here. He shows that what Satan is doing, he is doing in collision with God - that his bruiser has appeared. That is what He taught Satan in the wilderness. Satan is not afraid of us, but he has

more than his match in the Son of God. He is bold as a lion when he comes to you and me, but he trembles in the presence of Christ.

Now, in verse 23, He draws a very solemn conclusion. The battle is proclaimed, and there is no neutrality. God has made the world the scene of the conflict in which the question between Himself and Satan is to be decided, the fruit of which is to occupy eternity. The voice goes forth: "He that is not with Me is against Me." Then when the Lord had thus solemnly sounded the voice of the trumpet across the field - the blast of the silver trumpet, proclaiming war, in verse 24 - He sketches a very solemn sight, where we may linger a little. It is a most pregnant, awful picture. It was illustrated in Israel, and I believe will be in Christendom. The besom of Babylon may have swept the house of Israel, and to this day they may abominate idols, but a clean house may be just as fit for Satan as an unclean one; reformation will not do. So it is with Christendom. I trust there is not a single heart here that trusts in reformation. We are all thankful for that which gives us the privilege of sitting here together in peace; mere Protestantism will not do. The Lord teaches us that the swept and garnished house may be worse than before. What has taken the place of idols in reformed Christendom? Is it knowledge of Jesus?

Yes, in His own elect; but human vanities have conducted man in Christendom by the same path as the Jew. It is only hurrying on to a matured form of apostate iniquity.

Then He turns to those who were requiring a sign, and says, "There shall no sign be given." Now, why was it ever said to Christ, Show us a sign from heaven? Worldliness dictated it. They wanted a Christ that would astonish the world. The Lord would not and could not answer that. If you and I could not accept our Jesus in rejection, we shall never have Him in glory. Shall I think to see my Lord glorified in a defiled world, in the midst of such moral elements as fill it? He will give no sign here. If He is accepted, it must be under the sign of the prophet Jonas - not with a crown on His head, but buffeted and spit upon. Instead of giving a sign from heaven, He gives one from the bowels of the earth, in death and humiliation.

Next He gives the beautiful instance of the Queen of Sheba. Her conscience and affections were stirred when she heard that Solomon had the knowledge of God. "When the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD" (1 Kings 10:1), she took the long journey from the South to Jerusalem, just to find out God. What stirred the conscience of the men of Nineveh? Jonah's words. "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Then the king clothed himself with sackcloth. What a ridiculous thing to put horses and sheep in sackcloth! Who can measure the throes and compunctions of an awakened conscience! You may sit and analyze and criticize, but it will give no account to you. It is blessed to see, as in the stricken cases nowadays, that the convicted conscience cannot stand upon measure. Send us a sign, they said. No, says the Lord, You must believe on Me with your conscience.

While the Lord was about to answer the second of these questions, there was a woman in the company whose affection was stirred. Now tell me, do you not often find human affections stirred under the cross? The daughters of Jerusalem took their places apart from the prosecutors. Now I am not to trust this excitement of nature, but I am not to treat it as vile. There may have been a crop for Jesus in it - a blessing in the cluster. You may be prepared for a variety of moral activities nowadays.

The Lord says to this poor woman, There is a mistake in your judgment; rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it. Connection with Christ is to be spiritual and not fleshly, divine and not human. Do you not delight to know that nothing less than your necessity as sinners is to form the link between you and Jesus? Anything else would snap asunder like the withes that bound Samson.

Chapter 12

At the close of chapter 11 we see the Lord at the house of a Pharisee again. He does not sit in the house of Bethany in the same character as He does here. Such is the multiform beauty of the Lord. We see Him at the houses of three different Pharisees, in chapters 7, 11, and 14 of this Gospel. And here is one beauty of the mind of Christ - He was ever set upon distinguishing things that differ. In that way He illustrated one of the divine properties, as we read in Hannah's song: "The LORD is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed." The Lord was a God of knowledge, always weighing actions; but He never weighed an action in its relation to Himself, but in its relation to God and the person acting. He would pass by an affront offered to Himself (as in the Samaritan villagers), but He would stand firmly against an affront offered to God, as when He made a whip of small cords and drove out the moneychangers from the house of God. We are all prone to judge of actions in relationship to ourselves. That is not Christ, but ruined nature. The Lord might be flattered, and He would not be perverted. It is just as easy for human nature to be perverted by flattery, as to be made angry by an affront. There is scarcely a single person who is not tempted to value or mis-appreciate actions by the way in which they affect himself. You and I soon become the captives of a little flattery. If Peter had said to you in kindly humanity, That be far from thee, would you have said, Get thee behind me? I will answer for you, No. But Peter's softness was not enough to provoke easiness in Christ.

If you examine at your leisure these three Pharisees, in their moral condition, you will find that the Lord had the balances in His hand in each case. All Pharisees were not the same. Some were amiable, some besotted; some led, and some leading; but Christ distinguished between them all. The Pharisee of this chapter, of course, was courteous like the others, and the Lord accepted it, for He was the social Son of man, and came eating and drinking; but He was judging all the time. The Pharisee wondered that He had not "first washed before dinner," and the Lord answered him, and went on with earnest-hearted rebuke, verse after verse, to the end. I should have wondered to read such rebukes after such a simple remark, but wait a little. No rough word or providence will ever cross your path that He will not be able to vindicate. The last verses are His vindication here. He discerned what was underneath the flattery - a hypocritical enmity to Christ, and here it comes out: in the end. They were "laying wait for Him, and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, that they might accuse Him." You will not find that He treats Simon, in chapter 7, in the same manner. He knew there was a different pulse in him, and there was not the peremptory stern rebuke, but, "Come now, and let us reason together." "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." Do not go clumsily through society. Carry the balances of God with you. So did the Lord.

Chapter 12 is the appendix to the scene in the Pharisee's house. He speaks to the multitude and warns them against hypocrisy. He had just been the victim of it, and the Lord always takes a natural text. He did so in John 4. There the water Was His text, and here His text is naturally the scene in the Pharisee's house. In verses 2 and 3 He shows the folly of it. If you and I walked in the

light of eternity, everything that had not reality would be arrant folly to us. What a fine style the Lord can use when He chooses! For the soft whispered slander in the ear, the day shall come when the angel of the Lord shall proclaim it on the housetop. There is the answer to the insinuations that go abroad in well-conducted society.

The next subject is that of fear - the fear of man - and see how beautifully the Lord discusses it. The words of Jesus would give you a well-regulated mind, but your mind must first own its relationship to God as its great paramount circumstance. Now He tells you, if fear finds a place in your mind, not to fear man but God. Then He goes on to show how, if you fear God, you need not fear as a slave, but as a son; not servility, but with confiding reverence. Take Him up in this blessed way; there is not a single hair of your head that He has not numbered. Would you stand in fear before a friend who has numbered your hairs that you might not lose one? That is the way to extract fear. Then He goes on to say, in verses 8 and 9, Now you who confess Me, do not fear the Pharisees. Confess Me, for a day is coming when I will confess you. Could any reasoning be more perfect to extract fear from the heart? If you confess Me before perishing men, I will confess you before the indestructible glory of God. Then He goes on, "Unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven." You and I are the vessels of the Holy Ghost. A personal insult to the Son of man might be forgiven, but refusal of that which the Church carries is without remedy.

Now having disposed of fear, He takes up the subject of worldliness. "One of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me," and the Lord answers, Do you not understand Me? Is it My business to make a man richer in this world? The Lord has promised deep peace to His people, but never honor or wealth. This man mistook His mission, so He now preached a sermon on covetousness, and He gives a striking parable. Now, is the plentiful bringing forth of the ground evil? No. There is nothing evil in a good harvest. Plentifulness is a mercy, but I will tell you what is in it - not evil, but danger. And so it proved with the man in the parable; for he began to turn it to the account of his earthly mind, instead of to the account of the Lord paramount of the soil; and if people are in a thriving way of life, very right, I say, to employ their hands and skill, and it is a mercy if the crop be plentiful, but there is danger in it.

Then from verse 22, He goes on in that exquisite discourse of which, if one did not speak a word on it, the very reading is edification. I am sure of this, that the life of faith and hope is the only deliverance from worldliness. In the keen, discerning, vivid mind of Christ, that is what He shows us in this discourse. A man may be blameless and harmless, and yet he is a worldly man if he is not nourishing the life of faith and hope. Go and get lessons from the ravens and lilies. "Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not." Do you welcome such a lesson as that? Do you love to have the subtlety of a worldly mind shown to you? The love of present things rests itself most sweetly in the heart of man. If I am not trusting in God and waiting for glory, I am exposed by the Lord here as having a worldly mind. If in the Book there is a chapter of moral power, it is this. Get the girdle around your loins, the lamp of hope in your hand, and you will be delivered from worldliness - not waiting for bigger barns, but for the Lord. Does not this beautiful style extricate us for a moment? Ah, if it were kept fresh in our affections all the day long, I will answer for it, our wretched hearts would not be worldly.

Now, He shows that if thus waited for, when He comes, He will change places. You wait on Him now; He will wait on you when He comes. No longer wonder at the certain Samaritan. The traveling Samaritan changes places, and here the girded Lord serves. Love could do nothing more than that. This is love to a neighbor indeed. He will practice it in glory as He did in degradation. These words are easily read, but I ask you one thing: Could they be exceeded? Do you think it hard to gird your loins in waiting for such a master? He will not find it a hard matter to gird Himself and to wait on your joy. Thus speaking, Peter interrupts Him. In this Gospel He is constantly interrupted, because the Lord is here drawing out the human mind to give the passions of the heart their answer. He lets man expose himself. So Peter says, "Speakest Thou this parable unto us?" and the Lord answers, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household?" Again He changes places. If I only wait for Him in heart, He will gird Himself; but if I go forth and serve Him in hand and foot, He will make me ruler. Do you not call Him "Lord" as well as "Savior"? Then He will make you lord.

Next He distinguishes about the many and few stripes. He was carrying the moral balances here - not judicial. He did not come to judge, but by-and-by the day will come when He will hold the balances of righteousness and be as accurate there as He was here. If He did not confound the Pharisees,

He will not confound His servants. It is a great relief to the heart to know that a day of retributive justice is coming. There is not a single moral action you ought not to judge; but retributive judgment awaits another day.

In verse 54 He turns again to glance at the request, Show us a sign. "Ye hypocrites," you are asking a sign; now do you not discern the west wind laid up as a forerunner of heat? Now, where are you to get your forerunner? In Scripture, of course, where they ought to have got theirs, like the wind and cloud, to tell them what was coming. Look at Me, He says; in poverty and fullness, and witness that God has come among you.

In the last two verses, He glances back at the man who asked Him to be a divider. You have been dragging your brother to a magistrate. Another is dragging you, and I would advise you to make terms with him - Moses, the law of God. Make all diligence, for I tell you, if once you get there, you will not get away till you answer the demands of the throne of God. Could anyone here do it? If you cannot stand before the throne of God, you are not saved:

So, while that beautiful chapter morally addresses itself to saints, it closes by a word addressed to the conscience of man.

Oh, how one longs to feel the girdle a little tighter, and to walk in the light of the lamp of expectation, and "abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

The Gospel of Luke

I believe that in this chapter the Lord's thoughts from beginning to end are in company with Israel and Jerusalem. Many things filled the Lord's eye - the world, and the land of Israel, and, in the land, the city. So it will be, no doubt, in the Millennium - the nations, with Israel as the metropolitan part of the earth, with Jerusalem in their midst. In this rich, varied scenery, the Church holds a special part in peculiar relationship to Christ.

Are you not charmed when thoughts flow naturally? We do not like anything artificial. The Lord here had a piece of the news of the day brought to Him. He hears it, as it may be, and at once tells how to make use of it. The style is homely; you do not want to be in a foreign land with Christ. At once He turns and says, Do you think that those were sinners above all? No; but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. Now, this is not exactly the doom of sinners. It is true, if we do not believe, we have no life; but here the Lord had the nation in His mind, and if they did not repent, they would perish. The blood of the Galileans, shed by a Roman soldier, stood out as representing the judgment coming on the nation generally.

Then there is exceeding prophetic beauty in the tower of Siloam. The judgment of Israel was the judgment of the descending stone. Upon whomsoever that stone should fall, it should grind him to powder. There is exquisite beauty in this, and perfect prophetic truthfulness. I grant you, sinners will perish, but the Lord's mind is more perfect than yours. He is looking at Jerusalem's condition as ripe for the judgment of God.

Having said this, He indicts the parable of the fig tree. This is just a beautiful parabolic picture of what the Lord had been doing with Israel. He was traveling through the land for three years in long-suffering. Did you ever mark the departing glory in Ezekiel? how it lingers, passing from cherubim to cherubim, loath to leave its ancient place? So loath is the divine favor to leave an object that has engaged it. And will you not allow the Lord to be reluctant in withdrawing Himself from a nation that has so much engaged Him? The whole ministry of Jesus was the lingering of the love of God over unrepentant Israel. Suppose He had executed judgment when the Bethlehemite was refused; Israel would have perished. But He lingered for three years. Righteousness from the throne said, "Cut it down"; grace in the vinedresser said, "Let it alone." The three years spent themselves, and then, after that, He cut it down.

The tower of Siloam fell - the sword of the Roman came in and did the work of judgment. Now there comes the woman with the spirit of infirmity, and the ruler; and here comes out the secret of all the terrible judgment the Lord had been anticipating. Judgment is His strange work. He is provoked to judgment - grace is from Himself. The stone that fell was provoked by the unfruitful disappointment of the fig tree He had dressed year after year. Judgment is provoked; grace springs naturally. Why did salvation ever visit us? Did our good works provoke it? God's nature was the provocation of salvation; sin provoked judgment. It is blessed to see how God stands vindicated before all our thoughts.

The ruler is indignant that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day. Here was the representative of the need of Israel, standing out in the poor woman, and the representative of the moral condition of Israel standing out in the ruler that talked about healing for six days. You know what John Newton says: "If the most patient man that ever lived had the ruling of the earth, he could not stand it for a single hour." What do you do with your ass on the Sabbath day? says the Lord. How He exposes the man to himself, that he positively valued his ass more than his fellow creature! Then, having looked at this terrible apostasy, He goes on in the parable following to keep apostasy in view. It is the story of the kingdom of God, as well as the kingdom of Israel. We are in that story and not a whit better than Israel. It is a leavened thing - a thing that lodges the unclean birds. Can you rest yourself in Christendom? The birds of the air have found a home there. Can you? Or are you walking as a stranger there? Too often strangership is overborne by citizenship; but the mind

of Christ can never rest in such a world. The Lord's eye passes on, that you and I may be rebuked, as well as Israel.

In verse 22 He is pursuing His way to Jerusalem. Did you ever observe in the structure of Luke's Gospel that the great bulk of it is made up of the Lord's doings and teachings on the journey to Jerusalem? You see Him in chapters 9, 13, and 18 on His way; but He is looking at the distant city, in different places, in different lights. In chapter 9, it is as the place that was to witness His ascension; here, as the place about to fill up the measure of its sin by crucifying Him; and in chapter 18, as the place where He was to finish His journey as the Lamb of God. The mind of Christ is a beautiful thing, dealing with everything variously, yet accurately. Do you not long for such a fruitful mind?

Now as He is thus addressing Himself to the journey, one says to Him, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" No doubt the man saw something in His eye that awakened the question. No doubt those that marked His bearing often saw something significant in it, as when the disciples held back in chapter 4 of John. So here, as He went on, one said, "Are there few that be saved?" Does He say "few" or "many"? Does He answer categorically? No. There is a style among ourselves that is often painful. You hear people say, Is he a Christian - Is he a Christian? We are not to confound light and darkness, but we ought not to answer such naked questions so serious in their import. He does not say "many" or "few," but, You seek to get in. He looks at the inquirer, not the inquiry.

Are the striving and seeking in verse 24 merely different measures of the same thing? No. They are not different measures of intensity, but different actions. The man that seeks does so after the master of the house is risen up - at the last moment - but see that you begin beforehand. Do not let the rising up put you in that attitude of a seeker. Take the ground of Christ now, not the terror of a seeker then. The Lord's ministry dealt with three persons - God, Satan, and man. For a little moment let me present a few qualities of His ministry as addressed to man. He was ever exposing, relieving, and exercising him. He was letting him see himself to be a poor worthless thing, and then relieving him. Is it not blessed to see Him exposing your wretchedness, and providing relief out of it? We have to do with a faithful friend, not a flattering friend. But while exposing and relieving, He was exercising too. He called the conscience and heart into activity. Was He not putting the conscience of this man on a goodly piece of moral activity? If you could part with one of these things, the ministry of Christ would be defective. Then the Lord goes on to show the plea the seeker may put in. But "depart from Me." It will not do. He pleads his privileges and intimacy. "We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets." "Depart from Me." It will not do. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." What is the difference between the two? Do not confound them. Weeping is the expression of sorrow; gnashing of teeth is the expression of wickedness, as in Stephen's case, when they "gnashed upon him with their teeth." The incurred iniquity and villainy of the human heart is there, and they know it forever. If the condemned soul carries its sorrow, it carries its enmity too forever. These are serious thoughts.

Now we find the Lord approaching the city and He comes into Herod's jurisdiction, and they say to Him, "Depart hence; for Herod will kill Thee." "Go... tell that fox," He answers. How He looked in the face of that monster and let him know He would move on unfeared. He exposes him as a fox and reveals Himself by the similitude of the hen. This is the story of Israel. They refused the hen,

and preferred the fox; and, because of the mountain of Israel that lies desolate, the Roman foxes and the Turk and the Arab have walked there. Jesus would have gathered them, but they would not; and the foxes shall walk there till He that can gather as the hen is received, and they shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." When they shall turn to the Lord, and the veil be taken away, and He, as the gathering hen, be accepted, in the homely style of this beautiful figure, Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the earth with fruit.

Read Isa. 54 and Luke 15 and you will find yourself in company with the same God of grace. In Isa. 54, Jerusalem is looked at as a widowed thing. The Lord had said, "Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement?" Did I get tired of her? But in chapter 54 there is not a thought of divorcement but widowhood. In chapter 15 of Luke, when the prodigal is introduced, is it, This is my wicked son? No, but, My lost and dead son. Oh, the tenderness and beauty of this! He does not wish to keep our iniquity in remembrance, but our sorrow, and will not introduce Jerusalem as a thing once put to shame, but as one long in sorrow and widowhood. The divine eye has no capacity to look on that which is worthless, but on that which is dead, and alive again, lost and found. Why has the Lord so little of our hearts? Just because we so little know Him. May He reveal Himself to each one of us, and discover Himself before the thoughts of our souls. Amen.

Chapters 14 and 15

Put together, these are wonderful chapters. In the first, the Lord visits our world; in the second, we visit His. In the 14th, He makes Himself acquainted with our ways; in the 15th, we are called to acquaint ourselves with His. This is the grand moral distinction between the two chapters, and nothing can exceed them in interest. In the 14th chapter we find that nothing satisfies Him. Are you prepared for this conclusion? There is nothing thoroughly according to His mind. In the 15th, everything is suited to Him, and if we were divinely intelligent and divinely sensitive, we should find that nothing in man's world and everything in Christ's world would do for us. It is the grand character of the Apocalypse, that there is not a thing in it but suits the mind of the glorified Church.

Chapter 14 opens by the Lord's being invited to eat bread in a Pharisee's house, and, as He enters, at once all the sympathies of His mind are intruded on. The house is a type of man's world. As He went in, "they watched Him," and there came in a poor man that had the dropsy, and He asked them, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?" Now why did they hold their peace? It was a hypocritical silence. They ought to have answered, but they wanted to catch Him. Oh! what wretched, miserable tricks these hearts of ours can play! Your heart is under the lion and serpent - violence and subtlety - Satan is represented as both these. The Lord healed him, and then said to them, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?" Ought not you to have gathered your answer to the question from your own ways? The Lord takes us on our own showing, and exposes us out of our own mouth and our own ways. I do not need anyone to show me what I am; I know very well.

In verse 7, He has entered the house and looked around. That is exactly where we fail. We are so much taken up with ourselves that we do not look around to see things with the eyes of the Lord. The Lord came with the heart and resources of God to dispense blessing, but with the eye and ear and sensibility of God, to acquaint Himself with the moral of the scene here. What does He see here? First, the guests, and they do not please Him. He saw they chose the highest rooms. Now suppose you had the eye of God, and looked on the scene around you, day by day; would you not

see the same thing? We savor too much of it ourselves, and therefore cannot testify against it. Christ was infinitely pure, so that He could detect the smallest bit of impurity. He saw that it was pride that animated the scene under His eye, and you and I must have very false notions of what is abroad if we do not see the same thing. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life mark the spirit that animates the activities around us.

Now He looked at the host, but there was no relief for Him there. Selfishness in another form shows itself to Him. It was not the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind that the Pharisee asked to his feast; but his rich neighbors were seated on his right hand and on his left. Here the heart of Christ tells itself out in calling those who cannot recompense Him. It is very happy that Christ cannot be pleased with your world. What would your Lord Jesus be to you if He could put up with such a world? If Christ could have found sympathy with man's world as delineated here, you and I should never have been saved. He acted on directly contrary principles.

Now, one of the company says, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God" - a gracious movement, I believe. I do not say whether it ended in good or not, but a certain gracious instant passed over the soul. The Lord was not unaffected by it. He pays attention to the interruption. Oh, the precious and perfect humanity of Jesus! His deity was equal to the Father's; His humanity was equal to yours and mine, not in its corruption, but in all the beautiful traits that could adorn it in its perfection. He waits and indicts the parable of the marriage supper. The man had said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," and the Lord brings out this parable to exhibit eating bread in the kingdom of God. This shows that the Lord is willing to wait on the secret stirring of your spirit, and give it a suited response; and that word of the man that sat at table gives Him occasion to expand before his eyes a feast spread in the heavenly country; and, oh! what a different one from that here. Not one of the bidden guests came. No, and not a single bidden guest since Adam will be at that table. 'What do I mean? There must be more than an invitation. God must fill the chairs as well as the table. He must force His guests in, as well as fill the board. He sends His servant, and says, "Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." There is a peep into heaven. Did you ever know such a place in all your life? The richest feast ever seen, and not one at it that has not been compelled to come in! And does God put up with this? If there had only been the mission of the Son, there would never have been a single guest. If there had only been the mission of the Holy Ghost, there would have been no feast spread. What a wonderful exhibition of the love of God! If you had prepared a kindness for another, would you like to find an indisposed heart in him? No, you would not ask him again, but would say, Let him go and get what he values more. But there is the double mission of the Son and the Spirit. The Son prepares the feast, and the Spirit prepares the guests. So there is not a single merely bidden guest there; they are compelled guests.

What a wretched exhibition of the heart you carry! One has bought a piece of ground, another has bought five yoke of oxen. Anything but the Lord's feast. This is the contrast between God's table and man's.

When the Lord had delivered the parable, as He was leaving the house, great multitudes followed Him; and He turned and said, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." Now, how do you treat the Lord Jesus? Do you look at Him as a pattern - an example? Well, you will say, I ought to do so, and I grant it; but you and I are thoroughly wrong if

our first communion with Him is as a pattern; it must be as with a Savior. The multitudes followed Him as a pattern, and the Lord says, If you will be like Me, you must give up everything.

The next chapter opens with publicans and sinners, and there is communion of soul with Him as a Savior. The moment the Lord got that object, He was at home. He passes on through all till "publicans and sinners" draw near to Him. He had entered and left the Pharisee's house, and His spirit had not breathed a comfortable atmosphere; but when a poor sinner comes and looks at Him, that moment His whole heart gave itself out, and uttered itself in the three beautiful parts that follow.

It is impossible to follow the spirit of Christ in this chapter without being comforted. Could I know Christ as I would know Him if He could find a home in my world? No! but He says, If I cannot find a home here, you come and find a home with Me. You have disappointed Me, but I will not disappoint you. As one said once, "In preaching the gospel, the Lord said, 'Well, if I cannot trust you, you must trust Me.' " It is another version of the same thought here, and these beautiful illustrations show one leading and commanding truth - that God's world is made happy by sinners getting into it. Do you believe that you, as a sinner, are important to heaven? Whether you believe it or not, it is true. It is not our gain in the matter of salvation that is presented here, but God's joy, and that only. He takes these homely figures that our thoughts may not be distracted, and that you may learn that you are lost; but you learn, too, the joy of God in recovering you. I do not believe a richer thought can enter the soul of man. I sit down in heaven, not as a recovered sinner only, but as one whose recovery has formed the joy of heaven. Now you are at Christ's table, in Christ's world, and you see what kind of a place it is. As for the poor lost sheep, if left to itself it would only have wandered farther still; and as for the piece of money, it would have lain there to this hour if the woman had not searched diligently till she found it.

Now let us combine these two chapters. In chapter 14, you get the words, "compel them to come in," and in chapter 15, you get the prodigal compelled. We were observing the missions of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost never gives me my title to glory, but He enables me to read it. If I could not read it, it would be of no use to me. Now, I ask, what is this compulsion? It is not against your will, but you are made willing. Take, for instance, the prodigal. When he was brought to his last penny and began to be in want, he came to himself. This was the beginning of the compelling, when the poor prodigal opened his eyes to his condition. What did the Lord do to the heart of Lydia? He opened it, and her opened heart listened to what Paul spoke. The mighty compelling power showed itself here when the poor prodigal looked around on his condition and said, What shall I do? The Holy Ghost makes you willing when He makes you see your need, and that death and judgment are before you. He stirs you up by this till He puts you on the road to God. One poor soul says, I had better begin to look out for eternity; another is terrified by the thought of death and judgment. He will take you in any way. The thing is to get your back to the land where once you lingered. The poor prodigal says, I will arise; I have found out the end of my own doings; I will go to my father; and back he goes, and back he is welcomed! The story of the prodigal beautifully illustrates the compelling of the previous chapter. Zacchaeus wished to see Jesus one morning, and up he got into the tree. That was the compelling of the Holy Ghost. Oh, what two chapters! Christ disappointed in your world, and you satiated in Christ's world!

The Gospel of Luke

We have now reached chapter 16, and it is a serious chapter. We have been, in one sense, on very happy chapters in the last two, and have seen how the Lord visited our world, and how we are to visit His world - how nothing in our world pleased Him, but everything in His own. It should be so with us. If we are right-minded we cannot find a home here. Man's apostate condition has built this world, and it is a painful thing to build a house and not be happy in it; yet it should be so with us. You have built a house here, and Christ has built a house in the heavens. Do you cultivate the mind of a stranger in this world, and of a citizen in the heavens?

Having gone through this wonderful moral scenery, we enter on chapter 16 - a continuation of the same scene. If there is a serious chapter in this Gospel, it is this one. The Lord begins by the parable of the unjust steward; and before we go further let me call your mind to the word "wasted," in the case of the prodigal. It was just what he had done, and it is the business of this parable to show that the elder brother may do just what the younger did. He may be a very respectable waster; there are hundreds of thousands of such in the world, and high in the credit of the world they stand; but, weighed in God's balances, they are just as much wasters as this dissolute prodigal. If we do not carry ourselves as stewards of God, we are wasters. If I am using myself and what I have as if they were my own, in the divine reckoning I am a waster. This lays the ax deep at the root of every tree. The elder brother thought he was not a waster; but let me ask you, if you are living for this world, and using what you have as if it were your own, are you not an unfaithful steward and, if so, are you not a waster? Here is a steward. We are not told how he spent his money, but it is enough to know that he was not faithful to his master. Then we see how the Lord goes on to draw out the reasoning of a man like that. He lived for this world - laid plans about his history in this world and not in the next. The moral is beautifully laid to you and to me. As that man laid out his plans for this world, so you should lay up your plans for Christ's future world. If you live to yourself, do you not deny your stewardship to the Lord?

Then the Pharisees who heard Him derided Him. To be sure they must! It was a heavenly principle, and they were covetous. Covetousness is living for this world, and we are covetous just so far as we are laying our plans for this world. Now, when you find corruptions in yourself, what do you do? Do not let corruptions lead you to give up Christ, but to put on your armor. The Pharisees derided Him, and what did the Lord say to them? "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men." This is just what we were saying. The elder brother may be highly esteemed among men, but "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

We are now introduced to the rich man. Tell me, has this passage been repulsive to you, rather than attractive? There seems something rather repulsive in it, but let us look at it. Observe the difference between the rich man and the prodigal. The prodigal "came to himself" before it was too late, and the rich man, after the door was shut. The prodigal was dissolute and abandoned, and when he came to himself he thought of his sin. The rich man came to himself in the place of judgment, and did not think of his sins, but of his misery. The prodigal came to himself in the midst of his misery here - the rich man, in the midst of his torment there.

That is all the difference. The prodigal said, I will go back; what a sinner and a rebel son I have been! There was nothing of that gracious stirring in the spirit of the rich man when he lifted up his head in flames. The prodigal had not to finish the first sentence; the father answered him on the spot, and put on him a ring and the best robe, and killed the fatted calf; but the rich man cried

again and again. It was too late. Here is the end of the respectable waster. Why do I call him a waster? Will you tell me he called himself a steward of God while he was living sumptuously every day, with a saint of God lying at his gate? I am bold to say you and I are just the same if we are living to ourselves. This man died a respectable waster, full of honor and gratification. He had no misery to call him to himself. Have you ever contrasted these two pictures? It has changed this picture from repulsion to attraction.

Chapter 17

In the opening of chapter 17, the Lord applies all this. "It is impossible but that offenses will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones." I call upon each one to listen to this. To offend one of these little ones is to be on the way to the judgment of the millstone. In Rev. 18, we see Babylon under the judgment of the millstone; and here the Lord sees, in the offending of a little one, something that savors of the same thing. Now what is it to offend? Beloved, the Church of God is His little one - a cypher in the eyes of the world, but everything in the sight of God, and you and I ought to take care of any course of conduct that might stumble the little one. So far as I am living in this world, I am savoring of offense, having gone back to that out of which the grace of God had called me. Do you and I go through the circumstances of each day in the spirit of service to everything around us? That is the spirit of the little one. That is the beauty of the Church of God, and of every saint in the world. The moment you act as if you were privileged to dispose of circumstances after your own pleasure, you are an offender.

"If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." That is serving his soul. We should seek for grace to walk through circumstances as serving Christ and our neighbor. Christ is to be our Lord as well as our Savior.

He is a Savior inasmuch as He saves for eternity - a Lord inasmuch as He demands our time. This beautiful combination is exactly what Peter talks of, "our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." There were some (2 Pet. 2:1) who talked about Christ as a Savior, while denying His lordship practically. The Spirit is fruitful in revelations of grace and in admonitions of holiness. They cry out, "Lord, Increase our faith," for this is a terrible demand on us: and the Lord says, Ah, faith is the very thing that will do that for you. Faith is the very thing that God brings in, and then all things are possible. You might pluck up the roots of nature, and send them to be planted in the distant sea, in mortifying the flesh. There are two beautiful virtues of faith here, while it is a principle of self-emptying. "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants."

If I can meet a temptation with the Lord Jesus, I have the stronger man with me, and I overcome, and then come back and say, I have done that which it was my duty to do. There is an import in this chapter that makes it infinitely valuable.

From verse 11 of chapter 17 to verse 8 of chapter 18, must be read together. We are still with the Lord on His way to Jerusalem. The historic structure of Luke delineates the different stages of His journey up to the city. Now, as He passed through Samaria and Galilee, He came upon a certain village, and was met by ten lepers taking the place in which their leprosy put them, standing afar

off. We find in Leviticus the divine dealing with leprosy. It was set apart among the plagues that visit human nature to represent sin, and to show what God would do with it. The leper was first put outside the camp, and that is just where sin puts you and me. Have you any business or right to put a spot on the fair creation of God? No, you have not; and therefore to represent that, the leper was put outside the camp; and his business there was to learn what he was. Your first business as a sinner is to learn that exile from God becomes you. So he lifted up his hands and cried, "Unclean, unclean." This, in evangelic language, is called conviction. There he is, left outside; and with whom? None in the whole creation but God. His friends and neighbors were put afar off. So none can meet our necessity but Christ. Then he Was cleansed, brought back to the camp, and the priest received him back. This represents sin in its fruit and penalty, and the way in which God takes it up and deals with it.

These lepers cry, "Master, have mercy on us." This was not the language of faith, but of misery; but the Lord has an ear for the voice of misery. He had an ear for the voice of Hagar when she wandered in the wilderness; and now from their misery they howled out, "Have mercy on us," and He had mercy. "Go show yourselves unto the priests," He said; and they went, and as they went they were healed. This was the proof that they had been in God's presence - that the Jesus who had spoken, was none less than God Himself, because if we look again at Leviticus we shall find that none but God had a right to speak to a leper. This just shows us that we in our sin can go to none but Jesus; if we go to any other, we have not learned what sin is - that it shuts us out from all but Him. Our necessity is such that if we do not reach Christ, we do not reach blessing. The nine lepers had not discovered this; only one read the healing aright. Nine-tenths of those who hear a sermon will let it pass by. Another will ponder it and learn Christ. That was the tenth leper. He was stirred up to ponder what was done; and, instead of going to the priest, he returned to Jesus and laid his offerings at the feet of God his Savior. This was faith; "with a loud voice" he "glorified God." The other cry was misery. He had discovered who the stranger was, and he was down on his face glorifying God. He who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," at once goes in and occupies God's relation to their misery. There is a difference between misery and faith. Did you cry to me when you howled on your beds? says the prophet. No, you did not. Yet many a one begins his eternity of joy with the howling of misery.

In verse 20 we find Him again in company with the Pharisees. How exquisitely interesting it is to trace the moral scenery that constituted the path of Christ! Here they asked when the kingdom of God should come. What a vain - an insolent - inquiry! What I mean is this: it was as if they had said, Oh, we are ready for the kingdom - the only question is, when the kingdom will be ready for us. At once the Lord answers the condition of their souls. You must look for the kingdom within you before you can get it around. Do you not vindicate the Lord in such words? You are never ready for the kingdom in glory, till you have the kingdom within you. And having thus disposed of their question, He turns to the disciples and speaks to them of the kingdom.

The kingdom of God is a self-evidencing thing. Whenever it erects itself, it does not need a witness. Does the sun or the moon, the thunder or the lightning require a witness? They bear witness to themselves. Are you conscious that God has set up His kingdom within you? Paul says, "The kingdom of God is... righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. 14:17. Now, can you have such a thing in you and not know it? It may be in feebleness. There is many a poor trembling soul whose tremblings are evidence to those who look on that it is in a better plight than

it thinks; but wherever the power of God is, it makes itself known. "The kingdom of God" is an expression meaning divine power. Having established this with His disciples, He says, The days will come when you will desire to see the kingdom in glory, but you will not see it yet. What is the path of the Church all through this age? A path of desire. Is your spirit traveling, day by day, a path of desire after your unmanifested Savior? He says, I am to pass through rejection first, and you must pass through it with Me. The saint is desiring an absent Lord and, till He comes, is the companion of a rejected Lord, filled with the desire for His return, and filled with consent to be companion of His rejection. It is a rebuke, but let us welcome it; it is an excellent oil that will not break our heads (Psalm 141:5).

Having presented these qualities, He goes on to show the state of things just before the Son shines out in glory. In the days of Lot and Noah you get a picture of what the world will be then. They will be going on as those that have found their object in the world. The Lord had given a sketch of what the saint in the age of His absence ought to be; now He draws a sketch of what the world would be. Then, He says, it will be a day of discerning, as the day of Noah was. Was not Noah left when the whole world was destroyed? The story of Noah is to be revived in the closing hour of earth's history. There will be two in a bed - two in the field - it matters not; it will be a day of discerning.

Like the pillar of cloud that was at once salvation to the Israelites and doom to the Egyptians, so the day of the Lord will rise like the sun with healing in his wings to one in a bed, while it will burn like an oven for the other. No wonder that they cried out, "Where, Lord?" Strikingly, He answers, "Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." He never answered a question curiously, but morally. So it is here. The day of judgment will make no mistake; it will not take one it ought to have left, or leave one it ought to have taken. We ought to say, Am I ready? Do I know that if the Son were to break forth in judicial glory, I should not be part of the carcass?

Then in this connection He gives the parable of the poor widow. "He spake a parable unto them to this end," that they ought always to pray. It should not read "men." Suppose I were practically the companion of a rejected Lord; what should I naturally be doing? praying, to be sure, for strength to take my place till the Master comes back. Then He shows how the judge lent a deaf ear to the poor widow. Now does not the Lord appear to do the same? It was the judge's wickedness - it is His glory, and His long-suffering. Why did the judge not answer? Because of his selfishness! Why does not the Lord come back? Because of His long-suffering. The Lord seems to pass by our prayers, as the judge did pass by the poor woman; but the judge passed her by because of his selfishness! The Lord passes by, not willing that any should perish. But He will avenge, and the book of the Apocalypse comes in to make good the word. The day is coming when He will avenge these quarrels, but look to yourselves. Take care, while you are crying out against others, that you may be found right yourselves. Cherish and cultivate the hidden life of faith to which He has called you, and into which the Spirit He has given you would lead you. This completes the scene. Oh, if there is a thing to delight our hearts, it is to discover the personal, moral, and official glories of the Lord Jesus, and to see how Scripture harmonizes to bear this lesson undistracted to your heart and mine!

The Gospel of Luke

If we meditate on that portion from the 9th verse of chapter 18 down to the 10th verse of chapter 19, we have the mind of the Lord delivered on various detached subjects. It is a blessed thing to hear the mind of Christ on any single matter. His verdict entitles me to say I know how God thinks in such a case. This is a wonderful privilege. There is a difference between the gospels and epistles. The gospels introduce your heart to Christ, to find in Him its satisfaction; the epistles introduce the conscience to Christ, to find in Him its peace.

We find here the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. The Lord describes the condition of soul in both of these. The mind of the Pharisee was a mind of religious pride and self-satisfaction. The mind of the publican was the mind of a poor brokenhearted one that could not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven. Having these two objects before Him, the Lord lets us know His thoughts about them; and when He gives forth His mind, does it not make you happy to know that He approved the publican and not the Pharisee? It is a comfort to know that the mind of the Lord thus suits itself to your mind. I could not say that the publican was the expression of a fully justified man. He was justified "rather" than the other. He would not, if fully justified, have cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Is that the proper condition of a believer? No. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal. 2:20. That is not a poor publican, howling about his misery. He does not utter, again I say, the language of a consciously justified sinner. No doubt he was on the way to it, for "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Still there is comfort for us in this, when we see that the Lord values these first tremblings of the poor publican. Paul may have penetrated the innermost part of the sanctuary, and the poor publican be only at the brazen altar; but all these differences are very sweet to us who are conscious of our feebleness.

The next case is that of those who brought to Him young children, that He might touch them; "But when His disciples saw it, they rebuked them." Here we have to determine between the strangers and the disciples. Now do we not know that oftentimes those who are more familiar with the things of Christ, are less intimate? I think we see it here. These strangers had a better understanding of the Lord's mind than the disciples. They said, Stand by. No, said the Lord. Would you like the Lord to have approved the disciples rather than the strangers? I will answer for it, you would not. Now, am I not right in saying that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have done a worthy and wondrous work for us in introducing our hearts to Christ? When the heart is satisfied and the conscience is at peace, you are close upon heaven. You are pleased with the judgment of the Lord in this case. Some say, The Lord is better to us than our fears. A poor thought! He is better to us than our expectations. The strangers had said, Touch them; but He took them into His arms and pressed them to His bosom (Mark 10:16). How He exceeds all our thoughts!

Next, we have the case of the rich young ruler. He brought an uneasy conscience, and said, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He saw that the Lord was a good man, as we speak; and, uneasy, he saw the life of the Lord Jesus and watched it, and had no doubt that He had the secret of peace; so he came and put the question which the Lord beautifully answers by another, "Why callest thou Me good?" - because you have no right to call even Jesus "good" if He is not "God over all." This man did not apprehend His glory, so the Lord would not accept the title from him. He knew how to answer every man. He did not say He was not good, but "Why callest thou Me good?" You have no title to call Me good. You know the commandments. Well, says the young man, All these things have I kept; what lack I yet? "Yet lackest thou one thing," said the Lord; "Sell

all that thou hast,... and come, follow Me." What is the meaning of that? Why, that if I will put myself in the track of Christ, I must be like Christ. The Lord gave up everything and came down as an emptied man to serve others. Now, if you will be perfect, go and do likewise. And, when he heard this, he was very sorrowful, for he could not comply. How would you like the kingdom of God characterized? by selfishness or by unstinted benevolence? Oh, you will say, let selfishness perish here.

The young man could not give up everything, so the Lord says that is a condition unfit for the kingdom. You may be ashamed of your own wretched, selfish heart every day, but I will answer for it, you will justify the Lord's answer. Worldliness and selfishness have no power to breathe the atmosphere of the kingdom of God. Do not all these things please you? You have to carry on a warfare with the same mind in you as was in the Pharisee, the disciples, and the young ruler. Conflict is your perfection here, as sinlessness will be in your glorified body. What a different Christ you would have had if He had approved the Pharisee rather than the publican, kept the little children at a distance, or allowed the selfishness of the young ruler! I do not doubt that the young man was struggling after the kingdom, or that he got into it by-and-by. I do not doubt that there was a laboring of soul that was given of God.

In the 31st verse the Lord turns to speak of His going up to Jerusalem, and of all that He must suffer there; but "they understood none of these things." No, they were very ignorant. We may observe that the Lord never speaks of His death without speaking also of His resurrection; in the same manner the prophets of the Old Testament never spoke of the judgments coming on their nation without speaking of the glories that should follow. So it should be with you and me. We may talk of death at times, but resurrection and glory should come in rapidly on our thoughts.

The Lord is still on the way, and I invite you again to look at the mind of Christ. Here is a collision between a blind beggar and the multitude, and the Lord comes in to decide between the two. Are you pleased with the decision He makes? I am sure you are. You would have had a very different Christ if He had joined the multitude in telling the blind man to hold his peace. Every stroke of the Evangelist's pen is full of the beauty and perfection of Jesus. The blind man asked who passed by, hearing the multitude, and they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Is that all you know of Him? "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." What acquaintance, tell me, had this man with Christ? He knew Him (and so must you and I) in His personal glory and in the boundlessness of His grace. He called Him, "Son of David," and when they told him to hold his peace, he cried "so much the more." That is how you and I must know Him. If He be not the Person He is, all He has done is worth nothing. If He be not man, as one with the children (Heb. 2), and God as alone sufficient to put away sin by Himself, it is all in vain. If we do not recognize the glory of His Person, the grace of His work is worth nothing. We must connect His grace and His glory. The confession of the blind beggar showed an apprehension of these two things. He did not take up their word, but called Him Son of David; and when they rebuked him, he "cried so much the more." But how did the Lord decide? What is it that you want?

His dignity is beautiful as He stops on His way at the bidding of a poor blind beggar. Joshua once bade the sun and moon to stand still in the heavens, but here the Lord of the sun, and the moon, and the heavens, stands still at the bidding of a blind beggar! That is the gospel - the glorious, gracious One dispensing the grace of eternal healings to meet our degradation. We often admire

Jacob, laying hold on the divine Stranger, but look at Bartimaeus! He would not hold his tongue, but cried out till Jesus stood and said, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Take it, said Jesus.

Now look at Zacchaeus. He saw the Lord pass, and went through the crowd to get up into the sycamore tree. In the narratives of the four gospels there are two cases that distinguish themselves from each other - one is an exercised faith, as in Bartimaeus; the other is a quickening of spirit. This was Zacchaeus. In John, the second class of these prevails most, as in Andrew, Nathanael, Philip, and the Samaritan woman. These are all cases of quickening. In the two cases before us, we get samples of what I mean. Bartimaeus was exercising faith; Zacchaeus was getting life. It is a very simple story. He had a desire to see Christ. Who gave the desire? The life-giving Spirit of Christ. How beautiful to see eternal life beginning in such a seed! The power that clothed the desire is strongly manifested. Pressing through crowds to climb up trees was not the habit of this rich citizen. He made himself one of the rabble to gratify this commanding desire, and got up into a tree. The Lord called him down. He not only knew that there was a man in the tree, but He knew who he was; "Zacchaeus,... come down." Is there intimacy in all this? Are you pleased with it? I will answer for it, you are. So we have the Lord delivering judgment in detached cases, and such a judgment as contributes to make us happy.

You can easily conceive with what haste Zacchaeus came down. They spent the rest of the day together, and what is the fruit of their communion? "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." His heart instinctively uttered itself - a very different thing from the boastfulness of a self-righteous mind. The simple force of communion with his Lord enabled Zacchaeus thus to speak. There was power when he pressed through the crowd, and there was power when he closed that day which had given him communion with Jesus.

Chapters 19 and 20

We will now read from verse 11 of chapter 19 to verse 18 of chapter 20. We are putting those parts together which seem to belong to each other, though the chapters may separate them. We have here another instance of the way in which the Lord applies His mind to the correction of the moral scene around Him. The human mind is historic; the divine mind is moral. Here they were near the city, so they thought: a little advance, and the kingdom must appear. This was taking a simply historic view, and we are never right unless we are taking a moral view of everything. The mind of Christ was a moral mind.

The Lord addresses Himself to the thought of the multitude in the parable of the nobleman. The Lord gets His title to a kingdom sealed in heaven - but where is He to administer it? Not in heaven; He comes back to earth first. That is dispensational truth. He has, it is true, a kingdom now - "The kingdom of God is... righteousness, and peace, and joy." But I speak here of His royal glory, hereafter to be displayed on the earth. He goes on in this strikingly fine parable to tell us of a certain nobleman, going into a far country, who called his servants and delivered them ten pounds; but his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. Here are three parties - the departed nobleman hid in a distant country for a time - the servants who were to occupy till his return -and the citizens. This is graphic of the moment in which you live. The Lord has gone to the distant heavens to transact many things. One of these is

to receive for Himself a kingdom. In Dan. 7 you see the nobleman in the distant country, but this parable only tells you that He has gone there. It is beautiful to see the prophet and the Apostle thus mingling their lights together.

The citizens were at that moment the Jewish people, but the enmity of the Jew is now the enmity of the world at large, which has let the Lord Jesus know it will not have Him for king. That is the relationship the world bears to Christ. The servants are those who profess to serve Him while He is absent. There is a moral secret embosomed in this part of the parable. I am never really in the spirit of service if I do not remember that He is an absent and a rejected Lord. If I serve Him as king, I do not do it, to say the least, in dispensational wisdom. I am not now a subject to a king, but a servant who has to recognize the sorrowful fact that his master has been rejected and insulted here. Is it not a tender thought, that the very sorrows and insults which have been heaped upon Him here are so many fresh claims on our affection? Service, to be in the right character, should be in the recollection that it is rendered to One who has been cast out and refused. You might do but little, but that little would have a precious quality if rendered in the affection of one who owns the insults the Lord has received.

Then He returns and gives the rewards. There is such a secret as rewards. When the kingdom comes to be parceled out, I have not a bit of doubt that there will be rewards. But there was one that hid his talent; and now, mark the Lord's reply for your comfort. "Wherefore... gavest not thou my money into the bank?" He did not say, Why have you not traded with it? I may not have the energy and activity of my brother, but the Lord would say here, Well, do not be afraid, if you have not energy to go out and serve Me; at any rate own Me, and put My money into the bank. But this man had no spirit of service; he did not know grace; he feared. As far as we have a legal mind, we are serving ourselves. That is this man. The best thought he had was to serve himself - to come off free in the day of reckoning. So he was cut off as one that had no link with Christ. I love that "bank." If I have not the energy of my brother in service, at least let me own that I am not my own, but bought with a price. Let us cultivate in our souls the hidden spirit that says, Though I may be feeble, yet one thing, I will cleave to Christ - I am His and not my own.

How beautifully He links the next scene with what had gone before! There were two missions on which He sent His disciples; the first was to get the ass - the second, to get the guest chamber. But the ass must precede the guest chamber. Do you see the beauty of that? You must distinguish His dispensational actings - His rejection before His return. The mission to get the ass was that He might offer Himself to the daughter of Zion in glory. He was rejected and, as it were, asked to descend from off the ass - so He must be a guest in this world and pass on to His cross.

Here we get the Lord in royal glory, seated on the ass, descending the Mount of Olives, and about to enter the city. The multitudes follow, with palm branches and exultation, and the King is seen in full beauty. God is taking the thing into His own hands. "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof." Jesus took the place of Jehovah-Creator in Psalm 24. He had a richer title to the ass than the owner of it had. The cattle on a thousand hills are His. The owner bows to His claim, and in He goes, in the midst of the acclamations of His people. But now the Pharisees say, "Master, rebuke Thy disciples." That was the heart of, the nation exposing itself in the representatives of the people. The mind of the nation stood out in that saying, "Master, rebuke Thy disciples." That was rejection. "We will not have this man to reign, over us."

The Lord then laments over the city. Instead of being the city of peace, Jerusalem would have to go through another history altogether. Jerusalem is but a sample of the world in general, and because of the rejection of Christ, the world will have to go through a very different history than if it had been prepared for Him. The world has forced the blessed Lord up to heaven through His cross, and now it must go to the kingdom through its judgment. He went to display His beauty to the daughter of Zion, but the daughter of Zion was not prepared for Him, so He weeps over her and announces the judgment she brought upon herself. The world is not prepared for Him, and the earth must pass to its rest through the judgments that will purge it of its defilements.

Now they suggested a bit of subtlety. But there was not a bit of subtlety in the Lord's mind as He answered them. He did not lay a snare for them, though it acted as a trap. His purpose was divine. John the Baptist being rejected, it followed that Christ Himself would be rejected. It was as much as to say, I will let God answer you. In John you have God's answer to your question. It was God's way to reach Messiah through John, and as he was rejected, so would Christ Himself be.

Now look a little at the next parable. Here is another "far country." "A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time." When was that? In the days of Joshua the Lord planted a goodly vineyard and left it in the hands of Israel and told them to till it. I need not tell you how judge after judge, prophet after prophet was raised up, and all in vain. Then said the lord of the vineyard, "What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves." Ah! BEWARE or REASONING. "SO they cast him out of the vineyard. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?" This brings us just where the parable of the departed noble brought us - to judgment. "He shall come and destroy those husbandmen." If you put these two parables together, you will get a beautiful sketch of God's dealings from the days of Joshua till the Lord's return in glory. The laborers in the vineyard give us God's dealings with Israel till the rejection of Christ, the heir of the vineyard. The parable of the "ten pounds" carries us through the present age, up to the second coming, or the kingdom of Christ. He has now gone into the distant country, not to send back servants to seek for fruit, but to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return and execute judgment. I will just ask one thing: Is it the case that the Lord is seated in heaven till His enemies are made His footstool? You know it is. That thought in the 110th Psalm links itself with both these parables. There He is expecting till His enemies are made His footstool, and here His enemies are made His footstool. These are the beautiful luminous fragments that Scripture throws in here and there, and tells you to go over the field and gather them up, and when you have filled your basket, to bring them home and feed upon them.

The Gospel of Luke

We have reached chapter 22:39 and, as we were observing, we must be more particular with each verse, for each verse is pregnant with something. It is very blessed in this chapter to see how the Lord passes through different relations - with the disciples, with His Father, and with His enemies. It is beautiful to mark the moral pictures that adorn that path. Now He came out; He left the supper table and went to the Mount of Olives. That is a mystic spot. Why do I call it so? There are various lessons to learn there. A mystery is the enclosure of a secret. For instance, Abraham taking his son up to Mount Moriah was the incrustation of a secret. We find the Lord in these chapters in

three conditions - coming down the mount, ascending, and on the hill. As His royal descent was refused, we see Him making a wearisome ascent; and if we read Zechariah, we find Him again on the Mount, but it will split beneath His feet in judgment.

Now He is consciously leaving the disciples for the presence of His Father, and He leaves them with wholesome words: "Pray that ye enter not into temptation." His business is now with the Father. And what is He saying? "If Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me." Surely this was part of His moral perfection. It ought to have been so. His love made Him a willing victim; but it would have been a blot on the moral beauty of His journey if He did not deprecate such a relative position to God as that He was about to enter into on the cross. Since it cannot be disposed of except He drink it, "not My will, but Thine, be done."

"And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him." How do you interpret that word "strengthening"? It was not the same thing as "strengthen thy brethren." It did not extend beyond His frame. That is the office of angels. They are the messengers of providences. The Holy Ghost deals with your spirit. So I take it they were imparting some supporting virtue to His frame. It is a proof that He was not yet forsaken. We find nothing of that in the three hours of darkness. He was left in deep unfathomable solitariness. Not a ray of light from the countenance of God gladdened Him there. But as yet He was not made an offering for sin, and angels can come and strengthen Him. He is strengthened for a fresh agony. When He rose He came to His disciples and found them sleeping. They were His thought, not He theirs! He their thought? They could not watch with Him one hour. So it is now. He ever lives to make intercession for us. Do we live ever to love Him - serve Him? He ever lives for you. Do you ever live for Him?

Now He is brought into His last relationship. He is plunged into the midst and thick of His enemies. "While He yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas,... drew near unto Jesus to kiss Him." Then one of His disciples makes a mistake. It is a terrible thing to make mistakes. There is a class of mistakes that arise not merely from an imperfect understanding, but from a wrong condition of heart. That was the mistake of the disciples here. They had not been in Christ's company as they ought to have been. Can you conceive anything more distant from the Lord's heart than drawing the sword to smite the servant of the high priest? On His way to die, the just for the unjust, to see a hair of a poor sinner's head touched! I may mistake about the calling of the Church, or about coming glories, but there is another class of mistakes that you and I should keenly judge ourselves for. The Lord of course heals him.

Now mark verse 53. It gives a character to the moment. What is meant by this "hour"? How long did it continue? How is it distinguished from all that went before it, and all that followed after it? As to what went before, they could not touch Him till that hour had come. He must be a willing captive as He was a willing victim. But now the hour of the evening has arrived, and He becomes their captive. The moment you leave that hour (which stretches to the three hours of darkness) you have a new era altogether - no longer the hour of the power of darkness, but the bruising of the woman's seed. Now He puts Himself into their hands. He was a willing captive now, as He was a willing victim on the cross. They took Him!

Did you ever, in the light of Scripture, consider what the heart of man is? You will tell me it is a wicked thing. Aye, that it is; but it is not only capable of wickedness, it is incurable, desperate. Conceive a man taking stones in his hand to batter and beat a face shining like an angel's! Could

you conceive it? Look at the priests in the temple in the presence of the rent veil. They plotted a lie. Look at the soldiers in the presence of the rent tomb. They consented to a lie. The riven waters of the Red Sea did not cure Pharaoh's heart. The shining countenance of the martyr Stephen did not cure the heart of the multitude. A rent veil did not cure the priestly heart, and a rent tomb did not cure the soldiers' hearts. Now the sight of the healed ear (for the blessed Lord is a divine surgeon here) - in the presence of that they take Him. Is that a picture of the heart you carry? You may have different habitudes, but the flesh is the same in all - not only evil, but incurable. The watery walls did not cure it, and here in the very garden, they see Him performing a wondrous divine miracle of healing, and yet they take Him with murderous purpose. Tell me what you can do with a heart that has been proof against those things? Has hell had power to cure the devil? He may be overcome in Legion; out he goes into the herd of swine.

Now we have the little episode of Peter warming himself. Cannot you fancy him sunk down into humanity? He became not the companion of Jesus of Gethsemane, but of a poor man in the outer court of the palace. Here we have two things - the crow and the look. How do you interpret them? They are symbols of very different things, but two things we must all have to do with - conscience and Christ. The crow awakened his conscience; the look placed him with Jesus.

I want to have an awakened conscience and an eye by faith directed to Jesus. Then let Jesus close the story of my soul. If we are not all conscious of the cock-crow and the look, we are not yet in the school of God. My intellectual activity about the things of God will not do. Conscience must be occupied, and faith must be occupied. "And Peter went out, and wept bitterly." But his faith did not fail. He may be sent through sorrow and tears, but his faith does not fail.

"And the men that held Jesus mocked Him, and smote Him.... And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led Him into their council, saying, Art Thou the Christ?" How He looks at the inquirer! Do you think we deal faithfully with one another? No; we are too fond of letting people think well of themselves, and we call it tenderness, but it is a vapid thing! You never find in Christ the human amiability that gratifies. There was love in every form of faithfulness, but no human amiableness. Now the Lord deals with their condition in answer to their question - You will not deal with Me righteously - You are set on mischief, and mischief you will have - You are set on My blood, and My blood you will spill. Having convicted them, He rises up; "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God." This is the exhibition of Christ in judicial power. In many ways we track Christ to heaven. We think we have disposed of the ascension when we say He rose and ascended; but you must track Him to the highest heavens in various characters: personally as with the Father - in His priestly character as making intercession in the sanctuary - as One whom earth has sent there, and whenever we get that form, we see Him ascending in judicial glory. That is presented here. He is not gone up to heaven as a sanctuary, but as being the place of power, waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. In that character we view Him here.

Now we see the way in which He was viewed by the Gentiles, by the ecclesiastical and civil powers, that every form of society might be brought in guilty before God. Pilate and Caiaphas might be amiable men, but, as touching God, one and all stand guilty in a common revolted nature. Do you and I realize that the blessed Lord consented to walk such a path for us? We may well say that such love as that "passeth knowledge." May the Lord give us to receive it by faith, and feed on

it by communion. Amen.

Chapter 23

We are now going to meditate on chapter 23. "The whole multitude of them arose, and led Him unto Pilate." With what skillfulness did they adapt themselves to the moment! When He was before the Jews, they brought a charge of making Himself the Son of God. Before the Roman governor, they bring a charge of making Himself a King. He had a right to both of these titles. Both these claims were brought and challenged in a human court. Thus everything has been gainsaid and everything will be vindicated. We see Him standing as challenged before man; we find Him by-and-by vindicated before God.

Now when Pilate revives the question, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" He answers, "Thou sayest it." It is a beautiful thing for you to carry conscious glory in a hidden shape. He avowed Himself a King when He was asked. It was a glory He constantly carried, but was constantly hiding. We should be conscious of dignities that would outshine the glories of the world; but we find the world in such a moral condition that we cannot display them. That was the life Jesus. He was consciously a vessel of glory, but morally under the necessity of hiding it.

How instructive it is to see the laborings of different states of souls! Nothing can be more striking than the story of Pilate. He had no enmity against Christ. He would have discharged Him if he could at the same time have preserved his character in the world.

The Jews' conduct was a mere carnal enmity against God. In Pilate you see the victorious struggle that the world makes in the conscience. Now, Pilate naturally wished to rid himself of an uneasy conscience. So, when he "heard of Galilee," he thought it was a little door of escape, and at once he took advantage of it. Ah, it will not do to get out by back doors. The subtlety of the human heart in wickedness seeks them.

So Pilate sent Him to Herod, and we find that, before Herod, He never uttered a word. Herod was unmixedly wicked. He did answer Pilate, because there was no enmity in his heart. He answered Caiaphas for the oath of God's sake, by which he adjured Him (Matt. 26:63); but as for Herod, He has not a word for him. He passes from before him without opening His mouth. It is a terrible thing for God to be silent. It is better that He should be speaking to us by chastenings. "Be not silent to me: lest, if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit." Psalm 28:1. The silence of God is as if you put a man into a pit. "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Hos. 4:17. The intercourse between Herod and the Lord illustrates this. "And Herod... sent Him again to Pilate."

"For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast." We are entering on a moral moment of great solemnity. Why must he release one at the Passover? There is no direct commentary on it, but my own thought about it is that they claimed from the Roman governor a sign of the dignity that attached to this feast - when the Lord of heaven and earth made a great deliverance for them. And in order to keep up the memorial of it they demanded that one should be delivered to them. The Passover was a memorial of the ancient dignity of the nation. We like some little relic of bygone dignities. Now at that time it so happened that there was a murderer in prison - one "who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison." You could not go lower in moral acting than that. Now the question arises, Will they choose such a man as that, or

the Prince of Life? We find Peter in the opening of Acts making much of that. 'What does it tell us? It is the deep, full sifting of the heart of man, and it tells me that the heart of man in Luke 23 is exactly what it was in Gen. 3 Man in Gen. 3 preferred the lie of the serpent to the truth of God. Man here preferred a murderer to the Prince of Life! and if you do not think you are a full-grown Adam, you are deceiving yourself. I see the Jew of Luke 22 practicing the Adam of Gen. 3 The God of grace, the God of life, the God of glory, given up for the serpent. A murderer was preferred, for "he was a murderer from the beginning." So it was here.

So Pilate "said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath He done?" Still struggling! Those battles are not settled in a moment. Conscience loves ease too well to yield in a moment. Pilate is in a field of battle till he is conquered. In this wondrous Volume we get man exposed and God revealed - man shown to be an incurable moral ruin - God revealed as a repairer of every breach. And He will go on repairing till He turns the howling of creation into the praises of creation. He begins with the conscience. If the conscience is not restored, it is nothing to you to see creation restored; but He begins where we want Him to begin. Have I any reason to doubt that if, as a sinner, my conscience is given to howl, He can give it the garment of praise? He is to do this in creation; by-and-by He will turn its groans into praises; and is not my conscience as worthy of His workmanship as creation?

Then Pilate gave sentence. He succumbed to pressure and condemned the guiltless.

Now we are introduced to the daughters of Jerusalem. The daughters of Jerusalem are not the women of Galilee. How do we distinguish between them? They are distinguished. It is another instance of the vast moral variety of Scripture. We get the disciples - the women of Galilee - the daughters of Jerusalem - the centurion - and Joseph of Arimathea. Are you not conscious of like varieties in the scene around you? It may puzzle and grieve you; but what is too big for you, roll over upon Christ. I can hardly tell where light begins and darkness ends. It is too much for me. I must leave it with God. Now, where must you put all these varieties? Do not put them anywhere. Leave them with Christ. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Do not seek to settle it. The angels will know how to clear the field by-and-by. I converse with people every day and, if I were asked, I should not know where to classify their souls. The women of Galilee were evidently "elect according to the foreknowledge of God." But what do you say of the daughters of Jerusalem? They were not among the crucifiers. They represent, I think, the soul of the remnant by-and-by, in the first moment of awakening. "Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." Ah, this self-forgetting character of the Lord! I do not know that it more wonderfully displays itself than in these last scenes. If you are in trouble, do you not feel privileged to think of yourself, and to expect others to do so too? What beautiful witnesses we have here of self-forgetting love. "Woman, behold thy son"; "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me"; "Father, forgive them."

Now we pass on to the cross. What do you say about the "spirit" (v. 46)? Have you learned with calm conclusiveness that if the believer's spirit is now delivered from the body, it is with Jesus? When Stephen followed the track of his Master, he did it in life and in death. If they were battering his body here, the Lord Jesus was receiving his spirit there. Paul went to paradise simply as "a man in Christ." Men in Christ are independent of the body. He clothes the body with immortality, and the spirit with indestructible life. In His own Person the Lord was the first to recognize the spirit's going to the Father. He was the firstborn among many brethren, and the firstborn among

many spirits.

Now we come to the confession of the centurion. Then Joseph of Arimathea seemed to get courage by the confession. He "waited for the kingdom of God." What are we to make of him? Why had he not, for these many years, cast in his lot with the followers of the Nazarene? Well, we do not know; we must leave him there. He boldly goes and claims the body of Jesus. It did not cause him much trouble to go to Pilate. Pilate had no enmity.

What a chapter! The Lord closing the old creation. The Sabbath of old celebrated its perfection; the death of Jesus celebrated its close. The old creation was doomed from the beginning, and if we have not a place in the new creation, touching God we are nothing.

The Gospel of Luke

We have now reached chapter 24, and here we might generally observe that the Lord takes the scene into His own hands. We observed when He was taken in the garden, that He recognized that moment as the hour of the power of darkness. Man was the principal then; man took Him, man nailed Him to the tree, thereby verifying the word, "This is your hour." Man was disposing of the scene as it pleased him. And so it went on till the three hours of darkness. Then God took it into His hands. That was the time when God bruised Him and made His soul an offering for sin.

It is very desirable that we should see the special characteristic of that moment. All through life, His Father's countenance was beaming on Him. Was He forsaken of His Father through life? Read His utterance in Psalm 16. But now, according to the prophetic voices, according to the premonitions of John the Baptist, there He was - God's Lamb. Then at once He became a conqueror. God did not wait for resurrection, to sanction the death of Jesus. He sanctioned it by rending the veil. This was not the public seal; but ere the appointed third day had come, for the public seal (of resurrection), God put His private seal on it. And the rapidity of it is beautiful. We cannot measure the time between the giving up the ghost and the rending of the veil (Matt. 27:50, 51). That was the seal of the satisfaction of the throne. In two ways He was doing the will of God here. Through life His business here, as at the well of Sychar, was turning darkness into light. That was the will of the Father when He was a living minister. As a dying victim He was doing the will of the throne. The throne where judgment was seated was satisfied when Jesus gave up the ghost. One was doing the will of the Father; the other was doing the will of God in judgment. After that, having passed through man's hour and God's hour, we see Him in resurrection in His own hour. His own hour is eternity. How blessed to be in His company, to enter a bright and intimate eternity with Jesus.

We now see Him in resurrection, and we find many things here to invite attention. We find in the opening verses that as soon as the Jewish Sabbath was over, the women came with spices which they had prepared, and they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher; but they found not the body of the Lord Jesus. Now what do you say to all that? There is something exceedingly comforting in it. It is ignorance and affection mingled. It was ignorance that took them to look for the living among the dead; affection took them, counting the dead body of the Lord of more worth than all around. What are you to do with ignorant affection? Just what Christ did with it. He could appreciate it, but He was not satisfied with it. He will not have love in the place of faith. Love is the principle that gives; faith is the principle that takes. Which is the most grateful to Christ? He will tell

you in this chapter. He will have us debtors. He will occupy the place of the "more blessed." Faith says, Lord, You shall have it so. Another has said, Faith is the principle that lets God think for us; and so to that I add, That puts God into the chief room. If I come naked and empty and make God everything, that is faith. The law makes man principal, and God secondary. Man is to be doing this and that, while God is passive. The gospel changes sides altogether. In the gospel God is the giver and you are the receiver. Here, instead of faith, was ignorant love. They had affection, but they did not understand the victory He had gained in their behalf. It is Christ that has visited me in my grave, not I that have visited Him in His grave. He is the living One, I am the dead one.

So they bring their spices and ointments to the tomb, and there the angels meet them. They were afraid. They were looking for a dead body - they might well be startled by a glittering stranger. The angels were fresh from heaven, the witnesses of the risen and victorious Lord. They had not been thinking of that, so the angels put them to fear. And they said, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?... He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee." That was a rebuke. Do you like to see love rebuked? It is not pleasant, but it is faithful. They were about the business of love, but the business of unbelief too. So in everything God stands vindicated.

Then they remembered the words. How much mischief we get into by not remembering God's words! When the Lord Jesus was tempted, He had the word of God at hand, and by that simple word He could gain the victory in the battle. They do this piece of foolishness, because they had not remembered the simplest words that could have fallen on their ears. How sweet to see the God of all grace in intercourse with us even in our mistakes! Would you like a person to be always standing before a glass, fitting himself for your presence? You would rather find him at ease before you, and so would God. The rebuke was well meant and well deserved, but it was an excellent oil that would not break their heads (Psalm 141:5). Now this light puts them on quite a different road. Let my mistakes be a link with Christ, rather than the Ephraim condition, "Let him alone." "Be not silent: lest... I become like them that go down into the pit." Psalm 28:1. All this is anything but that. They were well-deserved and sharp rebukes; but again I say, Let my mistakes put me in company with Jesus, rather than that I should not be in company with Him at all.

So they went and told these things to the apostles, "and their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." Now would you call the apostles Corinthians, who, by intellectual workings, denied the resurrection? or Sadducees, who, as a depraved sect, denied the resurrection? I could not say that. I should not put them among the Sadducees of Israel or the Corinthians of the Gentiles. How then do you account for their unbelief? Ah, it is hard to believe that God is doing your business in this world. It is much easier to us to do Christ's business than to believe that He has done ours. Not a form of human religion takes up that thought. So it was with the disciples.

They could bring their spices and their ointments, but they were not yet able to believe the mighty fact that He had been doing their business. We think of Him as hard, and exacting, and watching above the clouds to find occasion against us. Their hearts had been as leaking vessels of the words of Christ, and they came as the living to the dead instead of believing that He, as the living, has come down to us, the dead. We will spend our days in penances, but we will not trust Him. Then we see Peter in the same plight. Peter! Is it possible! - he that had made the very confession

on which the Church is founded!

When Peter had to live the confession, he failed. The one among the eleven that ought eminently to have blushed was Peter. How you can distinguish a man from himself at times - his condition from his experience! If he had known what he was confessing, he never would have thought of "the Son of the living God" as among the dead.

Then we leave Peter, and return to the Lord, in company with two disciples. He got the very same element in them. The only exception lay in the distant corner of Bethany. We do not find Mary and Martha at the sepulcher. They had already been at the tomb of their brother. Was it from want of love that they were not at the empty sepulcher? No, but from faith in Christ. Ignorant love brought the Galilee women there; intelligent faith kept the Bethany women aside.

Now He joins these two disciples on the road, as with gloomy clouded hearts they were going back to the city. What made them sad? It was unbelief. That sadness was attractive to Jesus. If the affection that took the spices to His tomb was delightful to Him, the sadness that gathered round their clouded hearts was delightful to Him too. It was reality. Do you not believe that the gospels give you little bits of eternity? The gospels give you intercourse between the Lord of glory and poor sinners, and eternity will give you the same intercourse. It is worth a world to have an intimate eternity with Christ. The gospels prepare our hearts for it, even now, by such confidence. Their confidence was won and retained, though the Lord never made an effort about it. He just threw Himself out on their hearts, and they took Him up as He was.

And He drew near and asked them, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" And they said, "Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" We have turned our backs not only on Jerusalem but on all our expectations. This is the third day, and now we are going home. It is all over with us. He replied, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe" - to believe what? "All that the prophets have spoken." That was the cure, and that was where they came short. Oh, how that should bind round your heart and mine every jot and tittle of God's Word! Then He showed them how Christ should suffer, and expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Now their reasonings turn into kindlings. What turned them? Jesus had interpreted Himself. How natural then that He should make as though He would go farther! He was hiding Himself under a veil, and, as a stranger, He would not intrude on them. "But they constrained Him." I do not thank them a bit - I thank the kindlings they were enjoying - for this piece of courtesy. We had better take up our thanks to the One to whom thanks are due. We know how it ended. Be sure the joy of eternity will never weary you. Kindlings will be there in seraphic order. Give me a seraphim mind within, and the glories of Jesus around. That will be heaven.

Chapter 24:33

We are closing the Gospel of Luke, and we still find the same thing that we were meditating on the last time - the unbelief that lurked in their hearts touching the resurrection. Now the Lord sets Himself to dissipate it. It must be dissipated, for it is fatal to the faith of God's elect. Nothing could be a substitute for resurrection. The whole dealing of God with sinners depends on its being an accomplished fact. In several cases during His ministry we get the people expecting Him to

interfere between sickness and death. But that was not God's way. The wages of sin is death. So now, He must go into death. He must meet the enemy in the place of his strength and defeat him there. In the history of Jairus's daughter, it was just that. He tarried so long that she died - a beautiful witness that the Lord did not come to intercept death, but to defeat death. So in the case of Lazarus - the Lord tarried till the sickness ended in death. They were all crying and bewailing - howling over the ravages of death. That was the very place for the Son of God to display Himself. To be sure, He did heal and cleanse, but He came into the world not to interfere between sickness and death, but between death and life again. He is the holder of victorious life. Supposing He had met sickness and not death, nothing would have been done, for the wages of sin is death. Did He come to qualify the original judgment, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"? He did not. He came to meet it, suffer it, verify it, and get the victory on the other side of it.

When the two disciples are satisfied, they get back to the city to report what they have seen and, while they speak, Jesus Himself stands in the midst of them. There are many things for us to observe here. I will tell you a sweet thing. He not only rose, but He rose the same as He died. Could you put up with an altered Son of God? Though throned in glory this moment, He is the very same as He was at the well of Sychar. If you want to know what Christ is now, go and learn Him in the four gospels. Do you want a different Jesus than the one that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have introduced to you? Perhaps it is hard to understand that He is the same now in glory as He was here. It is part of the business of the post-resurrection scenes to assure us that He is the very, very same. Treasure that up in your souls. It will make the pathway to heaven easy. He has come into your world before ever He asked you to go into His, and the way to make the path there easy is to know that you will find, in yonder world of glory, the very same Jesus that came into your world. The Lord of the distant glories has been in the midst of my ruins, and has shown me that He is the same in the midst of the glories as in the midst of the ruins. It is among the moral wonders of the gospel that the blessed Lord has taken such means to accommodate my eye and ear to future glories. He has given beautiful pledges of that.

As He entered the room, He said, "Peace be unto you." Had He ever said that before? Were those strange words on His lips? He was only redeeming His pledge. Before He died, He said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." After He rose, "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." That is another witness. Before He died, He said, I will meet you in Galilee. Did He not take up the pledge? You may say that was a little thing, but whether big or little, a risen Christ makes good what a ministering Christ had promised. Circumstances cannot change Him. Ruins here and glories there have no power to touch Him. He said before He suffered, "I go to prepare a place for you." After He rose, He said, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father."

If you go through the post-resurrection scenes, you will be able to track a risen Christ in company with a ministering Christ, taking up the pledges and showing all the beautiful traits of character that He exhibited before. Do you ever think of sudden death? You may be borne without a moment's notice into His presence. Will it be a strange place to you? I may be a stranger to His circumstances, but not to Himself. Therefore, the more we acquaint ourselves with Jesus, the more we are in heaven already. It matters little about His palace if I know Himself. The blessed Lord wants to make us intimate with Himself. So in the post-resurrection scenes He lets us know that we know Him already.

Now we come to the verification of the fact of resurrection. Why is that such an important point? Suppose God had said, Satan has ruined your body, so I will take you to be with Me in spirit; it would have been verifying the victory of Satan over the body. Did God come into the world to do that? So the Apostle says, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain." Then He makes us, in our glorified bodies, the witnesses of His victory. Resurrection was not only the seal of His victory. He has made an atonement, and the throne has owned it by raising the Surety from the dead; but not only so, it is necessary to see that He has got a victory in this world; so to verify this, the Lord wonderfully condescends. "He said unto them, Have ye here any meat?" Why was all that? Simply to verify that it was no mere spirit that stood before them. The Lord came to fight a battle for you - palpable flesh and blood. Palpable manhood had been destroyed - palpable manhood must be redeemed. Having established the fact in the 44th verse, He makes all to hang on it. Then having recited what He had once told them, He here knits His present ministry with what had gone before. He opens to them in law, prophets, and Psalms, the things concerning Himself. We see something like this in His dealings with Peter. He had said, "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice." That came to pass. Then the Lord looked at him. He had awakened his conscience by the crow; He relinked him with Himself by the look. When the Lord rose, He took up Peter exactly where He had left him. He did not want to awaken his conscience again, or relink him with Himself again; but He took him up at the critical point where He had left him. He puts him into the ministry again.

The Lord knows the path of your spirit and will take you up exactly where you are. He had told them while He was with them that all things should be accomplished, and now He gives them an opened understanding (which He had not done before), and sits down to give them a lecture on them. It is beautiful to see how He educates us. What a wonderful moment! and that moment has been continued to this moment. That was a moment that characterized the present dispensation - that on the warranty of His death remission of sins should be preached to every poor sinner. In one sense we have never got beyond it, and we never shall till the last of the elect is brought in. Now He has done everything; and, as a preacher to the world, He was silent. He had declared remission of sins to a world of sinners. As an evangelist, I take leave of Jesus there. As a high priest, we have not yet fully seen Him, but, as an evangelist, that was a stereotyped moment of His ministry. He cannot add to that. He has told me, as belonging to a world of sinners, that through death and resurrection remission of sins is preached to me.

Now He led them out to Bethany. I believe it was a silent walk. If my spirit is drinking in the simplicity of such a gospel, it will be in deep-toned, silent satisfaction of soul. "And He lifted up His hands, and blessed them." That was priestly service. There He "ever lives." I never have done with His uplifted hands, and in that attitude He was taken up to heaven to carry on His priesthood on high. What effect has all this on you and me? - to look at an evangelist Jesus giving peace to the conscience, and then see Him going up to heaven in the act of blessing! What effect had it on the disciples? The whole character of their religion was changed. They were no longer trafficking with Moses. Their service became that of eucharistic priesthood. They went back to the city with great joy, "And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God." Can anything be more divine? Nothing. And there Christ takes leave of you. The heavens will retain Him till the times of refreshing; but have you lost Him? Could He give a more graphic impression than He has done here? He has accomplished redemption and He ever lives to bless you. Go to your Jerusalem, and

be ever praising and blessing Him.

There it drops. "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness." The trail of the serpent is everywhere, but in such shining paths as I see the feet of Jesus treading here. What He lays His hand to, He accomplishes to perfection.

"There, no stranger-God shall meet thee, Stranger thou in courts above;

He who to His rest shall greet thee, Greet thee with a well-known love."

The Gospel of Luke: Luke 20-21

In our last meditation we reached verse 19 of chapter 20. Now we enter, according to Luke, on the scene of the Lord's last conflict with His enemies. In this world, not only our sins but our enmities gave Him work. That you find continually. His sorrows on the cross, our sins put Him to; His sorrows through life, our enmities put Him to.

Now the Jews come to Him (v. 21) with a subtle question. There were three great representatives of the people - the Herodians, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. The Herodian was a political religionist; the Sadducee, a free-thinking religionist; and the Pharisee was a legal religionist; but these were only different forms of enmity against God. The flesh can never form alliance with God's Christ. We must be born again for that. Now they come to Him with a question - "Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?" They thought they had Him, and it was a sharp-sighted, subtle question. At once, detecting the moral of the occasion, He approached it. "But He perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye Me? Show Me a penny."

The Lord had no purse. When He wanted to preach on a penny, He had to ask to be shown one. The Lord had the wealthiest purse that anyone ever had in the world, but He never used a mite of it for Himself. He asked, "Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's." Very well; the Lord was not going to treat Caesar as a usurper.

He was the rod of God's indignation in the land of Israel. Whether Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, or Romans, they were no usurpers. So, when the Lord saw Caesar's coin passing through the land, He saw in it Israel's shame, not Caesar's usurpation. How beautifully He escapes the snare of the fowler! "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's." That was a golden rule ever since their captivity - the rule of returned captives - and so it is our rule. Do you treat the powers that are ordained of God as usurpers? No, but do not confound the rights of Caesar and the rights of God. If there is a collision between them, say with Peter, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." It was a short, terse sentence, replete with divine wisdom for Israel's condition at the moment.

Then when the Herodians are dismissed, the Sadducees come forth. The enmity of Satan is never weary. If foiled in the Herodian, he will try his hand in the Sadducee. Now, Master, here is the strange thing! The Lord is ready for them. He knows how to answer every man: You are confounding heavenly and earthly things. You are mistaking things altogether, but that ye may know that the dead are raised, even Moses called the Lord the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and He is not a God of the dead, but of the living. Now do you see the difference between the resurrection of the body, and a separate life in the spirit? If the only thing brought in had been a life in the spirit, do you see that God would not have been fully glorified? So Paul lets them know in 1 Corinthians 15 that if they do not believe in resurrection, they do not know the glory of God. The enemy has brought in death to both soul and body, and God must meet him in the place of his power. If, when Satan had destroyed the body, God had said, I will now make another creature, His glory would not have been fully shown. If He took you out of the body, to dwell with Christ in

spirit, it might satisfy you, but not His own glory. That is the need of resurrection.

Now He had silenced them. He confounded the interrogators, and then He put a question that baffled them: "David therefore calleth Him Lord, how is He then his son?" They were baffled, and none can answer that question who do not see the Person of Christ, the precious mystery of the God-man. Is it not a sad and terrible thing that you have sent the Lord to the right hand of His Father, there to wait till His enemies are made His footstool? You will say, He has gone. there to help me, a poor sinner. Yes, but you have sent Him there too. You have a very imperfect view, if while you see Him waiting on the necessity of poor sinners, you do not see Him waiting till He comes forth to judge His enemies, at the end of the world. His grace has put Him there as the High Priest of our profession; our enmity has put Him there as waiting for judgment. Chapter 21 derives itself from this; and here I would just say, there is an exceedingly beautiful thing attending the close of the Lord's ministry.

At the early part of His ministry, He was getting consolation for Himself, as at the well of Sychar, the man blind from his birth, etc. These were the fruits of His own labor; but, from the moment He leaves Jericho and meets Zacchaeus, and up to the thief on the cross, these were cases on which He never spent a moment's toil. They were consolations provided by God. The Lord was about to enter upon the darkest scenes of His sorrow, and God provides here and there a cup of cold water to refresh Him on His way. His toil was over. He was preparing for Gethsemane, and Gethsemane was preparing Him for Calvary; and God said to Him, as it were, Now, You shall not toil - I will bring refreshment to an untoiling Jesus. He had not expended labor on Zacchaeus, or on the thief on the cross. These were brought to Him.

Now, the Lord opens the story of "the times of the Gentiles." He is up there waiting till His enemies be made His footstool, and He gives a sketch of the times of the Gentiles - the age of the depression of Israel. "The times of the Gentiles" intimates the supremacy of the Gentiles and the depression of Israel. He anticipates the whole of this age. In verse 24, He calls the whole age, "the times of the Gentiles," in which the Gentiles are supreme; and Israel has no land or heritage in the earth. [While it is true that Israel again has land as a nation, the specific words of our Lord should be carefully noted: "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24. It was the city of their solemnities which they are not to regain until the period of Gentile supremacy runs out. The old city of Jerusalem, with its temple site and wailing wall, is in the hands of the Arabs, although it is a prime object of Israeli aspiration. They will probably get it from the beast of the revived Roman Empire when he makes a league with them for seven years (Dan. 9:27), but the Gentile soldiers of this Roman Empire will, in all likelihood, have to patrol it to guarantee its security. Thus the Lord's exact words are being literally fulfilled. - Ed.]

Look in verse 7, when they ask Him, "When shall these things be?" "Take heed," He says, People will be promising you rest before rest comes. Do you remember the mistake of the people in chapter 19, when they thought the kingdom would immediately appear? The Lord here anticipates the very same thing. He says, Now, do not mistake; the time cannot draw near till there has been judgment. And that is what I am bold to say to the world now. You are not going to have a kingdom; the time of glory is not drawing near, nor will it, till judgment has purged the earth. It is very different with the hopes of the Church. Judgment is on the other side of my glory. I shall be glorified when I stand before the judgment seat; but will the earth enter its glory before it is purged

from its iniquity? He cannot be Lord of lords till He has girt His sword upon His thigh. The world is promising itself glorious things. Do not believe it. Then He tells them, "In your patience possess ye your souls," not in false expectation. "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." That day has come, and Israel has been led captive into all nations. In verse 25, He anticipates the closing days of the times of the Gentiles. "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;... men's hearts failing them for fear,... and then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Then, when fearful signs come to pass - then, ye Jewish remnant - lift up your heads, for your jubilee draws nigh. It is the same word as redemption.

In Leviticus we read that every fiftieth year God re-asserted His own principles. For forty-nine years they might corrupt God's order, but in the fiftieth year they were sent back, every man to his own property, and the family order and estate was resettled. The moment we get things under God's hand again, we are keeping a jubilee. God knew that He was entitled to call His world, the world where His principles reign, a jubilee. Are you wearied of man's world? God's world will be a jubilee. Man's best world is to get his vanity gratified. Are we ashamed to have a heart for such enjoyment? So when these purgings and purifyings take place, then "lift up your heads." The sword of David is doing its business, and the throne of Solomon will be erected. "This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled." You will never mind it. It is now the very same generation as in the days of Christ. The world may be advanced in the accommodations of civilized life, but does that mend it? God only can cure it, and that by making an end of it. If He were to put new wine into old bottles, the bottles would burst. Then, that beautiful admonition to everyone. Do not live as if this world were your portion. The life you nourish in this world is a very different thing from the one you have to cherish for the next. If you live as if this world were your portion, that day will come upon you as a thief. So if you and I are telling our hearts to eat, drink, and be merry, the coming of the Son of man will be as morally different as the coming of a thief at night would be circumstantially different to a family that went to bed in rest and quietness.

Chapter 22

We have now come to a very serious chapter and must be a little particular on each verse. We have entered a solemn moment, and the impression produced on the mind is this: that all to whom we are introduced have their thoughts on death. Immediately we find the Lord's thoughts on death, but in a very different character. His thoughts on death are of laying the foundation of the eternal kingdom. They thought if they could but kill Him it would close the matter between Him and them forever. The doom of the old thing, and the foundation of the new and eternal thing are laid in death. The blessed Son of God entered into death, and laid the foundation of the new creation exactly at the point and spot where the old creation had its close. How the unfoldings of His ways are fraught with perfection.

We see all who represented religion found in this confederacy. You may lay it up as a sure and settled thing, that the religion of flesh and blood is ever at enmity with God.

We have remarked before, that in the close of the Lord's ministry two missions are glanced at; one was to get the ass to take Him in royal glory into the city; now here is a mission to get a room to eat the Passover in. The failure of the first mission makes place for the second. If the Lord had been accepted on earth, He had a title to fill the throne of David; but the citizens would not have

Him, so, being cast out as a King, He must become a stranger. He offered Himself to crown the whole system of the earth in royal beauty, but the earth would not have herself crowned; so what does He do? When He was refused as the headstone, He must be the chief cornerstone. That is the knitting of the two missions. The first was to get Him an ass and, as Lord of the fullness of the whole earth, He claims it from its owner. He says, so to speak, You are the owner, but I am the Lord. The man bowed to the claim, and so it will be by-and-by in millennial days - the supreme Lordship of Jesus owned, and His scepter kissed to the end of the earth. Now He sends out a mission, as a traveler going into a guest chamber. How the Lord knew how to transform Himself! He knew how to abound and how to suffer need; how to be abased and how to be exalted; to ride as a King into Jerusalem, and to go and take supper with a few poor disciples in an upper room! So to this day the Lord is a mere guest here, visiting His people. The master of the house is as ready to own His claim as the owner of the ass, so they sat down at the paschal table - not yet the Lord's supper, but the Jewish Passover.

Now He says, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover [for it will be the last]... I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." That act blotted it out forever. Now, why did He not take the cup? It was not enjoined by the paschal ordinances. Now, said the Lord, I will not taste joy. As an obedient Jew, He celebrated the Passover, but joy was reserved for Him in the kingdom. Till then, He knows no earthly joy.

Now, He institutes His own supper. He did not eat of this. He merely gave it to them. He could not take of it. He does not want redemption - purchase by blood. "This do in remembrance of Me." There is a deep and blessed secret in these words. That which in other days was anticipative, is now retrospective. The Lord's supper is a memorial. "What has occasioned the transfiguration? "This is My body." The Son from the bosom of the Father took a body. "A body hast Thou prepared Me." And now we do not come on the principle that sin has to be remembered, but that sin has been remitted, put away; there is no more. The paschal table anticipated the coming of the Lord to die. Now He has spread a table at which I remember that I was once in my sins, but that sin has been put away. The body prepared of God has been broken [although a bone of Him was not broken; see John 19:36] on the accursed tree, and now sin is put away forever. The whole character of the feast turns on the victim. The whole epistle to the Hebrews turns on the passage, "How much more shall the blood of Christ... purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" If your conscience is purged, what do you do with your sins? Remember that you were once in them, but that you are in them no more - dead and risen with Christ.

Now see again how the thoughts of all are on death. So are the thoughts of the Lord, but with this difference: they were thinking of Him as a martyr. He was thinking of a sacrifice - the victim character He was about to fulfill. The Lord died in two characters. He died a martyr at the hand of man - a victim at the hand of God.

Now we see that Judas was not simply one of the multitude. He holds a more awful character. He is the representative of apostate wickedness. His was not the common form of man's enmity to God. Judas represents apostasy. There has always been apostasy. Christendom at this moment, if it be not fully blown, is on its way to apostasy. The apostasy of Judas formed the link between Christ and His enemies.

Now we are introduced to the disciples, and (oh, terrible!) were they thinking of death? They were thinking of their own pride. "I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly." Pro. 5:14. Have you not been conscious,

in the most solemn moments, of your vanity and lusts? In the midst of all these deep solemnities, the thoughts of the disciples were about their vanity. I wonder that a look of the Lord would not have stilled and hushed the workings of their carnal mind!

Now see the meekness of the Lord. The proud are flattered in this world. It likes the haughty and the great. There is a verdict on the world. "But ye shall not be so." Does it not give you relief to come to the mind of Christ? "But ye shall not be so"; and He says elsewhere, "Go and sit down in the lowest room." Oh, the beauty of His mind, as well as the perfection of His grace and the brightness of His glory! "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations." Rebukes never separate. Suppose you are conscious that the Lord is rebuking you; you ought to be conscious that He is not putting you at an inch of distance from Himself. A rebuked Peter, James, and John went up to the hill of glory. The disciples had all been rebuked when He said to the Father in chapter 17 of John, "They have kept Thy word." Here they are rebuked, and yet the next moment He brings them nearer to Him, as the companions of His temptations, than the angels are. Did the rebuke put them at a single inch of distance?

In the kingdom of God there will be a table and a throne. The table is the symbol of personal family intimacy; the throne is the public display of glory. By a little word like that (v. 30), what a volume the Lord conveys to our hearts! We get the sanctuary of the family, and the outer places where the dignities of the throne will be displayed and shared. Now He turns to them, and they had earned it. If He never withdraws tenderness, He never withdraws discipline. The use of the rod never for a moment stills the pulses of the heart. "Simon, Simon," says the Lord, "behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." He had sifted Christ as wheat. Why did Satan get into Judas but that he might sift Christ? and now he desired to sift the disciples.

You see this introduces Peter in a very special way. From the beginning the Lord had appointed him head of the apostles, and apostle of the circumcision. He was primate of the apostolic

college. When the other disciples took to their heels, Peter lingered about. He failed terribly. His courage failed; everything failed but his faith in Christ, thanks to this intercession. Later when he saw the Lord, he rushed into the water to get to Him. Then, when he was converted, he could stand before councils; they could not make him a coward. So, when he was converted, he strengthened his brethren. We find the opening chapters of Acts verifying this. He was sifted; he failed in all but in faith; he was strengthened and he strengthened his brethren.

"And He said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything?" The meaning of this is very simple. When He was with them, He sheltered them; the garment is the symbol of shelter. Now that He was about to be withdrawn, they must take His place and become a militant people. They must reckon on taking His place in the face of the world's enmity. These are a weighty thirty-eight verses - the beginnings of laying that foundation on which creation itself is to rest for eternity. Christ died under the doomed old thing, to bring in a new eternal thing. Nothing was as old there. The joy will be as fresh when it has run ten thousand

years as it was in the beginning. The new creation is ever new and ever young.

The Gospel of Luke: Luke 3-5

We looked at chapters 1 and 2 of this Gospel in our last meditation. Let us now look at chapter 3. There is a great interval between the time of chapters 1 and 2, and that of chapter 3. We get the Lord there in infancy and boyhood. Now He has traveled on to the age of 30 years. I ask, "What sense are we to have of the Lord during that period of 18 years? What apprehension of Him is my soul to take? The answer is intimated in the closing verses of chapter 2; and the intimation is full of meaning. He was all that time under the law, growing up as an untainted sheaf, and the only untainted sheaf of human fruit - "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." This was the proper fruit of fulfilling the law. By-and-by He provoked much enmity. But suppose I fulfilled the law, and loved my neighbor as myself; should not I grow in favor with all men? So with the Lord. There is nothing more interesting than this, and I invite you to consider it. One act of complacency waited on Him from the manger to the cross - perfect complacency in the mind of God. The complacency might change its character, but not its quantity. There was not a single flaw in it from first till last. It is delightful to know that one such person has passed before the mind of God. He was equally perfect growing up in subjection to His parents as when the veil was rent.

Eighteen years have passed, and now we find Him introduced to His present ministry. He has magnified God under the law, and now He comes forth to walk among men as the witness of grace - a vessel about to display the grace of God to a ruined world. We must be prepared for tracking His path in its varied glory. Now we see Him as the perfect one under the gospel. He was introduced by John. John preached the baptism of repentance. "Bring forth... fruits worthy of repentance." Moses had prescribed a law, and they failed to keep it. John prescribed repentance, and they failed in that too. Then the Lord comes and dispenses grace. Supposing I had offended you, you would be disposed to give me space for repentance. This is just the ministry of John. The way of God is so simple that a wayfaring man will not err as he tracks it. Man broke the law, but before God gave him up, He gave him space to repent. He failed in that, so we see that whether he was tried by law, or by ability to repent, he failed under all. We must each one conclude that this poor self is a ruined thing. I have destroyed myself, but in God is my help.

The Lord comes to John, but He is not kept under John's ministry for a single hour. Ere He left the water, the Holy Ghost descended as a dove, and ordained Him for His ministry. Why was this? For a most simple and beautiful reason. There could be no fruit of repentance demanded from one who had never broken the law. You would not ask a person who had never erred, to repent. He would fulfill all righteousness. This was the divine appointment, and He would pass under it; but He could not stay under it for a moment. The moral beauty of this is perfect. We see the Lord fulfilling all the demands of Moses for thirty years; and though He passes under John's baptism, He does not stay under, it for a moment. Now He goes forth to do His own work. Now we see a minister, not coming with demands upon you and me, but bringing something to you and to me. Moses and John came in the way of righteousness. The difference is this: The law exposes yourself in all your failure; the gospel reveals God in the plenitude and riches of His grace, for

salvation.

Now we enter chapter 4, and it is beautiful. Now that the Lord has been ordained, what is the first thing He ought to do? What is the first thing any man ought to do before he speaks to another? Speak to himself. Do not speak to another and carry a careless heart yourself. "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, Dost thou steal?" Rom. 2:21. Now, before the Lord goes to assail Satan, He must withstand Satan. He lets him see that he has nothing in Him. If I take part in evil, I cannot rebuke it. So now He lets the devil see that there was not one single principle or touch of the power of darkness in Himself. The Holy Ghost leads Him up as the champion of holiness - as the champion of light - to contend with darkness, and His victory was complete. Satan may come in every form. He tries to get into the Lord what he got into Adam, but he utterly failed here, as he entirely succeeded before. In Gen. 3 you get the defeat of man; here you get the victory of man. Did you ever study with interest the Lord's being tempted? It is our stupidity that does not make every scene, jot and tittle of His journey interesting to us. The Lord lets us know that "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." John 14:31.

Now He returns in the power of the Spirit into Galilee. Under the power of the Spirit, He goes into the synagogue and teaches; and, as He teaches, He opens the book of the prophet Esaias. He does not find it open, but finds the place Himself. I pray you mark that. Why does He turn it over till He comes to chapter 61? Because chapter 61 is the deep, earnest, precious expression of the ministry He was entering upon - the ministry of grace. It was the very language that expressed the infinite varied grace that was about to mark His ministry. Do you believe that you and I are entitled to listen to such a voice? It makes no demands on me, as did Moses and John 1 am called to listen to One that is doing everything for me. How do you find secret communion of heart with God? as a judge or as a Savior? Nature puts you before Him in the character of a judge; the gospel puts you before Him in the character of a Savior. While you are figuring God to yourself as making demands upon you, you are under law. If you are listening with ravished attention to grace, you are under the gospel. Oh, happy soul that knows what it is to listen to Jesus! It will do more for the purifying of the soul than can Moses and John. "The joy of the LORD is your strength." Neh. 8:10. If I drink it in, it will make my heart too glad for it to serve my pride and vanity. Then He closed the book - as much as to tell them, That is everything. Do I believe, when I have listened, that there is my rest forever? Happy the poor sinner that takes up that attitude - that closes his heart where Jesus closed the book. The people marveled at His gracious words. At the close they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" What principle in human nature dictated that? It was their pride that could not brook the thought that the carpenter's son should be their teacher. They wanted a teacher from the college - fresh from the hand of man. The Lord finds out the two currents in their hearts. Supposing a mere sentiment awakens in your mind; is there any moral power in it? There was sentiment here, but pride got the mastery. Nothing will do but faith - that principle that lays hold on Jesus. Their fine admiration is gone; they are a defeated people. Their sentiment has been obliged to yield to a stronger current of pride, and they would have cast Him over the brow of the hill. He that trusts his heart is a fool. There is much excitement abroad now, and I welcome it, but I do not trust it. There must be a hold on Christ to secure victory. The lusts of the heart are too powerful to yield to excitement.

Then we find Him teaching in the synagogue, and they were amazed at His word; and, at the setting of the sun, He healed all that were sick.

And now I will introduce you to chapter 5, just to show how and where it is that the link is to be formed between Him and you. Admiration, as we have seen, will not form it, nor the healing of the body; of the ten lepers, but one returned to give glory. Nothing but a work in the conscience will do. You must learn your need - learn that a poor sinner cannot do without Him. Then the link is formed for eternity. We get this in Peter. How blessed to see this simplicity! The world is full of its wisdom, its religion, and its speculations. The gospel makes short work of it. It lets me know that I need a Savior, and then shows me that I have a Savior. If any soul cannot comfortably say, I have Him, I just ask, Do you want Him? If so, you are welcome to Him.

"He stood by the lake of Gennesaret," and He entered into a boat. It was Peter's. Peter was a goodhearted man, and would lend Him a boat. It is simply told. So He taught the people, and when that was done, He said, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draft." Well, said Peter, We will, but we have toiled all night and caught nothing. It was the reply of a good-natured man, willing to lend his boat to a stranger, and do a little thing the stranger asked him. But when Peter saw the multitude of fishes, the Spirit was forming a link that never was to be broken; he cried, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." What had taught him that? The draft of fishes was the expression, to his conscience, of divine glory. The veil had dropped off from the face of the Nazarene, and the glory of God shone out. Who but God could have commanded the wealth of the lake into Peter's net? So Peter's conscience, coming in contact with the glory, found out that he was a sinner. How do you know you are a sinner? Because if God broke the blue heavens and came down, you could no more stand before Him than did Adam. You would call on the rocks to cover you. There was the happiest intercourse between God and Adam in Gen. 2 In chapter 3, Adam flies from Him and hides himself behind the trees of the garden. This is just the difference between innocence and sin. Peter says, "Depart from me," and what is the Lord's answer? If you have found out, poor sinner, that you want Me, you shall have Me. Fear not. Has that intercourse ever gone on between you and Christ? Have you found out that you are a poor sinner and nothing at all, but Jesus Christ is your all in all? You may spend your admiration, scholarship, sentiment, on the Book. It will not do. Your conscience must have to do with Him. How simple it is! How worthy of God to be so simple! "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 4:6. He who said, "Let there be light," said also, "Believe and be saved."

We have pursued our meditation down to the middle of chapter 5, and have seen the Lord introduced to His ministry. If we scan with attention the characteristics of His ministry, we shall find out the mind of God. What the Lord was, God is. He tells us Himself, not by the lengthened descriptions of others, but by acting and speaking Himself. Would not we much

rather learn Him from His own activities, than let another describe Him to us? We do not spend our time describing ourselves to others; we let our actions speak for us. We ought not to pass such a thought without blessing Him! The Son has come into our midst, not merely personally by incarnation, but He has brought Himself into the history of everyday transactions, and can say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Shall we sit down to mark the characteristics of His ministry with increased desire? It is a highway cast up, to lead us to the bosom of the Father. We discern God Himself in the activities of the Lord's speaking and doing. The heavens declare His glory, and the firmament shows His handiwork; but the firmament has no glory, by reason of that

which excels. Does anyone who has seen Him in the face of Jesus need to go up to the heavens to seek Him? Could the heart be satisfied there? If I have discovered the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, His glories in the heavens and in the flowers cannot satisfy me. It is like sending a man back to the alphabet after he has read some of the precious treasures of a language. Christ is your lesson as well as your teacher. I could not do with Him exactly as a teacher only. What would He teach me? But when He sits before me as a lesson, I have but to read my lesson. We find out in His ministry the moral glory that characterizes Himself, and he that has seen Him has seen the Father.

In the opening of chapter 5 we see the link formed between Christ and Peter. In the previous chapter we saw how admiration failed to form that link. What admiration formed went to pieces under the assault of the pride of life. So also the healing of the body formed no permanent link. Those who were healed could come and go, but the moment conscience forges the link, it is not coming and going, but coming and staying. Yes, and until this hour it is the same thing. If we are not conscious that there is a link between the conscience and Christ, there is no link that will abide. To be sure, it is right to admire, but if we merely admire, the link may be shattered by the first blow of pride; but if you cry out, I want Thee, and cannot let Thee go, that is Peter's place; and he and Christ were joined for eternity. Nothing can be simpler. I would not have anything

but my necessity bind me to Christ; and when that link is formed, it is so blessed that I would not exchange it for anything. Adam outside the garden knew more of God than when inside. It was no condescension for God to make the heavens, but He must have emptied Himself to make a coat for a poor naked sinner.

Gen. 3 might well prepare me for John 13. I am not surprised to see the Lord washing the disciples' feet. God delights in the work of grace. Adam might have walked through the flowers of Eden for eternity, and never have found out God in that character. Do you think he would have exchanged his pardoned for his innocent state? - his clothed for his naked state? He had found out God in a richer way than ever he would have done as an untainted man. So in Eph. 3 we find the angels have to learn through the Church the manifold wisdom of God - the tale of divine goodness through pardoned sinners.

Now let us look at some of the characteristics of the Lord's ministry. First we come to the poor leper. "What does he say? "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou cant make me clean." Do you believe in the reality of the varied ministerial glories of Christ? Then delight in it. Is the first thing I have to do to imitate Him? My soul deeply says that the duty that attaches to the first look at Christ, is delight - to be "lost in wonder, love, and praise." Then, if such an object pass before me, I say I will appropriate it. I say, That is for me. This is the duty of faith - the obedient attitude of faith. When I can trust myself to Him, that is the most blessed obedience I can render.

The leper comes with a half heart - "Lord, if Thou wilt." It was a shabby thought. We should be ashamed to come to one another and say, You have a hand if you have a heart. I say it was a shabby thought, but the Lord bore with it. "I will," He says, "be thou clean." Can you trust the heart of Christ? Faith says it can trust the heart of Christ better than any other heart. Here is comfort. I may be very conscious that I have approached Him feebly. Fallen human nature is a legalist - an arrant unbeliever. But I am encouraged here to know that though my approach may be feeble, the answer will be blessedly full.

Next we have a poor palsied man, let down through the tiling into the midst before Jesus. How does He treat him? The moment He looked at him He said, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." How magnificent! The same condescension that comes down to a weak faith, delights in a bold faith. When Jacob said to the Lord, in Genesis, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me," how did the Lord entertain the thought? Just as He did here. He allowed Himself to be overcome. If He condescends to a feeble faith, He allows Himself to be overcome by a bold faith. When the blind beggar met Him, what happened? His bold faith commanded Christ. "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" He commanded all His resources. Does not such a picture of Jesus suit you? It is worthy of Him, but it suits you. If you approach Him with a bold, unclouded faith, He will delight in it. Mark now, "Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?" He intimates here, that as the poor palsied man got up and glorified God, so you, coming to Him as a sinner, should rise up and go out glorifying God. He who could say, "Rise up and walk," could say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." The Lord is His own commentator and He tells you that even though you cannot bring your diseased body to Him to be healed, you can bring your sins. He is the text and the commentator, so that He may give the lesson and then comment upon it, till He lays it down at your own door. The act happened almost 2000 years ago, but by the comment of the Lord, I have the pardon of my sins laid down at my own door today.

We are still pursuing the discovery of Christ, and at verse 27 Levi is called. The Lord simply said, "Follow Me," but Matthew felt His power. He brought in the hidden operative power of the Holy Ghost. How was Lydia's heart opened? Who saw the operation? "The wind bloweth where it listeth." The Lord was opening the heart while Paul was addressing the ear. So here, the Lord was addressing Levi while the Spirit of the Lord was opening his heart. Suppose you are happy in Christ; will you attribute it to nature? No; learn in simplicity to trace it to Christ. What virtue was there in the words, "Follow Me"? None; and yet in spite of himself, he rose up and followed Jesus.

It was the wind blowing where it listed. What carried Zacchaeus through the crowd and up into the tree? It was the drawings of the Father in the hidden energy of the Holy Ghost that threw the bands and cords round him to draw him to Jesus. 'What mighty power was detaching Levi from everything he had in the world? It was the voice of the Lord that breaks the cedars. Do you know such a moment? We should never have been at the feet of Jesus if the Lord had not drawn us. Levi rose at His bidding. And he made Him a feast and, with blessed beautiful intelligence, what company is it he brings? The very company that the Lord came to seek and to save. This was power clothing itself in light - strength accompanied by intelligence. The moment he is in company with the Lord, he knows the atmosphere he is in. What spreads a feast for Christ? Knowledge of Himself. That is what spread the feast here.

The poor prodigal spread a feast for Him, and the Lord found delight at the table. He quickly transfigures Himself from the guest into the host, as He did at another time, with the disciples going to Emmaus. He makes Levi's feast His own. He answers the Pharisees, Do not complain; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. I came, I spread the feast, not Levi. Levi had spread the feast, but he spread it in deep-hearted sympathy with the mind of His Master. Have you ever in your house a table of which the Lord could say that He spread it, and not you? that He could appropriate it? How blessed to get into such personal intimacy with Him! Oh, let the Pharisees to this day break their heads over this! What villainous Pharisaism lurks about you and me! What should we do if Christ had not come to spread a table for poor sinners? Joy in Christ is what you

and I want. If we had more of that, we should have more victory over the world.

The Lord then puts an interesting figure before their thoughts. It is the bustle of the bridechamber we are in now. We are on the way to the marriage. It is a happy bustle - the foreshadowings of a blissful day. Is your spirit breathing that atmosphere? Do you know the activities that suit the children of the bridechamber? Oh, if I knew the atmosphere that suits the place preparing for the joys of Christ, the old wine would have little power over me!

The Gospel of Luke: Luke 6-7

We are meditating on this Gospel with the purpose of discovering the ministerial glories of Christ. Every jot and tittle ought to have an interest with us, because if we discover the ministry of Christ, we discover Himself. It is the complexion of all that He was. It is not so with us. We are all more or less deceitful in our ways.

Then we travel from that up to God Himself. Man by wisdom knows Him not, but in the face of Jesus Christ we do know Him; and the more we discover the lineaments of His face, the more we know of the Father. We should acquaint ourselves with Him as reflected in the ways of Jesus. We can track our way back to His presence only through Jesus. His precious death is my title to put my foot on the road, and all that He is and was is my light on the road.

"The second sabbath after the first," is generally supposed to be some one sabbath between the Passover and Pentecost. On this occasion, as they were passing through the cornfields, His disciples plucked the ears of corn. The Pharisees objected, and this brings out a beautiful commentary on the temple (chap. 6:3, 4). What was the Lord doing after creation? Resting. And has He not had creation rest disturbed? To be sure He has, as chapter 5 of John declares distinctly, when the Pharisees complain of His breaking the sabbath (v. 17). The moment His rest was disturbed, He became a workman afresh, and prepared a coat for Adam. When sin turned Him out of creation rest, He entered upon the work of redemption. In the opening of Genesis, He comes forth as the Creator, and on the seventh day He rests. Man intrudes and disturbs His rest; and the Creator sets to work again. He is not overcome of evil, but overcomes evil with good. He sets to work for the very creature that had disturbed His rest. He quickens one poor sinner after another, till we shall see the sabbath of redemption - the rest which is called glory. Creation rest depended on the fidelity of Adam; it was lost. Redemption rests on the blood of Christ, and can never be lost. If their ox or their ass fell into a pit, they would trespass on the sabbath. So God trespasses on it. The rest of the Redeemer was intruded on the rest of the Creator. We are debtors to Him for our eternity. He quotes Hosea (Matt. 12:7), "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." He is not looking for you to bring something to Him, but He brings something to you. If only we were happy in Him, we would work much better for Him. It is joy in Christ that gives victory over the world. Why are we all in subjection to the world? Just because we have not found in Christ all the joy we ought to find. If I rightly use the grace of God, it will purify me. As Titus says, "The grace of God... hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." God links my redemption with my purification.

Next we get the choosing of the twelve. In Matthew we have only the choosing of the twelve; here the seventy are also chosen, because the Lord shows Himself in a larger character. There He is rather as the Son of David; here He is the Son of man. Therefore the seventy are sent out, to show how illimitable is the grace of God that surveyed the whole family of man. Salvation is to all the world. The twelve were confined to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Contrast that with Paul's

wide-spread ministry in The Acts; and "that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." The Apostle of the Gentiles was standing as the representative of the present ministry of God. That ministry stretches to the ends of the earth.

After the choosing of the twelve, He came down into the plain; and great multitudes came to Him, and He healed all their diseases. He was a divine visitor to this world - a heavenly stranger among men - a divine visitor to men. He had not where to lay His head while He was visiting their necessities with all the resources of God. This is the ideal of a saint of God - to be independent of all that the world can give, while, with open heart and lavish hand, bestowing upon it all the benefits and blessings of God. If he is a mere heavenly stranger, he may be an ascetic; if a visitor only to the world, he may get involved in its corruptions.

In this chapter there is an epitomized presentation of the sermon on the mount. It begins with the poor, the hungry, the mourner, and tells them that they are "blessed." Now, would that have been the voice of God when He had accomplished His creation? In Gen. 2 He put Adam among the fruits and flowers of Eden - an obedient creation. Enjoyment was the duty then, but patience now. God has not put me here to enjoy myself, as He did Adam. Sin has cast out the Lord of glory, the Prince of life, and my proper place is patience. It is not, blessed are they that walk amidst the fruit and flowers, but, blessed are they that suffer, they that mourn, they that are persecuted. We have seen the Lord in infancy and then as a healer. Now we have Him as a teacher, and the burden of His teaching is, I call you not to enjoyment, but to patience. Was Adam in the garden to be poor? There was no end of his wealth. But there is a new kind of blessedness now, because He who became poor has been in the world. God is a stranger now in a defiled world, and are you and I to settle down in a world where Christ has been crucified? We will not go through these verses, but that is the burden of them. In patience possess your souls; do not count upon enjoyment.

In chapter 7 we find the Lord in company with the centurion. Two needy ones crossed the path of our Lord here - the widow of Nain and the centurion. The centurion took his place at once, and he pleads through the Jews. This is a beautiful instance of the intelligence of faith. He took his place as a Gentile, having no right to approach immediately to the Lord, but comes through His own nation. There is great beauty in the intelligence of an understanding illuminated by the mind of Christ. He approached by the right door - got at the Lord by the elders of the Jews. And the Lord says, / will go. Then, at the due time, he began to be busy - when Jesus was on the road. He did not begin by going to Him, but the moment He was on the way to the house, it was time for the centurion to begin to stir himself. We want these fine touches of the mind of Christ, for we are not only cold and narrow, but awkward and clumsy. By a Spirit-led soul we get all this beauty. Now, he says, Lord, I am not worthy, but speak the word only, and it is enough. Servants are at my bidding, he says, but diseases are at Yours now.

I pity the soul that cannot enjoy such a specimen of the workmanship of the Spirit. That is communion, when we can sit together and enjoy one another as the workmanship of the Spirit. The Lord marveled. It was the marvel of deep and rich enjoyment. Nothing in this world refreshed Christ but the traces of His own hand. The joy of the woman at the well of Sychar did not come up to her Savior's joy. So here, He was overwhelmed for the moment. To speak after the manner of men, He did not know what to do with it. Christ found no water in this world, but when the Holy Ghost knocked a poor rocky heart to pieces, then there was water for Jesus.

Now we have the widow of Nain. The Spirit presents, in a few words, the deep loneliness of her condition. The dead man was "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." The heart of Jesus was arrested, and then He arrested the bier of the dead young man. His compassions always went before His mercies. It is commonly said that the heart moves the hand. Do you not prize a blessing that comes to you in that way? Salvation came gushing forth from the heart of Christ. To say that the cross of Christ is the source of our blessedness, would be slandering the heart of God. God loved the world, and sent His Son; Christ's heart went before His hand. A blessing from Christ is given, as Jeremiah says, with His whole heart and His whole soul. "He came and touched the bier." He was undefilable, or He must have gone to the priest to cleanse Himself after touching it. Did Christ ever need the washings of the sanctuary? He might have restored the young man without touching him, but He has God's relationship to iniquity. He not only stood apart from the actuality of sin, but from the possibility of it. "And He delivered him to his mother." Let me be bold and say, The Lord does not save you that you may serve Him. To suggest the thought would be to qualify the beauty of grace. He did not say, I give you life that you may spend it for Me. Let His love constrain you to spend and be spent for Him, but He never stands before your heart and says, Now I will forgive you if you will serve Me. Surely, He had purchased him; yet He gave him back to his mother. Yet you and I go back to the world, and seek to make ourselves happy and important in it. Ah, throw the cords of love around your heart, and keep it fast by Jesus! Amen.

We have now reached the well-known mission of John the Baptist to the Lord. We were observing that the Lord's ministry is the discovery of Himself, because everything about Him was infinitely truthful. So also it is a highway cast up before us by which to reach the blessed God. If man seeks by wisdom to reach Him, His answer is, I dwell in thick darkness; but when we follow Him through Jesus, we get Him in His full glory.

Now John sends his messengers to inquire, "Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another?" There is such a thing as faith, and the patience of faith. Abraham illustrated both of these. He was called out to listen to the promise in the starlit night, and he believed God; that was simple faith. Afterward, he was called to give up all he hoped in; that was the patience of faith. That is where John failed. He believed, and pointed out the Lamb of God; but the prison was too much for him. He was a choice servant, but he failed in this, and did not like being passed by when others were being attended to. He was offended. Therefore he sends this unbelieving and rather a little insulting message. It was very faulty, but the Lord bore with it. He stood as the champion of God's rights in the world, but He passed by every insult to Himself. This was part of His moral perfection. He does not resent John's insulting style, but sends a word home to him that none but he could understand. "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." He couched His rebuke in such terms that none could decipher it but the conscience of John. If I find a fault in anyone, nature disposes me to go and whisper it in the ear of a neighbor. The blessed Lord did exactly the contrary. He saw that John was not quite prepared for what the service of Christ brought upon him. If another trespasses against you, you ought to rebuke him, but take care to tell him his fault between him and you alone. It is as if the Lord had written an admonishing letter in a language that none but John could understand.

It is equally beautiful when He turns to the multitude. He paints two or three dark grounds to set off John to them. The first is a reed, and by that He chews out John; then, king's courts; then all that

are born of women. He is presenting these things that John might shine out in relief. How perfect the Lord's path is! He sends a message of rebuke to John's conscience, and then turns round and sets him out in every way He can. Now what is meant by, "He that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he"? Did you ever look upon John as greater than Moses or David? No. It is not the person the Lord speaks of here, but this secret - that God's ways are always advancing, as from the prophetic to the evangelic. In this way John was greater than all that were born of women. He was not personally above Moses, but he stood in an advanced stage of God's dispensational purposes. So now, every saint, however feeble or strong, is in a higher dispensational condition than John, Moses, or David. The light of His unfolding purposes shines brighter and brighter. You stand in the resurrection and in the risen glories of Christ; and will anyone tell me that it is not a higher place than Moses had?

In verse 31 He looks at the generation and says, Now what are you like? How He delights to hang over His servant John! He has got John before Him here, and He puts him in company with Himself. In substance He says, "We have come to you, children of the market-place, both piping and lamenting, and you have neither danced nor wept." The hand of God is very skillful in touching the instrument, but He can get, no, not one note of music in return. That is you and me, beloved; for the, Lord is delineating our common nature, and He says God's finger has touched the instrument in every possible way, and He can get no answer. "In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing."

Let us pause for a little at verse 36. Did you ever consult the occasions on which the Lord is seen at different tables? We see Him at the Pharisee's, at Levi's, at Zacchaeus's, with the two disciples going to Emmaus, and at the table at Bethany. What an interesting theme for meditation, to see the Lord sitting and forming one of a family scene in this social world of ours! He occupies each table in a different manner. In chapters 7 and 14 of this Gospel, He sits at the tables of two Pharisees in the character He had earned outside. He goes there, not to sanction the scene, but because He is invited. One Pharisee may have a better apprehension of Him than the other, but He goes in on the credit of the man He was when outside. He continues to be the teacher in the chapter before us. He has a right to be a teacher or a rebuker, because it was in that character He was invited when outside. Then we see Him at the house of Levi. Levi had been called, and left all and followed Him, and was so impregnated with the mind of the One he had invited, that he puts publicans and sinners at the table with Him. The Lord sits there, not as a teacher, but as a Savior. How beautifully He can thus morally transfigure Himself! Then, when the Pharisees complain, He pleads for Levi and the poor publicans with him: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Zacchaeus had just been moved by a desire to see Him, and He calls him by his name, "Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down." He went in as one that had been desired, and would gratify that desire. He said, as it were, You have looked for a passing sight at Me, and I will abide all day with you. Do you look around in the gospel for these glittering rays of His moral glory? He does not violate His character in any of these. He goes to Zacchaeus as one who would cherish and nourish an infant's desire.

Now we come to look at the disciples journeying to Emmaus. Here we get two, I will not call them backsliders, but two who had got under the power of unbelief. "O fools, and slow of heart," He calls them, but He does not leave them till He leaves them with kindled hearts. It was a kindled heart that said, "Abide with us," and He stays till He could have them, in spite of the nightfall, go back to

Jerusalem and tell that they had seen the Lord.

Last, we see Him at Bethany, not here as a teacher or a Savior, but as a familiar friend, one who adopts completely the sweet and gracious truth of the Christian homestead; and He would have left the family scene as He found it, if Martha had not stepped out of her place. She might have been a housekeeper still, but the moment she leaves her place and becomes a teacher, He will rebuke her.

In the case before us, in the Pharisee's house, we have two persons. This is the most complete expression we get in the gospels of a consciously accepted sinner. She came, knowing that her sins were forgiven, and bringing everything she had with her - her heart, her person, and her wealth. This is a beautiful witness of what we would be if the sense of salvation were simple with us. The Lord entered into Simon's reasonings, but they were lost on the woman. One loves the soul that is resting peacefully in the conclusion, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." If the reasonings of a doubtful mind are lost on you, happy are you! So happily have thousands reached this conclusion, that they cannot understand the reasonings of others. She is occupied with her joy.

Another thing: When the Lord speaks to Simon about her, it is of what she has done; when He speaks to her ear, it is, "Thy faith hath saved thee." It was not her love, but her faith that saved her. Was that a cold word? Do you ever suspect the Lord of treating you coldly? She might have thought it a cold word, but go behind her back and hear His words: Simon, do you see her? Was that a cold heart? So if in His direct immediate providence He seems to deal coldly with you, just go behind - what is behind your own back, so to speak. Do not judge Him by His providence to your face, but by the love that never, no, never forsakes you, but has recorded in His book every cup of cold water given in His name. Let us pray that He will keep us near Him. We want, inside, to be as near to Christ as ever we can get, and outside, to go on from victory to victory in His name.

The Gospel of Luke: Preface

These meditations were first printed years ago in a monthly magazine called "Present Testimony" which was edited by G. V. Wigram. In a preface, he wrote that the manuscript was presented to him and he was urged to publish it, although it pretended to no finish, for it was a collection of rough notes, perhaps of private readings. Mr. Wigram felt that "it was precious, and calculated to refresh souls," and so commended it "as a basket of broken fragments to the hungry in Christ."

We have recently read these notes and have been richly rewarded in feeling the genial warmth and comfort of a heavenly atmosphere which is strongly contrasted with the chill air blowing across the world from man's frigid intellectualism and materialism. The notes breathe the fragrance of that glorious land to which we are going, and indicate that the writer was living in happy communion "with the Father and the Son." They are not calculated to merely increase our knowledge, as such, but, what is of more importance, they touch our hearts as we see the heart of God displayed in the Man Christ Jesus; they also reach the conscience, for truth rightly received is bound to enter by that avenue. We should not become spiritual Athenians who are interested only in hearing or reading "some new thing," but rather seek every opportunity to grow in grace and in acquaintance with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What characterized the "fathers" (those who had made the most progress) in John's first epistle was that they knew "Him that was from the beginning"; that is, Christ Jesus. Those whose hearts are full of Him have little to fear from either the world or false doctrines; therefore, the Apostle John addressed no special exhortation to them. (See 1 John 2.)

Some have conjectured on who the author might have been, but as the series was run anonymously in "Present Testimony," we shall do likewise. -Editor Christian Truth

Chapters 1 and 2

It is impossible to read chapters 1 and 2 of this Gospel without feeling that heaven is opened, and opened very widely too, to the view of earth. Do you enjoy the thought of heaven bringing itself near to you? God is an intrusion to the heart that does not enjoy Him. We ought to read all Scripture with personal application. There was a very beautiful opening of heaven at Jacob's ladder. Again, it was opened to Stephen when he looked up and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. So in the beginning of Luke, we get the opened heaven communicating with earth, and we ought to have a welcome for such a sight.

Things have been going on in a very homely kind of way since the prophets. Then heaven opened with a witness. So it will be by-and-by, though there may be a pause now. Zacharias had been serving the Lord in the temple, as others, and the angel's visit was a surprise to him. He was not quite prepared for it. Listen to the angel's language: "Fear not." Does the thought of nearness to God awaken alarm in your soul? Very right that it should, in one sense. We are all revolted creatures, but how blessed to see God quieting such alarms! The angel speaks the mind of God - "Fear not." Can your heart let in the comfort of that? Do you know what it is to have alarm as a sinner, and then to have your alarm quieted? We must acquaint ourselves with the personal

application of these things.

Zacharias is not quite prepared, and he confesses it, and the angel rebukes him. There is comfort in this - let us examine it. Would it be happy to you if a person did not show confidence in you? Just so it is with the blessed God. So the angel expresses resentment: "I am Gabriel," he says, "that stand in the presence of God." And why, beloved, why is your faith, too, challenged? Have you read the Romans with care? "Why does God challenge your faith there? Would it be comfortable to you if God did not care for your confidence? It would not be so between friends. We do not read Scripture with sufficient intimacy of heart. We read it as if we were acquainting ourselves with words and sentences. If, by Scripture, I do not get into nearness to God in heart and conscience, I have not learned the lesson it would teach me.

In the sixth month the angel goes up to a distant village of Galilee, to Mary - God still communicates with earth. Mary has a more simple faith than Zacharias. How often we see a poor unlettered soul that knows more of the simplicity of the truth of God than many who can talk much of the Bible. Again the angel's words, "Fear not." Do not pass that. What consolation in the fact that a visitor from heaven had such words upon his lips! He then speaks largely of what God is about to do. And Mary answered, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." Is that the echo of our hearts? What is the proper answer to grace? Faith. If a person shows you a kindness, you accept it. It is the only return you can tender. The grace of God shines out, bringing salvation, and the sinner's duty is to accept it. The eunuch accepted it and went on his way rejoicing. The joy of faith is responsive to the communication of grace. No element is more responsive to the gospel than joy. I have mistaken the glad tidings if they have not made me happy. If I have so listened to the gospel as to find it glad tidings, my answer is joy. So it was with Mary.

Now we get Elizabeth and Mary coming together. I do not know that we find in Scripture a more beautiful sample of communion in the Holy Ghost than here. Elizabeth was the wife of the high priest; Mary, the betrothed of a carpenter. Perhaps they would never have come together but for this. Now they meet, not merely in the flesh, but in the spirit. Now Elizabeth bows to Mary as the more highly honored - "And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Communion arises when people forget the flesh and act only in the spirit. There was no grudging on the part of Elizabeth, no pride on the part of Mary; Elizabeth holds herself meekly, Mary holds herself humbly. There is plenty of intercourse nowadays, but too little communion, even among the people of God. Communion is according to relationship in Christ.

Now we see a beautiful thing in Zechariah's mouth being opened. Unbelief had shut it - faith opened it. God does not afflict willingly, but personally - with an end in view. It was very right that he should be put into silence for a time, but as soon as possible his mouth was opened, wider than ever he counted on.

It was but a little bit of the world that heaven had opened upon. The great world lay, as we read in the second chapter, in the hands of Caesar. We will leave the big world for a moment and come to the fields of Bethlehem. There is something here exceeding what we get in chapter 1. We see the glory coming out of the opened heaven, and not one angel, but a host of them. When the poor shepherds tremble at the sight, we hear that word unchanged on the lips of heaven, "Fear not." Again, and again, and again, heaven echoes its own words in speaking to trembling sinners. Do

not pass them by as commonplace, unnecessary words, but drink them in. What title had the poor shepherds to them that you and I have not? They were poor sinners. Faith entitled them to it. And the angel said, "Unto you is born... a Savior." Not a judge nor a lawgiver. The grace of God, as the Apostle tells us, brings salvation. The angels talked of salvation. From beginning to end of the book - from the woman's seed down to "Whosoever will" let him come, salvation is the burden. So here - "And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Though very easy to us, it cost Christ everything. It brought the Son from the Father, to be made flesh; and the beginning of the story of His sorrows is here. The poor weak infant, lying in a manger! The moment He touched the flesh, the story of what His days were to be, began to tell itself out.

Suppose I showed you a person, it might be only his back, and say, He did you a kindness once; you could not but look after him with interest. The Lord Jesus has done you a kindness, in the three hours of darkness, and if by faith you entertain the thought, you cannot but be interested in Him. It is a simple, believing mind we want, to bring our minds into contact with the Person of Jesus.

The moment the glad tidings are announced, the hosts raise their acclamations. Now the word of the Apostle begins to be accomplished: "God was manifest in the flesh... seen of angels." 1 Tim. 1:16. The angels are deeply interested. In the Old Testament we get the cherubic figures hanging over the ark to express their desire to look into the things of Christ. That is the Old Testament form of the New Testament truth. The moment He is manifested, they begin to take up their attitude. The angels come to watch the path of the Son of man. They are interested, and they have less interest in it than you have.

The next person that is introduced to us is Simeon in the temple. We find him rehearsing his joy, as the angels and Elizabeth and Mary rehearsed theirs. The Holy Ghost gave him warning who the Child was; and at once, without asking leave of any, he took Him in his arms for salvation. Have you ever acted the part of Simeon and taken Christ in your arms for salvation? We are not indebted to Mary, to the Church, or to the brethren. Faith refuses to be debtor to a fellow creature. A brother may help us; a friend may comfort and cheer our spirits; but as to the question of the soul and eternity, we know nothing but Jesus. What a wretched piece of sophistry it is that sets up Mary for our souls! When it comes to a question of salvation, Mary must stand by, and all the saints in the calendar. Then poor Simeon is ready to depart. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." The moment the soul is introduced to the blood, it is made meet for the glory. It is very blessed to grow in knowledge, but the moment that by faith I have stepped into the kingdom of God's dear Son, that moment I am made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Are attainments to be my title? Attainments are very right, but the blood is my title. Would Christian watchfulness allow one carnal thought? No; but still, all that is not my title. The dying thief caught hold of the fountain, and his next step was paradise. So with Simeon - salvation in his arms, the crown upon his brow.

Next we come to Anna - the widow-hearted Anna. Her widowhood is over - exchanged for nuptial beauty and joy. She talks of Him to all. If we were more familiar with these chapters, it would enable us to live much in heaven. Here "Heaven comes down our souls to greet." Is there cloud, sorrow, defilement there? Look at the angels with joy and shining garments. There is joy and

strength in His presence. Under the law, no priest had any more right there in sorrow than in pollution. If heaven is the place of unspotted holiness, it is the place of unchecked joy.

At the close of the chapter, we get a little bit ashamed of Mary. She is the only one that leaves a blot on these chapters. Zacharias did, but it was more than compensated by his returning faith. And this Mary is the one in whom men boast! O the subtlety of Satan! He will place anything between the heart and Christ. Ah, none but Jesus! Commit your souls to none but Christ. Even when a gift exercises itself before me, I am to judge it; but where the committal of your soul is concerned, "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace." There is a thing abroad in Christendom that tells me to commit my soul to the Church. Will I? By God's help - never. May God acquaint our consciences with Jesus for sufficiency, and our hearts with Him for satisfaction. Amen.

The Man-Made Moon

The Russian launching of a 23-inch sphere, into an orbit reportedly 559 miles above the earth, at the speed of 18,000 miles per hour, is man's most audacious undertaking. It is by far the most amazing achievement in his history, for in it he has reached out beyond the earth and its atmosphere into another domain. He has invaded a realm other than that which God gave to man - "The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD'S: but the earth hath He given to the children of men." Psalm 115:16. Man has done marvelous things on the earth, and has shown great ingenuity in making his natural environment serve him. He has utilized things on the earth, and in the sea, and in the very atmosphere about him, and has reached down into the bowels of the earth and brought up substances to aid him in his accomplishments. In many ways he has reached the practical limits of development. He can travel faster than is prudent on the earth's surface, and can fly through the air much faster than the speed of sound. He has leaped communication barriers by transmitting pictures and sounds instantly through the air. He is extracting from the rocks the elements with which to make atom bombs, which are used to trigger the dreadful hydrogen bombs that can destroy whole cities with a single blast; in fact, he has unleashed the very power that burns in the sun. We may say with a strange emphasis, "What is man?"

Man's marvelous achievements show that in spite of his fall and alienation from God he still retains evidence of being God's handiwork. God made man in His image - His representative on earth - and gave him this inventive ability. Man has God-given powers, although he boasts as though he had not received them, but treats them as the product of some fortuitous development brought about by a strange evolutionary process.

But with all of man's masterful accomplishments, he is not any nearer to God morally than he was before the dawn of the scientific age. Everything is being used to gratify his desires and lusts and feed his ego, while he remains an enemy of God in his mind. It is as true today as when the psalmist wrote: "The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy." Psalm 14:2, 3. This is man's general condition, although by grace some have had their consciences reached and been led to repentance, and had their hearts opened to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Otherwise, the verdict of Rom. 3 is still true: "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.... Their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes." Rom. 3:11-18.

The Russian announcement of their successful launching of the first earth satellite contains a truly expressive statement of man's condition: "The present generation will witness how freed and conscious labor of the people of the new socialist society turns the most daring of man's dreams into a reality." It certainly savors of the pronouncement made when man started out to build the tower of Babel: "Now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." Gen. 11:6. Man today sees nothing to hinder the accomplishment of his wildest dreams; and he is

reaching out for new worlds to conquer, and speaks confidently of conquering outer space and making trips to and from the moon and other planets. Surely no one would belittle what he has already done. It is nothing short of astounding that he should be able to toss a 184-pound metal ball hundreds of miles into space and set it in an orbit to travel about the earth every 96 minutes. His cleverness is further demonstrated by placing it in an orbit 65 degrees from the equator so that it passes over most of the inhabited land area of the rotating earth three times a day.

The ignorant infidel used to talk of distances in the heavens as though the God who made them would be hampered by distance and could never take the redeemed to heaven. But now man has placed an object out in the heavens that in its first week of travel covered a distance equal to more than five round trips to the moon. And since then he has placed a larger object farther out, and may send out more. He may even shoot a projectile to the moon. Now man is emboldened to talk of these as only the first steps toward space travel. Some may ask, Where will it all end? how far will man be allowed to go? Perhaps we may answer this by referring again to men's first concerted attempt to make a name for themselves, at the tower of Babel. When everything was proceeding according to their plan, God confounded their speech, and they were scattered. Their mistake was that they left God out of their calculations, and the folly of that day is the folly of the mid-20th century.

Judgment hangs over this world because of what man did to the Son of God when He came into it in grace, but the sentence has not yet been executed because God has lingered in patience, pleading with men to "repent... and believe the gospel." But we are now approaching the very end of God's long-suffering with Christ-rejecters. The Lord will soon come and take His redeemed to be with Him in the Father's house, and then the judgments will begin to fall on the earth. They will come with frightening rapidity, and "a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." Judgment is "His strange work," but the world-crisis nears as man's self-conceit, self-confidence, and audacity mount to new heights. "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Matt. 24:21. So terrible will be the devastation of that time, that unless a very short time had been allotted it, no flesh would be left on earth (see v.22). Then the Lord Jesus will come back as the avenging Son of man to make His enemies His footstool, and "every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." Rev. 1:7.

The bold impiety of man will reach its climax when the Lord Jesus comes to execute judgment, for "the beast" (the head of the great Western alliance), "and the kings of the earth, and their armies," will be "gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army" (the army of heaven) only to be slain with the sword of His mouth. The ultimate in modern weapons will be useless against Him; His word will be all that is necessary to consume them. This is where man's scientific strides are taking him; he is going headlong to destruction. His very inventions are already causing widespread consternation before that day when men's hearts shall fail them for fear of those things that are coming upon the earth (Luke 21:26). We as Christians need to keep a clear perspective as the moment approaches when "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day." Isa. 2:11.

The unbelief of man has rejected as outmoded the truth that God created all of the heavenly bodies. According to pseudo-scientific circles, these bodies all evolved by natural means. The plain statements of Scripture that God created them are summarily rejected, and numerous scientific speculations are substituted to account for their origin. By the same token, we might guess that the new ball circling the earth was not made by anyone, but just came about by some accident of nature. Such a conclusion would be rightly ridiculed, for man made the satellite, and he intends to have the credit for it. But it is just as unrealistic to look at the heavenly bodies and reject the idea of a creator. Man little realizes what is the source of such illogical reasoning, but it is the product of his enmity toward God. Man's will is opposed to God, and any speculation that removes the idea of a living God to whom man is responsible is welcomed by fallen man. Satan, the god and prince of this world, is very adept at helping on such evil surmisings with lies of his own making, for "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8:44.

This brings to mind a story that is told of Sir Isaac Newton, the world-famous scientist, who was far ahead of his day. It is said that Sir Isaac made a model of the earth, sun, and moon in their correlations, showing their movements in their orbits. One day an infidel acquaintance came to the house of this renowned Christian and saw his intricate model. The infidel asked, "Who made it?" Sir Isaac replied, "No one." The infidel, thinking he had not been heard, repeated his question. Sir Isaac replied again, "No one." The acquaintance then said, "You evidently do not understand what I asked; I wanted to know who made this model." These repeated questions provided the opening that the Christian man of learning wanted, and he went on to explain that his was only a small insignificant model of the heavenly bodies, and obviously even it had been made by some one. How much more obvious it should have been that the celestial bodies themselves had been created by God Himself.

The Man of the Pharisees

We do not find any miracle in John 1. Andrew, Peter, and Nathanael were all brought to Jesus without miracles. The work was in their souls. The word, "Behold the Lamb of God!" had awakened this going to the Lord, and to seek Him as "The Lamb of God," is to seek Him as sinners, as those who have discovered their moral condition. This is far different from having been drawn to Him by a wonder (see Acts 8:13), and the difference that followed was great. The Lord gives Himself to those who reach Him in chapter 1; but He will not commit Himself to those who believe on Him in chapter 2 - who believed Him because they saw His miracles.

So again, we may observe in chapter 4, there is no miracle under the eye of either the Samaritan woman or the villagers of Sychar. Conscience was stirred. They receive Him as "the Savior," and He is at home with them at once. He commits Himself to them as He does not to those in chapter 2; but as He received Andrew and his companions to His dwelling place in chapter 1, so now He goes into the dwelling places of the Samaritans in chapter 4.

Such, however, is the beautiful variety of moral illustrations in the Book of God, that in chapter 3, in the midst of all this, we get Nicodemus, the "man of the Pharisees," occupying his own peculiar place. He was attracted by the miracles, as those of chapter 2 had been; but then his soul was reached as theirs had not been. It did not end with him as it had begun. He did not merely wonder and believe, but he wonders, ponders, is exercised in his soul, and seeks - timidly indeed, but still he seeks, and seeks Jesus. The miracle had put him on a journey to Him who had wrought it, as something more than a mere worker of wonders. And the result is peculiar, as is the thing itself.

The Lord does not take him to Himself at once, as He had done those in chapters 1 and 4, nor does He refuse to commit Himself to him, as He had refused to do with them in chapter 2. He is patient, and yet decided. He exposes him, forcing him to learn himself; but still He goes on with him, in a measure committing Himself to him.

But here, let me ask, as in chapter 2:24, what is this committing of Himself to others? It is this --forming real, living alliance with them - consenting to know them as with personal knowledge and in the bonds of fellowship. Jesus cannot do this with one who believes in Him merely historically, as it were, or by force of evidence, as the multitude in Jerusalem then did, and as Christendom now does. It is with a sinner He has come to form alliance, and friendship, and fellowship for eternity. The fragments of convicted hearts must be the links between man and Him and the outgoings of divine saving grace. Our need and His fullness, we as sinners, and He as the Savior, must form these links.

And such links are, at the end, I judge, formed between Jesus the Savior and Nicodemus the sinner.

He is seen a second time in chapter 7, standing for righteousness in the Person of Jesus, in the midst of the Jewish elders. But this seems to me but a little way beyond where he is in chapter 3. He is still the companion of the Jewish rulers, acting with them, though doubtless under some

misgivings of soul, and timidly still, as the one that had before come to Jesus by night, and in a small measure owning the Righteous One.

But in chapter 19 he has surely advanced. Here he puts himself on the side of the world victim. He stands, as with God Himself, in relation to Jesus there. God will provide that Blessed Sufferer with a glorious, triumphant resurrection by-and-by; Nicodemus and his companion Joseph will in their way provide Him with a tomb and graveclothes now. Their spices shall perfume that sepulcher which, ere long, divine power shall rend asunder.

Surely Nicodemus was now occupying the place of which the early words of Jesus in chapter 3 had told him. Is he not now, in spirit, looking at the uplifted serpent, the crucified, healing Son of man? And may we not judge that from henceforth he was one to whom Jesus committed Himself? Do we know that Jesus has committed Himself to us?

Man's Natural Thought Answered: Matthew 19:16-26

In the apparent dealings of the Lord Jesus, we sometimes find a degree of roughness (though, in spirit, always most blessed gentleness), and this especially when that which was amiable in human nature was brought before Him. Thus, when this young man came running to Him and said, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus gave the abrupt answer, "Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." Again, when Nicodemus came to Him by night, desiring to learn of Him, and professing to believe He came from God (John 3), He answered, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Again, when (Jesus having foretold His suffering many things at the hands of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, at Jerusalem, and being killed, and raised again the third day) Peter, in the amiable feelings of human nature, said, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee" (Matt. 16), He immediately replied, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offense unto Me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. The feelings of Peter only savored of the things of men; therefore, Jesus could only receive it as that which was ministered by Satan - "Get thee behind Me, Satan."

This young man counted on some competency in himself to do that which was good. He was very amiable, very lovable (it says, in the mention made of this same incident in Mark, "Jesus beholding him loved him"). There is much that is naturally beautiful and lovely in human nature; but there is nothing in it that tends to God - there is no will to please God in it, no righteousness in it. If such a young man had come to us asking such a question - "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" we would have considered it a most hopeful sign; but how did Jesus treat him? He just showed him that he was entirely wrong in his estimate of himself - "But if thou wilt enter into life," He said, "keep the commandments." On his asking, "Which?" Jesus tests him by those which respect his conduct toward man - "Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Well, says the young man, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" Jesus does not deny it, but tests him further, and says, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me." "When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."

Jesus had now touched that in which his heart was concerned, and proved him to be an idolater and covetous. His riches were the treasure on which his heart was set.

If we would do that which is good, we must have a new nature. There cannot be good fruit unless the tree is good; and if we would do that which is good, we must have a good nature. But Jesus declares, "There is none good but one, that is, God." That word, Do, and live, was just brought in to prove that all are lost, to prove that none can do; and therefore it is folly to think of entering into life thus. An innocent man would not have understood the meaning of the commandments. Thou

shalt not lust, is addressed to a sinner who has the inclination to lust. "Thou shalt not steal," is addressed to a sinner who has the inclination to steal. Jesus did not come to cultivate the good of human nature, but to save the bad and the lost; therefore He tells the Pharisees, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Matt. 21:31.

"There is none good," says Jesus of human nature; but there is ONE good - GOD.

When summing up the sins of the Gentiles, the Apostle says, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Why? Because "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge." Rom. 1:28. This was the root, and all the other sins were but the fruit. God does not ask for your goodness. He wants the heart, and this is what man does not like to give.

Paradise was God's being good to good people. The law was God's being righteous to bad people. But what we require is God's being good to bad people; and where shall we find this? In the gospel. You may object, This is favoring the wicked. So it is, "Let favor be showed to the wicked," etc. Isa. 26:10. Jesus came to the lost, and this was "favor... showed to the wicked."

This is what Satan always tries to make us disbelieve, and what our proud hearts do not like to accredit. Satan said to Eve (in effect), God wants to keep one piece of fruit from a man who is innocent; He is afraid you will be gods like Himself, knowing good and evil. But what has God done?

He has given not simply a certain fruit to one who is innocent, but (wondrous love!) He has given His Son for poor lost sinners. Satan always tries to tell us lies about God. Nothing could show forth the riches of His grace like this, that He has given His own Son for poor sinners. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5:8. God is righteous and just. In what? In requiring goodness from us? No. In condemning us? No! He is righteous and just in forgiving our sins - in estimating the worth of His own Son's work. (Rom. 3:24-28.)

Surely His love is immeasurable!

Many Mansions

The "many mansions" of John 14 set forth the blessed fact that there is room in the Father's house for the many families which shall share in the fruits of His everlasting love. But our Lord assures His disciples that His going to heaven was at once to prepare and define the place which they were to occupy. There was no place there for them till He went thither; but His place was to be theirs. Wondrous truth! The notion that the many mansions set forth the various rewards to be given to Christ's servants is, in our judgment, simply absurd. "I go to prepare a place for you." What has this to do with rewards? It is His entrance there, not our working here, that prepares our place in the Father's house. We believe, of course, in rewards; but John 14:2 has nothing to do with them.

Misuse of the Cross of Christ

In the present state of Christendom, it may be difficult for believers to enter into the full meaning of the cross of Christ, for the cross has been gilded over and its true sense has been lost.

The cross, which represents an ignominious death, has become a glorious ensign in the world. In Constantine's legendary vision, "in hoc signo yinces" ("by this conquer!"), on the standards of the Roman army, and later on the red shields of the Crusaders, the emblem has changed its true meaning. In pretending to honor the cross, the enemy has made it a worldly sign. The struggle between the crescent and the cross became one of earthly politics, and the real import of our Lord's death was ignored.

But, it will be said that the Crusades are all over, and that we are living in different times. [Today the cross is on the banner of Christendom as a sign to withstand the hammer and sickle of communism in the gigantic struggle for men's minds. - Ed.]

It is to this that we must now direct our attention. We are living in the last days, but the lamentation raised by the Apostle, that many were walking in the Christian profession, being all the time enemies of the cross of Christ, sounds mournfully true at this very time. Whatever may be the changes in the aspect of Christendom, the fact remains that we are in it, and that while the cross is its outward symbol, the true cross of Christ is as unpopular as ever. No one, unless he be taught of God, can possibly like the cross of Christ; it cuts at the very root of all human pretension and earthly hopes.

The Most High

I have been looking into the force of Elion (the Most High). That it ultimately refers to God in the Millennium as the supreme God then manifested, to the exclusion of what is false, is evident. This is the force of the word - One who, to the exclusion of and superiority over all others, holds the place of the one true God, but exalted as supreme in government. Jehovah is, as we know, the God who is in relationship with Israel, but He is the supreme God, the Most High. The full statement of the title, and the time of taking it, is in Gen. 14:19, 20, 22. Israel's enemies are entirely discomfited, and delivered into his hand, and the heir of promise blessed of Him who possesses heaven and earth. He is supreme, and has taken all things into His possession.

Still God is, of course, always such, and referred to in trial as the One who will set all right. When the Lord is just coming into the world to set all in order, the question is raised, Where is the secret place of the Most High? Where is He to be found as a protection? Whoever finds Him will have the protection of Abraham's God - the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - the place of promise. Jehovah is it, the God of Israel. And in fact the full divine care of the supreme God, the God of promise, is found, possessor of heaven and earth, revealed in connection with the Melchisedec priest.

Hence, too, when Nebuchadnezzar is restored from a state that represents the character of the empire which began in him, he owns the Most High (Dan. 4:25-34).

In the Psalm the use of it is frequent. In Psalm 21 it is connected with the royalty of Christ as the glorified Man and King. His hand will find out all His enemies, and by the favor of the Most High He will not be moved (Psalm 46). God is again in the midst of His people on Messiah's triumph (Psalm 45). The tabernacles are those of the Most High. His power is fully displayed in the earth, Jehovah being with Jacob. So more fully as to the world in Psalm 47. In Psalm 50 Most High is connected with the judgment of God in power. In Psalm 9; 10; 55, and 57, it is calling upon Him in this character by the remnant when in distress, the first of the two latter speaking of the distress, the second of the delivering supremacy over all the earth. Psalm 73 is the first of the third book, and the power of the Most High is despised by the adversaries; but, going into the sanctuary, their judgment is discovered. The years of the Most High are remembered in Psalm 77; His way is in the sanctuary and in the sea, not looking to heart-failing in man, but to Jehovah, the Supreme, who accomplishes His good pleasure. In this Psalm, and the next, it is Jehovah's right to this name, as in all the history of Israel. For this is all Israel. Psalm 82 and 83 both speak of judgment at the close, and in the fullest way recognize that Jehovah is the Most High over all the earth. Psalm 91 has been spoken of. Psalm 92 is the same perishing of the enemies, and exalting the true David. Psalm 97 is expressly as Jehovah reigning, and as Most High over all the earth, and exalted above the gods when He comes to judgment. In Psalm 107 it is Israel re-gathered who celebrates God's government, and His chastisement for their rebellion against Jehovah who is the Most High.

We have the Most High in Dan. 7, though in most of the occurrences in Daniel, it is in the plural for "high" or "heavenly places." There its connection with God's title, and making good His dominion,

and this connected with Israel, is evident. Thus, though Jehovah is looked back to in self-judgment in the history of Israel, as Psalm 56; 57, and 73, yet the force of the title is evident.

My Late Affliction

"I see in my late affliction no defeat from Satan in anywise. Contrary to that, I had been asking the Lord, and earnestly, for more practical separation to Christ in heaven for myself and His people. And in taking from me to Himself her whom He had given me as a companion and an ensample of unearthliness, I fancy I can see a lesson quite in harmony with the Father's love and ways. So far as I walk in heaven I am not bereaved; it is only when walking apart from the glory of Christ, or when the weakness of the earthen vessel is in question, that there is a void and a vacuum for me to bring Christ in to fill. But He guides me afresh and will lead me Himself whither He wills."

The Nazarite: Numbers 6

The great principle of the energy of the Spirit of God in us while passing through the wilderness is brought out in the book of Numbers. Exodus shows us redemption and relationship; Leviticus, the way of a sinner's approach to God; Numbers, priesthood in the tabernacle in the wilderness. Up to Sinai all had been grace on the part of God with His people. Here is the intercourse of God with them in the tabernacle of the congregation in the wilderness of Sinai (chap. 1:1). The principle of the red heifer in chapter 19 is the ground on which all the sacrifices are taken in this book - the energy of the Spirit of God in giving comfort to the soul, taking the ashes of that burnt long ago, and applying it with present efficacy to the conscience that has contracted defilement in its walk through the wilderness.

In chapter 6 we have the positive separation to God in the energy of the Holy Ghost (v. 2) - "unto the LORD." So the Lord Jesus, particularly after His ascension - "For their sakes I sanctify Myself," that we, by the energy of the Spirit in us should be separate now in the wilderness, walking in white, keeping our garments unspotted by the flesh. Again, the Lord did separate Himself that He might be about His Father's business, and for this did He separate Himself from His "mother's children" (Psalm 69:8) - the flesh, which by sin was under the power of death. He still holds the Nazarite character, because all His disciples are not yet gathered to Him; and now, in a certain sense, with us it is separation from joy - "the fruit of the vine"; we must not let the heart go. In glory it is the great spirit of rest; there will be no need to gird the heart then. Now the effect of the energy of the Spirit is to gird up the loins of our mind lest we get defiled; but in glory we shall let flow our garments, because we shall not fear defilement there. In the city of refuge the man was safe, but he could not go out or enjoy his possessions.

Verse 3: "Separate himself from wine"; that is, joy. The Lord came in character expecting to find joy among men, expecting to find a response to His love in the hearts of men, but found none, and so was a Nazarite from the first. To be a Nazarite is to be separated from every natural affection which can be touched by death - to be separated unto the Lord. No honey could be offered to the Lord, and now the Spirit is a new power come in detaching us from everything natural. The Lord filled with the Spirit for service said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" All nature by sin has come under the power of death, so the Nazarite "shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother," "because the consecration of his God is upon his head." v. 7. See also Luke 14:26. The Lord's tie in nature was with the Jews as Son of David; but all this He gave up as natural, for "when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them." Natural affections come from God and are therefore good in themselves; but they do not tend to God, being spent on the object. John was a Nazarite from the womb. Paul was a Nazarite, and Jeremiah also. So we are Nazarites.

Our own proper joy is beyond death; therefore all I give up here which savors of death is just giving up that which hinders a deepened apprehension of the joy and blessing of that life which is beyond the power of death. The Lord broke the link in the cross. "By these things men live, and in all these

things is the life of my spirit." Isa. 38:16.

"All the days of his separation he is holy unto the LORD." v. 8. This is the great principle in the Nazarite - holy to God, and in however short a degree he may attain to that character, yet in Christ it is perfect. All this is a distinct thing from innocence. Adam was innocent, but not separated unto God. Separation unto God supposes a knowledge of good and evil, and yet separation from evil. Adam got the knowledge of good and evil by the fall; the Holy Ghost is come to take us out of that evil. The Spirit is a new power altogether, separating us unto Christ in glory now that evil and self-will have come in. It is a most trying thing to us to know good and evil, for by nature we are in the evil - loving the evil and hating the good. The Holy Ghost is now taking us out of the evil, and here is the pain - His energy in us keeping us from the evil while passing through a world of sin and death. We cannot be innocent now that sin has come in, but we are holy in Christ.

Verse 9: "If any man die very suddenly by him." Death came in on everything in nature as the sign of God's hatred of sin. The spirit of real devotedness to God always was perfect in Christ, but it is failing in us. Wherever the old man works, there is the principle of death; therefore we get into death for the time when the old man is working. Therefore the word to us is, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts"; and again, "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man." All this is solemn. Not only have we peace but, while we are passing through this scene of sin, we need to be kept holy and devoted to God by the energy of the Holy Ghost in us.

Verses 9, 12. If I go back from devotedness to God, it is true the hair may grow again; but the head must be shaved close, and the time lost. It is not a question of sin here, but of loss as to the energy of life. A tree that has been much mutilated and broken down will grow up again; it was not killed, but only injured; yet its stature will not be the same as an uninjured tree. It is letting Satan mar and hinder the work of the Spirit. Samson let his heart go into the weakness of nature, and when we let in nature our strength is gone. Samson, as a Nazarite, was a type of the energy of the Spirit of God; he let out the secret of his strength, and it left him and he became weak as other men. True, in due course his strength returned, and with mighty energy he lifted the foundations of the temple. If we are not careful and watchful to keep the secret of our strength in communion with God, and worldliness and sin come in, we may not be conscious of it ourselves, but the truth will appear when we rise to shake ourselves - it may be in service - and we find ourselves weak as other men. And when in our weakness, like Samson, the devil will put out our eyes.

The Lord was the true Nazarite and He never departed in the whole course of His walk from His Nazariteship. It was not a light thing for Him to tread the path of suffering, but He prayed. In the garden,

"being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly" before the temptation came, and then we see He halted not; He could not. So we should first pass through the trial with God; then God will be with us in the trial. Peter slept and did not pray, and when the trial came he met it in the flesh and drew his sword. Jesus had prayed that the cup might pass from Him; but when the chief priests and soldiers came, though Satan was in it all, yet He saw the hand of God and could say, "The cup which My Father hath given Me"; then it was no temptation at all, but an act of obedience.

Verse 9: "Die suddenly," a careless thought, and communion is lost for the moment.

The offerings to be offered. All that was in Christ is presented to God (v. 20); so we really come in the power of these sacrifices to God; but until the Church be gathered, the Lord keeps His Nazarite character.

Palestine

How true it is that God's thoughts are not man's thoughts, nor His ways as man's ways! Man attaches importance to extensive territories, material strength, pecuniary resources, well-disciplined armies, powerful fleets. God, on the contrary, takes no account of such things; they are to Him as the small dust of the balance. "Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers: that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: that bringeth the princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity." Isa. 40:21-23. Hence we may see the moral reason why, in selecting a country to be the center of His earthly plans and counsels, Jehovah did not select one of vast extent, but a very small and insignificant strip of land of little account in the thoughts of men. But oh! what importance attaches to that little spot! What principles have been unfolded there! What events have taken place there! What deeds have been done there! What plans and purposes are yet to be wrought out there! There is not a spot on the face of the earth so interesting to the heart of God as the land of Canaan and the city of Jerusalem. Scripture teems with evidence as to this. We could fill a small volume with proofs. The time is rapidly approaching when living facts will do what the fullest and clearest testimony of Scripture fails to do; namely, convince men that the land of Israel was, is, and ever shall be God's earthly center. All other nations owe their importance, their interest, their place in the pages of inspiration, simply to the fact of their being, in some way or other, connected with the land and people of Israel. How little do historians know or think of this! But surely everyone who loves God ought to know it and ponder it.

Peace

In John 20:19-21 we have the word "peace" in a twofold sense; first, as applied to the inner life, and second, to the outer life of the Christian disciple. "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side."

Here we have peace in its blessed application to the inner life. All was finished. The battle was fought, the victory gained. The Conqueror was in their midst - the true David with the head of the Philistine in His hand. All possible ground of anxiety was forever removed. Peace was made, and established on a basis which could never be moved. It was utterly impossible that any power of earth or hell could ever touch the foundation of that peace which a risen Saviour was now breathing into the souls of His gathered disciples. He had made peace by the blood of His cross. He had met every foe. He had encountered the marshalled hosts of hell and made a show of them openly. The full tide of Jehovah's righteous wrath against sin had rolled over Him. He had taken the sting from death, and spoiled the grave of its victory. In a word, the triumph was gloriously complete; and the blessed Victim at once presents Himself to the eyes and to the hearts of His beloved people, and sounds in their ears the precious word, "peace."

And then mark the significant action. "He showed unto them His hands and His side." He brings them into immediate contact with Himself. He reveals His Person to their souls, and shows them the unequivocal tokens of His cross and passion - the wondrous marks of accomplished atonement. It is a risen Saviour, bearing in His body the marks of that death through which He had passed for His people.

Now this is the secret of peace. It is a great deal more than knowing that our sins are forgiven and that we are justified from all things, blessed as all this assuredly is. It is having before our souls - before the eye of our faith - the Person of a risen Christ and receiving from His own lips the sweet message of "peace." It is having in our hearts that holy sense of deliverance which springs from having the Person of the Deliverer distinctly presented to our faith. It is not merely that we know we are forgiven and delivered, but our hearts are livingly engaged with the One who has done it all, and we gaze by faith upon the mysterious marks of His accomplished work. This is peace for the inner life.

But this is not all. "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." Here we have the outer life of the Christian. It is all, from first to last, wrapped up in this one grand fact: he is sent into the world, as Jesus was sent by the Father. It is not a question of what he has to do or where he has to go.

He is one sent by Jesus, even as Jesus was sent by the Father; and ere he starts on this high and holy mission, his risen Lord insures him perfect peace as to every scene and circumstance of his

whole career.

What a mission! 'What a view of the life of a Christian! Do we at all enter into it? Let no one suppose for a moment that all this applies only to apostles. This would be a grand mistake. The passage on which we are dwelling does not speak of apostles. It speaks of "disciples," a term which surely applies to all the children of God. The very feeblest disciple is privileged to know himself as one sent into this world as Jesus was sent of the Father. What a model to study! What a place it gives us! What an object to live for! How it settles everything! It is not a question of "views" - of opinions, dogmas, or principles - of ordinances or ceremonies. No, thank God; it is something quite different. It is life and peace - life in a risen Saviour, and peace for that life, both inward and outward. It is gazing upon a risen Saviour, and starting from His feet to serve Him in this world, as He served the Father.

Peace With Gibeon

See Josh. 9

If we are acting faithfully, to every step of faithfulness the Lord will surely add more light; only it behooves us to take counsel of the Lord at every step. Peace with Gibeon only deprives us of victory, and brings upon us other wars and troubles; for the presence of what is not of God always opens the door to Satan. This, perhaps, is not so much felt when all is in vigor in the soul; but when there is decline, then the evil and consequence is felt. In the days of David there was a famine three years; it was for Saul and for his bloody house, because he had slain the Gibeonites. All this arose from the little act of not taking counsel with God. When all was war, it appeared a convenient thing, a blessing, to find some peace and recognition from those who said, The Lord your God. It sounded like Rahab's believing voice; and in appearance, with these far-distant travelers, there was nothing wrong in peace - they were not of the forbidden and accursed race. But they asked not counsel of the Lord; and it turned out that they were of the accursed race, and it went nigh to separate between Joshua and the people. So cunning is the enemy, it is almost as bad, or worse, to lean on one's own wisdom in the ways of God, as on one's own strength for the battles of God; peace with Gibeon and war with Ai end in defeat, or in confusion and shame.

Prayer

It has often been said that "Prayer moves the arm of Him who moves the universe." Prayer is an expression of dependence upon God. A prayerless Christian might be called an independent Christian, and independence of God is synonymous with the slavery of Satan. Thus a prayerless Christian is in a most perilous condition, and is sure to bring dishonor upon God.

The divine path for the child of God is altogether opposed to man's intelligence, and it is only as we are dependent upon God that we can go on in that path. The world seeks to ensnare us by its charms and allurements; "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (Gal. 5:17); "The devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Pet. 5:8. Are we stronger than the world, the flesh, or the devil? Even many Christians seek to draw us aside. Under the plea of liberal-mindedness they strive to widen the narrow path God has set our feet in, so that something of man may be utilized for Christ, and Christianity become more popular and serviceable, as they think.

Beloved, it is only as we are dependent upon God, learning His will, and abiding therein, that we can glorify Christ in a world which rejected Him. We are not called to be earthly saints, but heavenly, even as we are heavenly (1 Cor. 15:48).

So in this day, when Satan is arraying his deadly forces against the reproduction on earth of a Christ in glory, and even getting Christians unwittingly on his side, we have the more urgent need of private and public prayer. When the professed leaders of Christianity are giving up the truth and reducing God to the level of man, as in Psalm 50:21: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself," and when their followers applaud and endorse all this, it does indeed behoove us to pay attention to prayer, that we may be kept.

Prayer occupies a very large place in the Scriptures. We read, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17); "Continuing instant in prayer" (Rom. 12:12); it is only as we in prayer and supplication and thanksgiving let our requests be made unto God, that the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:6, 7). It is a most marvelous thing that, amid all the violent heavings and surgings of this poor world, whether politically, religiously, socially, or domestically, we can have this wonderful peace "which passeth all understanding"; and this is through prayer. We have an exhortation in 1 Tim. 2:1-4 which, I believe, is largely neglected by God's children. Paul says, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty," etc.

May we all give more earnest heed to it. Exhortations to prayer might easily be multiplied, but space forbids.

The blessed Lord Jesus Christ when here on earth was a perfect example to us. He was the truly dependent One, and we find Him marked by prayer. "And when He had sent the multitudes away,

He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone." Matt. 14:23. "And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed." Luke 5:16.

In John 17:9, Jesus says of His disciples, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me." We have only to read through the gospels to see how often, even all night, our blessed Master prayed.

The life of the Apostle Paul, whom the Holy Ghost puts forth as a pattern saint, was a man of prayer. One example out of many may be adduced: "For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?" 1 Thess. 3:9, 10.

The early Christians, as seen in The Acts of the Apostles, were characterized by prayer. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts 2:41, 42. Surely the lack of private and public prayer gives the key to all our weakness, both individually and collectively. For proof of this, see the principle brought out by Christ in Mark 9:29: "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."

In Acts 12, we find that when Peter was cast into prison "prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." Then when God answered them, and Rhoda told the praying company that Peter was at the gate, they said to her, "Thou art mad." When she pressed it upon them, they admitted that it might be his angel; and finally, when the gate opened and they saw him, "they were astonished." What a sad tale of unbelief it is when we so little look for an answer to prayer, that we are astonished when it comes, and call it "a remarkable answer."

The Old Testament abounds in allusions to prayer. "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice." Psalm 55:17. In conclusion, I would like to give you an example of prayer found in 1 Kings 18:41-46. In the first verse of this chapter we find that God told Elijah that He was going to send rain upon the earth. Many Christians throw their responsibilities and privileges overboard because of God's sovereignty. God in His sovereignty was about to bless Israel, to remove the curse that had for so long dried up her streams and turned the country "flowing with milk and honey" into an arid wilderness. The prophet might have said, What need I pray, when God has told me that He is going to send the rain? But not so; he went to Mount Cannel - a place of expectancy - from whence he could scan the whole seaward horizon. Then "He cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees."

While he looked up for, the blessing, he sent his servant seven times - perfection of expectancy - to look out for the blessing. On returning the seventh time, the servant reported, "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." Many might think that was a poor and insignificant answer to prayer, but not so Elijah. He sent a message of urgent haste to Ahab - "Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not."

Now comes the triumphant answer to the prayer of faith. God's mighty hand is in that little cloud. "And it came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain."

Would that we were more like Elijah - in the current of God's thoughts, in earnest prayer about what concerns Him and His interests. May this simple little paper recalling to your memory a few verses of Scripture on this wonderfully important subject of prayer, be blessed in some measure. May we all be stirred up to more private and public prayer, not only about our interests and needs, but also about God's interests and the sinner's needs. There is ample room and urgent necessity for continual earnest prayer to Him that is able to do exceedingly above all that we ask or think.

Israel, Present and Future: the Editor's Column

Confusion exists in the minds of many Christians regarding Israel's present status as a nation which has been recently attained after almost 2000 years without any polity. For all those years they were "wanderers among the nations" (Hos. 9:17), and they were "as a vessel wherein is no pleasure" (chap. 8:8). Now at long last they have an established government in Palestine; and whereas there were only a very few Jews in Palestine for centuries, there are now 1,600,000 there (an increase of 250% since the nation was formed nine years ago), and an estimated 100,000 more are to take up residence this year.

"Shall a nation be born at once?" (Isa. 66:8) is often quoted as a scripture that applies to their becoming a nation when Great Britain relinquished her mandate over the "holy land." It is cited to prove that their announcing themselves as a nation at that time, with the approval of other powers, was the fulfillment of prophecy. This is as much an error on the one side, as to say that God will never reinstate and bless Israel is on the other. Both are untrue according to the prophetic scriptures.

God has surely decreed that that land, "the glory of all lands," will be inhabited by His earthly people in blessing and prosperity. Many scriptures attest this: "And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts." Mal. 3:12. "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: for I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.... And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be My people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee.... And the Lord shall inherit Judah His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again." Zech. 2:4-12. "And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph [that is, the two tribes and the ten], and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the LORD their God, and will hear them." Zech. 10:6.

These quoted verses are all taken from the post-captivity prophets; that is, from those who spoke to the feeble remnant that returned from captivity in Babylon; so it is evident that these prophecies have not had any fulfillment as yet. They could not have applied to the return of the remnant in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, for they spoke of a glorious state that did not come into being at that time, and which these prophets indicated was yet future. To apply them to any past period of Israel's history is extreme error, for it would turn the Word of God into a mockery. And to say that they will not literally be fulfilled is to charge God with unfaithfulness to His promises - "God that cannot lie."

Many other prophecies could be quoted from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets, which are still future, and which can by no stretch of the imagination be applied to any previous time in history. They are plainly future - the future of the people of the twelve tribes of Israel, and of that land given to them by a divine grant, and which was never possessed by them in its entirety. So let us be crystal clear in this matter - blessing for Israel in their land under their true Messiah, and

under the new covenant, when the law shall be written in their hearts, is sure. It will come just as surely as day follows night, for "God is faithful."

But those who think that Israel's proclamation of sovereignty nine years ago was in any wise the fulfillment of these promises are, to say the least, grossly mistaken. What we have witnessed in Israel is not the work God describes, but a work of man.

There is one cardinal defect in all such hasty conclusions; namely, they do not take into account the absolute necessity of God's doing it according to His own character. He can never be gracious at the expense of truth. "Grace and truth" came by Jesus Christ, but it is never grace at the expense of truth; grace must have truth as its righteous basis to be of God. The demand of His holiness must be met, so that grace can reign through righteousness.

We have already quoted from the 2nd chapter of Zechariah regarding Israel's coming blessing, but the 3rd chapter of the same prophet is an integral part of the prophecy and belongs with the promises of future glory and blessing for Israel - both for the land and the people. The 3rd chapter shows how God can bless them; let us look at it:

"And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.... Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel." vv. 1, 3. Here is the scene that explains how God can take that people into His favor. First we see them represented in the person of their then high priest - a man by the name of Joshua. He is not shown acting as their priest here, but as a representative of the people in their condition - he "was clothed with filthy garments." This is the condition of the people as seen by God - covered with defilement. Can God bless a people in such condition? No, never. And if the present national reviving of Israel were the work described in Zech. 2, then it is not connected with Zech. 3, and God would be blessing them in defilement.

This "angel of the LORD" is none other than Jehovah Himself; as we read in Exod. 23 "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions: for My name is in Him." vv. 20, 21. Joshua the high priest represents a sinful and defiled people before they will be brought into all the blessing God has promised. The third person mentioned in these verses is Satan - the adversary of God and man. He is bent on opposing the purposes of blessing, but he knows nothing of the ways of grace.

Satan correctly understands the filth of the people of Israel and would press it before God against them. He went before God to accuse Job, and in Rev. 12 he is called "the accuser of the brethren." He overcame the first man, and hence brought in sin and death, and has kept man in fear through that power of death; but Christ has overcome him (Heb. 2:14).

What is Jehovah's answer to these accusations of the adversary? "And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" v. 2. Joshua is silent here; he does not speak throughout, but Jehovah takes up the challenge of Joshua's (Israel's) defilement; He speaks for Joshua and says, "The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan." Who else could rebuke Satan? Even Michael the mighty archangel "durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." Here the "stronger than he," who overcame him, rebukes the adversary, and, as it were, acknowledges

the claims of the fires of judgment, but speaks of Israel as being a brand plucked out of the fire. And who but God could thus pluck a person or a people out of those fires? How quickly a brand, a straw, is consumed in a fire! It would soon be gone, but for the grace that would pluck it out in time. Thus will Israel - a remnant, no doubt - be plucked out before they are consumed. He who will bring them "through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined," will remove them at the right moment (Zech. 13:9).

But while Satan is rebuked and thus silenced by divine power, is God going to bless a defiled people, even though at the last moment He snatched them out of the terrible fires of "the great tribulation," "the time of Jacob's trouble"? No, that cannot be! not any more than the father in Luke 15 would bring the degraded prodigal, defiled by the swine's pens, into his house in the condition in which he came from the "far country."

God in His sovereign rights had "chosen Jerusalem," and the next step is that Joshua, representing the people, must be cleansed. Jehovah gives commandment, "Take away the filthy garments from him." All is done for him as for the prodigal. His defilement must be removed before God can bless him, or that people, as He purposes to do in a day that is coming shortly.

Joshua must also hear from the lips of "the Angel" these words: "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee." Thus the repentant remnant of Israel will look on Him "whom they pierced," and enter into real self-judgment before God; then they will understand that it was He whom they crucified who actually bore their sins on the cross. They will then say in the language of Isa. 53 "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." v. 5.

Further, "the Angel" says, "I will clothe thee with change of raiment." He was not only cleansed from his iniquities, but clothed in a manner suitable to God Himself, just as the son in the parable of Luke 15 was clothed after his father commanded, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." Those whom God takes into favor must be attired suitably to His own presence. Nothing less will suit either His presence or His heart. Just as those who come into the king's house in the parable of Matt. 22 had to have the wedding garment, so all must be clothed with the robe of God's providing.

How happily the Apostle Paul had learned the lesson when he said, That I may have Christ for my gain, and be "found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. 3:8, 9. Perhaps no one ever had a better garment of human righteousness and religious attainment than he, but he had learned its worthlessness and was glad to be rid of it in order to be clothed with "the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Then in Zech. 3, verse 5, the prophet seems to speak as though he were in concert with the mind of God: "And I said, Let them set a fair [or, pure] miter upon his head." One thing more was requisite; he needed to be crowned. Joshua was now to represent a chosen, cleansed, and clothed people in their new and holy standing as a nation of priests. The miter was the priestly headdress of fine linen on which was the plate of pure gold. God had promised that people of old that on the condition of obedience they would be "a peculiar treasure" unto Him, and be a "kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" (Exod. 19:5, 6). But, alas, this never came to pass, for all was lost immediately by transgression.

The Apostle Peter, by the Spirit of God, applied these words to the feeble remnant of the Jews who accepted the Lord Jesus as their Savior (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). They came into these blessings before the day when the nation will, and came into them in a richer and fuller way than Israel will know it by-and-by. All believers of this day are "holy priests" to "offer up spiritual sacrifices" to God, and "royal priests" to show forth His praises and, as it were, dispense royal bounties. But a chosen, cleansed, and clothed Israel with a new heart will offer up praises to God and show forth His glories; for He will be glorified in them as His earthly people, as He will be glorified in us, His heavenly people. Joshua and his "fellows" are to be "men wondered at" (or, men to be observed as signs) in that day (Zech. 3:8).

One more statement remains to be noticed in this remarkable chapter which stands out as a pre-requisite to that nation being "born at once"; namely, "And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." v. 9. In order for the new Israel to be born at once, the iniquity of the land must also be removed in one day. This will be done at the fulfillment of the great day of atonement, when that people, "beloved for the fathers' sakes," but cast off for the rejection of their Messiah, shall look on Him whom they pierced and be in heaviness for Him (Zech. 12:10-14). They will mourn as truly repentant souls with "repentance not to be repented of." So before the promises of God for the earthly blessing of the children of Israel can be fulfilled, it will be necessary for them to pass through "the time of Jacob's trouble," and then see the Lord Jesus with the marks of the crucifixion in His hands, and they will pass through a time of exercise such as Joseph's brethren did when he revealed himself to them, saying, "I am Joseph." The land itself will also be cleansed.

Before we close these comments on the order of Israel's restoration, it should be noted that whether it be Israel of the future, or the sinner of today, God's principles of dealing are the same. The enemy would gladly accuse, but it is God that justifies and, when He does, who then can condemn? We need to know that we are cleansed from our sins, and clothed - clothed with the "best robe" and are fully fit for His presence; also that we

have the pure miter on our heads, or, in other words, have been made holy and royal priests to God; and all began with His sovereign choice. May we lay hold of the words of the poet:

"Though the restless foe accuses-

Sins recounting like a flood,

Every charge our God refuses;

Christ has answered with His blood."

And may we so rejoice in what His grace has done for us that we shall spontaneously offer up more of the sacrifice of praise to God as holy priests, for that is the portion of each saint - young or old, newly-saved or one who has had a long life as a Christian, man or woman. Public ministry has not been given to all, but all can offer up praise to God. Ministry comes down from God to His saints, but praise and worship can and should ascend to God from every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a sad commentary on our lack of occupation with Christ and with the grace of God, that worship is lacking in us as the saints of God.

Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ: the Importance and Necessity

It is my desire to say a little on the priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here we are, going through this poor wretched world where we need sympathy and want succor and sustainment continually; we are poor weak things down here; if I think of myself up there in heaven, I have a home, a rest, and no want, no care; we do not need sympathy or succor or sustainment in heaven. Oh what a moment, when we are forever out of the scene where we need those things! But then while our rest and home are in heaven, and that is our true place, still we are going through this world, and it is our life in this scene as we pass through it, our life down here as in the body, and surrounded by all the things that belong to this world - this, I say, is the sphere, and these are the circumstances where this wonderful grace of Christ is made known to us. Now we have need of sympathy, and what a sympathy is that of Christ!

There is a very marked difference between a person who knows Christ's sympathy, and a person who does not. There is nothing that so softens the heart as sympathy. There is nothing that ministers such real divine softness to the heart as sympathy. It is just the very lack that you may often see in souls. If they only knew Christ's sympathy, with all the softening and subduing influence of it, what a change it would make. But then, who in very truth can meet us in that way save Christ? There are scenes and circumstances through which we pass down here, where no one can really sympathize with us but Jesus. And you will find, beloved friends, and I have no doubt many of you have often proved it for your own hearts - you will find that while there are many who will feel for you, there are but few, if indeed any, who can feel with you. How few there are who are free enough from themselves to say to you, "I feel much with you, I have gone that road, I have traversed that path, I have passed through those circumstances; my heart has entered into all that." And that is just what is so blessed in its perfection about Christ - that He came down here and went through the circumstances in order that He might be able to feel with His poor saints when in them!

Oh, think of that precious grace! Think of Jesus coming down here and passing through all the circumstances that belong to a man down here in this world, that He might know and be able to enter into the feelings and sorrows and the afflictions and the trials of His poor beloved saints when they are passing through them. So the sympathy that we get from Christ is a sympathy which He has learned to accord to us. How blessed! He learned it for us. He did pass through it all as man; He learned it as man. And it was His human life down here, through all the circumstances of this world, and what He endured and passed through, that fitted Him to accord that sympathy to us when we are in like circumstances. And that is one thing that comes from priesthood - even sympathy; He is able to sympathize. And that is the meaning of that passage in the beginning of Hebrews: "We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (literally, who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses). It is put in that negative way to present the intense reality of His sympathy. We have a high priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses; He is able to do it. How precious! He is able to sympathize, He is able to succor, and He is able to save - the three things that are said of Him in connection with His priesthood. He

is able to sympathize; "He is able to succor," inasmuch as "He Himself hath suffered being tempted"; and "He is able... to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth" - to carry them in His arms, in His affections, and to lift them up - "He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Oh! beloved brethren, it is connected with much of our history down here - things we never could have surmounted. Have you not often found yourselves face to face with circumstances in which you could say, "I do not know how I ever got through that, how I passed through that trouble or was able to endure that pressure that was upon me"; I will tell you. The Priest on high succored you., saved you, carried you, because that is the meaning of "He is able to save to the uttermost." There is no circumstance which He is not able to carry you through; there is no wall too high that He will not carry you over; there is no pressure too grievous that He will not support you through. "He is able to save to the uttermost." I remember very well how that scripture has been used to set forth the gospel; and though I have a longing desire for more gospel energy and evangelistic desire after the souls of the miserable and perishing, still, I am jealous of that passage being misapplied; and this is the case if it be attempted to bring the gospel into it. Further, it would be an entirely false conception of the gospel to connect it with the intercession of Christ.

If it be a question of the salvation of the soul, that is connected with His cross and blood-shedding and death, and not with His intercession. This in Hebrews is the salvation of a saint, not of a sinner. The saint needs to be carried through the wilderness, over the difficulties, through the trials, lifted over all the ups and downs - that is the salvation a saint needs. He must be carried in the arms of the Priest if he is to get through; but that Priest is the One who bled and wept and suffered and died in this world. He died to be the Savior and He lives to be the Priest. He died, and it is His death as the Savior and the shedding of His blood as the Savior that settles the question of our peace with God, even the question of our sins; but it is His life in the heavens that supports and carries and sustains through all the difficulties down here. And such a High Priest became us - not a Priest for our sins, but a Priest for our trials, our sorrows, our difficulties, our weaknesses. A saint cannot do without a Priest for his weaknesses; a poor sinner needs a Savior for his sins; thank God, He is both. He is the Savior of our souls, and He is the Priest for our weaknesses.

Bear with me if I apply it in a personal way; I would ask, Are you conscious of this gracious ministry? Have you got the sense of this blessed priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ in its sustaining character in the heavens? What a cheer it is to the Christian as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ to know that there is One up there on the throne of God who came down to earth about his sins, and now He is gone up from earth to heaven about his infirmities. Think of the blessedness of that! It was our sins that brought Him to earth; it is our infirmities that He is occupied with in the heavens. He came down about our sins, settled the question of them forever on the cross, and now, raised up from among the dead and gone into glory, He sustains and supports and represents us on high. He sustains us in weakness, He cheers us in sorrow, and He sympathizes with us in all our trials and distresses.

The Lord give our hearts a better, a more divine sense of what we owe to the all-prevailing priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ - His unceasing intercession. Oh, how blessed to think of those hands ever lifted up, those unwearied hands of intercession, those hands that do not grow weary like Moses' hands. Poor Moses! his hands failed and fainted; he was a poor weak man like

ourselves, though while those hands were lifted up Israel got the victory; but Moses had not divine continuity, and his hands failed. The hands of Him who continues forever never grow weary, blessed be His name; His hands are ever uplifted, His heart is eternally interested in the objects of His love, and that is supreme comfort for our souls as belonging to Him. We are not only borne on the breastplate of judgment upon His heart, but we are borne upon the strength of His shoulders. We are borne on His affections and we are borne on His strength. Just as the high priest bore the names of Israel on the breastplate of judgment ever on his heart when he went in before the Lord continually, and bore them too upon his shoulders, so Christ has got the names of all His people indelibly recorded on His heart and on His shoulders; the Lord be praised for such cheer!

The Red Sea and Jordan

The Red Sea for the children of Israel was the door of deliverance from the house of bondage, the placing of them forever beyond Pharaoh's power and setting them in the wilderness as a redeemed people brought to God.

It is to us a type of the death and resurrection of Christ, not so much in the passover aspect of the former, where the blood met the claims of God's justice as regards the people's sins, but as that which has annulled Satan's power, delivered us from it, and brought us to God in perfect peace, so that we can joy in Him whose power has wrought so great a deliverance for us. This line of truth will be found in the Roman epistle.

Jordan was the entrance into Canaan. The crossing of it is in nowise a type of the death of the body, nor is Israel's entering into it a picture of the departure of a believer to be with Christ. It was when the people had crossed Jordan that the wars of Canaan properly began. There will be no fighting in heaven, no Canaanites to be dispossessed when we get there. But the Jordan must be crossed before Canaan can be reached; and Canaan, or rather what answers to it, is our place now, if indeed by faith and the power of the Holy Ghost we enter there. If the passage of the Red Sea is our redemption from Satan's power, so that henceforth we might walk with God through wilderness scenes, at peace with Him and standing in His favor, He being for us in all His love and unailing resources, the crossing of the Jordan is our entrance by faith into the blessed fact that we have not only died with Christ, but that we who were dead in sins have been quickened together with Him, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him.

The Red Sea and the Jordan have closed forever our history as men in the flesh, and now we have a new place in Christ before God, and are in spirit associated with Him where He is now, having been quickened with His life, and having the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. And this is the true Christian position, the proper portion of every believer. But let it be remembered that it is one thing for all these things to be true of the believer when viewed as in the place which the grace and power of God has made his, and another for the soul to be consciously standing in possession of it all. It is in the Ephesian epistle that our heavenly position and privileges are unfolded, and it is there we learn the need of the whole armor of God to enable us to stand (even when it is known) in the present enjoyment of what is infallibly and eternally ours in Christ.

Repentance

Repentance involves the moral judgment of ourselves under the action of the Word of God by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is the discovery of our utter sinfulness, guilt, and ruin, our hopeless bankruptcy, our undone condition. It expresses itself in these glowing words of Isaiah, "Woe is me! for I am undone," and in that touching utterance of Peter, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Repentance is an abiding necessity for the sinner, and the deeper it is the better. It is the plowshare entering the soul and turning up the fallow ground. The plowshare is not the seed, but the deeper the furrow, the stronger the root. We delight in a deep work of repentance in the soul. We fear there is far too little of it in what is called revival work. Men are so anxious to simplify the gospel and make salvation easy, that they fail to press upon the sinner's conscience the claims of truth and righteousness. No doubt, salvation is as free as the grace of God can make it. Moreover, it is all of God from first to last. God is its source, Christ its channel, the Holy Ghost its power of application and enjoyment. All this is blessedly true, but we must never forget that man is a responsible being - a guilty sinner - imperatively called upon to repent and turn to God. It is not that repentance has any saving virtue in it. As well might we assert that the feelings of a drowning man could save him from drowning. Salvation is wholly of grace; it is of the Lord in its every stage and every aspect. We cannot be too emphatic in the statement of all this; but at the same time we must remember that our blessed Lord and His apostles did constantly urge upon men, both Jews and Gentiles, the solemn duty of repentance. No doubt there is a vast amount of bad teaching on the subject, a great deal of legality and cloudiness, whereby the blessed gospel of the grace of God is sadly obscured. The soul is led to build upon its own exercises instead of on the finished work of Christ - to be occupied with a certain process on the depths of which depends its title to come to Jesus. In short, repentance is viewed as a sort of good work, instead of its being the painful discovery that all our works are bad, and our nature incorrigible. Still, we must be careful in guarding the truth of God; and, while utterly repudiating Christendom's false teaching on the important subject of repentance, we must not run into the mischievous extreme of denying its abiding and universal necessity.

Responsibility

A Christian, everyone will admit, ought to be a Christian in conduct and walk, as well as in name; how else is the character which stamps him as such, the life of Christ in him, to be seen? In these days of worldliness and declension we often have to leave the question whether a person is really a Christian or not. We know that "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His"; but it is incumbent on everyone who names the name of the Lord to depart from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19; J.N.D. Trans.). It is not the walk which makes the Christian, though to walk in some measure as Christ walked entitles such a one to the name; for what a Christian is before God should be reproduced in his walk. Before God he is seen in Christ as holy and without blame in love (Eph. 1:4), and such a character should mark him now. (1 Thess. 3:12, 13.) He is in the same position before God as Christ is; he has no other standing, for he is in it as the effect of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He knows it by the Holy Ghost which dwells in him, through whom he enjoys all the results of that death and resurrection, whether present or future. His sins have been forgiven for His name's sake. He is in Christ, saved forever from judgment; for love with him has been made perfect, so that it can be said, "As He [Christ] is, so are we [Christians] in this world." God sees each believer as such absolutely; he is complete in Christ.

Has the state of Christendom, which is a witness of the ruin of Christian profession, altered one bit what a Christian is, and consequently what his walk should be? True, the altered condition of things around us from those of early days of the Church, and the varying phases of that which bears the name of Christ, and therefore stands in the responsible place of answering to that name, may and do make the circumstances more difficult in the midst of which Christian walk has to be maintained, but we ought to be true to what, through God's grace, we are.

Risen With Christ

We get here the blessed side of the Christian state - being risen with Christ, the great groundwork on which we are. It is not that Christ has died for our sins, but that we have died and are risen; and this is the starting point of the exhortation. We have done altogether with the old man, having died as children of Adam; and we are also risen, having totally done with the world, and yet in it, but risen with Christ; therefore you get the practice of a person risen, and the affections and state and condition of the heart. The Christian is looked at as a person not alive on earth at all; he has died, and now, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."

In chapter 2 you get, "Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" You are not living in the world; you are dead. Now set your affection on things above. You belong there; you have not gone there yet, but the new man is not in you to put you into earthly things. The Spirit takes of "the things of Christ" and shows them to you, not to fix your heart on earthly things, but to deliver you from them; we are to be, in spirit, mind, and affections, up there. We are risen, and have nothing more to do with the world, as to our affections and object, than a man who has died out of it. It does not say, "You must die," but, "You are dead," for that is the Christian state. Christ having died, and He being my life, my life is hid up there in Him. There is complete association with Christ. He has died; I have died. He is hidden up there; my life is hidden. He will appear; I shall appear with Him in glory. Thorough, complete, blessed association with Christ is the place into which we are put; and it is the starting point of the character of this life displayed on the earth to which we do not belong. If an angel were here, he would do that which was God's will for him; but he would have nothing to do with the earth as to the object for which he lived.

The Apostle does not allow that we have any life here, but talks of our members: "Mortify" (put to death) "therefore your members which are upon the earth." All that proceeds from the flesh, the Christian is not to allow for a moment. Mark how different it is from dying to sin, as people speak. Mortify is just the opposite; it is putting to death. That is power. If I say, "I must die," that is being alive. We are dead to sin, the world, and the law. Christ having died, we have died. What is true of Him is true of us. Having now life and power, we are to put these things to death. There is no more lust, or self-will, or working of the flesh, if a man is dead. I am to reckon myself dead, not setting about to die to sin, for I should not be able; that is, the flesh, the old man, does not want to die. The Apostle says, "Reckon yourselves dead." You have died. Then put off the old man. "Our old man is crucified with

Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." Rom. 6:6. Sin has been "condemned in the flesh." Now I have the place of power to put to death every evil that the flesh would produce. Put to death your members, not your life in Adam. You are dead; therefore put to death your members. If you let them act, it is the flesh. The Christian has power in Christ - "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13) - to put down everything inconsistent with the life in which this power is. The life is hid with Christ in God, but our members are on the earth; and he says, in effect, "Now keep them in order; you have the power of Christ."

There is not deliverance till you get to that. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." We have to watch not to be careless and let these things spring up; but we have power to say, "Not a single sprout of the old stock shall spring up." The old tree is cut down and grafted. The old stock may begin to sprout, but that is not "the tree" in common parlance; it has been grafted. We know the stock is there, and so is the flesh there; but we must remember we have power, and we must not excuse ourselves. Our will is not changed; but if Christ is our object, there is power. There is still the law of sin and death, but I am not a debtor to it; it has no claim or power over me. It will have power enough if we allow it, but we have a power entirely above it. The Lord leaves us here to learn to have our senses exercised to discern good and evil, to be tested and tried. The flesh is there, but if we are full of Christ we are masters of it; if we are not full of Christ, it masters us, but it is our own fault - we have no excuse. We have to exhibit this life of Christ or else the flesh acts, and then the old man is exhibited. The Apostle says, You are not living in the old man at all now; you are living in Christ and you are not going to walk in these things.

In verse 7 he applies it to their walk. It requires us to make active use of the power. The flesh is soon up if we are not full of Christ. We are to arm ourselves with the power of Christ, and be active in keeping the flesh in its place - down altogether. If I am not full of Christ, for Himself, for His own sake, enjoying Him, the flesh comes out. It will not do to put on your armor at the battle. Everything we pass through in this world is one of two things: either an occasion of obedience to the new man, or of temptation to the old. The Lord prayed in an agony in Gethsemane, and when they came to take Him, He said, "Whom seek ye?" He had gone through it with His Father, and it was an occasion of obedience when it came. "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" Peter was asleep in the garden; and when the Lord was witnessing a good confession, he was cursing and swearing he did not know Him. If he were full of Christ, temptations would be nothing but occasions of obedience and glorifying God. We need self-knowledge and diligence of heart in abiding in Christ for Himself, so that when the temptation comes, we do not enter into it, and it is an occasion of blessed obedience.

In verse 8 we come to another thing - there is no lust, but the flesh is not subdued. We have no lust to be angry; it is an unsubdued nature, and that is not Christ. This is a second step - "also put off all these." We have done with those horrid evils that God abhors (and He abhors them even more in His children than in others; His delight in us does not change the holiness of His nature); now put off these which express an unsubdued will, an unarrested action of the flesh. If a man says something to me, and I get in a passion, that is not Christ; it is that which unsubdued flesh gives forth. "Lie not one to another." Satan was a liar and a murderer; we are to put off lying and violence. Put these off, because you "have put off the old man [faith has done it]... and have put on the new." You have done with the old man as to its very nature; you have put on the new. Now do not bring forth the fruits of the old, the crabapples of the old stock. The new is "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." The new man knows God, and takes nothing as the right thing but what suits God. It is not merely an intelligent creature; he is not received in that way. But the Christian knows the love and holiness of God in Christ. It is the knowledge faith has in God. There is no measure of the path I am to walk in as a new man but God Himself. That is where the Christian is set. Act in the same spirit and character as He has shown in Christ. Did He not show grace to you when you were an enemy? Then you go and show grace. Was He not full of

mercy to the unthankful? Then you go and do the same. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. 5:48.

Service and Communion: From a Letter

In connection with our work, dear brother, seek the Lord's face and lean on Him. When the body is not robust, one is in danger of doing it as a task, as an obligation, and the spirit becomes a little legal; or one yields to weariness, and is discouraged before God. Work is a favor which is granted us. Be quite peaceful and happy in the sense of grace; then go and pour out that peace to souls. This is true service, from which one returns very weary, it may be, in body, but sustained and happy; one rests beneath God's wings, and takes up the service again till the true rest comes. Our strength is renewed like the eagle's. Ever remember, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." May communion with God be your chief concern, and the sweet relationships in which we are placed with Him. All is well when we walk in them; then we discern and judge everything day by day, as to which hinders communion, and so the heart does not become hard nor the conscience blunted, and we readily enjoy those communications of grace which give strength.

The Seven Feasts of Jehovah: the Editor's Column

God has prophetically unfolded His dispensational ways in the symbolic "Feasts of the LORD." These have a bearing on the present dispensation in which the first day of the week, and not the Sabbath, is pre-eminent; they also have great importance concerning Israel's coming repentance and national resuscitation. With these thoughts in mind we give herewith a concise review of Lev. 23

In this chapter the Lord gave directions through Moses to the children of Israel concerning certain yearly feasts which they were to keep unto Him. But before outlining them, He told them to keep one weekly celebration - the Sabbath. This Sabbath was not a part of the yearly feasts that follow, but it is important that it should be given first. The first mention of the Sabbath is in Gen. 2:1-3 when the Lord rested on the seventh day after His work in making the earth ready for man, but His rest in creation was soon broken by the sin of Adam and Eve. God again began to work and prepared coats of skin for the guilty pair; even so the Son of God could not take His rest in this sin-spoiled creation when He came. He could not rest from His work even on the Sabbath day, for all around Him He found the effects of sin and the works of the devil; but He came to undo the works of the devil. So on one occasion, when He was chided for healing a man on the Sabbath day, He said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:13), thus referring to God's rest having been broken by sin.

But a chief reason for the introduction of the Sabbath at the beginning of Lev. 23 is that God still purposes that there should be a period of rest for this creation. It was ever before Him, but inasmuch as it could not come in at first by reason of sin, God, in this chapter, shows how it will be brought in as we shall see later.

These seven yearly occasions when the people would hold religious observances were not equally divided throughout the year. Normally, three were held in the first month, one in the third month, and three in the seventh month.* It was not God's plan to divide the year into three equal parts, but to teach us lessons about His dispensational ways.

The foundation feast was the Passover; it was the basis on which all God's ways would be established, for man was a sinner, and his being sheltered by blood must come first. It took place in the first month. We need to go to Exod. 12 to learn more about the Passover. God's earthly people, the people of promise, were slaves in Egypt; and the Egyptians defied the Lord when He asked them to let His people go. Nothing was left for God but to execute judgment on that rebellious people and land. But when He was going to visit the land in judgment, His earthly people were amenable to judgment, for they were sinners and had fallen into the ways of the Egyptians. But God said that He would "make a difference" between the Egyptians and the Israelites. It was not a difference founded on parentage or previous privileges, but one which He would make - one founded on the blood of the lamb.

The secular year had been running its course, but God interrupted it and said, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." There was to be a new beginning and it was to be founded on redemption. A lamb without blemish was to be taken on the 10th day and kept until the 14th day; and on that 14th day it was to be killed and its blood put in a basin; then the blood was to be applied with hyssop to the outside of their houses - to the two doorposts and the lintel above the door. After this was done they were to enter into the house and take shelter under the sign of that blood - a mark that a substitute had died. God said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." "Wherever this was acted upon, there was security, but not necessarily peace, for that depended on faith in God's word. They were safe under the blood, for God had spoken; they should have been in perfect peace about it, for His word should have dissolved every doubt.

The Passover pointed on to the "Lamb of God," and was a type of Christ the true Lamb of God's providing. We are not left to our imagination on this point, for the Word of God says, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." 1 Cor. 5:7.

What a blessed privilege it is for us who believe to rest in His work, His blood-shedding, and the Word of Him who cannot lie. Nothing else secured those in Egypt from the destroying angel that night, and nothing else secures the sinner now but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His shed blood. Truly this is the foundation of all God's ways of blessing, both now and forever.

The next feast in the yearly calendar was that of "unleavened bread." It began on the very next day after the Passover and was directly connected with it. The two could not be separated. They are often referred to as one; for example, see Luke 22:1. We may inquire what lesson God would teach us in this feast, and here again we are not left to conjecture, for we read in 1 Cor. 5, joined with the statement about Christ's being our Passover, "Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." v. 8. Here it is not Israel but us who are exhorted to keep this feast, but not in the outward manner as many Jews do to this day, making diligent search in the house to remove all leaven before the Passover begins. We are to put away "the leaven of malice and wickedness." Leaven is used throughout Scripture, without exception, as a type or symbol of evil. There is the leaven of Herod, of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, etc. It is evil that works secretly, corrupting and assimilating to itself. It may be in practice (1 Cor. 5:6) or in doctrine (Gal. 5:9), and frequently the practice becomes a doctrine to support the practice.

So it is plainly evident that the Christian who is sheltered by the blood of Christ, "as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," is called upon to put away evil, and that immediately after conversion; for the feast of unleavened bread followed the Passover immediately. There is still another point; that is, the feast lasted for seven days. Seven is a number always used to signify completeness, and indicates that the complete period of our lives should be marked by "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." There is never a time when the Christian may carelessly sin; he is to remember that he is "unleavened."

The next yearly feast is the "wave sheaf." We read: "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the

priest shall wave it." Lev. 23:10, 11. They were not to eat of their new harvest until the very first sheaf of it was presented before the Lord, as was said, "to be accepted for you."

Now we are not left to devise some means of explaining the typical meaning of this feast, any more than the preceding ones. In 1 Cor. 15 we read: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." v. 20. Also, "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." v. 23. The Christ who died as our Passover also rose from the dead. He had said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He was the true "corn of wheat" who died as "our passover" and rose again as the firstfruits of a new harvest. This feast definitely represents Christ in resurrection as the firstfruits of them that slept. And in resurrection He is accepted for us. We are "accepted in the beloved." We are seen in Him before God - in Him in resurrection.

The very day that the Lord Jesus died, the priest and the people were keeping the Passover, not realizing that in His death the type had come to its completion - that type had met antitype. Then on the very day in which He arose, the priests were waving the wave sheaf in the temple. Little did they realize that as they sought to bribe the soldiers to falsify the report of His resurrection, they themselves were actually doing that which for 1500 years had foretold His resurrection.

Another singular thing is that this was done on the "morrow after the sabbath" - the first day of the week, the Lord's Day. He was not only the firstfruits of a new harvest, but He arose on the first day of a new week. Let the Jews (and those "who say they are Jews, and are not") explain why this departure from the Sabbath was written into their own Scriptures.

Next comes the "feast of weeks," which took place fifty days later than the waving of the sheaf of the firstfruits. "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD." vv. 15-17.

The harvest from which they offered the wave sheaf had now had time to be made into flour, and they were to present "two wave loaves" unto the Lord. Fruit of the same harvest, but offered fifty days later. Are we left to our inventions as to the meaning of this feast? No, in no wise. In Acts 2 we read, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come." Pentecost means "fifty," or fifty days. Therefore on the very day when the priests in the temple were presenting the wave loaves with their necessary offerings, a new offering was being presented unto the Lord, not now in the temple, but in the upper room. The disciples were assembled there, awaiting the promised coming of the Holy Spirit; and on that very day, another first day of the week, He descended from heaven and dwelt in each believer individually, and in all collectively. Thus was something new formed, something never before known - the Church on earth united by the Spirit to Christ the Head in heaven. The fourth of the yearly feasts had its fulfillment in the inauguration of the Church on earth by the Spirit from heaven.

It is worthy of note that in these two feasts (the wave sheaf and the wave loaves), and these two only, the first day of the week is the day on which they were performed. The one speaks of the resurrection of Christ, and the other, of the formation of the Church of God. Should not this silence

the Seventh-day Adventists and all who would have Christians keep the seventh day, that those feasts which foretold of this period of time, the first day of the week should be pre-eminent? It should forever resolve any doubt in the minds of those who are subject to the Word.

Another important point to notice with regard to these two feasts is that there was no sin offering presented with the wave sheaf, but there was with the wave loaves. How accurate is Scripture! How could a sin offering be offered in connection with that which spoke of Christ in resurrection! But how fitting that it should be offered with that which spoke of the Church! The wave sheaf needed no preparation; it was presented as it was taken from the field. The wave loaves prefigure the Church ("two" perhaps referring to ample testimony on earth, or to its composition of Jews and Gentiles), and there is sin in it. There is leaven baked in the loaves; therefore, the need of the sin offering. Other offerings were also presented at both times, but we shall not go into them. Leaven was never burned on the altar; it is used here as a type of sin in the Church; and on another occasion it is used to represent sin in the individual offerer (Lev. 7:13). The leaven in the loaves was "baken," indicating that it was not seen as active before God.

There was a long interval between the feast of weeks and the next feast - from the third month to the seventh month. This no doubt illustrates the period of the Church's history, for just before the next yearly festival, there is a strange statement - verse 22: "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God."

This seemingly has no connection with the seven feasts; it appears to have been dropped in almost at random, but its very position is full of instruction for us. How will the Church's history on earth end? With the harvest - the gathering of the redeemed of this age into the heavenly garner. What a blessed hope we have! This verse is undated, just as the hope of the Lord's coming is undated in the New Testament. Nothing intervenes between the offering of the wave loaves and this 22nd verse. There is also an answer here for those who say that the Church must go through the great tribulation first, if only they would see it.

Soon the Lord shall come and gather the Church home, but there is going to be a little grain left in the field, in the corners. The poor Jew and the stranger Gentile who will believe in the coming King during the tribulation period, and suffer martyrdom, will also have a heavenly portion. Rev. 20:4, in the J.N.D. Translation, gives the account of the two classes which will be raised from the dead for heavenly blessing at the end of the tribulation period, before the fulfillment of the fifth feast of Lev. 23. The grain left in the corners of the field may also indicate the food of these tribulation martyrs who will apprehend the truth of the Scriptures regarding Christ as coming King.

But to return to our chapter. The next feast in order took place in "the seventh month, in the first day of the month." It is commonly called the "feast of trumpets." Directions were given more completely in Numb. 29:1-6. It signaled a new beginning, a calling together by the trumpets. The feast has not yet had its typical fulfillment; it and the next two are still future. It signifies the time when Christ will return to the earth with His heavenly saints and recall His earthly people, the Jews, to Palestine. When the Son of man appears in power and great glory, "He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matt. 24:31. "And it shall come to pass in that day,

that the great trumpet shall be blown." Isa. 27:13. The Jews are now going back to Palestine in unbelief to accept the antichrist; but then their Messiah will call them back to settle them in their own land with His blessing.

The next unfulfilled feast (that is, in its typical meaning) is the day of atonement, which took place on the "tenth day of this seventh month." This feast prefigures the day of Israel's mourning when they look on Him "whom they have pierced," and "shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him.... In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem... And the land shall mourn, every family apart." Zech. 12:10-12. Thus our chapter says, "For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people." This was also typified in Joseph's dealing with his brethren when he had them recall their sin "concerning" their "brother." It will be a solemn time for Israel when they go through in reality the fulfillment of the type of the day of atonement. After it is over they will say in the language of Isa. 53 "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." (Lev. 16 gives the details of the day of atonement and the offerings to be offered.) Then the repentant remnant of Israel will be ready to fulfill the type of the next feast.

The feast of tabernacles prefigures the Millennium (which will be the Sabbath for the earth), founded on Him who was the true Passover. Here we see the rest which will come in, not on the basis of creation, but on that of redemption. This last feast is a feast of gladness and joy. It, like the feast of unleavened bread, lasts for seven days; that is, a complete period of time. "And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days." v. 40. In that day all the promises made to Abraham and to Israel respecting their ultimate blessing will be fulfilled in detail. Israel shall be made a rejoicing, and blessing will flow out from the earthly Jerusalem to the whole earth. Space does not permit a more detailed examination of this wondrous scene of joy and blessing, not only for Israel, but for the nations, and for the whole animate creation, "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Rom. 8:19.

There is something special connected with the feast of tabernacles which is not found in any other feast; that is, that after the feast runs its allotted seven days, an eighth day is mentioned. This brings before us another new beginning, and that without an end being mentioned. We may call the eighth day the day of eternity, or a hint that God will then bring in a new and final scene of blessing.

In Deut. 16, the three times that all the males in Israel should go up to God's center were mentioned as Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, but they were so arranged that in doing this they could keep all seven of the feasts.* They were the times when God gathered the people around Himself. But while they kept them unintelligently, not realizing what they pointed on to, it is ours to rejoice in the knowledge of their typical meanings, not only in those that have already been fulfilled as part of our blessings, but of those yet to be kept in their real meaning for the blessing of Israel, the nations, and the animate creation, when Christ shall have His rightful place.

Seventh-Day Adventism

After the copy for this issue had gone to the printer we received information which we feel should be included, for it points up the character of the days in which we live as they lead up to the great apostasy. It also shows the necessity of being forewarned about the great delusion which has been fostered by Drs. D. G. Barnhouse and E. S. English, and Mr. Walter Martin; namely, that the Seventh-day Adventists are sound in the faith and should be treated as dear brethren in Christ. The campaign of these Adventism apologists is bearing its sad and destructive fruit, which is apt to gather momentum as it rolls. The information was this:

The official organ of the Seventh-day Adventists-Review and Herald-announced that their general headquarters had a telephone call from the Salvation Army headquarters in New York requesting "inspirational literature that could be supplied to their 2000 field leaders across the United States." This was answered by a suggestion that the Salvation Army purchase 2000 books of one kind, and then the Seventh-day Adventists would furnish free 2000 copies of Mrs. White's book, Steps to Christ. The transaction was completed, and the books were supplied with all possible speed. The Review and Herald expressed the hope that "this literature will bring inspiration and blessing to every one of these Salvation Army leaders."

Thus the leaven of evil continues to spread with the impetus supplied by misguided (if not deceived) leaders. Now the top echelons of the Salvation Army have been supplied with books that teach a part of the strange "message," and the way is open for further indoctrination with the Christ-dishonoring, bondage-producing, soul-enslaving legal system which denies the existence of the soul and spirit of the departed, and rejects with scorn the eternal punishment of the damned. A great step has been taken which may result in the Salvation Army's becoming a recruiting agent for Adventism deception.

In previous numbers we have taken issue with Dr. Donald Gray Barnhouse, Mr. Walter Martin, and Dr. E. Schuyler English for their articles in Eternity, Our Hope, and Christian Life magazines in which they sought to take the Seventh-day Adventists out of the ranks of the cults and to force their reception by sound, orthodox Christians. We pointed out some of the heresies, held by the Adventists, which undermine the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. The subjects considered were that the Lord Jesus as a man possessed the nature of man in his fallen estate, that He was liable to sin, that He risked the loss of everything when He thus became a man, that when He arose from the tomb He took our sins back to heaven, that He is at present engaged in an "investigative judgment" to see who are worthy of eternal life, and that when He has finished He will come forth and place the sins of believers on Satan who will be the scapegoat to bear away the sins. We still affirm that these doctrines are held among them and are in the books now being advertised and sold by them, and that they are fundamental errors. They are a part of a system of doctrine which cannot lead souls to deliverance and peace.

As the afore-mentioned heresies are by no means all of the fatal doctrines propounded and tenaciously held by the Seventh-day Adventists, we feel called upon to examine other grave

errors. And inasmuch as Dr. E. Schuyler English has said of Mr. Martin's defense of these people that "He is not talking about [Seventh-day Adventism in] the year 1875, or 1900, or 1925, but 1956," we shall be content to refer only to periodicals published by them in 1957, or to books which they have advertised or sold in 1957.

We cannot conceive that the Adventists really wish to have very close relationship with orthodox, evangelical Christians, unless for the purpose of proselytizing; for it is abundantly clear from their current writings that they consider themselves (and themselves only) to be the true "Remnant Church," and to have a special "message" to carry to all the world - a message that is basically different from the plain, simple gospel presented by true, earnest evangelical Christians. Of course they have welcomed the efforts of those who are seeking to remove the stain and stigma of bad doctrine that has followed them from their beginning. Now let us note a few of the many comments in their 1957 periodicals regarding their special "message":

"The borderlands of the Northeast Union are rich with prospects for God's last message"; "One of these insidious leaks is loss of confidence in the message. Ours is a most glorious message, and its truths are very precious"; "For this is God's message and we are His people"; "Seventh-day Adventists are interested in the island [Pitcairn] chiefly because almost all of its 138 inhabitants belong to the remnant church.... Thus thousands of people pass Pitcairn every year and learn something of the great Advent message"; "When the message of the three angels of Revelation [14:6-11.7 took hold of their hearts, many of these Islamic people accepted it, and several whole villages became Seventh-day Adventists"; "That congress filled him with the spirit of our message"; "the spread of our message"; "Songs were sung, attracting more people, then the third angel's message was preached for the first time in this area"; "These young men first heard of our message through the Voice of Prophecy"; "This experience... shows us that there are in every dark county, every city, and every village honest souls who are waiting for God's last saving message"; "The wife of a Hindu doctor accepted the message"; "the truths that make up God's message for this hour"; "giving Bible studies to those not acquainted with the faith of Seventh-day Adventists"; "A promising evangelistic project is found in providing for the fields color sound films on the main points of the Seventh-day Adventist message"; "Seventh-day Adventists have a special message to bear to the world in this generation.... The world needs, most desperately needs, that message."

We could multiply quotations to prove the Adventists feel that theirs is a distinctly different message; but these gathered at random from only a handful of copies of their official organ, the "Review and Herald," should suffice for our purpose. Theirs is different from the message that Paul preached, when he merely pressed repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Then the people "turned to the Lord," and not to some special message. And the same gospel preached by the Apostle Paul is God's only saving message for today.

But let us go to their own publications to find out what we can of their special message, and let us note some of the salient points. We shall first consider what the Adventists call "The Spirit of prophecy." The expression is found only once in the Bible; namely, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Rev. 19:10. (In this place the meaning is that the Holy Spirit's work will not be confined to the Church and this day, but after the Church has been translated to heaven, He will work in hearts as "the testimony of Jesus.") But this has been appropriated by the Adventists to themselves, and to themselves only, in order to build a doctrine which is used to prove that Mrs.

Ellen G. White was endowed with a distinct prophetic gift from God to the remnant church, and that it is connected with their special message. This is not some casual point in their doctrine, as we shall observe, but it may well be called the warp and woof of it. Its threads run through every phase of Adventism, and without it Adventism would fall. Here are some recent quotations regarding "The Spirit of prophecy":

One of their most prominent leaders, Carlyle B. Haynes, in an article entitled: "The Spirit of Prophecy-Should It Be Presented in Our Evangelistic Meetings?" says: "It had been a conviction with me for some time that the presentation of the message was incomplete without a comprehensive setting forth of the Bible teaching concerning the Spirit of prophecy-. I had observed over the years that converts to the faith who became firmly grounded in the clear teaching of Scripture about this ancient and important gift, became church members of the strongest kind. These were the ones who were the most firmly established and least likely to drift away from the message.... I followed the custom of preaching three times on 'The Gift of Prophecy.' " Mr. Haynes then told of a woman whose face glowed with interest and satisfaction when she listened to the story of "the restoration of the gift of prophecy to God's remnant church." - Review and Herald, July 18, 1957.

Eph. 4:8-13 is used by Seventh-day Adventist writers to bolster their contention that Mrs. White possessed a special gift of prophecy. In these verses the Spirit of God says that the ascended Christ gave gifts to His Church - "apostles... PROPHETS... evangelists... pastors and teachers." But in Eph. 2:20 we read that the Church was built on the FOUNDATION of the "apostles and prophets"; that is, New Testament prophets. (Judas and Silas are mentioned as being prophets in Acts 15:32.) The apostles and prophets did not remain after the establishment of the Church; they were the foundation, and the upper structure of a building is not the foundation. Therefore it is evident that these two gifts - apostles and prophets - ceased to exist after the Church's founding; but the "evangelists... pastors and teachers" remained "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." But this is rejected by Mr. Haynes, who says, "As none of these objectives is yet reached, every one of the gifts designed to reach them is still needed. No one can be allowed to depart from the church without their being a real loss.... All these gifts, then, including the gift of prophecy, should still be in the true church of Christ." - Marks of the True Church, pp. 24, 25. Will Mr. Haynes, who contends that the gift of prophecy was continued in Mrs. White, also contend that the Adventists have apostles? (The Mormons have twelve apostles.)

In a pamphlet, "The Testimony of Jesus - The Spirit of Prophecy" by another prominent leader, W. E. Read, purchased from an Adventist book room in 1957, we read: "Through the years they [the Adventist people] have believed and taught, and still believe and teach, that this gift has been exercised among them in the life and works of Mrs. E. G. White, who for several decades received revelations and visions from the Lord.... For seven decades Mrs. E. G. White... gave messages of counsel and warning, which we believe were just as verily from God as were the messages of the prophets in days of old.... The work of Mrs. White closed in 1915,... but her work still lives.

... Near the close of her life she declared: 'Whether or not my life is spared, my writings will constantly speak, and their work will go forward as long as time shall last.'

Every issue of the official publication of the Seventh-day Adventists - Review and Herald - has quotations from Mrs. White's writings on almost every page. They are the court of last appeal, and from the highest to the lowest among them they feel it necessary to punctuate their statements by references to Mrs. White's writings. From the pen of the president of the organization we read these words: "From various writings of the messenger of the Lord we read these words of admonition." - R. R. Figuhr. Then the editor of this periodical says: "They lead one to the conclusion that Mrs. White was illumined from heaven when she wrote." - F. D. Nichol. And Mr. Frederick Lee, the associate editor, says, "Ponder this message from the messenger of the Lord," and, "The Spirit of prophecy tells us in clear language." Then there is a statement by one who knew Mrs. White: "She attracted them [children] as did Jesus when

He was here on earth... nor have I ever doubted that she was God's messenger to His last church on earth." And from a recently purchased Adventist pamphlet we read: "The divinely inspired writings of Mrs. Ellen G. White should be in every Seventh-day Adventist home. If carefully studied, they will pilot us safely into the heavenly harbor." - J. K. Jones, President, Southern Union Conference. "Next to the Bible, I regard the writings of the Spirit of prophecy as God's most precious visible gift to His remnant church." - A. V. Olson, General Conference Vice-President for Southern Europe. We could go on and on quoting official references to Mrs. White as God's messenger, but all this strikes us as very similar to the place given to Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy by the Christian Scientists. With them it is the Bible and Mrs. Eddy's Science and Health; and our observation of Adventism is that with them it is the Bible and Mrs. White's works.

Now the Adventists' apologist, Mr. Walter Martin, in *Our Hope*, tells us that this group does not place Mrs. White's writings on the level of Scripture, but if they were "as verily from God as were the messages of the prophets in days of old," they are despising God when they place them on a lower level than the prophets. But, let us see if they do not say otherwise. Listen to these words from K. H. Wood, the assistant editor of *Review and Herald*: "God wants His children to be happy.... So He has warned and counseled"; and then to prove his point Mr. Wood quotes from Mrs. White to the end that early marriages are not to be encouraged, thus linking God's warning and Mrs. White's counsels together. So this Adventist writer calls Mrs. White's counsel God's warning and counsel, and then concludes by saying, "even among us who have been given inspired warnings." If this be true, it is as binding as Scripture. You cannot belittle testimony that would come with the same authority as the Old Testament prophets, nor warnings that are inspired by God.

Another statement from the same issue of *Review and Herald* says: "The letting down here and there in the way of life we have been taught in the Word of God and the Spirit of prophecy writings weakens us." Here we have the Word of God and Mrs. White's writings placed side by side. Just how much different is this from combining the Bible and Mrs. Eddy's Science and Health?

The Adventists' apologist, Mr. Martin, contends that so long as the Adventists consider Mrs. White's writings only apply to them, it is not within the realm of objection on our part. In other words, it is of no concern to evangelicals as long as they do not try to bind them with it. Is this correct? No, it is not. If God spoke through Mrs. White, then we too are responsible to hear. It cannot be passed off that lightly. And so the Adventists themselves teach that all are responsible when they hear her message. To assume Mr. Martin's indifferent attitude leaves simple souls in

the dark when that message is presented.

It is also contended that Mrs. White did not introduce any of the major teachings of the Adventists; but it cannot be denied that she by her dreams and visions and counsels did establish them, and her word is used today to bolster each one of them. She spoke as an authority on practically every point.

There is a special advantage to the Adventists in stressing the point that Mrs. White was a special messenger from God. It enables them to press home on their proselytes their special message with the supposed authority of God. If this "Spirit of prophecy" is accepted, then the way is open for their neophytes to accept anything she said. The deluded ones are now ready to swallow down the camel (Matt. 23:24). This same thing is true with Roman Catholicism; when once the premise is accepted that that corrupt religious system is the Church, and that Christ ordered it to teach, then the dogmas and precepts of men become supposedly divine commands.

In the case of the Adventists this is done in spite of the precise words of Scripture: "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man," and "Let your women keep silence in the churches." Of course they will quickly recall that God spoke through women prophets of old, but nowhere in the Old Testament was it forbidden. The Church did not exist then. The Adventists may also refer to the New Testament where Philip's daughters prophesied; but this they did not do in the church, nor has one statement of theirs ever been recorded.

Another distinctive feature of the Adventist "message" is the emphasis placed upon the ten commandments. It is not generally brought up in their early contact with non-Adventists, nor in the beginning of their proselyte-seeking campaigns, but sooner or later the duty to keep the ten commandments will be stressed. To them it is a vital part of their teachings.

Their Review and Herald for August 1, 1957 quotes approvingly this testimony from a convert: "For the growing betterment of my character I owe to the sermons, lessons, and literature of the Voice of Prophecy [Adventists' principle radio broadcast]. In fact, for my very understanding of the Bible and the message of Salvation I am indebted to the Voice of Prophecy. Yes, it was the Voice of Prophecy that taught me to keep all the ten commandments of God." Where is any of this in the gospel that Paul preached? This convert's character was bettered, and his understanding of the Bible and the message of salvation came through something that taught him to keep the ten commandments.

In a book advertised in the Review and Herald of May 16, 1957, we read: "The church of Jesus Christ must go forth to the world, clothed in the power of the Spirit of God to call men back to the Creator Christ and His commandments." - Christ Forever, by Arthur E. Lickey.

Mr. Francis D. Nichol, in the July 25, 1957 issue of the Review and Herald, says: "Now in these final days of the earth's history God is making one last dramatic endeavor to present the grandeur and the worth of His holy law and to provide exhibits of its worth in the lives of men and women....You have the rare privilege of cooperating with God in this audacious attempt to give the moral standards of heaven a foothold on earth. Don't fail God in this." In another issue, an advertisement for a book by Mr. Nichol, entitled, Making Ready For Heaven, says, among other things, "It reviews in detail the Ten Commandments and the demand they make on the believer."

Mr. Milton E. Kern, who was secretary of the Adventists' General Conference Missionary Volunteer Department from 1907 to 1930, and who is now an honored "82-year-old veteran worker," wrote in reply to Mr. E. B. Jones's book of reasons why one should not be a Seventh-day Adventist: "We are condemned by Mr. Jones for teaching that the 'condition of eternal life is... perfect obedience to the law of God.' [Mrs. White in Steps to Christ.] Yet we are told, in the same connection, that Jesus rendered that perfect obedience. That is right. He says, 'I have kept My Father's commandments.' John 15:10. And Jesus' practice was in harmony with His teaching. We read, 'One came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?' What was Jesus' answer? 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.' On being asked which, Jesus quoted five of the Ten Commandments. (Matt. 19:16-19.) Again a lawyer came asking, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' The lawyer quoted the two commandments that sum up the whole Decalogue, and Jesus replied, 'Thou hast answered right: this do and thou shalt live.' (Luke 10:25-28.) The instruction given by Jesus to such inquiry was different from that given by our critic [Mr. E. B. Jones], who declares, 'There is, indeed, no law - no keeping of the law required as a means of salvation,' because now we are 'under grace.' "

In the above quoted paragraph we have followed our practice of putting quotations from Seventh-day Adventist literature in italics, but we have exempted their last sentence which they quoted from Mr. Jones, for it is definitely right, although they quote it to condemn it. And while we find some statements and protestations here and there from the Seventh-day Adventists that they believe in being saved by grace without works, yet, time and time again, the evidence that they are law-keepers for salvation does intrude itself. And Mr. Kern here defends it. He and the rest of their writers, from Mrs. White down to the most recent, quote and requote a verse from Rev. 22, as it is found in the King James Version, thus: "Blessed are THEY THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." v. 14. This exactly suits their religion of works - commandment-keeping as a prerequisite to salvation. And although they are very adept at quoting from various translations of the Bible, especially the new R.S.V., they never once quote this verse from the R.S.V., for there it reads: "Blessed are those WHO WASH THEIR ROBES." Note the difference. The former makes it commandment-keeping, and the latter, the cleansing of the robes-the blood of Christ. And yet practically every other translation supports the latter rendering. We have at hand here the following translations and versions which quote it "wash their robes" or the equivalent: A.R.V.; Douay; R.V.; Ronald Knox; Confraternity; J.N.D.; Wm. Kelly; R. F. Weymouth; and the Berkeley Version. We do not have one that supports the King James, the translators of which obviously made an error, but an error that suits the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of error.

Seventh-Day Adventism

Now to return to the young man who asked the Lord Jesus, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Let us notice what Mr. William Kelly says about this man: "He had not learned the first lesson a Christian knows, what a convicted sinner is learning - that he is LOST. The youth showed that he had never felt his own ruin. He assumed that he was capable of doing good; but the sinner is like the leper in Lev. 13, who could not bring an offering to God, but only remain outside, crying, 'Unclean, unclean.' The young man had no sense of sin. He regarded eternal life as the result of a man's doing good. He had been doing the law; and, as far as he knew, he never broke it." The Lord took him up on his own ground and proved that he could not

thereby obtain eternal life.

In the other case, that of the lawyer (one who dealt in the ten commandments), he asked, "What shall I DO that I may inherit eternal life?" He had put himself on the ground of the law when he said "do," so the Lord asked him how he read the law. To this he correctly quoted the summary of the commandments. That was the basis of DOING the law. But his great mistake was that he did not know he was spiritually dead; what could he do? The Lord was going to prove to him the utter futility of keeping the law for eternal life. The Lord in His reply said, "This do, and thou shalt live" - note carefully, not have eternal life, but LIVE ON THE EARTH. But he had broken the law, death was his portion. Of what use is it to go to a man condemned to death for murder and tell him, "Keep the law of your state and you will live"? He would rightly ridicule you for your ignorance and stupidity.

Mr. Kelly said of the young man of Matt. 19, that he did not know what sin was. Let us turn aside here for a moment and see if that is not the root matter of the Seventh Day Adventists' legalism.

What is sin? To this the whole body of Adventist writers answer in unison, "Sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4. Mrs. White wrote that it is "our only definition of sin." This is a proof that they do not know what sin is, for here again the King James Version is defective. Breaking a known law is sin, but sin comprises more than that; it "is lawlessness" - it is the creature's exercise of his own will in independence of his Creator, even when there was no law given. Well may we ask again, Why do not the Adventists quote this verse from the R.S.V. and most other translations? Simply because the verse as found in the King James Version suits their error.

Nor does the correct understanding of this verse depend alone on the translation of the Greek of 1 John 3:4, because the collateral testimony of other scriptures settles the issue. Remember THIS verse, "Where no law is, there is no transgression." You cannot break a law unless you have one, but man may sin against God without breaking any law. God says that the "plowing of the wicked is sin," and "the thought of foolishness is sin." Yet there is no commandment against either. Rom. 5 says, "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." vv. 13, 14. From Adam to Moses there was NO LAW. Adam broke a divine command, but no other was given until the time of Moses when the ten commandments were given. But "sin was in the world" during all that time, even though men did not have the ten commandments (regardless of what Seventh-day Adventists say about this, the Word of God is plain); they sinned and they died. Yes, death reigned because of sin. To say that sin is only the breaking of the commandments is grievous and well-nigh fatal error. Those who make such a claim do not know what sin is; therefore their ideas of redemption and what is necessary for eternal life must be wrong, as also what is just retribution for sin.

It is demonstrably clear that the Adventists have never learned the difference between God's dealing with man under the law in Old Testament times to see if he were a recoverable sinner (only to prove him hopelessly lost - "without strength," and "dead") and that in the New Testament where God stopped seeking fruit from man in the flesh and gave His beloved Son to be the Savior - to SAVE by His death and blood-shedding, not by His law-keeping. The law served its purpose in condemning man; now God has come out in pure grace. But listen to the Adventists' Mr. Varner J. Johns: "There are those who appropriate the blessings of the new covenant to those alone who

have lived since Calvary. Such teaching divides the way of God's dealings with men. It takes grace away from the Old Testament Scriptures and law from the New. It belittles the law and misrepresents the gospel. It takes away the 'law, the prophets and the psalms,' leaving a dissected Bible and a perverted gospel." - Review and Herald, May 9, 1957.

Does anyone need further proof that the Adventists corrupt both the law and the gospel? They try to make an emasculated law without power to destroy, and a gospel with a corrupted grace, because law is connected with it and made a part of it. Thus with them law is no more law, and grace is no more grace. This is borne out by a statement to their Bible teachers about being "careful to stress the practical harmony between the law and the gospel." - Review and Herald, June 27, 1957. Thus both the law and the gospel are corrupted. This hybrid system is utterly false and is in principle a denial of the distinctive characters not only of the law and the gospel, but of Judaism and Christianity, of sin and of holiness. This is serious, for the Apostle explains in Rom. 7 that to be under both law and grace is spiritual adultery.

We might add that the Seventh-day Adventists seek to prove that "God's people knew the Ten Commandments and were expected to observe them before Sinai." - Signs of the Times, May, 1957. This is not so. Their contention is based on the fact that in Exod. 16, the people were given instructions about neither receiving nor gathering manna on the Sabbath day. This was just before the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; it is no proof that they had the law before that dreadful day when it was given. But the law was given at Sinai "that the offense might abound" - not that sin might abound, but the offense, "that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." Man by natural conscience knew it was wrong to steal and murder, etc., but when God expressly forbade it to Israel under the law, it became worse - "exceeding sinful." And the Apostle Paul says the law awakened lust in him, for the very things it forbade, he especially desired to do; therefore, "the strength of sin is the law."

In further evidence of the commandment-keeping character of the Seventh-day Adventist movement, we call on a pamphlet entitled, Marks of the True Church, by Carlyle B. Haynes, published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association in 1951, and still being sold in 1957. It gives "Two Outstanding Marks" which "This true church of the Lord" will have; namely,

"It is to be a commandment keeping church."

"And it is to possess the Testimony of Jesus."

Mr. Haynes adds: "There is only one movement, one body of people, which meets these specifications today." So the Seventh-day Adventists claim to be the only ones who are "commandment-keepers," and they alone have Mrs. White as their prophetess; that is, have "the Spirit of prophecy."

Now all this strange conglomeration about Mrs. White's "Testimony of Jesus" and law-keeping are worked out of Rev. 12, where the nation of Israel is removed and their place usurped by the Seventh-day Adventists. In this chapter it says, "And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne." vv. 4,5. Now by what method of twisting can the Seventh-day Adventists make out that this woman is the Church? Did the Church bring forth Christ? To even ask such a question

is ludicrous. The "woman" from whom Christ was born is Israel, and no one else. This is not only clear to any sober mind, but Isa. 9 proves it conclusively. Let us read: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The mother here

is the woman mentioned in Rev. 12 - Israel - and here she has a child, and it is "a son" - "a man child," as Revelation says. Furthermore, lest there be any mistake as to who this Son is, "... the government shall be upon His [Christ's] shoulder." Does not this fit perfectly with Rev. 12, where this Son is "to rule all nations"? Then in Revelation we learn that He was caught up to God and His throne. (vv. 4, 5.)

But after the Adventists twist this to mean the Church, then they come down to the last verse in the chapter and, calling themselves "The Remnant Church," apply this to themselves: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." HERE, they say, WE ARE-because we keep the ten commandments and have the Spirit of prophecy - Mrs. White.

And so Mr. Arthur S. Maxwell, editor of the Adventists' Signs of the Times, says of the "Advent Movement" that "Everywhere it has called men and women back to the Bible, back to the Ten Commandments, back to the holy Sabbath, until today, scattered in the larger countries of the world and many islands of the sea, there are nearly a million people,... who 'keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' " - Christ and Tomorrow, p. 81. And another Adventist writer has said, "There can be no evasion of our duty to obey the Ten Commandments." - Signs of the Times, May, 1957. Mrs. White wrote: "Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. All men will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed." - The Desire of Ages, p. 763. And the Review and Herald of June 6, 1957 quotes one of their new converts as saying, "I am determined to cast in my lot with those who keep all of God's commandments." Now regardless of what Seventh-day Adventists or their apologists have said, or may yet say to the contrary, we have honestly sought out the facts, and they are irrefutable. The Adventists bring all who come under their sway under the

law. One of their remarks is, "If you know nothing else but the Ten Commandments, follow the gleam." - Review and Herald, May 30, 1957. We may ask, "What gleam? So terrible was the sight at the giving of the law that "Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake."

Let us now go back to the early days of Adventism, back to 1846. At this time Mrs. White had one of her notable visions (which "gift," according to statements by others, has the same authority as the prophets' writings of old). She says: "But the Lord gave me a view of the heavenly sanctuary. The temple of God was open in heaven, and I was shown the ark of God covered with the mercy seat. Two angels stood one at either end of the ark, with their wings spread over the mercy seat, and their faces turned toward it. This, my accompanying angel informed me, represented all the heavenly host looking with reverential awe toward the law of God, which had been written by the finger of God.

"Jesus raised the cover of the ark, and I beheld the tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written. I was amazed as I saw the fourth commandment in the very center of the ten precepts, with a soft halo of light encircling it. Said the angel, 'It is the only one of the ten

which defines the living God who created the heavens and the earth and all things that are therein." - Life and Teachings of Ellen G. White, published by Pacific Press Publishing Association in 1953, and sold in 1957. This "testimony" very conveniently backed up the teaching of one of the principle founders of Adventism, Elder Joseph Bates, who had already believed in keeping the Sabbath. Mrs. White's report of a vision given her on April 3, 1847 is much the same - "The fourth commandment shone above them all." Thus, as her apologists state, she did not introduce the doctrine, but notice how she enforces it - by special inspiration. And a new revelation was certainly needed, for she admitted that "The New Testament does not reenact the law of the tithe AS IT DOES NOT THAT OF THE SABBATH [emphasis ours]; for the validity of both is assumed." - Counsels on Stewardship, p. 66, and quoted in Review and Herald, July 4,

1957. It is no longer assumed by them, but enforced as a MUST.

We are told in their writings that the "seal of God" is the keeping of the Sabbath, and that the "mark of the beast" is the enforcement of Sunday observance. And Mr. Arthur S. Maxwell says: "Most important for us is the fact that the hour of decision has come. We have to make up our minds on which side we intend to stand in the closing crisis of the ages. Are we going to give our allegiance to Christ, or Satan? Shall we choose to have the SEAL OF GOD [Sabbath keeping], Or the MARK OF THE BEAST [Sunday keeping]? Today Christ's last threefold message to man is being given to the world. It comes to you now. What will you do with it?" (emphasis ours). - Christ and Tomorrow. This is the issue - either keep the Sabbath or not, the choice is yours, but your destiny hangs on it. As Mrs. White says, "Man's destiny will be determined by his obedience to the whole law." - The Desire of Ages, p. 498. This is Adventism's special message.

To call attention to the centrality of Sabbath-keeping in their gospel (?) message, we shall quote from their Mr. Carlyle B. Haynes: "The reformation began to work, but did not proceed far enough to restore the Sabbath to its rightful place. This was to be done in the final movement and message of the gospel on earth.... The Closing Message of the Gospel [chapter heading]. To bear this message to the world, God had to raise up a new movement and people, separate from the established churches, for they had refused to walk in the advancing light, and had not accepted the Sabbath truth.... Just such a people as are here described as the remnant church have been raised up.... They are called Seventh-day Adventists." - Marks of the True Church, pp. 26, 27. Yes, this is a part of THEIR GOSPEL, but not of the gospel of the grace of God - the gospel that Paul preached and the early church received. Theirs is a perverted gospel, a gospel of works, a gospel that does despite to the Savior and His finished work. The Apostle John said, "No lie is of the truth." 1. John 2:21.

Let us note a few random quotations from their publications regarding the Sabbath:

"After twenty years, with the Lord's blessing, we had two thousand Sabbath-keepers." "Four of these people have already been baptized, and others are keeping the Sabbath or attending church services." "Cities in North America have been entered, and practically all, if not all, cities with a population of twenty-five thousand or more now have one or more Sabbath-keeping churches." - Review and Herald, June 6, 1957. "I began to read the fourteenth chapter [of John]. 'Let not your heart be troubled.' How I needed peace! I read on. I came to the fifteenth verse, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' I longed to know God. I longed to know that He loved me. I longed to know that I might love Him. Here in this verse was love, and a recipe for showing it, 'Keep my

commandments.' But I knew that this meant keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. This I had resolved never to do.... Still there was restlessness and frustration, and I again turned to the fourteenth chapter of John... read to the fifteenth verse, and then made my decision. I said, 'Lord, I will obey, whatever the cost may be.' The next Sabbath I attended church, and when the pastor made a call for consecration I stood up in response." - Review and Herald, July 25, 1957, article by Frank H. Yost, Associate Secretary Religious Liberty Department General Conference. (Where is the gospel of the grace of God, or salvation, in the above quotation?) "I think of Sinai. Amidst the thunder and lightning God gave the world His law. At its heart was the solemn command, 'Remember the Sabbath day.'... I am glad there is a people who keep the Sabbath.... I believe in the Sabbath." - Signs of the Times, June, 1957.

Under a title, Literature Wins Souls in the Philippines, we read: "Brother Roque Vitin and Brother Cornelio Castelo sold 'The Great Controversy' and 'Lights for Today' to a certain customer some time last year. This person found the light of truth contained in these books. He began to look for Sabbath-keepers, and as a result three new believers were baptized." Then it tells of two others who sold a book, " 'Judy Steps out,' together with other books. Little did they realize that ten would now be observing the Sabbath as a result of these contacts." - Review and Herald, May 9, 1957.

From The Signs of the Times for July, 1957 we read: "In 1886 an American Missionary, John I. Tay, came to the island, and before his departure the entire population was observing the seventh-day as the Sabbath of the Lord. From then on, the Pitcairn Islanders have maintained their adherence to the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church." The following quotations are again from Review and Herald: "The issue today is a decision on the restoration of the true Sabbath. The right day and its proper observance is the great test of this hour. Our decision is not immaterial to God, and we dare not treat it with indifference." June 27, 1957. In the same issue they ask the question, "What serves as special light in these last days? [Answer] A message to restore the true Sabbath." From a word to Juniors: "Did you know that God's kingdom has a flag? This flag has the name, the title, and the dominion of our ruler Jesus Christ inscribed on it.... He is the Lord who created heaven and earth in six days. The seventh-day Sabbath, Saturday, has been set apart since creation week. Do you wave it with enthusiasm by resting every Sabbath, going to church," etc. "He finally felt he must do something. He took a job as a purser on a ship, feeling that he could arrange his work to have his Sabbaths free. After careful thought and preparation he was baptized." - May 16, 1957.

We have now shown by quotations from current Seventh-day Adventist literature (and these might be multiplied many, many times) that they are under the law, the ten commandments, with their gaze centered on the Sabbath commandment, and that they are obsessed with the idea of bringing as many as they can throughout the world into their same fold of bondage and legalism. But in order to consider that they actually keep the law, they lower its standards; for instance, how can they baldly state that they keep the ten commandments when the tenth commandment says, "Thou shalt not covet." This touches the root, the heart of man, for out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, evil doings. If they were honest with themselves, they would feel condemned and guilty before God; for one cannot put himself under the law and not incur its judgment. The scripture says, "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse," not as many as break the law, but as many as come under it.

The Apostle Paul was brought up under the law, and he says, "I through the law am dead to the law." It killed him. Who ever excelled Paul in outward attainments under Judaism? None! But this model Pharisee found the "good" law was death to him, and any honest mind will find it the same today.

Who gave the Seventh-day Adventists the right to attenuate the law, or mitigate its exactions? For instance, they make their boast of the Sabbath day, but do they keep it as originally required? No. It is written: "Speak thou also UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, saying, Verily My sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you.... Every one that defileth it shall SURELY be put to death; for whosoever doeth ANY work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people." Exod. 31:12-17. The Adventist has no right to kindle a fire, to turn on a gas or electric stove, or start an automobile engine (Exod. 35:3), or do ANY work on the Sabbath. In Numb. 15 a man was ordered stoned to death because he gathered some sticks on the Sabbath day. How many Adventists would be left today if all who violated the express commands connected with the Sabbath had been put to death?

Did the Lord give the Adventists some land? We read that God said to those to whom the ten commandments were given: "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." Exod. 20:12. Surely they must be able to fill all the requirements of this verse. Where is their God-given land?

No, their pretensions to keeping the law are vain, and the curse is upon them; for "Cursed is every one that continueth not in ALL THINGS which are written in the book of the law to do them." Gal. 3:10.

Of course they will reason that the Lord Jesus worked on the Sabbath and that He liberalized the day. True, He worked on the Sabbath, and He said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." He thereby referred to the fact that God's rest in creation was broken by sin, and God had to begin at once to work to clothe guilty Adam and Eve; even so, the Lord Jesus was down here in this defiled place where sin and misery abounded, and He could not cease from work in such a scene. As sin had intruded on God's rest in creation, so the Son could not rest either. But anyone who is under the law must accept the Sabbath commandment as it is with its penal sanctions.

Actually only the Jews were ever under the law. God gave it to that people as a choice sample of the human race to see if man in the flesh could keep it. But alas, they broke it before it came into the camp. God tells us, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law [the Jews]: that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God." Rom. 3:19. If the choicest sample of the human race failed so miserably, then no one should dare to speak in self-defense. Every mouth should be stopped. But this has not silenced the Adventists. They make their boast of the law.

Plainly Seventh-day Adventism is the modern counterpart of the Galatian heresy. The people in the Galatian assemblies were not Jews, but had come under the spell of Judaising teachers. They had "fallen from grace." And Paul writes very severely to them. He begins his letter without any commendation for anything. He launches immediately into their removal from the GRACE of Christ unto another gospel. He said to them, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you." Gal. 4:10, 11. They were adding the laws and rules of Judaism to the gospel that

Paul preached and they had received, and so Paul calls it "another gospel: which is not another." For when ANYTHING is added to the gospel of the grace of God, it is no longer grace, nor gospel. It is a perversion which will ruin souls.

So strongly did the Apostle feel against the Galatians' adding to the gospel that he had preached, that he said, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal. 1:8. And that verse is strong enough and broad enough to encompass any present-day "Spirit of prophecy." If another gospel, it is contrary to the gospel that Paul preached, and the preacher of it is accursed. And whenever did the Apostle tell ONE person to keep the ten commandments? When did he ever put ONE person under the law of the Sabbath? NEVER! "The Message" of the Adventists is not Paul's gospel; it is not "the truth" which makes men free (John 8:32), but a falsehood which brings them into bondage.

The Siege of Jericho

Few things are more thrilling than the history of a siege. The endurance, courage, and skill called into exercise at such a time awaken our interest; while the privation, sorrow, and suffering that are entailed excite our sympathy.

History recounts many remarkable sieges - sieges in which extraordinary stratagems have been resorted to - yet it may be safely said that the siege of Jericho stands alone in the singular means employed for its overthrow by the besieging party.

Jericho was a city of Palestine standing a few miles distant from the banks of the Jordan. It was encompassed by a wall of considerable strength, which in those days might have been considered impregnable.

The people of Jericho had given up all fear of God and consequently had plunged into every species of vice and wickedness. So dreadful had their condition become that, after having in vain given them space for repentance, God in His righteous anger determined to destroy their city.

He ordered the Israelites,

His favored people among whom He dwelt, to besiege and take Jericho, extirpate its inhabitants, and afterward burn the city to the ground.

Now had the taking of Jericho depended upon the prowess of the Israelites, they might have had trouble enough.

However, the battle was not theirs, but the Lord's; therefore, they simply had to receive orders from Him, and abide by them. It is the peculiarity of these orders that renders the taking of Jericho so remarkable.

The men of Israel had merely to form a procession and march around Jericho accompanied by the ark of God and the priests blowing trumpets of rams' horns.

For six succeeding days they were to compass the city once; but on the seventh day they were to compass it seven times, after which they were to shout with a loud voice, and God would cause the walls to fall flat, so that without hindrance they might be able to accomplish their mission. And so it came to pass.

God's messengers of judgment then commenced their solemn work, and, without distinction, all the inhabitants of Jericho perished, with the exception of a few that had taken refuge in a house on the city wall.

Now we are not told that there was anything particularly noteworthy in the build or general appearance of this house - it was very similar to other houses of Jericho.

Yet, strange to say, instead of entering this house and putting its inmates to the sword, the Israelites kindly led them to a position of safety outside the city.

We might naturally suppose that it was the family of some very excellent man to whom such a merciful exception was made; but in this we should greatly err, for in the whole of Jericho there could not be found one godly individual.

No; those who were thus saved when Jericho was overthrown were a harlot named Rahab with her relations and friends.

It is possible that some readers may be quite at a loss to understand this matter, and therefore we will give a few words of explanation.

Previous to encompassing Jericho, Joshua had sent two spies into the city. Rahab received these into her house, sheltered them from their pursuers, and enabled them to escape by letting them down outside the city walls by a scarlet line from one of her windows.

She believed that God would deliver Jericho into the hands of the Israelites; and so she entreated the spies to remember her kindness to them, and to save her and her father's house. The spies entered into a solemn agreement to do this.

"And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.... And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window." Josh. 2:14-21.

We believe the destruction of Jericho to be a solid historical fact. Yet none the less we may look upon this unhappy city, both in its moral condition and in the judgment which befell it, as a striking type of the world in which we live.

As to its moral condition, it was entirely obnoxious to God, and had not in it a single individual that pleased Him. And notwithstanding the enlightenment and civilization of this day, the world is entirely contrary to God, nor is there in it one person who by nature seeks after Him. God has not yet, it is true executed judgment upon the world, as He did upon Jericho of old; nevertheless, we read, "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness"; and, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." This is a matter that calls for the serious attention of every reader.

The harlot Rahab, having heard of approaching judgment, awoke to the gravity of her position. It was a real thing to her, and she could not rest until she had learned a way of escape.

Her safety lay in the simple obedience of faith. The scarlet line was to be bound in her window; and we may believe have to have been so in earnest, that the spies had not proceeded far from the house before she might have been seen eagerly carrying out the direction received.

Had any passer-by observed the line bound in her window, he might at most have thought it looked strange and untidy. But to Rahab, how precious was that scarlet line! Her life, and that of all her friends, depended on it.

There is but one way of escape, and that is being under the shelter of that of which the scarlet line is but a figure - even the precious blood of Christ.

We feel that we are speaking on a subject the importance of which cannot be overestimated, and we desire to be plain and simple.

God tells in His Word of a coming judgment; but it is His desire that sinners should escape from it. So great is His love that He gave His only begotten Son to die that they through Him might be saved. Christ suffered upon the cross, the just for the unjust. God is now able righteously to receive and bless every sinner who puts his trust in nothing but the blood of Jesus.

It is not enough to know about the blood.

Persons may be very orthodox in their views of the atonement, and yet not have taken shelter from the coming wrath. If Rahab had simply talked about the scarlet line and what had to be done with it, and had failed to bind it in the windows of her house, she would have perished miserably like the rest.

Having serious thoughts about death or coming judgment will not save.

Rahab was not alone in her fears. We read that the hearts of all the people of Jericho melted for fear, yet they were destroyed.

How was this? They were not under the shelter of the scarlet line. Many have been alarmed on hearing a stirring sermon, or moved to tears by the affectionate appeal of an earnest preacher; but unless that fear causes them to flee to Christ, they are as much exposed to the coming judgment as though they had never given the matter any consideration.

We would ask you to notice that those who escaped when Jericho was destroyed were not spared on account of any personal merit. Rahab's character had been bad, and in all probability her friends were of a character equally debased. The most amiable person in the city was destroyed if found outside the house to which the scarlet line was attached; but those within, though they may have been flagrant sinners, were carried into a place of safety.

Scripture explains this. We read, "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not." Heb. 11:31.

There were then in Jericho two classes of persons - sinners that had faith, and sinners who believed not. There are but these two classes today.

Heaven with all its blessedness will be the portion of those that have faith in the blood of Christ, but there awaits the unbeliever an eternity of unutterable, indescribable woe in the lake of fire.

It is quite possible that some reader is trusting in nothing but the blood of Christ, and yet is afraid he does not belong to the class that has faith, because at times he feels uncertain as to his soul's safety, and is often alarmed at the thought of death.

We would ask such a one to notice that the only faith needed for Rahab's safety was a faith that would lead her to bind the scarlet line in the window of her house.

It mattered not whether she felt happy or miserable; if the scarlet line were bound in the window, the spies had solemnly sworn to save her.

Rahab's safety then depended upon the scarlet line. Now, Christ has pledged His word "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. If your trust is in the blood of Christ, this is all that is needed to insure your safety; you have, as it were, bound the scarlet line to the window of your house; your safety therefore depends upon the blood. If, however, Rehab would be not only safe, but also happy, she must believe the words spoken to her by the spies.

As she saw the Israelites marching round the walls, she may sometimes have trembled, lest after all she would perish with the rest of the inhabitants of Jericho. She would then call to mind the words so solemnly uttered, "Our life for yours"; and as she pondered them, her doubts and fears would no doubt for a time be removed.

Yet it is possible that even till the walls of Jericho fell down, and the spies came to carry her away from the scene of judgment, she may have been tormented with secret misgivings. This, however, though it would make her extremely miserable, would in no way affect her safety.

Now, though your safety depends upon your having taken shelter from coming wrath by fleeing to Christ and putting your trust in His precious blood, your peace, like Rahab's, depends upon believing the word spoken. Our sins are forgiven as soon as we believe in the Lord Jesus; we know them forgiven when we rest upon God's Word: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Sin and Sins

It is of moment to see the difference between these two verses. Sin had to be put away abstractedly out of God's sight, and hence He had to be perfectly glorified in respect of it in that place where sin was before Him. Christ was made sin, appeared to abolish it out of God's sight, "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Besides this, our sins (guilt) were in question, and Christ bore them in His own body on the tree. The sins are borne, and Christ has them no more. They are gone, as guilt, before God forever. The work for the abolition of sin in God's sight is done, and God owns it as done, having glorified Jesus who has glorified Him as to it when made sin. So for God the thing is settled, and faith recognizes this, but the result is not produced. The work is before God in all its value, but sin still exists in the believer and in the world. Faith owns both, knows that in God's sight it (the work) is done, and rests as God does in it; but the believer knows that sin is still in fact there and in him, only he has a title to reckon himself dead to it, knowing that sin in the flesh is condemned, but in the sacrifice for sin, so that there is none for him. The putting away of sin is not accomplished, but what does it is, so that God recognizes it, and so does faith, and stands perfectly clear before God as to sin and sins. He that is dead (and we are, as having died with Christ) is justified from sin. Our sins have all been borne. The difficulty partly arises from "sin" being used for a particular act, and also abstractedly. In the word "sins" there is no such ambiguity. A sacrifice for sin may apply to a particular fault; sin entered into the world is another idea. This ambiguity has produced the confusion.

Suez Canal Crisis — Israel Invaded Sinai: the Editor's Column

The following editorial comment had gone to the printer for typesetting when Israel invaded the Egyptian-held Sinai peninsula and the Gaza strip in lower Palestine, while England and France attacked Egypt in an effort to regain control of the Suez Canal. It will be necessary to add some later notes as we go to press, but we feel that what was already set in type is pertinent, so will print it.

We pointed out in our August issue that the ceasefire agreements between Israel and her Arab neighbors, which were secured through the earnest and laborious efforts of the United Nations' Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold, were not likely to be more fruitful of peaceful results than such previous agreements. Since that date the incidence of border violations, and provocations and retaliations have increased sharply. Today, more than ever before, the Middle East is a seething caldron which could boil over, precipitating a full-fledged war between the Arab states and Israel, in which event the whole world might conceivably become involved. The Western world has vital stakes there, and Russia has obtained a foothold from which to strengthen her position.

The Suez Canal crisis is only a small part of the real tension in the region, but it has suited Russia's purpose to stir up trouble for the West. It now seems apparent that Egypt's seizure of the Canal is only a preliminary step toward the Arab's common goal of a war of extermination of Israel. Even before this seizure, Egypt was effectually blockading the Canal against Israeli shipping, in defiance of agreements and international law. In September, 1954, Egypt seized Israel's S.S. Bat Galim; and in August, 1956, she formally confiscated the ship and cargo, then incorporated the ship into the Egyptian navy. On May 25, 1956, Egypt detained a Greek vessel bound from Haifa to Elath in Israel, and not until September 8 was it permitted to leave - then only to return with its cargo to Haifa. In substance, a state of war already exists between Egypt and Israel.

We have been impressed by recent statements of the Arab world leaders; we shall quote a few in brief:

"Many steps and acts will follow the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company in order to regain stolen Palestine." - Foreign Minister of Jordan.

"The Egyptian Nationalization of the Suez Canal is another step toward the liberation of Palestine." - Egyptian Charge d'Affaires in Amman, Jordan.

Other statements, not quite so recent, but all spoken or written in 1956, are:

"It will be good for mankind if the State of Israel will shrink and degenerate... In the Arab states, there is no hesitation about beginning a war." "The Arabs are determined to stress one fact, even by bloodshed: Israel must be wiped out." - Government controlled Egyptian Broadcasting Service.

"Israel ought to know that the Arabs... are bringing the day of her elimination nearer." - Government-controlled Jordan Broadcasting Service.

"The elimination of Israel is indispensable and Israel herself knows that no other possibility exists.... The Arab armies are now united and have at their disposal a sufficient quantity of arms for an attack on Israel." - Egyptian daily newspaper.

"The Syrian people will not rest or be quiet as long as the thing called Israel exists." - Member of Parliament of Syria.

"The solution to the Palestine question will be reached not through the United Nations and inquiry committees, nor through conciliation committees.... The solution will not be secured by words and discussions but battle and action."-Member of Parliament of Jordan.

"Israel represents Western imperialism and world Zionism. Both are a cancer which has to be cut out of the body of the Arab nation." - Cairo daily newspaper.

"The present situation demands the mobilization of all Arab strength to eliminate that state which has arisen in our midst. Israel is like a cancer, not only satisfied to feed on her own manpower but is also assisted by world Zionism." "How can we rejoice when in the Holy Land exists a wicked and hostile state.... Sacrifice will regain for us that part of our land under tyranny." - President of Syria.

"Every gun, plane or tank received by Iraq will contribute to solving the Palestine problem in the interests of the Arab states." - Prime Minister of Iraq.

"We are now obliged to be strong in order to liberate the entire Arab land from Morocco to Baghdad and in order to retrieve the rights of Palestine's people. We must unite for the realization of our goals." - President Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt.

"The Arabs must put aside their conflicts in order to prepare for the war of honor in Palestine." - Minister of Information of Lebanon.

"The Palestine problem will be solved only on the soil of Palestine.... The Security Council has lost its prestige.... The solution is in our hands alone and the method is to expel the enemy by force." - Minister of Interior of Syria.

"The foreign policy of the Arab states must be united and set as its primary goal... the reconquest of Palestine." - Member of Parliament of Iraq.

"The Syrians stand ready to enter a war of revenge and in defense of Arab honor." - Commander-in-Chief of the Syrian Army.

Many more such statements could be quoted from excerpts compiled by the Israel Office of Information, but these are sufficient to demonstrate the deep-seated animosity of the Arab peoples to the very existence of Israel as a nation. They are virtually saying now, what the prophetic psalmist has foretold that these same confederates will say just before the Lord appears for Israel's deliverance; namely, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance." Psalm 83:4.

Between now and the appearing of Christ in power and great glory, these same peoples will wage a war of extermination against Israel, only to have the Western world, under the leadership of the head of the revived Roman Empire, come to Israel's aid, defeat the Arabs and give Palestine, including Jerusalem, to the Jews under a contract for a period of seven years: "And he [the beast,

or head of the Roman

Empire] shall confirm the [or rather, a] covenant with [the] many [or the mass of the Jews in Palestine] for one week [or one heptad, or period of seven years]." Dan. 9:27.

At the end of that period, the confederated Arab world (or perhaps the Moslem world, which is still broader) will be emboldened by the reeling of the Roman Empire under the successive strokes of divine judgment, under the "trumpets" and "vials" of Revelation, to act on their long-standing determination to unite in cutting Israel off from being a nation, and will come down against Israel "like a whirlwind" (Dan. 11:40).

God has decreed that the Jews' protective alliance with the beast of the Roman Empire shall fail to protect them from the powerful alliance to their north and east. His word for that hour is: "Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.... Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it." Isa. 28:14-18.

At that time "the city [Jerusalem] shall be taken...; and half the city shall go forth into captivity." Zech. 14:2. "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land [Palestine], saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third part shall be left therein." Chap. 13:8. This will fill up the "time of Jacob's trouble."

Then "The Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act." Isa. 28:21. Judgment is His strange work, but it shall surely come when man has reached the climax of his wickedness and defiance of Him. He "shall... go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle." Zech. 14:3.

At that time the wicked occult leader of the Arab world "shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand." Dan. 8:25. "He shall come to his end, and none shall help him." Chap. 11:45. And his destiny is decreed: "For Tophet [that place of continual burning] is ordained of old" for this man, besides others; "He bath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." Isa. 30:33.

When the Son of man arises to destroy all the Gentile powers that have gathered themselves against Jerusalem (Zech. 12:9), He "will bring the third part [a remnant of Israel] through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried." He further says, "They shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God." Zech. 13:9.

Israel's blessing will then be secured by the Sovereign Lord of all the earth, "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up

from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." Zech. 14:16. Israel and Jerusalem will then be the world center, and Jehovah will be King in that day. At that time righteousness will reign, and holiness will be found in Israel: "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses,

HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD: and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts." Chap. 14:20, 21.

This will usher in the millennial scene of bliss; but before that time arrives, the Israelites are due for disappointment and vexation of spirit. They labor now in Canaan, but the Lord is not building the house and, unless He does so, "they labor in vain that build it." Psalm 127:1. More desolations are determined for that land (Dan. 9:27).

When we see men striving to build things which the Lord will tear down, how thankful we can be that He has revealed to us the secrets of His plans and counsels concerning the earth - Israel and the nations. While our portion is distinctly heavenly, and we are just waiting for the call to "come up hither," (which of course will take place before these prophecies concerning Israel can be fulfilled) we have divine wisdom concerning that which passes before us. We need not build in vain, for His Word has been given to us, with understanding through His Spirit, so that we may pass on our ways unruffled by the troubles piling up for this doomed world, while we behold everything taking shape according to His prophetic word. Consequently, we know that the moment of our departure is AT HAND. How strange then it is for some Christians to be building their hopes down here, or helping the poor Jews to return to Palestine for the very worst of their troubles which are to precede their emancipation, before they "look on Him whom they pierced," and realize that Jesus of Nazareth was truly their Messiah. Then their repentance, like that of Joseph's brethren, will pave the way for their installation in the choicest place, and under divine favor on the basis of pure grace.

■ As we go to press, Israel has conquered all of the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip; England and France failed to gain a quick decision over Egypt which would have given them complete control over the Suez Canal; United Nations' troops are taking over along the Canal; Israel has agreed to withdraw from Egyptian territory. It may be argued whether or not the bold ventures were wise or foolish, but one thing should be apparent: the wisest of men are not masters of the destinies of their own nations. Events are moving in a general direction contrary to the wishes and efforts of Western leaders. Man's day is about to run out, and God's purposes are going to be fulfilled.

One thing is certain as an aftermath of the recent hostilities; that is, Arab resentment against Israel will be more deep-seated than ever before. The will to cut it off "from being a nation" will be strengthened, not lessened. A new opportunity to carry it out will be sought.

Russia has gained a new foothold in the Middle East and is now engaged in building up Syria with arms and men. Syrian army men have long aspired to assume Arab leadership. At present they express favor for and unanimity with Egypt in her stand against Israel, England and France, but they seek to be the dominant Middle East Arab power. The severe losses of materiel and men

suffered by Egypt in the recent struggle, opens the way for this. There has long been a power vacuum in that area, so now with the aid of Russia they may easily fill that void.

In the very midst of the fighting in Egypt, the president of Syria and his official family were in Russia cementing relations between the two countries. Now Syria and Russia together express strong anti-Israeli sentiments, and the pro-Russian army leaders of Syria are in power in Syria.

In the past we have pointed out that a strong confederation of Arab peoples north of Palestine would be formed, and a mighty leader would emerge. We could not be sure which country would assume such leadership, nor whom the leader would be, but current events may indicate that Syria will be the country, and that a strong man may (with Russia's assistance) arise quickly in their midst. Syria has been the traditional opponent of Israel on her north, and Syrian kings were referred to in turn in Dan. 11 as "the king of the north," the most notable one being Antiochus Epiphanes. He oppressed Israel and is the prototype of the man soon to arise in that area.

In Dan. 8:24 it is said of the coming northern opponent of Israel, that "his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power"; he will have outside help. Perhaps we are witnessing this development now. Coming events do cast their shadows, and the shadows are becoming more and more clearly defined as we approach the moment of our home call. Surely our hearts should beat a little faster with the bright anticipation of hearing that shout any day, but may we be more faithful to the unsaved about us in view of the terrible calamity which will befall the world after we leave it. Our own portion has been well expressed by the poet: "What will it be to dwell above,

And with the Lord of glory reign,
Since the blest knowledge of His love
So brightens all this dreary plain?
No heart can think, no tongue can tell
What joy 'twill be with Christ to dwell.
"When left this scene of faith and strife,
The flesh and sense deceive no more,
When we shall see the Prince of life,
And all His works of grace explore;
What heights and depths of love divine
Will there through endless ages shine!
"And God has fixed the happy day
When the last tear shall dim our eyes;
When He will wipe these tears away,
And fill our hearts with glad surprise;

To hear His voice, and see His face, -
And know the fullness of His grace."

The Supper at Bethany

The account of our blessed Lord's anointing in the house of Simon the leper has been before us very often. The incident, however, never loses its interest. It has a peculiar charm attached to it by Christ Himself, who declared that wherever the glad tidings were preached in the whole world, the fact of the broken alabaster box should be proclaimed.

There is a peculiar charm too in the narrative of the last days of our Lord's life; the shadow of death was to be seen closing around Him. I say, "was to be seen," but it needed a spiritual eyesight, and that eyesight that could only be procured from Him to discern clearly the approach of His death. All the malice of the scribes and elders of the people was aroused; Judas was near, full of perfidy; Caiaphas had pronounced the fatal word; yet more was needed for a right apprehension of what was about to take place.

They made a supper for Jesus in Bethany. A supper always represents, symbolically, a quiet period of repose after one of work. It was the last meal in the day; the rest at the end is always grateful.

There was this respite for the lonely Stranger. While the hatred of the Jews was becoming more violent every day, and Jerusalem more and more hostile to the Messiah, a few obscure believers made a supper in Bethany for Him whom they loved.

It has often been remarked that Martha, Lazarus, and Mary, on this occasion, form a beautiful picture of the faithful remnant in Israel - a nucleus of believers in the midst of an unbelieving people.

The risen Lazarus gives a peculiar character to the little company. I often ask myself what we should say if we met with a man literally dead and risen. We speak much of death and resurrection, but I fear we do not understand much about it.

But not one of us can doubt that Mary was in advance of the others. There was a depth of interest, a work in the soul that was properly divine. It would seem at first sight almost too bold an act in the quiet, attentive Mary; yet there was no effrontery in it, and it was opportune. The right moment had come to break the alabaster box and to pour out all the spikenard at once!

I have often imagined the consternation of Judas Iscariot, but it was not only the heartless thief who was troubled. There seems to have been a general impression that there was wanton waste; the astonishment on all sides was great, and the disapprobation general.

Yet the poor woman was accomplishing the one intelligent act of service toward our Lord in all that time. It was a question of deep spiritual instinct; death, someone has said, was in the air, according to her view. She saw what others failed to see, because her love to the Lord made her spiritual eyesight so keen that His death was there before her.

The other disciples who were present seem to have misunderstood the action. It was not that they did not love the Lord; they must have felt, too, the danger to which He was exposed, but the deep sense of the solemnity of the moment was wanting. For the one who was taught of God, the one absorbing desire was to act in sympathy with Christ who was about to die, and to answer to His deep feelings at that time.

Everything else became secondary to this; even the privilege of helping the poor was not so important. "Ye have the poor with you always," said the Lord, "but Me ye have not always."

And now let us ask, What is the meaning of this incident? What are we to learn by it? To try to please our blessed Lord by answering to His present wish, and by being in the secret of His present thoughts.

It is not given to all, no doubt, to break alabaster boxes of precious nard. I fear that there is not much danger of our going too far in this way. Yet the desire of our hearts should surely be to answer to our Lord's place and thoughts in the present moment, and to have His approbation.

Let Judas Iscariot and all who may admire his reflections say what they will, there are certain sacrifices of present advantage to be made which are according to the mind of Christ; and it is for us to be near enough to Him to make them at the right moment.

Such a spirit is not that of mere impulse and fanaticism. There was a deliberate purpose

in Mary's conduct when all the ointment was poured out; and there will be a calm sense of the Lord's approval in every true act of service in which His place as the rejected and crucified Savior is owned before men.

The house was full of the odor of the spikenard, and the Lord's thoughts as to the offering were very different from those of all the bystanders.

May He give us grace to answer to His present wishes!

Sympathy and Power

In God's way with His elect, His sympathy comes first, and then His power - the sympathy which accompanies them through their sorrow, and then the power which delivers them out of it. We are prone to desire present ease, and would have all inconvenience and contradiction removed at once. But this is not His way. When at Bethany, "Jesus wept"; and afterward, but not till afterward, He said, "Lazarus, come forth." Nature would have had the death, which had called forth the tears, anticipated. We judge that we might have been spared many a trial, and we reason it out as a clear, unquestioned conclusion, that God has power. As the friends of the family at Bethany said, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" But they reasoned imperfectly, because they reasoned partially; that is, only on the power of Christ.

Christ the Truth: Pilate Saith Unto Him, What Is Truth?

Christ, and Christ only, is the Way. But there is another thing. Christ is not only the Way to the Father, but He is also the Truth. Where is truth to be found? In Him alone. He Himself is the Truth. Thus the man who has taken the Way possesses the Truth. He who has bowed to Christ, does not want some new resource. Truly God is wise, and as good as He is wise.

Let me now try to unfold what truth is. Man in his natural state may ask, but eludes the answer (John 18:38). How is this? Because he is gone away from God, serves Satan in whom is no truth, and likes Christ less, the more he knows about Him. When He came into the world, people seemed to value Him at first, for they did not then know that He was the Truth, and were not yet proved by Him.

They were all looking for and expecting the promised Messiah. The time spoken of by Daniel was fulfilled, and men were in a state of expectation. The famous prophecy of the Weeks (Dan. 9:24-27) pointed to those days, and the Jews all knew, or might have known, that the time was quite near when the Messiah, the Prince, was to appear, though none understood that He was to be cut off. The very heathen were moved by the rumors of a coming Deliverer; they heard that the time was at hand that a mighty King should reign, and most remarkable changes happen for the world. Wise men came from the east to see Him that was born King of the Jews. More than one hundred and fifty years before Christ, the Old Testament had been translated into the Greek tongue, which was at that time the usual means of communication. This translation of the Bible was a sort of preparatory testimony. Thus the Jews were not the only people who were looking for the Messiah.

But He is much more. He is the Word, He is God, He is the light which, coming into the world, enlightens [or shines for] every man. And men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Hence the early attraction soon faded and gave way to fear and hatred; and as they desired not to know God or themselves, they sought to get rid of what convicted them by killing Him. They might kill, but they could not get rid of the Son of God; and as we have seen Him the Way, so He is the Truth. What is meant by it?

Let us compare the law with Him. The law is holy, just, and good; but still, it is nowhere called the truth. The law is the standard of divine requirement from man; it declares what God demands from him who takes the ground of his own obedience as his standing before Him. The truth is the revelation of God, the manifestation of everything else, in Christ. It is therefore not requirement, but revelation. In fact, God Himself contrasts them; as it is written, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Was it not God's law? Yes; but it was given by Moses, who was the channel of communication. But Christ was and is the Way; and this not only for God to come down to man, but for man to go to God, nay, to the Father. Besides, He is the Truth. He makes everyone and everything known as it really is; and when we weigh what the Truth is, we can see that Christ only could be the full presentation of it. God is thus revealed, and Christ, being the revealer of God, is Himself said to be the Truth. As Son, He brings out what the Father is. But

He, the Holy One of God, shows me what sin is - what I am. In short, He manifests everyone and everything exactly as each is.

God is never said to be the Truth, but Christ, being the image of the invisible God, is. Man is not capable of fathoming God; no man hath seen God at any time. Who is competent to know God? No man, nor even angel. The creature does not know God, but God can make Himself known to the creature. How? In Christ by the Holy Ghost. This is the reason why the Holy Spirit is also called the Truth in 1 John 5. Christ, the Truth, is the object presented in whom I can learn everything as it is; the Spirit of God is the inward power that makes the truth enter into my soul, that I may have and enjoy it. Hence the necessity for the Holy Ghost, as well as Christ, to be the Truth. The spirit of man in itself is no more capable of knowing God, than a beast is of understanding the mind of man. The beast has its own creature instincts; but no beast, no creature of that order, can pass its own limits. No lower creature is capable of understanding man; and no man, as such, can rise to what is above his nature.

Yet, without the truth, how wretched one must ever be! I have sinned. How do I stand, and in what relation, to God? Are we doomed to be in utter uncertainty of the only thing that is of supreme importance? There are things that a man can come to, if left to himself - dread and horror, hardness and indifference. But these fears are only the premonition of what, far more terrible and unending, will befall him if he lives and dies as he is. What is to become of his soul? My answer is: Christ is the Truth; and Christ was here expressly on an errand of love, to glorify God, to save sinners by faith, to meet this dark and awful void, and give life and peace, with certainty, to the believer.

Do not take the ground of an unbeliever, and say that it is impossible to have certainty in this life. If God tells me anything, and I believe, is it certain or not? If God tells me His mind, does this give no certainty? Christ is God's revelation of Himself to me. Do you say, I am a sinner? It is true as far as it goes; but even so, you do not know what a sinner you are, else you could not take it so quietly. You go to God about your sins then; will He leave you in a state of uncertainty? No; Christ has come, the sent One of God, to do His will in the offering of His body; and by Him came grace and truth - not merely truth. And what grace it was! The Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, becoming a man; and not only so, but born of a woman! Adam was not born, but made. He was not a son of man therefore, though son of God in a certain sense (Luke 3). He came into the world mature and formed to be its head; he had attained his full proportion when he came from God's hand. Jesus was not merely a man, but the Seed of the woman, as no one ever was save He. He became a servant - all that man is - except sin. It is not only that He did not sin, but He never in His life knew what sin was; He could always say that His meat was to do God's will. "Lo, I come to do Thy will." But He was made sin on the cross; He suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

Do I learn what sin is by prayer, or by looking into my own heart? No, but I see it in His cross. What did my sin cost Him? It brought upon Him, the Holy One, the horrors of divine judgment; and now He is become the captain of salvation, having obtained eternal redemption. The same Jesus who gives me the truth of a sinner in myself, gives me the truth of a Savior in Him. Where shall I find what a holy man is? Can it be Adam? The man who could not keep his hands off the fruit of the tree, that God had told him not to eat - he a holy man? Why did he not listen to God? He

disobeyed and became a sinner. Not that he was made so, for God made him innocent, and innocence supposes absence of evil, with liability to fall into it. But when Jesus was made flesh, He was not only sinless, but holy - holy not in ways only, but in nature. "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." There also we read, "A body hast Thou prepared Me"; and this is never said of anyone else. Why was this body so specially prepared? Because there could not be the least relic that defiles in the Holy One. The smallest taint of evil would spoil the sacrifice; the lamb for the burnt offering was to be without blemish and without spot. When Jesus was born, although He was the Seed of the woman, there was no taint of sin in His nature; He is called that holy thing, for He was born by the power of the Holy Ghost. Thus He could take upon Him not merely all our sins, but sin itself. This is the truth.

If I want to see sin, I can see it by contrast with the Lord Jesus. He came and showed out all its darkness. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin." Christ is the Truth, so all is brought out in its own character.

But there is just the same result about God; Christ as the Truth clearly shows what God is. It is never said that Christ is the likeness of God, though with the greatest emphasis, He is said to be His image. It would not be true to say of any man that he is like a man, although you might say so of an angel. Just in the same way, Jesus is not said to be like God, because He is God. Here was One who was perfectly able to show what God is. It is the Absolute deigning to become relative. As long as God is only God, He is unapproachable by man; man cannot understand Him. But I must know God, or I cannot have eternal life; and this cannot be apart from Him whom He has sent, even Jesus Christ the Lord. Christ is God manifest in the flesh, and He has brought me exactly what I need. God is the One who loves me, who comes down in the Person of Jesus, Son of God and Son of man, to meet the need of a poor sinner - if, again, I want to know what the devil is, it is the same Jesus that brings it out. Satan, a murderer from the beginning, and a liar, is the one being who stands always opposed to the Lord Jesus. Jesus therefore brought out what the devil was as it never had been manifested before; but the Son of God came that He might destroy the works of the devil.

Now, have you got the Truth? You have heard the truth in Him; what is the effect on your soul? "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." The law makes me feel my shortcomings, but the truth makes them even better known. But if I am willing to know how bad I am, I want to be delivered. Will the law do this? When the law was given, it put man at a distance. Moses was to set bounds to the mountain, and if a beast so much as touched it, it was to be slain. This, no doubt, was a wholesome righteous warning; but the truth is, that the Lord Jesus came down from heaven to seek and to save the lost. And how are you to be saved? By submitting to the Truth - by coming as a sinner to the Savior of sinners. I cannot be saved except by the Truth. It is the Lord Jesus Himself who brings it all out to the soul, and, in confessing Him Lord, I believe God and set to my seal that He is true. By the grace of God, my soul bows to the truth, and I can say in my heart, This is just the truth for me. I abjure my unbelief; I bow to what God says of His Son. It is God's proclaiming what is true, and I believe He is as good as He says. I believe that He is forgiving my sins and making me

His child on the spot. I have no desert, but Christ is my plea. I am willing to be nothing, that Christ and His cross may be everything for and to me.

But we must remember that the Holy Spirit is the Truth just as truly as Christ is. May He bring the truth home to your souls. Were you to live ever so long, and learn ever so much, it is only knowing better the Truth you receive at the start. Confess Jesus as Lord, the only Savior, the Son of God. Confess all that grace has given you to know, and look well to it that your ways be a living confession of that Blessed One who is the Truth.

This Light Bread: Christ As the Wilderness Food

It has often been noticed that the burst of a song which broke forth from redeemed Israel on the banks of the Red Sea had scarcely died away before they began to murmur against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" Though they had been slaves under the iron yoke of Pharaoh, they were not prepared for the hardships of the desert; and as a consequence their hearts were filled with rebellion, and their lips with murmurs.

There were three things that made up the bitterness of their daily lives, all of which are most instructive to ourselves. First, there was "no bread, neither... any water" (Numb. 21:5; Exod. 15 and 16); second, they loathed, became weary of, the bread which God had provided for them, saying, "Our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, besides this manna, before our eyes" (Numb. 11:6); and third, they longed after the food of Egypt, "the fish,... the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic." (Numb. 11:5; Exod. 16:3.)

These things together became so insupportable that they again and again avowed that they would far rather have remained in Egypt. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [as types]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Cor. 10:11.

The first thing then that troubled them was, that they found no bread and no water in the desert. As the psalmist expresses it, "a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." Brought out of Egypt - type of the world of nature, of man in his natural condition - they had lost their accustomed food; and the wilderness on which they had entered was destitute of all the sources from which they had hitherto drawn, as well as those from which they needed now to draw, their life and sustenance. They had lost their old life forever (in figure) in the Red Sea - the life which Egypt fed and nourished - and they now possessed a new life, the springs of which were far from the scene through which they were passing.

It is so with the believer now. For the new life which he possesses in a risen Christ, there is neither bread nor water in the desert. The time was, before he was met by the grace of God and brought out of darkness into His marvelous light, when all the springs of his life were hid in the world; but now the world has become to him "a wilderness wide," and looking out upon it he has to learn that it can offer him nothing, either to stimulate or refresh him in his pilgrim way. Not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world, as dead with Christ to it, and risen with Him out of it, how could he find his suited food in it, or slake his thirst at its polluted streams?

These truths are as familiar as household words, but we need to challenge our hearts continually as to their practical acceptance. Do we then habitually act in the remembrance that, apart from the few and simple requirements of our bodies, the scene of our strangership contains nothing for us, nothing to aid or invigorate, but, on the other hand, everything calculated to blight and deaden the life we have in Christ Jesus? It is of the last importance, especially for young believers whose feet have just entered upon the sands of the desert, to have this continually in our minds, that there is

no bread or water to be found for our souls in the wilderness, for we belong to another scene. Christ Himself at the right hand of God is our life (Col. 3:3), and it is therefore from thence, and from thence alone, that we can derive our nourishment and strength. All our springs are in Christ risen and glorified. With Him alone is the fountain of life. The believer who walks through the world in the power of this truth expecting nothing, nothing but snares and dangers, from it, will be kept in independence of it; he will be conscious of a life that has no affinities to anything round about him, and he will exhibit a life, fed from on high, which, shining as a light in the moral darkness of this scene, will be a testimony for Christ, a testimony of grace, and also, alas! of coming judgment.

The second thing that afflicted these poor pilgrims was, that they became weary of the food which God had provided for them. It was in response to their murmurings (for as yet they were under grace, Sinai not having been reached) that He in His tenderness and mercy gave them the manna. "The whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: and the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger." Exod. 16:2, 3. Such conduct merited judgment; but the Lord acted in grace, and hence He said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." And this He did day by day for forty years, until they passed over the Jordan (Josh. 5).

The manna was Israel's food, suited food for the wilderness, and it was of this that they tired, until at length they dared to say, "Our soul loatheth this light bread." Numb. 21:5. Now the manna, as our readers know, is a type of Christ, of a humbled Christ, of all that Christ was in His tenderness, grace, sympathy, etc., as He passed through this scene - of all that He is therefore as suited to us in wilderness circumstances as strangers and pilgrims. Christ then in this character is our only food (see John 6), the only food that can sustain and strengthen us, but Christ, it should be observed, in every respect in which He is presented to us as the Manna. We need all that He is as thus given; but we need nothing outside of Himself - nothing but Himself - for since He Himself is our life, it is He only that can sustain it.

How then is it possible for the believer to weary of it? We have two natures, the old and the new, and "these are contrary the one to the other." If therefore we are not walking in the Spirit (see Gal. 5), the flesh will assert its desires, and the flesh never loves Christ; the mind of the flesh, indeed, is enmity against God (Rom. 8). It is the flesh therefore that wearies of Christ, that, desiring its own proper food, begets in us a disrelish, a distaste, for the heavenly manna. But the flesh is subtle and, when thus acting in the believer, generally loves to conceal its true character. But flesh is flesh, whatever the forms in which it is expressed; and even as Satan knows how to transform himself into an angel of light, so the flesh knows how to assume most pious forms. It is necessary therefore to be on our guard lest we fall into this grievous sin of loathing "this light bread."

Signs of this tendency often appear where least expected; for example, if a ministry which appeals to the intellect instead of to the heart and conscience is preferred; if the exposition of interesting principles in which even the natural man can delight is welcomed rather than a simple presentation of Christ Himself; or if we seek companionship with those who can entertain us naturally or socially, in preference to those with whom we could have spiritual fellowship, those with whom Christ alone would be the bond; if we are losing our appetite for the Scriptures and, it may be

added, if we are losing the sense of our pilgrim character and are gradually settling down into the enjoyment of things around - then there is reason to fear that we are becoming weary of "this light bread." But the test may be a positive one. Let us then boldly ask ourselves whether we are satisfied with Christ, satisfied to the full in Him as our daily food. Let us ask ourselves this question in our homes, in our daily and social life, in our leisure moments, when listening to ministry, when gathered together in the assembly of the saints. It is one thing to sing,

"Jesus, of Thee we ne'er would tire;

The new and living Food

Can satisfy our heart's desire;

And life is in Thy blood,"

and it is another thing to know it practically. May the Lord keep us from the grievous sin of losing our appetite for Himself.

Combined with this, in the case of the Israelites, there was an intense desire for the things of Egypt. How often did they longingly recall the fleshpots, the fish, the leeks, the melons, and the cucumbers of Egypt! The two things always go together. Losing appetite for Christ is sometimes the consequence of indulgence in, and sometimes the cause of desiring, Egyptian gratifications. But let us ask plainly what this means. To long after the food of Egypt, then, is for the believer to seek after the same gratifications, amusements, sources of enjoyment, as the man of the world. The natural man has his suited food, that in which he endeavors to find his life, as the Christian has his. If the believer turns from Christ to that on which the worldling feeds, he is in exactly the same case as the Israelites. If the Christian cultivates the world's habits and manners, if, in short, he is turning to any of the sources of earth, any of its sources of enjoyment, pride, pleasure, or exaltation, he is, in fact, longing after the fleshpots of Egypt.

What then have we to say to these things? Are we - are you, beloved reader - in this case? There is no sadder spectacle than that presented by some who once knew what it was to feed on Christ and to find their all in Him, but who now are turning back to the very things which they had gladly refused for His sake. They did run well, but they have been hindered through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life. Whatever is not Christ, and of Christ, is Egypt and of Egypt. We need therefore to be so attracted, possessed, and absorbed by Christ as to have every want satisfied in Himself. This is the effectual antidote to every fascination and allurements that Egypt can present.

"Art thou weaned from Egypt's pleasures?

God in secret thee shall keep;

There unfold His hidden treasures,

There His love's exhaustless deep."

The Unity of the Word of God

Passages of the Old Testament cited, as they are in all parts of the New with many and many a glance or tacit unexpressed reference, link all the parts of the volume together and give it a character of unity and completeness. The contents themselves of the volume do the same. They also give unity and completeness to it, for they are a series of events which stretch from the beginning to the end, from the creation to the kingdom. And prophecies in the Old Testament of events in the New are as quotations in the New of passages in the Old. And thus, in the mouth of several witnesses of the highest dignity, we have the oneness and the consistency of the divine volume from first to last fully set forth and established. Thus the divine original of the Book, as well as its unity and consistency, is established. And we hold to these truths in the face of all the insult which is put upon them by unreasonable and wicked men. Oppositions of criticism, falsely so called, only spend themselves in vain like angry waves upon the seashore. God Himself has set the bounds, and these things only return upon themselves, foaming out their own shame.

Quotations are found in every part of the New Testament, and are taken from every part of the Old from Genesis to Malachi - and that very largely. So that we have, in the structure of the divine volume, nothing less than the closest, fullest, and most intricate interweaving of all parts of it together, the end too returning to the beginning, and the beginning anticipating the end. In a certain sense, we are in all parts of the volume when we are in any part of it, though the variety of communications in disclosing the dispensations of God is infinite. Surely it is marvelous! But the Spirit of Him who knows the end from the beginning accounts to us for it; nothing less can. "The Book," as has been said, "is a greater miracle than any which it records."

Citations out of His own writings from the Old Testament by God Himself, first in the Person of the Son in the gospels, and then in the Person of the Holy Ghost, in the Acts and epistles, are beautiful. And God sent forth these writings from Himself at the beginning, being the source of them, so after they have come forth and been embodied in human forms, and accepted of men, He Himself comes to accredit them. He has inspired them and sealed them - and we receive them thus introduced to us by Himself - and we ask no more.

And we may say of the Scriptures from the beginning to end, that one part of them cannot be touched without all being affected. To use inspired language, "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it" (1 Cor. 12:26), God has so tempered all of it together. And I may go further in the same analogy, and say, The uncomely parts have been given more abundant honor - as for instance, in the book of Proverbs, we get as rich and blessed a witness of the Christ of God in His mysterious glories as we find anywhere.

Warning and Encouragement

"Unskillful in the word of righteousness" will be easily seen to be a fit expression, as used by the Spirit in the epistle to the Hebrews. There was need of rebuke and encouragement from the Lord to those who were addressed. They were resting satisfied with certain elementary truths with regard to Christ. The Spirit would condemn this resting satisfied with such. They should go on to know Christ in glory, and all that flowed from the knowledge of Him there, and the results to them; in other words, to "go on to perfection." The very absence of such progress causes him to raise the solemn, warning words of the early part of Heb. 6, knowing that retrogression in spiritual things may lead to their surrender and the sad discovery that he who once held them, did so but to his own destruction, because only intellect and mind were at work, and no true quickening of the soul was there.

He would encourage the feeblest living one, and warn the most instructed professor, filling the one with "strong consolation," and telling the other that, having made known the blessed truths of Christianity, God had no more to reveal, for He Himself was known, and His Spirit given to carry down the blessed things of Christ from heaven to earth, during His absence. If such were only used by intellect, and no living faith at work in the soul, "it is impossible... to renew them again unto repentance."

You may check your answers with those given on page 45.

Why did Nehemiah give his brother Hanani (together with another man) charge over Jerusalem?

What commendation did the Apostle Paul give Timotheus when writing to the Philippians?

What did the same Apostle say about Onesiphorus?

How were the saints benefited by Philemon?

We "Testify That We Have Seen"

What kind of gospel do you preach, or, as many who read our question do not preach publicly, How do you evangelize? All God's people should in some way or other be evangelizing; therefore the question is of moment.

The character of the crop we raise depends upon the sort of seed we sow; and the character of conversions God grants us largely depends upon the kind of a gospel we preach. Indeed we may go further, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh - the sort of gospel we preach depends upon the sort of acquaintance we have with Christ ourselves.

See the zealous, devoted man who, possessed with the belief of heaven and hell, preaches what he believes. He speaks of realities, and in a way that makes men bow to his convictions. What is the result? The Spirit of God uses his word to awaken in the sinner an earnest desire to escape hell and to reach heaven. Thank God for his intense words.

Or look at him whose very being is filled with God's grace in forgiving the sinner; he pours out of the abundance of his heart the God-given words, and God the Spirit graciously grants the longing for, and the knowledge of, forgiveness of sins to the hearing sinner.

No doubt each servant has his special service, as every bird his peculiar note; and we cannot give out one whit more than what by God's work is really within our souls.

If we know forgiveness, we can by God's grace proclaim it; if peace, then we can in His power publish it; but there is more than forgiveness and peace to tell.

Surely the Apostle Paul preached forgiveness and peace in divinely given energy, but he did more. He had seen Christ in the glory; his soul was laden with Christ there; hence he preached for the believer here, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." He was not satisfied that converts should be saved from hell and safe for heaven, but he travailed for them that Christ should be formed in them. He labored - he strove according to God's working, which worked in him mightily - that they might know the riches of the glory of the mystery, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." He longed that souls saved should be free from the law, and from the earth, and be free for Christ, and Christ only. In his deep desires for Christ's glory, and his sympathy for souls and their progress, he had great conflict - even for converts he had not seen - that "all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery" might be theirs.

Does our preaching so bring Christ Himself, as He is, before our converts, that they long to "know Him"? We see, as the fruit of our words made powerful by the Holy Spirit, the sinner, or, shall we say, the quickened soul, longing after peace with God, or peace for his conscience; but do we see the soul who has obtained the peace for which he longed thirsting after Christ Himself?

The joy of having peace does not carry souls very far out of the world. It fails in very many instances even to separate them from their old habits of religious thought. In some strange manner they go on with the law as a rule of life, and with teachings contradictory to peace. Would this be

morally possible if Christ were in them the hope of glory? Could they then tolerate law or contradictory teachings? Is there not often a quiet kind of worldliness allowed, while peace - in the sense of no longer doubting the fact of being saved - is known in the soul? We must own that these things are so. Let us ask then, whether the realities of Christ being in the glory for us, and of His being the hope of glory in us, are as forcible in our souls as the facts of His blood having been shed upon this earth for sinners, and of present forgiveness of sins for all who believe on Him.

He "preached Christ unto them," is said of Philip the evangelist. It is easier to preach what Christ has done, than who Christ is, and it is utterly impossible to preach Christ as He is unless the heart be filled with Himself by the Spirit. The evangelist, or evangelizer, has a noble mission; he is freighted with divine compassion to a perishing world; he is burdened with blessings for sinners, and his heart is fitted by God to yearn over the Christless souls dying around him. But his words are formative; by his knowledge of Christ, his hearers learn Christ; he is not a mere trumpeter who blows his blast and goes quietly home.

Alas! that any bearing the power of carrying the gospel of God to men should have for their ambition the number, instead of the constancy, of their converts. And that when told their conversions are not all God's converts, but poor plants withering away, they should, instead of weeping, hand you a fresh list of recent conversions! Ah! ye lovers of souls, where are the souls you love?

"But," say some, "the evangelist's work ceases at conversion; he leaves to others the care of his converts." But who has drawn the line where his work and love should cease? If the father cares not for his children, who shall do so? If he who presents Christ to sinners, does not long to present the sinner God has saved by his poor means to Christ, who shall? The true evangelist is a nurse to his converts; gentle, affectionate, filled with love for them; willing to impart to them, not the gospel of God only, but his own soul, because they are dear to him.

He who knows that he is safe for heaven preaches safety; he who knows God's grace in forgiving his sins, preaches forgiveness; he who rejoices in peace, preaches peace; and he who has Christ dwelling in his heart by faith - Christ as He is - Christ the hope of glory - preaches safety, forgiveness, peace, but all colored by his own personal acquaintance with Christ. The less does not include the greater, but the greater does take in the less.

Wrong Doctrine of Ray C. Stedman: the Editor's Column

Some of our readers have sent us two articles taken from current so-called fundamentalist literature. They were both written by the same man (Ray C. Stedman) and are entitled "True Separation," and "The Christian and Worldliness." We have been asked for an appraisal of the teachings set forth in them; hence we feel called upon to examine them and to make a report. The two articles have much in common, and many of the phrases are used in both, so we shall consider them together.

These articles do contain a certain amount of truth, but it is far overbalanced by the neglect of important scriptures, the misapplication of others, and a slanting of truth generally, thus producing a very insidious line of teaching that will undoubtedly undermine true separation. They advocate a definite mingling of Christians with the world in an adventuresome sort of Christian heroics which dares defilement. This is bolstered by reference to the Lord Jesus in the days of His ministry eating and drinking with publicans and sinners. This He surely did! He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He came to heal that which was sick, but not to call the self-righteous who in their own eyes needed no repentance.

But let us be honest. Did the Lord mingle with the world on its own plane? Did He ever engage in any banter to gain its friendship? True, He went into the houses of publicans and sinners to eat on certain occasions; He also dined in houses of Pharisees. In Luke's Gospel, where He is displayed as the Man among men, He is seen twice in publicans' houses, and twice in Pharisees' houses, but in each instance He took a different character according to the need of those present. He was ever the LIGHT that shone on everything around, and brought all into proper focus. He never descended to the level of those whom He visited; He never acted beneath Himself in His infinite holiness in order to gain people's interest. He did not discuss the common topics of the day with the woman at Sychar's well, nor did He discourse with her about the men of the city; only to call her sin to remembrance did He mention them. Again when a man came to Him and desired that He should speak to his brother to divide the inheritance with him, what did the Lord say? Did He act as arbitrator? Did He assume judgeship? No; He said, "Who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" and then exposed what was at work in the man's soul - covetousness. (See Luke 12.) These articles we have examined teach that the Christian should go out and mingle with worldlings and learn to talk with them about what concerns them, be one with them, until such time as one gets an opportunity to speak of better things; but that is not what our blessed Example did.

One article says, "Christians may associate freely with unbelievers, even to joining clubs and associations where their mutual interests meet, so long as such association does not commit them legally or morally to some act or practice from which a mere word of dissent could not excuse them." Let us look at our blessed Lord again. Did He join a political society, the Herodians? Did He join the Pharisees, although they were fundamentalists of that day? Their beliefs were generally orthodox, and they themselves respectable. To ask such questions is to answer them. It might also be well to call attention to the fact that we never read of the Lord's dining in the house of a

Sadducee. Sadducees were the infidel Jews of the day, and we never read of one of them getting a blessing.

How careful the Lord was in maintaining absolute separation from all defilement, although He went about doing good and dispensing regal blessings. And yet the writer of these articles dares to say, Christians should "be in the world like our Lord was - in it up to the hilt." How shocking! Truly this is a libel on Him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." It was the very fact that the Jews could not get the Lord to accommodate Himself to the world system of the day that caused their intense hatred of Him. They would even have made Him a king in their world, but it would not have been God's way, though soon He will reign as God's King. The world today will bear with Christians if they will but accredit the world by acquiescence in its schemes, its pleasures, its politics, its philosophy, its religion, etc. It is the Christian's walking as he should as a heavenly person going through a strange land that is intolerable to the world. Christians should not marvel if the world hates them, for the Lord forewarned them, "It hated Me before it hated you."

The book of The Acts presents the early days of the Church, and there we find the intense separation of the early believers. They were separate and distinct from the Jews and the pagans, and yet there was never a time when there was such blessing in the gospel. But the author of these articles thinks to bring about great blessing in the gospel by having believers intermingle with the world. It was not done in the bright days of the Church when all was in order.

In "The Christian and Worldliness" we read, "There is a tendency to withdraw and seek our own crowd." This the author condemns, but when the early disciples were let out of prison, "They went to their own company." There was a company known as their own, and they sought that fellowship. "And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them." When Peter was released from prison, he knew where to find his own company, and he went straightway to it. When Paul and Silas were released from the Philippian jail, they went to the house of Lydia and comforted the brethren. True, when the saints were scattered they went elsewhere, but as they did they preached the Word (Acts 8). They had no time for joining worldly societies and learning to talk the world's language; they had a message to tell and, as they went, they told it. They were dubbed "Christians" in Antioch, in disrespect, and they were referred to as those that turned the world upside down. Theirs was a vigorous and living testimony that either drew men in faith to them and to the truth, or made them enemies.

Mr. Stedman refers to a Christian's walking in holy separation as monasticism, but that is unfair. The believers in The Acts were not monks or ascetics; they went in and out before the unbelievers and were a testimony to the attractive power of the gospel that wrought effectual satisfaction in those who received it. The impact of the early believers at Thessalonica was so great that the whole district was talking about the people that gave up their idols and worshiped a God in heaven and waited for His Son to come back. If there were more of that kind of Christian living today, less human efforts would be used, and results would be greater. It is not holy separation and recognition of the Christian's heavenly calling that is to blame for little true results in the gospel, but rather the world bordering of the Christians. We are living in a day of sickly, devitalized Christianity that leaves no impact on the unbeliever.

At the beginning there were the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God. Today Christendom is a grand medley of Christianity, Judaism, mysticism, social reform, philosophy, and what not. These

are the last days, when holy separation is more than ever needed in the true saint of God. The Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy gives instructions for these very days, and calls attention to the form of godliness without power that has enveloped the land. These are the difficult days when vessels to honor and to dishonor are found side by side in the profession. What does the Lord call for? SEPARATION! "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ [the Lord] depart from iniquity," and "If a man therefore purge himself from these [and it should add, by separating himself from them], he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." Not by worldly association will the man of God be suitable and fit for service to the Lord, but by holy and intense separation.

It is true there is a false separation, of which monasticism is a sample. The Pharisees of old separated themselves from many things, and Jude speaks of such: "These be they who separate themselves, sensual [natural], having not the Spirit." A man need not be a Christian at all to have that kind of separation; in fact, it may well be a sign that he is not. We are called upon to be ready to every good work, to be ready to help our enemy if we find him in need (Rom. 12:20). We are to walk blamelessly in the midst of a crooked and perverse world in which we are to shine; but not one word of this implies the mixing that is suggested in the reviewed articles. Our neighbors, our fellow workmen, our classmates, and all who know us should witness our separated walk as heavenly people on earth, as those who are mindful of their heavenly birth and citizenship. Our work and manner of life should be above reproach, and we should always be ready to give an answer to anyone for the hope that is in us.

In such a case, even though they may wish to say, "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live," there is a day coming when they will have to admit that our lives were a testimony to them. "Flaying your conversation [or manner of life] honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." 1 Pet. 2:12. Let us look further:

The plain, definite injunction of 2 Cor. 6 is, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel [unbeliever]? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" Surely God's Word is plain enough, but this article entitled "True Separation," seeks to set it aside by specious reasoning. It quotes Deut. 22:10, which is very much in point: "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together," but then suggests that it was only because it would be irritating to both animals because of their different natures. "Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith He it altogether for our sakes?" Let us also look at Deut. 22:9 and 11: "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled.... Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woolen and linen together." Is it not plain enough that these verses cannot be dismissed with a simple explanation that the two animals would be rendered fretful? The truth is that God hates mixtures, and does not want His people to be a people of mixed habits or associations. The priest of old was to be well versed in the law so that he might differentiate between the holy and unholy, between clean and unclean. God makes a difference, and expects His people to do likewise. As another has said, "Abram's garment was soiled" by failure in the path of faith, but "Lot's garment was 'woolen and linen.' He was untrue to the call of God." He mingled with the world and did not benefit it at all, but pulled himself and his

household down. Oh, how many dear Christians have followed Lot into the world, often by thinking that they could exert an influence for good in it, only to fall into its meshes to the extinguishing of their testimony altogether.

God is wiser than we are, and He has said, "Be not unequally [or, diversely] yoked." A yoke is a linking together of people in any common cause. A servant of the Lord once gave some wholesome advice to young Christians when he said, "Never join anything." "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." Let us not link ourselves with any cause whatsoever in this world, be it ever so noble, or our aims ever so good. C. H. Mackintosh wrote that someone asked him if he would not help pull a cart out of a ditch; he said he surely would, but he would not join a society organized for the purpose of pulling carts out of ditches.

God calls us to come out and be separate, but Mr. Stedman tries to reason it away by a play on the Greek word for separate; however, a careful examination of the places where the word is used will not admit of anything but separation. Furthermore, what does "come out" mean? We quite admit that our separation should be more than outward separation; it should be of heart and purpose, but let us not set aside the plain Word of God. We know this will be called narrowness, but it is not so. Just before the call not to be diversely yoked with unbelievers, the Spirit of God directs this word to us: "Be ye also enlarged." It is not narrowness to walk in obedience, with our feet in a narrow path; but all the while our hearts should be enlarged with compassion for the unbeliever, and even for the believer who is unequally yoked, although not going with him in his wrong course.

In the article, "The Christian and Worldliness," oddities and eccentricities of some Christians are held up to ridicule in such a way as to discredit a Christian's walking in personal devotedness and unworldliness. It even teaches us to examine all that our fathers have taught us of avoiding the snares of the world. To be sure, we should make the Word of God our standard, but let us beware how we "remove the old landmarks." Are we in our generation more holy and better able to discern between that which pleases God and that which does not, than were our fathers?

The Word of God will neither make us hermits nor freaks. We shall seek to give no offense in anything (1 Cor. 10:32), and to view the world and its allurements from an elevation, such as Abraham was able to do when with God on the mountain above the plain where Lot dwelt. There was nothing in all the plain that appealed to the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" in Abraham, for he had something better. The Apostle John lets us know that all that is in the world is opposed to the Father; and if the love of the Father is in our hearts, the world will be kept out. You cannot fill a vessel that is already full to the brim; there simply is no room for more.

Do we need lists of worldly things, as the author suggests many have, to keep the world out? No; we need the enjoyment of the Father in our souls. "For all that is in the world,... is not of the Father, but is of the world." But Mr. Stedman says, "What I am trying to do is to show you that everything can be worldly just as everything can be spiritual." This is fallacious and misleading. The lusts of the flesh are never spiritual, and never can be, nor can the lusts of the eyes or the pride of life. Now we admit that new clothes (as the author suggests) can be a cause for the pride of life, or suit the lusts of the eyes, or of the flesh, so that what is perfectly normal and needful could be used for worldly principles; but he places drinking, smoking, and dancing in the same category. Seriously, can these ever be spiritual? Would our attitude toward them change what is purely a lust of the

flesh into that which is spiritual, or of the Father? To suggest this is plain sophistry. We could go on and on in pointing out serious flaws and errors in these articles, but we solemnly warn our readers against anything that tends to have us forget our heavenly calling or to make us walk unworthy of it (Eph. 4:1).

And in direct opposition to Mr. Stedman, we still stand by the Word of God and would teach our young people, and those who are older too, to avoid evil and evil contacts, instead of walking forth in the spirit of valor to meet it with confidence. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. AVOID IT, PASS NOT BY IT, TURN FROM IT, AND PASS AWAY." Pro. 4:14, 15. (Also Psalm 1:1.) Remember that Proverbs is the book of wisdom for the path of earth. All would do well to ponder its precepts.

And contrary to Mr. Stedman's thought, when we walk in holiness and separation, with the love of the Father in our hearts, we shall not have "a terrible sense of boredom and frustration in life," nor will life "be pale and uninteresting." The Christian who walks in "fellowship with the Father and the Son" knows fullness of joy, and no one else does. We can then be like the Thessalonians, waiting "for His Son from heaven,... even Jesus."

Another gross error in the teachings of these articles is the way in which Christians are encouraged to dare the world and its defilement. We are never "conditioned... to overcome" evil, except as we truly are conscious of our utter weakness, and go in the Lord's strength. We can never do this lightly, nor as "a thrilling and daring challenge," in a "love of adventure." Those who do so must go forth at their own charges. The soul that knows its own frailty will cry, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." We need the constant succor of Christ as our Great High Priest who understands our weaknesses.

The Word of God abounds with instances of failure on the part of the saints of God when they dropped down from their place to the level of the world. The prophet was sent to Jehoshaphat when he joined a society to help Israel recover God-given ground: "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD." 2 Chron. 19:2. Even take the case of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. He was told to go far hence to the Gentiles, but he went back and mixed with the Jews in Jerusalem, where he had no business to be. What was the result? He got into trouble there, and was left much to himself; then he made one mistake after another, and had to take some things back and suffer for others. If we go in our own strength or where we ought not to be, we shall have to go it alone to our discomfiture.

We will find ourselves in problems and difficulties which we shall not know how to meet, but the fact will be that it was not the mind of God that we should be there.

"O Lamb of God, still keep us

Close to Thy pierced side;

'Tis only there in safety

And peace we can abide;

With foes and snares around us,

And lusts and fears within,
The grace that sought and found us,
Alone can keep us clean."

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