

# CHRISTIAN TRUTH VOLUME 12

by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan

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*A collection of articles and writings by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan from Christian Truth Volume 12, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.*

100 Chapters

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## Christian Truth Volume 12

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## Belshazzar's Banquet

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There is no doubt at all why God has been pleased to record the scene that we have in this chapter. He has put it down, as a New Testament scripture tells us, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning"; that men and women, you and I, whoever and whatever we may be, may learn first to what a length in impiety, idolatry, and wickedness one may go. The strong point of this chapter is, that we have a most distinct and solemn warning in it from God to Belshazzar; but he paid not the slightest heed to it.

Now let us take a look at that scene. There was a huge banquet prepared, and one thousand lords were there. Would you have been glad to have had an invitation? I can imagine the brilliancy of that scene, the luxury and wealth, lit up with all the splendor of an Eastern court; and they feasted and drank wine, and

God was not thought about. Well, the feast goes on and the impiety and idolatry increase. Belshazzar all the time knew what had happened to his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, but the devil delights to make men forget these things. But see, the feast goes on; and Belshazzar, to crown his impious audacity, commands the sacred vessels which had been dedicated to the service of the Lord God to be brought in; and they drank out of them to their idols.

But God looked on as they feasted and drank and praised the idols of gold, silver, and wood. At the very climax of their impiety, in the same hour, came forth fingers of a man's hand and wrote on the wall. In plain language, God steps in. I know a thing that would spoil the brightest banquet in the world, or the sweetest strains of music, or the ball, or racecourse, or any other worldly scenes of merriment. All enjoyment there is destroyed at once if God steps in.

At the banquet, only the hand of God is seen, the fingers of a hand; and the king saw it. God arrests that idolater; and is not His desire to arrest any unsaved reader? Yes, most truly. Mark His grace. He warns, He arrests that man; He does not strike him dead. Would not you have supposed that, as he raised his cup to drink to the senseless idol, God would have struck him dead? But no; God gives a warning word, that the sinner may have time to repent.

"The king's countenance was changed." The face gets serious, the eye droops, the heart beats - what is the matter? Why, something marvelous has happened! God has drawn near.

The king was frightened; his thoughts troubled him so, that "the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another"; for the man was conscious that it was God speaking to him. The king was anxious; he sent for the astrologers and wise men, but they could tell him nothing. Then the queen comes in and tells of Daniel; he is able to interpret dreams, and show "hard sentences," and "dissolve doubts"; and that is just what the gospel does.

Belshazzar knew how God had dealt with Nebuchadnezzar (see chap. 5:2), and yet he had not humbled his heart.

Now Daniel says, "The God in whose hand thy breath is,... hast thou not glorified." What a solemn charge is this! If Belshazzar had been wise, he would have fallen on his face before God and owned his guilt.

The handwriting was sent as a warning to the king, and he neglected it. It is all over with Belshazzar! Do you think he believed his warning? No, not a bit; his after-conduct shows that he was unconcerned. He was "weighed in the balances, and found wanting."

In the 29th verse, Belshazzar commanded that Daniel should be decked out and honored; and I suppose he went on with his banquet, but he was slain that night, and the city was taken, as history tells us now. And, half drunk, in the midst of their feasting, this impious king was judged.

If an unsaved soul should read these lines, I urge you to come to God this very moment, and you will get salvation and mercy. He will whisper peace to your troubled soul. Do not drop this paper before coming to Christ. Decide for the Lord just now. Your days are surely ' numbered. I beseech you to

halt, tarry, pause consider, turn round and own your... guilt; seek the Lord, and you will find Him; and He will bless you with an everlasting salvation. Come now, I do entreat you; repent and turn to God and receive "the gift of God,... eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

## Blind Leaders of the Blind: the Editor's Column

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Our attention was called to a certain greeting card which was used somewhat extensively in Christendom at the end of last year. The message it conveyed was entitled, "No Room in the Inn." It contained some well-turned phrases to express beautiful sentiments which would pass for true Christianity with most people. The birth, life, and teachings of Jesus were mentioned with religious nicety, and even the fact that He was brought "at last to Calvary" was not forgotten; but entirely missing from the card was His title of "Lord," any mention of His atoning death, His blood-shedding, or His resurrection. He was called "the Master" and "Christ," but not "Lord." This should not be surprising, for no man can truly address Jesus as Lord but by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3).

The most revealing sentence in the article is this: "At the inn they crowded Christ out because they never guessed who He would be." This at once betrays the state of soul of the man who wrote it; he must never have had a true glimpse of the glory of His Person. And yet he adds, "But we have no such excuse. We know Jesus." This can be challenged, for to know Him is life eternal; but to know Him only as a Teacher, a Master, or even Christ, is not to know Him.

Think of what is implied in the remark, "they never guessed who He would be." The fact is that they did not know who He was. He never was less in His infancy than as a teacher. He was God, and this He could never cease being. "And the Word was God" (John 1:1) - absolutely, and nothing less at any time, although He took upon Him the form of a man. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14; J.N.D. Trans.

The man who can write as did the author of "No Room in the Inn," evidently does not know Jesus-who He is. The publican, Zacchaeus (whom the religious Pharisees shunned), being divinely instructed, "sought to see Jesus who He was" (Luke 19:3). Happy man! He found Him as a Savior, so that the Lord Jesus could say, "This day is salvation come to this house." Happy man! He found Jesus and learned who He was, although the Pharisees of that day learned it not. The same is true today of the modern religionists who relegate Him to being merely a teacher or a reformer. We might well inquire of the rank modernist, Harry Emerson Fosdick, who authored those derogatory words, "What or whom did He become?" If He was not God incarnate from His birth, He never was; and if He were anything less, mankind' would have been doomed to eternal damnation without exception.

Job, as one of the ancients, knew better than these modern preachers, for his plaintive note was: "For He [God] is not a man, as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay His hand upon us both." Job 9:32, 33. Job had some sense of the majesty and holiness of his God, and he bemoaned the fact that he could not talk with God as with man, and that there was no one between them to come into the breach. He wanted one who could lay his hand upon God and also upon man; now it is plainly evident that no one could lay his hand upon God unless he was God, nor could he reach down to man unless he was man. Oh, glorious mystery! such a One has come, for there is "one God, and

one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. 2:5. Modern religionists reject the Lord Jesus as God, and as Savior, and thereby incur the wrath of God (John 3:36), while another branch of Christendom introduces various and sundry other mediators and intercessors to the dishonor of God's one and only Savior of sinners, and thereby sends souls on the wrong road - one that leads to destruction.

Many religious people are as willfully ignorant of who the Lord Jesus was and is as were the world leaders at the time of His first coming. In their ignorance then they "crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8). Think of all the displayed glory of God in the celestial abodes, and the Lord Jesus was "the Lord of glory." The saint is lost in adoring wonder when he thinks of the greatness of the Person who subjected Himself to scorn, ignominy, and rejection here. What an unfathomable mystery - "the Lord of glory," and yet subjected to all the indignities that the rebel heart of man could devise. The words "crucified" and "Lord of glory" express contradictory and incongruous thoughts. The one describes the form of death meted out to the lowest and meanest - to the worst of criminals - while the other speaks of Him as head of all those realms of bliss. How could it be that such took place? It was only by His marvelous grace that He stooped so low that He allowed wicked human creatures to thus handle Him.

Another incongruity of terms is seen in Acts 3:14 and 15: "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince [or Originator] of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." How could men kill the originator of life? and yet this is what they did in their blind hatred of Him whom God sent into the world. They counseled to put to death the One in whom they lived and moved and had their being (Acts 17:28). The creator and sustainer of all things (Heb. 1:2, 3) was taken by wicked hands and nailed to the cross in the all too-obvious determination to take His life. And insofar as they were capable of it, they did it, although in the final moments He cried out with a victor's cry of strength and laid down His own life.

But it was not possible that He should be held by death (Acts 2:24), so He came forth in mighty victory over it in what is the best attested miracle of all, for the disciples who knew Him were His witnesses. But this same Harry Emerson Fosdick who saw not who He was when on earth, has denied His bodily resurrection.

To deny the glory of His Person, His atoning death on the cross, His blood-shedding there, and His marvelous resurrection and ascension, is to reject the very foundation of the gospel. It is plainly a rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And those who do this will leave this world in their sins, as those to whom He once said, "If ye believe not that I AM,... ye shall die in your sins." John 8:24. Their portion will be to meet Him (who would have been their Savior) as their judge and hear that awful sentence, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. 25:41.

Oh, poor deluded men! The god of this world has blinded their eyes (1 Cor. 4:4). And yet, many of these false guides preach in His name and extol Him as a teacher or example! Blind leaders of the blind, who with their deceived followers will fall into the ditch (Matt. 15:14)!

How happy we who can rejoice and sing:

"How wondrous the glories that meet

In Jesus, and from His face shine!  
His love is eternal and sweet,  
'Tis human, 'tis also divine.  
"His glory - not only God's Son -  
In manhood He had His full part -  
And the union of both joined in one  
Form the fountain of love in His heart.  
"The merits and worth of His blood  
Have freed us from hell and from fear,  
That we, as the blest sons of God,  
May make His good pleasure our care.  
"Oh then may this union and love  
Make us walk in the service of Heaven,  
'Mid obedience and suffering to prove  
That we to the Lamb have been given."  
#61, Little Flock Hymnbook

## The Blind Man Who Did See: the Pharisee Who Said, "We See"

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The moral effect of the mission of Christ is strikingly presented in the 39th verse of this deeply interesting chapter. "And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." The work which He had just performed upon the blind man may be regarded as a very beautiful illustration of this statement, inasmuch as it was an illustration of the work of the cross. The remedy which was applied to the blind man was one which the human judgment 'would at once pronounce to be the most likely to deprive a man of sight. "He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay."

This mode of acting was well calculated to confound human wisdom; and hence it leads one naturally to contemplate the great work of the cross, in which we may behold the entire overthrow of man's wisdom, and the full establishment of the wisdom of God upon its ruins. That a Man crucified in weakness should be God's great way of salvation to the believing soul - that this same Man should, by death, destroy him that had the power of death - that He should, by being nailed to an accursed tree, become the foundation of eternal life to His Church - all this involves a display of wisdom which, while it opens the eyes of poor blind sinners, and pours in the light of heavenly wisdom upon the dark understanding, only dazzles and confounds the learned and the wise of this world. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men." 1 Cor. 1:25.

But where are we to look for a manifestation of this "foolishness," which at once excels and confounds the wisdom of man? assuredly to the cross. "We preach Christ crucified,... unto the Greeks foolishness." The proud sages of Greece, wrapped up in their schemes of philosophy, were but little prepared to understand or appreciate the preaching of the cross, which called upon them to come down from their heights of fancied wisdom - to lay aside their philosophy as a vain and cumbrous mass of folly, and, as "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" sinners, betake themselves to Him who had been nailed to the tree between two malefactors.

Then, again, the preaching of the cross is "unto the Jews a stumbling block." The Jew would despise or stumble over the cross, just as much as the Greek, though he looked at it from a totally different point of view. The Greek looked at the doctrine of the cross from the fancied elevation of "science falsely so called." The Jew looked at it from amid the dark and bewildering mists of a traditional religion. In both alike we behold the blinding power of the god of this age. Both alike were moving in a sphere which owned not "Christ crucified" as its center.

Now, the Lord Jesus expressly tells the Pharisees in this chapter, that their sin was not their real blindness, but their fancied sight. "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." A blind man could have his eyes opened; but for one who professed to see, no remedy was needed. A sick man may be made whole, but one who professes to be whole needs neither balm nor physician. The most hopeless feature in the condition of the Jews was their imagining that all was right. So far had they gone in their fancied soundness and rectitude, that they "had agreed already, that if any man did confess that He [Jesus] was the

Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." This was going very far. It was not that they had taken the trouble of investigating the claims of that blessed One who stood in their midst. No without a question, they had made up their minds that no confessor of Christ should remain within the pale of their church. How could they learn? What hone was there left for men who, when called upon to look at an object and own its merits, would rise up and in blind obstinacy close the shutters or put a bandage across their eyes? None whatever. "Now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." This is truly solemn. The permanence of sin is connected with a mere profession to see. What a principle for an age of religious knowledge!

But let us trace in the person of the blind man the progress of an honest soul upon whom the light of heaven had dawned.

From the moment that this man became the subject of the work of Christ, he was a marked man. "The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?" The marked change that had taken place was manifest to all who had known aught of his previous state. It was an important case, and one which needed to be submitted to the judgment of the church. "They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind." Nothing could be accredited which lacked the stamp of the church's approval. It was in vain that a blind man had had his eyes opened to see the light of heaven. If the matter met not the approval of the Pharisees, it must go for naught. Now let us see how the Pharisees deal with the case. They were, we feel assured, ready to bear with anything save a clear, simple, emphatic testimony to the work of Christ; but this was the very thing which the man was about to lay before them. "How were thine eyes opened?" Mark the reply, "He put clay on mine eyes." How little the Pharisees knew, or cared to know, of this! They, no doubt, regarded the matter as an insult to common sense. It certainly was, in its way, "a stone of stumbling" to them.

But who did the man mean by "He"? Who was "He"? This was the point. The poor man was ignorant of this himself, though he was on the highway to intelligence about it. He knew the work, but not the Person of Christ. Yet how highly distinguished was he, in being led to a knowledge of the work of Christ; yea, in being himself the subject of it; for this is the true way in which to arrive at a knowledge of it. Intellectual accuracy in reference to the plan of salvation is but a poor, cold, uninfluential thing, when not accompanied with the personal experience of its efficacy. We shall certainly never be able thereby to confound the logic of such as stand up merely for the defense of systematic religion, apart from, or in opposition to, Christ. We must be able to show, in our own persons, our character, our ways, the practical results of the work of Christ, or else all our accuracy will be worth little.

"He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see." Here was the presentation of a living fact which was calculated to bear down with greater weight upon a Pharisee's conscience than all the arguments that could be used. What could gainsay it? Men might reason as they pleased; they might even talk about giving glory to God; but this man could prove in his own person, that the work of Christ had done that for him which the Jewish system, with its priesthood and its rites, never could. This was enough for him, and it would have been enough, too, for any who were not blinded by the power of system.

But, observe, how the heart of this poor man lingers about the work of Jesus. He never allows himself to be drawn away from it in order to follow the puzzling arguments of the Pharisees. To all

their questionings and reasonings his reply is, "He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see." Here was his solid ground, from which no logic could shake him. He kept to the simple fact of Christ's work, and reasoned not upon it; and this was his security. Had he reasoned upon it, they would have confounded him, for they were subtle men; but they could make nothing of his simple testimony to the fact of what Christ had done for him. "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." The connection between the two statements is very marked. "He put clay upon mine eyes," and, "Now I see." When we can connect the work of Christ with positive results in our own case, the testimony is irresistible; but there is a feebleness and a shallowness in the testimony of such as merely apprehend intellectually the theory of the gospel, which, not being connected with any positive result in the character and conduct, is soon borne down by the enemies of truth.

This is very perceptible in the case of the parents of the man. They, when questioned, could deliver but a poor, cold testimony in the matter. So far as their son and his wretchedness were concerned, they could speak distinctly enough, "But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not." In other words, they neither knew nor cared to know Christ or His work. They valued their position in connection with the accredited religion of the day, and were not prepared to bear the reproach of throwing in their lot with Christ and His followers. This, alas! is but too common. It requires no ordinary depth of truth in the soul, to enable a man to "go... without the camp" to Jesus. It must be a personal question. The grace of God as manifested in the cross must be experimentally known, else we never shall be able to witness a good confession. The name of Jesus never was, nor is it now, popular in the world. Religiousness may be, and doubtless will. But religiousness is one thing, and the faithful confession of Christ is quite another.

The Pharisees and chief priests had plenty of religion; yea, they were its guardians. They could say, "This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the sabbath day." And again, "Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner." All this sounded very religious; but my reader, we must ever bear in mind that to talk of giving glory to God, or of honoring His institutions while Jesus is rejected, is the merest delusion. Jesus is God's great institution, and the cross of Jesus is that which makes His Person and work available to the sinner; hence, if He be rejected, we are destitute of the only true and divinely recognized basis of religion. One divine thought about God's anointed Savior is better far than all the devout expressions of fleshly piety. Where Jesus is known, there is the preparedness of heart to suffer for His name, and also the true desire to be identified with Him, and conformed to Him.

But the parents of the man had not this preparedness of heart, and hence their testimony was characterized by all that so-called prudent caution which is ever observable in mere worldly religionists. "These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." This was a serious affair. The Jewish system had, of course, a large place in the affections of every pious Jew, nor would anyone lightly give up his position as a member of it; still less would he think of attaching himself to the person of one who was manifestly outside of all that which the world deemed reputable or desirable.

However, the man whose eyes were opened could not but speak the thing he had seen and heard, and the consequence was, that the religious guides of the people could not endure the edge of his

simple testimony - a testimony based throughout upon the work of Christ. He had received light, and this light had come into collision with the darkness. There could be no harmony, no fellowship, no rest. The light must be put out. So long as he had been a blind member of their system, it was well. They never raised a question; but since he had received light, and was not disposed to put it under a bushel, nor yet to put his conscience into their keeping, they had only to seek to get rid of him as best they could. "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and loth thou teach us? And they cast him out." They were the great depositaries of knowledge, and he was but a poor, ignorant man, and should not presume to think for himself, or set up his judgment in opposition to them. They, no doubt, regarded him as an obstinate heretic for whom nothing was reserved save the thunders of the church. "They cast him out." And why? Simply because he had had his eyes opened. How strange! How often we see cases like this! Men go on living in vice and ignorance, and are yet tolerated by human religion; but the moment the holy light of Scripture dawns upon them, they are only deemed fit subjects for the rack and stake. The vilest crimes are light, in the judgment of a corrupt religious system, when compared with the honest confession of the name of Christ.

We have already noticed the extent of this honest man's intelligence. It only extended to the work of Christ. He understood nothing of His Person as yet. This knowledge was reserved for him when cast forth without the pale of the synagogue. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?"

Now there is something very instructive in this progress of intelligence. He had been cast, by reason of his faithfulness, into a position of decided sympathy with the Son of God. The good Shepherd had, in tender mercy, visited the fold, and was now calling this, His sheep, by name, that He might lead him forth into a wide and wealthy place, wherein he might taste the blessedness of fellowship with that "one flock" which was about to be placed in the Father's hand forever. "Who is He?" Precious inquiry of an honest heart! - an inquiry speedily answered indeed. "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him." Here, then, we may well leave this highly favored soul - favored, though expelled from amid all that was highly esteemed among men. Truly happy was it for him to find himself outside a system which was rapidly crumbling to ruin, and to know his place as a worshiper at the feet of the Son of God. He had gone outside of the camp to Jesus, bearing His reproach, and is now seen offering the sacrifice of praise, even the fruit of his lips.

## The Bridegroom Comes

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The great truth of the Lord's coming in person the second time will in very deed be found to shine in the pages of inspiration like stars in the midnight sky. Alas, that it should have been so forgotten! But the Lord foresaw this and foretold it in the parable of the ten virgins. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." Not alone the foolish, but the wise ceased to watch and wait. So in process of time it came about that the coming of the Lord was no longer an object of joyous hope and expectation, and the promise of His coming was either spiritualized and explained away, or it dropped out of sight altogether. In the early days of Christianity, it was far otherwise. The Lord's return, like a golden thread, was interwoven with all other truth; and the youngest convert was led to look at once for the Savior. Is this questioned? We would ask, then, of those that question it, What other meaning can be attached to those words of Paul in 1 Thess. 1:9, 10: "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come"?

Some may say, We have always believed the Lord Jesus would come in judgment at the end of the world - that is nothing new - but we are not speaking of that dread appearing. He will without doubt come to judge, for we are told that God "hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained." Acts 17:31. And when He thus appears, it will be in flaming fire, and with the angels of His might, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:7, 8). All that is solemnly true, and we would that men heeded it more; but were we to explain our parable as if it related to that event, we should mar its beauty and pervert its meaning; for it treats of the coming of the Bridegroom, not of the Judge. The world of the ungodly may hear with alarm of the Judge's approach, knowing in themselves that the hour of punishment is at hand; but the Bridegroom's coming is waited for with earnest desire by those who are assured of His faithful love. Accordingly, at the close of the Revelation, when the Lord Jesus calls Himself the bright and morning star, the Spirit and the bride say to Him, "Come." And the last word spoken by Him from the glory is, "Surely I come quickly." To this assurance, so cheering and sustaining, there is the ready response, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Who could ever imagine that such language would be used if we looked for Him as judge?

"At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him." What are we to understand from this but that a clear testimony was to go forth before the Bridegroom came? And surely we may say that the cry has been raised; and, whether men will heed it or not, the fact that the Lord's coming again has been sounded out far and wide. At any moment He may come, and then shall be brought to pass that which is written: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:16, 17. Then it will be said, The Bridegroom has come, and they that were ready have gone in with Him to the marriage.

And if we believe that the midnight cry has gone forth, and that the Bridegroom is at the door, how needful it is that we should see that our lamps are well trimmed so that they may burn with a brighter, purer, steadier flame than ever. "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." Eph. 5:8. Again, the same Spirit, by the same servant, says to us: "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." 1 Thess. 5:5-10. We shall do well to hear the Spirit's word of exhortation calling us, as it does, to watchfulness and sobriety of mind, to the exercise of faith and love and hope in view of our Lord's return.

"A little while - He'll come again;

Let us the precious hours redeem;

Our only grief to give Him pain;

Our joy to serve and follow Him.

Watching and ready may we be,

As those that wait their Lord to see."

## The Broken State of Christendom

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There is no greater danger than forgetting the spirit that becomes those to whom God has shown His mercy in giving true understanding of what suits Him in the actual and broken state of Christendom. Is it not one of the things we need most to look to, that the tone in which we use the truth should be becoming? The more we learn of God, the more we should cultivate lowliness of mind. This does not imply that you should have indecision in your convictions, but that along with this you should have a just sense of your own weakness, with brokenness of spirit, remembering how the glory of the Lord has suffered by the failure of His people. We feel how far the Church has fallen, and whence also, but we ought not to be discouraged. There is no element of Christ in despair or distrust. The Holy Ghost never produces doubt. As there is sometimes a difficulty in minds about what is called the ruin of the Church, a few words may be well on the present broken state of things among those who call on the Lord's name.

We must bear in mind the Church in two points of view the Church or assembly as built by Christ, and as built by man; that is, by His servants. The assembly as built by Christ never fails. "The gates of hell [hades] shall not prevail against it." But that which has been built by the servants of the Lord is always liable to be injured by elements more or less worthless, if not worse. It may suffer through -worldliness, haste, carelessness, fleshly feeling, a thousand things according to nature, allowed to act without being judged, and so leave results to shame and the Lord's dishonor. Hence we find among the Corinthians there were materials of which the Apostle speaks in tones of grave admonition. They had let in what was not unprofitable only, but even corrupting - "wood, hay, stubble." Yet also there might be a power of defilement with the hand of destruction there. He who built what was worthless might be saved while his work perished; but the man who defiled, or destroyed, the house of God, would himself be destroyed by the judgment of God. All this is where men are the builders.

Thus we see the two aspects justified. There is that in the assembly of God here below which is built of Christ, and so never fails, the stones of which are living, and in no case dead ones. On the other hand there is the bad workmanship, more or less careless service, as the case may be - either bad men doing what is according to themselves, or good men who are not in everything guided of God - and consequently there is an accretion of inferior material having no value for God, which sullies His temple, and so far incurs the charge of confusion, disorder, and weakness. It is in the last point of view that we see the springs of the ruin which soon overspread the Church. The perishable things, "wood, hay, stubble," mean, I think, ill-put or light doctrine generating persons akin. It might thus easily mean both; it is in the first instance doctrines palatable to the flesh, and therefore attractive to persons in a fleshly state, perhaps unconverted or natural men.

Some no doubt think it is a hard saying to speak of the Church in ruins; but why so? There is no impeachment of God, but only of man. God called Israel out of Egypt, yet Israel became a ruin. Why then should we wonder that the Gentile has not continued in His goodness? Compare Rom. 11, where we may see how little the Apostle could be surprised at such an issue. The principle

runs through every dealing of God with man. The creature always fails, but all turns to God's glory. No doubt the Church, like Israel, exists, but in a ruined state. Does not the Protestant own it when he thinks of Popery? the Romanist when he looks on Protestantism? Upright and spiritual men own it without reserve.

All these are but cases of a still more general truth. The first man fell and is fallen universally. But there is another great fact - the second Man is risen from the dead and has begun a new creation which will never perish or even fall. Thus the same principle applies far and wide, as always; as far as we touch on the responsibility of man, we behold ruin and confusion. Everybody feels it; every godly, intelligent person owns it, even though he might not be used to the expression, and so feel difficulty, fearing it might compromise the grace and faithfulness of God. It is impossible to love Christ and the Church without groaning.

## Calvinism: Mr. Pink

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In turning now to the errors of Calvinism, it is not our purpose to examine the works of John Calvin; we will instead take a fairly recent book of this persuasion which has had a large sale, and which has turned many from positive truth into bypaths of error. It is entitled, "The Sovereignty of God," and was written by Arthur W. Pink, a man whom we understand died in Scotland during the years of World War II.

It is obviously impossible for us to review Mr. Pink's book in minute detail in our limited space, for it is a work of 320 pages. This, however, is not necessary, for if it can be proved to be built upon false premises, and permeated with erroneous teachings, then it will be evident that it is not trustworthy. This we purpose to do, without rancor or malice, but solely in the interest of the truth of God's Word, and for the help and edification of His children.

We will select for our first consideration author Pink's teaching of a limited atonement; that is, that Christ died on the cross for certain ones whom God in His sovereignty chose in a past eternity, but in no way for any others. To prove that he taught this, we quote a few excerpts from his book: "Surely the Lord Jesus had some absolute determination before Him when He went to the cross. If He had, then it necessarily follows that the extent of that purpose was limited, because an absolute determination or purpose must be effected." p. 72. On another page (123) he says, "From it [Adam's fallen race] God purposed to save a few as the monuments of His grace; the others He determined to destroy." Therefore, according to Mr. Pink, Christ came and died for "a few" of fallen men. Truly his ideas of the atonement are limited. He also seeks to bolster his "limited atonement" doctrine by misuse of portions of Isa. 53 as he attempts to prove that the Father in a past eternity made certain promises to the Son in respect to the limited number for whom He would die. We say at the outset, these ideas are the work of the finite mind trying to confine the infinite within its own exceedingly "limited" apprehension. Who has been able to comprehend the extent of the heavens that declare the glory of God in creation? or who shall rightly declare the moral glory of God in redemption? Shall mortal man limit the excelling glory of God in the work of the atonement? - that inestimable work that has glorified God in His very nature, character, and all His attributes. The Apostle Paul speaks of God's ways being "past finding out," but this writer seems to feel that he has found them out. Another has said about trying to comprehend God by the mind: "He would not be God if human understanding could measure Him."

The "limited atonement" doctrine is built upon a premise that lacks understanding of the two views of the cross of Christ as regards His work; that is, propitiation and substitution. The types used on the day of atonement in Lev. 16 are set aside in deference to a theory, a doctrine of men (be they good men or bad is not the point). On that memorable day, which occurred once a year in Israel's history, there were, among other similitudes, two goats - one called the Lord's lot, and the other the people's. The goat of the Lord's lot was killed and its blood taken inside of the veil by the high priest, where he sprinkled the blood once upon the mercy seat and seven times on the desert sand before it. It was there above the mercy seat that God dwelt among the people, and as they

were sinners He must needs have the evidence of death presented before Him - the blood was sprinkled there. This was propitiation - a satisfaction rendered to God whereby He could act in grace toward a sinful people. On the head of the other goat, the sins of the people were confessed by the high priest, and it was led into a land not inhabited, so that their sins were removed. This was substitution. In a sense, both goats are one in the matter of sin - the one being slain and its blood presented before God, and the other bearing the sins away to be remembered no more - for without the blood of the one goat there could be no bearing away of sins on the other. Let us notice the words of another:

"There is a continual tendency in the different classes, even of believers in Christendom, to ignore one or other of these truths. Take for instance those zealous that the gospel go out to every creature. It is notorious that most of these deny God's special favor to the elect. They overlook or pare down any positive difference on God's part toward His own children. They hold that a man throughout his course may be a child of God today and not tomorrow. This destroys substitution [seen in the live goat led away]. They hold propitiation [seen in the blood of the other goat as presented before God], and there they are right, and quite justified in preaching the gospel unrestrictedly to every creature, as the Lord indeed enjoined. But how their one-sidedness enfeebles the proper portion of the saints!

"But look for a moment at the opposite side [Mr. Pink's], which holds that all God has done and reveals is in view of the elect only, and that all He has wrought in Christ Jesus is in effect for the Church, and that He does not care about the world, except to judge it at the last day. This may be put rather bluntly, for I do not present such grievous narrowness toward man and dishonor of God and His Son in as polished terms as those might desire who cherish notions so unsavory and unsound. But it is true that a certain respectable class around us do see nothing but the elect as the object of God. Their doctrine supposes only the second goat, or the people's lot. They see the all-importance of substitution, but Jehovah's lot has no place as distinct.

"How came the two contending parties of religionists not to see both goats? The Word of God reveals both.... Plainly there are two goats. The goat of propitiation is to provide in the fullest manner for the glory of God, even where sin is before Him. In fulfilling it what was the consequence? Christ was forsaken of God that the believer should never be forsaken. He bore the judgment of sin that God's glory might be immutably established in righteousness. Thus grace in the freest way can and does now go out to every creature here below.

"But there is much more. Besides opening the sluices that divine love might flow out freely everywhere, we also find another line of truth altogether: the fullest and nicest care that those who are His children should be kept in peace and blessing.... God took care, not only to vindicate His own glory and nature, but to give them knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins. The sins are all out to be borne away.

"Even the type demonstrates... that we require these two distinct truths to maintain the balance of God's truth.... They are admirably held together; they compose God's truth. It is quite true that in the first goat God has secured His majesty, and His righteous title to send forth His message of love to every creature. Again, in the second goat He has equally cared for the assurance of His people, that all their sins, transgressions, and iniquities, are completely borne away. How could the truth of atonement be more admirably shown by types beforehand?"

Before leaving this part of the subject, let us refer to the words of another servant of God: "Christ is both high priest and victim, has confessed all the sins of His people as His own, and borne our sins in His own body on the tree. The two goats are but one Christ; but there is the double aspect of His sacrifice - Godward, and bearing our sins. The blood is the witness of the accomplishing of all, and He is entered in not without blood. He is the propitiation for our sins."

The error of the one-sided Calvinistic theology in the denial of propitiation in its wide scope for the whole world has necessitated a determined but futile attempt to remove or explain away every scripture which supports it. Take the verse which explains that Christ was the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2), so that His propitiatory sacrifice furnished the righteous foundation on which our sins have been removed; it also says, "and not for ours only, but also for the... whole world." The words in the King James translation "the sins of" are definitely not in the Greek, and are shown in italics in many Bibles, thus indicating that they were added by the translators. He was not a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, but He is the propitiation for the whole world. The writer of the previous paragraph continues: "He is the propitiation for our sins. But in this aspect the world comes in too. He is the propitiation for the whole world. All has been done that is needed. His blood is available for the vilest, whoever he may be. Hence the gospel to the world says, 'Whosoever will, let him come.' In this aspect we may say Christ died for all, gave Himself a ransom for all, an adequate and available sacrifice for sin for whoever would come - tasted death for every man." But Mr. Pink says: "What then was the purpose of the Father and the design of the Son? We answer, Christ died for 'God's elect.' " p. 72. This is plainly error which limits the scope and value of the sacrifice to the limit of substitution - to the scape goat. Then he adds on page 73, "Christ died for the elect only." This is a flat denial of the Word of God.

Let us notice what Mr. Pink further says: "On the cross the Lord Jesus gave Himself a ransom, and that it was accepted by God was attested by the open grave three days later; the question we would here raise is, For whom was this ransom offered? If it was offered for all mankind then the debt incurred by every man has been canceled." p. 75. This is just so much human reasoning which sets aside the plain and emphatic statements of Scripture, but it all turns on Mr. Pink's not seeing, or being unwilling to see, the difference in the two goats, and what they signify.

We are cognizant of the fact that Mr. Pink uses the words propitiation and substitution, and speaks of their being Godward and manward (p. 75), but he makes them co-extensive and limits the work of Christ to bearing the sins of the elect. Words in themselves mean nothing unless that which is signified by them is admitted.

Mr. Pink rejects the correct rendering of 1 John 2:2, and uses the mistaken text of the King James Version: "propitiation for the sins of the whole world." This only aggravates his confusion and mixes the truth of the two goats instead of retaining the careful distinction of God's Word. Christ is indeed the propitiation (or the efficacious sacrifice Godward by which God can and does offer peace and pardon to all) for the whole world, but to inject "the sins of" alters the sense and introduces error; it brings in substitution where it was not intended to be. But Mr. Pink by his confusion only compounds his difficulty, and so he then has to explain away "the whole world" (p. 74), instead of leaving out the erroneous "sins of."

Heb. 9:26 also suffers from the same muddling at the hand of this author, for he makes "Hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," to mean, to put away the sins of the elect.

He connects the same error with John 1:29 - "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" --and makes both scriptures apply to the actual guilt of the elect only; but this is very far short of the truth and shows how restricted his theology really is. Both of these verses contemplate the final and complete removal of sin and all its effects from God's creation. It certainly is not so now, but the work on which it will be accomplished is finished. At present the believer knows his sins forgiven; in the Millennium there will be a greater display of the efficacy of that wondrous work, but only in the eternal state will its full meaning be known. To lose sight of the important truth taught by the goat of the Lord's lot is to narrow one's apprehension of Christ's work to only one phase of it, and be guilty of disparaging His mighty work. It is sad indeed for one who does this, and worse still for those who teach others this human limitation of an infinite work. (Substitution is taught in verse 28 of Heb. 9 "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.")

Mr. Pink's dedication to defend an unscriptural idea brought him into trouble with 2 Cor. 5:14, 15 and 1 Tim. 2:5, 6. The former says, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." Now Mr. Pink labors to prove that these ails mean only all the elect, and then to bolster that point he makes "all were dead" to mean the elect believers died with Christ. This is not only far-fetched, but it is wrong from the very context. The all were in the place of death; that was the portion of all mankind because of sin. Then in grace the Lord Jesus came down and went into death for all - it is again the general thought as seen in propitiation. But the verse adds, "that they which live" might henceforth live "unto Him which died for them, and rose again." There is a contrast between the all being morally in the place of death, and death their allotted portion, and the "they which live" (not now all, but the saved who have life in Christ) who should now "live unto Him."

Here are the words of another: "Christ's death for all is the proof that it was all over for mankind. If He went down in grace to the grave, it was just because men were already there, and none otherwise could be delivered.... There is then life in Him risen, and this not in Him only, but for those who believe. He is our life. And such is the meaning of 'those who live'; not merely those alive on earth (though this be implied, of course), but living of His life, in contrast with 'all dead.' " After going into the meaning of the Greek words, this writer adds concerning those who live: "It is not as including all for whom He died, but as of some out of all, 'those that live' in contradistinction to all dead.... The reader will observe that Christ's resurrection is associated only with 'those who live.' This again confirms the special class of the living, as only included in, and not identical with, all for whom He died. Those who would narrow the all for whom He died to the elect lose the first truth" - the judgment of death seen written on all, so that Christ's death becomes the ground of deliverance.

We will not take time or space to elaborate on Mr. Pink's justifying his same error in connection with 1 Tim. 2:5, 6. The "ransom for all" is what it says - "for all." The Apostle by the Spirit had just stated that the mediator between God and men was the Man Christ Jesus; but man is reluctant to believe in God's grace to him even when One died and rose for his deliverance; "it is 'a ransom for all,' whoever may bow and reap the blessing; which those do who, renouncing their own proud will for God's mercy in Christ, repent and believe the gospel." Simply believing what God says, the way He says it, is very much better than raising objections to conform to a pre-determined scheme, and then having to explain away what the Word says.

We may well say with Mr. Pink's concluding statement, "The Atonement is no failure." p. 320. It certainly is not, but it is of far greater import and value than Mr. Pink ever imagined. It has so thoroughly glorified God's character and nature - light and love - that He is glorified in the vastness of Christ's work, so that He is justified in offering salvation, pardon, and eternal life to all without limit. It has also proved that God was righteous in having passed over the sins of those who in Old Testament times had faith in Himself (see Rom. 3:25 and Heb. 9:15).

Calvinism: Mr. Pink

A concomitant error to Mr. Pink's doctrine of a limited atonement, with its denial of the real truth of propitiation, is the Calvinistic denial of the elementary and basic truth that "God is love." This is seen in Mr. Pink's handling of John 3:16: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He goes to great lengths to prove that God does not love the world - mankind - and this precious verse suffers much at his hands. Everything must conform to his predetermined scheme; hence he says it is not the world as such that God loves, but only "the world of the godly" or "the world of God's people." But where was "the world of the godly" or of "God's people" when He sent and gave His beloved Son?

On this subject, Mr. Pink further says: "No matter how a man may live - in open defiance of Heaven, with no concern for his soul's eternal interests, still less for God's glory... notwithstanding, God loves him, we are told." p. 246. Here is serious heresy, for this of necessity makes God's love to man to depend on something in man. If Mr. Pink could restrict God's love to His own elect, will he say that they until conversion were otherwise than those whom he pictures as being unlovable? undeserving? Were God's elect in anywise different from all mankind? Instead of extolling God's sovereignty, Mr. Pink here makes God's love descend on the worthy only! If God does not love those who live "in open defiance of Heaven," and those who have "no concern" for their "soul's eternal interests" or for "God's glory," who then would be saved? If these are prerequisites for God's loving us, our case is hopeless indeed. If God loves any on this basis, it would strike a fatal blow at the very thing - God's sovereignty - for which Mr. Pink says he is contending.

Mr. Pink says, "One of the most popular beliefs of the day is that God loves everybody, and the very fact that it is so popular with all classes ought to be enough to arouse the suspicions of those who are subject to the Word of Truth. God's Love toward all His creatures is the fundamental and favorite tenet of Universalists, Unitarians, Theosophists, Christian Scientists, Spiritualists, Russellites, etc." pp. 245, 246. Here he treads on dangerous ground, for he assumes that God's love for His creatures is a fable simply because some false doctrines make His love a blind love that will wink at sin. God's love is real, in spite of Calvinism; but it is holy and will not tolerate sin, in spite of Universalism, and of all who would make God a party to sin. Even John 3:16 shows that God's love is not the kind that Mr. Pink would portray as being preached today, for He sent His only begotten Son into the world that whosoever believes in Him should not perish. Justice must be satisfied or all would have perished - "the Son of man" must "be lifted up."

To show the folly of Mr. Pink's contention that John 3:16 only means that God loved His own elect and no one else, let us ask those of his persuasion, What then is the purpose of the word "whosoever" in the rest of the verse? Absolutely none whatever, unless "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," should mean that because God loved the world

and gave His Son, any or all who will may come and be saved through Him. "Whosoever" has no meaning if it does not signify the scope of the offer. It is without limit or restriction. Would God make an offer that was not real? God did love the world and gave His Son; now all may come.

Author Pink remarks: "To tell the Christ-rejecter that God loves him is to cauterize his conscience, as well as afford him a sense of security in his sins. The fact is, that the love of God, is a truth for saints only." p. 246. Was it to a believer that the Lord spoke John 3:16? No, Nicodemus was not so then. He still needed to be born again, as the Lord told him. Will Mr. Pink impugn the wisdom of the Lord Himself in quoting that verse to him? Listen to the words of a more sober strain:

"The love of God, and even His love announced in forgiveness through the work of Christ, may, through the power of the Holy Ghost, awaken the sense of need: still having the forgiveness is another thing. That love, brought home to the soul through grace, produces confidence, not peace; but it does produce confidence. Hence we come into the light. God is light and God is love. Christ in the world was the light of the world, and He was there in divine love.... When God reveals Himself, He must be both - light and love. The love draws and produces confidence; as with the woman in the city who was a sinner (Luke 7), the prodigal (Luke 15), Peter in the boat (Luke 5)." "The law may by grace reach the conscience and make us feel our guilt, but it does not reveal God in love." If conscience only were reached, it would drive man into hiding from God, as Adam did in the Garden; but it is the thought that there is goodness in the heart of God that draws anyone to Him. It was the sense of goodness in the father's heart and house that led the prodigal to return. Little did Mr. Pink think of it, but his denial that God is love is closely akin to the devil's lie when he libeled God to Eve, for he insinuated that God was not good - not love - that He was arbitrarily keeping back something from the creature which would have been for his good. "What a solemn thing to echo a false accusation against God! To believe Mr. Pink, one would have to come to the conclusion that God is neither love nor good. This, the devil propagated among the heathen, so that they sought to appease an angry God. At present there is generally another form of his old lie in the garden, which in substance says, If God would put the sinner in hell, He would not be good or love. But be it remembered that a good and loving God can punish sin without any impairment of His goodness; a holy God must punish sin. A loving earthly father can punish a disobedient child without foregoing his natural love. Mr. Pink is on dangerous ground in his assumptions that God has no love toward the sinner; they strike at the very root of God's nature, for He is love.

Mr. Pink says, "It has been customary to say God loves the sinner, though He hates his sin. But this is a meaningless distinction. What is there in a sinner but sin?" p. 246. Ah, Mr. Pink, there is in the sinner a soul that will live on and on and on, either in bliss or in woe. Your statement will not bear scrutiny. God does love the sinner.

It would be amusing, if it were not so serious, to watch the way Mr. Pink twists Scripture to his own ends. When it comes to the rich young ruler in Mark 10, whom Jesus loved, Mr. Pink clears up the difficulty for himself by saying, "We fully believe that he was one of God's elect, and was 'saved' sometime after his interview with the Lord." p. 247. This is only his bare assumption without any support.

Notice the following foolish error in the book we are reviewing: "Why say 'he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father' if the Father loves everybody?" p. 248. Who said that the Father loves everybody? Let us keep with the very words of divine inspiration, and say, "God so loved the world

that He gave." It is God that loves the world, not the Father. Furthermore, there is a special love of complacency in the Father for those who love His Son - "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father." Mr. Pink attacks such a differentiation, but it is there nonetheless. He misuses Heb. 12:6 in the same way when quoting "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," saying that God's love is restricted to members of His own family (p. 248). Does it need to be said, that this again is not God's love to the world - the world of mankind? It is the children in the family who are disciplined in love by the Father. He also confuses Eph. 5:25 with John 3:16; but let it be noted that "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it," but God loved the world. It does not say that Christ loved the world, nor that God loved the Church. Why cannot men quote Scripture as it is given, and revel in its perfect exactitude as evidence of divine inspiration?

Mr. Pink becomes rather daring in the following: "'God so loved the world.' Many suppose that this means the entire human race. But the entire human race includes all mankind from Adam to the close of Earth's history: it reaches backward as well as forward! Consider, then, the history of mankind before Christ was born. Unnumbered millions lived and died before the Savior came to the earth, lived here 'having no hope and without God in the world,' and therefore passed out into an eternity of woe. If God 'loved' them, where is the slightest proof thereof?" pp. 248, 249. This almost savors of replying "against God." Let such as endorse Mr. Pink's grave error read Rom. 1 and hold their peace. In that chapter we are told that at one time the human race knew God - "that, when they knew God" - all who came out of the ark had the knowledge of God, and the long lives of the Patriarchs from the flood to the tower of Babel made it possible for men to learn of God through their ancestors. Shem, Noah's son, was still living when Isaac was past fifty years of age, although Isaac was born about 500 years after the flood. But they did not like to retain that knowledge. They gave up God, and God gave them up to uncleanness. They had also the testimony of God in creation; "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in [rather, to] them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." Here is the right answer. God never left man without a testimony of Himself, and men at all times were responsible for whatever revelation He was pleased to give them. The infidel today inquires about the heathen, asking what God will do with them, but Mr. Pink disposes of that question by an assumption of his own, that God designed to cast them all into hell. This in our judgment is very serious. Who gave Mr. Pink the right to speak for God?

We cannot but think of Job's friends when we read Mr. Pink's book. They did not speak right about God: "And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath." Job 42:7. Job had been through a hard school, and had learned about himself; but he had not said things that misrepresented God, as his friends had, and which we are persuaded Mr. Pink has done.

Again, Mr. Pink argues that God could not have loved the world as representing the whole human race, for half of the human race "was already in hell when Christ came." p. 251. What does he mean, "in hell"? There are none in hell yet, for the first two men who will go there will be the Roman beast and the false prophet in Jerusalem, and that has not happened. If he means those that died without faith are lost, we grant it. But how does he know how many in old times had faith

in God? The Old Testament mentions individuals here and there who were not Jews who evidently had faith. Was not Job one of these? When he says, "The objects of God's love in John 3:16 are precisely the same objects of Christ's love in John 13:1," he is sadly mistaken. Why does he not make "His own" in John 1:11 the same as "His own" in John 13:1? It would be just as reasonable and just as wrong. The former were the Jews as a people, the latter the Jews who had faith in Him.

When Mr. Pink asks, "Is it conceivable that God will love the damned in the Lake of Fire? Yet, if He loves them now He will do so then, seeing that His love knows no change - He is 'without variableness or shadow of turning!'" p. 248. This is just plain sophistry. Wrath and judgment, the just deserts of sin, are not incompatible with love.

If any reader doubts the absurd lengths to which Pinkism goes, let him notice this quotation: "There is far too much presenting of Christ to sinners today (by those sound in the faith)." p. 247. Did not Philip go down to Samaria and preach "Christ"? (Acts 8). Did not Paul preach at Corinth, Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3)? Of course man's need should be presented, for if a man has no need, there is no need of the gospel. But preaching only wrath and ruin will not draw a soul to God. Mr. Pink says, "The Gospel is not an 'offer' to be bandied around by evangelical peddlers" (p. 257), but Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, even if not sincerely. Mr. Pink did not agree with Paul.

Another bit of sophistry is to be found on the subject of God's love: "God does not love everybody; if He did, He would love the devil." What semblance of authority has he for such a baseless conclusion? Does John 3:16 embrace infernal beings? A similar bit of reasoning is found on the same page (30), "In the final analysis, the exercise of God's love must be traced back to His sovereignty, or, otherwise, He would love by rule; and if He loved by rule, then He is under a law of love, and if He is under a law of love then is He not supreme, but is Himself ruled by law." The author of this has not considered that love is God's very nature. God cannot deny Himself, or act other than He is - He is love and will always be so; and judgment is "His strange work."

A sober servant of Christ has written: "The first part of what the Lord says in John 3 is: 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.' The

Son of man, He who represented man, must be lifted up - die on the cross, and where was such a lamb to be found? 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.' The 'Son of man' must be lifted up, the 'Son of God' was given, the same blessed person: but 'Son of man,' to die for man's need, standing for man before God; 'Son of God,' vessel and proof of God's sovereign love." And again, "God loved us while we were sinners, and this is the characteristic of His love, His saving love." And, "God loved us while we were sinners; He loves us without any change when we are cleansed.... He loved us when we were in our sins."

What poor, unworthy thoughts of God, Mr. Pink had! and he would engender the same in all his followers, but it will not be to his credit, nor for the good of those who follow him. Let us rather sing:

"Oh the glory of the grace,  
Shining in the Savior's face,  
Telling sinners from above,

`God is light,' and `God is love.'"

Mr. Pink does not stop at denying God's love to the world - to mankind -but he actually goes so far as to teach that God hates those whom He does not love. Notice this: "He loves one and hates another. He exercises mercy toward some and hardens others, without reference to anything save His own sovereign will." p. 111. In speaking about God's hating Esau, Mr. Pink goes so far as to indicate that this was so before he was born; thus: "Go back to Rom. 9:11-13: did Esau fit himself to be an object of God's hatred, or was he not such before he was born?" p. 118. (Although this is put in the form of a question, there can be no doubt from the context that he is here teaching that Esau was hated before he was born.) Here is a more definite statement of Mr. Pink's: "If then God loved Jacob and hated Esau, and that before they were born or had done either good or evil, then the reason for His love was not in them, but in Himself." p. 30.

Let us notice what one, from whom we have previously quoted, says on the subject: "If God 'despiseth not any' (Job 36:5), we may be perfectly sure He hates not any. Such an idea could not enter a mind which was nurtured in the Word of God, apart from the reasonings of men. I say not this because of the smallest affinity with what is commonly called Arminianism; for I have just as little affinity for Calvinism. I believe the one to be as derogatory to God's glory as the other, though in very different ways - the one by exalting man most unduly, and the other by prescribing for God, and consequently not saying the thing that is right of Him."

Mr. Pink speaks of God's wrath upon one as though it might be synonymous with God's hatred, but this "confounds hatred with judicial anger. There is no hatred in God to man assuredly. Yet God is a righteous judge, and God is angry every day, and ought to be so." But Mr. Pink asks, "Can God 'love' the one on whom His 'wrath' abides?" p. 248. Our answer to this is "yes," for God's wrath against the sinner because of his sin is not inconsistent with infinite and sovereign love. Thus Christ in the synagogue looked upon them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts. The grief was love, the anger was His righteous estimate of their sin.

The consideration of Jacob and Esau brings us to Mr. Pink's affirmation of the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation, but this must be left for another issue. It is far too important to pass over quickly, even for those who have never had to face it.

## Care for Sound Doctrine

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"Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." 1 Tim. 3:9.

Nothing is more clearly seen in the apostolic writings than the decided way in which evil doctrine was resisted. Immorality was also disallowed and dealt with; but the marked care of the inspired writers to preserve "the truth," and their uncompromising attitude toward those who sought to corrupt it are distinctly seen.

It was when Paul knew that something which Peter had done, an act of his, had put in jeopardy the precious truth of justification by faith, and therefore was dishonoring to our Lord, that he, Paul, "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed"; and we cannot doubt, from Peter's allusion to Paul after this, that he accepted the reproof and was delivered from the snare. (Gal. 2:11-21; 2 Pet. 3:15, 16.)

We find also, that when the Corinthians had untrue thoughts of resurrection, the Apostle sought to show them that, by denying the resurrection of the body, they were virtually denying the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:13-20). This made the matter very serious. Further on, when others were teaching what was contrary to "faith" and "a good conscience," Paul, by his apostolic power, delivered them unto Satan, that they might be taught by discipline not to blaspheme (1 Tim. 1:20).

Again, when some teachers added "circumcision" to the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ, the indignant and decided testimony of the Holy Spirit by an apostle was, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you"; and, "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. 5:12; 1:8). And let it never be forgotten that whether the Spirit by an apostle is speaking of false doctrine or of evil practice, in each case he warns us that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Nothing can be a more serious warning to God-fearing souls, or more enjoin us to check evil of every kind in the beginning of its intrusion. (1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9.)

So much was the preservation of "the truth" cared for by the early Christians, that we find one Apostle saying, "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth"; and another, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." Timothy was enjoined to "preach the word," though some may resist the truth, and to commit "to faithful men" the things that he had heard of Paul among many witnesses, who should "be able to teach others also." (1 Cor. 13:8; 3 John 1:4 Tim. 2:2.) Titus was to speak the things which became sound doctrine, and to rebuke some "sharply" that they might be sound in the faith (Titus 1:13).

Sound doctrine was considered of such paramount importance in the days of the apostles that, when a question had been raised as to how far Gentile believers were under the law of Moses, the apostles, elders, and brethren came together at Jerusalem to consider the matter. The result, after much consideration and conference, was that they were confident from the written Word that they had the Lord's solution of the difficulty. They therefore wrote to the Gentile assemblies, "It seemed

good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well," (Acts 15:6-29.) The verdict, therefore, of this famous meeting at Jerusalem exposed and set aside the false doctrine of Judaizing teachers, and showed clearly that we who believe are "not under the law, but under grace."

"The truth" began very early to be the object of Satan's attack in various ways, with the view of perverting and undermining it, and of overthrowing the faith of some. Afterward, it was more directly against the Person of our Lord that the efforts of "evil men" were directed; for, it is evident, if the smallest imperfection could be attached to His Person, it would set aside the eternal efficacy of His accomplished work. Thus we should be robbed of all blessings and comfort. But, thank God, Scripture always guards His Person, so that in the inspired pages we seldom find His deity spoken of without an allusion not far off as to His humanity. In the Old Testament, He is brought before us as the Child born, the Son given, the Mighty God, the virgin's Child, yet Immanuel; in the New Testament, He is spoken of as the Lamb of God, the Son of God, born of Mary, Emmanuel, "that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." 1 John 1:2. His deity and perfect manhood, yet one Person, are continually presented to us - Jesus Christ come in the flesh, Son of God, whose blood cleanseth us from all sin; through whom and in whom God hath given us eternal life.

The Apostle John boldly asserts that "Every spirit which does not confess Jesus Christ come in flesh is not of God" (1 John 4:3; J.N.D. Trans.), so that even untrue doctrine concerning the Person of the Son of God is fatal. Such uncompromising care of the truth of His Person is enforced, that to a Christian lady and her children John wrote, "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not Jesus Christ coming in the flesh.... Look to yourselves.... If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 7-11 (see J.N.D. Trans.). This is very solemn. Nothing can more clearly show the care there was in those days to maintain sound doctrine.

The Apostle Peter also warned the saints against false teachers who would bring in by the bye destructive heresies, and deny the Master that bought them.. that many would follow their dissolute ways, etc. (2 Pet. 2:1, 2).

Jude enjoined all true believers to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and traced the root of the apostasy to evil doctrines. 1) "The way of Cain," or approach to God without blood. 2) "The error of Balaam," or loving the wages of unrighteousness, while professing to serve God. 3) "The gainsaying of Core," or despising God's order of rule and priesthood, and setting up a false order. Thus the atoning work of Christ, the service of Christ, and the priesthood and lordship of the Son, have all been perverted and supplanted by what is false, on all which judgment is coming. (Jude 1, 11-15.)

Paul's prophetic warning to the saints on leaving Ephesus was: "After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Acts 20:29, 30. And the remedy for such a time was, "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you

up," etc. v. 32. Thus we learn that those only who have to do with God and His Word can expect to be kept according to His mind in a time of evil.

Taking a brief glance at the book of Revelation, we find the same care for the truth, and the exposure of evil doctrine. The saints at Smyrna and Philadelphia had to meet "the blasphemy" of those who took the Jewish ground of successional religiousness, and who were in some respects entirely opposed to the truth, but were not Jews. Observe, it is called "blasphemy." The saints at Pergamos were blamed for having some among them who held the doctrine of Balaam, and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Thyatira was threatened for allowing Jezebel teaching, which turned hearts from God to idolatry and other corrupt practices. Sardis had not the truth in the love of it - was formal and "dead." Laodicea, however orthodox, went on without Christ, with indifference to His honor, and was therefore ripe for His rejection - to be spewed out of His mouth. Can any warning be more solemn at this moment?

Thus we see what a great cause of trouble and sorrow evil doctrine was to the faithful in apostolic times. Besides diligently laboring in the ministry of the positive truth of God, they had constantly to watch against attacks on the truth by "evil men and seducers." They fought the good fight of faith and contended earnestly for the Word of God as the only final and conclusive authority. This cost Paul many tears and sometimes brought him into collision with those he loved. In his last epistle he says, "All they which are in Asia be turned away from me," and among them he particularly mentions Phygellus and Hermogenes. He had to speak of Alexander the coppersmith having done him much evil, and that Demas, one of his fellow laborers, had forsaken him, "having loved this present world." When Paul was a prisoner before Nero, he said, "No man stood with me, but all men forsook me." Such were some of his sufferings in contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. On the other hand, he had confidence in God, and added: "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me;... and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

Looking onward with a prophetic eye he said, "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived"; and the time will come when "They will not endure sound doctrine;... and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Knowing, as the Apostle did, that he would soon leave this earthly scene, he charged Timothy in the most solemn way before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, to watch in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, and to make full proof of his ministry; for, he added, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." (2 Tim. 4:1-6.) He saw the direction things were taking and, by the Spirit, anticipated the time in which we are. Yet, how anxious he was to the last that the truth should be preserved by faithful men! In the immediate prospect of martyrdom Paul could say, "I have fought a [the] good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

## Christ in Luke's Gospel

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All, I suppose, realize that what is of ourselves must be put aside. I think I may say more; there is not one single bit which we ever receive into our souls of Christ that is not at the expense of what is of ourselves being judged and put aside. We may learn many a thing about Christ very honestly and sincerely, and yet, owing to the condition of our souls - something of the old man, some root of self, not judged and given up - we are not able to profit and take up the truth that we may sincerely have learned.

### Christ As The Son Of Man

What I desire is to trace the blessed Lord Jesus Christ as He is presented to us in this Gospel, as the Son of man come down here - a new kind of Man in this world altogether, totally different from all others. If I turn, for instance, to chapter 2, in the very growing up of the Lord we see that there is a different Person in the world. As we grow up, we grow up in sin. I knew more sin at seven than

I did at four - more at twenty than I did at ten. God may come in in grace and convert us early; but the moment we see the blessed Lord, we see a vessel filled with grace. "The grace of God was upon Him." It was the first time it ever could be so said. God had given a measure of grace to one and another, but for the first time He looked down on a perfect vessel of His grace. In John 1:14 we read, "Full of grace." That grace instantly began to display itself, but we see how little man was able to hold it. A system of things that was legal and adapted to man in the flesh could not hold the grace; it was impossible. So we get early in Luke the angels saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace." In chapter 12 it is, "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth?" But is not that what the angels said? A verse or two before, He said, "I am come to send fire on the earth." Then, if we go on to chapter 19, when the disciples spread their garments in the way and shout Hosanna, we get, "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." The thing was, peace came, but the son of peace was not here. The Lord told His disciples to say, "Peace be to this house." If the son of peace was not there, it should return to them. The Lord came bringing peace into this scene, and the son of peace was not here, so His peace returned to Him; that is, as far as man in the flesh was concerned, or the system of things which would have blessed man in the flesh, if it were possible. In the early part of the chapter He is preaching the Word. He came not only to heal men's bodies, but to deal with their souls. There was moral power too in what He did. In the end of the chapter He brings this truth simply and plainly before us - the new will not fit in with the old. There was a new order of things presented in His Person; but man had no relish for it. It could not be put together with the old; and second, man had no heart for it - "He saith, The old is better." He prefers the things according to the flesh, whether religious or not; therefore he will not have the new wine.

### The New Wine

In chapter 6, we find the Lord setting aside the sign of the covenant between Jehovah and the children of Israel. He has brought in the new wine; the grace of God was presented to man in His

Person. Not merely could He say, I am come as the messenger of grace, but He was the channel of it. It was come in Him. People would not have the Lord. In John 6, where He speaks of the bread that came down from heaven, they say, "Lord, evermore give us this bread"; but the moment He says, "I am the bread of life," they will not have Him; they look at Him as the carpenter's son. But the Lord having come to take up any poor ruined sinner, we see Him in the previous chapter calling Levi, and Levi enters into what the Lord's mind is; and he makes a feast for the Lord, and invites the very people the Lord wanted. There is a full river of grace flowing now, and the Lord wants vessels for the grace to flow into. Levi brought together the vessels, for the grace that was then flowing, into company with the Lord. That leads to the murmuring of the Pharisees which brings out that man's heart has no taste for what there is in Christ. That leads on to chapter 6, where the Lord virtually sets aside the sabbath, the sign of the covenant between God and the Jews. He says in Eze. 20, "I gave them My sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them." The Lord now sets it aside. They could not eat of green ears or parched corn until the wave sheaf had been offered (Lev. 23:14); and they were allowed to pluck the ears as they passed through the standing corn of a neighbor (Deut. 23:25). This the disciples were doing. The Lord of heaven and earth was here, and His disciples were passing along hungry. He was the rejected One, and instead of receiving tribute from those who were His subjects, they suffered those attached to Him to hunger. They were ready to stand upon the outward form, as the flesh always is; but God delights in mercy and not sacrifice. They knew not what was in God's heart, nor did they realize that the Lord Jesus Christ was the expression of what was in that heart down here. The Lord takes His place here as the Son of man, because everything in title is put under Him as Son of man; consequently, He is Lord of the sabbath. He sets it aside. What it meant was, that He was setting aside the system of things which was found to be faulty. The new wine could not flow into the old vessel, nor the new piece be put on the old garment. He sets aside Judaism.

#### The Man With The Withered Hand

We pass on a little further, and then it is another thing. It is not the disciples this time. When they were in question, He appeals to what David did when he was a rejected king; but now it is a poor son of want and woe in the synagogue. They watch Jesus. Is it not strange that the heart of man is against the grace of God? Anything rather than grace, than that the heart should open itself and let the grace of God flow in. The Lord knew their hearts; He knew what was in man. He then bids the man rise up and stand forth in the midst. What a wonderful moment! The Lord in this scene of sorrow and sin and misery, and in the synagogue too, where what God was should be taught to His people - "I am the LORD that healeth thee."

They had no idea of who Jehovah was, no idea of the One whom Jehovah had sent; therefore, when the Lord puts the question which was simply, Is it proper and right to do good, or to do evil? they did not answer Him. He heals the man, and "They were filled with madness; and communed one -another what they might do to Jesus." Grace is working and, instead of welcoming it, "They were filled with madness," and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus. The presence of the Lord Jesus in this world made everything manifest. In the beginning of the Gospel, Simeon says, "That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Chap. 2:35. The Lord Jesus comes into this world presenting grace in all the tenderness of man, in the perfection of a man, in such a way that in the next chapter a poor woman that was a sinner was allowed to wash His feet with her tears. That was Jesus in this world, the vessel of the grace of God here. In Luke He is not

so much looked at as the manifestation of what God is - the full development of the grace of the Father's heart, beautiful as it is (that is seen in John) - but He is presented as a man, in such a way that we can be near to Him. As the poet said: "That Thou might'st with us be"; so that a poor woman could touch Him; that Levi could make a feast and invite a number of poor sinners to come and sit down with Him; that He could wander with His disciples through the cornfields while they plucked the ears of corn and did eat. A heart touched with the want and woe all around, yet man's heart thoroughly against Him. That is what was on the earth; the whole thing is thus portrayed. The sabbath, besides being a sign between God and Israel, was also the sign of God's rest in His own creation. He made everything very good and He rested. It was all broken up soon, we know. The sabbath was a sign of the goodness of God. Gen. 2 tells us, that before there was a man to till the ground the Lord God caused everything to grow. It was God's delight to prepare that place for the creature to be put into. The sabbath was expressive of His delight in what His own hands had done, yet to be realized in the millennial sabbath. He thus presented Himself to His people of old as the Fountain and Source of all good, that man might come and enjoy what God is, and know what flows from God to His creature. The new creation in its fullness will be a scene where God Himself will fill every bit of His own creation - God all in all. Yet evil man turned Him out of His creation, and crucified the Lord of glory. There is not a time when we look for anything in ourselves, instead of drawing every spring of our life from Him, that we are not slighting our blessed Savior.

The sabbath was the sign of all this to His people. What people were like Israel whom God had taken to be His own inheritance? So He says in Isa. 58, "If thou turn away thy foot from... doing thy pleasure,... and call the sabbath a delight." Instead of a man doing his own work to satisfy himself, if he kept the sabbath, the Lord says, "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord... and I will... feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father." I know that is only earthly blessing; but what is it now, when I become a vessel of grace? There was this vessel of grace flowing out in this weary world, addressing itself to man's heart in the most tender manner, so that any poor son of want and woe could understand it.

The Lord was born so poor in this world that there never was a poor man who could say, I cannot go to the Lord because He is above me; that is, as to position in this world. Pride of heart does not like it to be so; but whatever the want I have I can come to every woe. As it says, "Himself took our infirmities, and bear our sicknesses." That is what Jesus was in this world, and the heart of man would not have Him.

### The New Order Of Ministry

I ask you to look at a verse or two more. Verse 12. I do not say much on that, but it seems beautiful to see the Lord going out and spending all night in prayer to God while moving about in service down here as the full channel of God's grace. He has communion with God about the whole scene He was in. I hesitate to say much, for it is treading on holy ground - how His heart breathed out all that it knee into the ear of God - what felt as the channel of the want and woe around. Then, coming back into service, He brought from God, because He was the dependent Man (I say it with reverence), the divine communications, according to which He acted. We know that He had His ear opened morning by morning. Thus all He did as the dependent Man was done perfectly, according to His Father's mind, according to the will of God. Everything was told to God

in prayer, and the actings of grace were from the very heart of God. This marked the path of the Lord Jesus. Having spent the night in prayer, when it was day He called unto Him His disciples (vv. 12, 13). We now get the new order of ministry - Judaism being set aside as a vessel unfit to hold the new wine. The Lord ordains new ministers. The temple and the synagogue services, the scribes and Pharisees, could not be ministers of this grace which was now flowing; therefore the Lord sets them aside and chooses new instruments. He chose twelve, the perfection of administration in man, because this grace of God was to flow through a full channel - those that had tasted the grace themselves. He calls them apostles. They are commissioned that they might go out and minister this grace. Thus we get the vessels of the new wine; the Lord chooses them, "that they should be with Him" (Mark 3:14) and carry out the grace to others.

Verse 17. He stood in the plain, more properly a plateau. He takes His place with His chosen ones, and stands there now with them, and a company of people from all parts surround Him; and then we get the beautiful character of the new thing - the new wine is flowing out. "The whole multitude sought to touch Him; for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all." What a sight to see in this world! Here was the One that the synagogue rejected, the One they were filled with madness about, the One who had been all night in communion with God, the perfect Man.

Then "He lifted up His eyes on His disciples." v. 20. Not only does the new wine flow out and gladden weary hearts, while words of love and mercy fall upon their ears, or virtue goes out and heals them; but we have now what it was to be\_ brought into companionship and association with Him. His eyes are bent upon His disciples, and what does He say to His companions? "Blessed," "blessed"! I may know what poverty is, or hunger, but if in His company, He says, "Blessed." The synagogue, the established religion, does not know it. Laodicea may be increased with goods and have need of nothing; but to choose the company of Christ is to give up the world. But what is it to find? What can we say we have found in His company? Have we heard Him, as it were, say, Well, if you are in My company, you are perhaps poor, and hungry, and weeping now, but you are blessed. Laodicea rejoices now, laughs now. The great effort of the present day is to set up the first man again, to reinstate and improve him. Thus Christ is not expected; for if you can set up the first man, you do not want Christ to come. But if you feel the whole scene is a wilderness, you say, Never till I am with Him shall I know fullness of joy. In spirit we enter into it now. When our hearts get into His presence we do know something of what fullness of joy means, that in His presence there is something that satisfies; and the more we find it, the more our hearts go after it. There is plenty to dishearten if we think of what we find in ourselves and around us; but this is a comfort, that every little taste of Him, and there is the heart that made itself the vessel of Spirit of God gives us of Christ leads us to want more. It will be at an expense to ourselves. Perhaps I shall have to give up this or that - not in a legal sense, but I shall find that this or that hinders my having something more of Christ. It may be a struggle; but when we have found it, we shall say, There is something in Christ so precious, it is worth giving up something that I may get it. Blessed poor! Whose lips are saying it? They are in company with Jesus. So on the mount of transfiguration - they are down with their faces to the earth, and when they look up, they see Jesus only. God fixes our eyes and hearts upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Here the Lord bends His eyes upon them. It is wonderful to think of the Lord's eyes bent upon us, and His lips uttering such words. Does it come home to our hearts, "Blessed are ye"?

## Christ Is Everything

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God in His grace has centered for us every blessing in Christ. Without Christ we have nothing, nothing but our sins; with Christ we have all things, and therefore want nothing besides Christ. As the Apostle says, "All [things] are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. 3:22, 23. Hence the saying of an old writer, If thou knowest not Christ, it matters not if thou knowest everything besides; but if thou knowest Christ, it matters not if thou knowest nothing besides.

Now it is not every believe/ that knows Christ. All believers - those, that is, that have peace with God - know Christ as their Savior. They know Him in this character or relationship, but it is another thing to know Him in Himself, to have such a knowledge of Him as to be intimately acquainted with His mind character, and ways. Those (who thus know Him find their daily delight in feasting on His beauties and perfections. They value Him for what He is, if possible, more than for what He has done, albeit these two things can never be separated. The Apostle John indeed teaches, that to know Him that is from the beginning is the last and highest attainment the believer makes. This knowledge is the characteristic of the fathers in the family of God (1 John 2).

Do any then inquire, Where can I meet Christ, be in companionship, so to speak, with Him, so as ever to learn more of Him? The answer to this question brings out the special thought lying on my mind. The only place where we can come into contact with Christ is in the written Word of God. The Lord then said to the Pharisees, "Ye search the scriptures, for ye think that in them ye have life eternal, and they it is which bear witness concerning Me." John 5:39;

J.N.D. Trans. We find Christ - Christ in every aspect, position, character, and office in the Scriptures, Christ in humiliation and rejection, and Christ in exaltation and glory. The more therefore I read and meditate on God's Word, the more I shall learn of Christ.

Be it, however, remembered that Christ, though revealed in the Scriptures, cannot be apprehended by any efforts of the mind. We might read the Scriptures from morning to night without one single ray of the glory of Christ falling upon our souls. It is the Holy Spirit alone who takes of Christ and shows it unto us. Much therefore - may we not say, everything? - depends upon our state of soul. If I read carelessly or hurriedly, if I have unjudged sin within my heart, and consequently a grieved Spirit, how is it possible for me to discern Christ? Like Mary, I must be at the feet of Christ, occupied with Himself, the eye up to Him, and the ear opened to His voice, if the Holy Spirit is to reveal Him to my soul. Leisure of heart and quietness of mind are essential. But do you say, How is it possible to have that, absorbed as we are in our daily occupations? It is the Lord who gives His beloved sleep. Yes, He can give our souls quietness and rest in His own presence when surrounded even by the storm and the tempest. And then, through some scripture hidden away in our hearts, He can so irradiate it with His own glory as to make it the means of an enlarged revelation of Himself to our souls.

Permit the question, Do you desire to know more, to have more, of Christ? There are few who would hesitate to reply, Indeed we do. And yet it is quite true, as often said, that everyone

possesses as much of Christ as he desires. Of the Israelites in the wilderness we read, that they gathered of the manna every man according to his eating. The appetite determined the amount collected. So it really is with ourselves. Christ never withholds Himself from those who truly seek Him; no, He responds to us far beyond our desires. The fact is, we want to have more of Christ, and something else besides. This cannot be. It must be Christ alone - Christ our only object - and then He will satisfy even beyond our utmost expectations.

Phil. 3 will teach us the true method of pursuing after the knowledge of Christ while waiting to possess, and to be fully conformed to, Him in the glory. Everything is counted but dross because of the excellency of Christ. For Him the Apostle willingly suffers the loss of all things, in order to have Christ alone as His gain. Then two things mark him - concentration and purpose of heart. One thing only is before his soul, and that he resolutely pursues. The glorified Christ, who had been revealed to him, acts upon his soul like a powerful magnet, draws him away from everything else to Himself, and begets in him the intense desire to know Him even more fully, to have fellowship in His sufferings, and even to be made conformable to His death, in view of the glorious prospect of being raised from among the dead, when he would be with, possess, and be like Him forever. May the Lord grant to each one of us to be like minded in this respect to His servant Paul.

## Christ Our Food

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Aaron and his sons were to eat what was not burned in the fire of the meat offering. Christ was the true bread, come down from heaven to give light unto the world, that we through faith, [who are] priests and kings, may eat thereof and not die. It was holy for Aaron and his sons; for who indeed ever fed on Christ but those who, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, live the life of faith, and feed on the food of faith. And is not Christ the food of our souls, sanctifying us also ever to God? Do not our souls recognize in the meek and humble Holy One - in Him who shines as the light of human perfection and divine grace among sinful men - what feeds, nourishes, and sanctifies? Cannot our souls feel what it is to be offered to God in tracing, by the sympathy of the spirit of Jesus in us, the life of Jesus toward God, and before men in the world? An example to us, He presents the impress of a man living to God, and draws us after Him; and by the attraction - Himself the force which carries on in the way He trod, while our delight and joy are in it - are not our affections occupied and assimilated in dwelling with delight on what Jesus was here below? We admire, are humbled, and become conformed through grace. Head and source of this life in us, the display of its perfection in Him draws forth and develops its energies and lowliness in us. For who could be found in fellowship with Jesus? Humble, as one has said, He would teach us to take the lowest place, but that He is in it Himself. Blessed Master, may we at least be near to and hidden in Thee!

## Christ the Way

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This was a momentous word for man -for every man, woman, and child. No words more encouraging were ever uttered, even by the Lord Jesus Himself, for such as felt the need of divine direction - "I am the way."

I have no doubt that there was more in them than the mere answer to the question. They meet the need not of one man only, but of all. Yet our Lord was not addressing a multitude of hearers, but the perplexed disciples; and this gives a definiteness of application. He is addressing a believer under Jewish prejudice, not an unconverted man. Not that I am going to confine myself to its strict bearing on the inquiring disciples, for there is in it the fullest answer to the darkest heart. There is divine help for those who know really but very partially. Their knowledge was scanty; they were not the wise and prudent of the earth; and Scripture takes pains to show this. They were not chosen for anything in themselves. It was manifest that they could add no luster to the gospel. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence." 1 Cor. 1:26-29.

Thus does God confound the pride of flesh, and show the utter folly of any pretension on man's part to be of value in the things of God, seeing that he is really nothing but a lost sinner. When Thomas asked the question about the way, the thoughts of the disciples were still hampered by the earthly expectation of Israel. Man is truly a poor thing. No wonder that God's thoughts find their center in one Person, and He is the object of God here and everywhere.

One Person was always before the mind of God, and this was expressed thousands of years before He became a man.

He was not only perfection, but He was the perfect Man as well as God come down to deliver those who were most opposite to Him in every way. Here we see divine good in a man, and nowhere else. No man can be a Christian who refuses Him, or takes any other way. On the one hand, were He not God, it would take away from God's glory as well as destroy man's hopes. He could not else have been the perfect Savior and deliverer. On the other hand, it would have taken away all the means of our blessedness if He had not deigned to become man. But He who was God became man, is so now, and ever will so abide, though infinitely more than man. It is just as true that He is always God, even on the cross; and this is the pledge of sure and stable blessing for every soul who would hide himself by faith in Him, spite of all his sins.

Have you fled for refuge? Have you thus come to Him? Or are you thinking to try and make yourself a little better first? But remember, salvation is for sinners. God does not want people who are good (not that He could find them if He did); He has come to seek and to save the lost. It is they who need Him. Are you willing to take this place? It is a solemn thing to tell out all our sins to

God; it is as much as to confess that one deserves hell fire. Do not draw back when I press this. Does it make any difference to God's thought of you? He knew it all before; but for you it is all-important to take the place of good-for-nothingness in His presence. Thomas was slow to believe, and so are very many. No man likes to tell out what he really is; but when he does, he finds out what God is, and He is love. Indeed, grace, and grace alone and exactly, meets the need of him who finds out that he is nothing but a sinner. It will not do to say in a general way, Ah, yes, we are all sinners. / must have to do with God about my own sins, and that in a particular way. It is neither faith nor conscience to deal with them all in a lump, as it were. Do not tell me that you have done so - that you have been to God about your sins - and come away empty. You deceive yourself as to this.

You have not been simple or truthful in telling out what you are, else you would have found all you want to meet your need in the Lord Jesus. His fullness meets all our wants. Could I say less when it is about Jesus? He did not come to limit Himself to any one people, or country, or age. His grace flows out freely to all. It is no longer only Israel, but any sinner at any time. When John said, "Behold the Lamb of God," what was the effect? He tells us, "which taketh away the sin of the world." Accordingly, this is what the work of the Lord Jesus will accomplish: no particle of sin or of its effects will be left in the world. But that day is not come yet. Before it can come, the wicked must be banished, that they may go to their own place.

The promise of salvation is to him who hears the Word of God - the gospel. And man is condemned because he refuses God's remedy in it. Do not you then lose your time, and it may be your soul, in troubling yourself about God's dealings with the heathen. The Lord will judge them, and He will do His work perfectly. What you want yourself is mercy, forgiveness, salvation. Therefore, I pray you, banish all thoughts of your own on such a subject; you do not and cannot yet understand God's ways. Venture not to sit in judgment on Him.

There is nothing so presumptuous and inconsistent as unbelief, nothing so humble as faith. So those who would not scruple to discuss and condemn God's dealings with the heathen count it the height of presumption on a believer's part to say, I know I am forgiven, washed perfectly white, free from all stain. Yet this confidence is from nothing in themselves; it is founded simply on faith in the efficacy of Christ's blood. It is due to what Christ has done, not to what we are. A man who knows he is a sinner gladly owns the Savior. His first desire is that he may be brought to God. How is he to get to Him? Here is our Lord's answer: "I am the way." Let us consider then a little what "the way" means in Scripture.

When man was first made he was not as he is now. God made man upright. He was the most wonderful being that God had made. An infidel may talk (and there is plenty of such talk in these days) of man's having grown gradually to the state he is now in, that he came into existence of himself, nobody knows how, out of nobody knows what. And this is science! Nothing is so utterly foolish as unbelief. But supposing the protoplasm was seaweed; we still have the difficulty, How did the seaweed come? and how did it so change? The very least object could not have come into being without the will and power of God.

But wonderful as the power of God in His works may be, and the more as we think truly of all He has made, much the more wonderful is man even now, though fallen; for he is still responsible as the image of God, if not His likeness. And this is why murder can only be wiped out by death, for

man has destroyed the image of God in another. Yet there has never been a good man born into this world.

Man was originally made in the likeness of God, but Adam was fallen before his first-born child appeared. Thus sin had come in; and so even Seth was born in Adam's likeness, though in God's image still. A brute has not a reasonable soul. Man is the only one of all God's creatures here who is thus endowed. We therefore see that God did not make the world or man as we see them now; for, when they came from His hand, there was not a single thing that He did not pronounce good, or very good.

Then there was no need of a way; for whether man turned to the right or to the left, all was good; and there could be no need yet to say, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Isa. 30:21.

The use and importance of a way would be when that which may have been good everywhere is so no longer. Evil has come in, and the world has become a wilderness. Such being the case, there is no way; and we need one. The world is nothing but a waste and howling wilderness, through which we cannot pass without a way. There is no rest here, nothing to satisfy the heart of man. He may seek to take his fill of the pleasures of the world; it is but a dram to render him insensible to the fact that he is miserable at the thought of facing God. Having a bad conscience through his sins, there is no one he would so like to get away from as God. He has perhaps some fear of Satan, but he is not so afraid of him as he is of God. What does this tell? That he is a sinner away from God. It is the sense of sin that makes him afraid.

Satan first entraps a man into sin, and then whispers that he is done for - first entices, and then gives a sense of God's judgment against him. Man then tries to drown his fears in pleasure. He will go anywhere, do anything, to get rid of the pressure of sin on his conscience; he will occupy himself with, it may be, his family, his business, even his (duties, as he calls them - anything that will keep him away from God. Then, it may be, he is laid on a sickbed, and he feels, I must meet God in my sins; and some especially come to mind that had been long forgotten, but ah! none forgiven. For you cannot be forgiven a little here and a little there. Sin is not to be got rid of in this fashion, one at a time, perhaps when you feel sorry about it. Whatever they may say who sell masses, it is not so with God. But when and how does He meet this ruined condition? Man is lost, and the world is as much of a wilderness as the sands of Arabia to a traveler who has missed his way. Man has absolutely no resources as regards his sins. What then is to meet him in his need? Trying to make amends will not avail. Your sins are upon you, and what can you do when they confront you in the light of God's throne?

But how does God meet your need? Jesus says, "I am the way." Jesus is the way, the only way, to God the Father. Jesus is the way in this world of utter alienation and departure from God. Man is the head of all the ruin as he is the head of the creation. Adam was the head of all before Eve was given to him; he had called all the creatures by their names. Eve's place was in association with him. So the Church has no claim but by association with Christ. He is the way; and can this way fail? Christ fail! What folly! He is the way. I have nothing to do but to take the way. Christ never sent a soul away unblessed - none that came as sinners and lost.

This is what man really is, a sinner ruined and lost. He has no resources toward God; he cannot diminish one of his sins. What is to become of him? Jesus says, "I am the way"; and it is sure,

unfailing. The Son of God became a man in order that He might be the way. He came to be a Savior, but a Savior only to those who believe. He will be judge of those who reject Him. He has other offices too, but they are mostly connected with salvation. A man who will be saved is not brought into judgment. Men who have life and are saved have no sins upon them. How then and for what are they to be judged? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24. The word really is "judgment," not "condemnation," as it is translated in the King James Version. What God declares is, that he that hears His Word has everlasting life. It is a present thing. The believer has passed from death unto life. What would be the sense of judging life, of judging what God has wrought?

But all men will give account of their deeds. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. This is a very different thing from being brought into judgment by God. To be judged, a man must be a criminal. It is not always the case where there is an earthly judge; for if the grand jury bring in a true bill, the man, even if innocent, must be brought before the judge, and might even be condemned; but this would be caused by man's infirmity. There could be no such thought in this connection with divine judgment.

No believer ever comes into judgment, speaking now of the judgment of the great white throne, and this because he has eternal life and his sins are forgiven now. Are you rejecting this salvation?

God is now in Christ beseeching, entreating you to be reconciled on the ground of His acceptance of Him who was made sin. Your rejecting Him proves that you are not willing to be saved. He is ready to save you, to pardon here and now. But you have some secret reserve - something you are keeping back from Him. You either wish to serve sin a little longer, or you do not believe that God is as good as He is. You prove that you judge yourself unworthy of eternal life.

No man is saved because he deserves it. I implore you, put it not off, wait not for anything. Christ will not be more of a Savior tomorrow, and are you sure that you will hear His voice tomorrow? Is it not to be feared that you will be less and less inclined to receive Him? He is the way and the only way. When we get to heaven, we shall not need a way any more than it was necessary in Eden. All is right there, and no way will be required above. When in heaven, there will no longer be responsibility. Here it brings danger, failure, ruin; for now, on the ground of responsibility as a man, you are lost altogether.

Henceforth it is really a question of faith. Do I rest on Christ, believing in Him? I learn that He has undertaken for me, that God has given me a Savior, and that He commands me to repent and take the place of one that is lost. When a man tries to become religious, he is denying that he is lost; he sets himself to read and pray, to work out righteousness for himself. He says, David prayed three times a day, and I will pray four times; but will it help him? Do I think lightly of prayer? By no means; but when a man acts like this, he shows that he does not know his sinfulness and lost estate.

Suppose the case of one guilty of high treason and condemned to die. The king might say, I know the man is guilty, but in my sovereign mercy I grant him a free pardon if he will only come and avail himself of it. But the man obstinately refuses to come out; he will not credit such goodness, and the king orders the sentence to be carried out. So it is with man; he refuses to believe that God is

willing to save, and why? Because he judges of God by himself.

Faith is sure of God as He reveals Himself; and He is not only willing, but He can afford righteously to save. God saves on the ground of Christ's redemption. It is not mere mercy. Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, for Christ was judged for our sins by God Himself on the cross. Hence He is righteous to forgive, for Christ has paid the penalty. God is not merely justified in forgiving, but glorified also. It brought far more glory to God than if He merely punished all as sinners; for every attribute of His is satisfied - His majesty, His love, His truth, His holiness. All the grace of His character shines out for every soul that comes, bringing out more of the infinite worthiness of His Son.

Be afraid then to stay away from the Savior of sinners, lest tomorrow find you in a more hardened state than today. All delays are dangerous; but what is so dangerous as to put off bowing to the Son and accepting God's free salvation?

## Christ's Blood

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The notion that Christ's blood was literally presented in heaven, and will be seen by us when with Him in glory, is utterly baseless and revolting, and shows the danger of speculation by going beyond the New Testament and literalising the Old Testament shadow. It should be met by rebuke, and not discussion.

## Conversion and Salvation

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There are many people who bear the name of Christians who have not got beyond this state [of being converted - turned to God - but who know not salvation]. They are like the prodigal son (Luke 15) when he repents and arises to go to his father. He was on the right way, but he did not know how he would be received by his father. Such people possess perhaps more light but, as to their relation with God, they are in the same state.

Cornelius was already converted, devout, faithful, and full of the fear of God, according to the light he possessed. But he did not know salvation, the work of the Savior, and its efficacy. Led only by the grace of God, he received with faith what Peter told him. Now it was declared to him that, according to the testimony of all the prophets, he who believed in Jesus received the remission of his sins. The Holy Ghost seals by His coming this truth received with simple faith into the hearts of Cornelius and his friends. The Holy Ghost is given then to the Gentiles, without their becoming Jews or being circumcised.

Henceforth it was impossible not to receive them into the Christian assembly. God had received them, and had put His seal on them. Peter commands them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

We have here four distinct points: the conversion of the soul by grace (Cornelius was already converted, and his prayers and alms accepted by God); then the testimony for the remission of his sins by faith in Jesus, the victim by whom propitiation was made for us on the cross; then the seal of God by the gift of the Holy Ghost; and, finally, the formal reception among the Christians. This order is not that which is found elsewhere, because God was here showing that it was His will that the Gentiles should be received. But it is important to distinguish the four things, and to observe the true force of each of them.

It is important to ponder deeply the difference between conversion and salvation. I have already spoken on this subject, but it is one that is so much neglected, and Christians are so accustomed to be content with a low state of soul, and are so uncertain with regard to salvation, that I shall take the opportunity of adding a few more words. Cornelius was already converted; his prayers and alms were acceptable to God. He was to call for Peter, who would tell him words whereby he might be saved. God had been working in his soul, but he did not yet know the value of the work accomplished by the Savior. It is the same in the case of the woman in Luke 7; she loved the Lord deeply, and had felt the height of His grace and the depth of her sins; but she knew not that all was pardoned. The Lord tells her so. The prodigal son was converted, confessed his sins, and turned toward his father; but he was not yet clothed with the best garment. His father had not yet fallen on his neck; he knew not his love; he hardly hoped to be admitted as a servant, and was not in a fit state to enter into the house. Every privilege awaited him, but he did not possess them.

I doubt not that He who has begun the good work will continue it till the day of Christ Jesus. As long as a soul reasons about its state, seeks to know whether it is saved or converted, and judges

by its own heart of what is in the heart of God, it is under law; salvation for such a one depends on his own state, not on the love of God and the efficacy of the work of Christ. He may perhaps say he is truly converted; he feels the need of salvation, and believes that others have found it, but he does not himself possess it, just as Israel was not out of the land of Egypt till the sea was crossed. Two things which cannot be separated are necessary: faith in the work of Christ, and the knowledge that it is finished. I say they cannot be separated, because, when we believe in the work of Christ, and by faith trust in it, we are sealed by the Holy Ghost; we enjoy peace (the love of God being shed abroad in our hearts), we are reconciled to God, and in Christ are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; and we know it by the Holy Ghost given to us. In spirit we are in the Father's house, partaking of the food with which He nourishes His beloved children. Not only has the heart turned toward God, but Christ is our righteousness, who also appears for us continually before the face of God.

## Creation and Redemption

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Genesis shows the entrance of sin with intimation of redemption. Exodus expands the view of redemption. Till we are introduced to God as redeemer, we never know Him. To know Him merely in creation, is now but idolatry. True, we find traces of the Garden everywhere, but to look at creation now as worthy of God - how mistaken! There is a disturbing fire at work, of which God is not the source.

Faith is the answer to God's redemption, as light to His creation. What is grace? God's making provision for our condition as sinners. Eden was God's provision for our innocence. He cannot give us back the Garden, but faith entertains His new, His unspeakably precious, gift.

Adam walked up and down Eden in freedom; it was his obedience to enjoy. And so with us. Adam had no more title to the Garden than I have to Christ. The Israelites pleaded the blood outside, and went within to feast, not going outside every moment to see the blood. This is as perfect as Adam's enjoyment of Eden, because God provides for both conditions.

## Daily

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"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily." Luke 9:23. "Daily" - this is the trial. A man might heroically do it once for all, and he would have plenty of people to honor him, and have books written about him; but it is very difficult to go on every day denying oneself, and no one knowing anything about it. It comes to this that, if you spare the flesh in this life, you will lose your life in the next; and what if a man gain the whole world and lose his own soul: what should a man give in exchange for his soul? It is not a question of bringing life down to the flesh; but if you lose your life here, you will get it elsewhere, above and beyond this world: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it." It is giving up the world for eternal life, or, eternal misery, that is the real question. "What is a man advantaged?" You must give it up; you cannot keep it.

## Dependence

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The only true attitude for the Christian is that of dependence. The moment we get off the ground of dependence on God we are sure to come to grief. This is true both individually and collectively.

Peter got off the ground of dependence when, in self-confidence, he said, "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." Matt. 26:33. Alas, he had soon to learn by bitter experience that he had no strength to stand when the hour of trial came. So with us; if we think we are strong and able to meet the enemy, it is just then we are in the most dangerous position of all. God has to allow some sifting to come to show us that we are nothing and that all our strength is in Him.

For a servant of God, even success in the Lord's work has its dangers. He is apt to accredit himself with what God has done through or by him, and to think that he has accomplished something. In this connection it is interesting to note that the apostles, after returning from a most blessed missionary work, reported not what they had done, but all that God had done with them (see Acts 14:2; 7:15:4,12; 21:19).

But it is only in the Lord's presence and in nearness to Him that there can be that absence of self and constant dependence upon Him so needed for the Christian life and walk and service.

The same fact of the need of dependence is true collectively. The moment an assembly of Christians begins to say (or to think, if they do not say it), "We are the people, the testimony," failure has come in; they are off the ground of dependence. Self, and not Christ, has become the object of attention. They have, in fact, taken the first step on the inclined plane of self-occupation, which is sure to end in disaster if not repented of.

Our blessed Lord was the true example of dependence. He never deviated from the path of absolute dependence on the Father, not even for a moment. The last Adam stood where the first Adam had failed. No subtle allurements of Satan could induce Him to set up an independent will, or leave the ground of simple dependence.

Thus, He could say, "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John 6:38); "I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me" (John 5:30); "I do always those things that please Him" (John 8:29), etc. And He could answer Satan by "It is written." He lived by the Father, and by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. His was a path of perfect obedience, perfect dependence, perfect submission to the Father's will, and therefore of perfect light and inward joy, whatever sorrows may have pressed upon Him from without.

O to learn more of His grace! Just to dwell upon the path of the lowly, humble Man, Jesus, who could say in the depth of His self-abnegation: "Thou [My soul] host said to Jehovah, Thou art the Lord: My goodness [extendeth] not to Thee; - to the saints that are on the earth, and to the excellent [Thou host said], In them is all My delight." Psalm 16:2, 3; J.N.D. Trans. What a place of

perfect submission and dependence!

And was not our Lord Jesus truly and really "over all, God blessed forever"? (Rom. 9:5.) Surely He was, but He does not take that place in the Psalm just quoted. Nowhere, indeed, does He show Himself to be God more truly than in the act of taking, voluntarily and in divine love, the lowly form of a bondservant. And how blessedly He has marked out the way for us, and manifested the true features of the divine life in man, in His lowly path of dependence on God.

Blessed Savior, may we learn of Thee and be occupied with Thee! And thus may that wretched self which so clings to us be displaced and forgotten in presence of Thy lowly grace, perfect devotedness, and humble submission to the Father's will in everything!

## Disorder in the Land

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I was much struck in reading Luke 3 this morning. There was the Lord's land, with the rightful heir to it lying in a manger, while it was parceled out among the Gentiles, and an anomalous condition existed in the religious polity of Israel - two high priests. Then a voice breaks in on this state of things, but it is not the rams'-horn trumpets of Joshua's day, claiming the land for the Lord. That would not have been confessing the ruined condition and the sins of Israel. John is not driving back Jordan to prepare the way of the Lord, but calling a people down there to confess their sins. It is taking the true place of utter failure before the Lord, and Jesus joins this remnant. He can attach Himself in grace to such, and, when taking that position, was sealed by the Holy Ghost, and owned by the Father's voice. How good it is to be in the secret of the Lord! In later days He will write the name of His God, and of the city of His God, and His own new name on the lowly remnant who hold fast His word and do not deny His name.

## Display of Affection: a Word of Warning

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There are danger spots in this world which should be sedulously avoided by the child of God. One of these, over which we would erect a beacon, is the display of human affection - a thing right and proper in its place, but a most dangerous snare for the unwary. Perhaps there is no more slippery place for a Christian's foot; it is on the brink of a pit of sorrow into which many dear Christians have fallen. An unguarded moment, a careless act, may give the flesh and the devil an opening which would lead to public dishonor to the Lord and a permanent blight on a Christian's testimony.

Young Christians who have been brought up in a day of great moral laxity in the world, need to be guided by the Word of God rather than by what they see in the ungodly, or even in other Christians. The whole atmosphere of the world is permeated with a degraded sense of what people "know naturally, as brute beasts." The prince of this world is leading it down the road once trodden by the depraved Roman Empire where virtue was almost non-existent.

We would therefore give some words of advice and of warning regarding caressing, or display of affection. Here we may confidently draw upon the wisdom found in the Word of God. Let none say, It is old-fashioned, or out-of-date. Sound wisdom is found only in the Word of God, and it is never old-fashioned or outmoded. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word." Psalm 119:9.

Caressing is a display of human affection, one for another. It is indeed a beautiful thing in its proper place. God Himself has placed affection in the human breast, and He has endowed us with the capacity to manifest it, but surely it is to be done with propriety and discretion. The present widespread practice of promiscuous caressing has degraded it to the level of cheap fleshly indulgence.

In every several relationship there is becoming conduct for one who seeks to walk in the fear of God and pleasing to the Lord. For instance, there is the affection that belongs to the relationship of parents to children, and children to parents; and to lack natural affection is not of God - it is one of the signs of the last days (2 Tim. 3:3). But even between parents and children there is a becoming demonstration of love and affection that should not be violated, nor should it be indulged in by those who are not in that relationship - only a daughter should be shown the affection that belongs to a daughter, and only a son should be given a son's place. The time has not come when we can let our affections loose; they must be guarded by discretion and wisdom as given by God. He who gives free rein to his feelings is walking on the brink of sorrow. As long as we have the old nature with its lusts with us, and that will be as long as we are in the body, we shall have to have our loins girded with truth.

Then there are the displays of affection that properly and only belong to the relationship of husband and wife. There is that which is suitable in those whom "God hath joined together," and even in marriage there is to be propriety, as Heb. 13:4 admonishes: "Let marriage be held in every way in honor" (see J.N.D. Translation). Carelessness in observing these distinctions, and laxity in

showing becoming conduct and proper delicacy have brought sorrow into many hearts.

There is also a suitable display of affection in those who have become engaged and are pledged to marry each other, but which would be entirely out of place in those not betrothed. It should, however, be remembered that persons who are engaged are not actually married, and that every display of affection for each other should be conducted with self-restraint and wise discretion. (In the "young man's book" - Proverbs - discretion is referred to a number of times.) How much better, safer, and happier to refrain from overstepping the bounds of propriety, and to enjoy only what is suitable, while anticipating the time when affection can be displayed more fully. Those who guard themselves in this are not losers, and when the proper time comes for a fuller display of affection, they have an increased joy in that which has been kept pure. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered." Pro. 28:26.

For those who are not engaged the rule of "hands off" certainly is wise and safe. Oh, how much sorrow Christians have brought on themselves (and dishonor to the Lord) by overstepping what is becoming, to give way to mere fleshly indulgence. Satan is ever ready to set a trap for our feet, and he uses the "lusts of the flesh" very successfully. It is one of the marks of the "children of wrath" that they fulfill the "desires of the flesh and of the mind" (Eph. 2:3). But we are exhorted to "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11).

We should also remember that marriage is the blessed type of Christ and the Church. The man represents Christ, who has loved the Church and given Himself for it; and if a man plays with affections and trifles with that which is sacred, he most surely is not true to that which he should display; nor is a young sister true to being a type of the Church in single-eyed espousal to Christ if she allows or receives embraces and intimate attentions from others than her own husband, or husband-to-be - in the latter case with due limitations. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." 2 Cor. 11:2.

These remarks will not square with either the general ideas or practice in the world, but when has the world ever been able to set a suitable standard of conduct for the children of God? The world is hastening on to its doom and is daily increasing in moral laxity and depravity, but God has called us out of it to Himself. May we remember the words of our Lord Jesus as He prayed to His Father (John 17); He made a great distinction between the world and those who are His, and He desired that we should be kept from the evil. It would be well for us to read carefully the fifth chapter of Ephesians where we are called to be imitators of God while in this morally dark scene; we are to avoid all uncleanness, have no fellowship with it, walk as children of light, and be circumspect and wise. May the Lord give us HIS thoughts of what is becoming to those who are thus called out of this world to Him who is holy.

Note: The above is chapter 9 from the book, "THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE," which is available from the publishers of this magazine.

## Enoch's Translation

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The translation of Enoch was the first formal testimony of the great divine secret, that man was to have a place and inheritance in the heavens. By creation he was formed for the earth. The garden was his habitation, Eden his demesne, and all the earth his estate. But now is brought forth the deeper purpose, that God has an election from among men destined, in the everlasting counsels of abounding grace, for heaven.

In the course of ages and dispensations after this, this high purpose of God was only dimly and occasionally, slowly and gradually, manifested. But in the person of Enoch it is made to shine out at once. The heavenly calling at this early moment, and in the bosom of His elect and favored household, declares itself in its full luster. This great fact among the antediluvian patriarchs anticipates in spirit the hour of Mount Tabor, the vision of the martyred Stephen, and the taking up of the saints in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

Such is the high destiny of the elect people.

## Ephesians 1:11-12

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There are two parts in the mystery: 1. All things shall be put under the headship of Christ. 2. The Church, which is His body, will have part in the inheritance. We shall be before God according to the perfection of His nature. Christ having been put to death, God and the sinner have met together. But here it is rather a question of the accomplishment of the mystery of the will of God for the glory of Christ. The Church will have part in the inheritance. "In whom," it is said, "we have obtained an inheritance"; but the whole of the mystery is not the Church only, and this is very simple if we receive the thoughts of the Bible; not, indeed, that we shall understand the whole extent of the glory, but we shall see that all things created are to be gathered together in one in Christ.

In the epistle to the Colossians Christ is presented as Creator; the Person of Christ is in the prominent place rather than the counsels of God as to the Church. Christ is the first-born of every creature, and the first-born from the dead; Head of His body, which is the Church. But here, in the epistle to the Ephesians, it is the privileges of the Church in Him which we are given to know. In verse 6 it is said that what we possess already is to the praise of the glory of His grace; and in verse 12, where He is speaking of the glory to come that is before us, it is said, "that we should be to the praise of His glory." The Church has a portion quite apart and most glorious. All things are to be gathered together in one in Christ. The Church, being united to Him, is made partaker of the inheritance, that we should be to the praise of His glory. The glory of God is understood by its being seen in us; and the world will then see that we have been loved as Christ is loved.

Verse 12 might seem a difficulty, where it is said, "We who first hoped in Christ"; but he is here speaking of the Jews, who have believed before the revelation of Christ to the nation, at His second coming, and before the national call to the Jews at the end: such of the Jews as have believed, as have hoped beforehand, they are glorified with Him.

## Examination of Calvinism

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Before we take up the subject of reprobation, we should probably first state what it is, and then examine whether it has scriptural soundness or not. Reprobation is a dogma of Calvinism which can be expressed in the words of Arthur W. Pink as illustrative of its proposition; hence we quote: "God's decree of Reprobation contemplated Adam's race as fallen, sinful, corrupt, guilty. From it God purposed to save a few as the monuments of His sovereign grace; the others He determined to destroy as the exemplification of His justice and severity." p. 123. "The case of Pharaoh is introduced [in Rom. 9] to prove the doctrine of Reprobation as the counterpart of the doctrine of Election." p. 111. "If God actually reprobated Pharaoh, we may justly conclude that He reprobates all others whom He did not predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." p. 110.

Here it is, briefly stated; that is, it is "the counterpart of the doctrine of Election." This is a false premise based on the assumption that because God chose some in the past eternity as objects of His mercy that He necessarily thereby designed to consign all the rest to hell; that He decreed before the world was that most of His creatures should go to hell. This, we say, is definitely without scriptural warrant. There is no place where there is a "Thus saith the Lord" for the doctrine of reprobation. It is arrived at by conjecture, assumption, deduction, and human reasoning. To show that such is the case, let us quote just a few excerpts from Mr. Pink's chapter on Reprobation: "it would unavoidably follow.... Every choice, evidently and necessarily implies a refusal (p. 100).... then it is clear He designed and ordained that that person should be eternally lost.... it must be because.... no escape from these conclusions (p. 101).... Now are we not obliged to conclude?... it must have been His will (p. 102).... we assuredly gather that it was His everlasting determination to do so; and consequently that He reprobated some from before the foundation of the world... in addition to the above conclusions (p. 103)," etc., etc. Italics ours.

No man should dare to presume to thus speak for God, for His Word plainly says, "Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Pro. 30:6. Where the Word of God is silent, men should forbear to speak. Years ago a faithful servant of the Lord was confronted by some persons of reasoning habits who contended that because the Word of God says of certain ones that He would not blot out their names from the "book of life," there were others who would lose their salvation and God would blot out their names. The faithful man replied, "Never put a positive statement where God puts a negative one." If God speaks, we can speak with assurance; but when He is silent, we should be silent also. If this simple rule had been followed, we would not have the one-sided doctrine of reprobation.

Let us take the case of Jacob and Esau which is a cardinal point with these extreme Calvinists. They contend that "God loved Jacob and hated Esau, and that before they were born" (p. 30), but this is not stated in Scripture. This is another case of overstepping what is written, and adding to God's Word. Let us read Rom. 9:11, 12: "(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger." Surely it was before the

children were born that God said to their mother, "The elder shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23). What was wrong with that? God had chosen Abraham as the depositary of His promises and blessings, and then said that "in Isaac shall thy seed be called." Next He chose Jacob to continue the line of earthly blessing, and the seed through which the Messiah was to come. But let the dedicated followers of Mr. Pink search the Scriptures for one inkling that God hated Esau before he was born. Not until the last book of the Old Testament- Malachi- did God say that He loved Jacob and hated Esau; and then it is not merely Esau that He hated, but Esau's posterity. Note carefully the language of Mal. 1:3, 4: "And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places," etc. It is "his mountains" and "his heritage" and "Edom"-the descendants of Esau. They say, We will build what God has destroyed. Is it not abundantly clear that Mr. Pink has overstepped more than propriety in adding to what God actually said? Furthermore, Esau had shown himself to be "a profane person" by despising "his birthright" which was in fact a divine title to the land of Canaan. God's choice of Jacob for the pre-eminent place over the elder brother Esau, who had it by nature according to birth, did not make him profane.

We quote the words of another on the subject: "It must be carefully observed that this [in Malachi] is not an appeal to God's sovereignty in His choice of Jacob as in Rom. 9, where the Apostle indeed cites this passage (after he has recalled the scripture [Gen. 25:21-23] which announced the divine purpose respecting Esau and Jacob) to show, not only that Israel was entirely indebted to grace for the difference God had put between themselves and Esau.... The evidence here given is drawn wholly, not from God's action toward Esau himself, but from God's judgment upon his posterity-1 laid his mountains and his heritage waste,' etc. And in other scriptures we find (see especially Obadiah) that these judgments were visited upon them because of their irreconcilable hatred of Israel, and their triumph over, and their vengeance upon, them in the day of their calamity. God had chosen Jacob-let not this truth be ignored, albeit Esau despised his birthright; but the scripture before us concerns the ways rather than the sovereignty of God."

And still another has written: "God withholds the sentence of hatred till it is evidently justified by the conduct and ways of Esau, more particularly towards Jacob, but indeed towards Himself. In short, it would be quite true to say that God loved Jacob from the first, but that He never pronounced hatred until that was manifested which utterly repels and rejects Himself with contempt, deliberately going on in pursuit of its own way and will in despisal of God. Then only does He say, 'I hated Esau.' Along with this He draws attention to the fact that He `laid his mountains and his heritage waste.' " "When God says, `Esau have I hated,' He waits till the last moment, till Esau has shown what he is.... He is patient in the execution of judgment. Long-suffering belongs to God, and is inseparable from His moral nature, while He delays to execute judgment on evil.... Yet Esau's ill conduct to Jacob was not the only or worst element of evil which comes into judgment. He was profane Godward, despising everything done on God's part, save that which brought sensibly before him the greater dignity to which his brother was promoted.... He had no confidence in God: beyond this life no thought, no desire.... Why should he seek more than to enjoy present life?"

We will also quote from another book: "In short then not only not Paul but no other inspired writer ever speaks of 'eternal reprobation'; it is merely a dream of a certain school. So the curse of God follows, instead of causing, the impious ways of men. Arminianism is wholly astray no doubt in reducing God's election to a mere foresight of good in some creatures; but Calvinism is no less

erroneous in imputing the evil lot of the first Adam race to God's decree. They both spring from analogous roots of unbelief: Calvinism reasoning, contrary to Scripture, from the truth of election to the error of eternal reprobation; Arminianism rightly rejecting that reprobation but wrongly reasoning against election. Like other systems they are in part true and in part false-true in what they believe of Scripture, false in yielding to human thoughts outside Scripture. Happy those who are content as Christians with the truth of God and refuse to be partisans on either side of men! Our wisdom is to have our minds open to all Scripture, refusing to go a hairbreadth farther."

Another stone in the conjectured arch of reprobation is the case of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Let us notice a few remarks from the pages of Mr. Pink's book: "The case of Pharaoh establishes the principle and illustrates the doctrine of Reprobation. If God actually reprobated Pharaoh, we may justly conclude that He reprobates all others whom He did not predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son. This inference the apostle Paul manifestly draws from the fate of Pharaoh, for in Rom. 9, after referring to God's purpose in raising up Pharaoh, he continues, 'therefore.' The case of Pharaoh is introduced to prove the doctrine of Reprobation as the counterpart of the doctrine of Election." pp. 110, 111. Note how much conjecture is here.

Mr. Pink will not allow that God hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he could not let the people go only after Pharaoh had proved himself the inveterate enemy of God and His people. He insists that God hardened his heart arbitrarily before Pharaoh had displayed his wicked intentions to God's people. That Mr. Pink held this, we prove from the following: "It is not judicial hardening which is in view (that is, hardening because of previous rejection of the truth), but sovereign 'hardening' of a fallen sinful creature for no other reason than that which inheres in the sovereign will of God." p. 114.

But let us notice words of another vein: "The king of Egypt was a thoroughly selfish, cruel, and profane man when God first sent him a message by Moses and Aaron. The effect of the summons on such a spirit was to bring out his blasphemy against Jehovah and more savage oppression of Israel.... God made a most striking example of Pharaoh, not a mere exposure of his malice, but His own power on that background, so that His name might be thus told abroad in all the earth. Never does God make a man bad; but the bad man Pharaoh, made yet worse by his resistance of the most striking divine appeals, He made manifest, raised up as he was from among men to such a height, that his downfall might tell on consciences far and wide throughout the world. Hard at first, God sealed him up at length in a judicial hardening.... If it were true, as Calvin says, that those who perish were destined to destruction by the will of God, the case were hard indeed. But Scripture never really speaks thus, and the language of the texts usually cited in support of such a decree, when closely as well as fairly examined, invariably avoids such a thought, however near it may seem to approximate."

Verses 22 and 23 of Rom. 9 have also furnished Mr. Pink and Calvinism with opportunities to twist them enough to furnish ground for their own devices: "What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory." These verses are used by this school to declare that God prepared these vessels to destruction on the one hand and to glory on the other. Thus Mr. Pink says: The Apostle "intimates here, that before they are born they are destined to their lot." p. 120.

This is to falsify what the Apostle said, for he did no such thing as is here alleged.

A careful examination of these verses will show that it is not said that God fitted such vessels to destruction, but that He prepared the vessels of mercy unto glory. To say more than is here said, is to add to God's Word. Furthermore, instead of saying that He prepared the vessels of wrath for destruction "before they were born," it is said that He "endured with much long-suffering" these vessels. Not a word about His preparing them, but about His forbearance with them.

We shall again quote from a more sober author: "Sinful men thus living in enmity against God are here styled 'vessels of wrath,' on the one hand; as those who believe are designated 'vessels of mercy' on the other.... But there is a shade of difference as distinct as it is refined and profoundly true which no reader should overlook. The vessels of wrath are said to be 'fitted for destruction.' But it is neither said nor implied here, or anywhere else, that God fitted them for it. They were fitted by their sins, and most of all by their unbelief and rebelliousness against God. But when we hear of the faithful, the phrase is altogether different, 'vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory.' The evil is man's, and in no case is it of God; the good is His and not our own. Not the saints, but God prepared the vessels of mercy for glory. More strictly, He prepared them beforehand with a view to glory.... Thus lost man will in the end be compelled to justify God and to take the entire blame on his own shoulders, who preferred to trust Satan as his friend and adviser rather than God; while the saved, however dwelling in bliss, will know and make known all as the riches of His glory, themselves debtors to His unfailing and unfathomable mercy." And from the same writer: "To me I confess it looks like the blinding influence of falsehood when men overlook the difference of vessels of wrath fitted on the one hand to destruction, and vessels of mercy which He on the other hand before made ready for glory."

We will quote from still another source: "While it is true that Christians are 'chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world' (Eph. 1:4). it would never be right to say that lost sinners were in a parallel way elected to reprobation.... In the case of the wicked, so far from being elected to eternal misery, we find that God endures them [while on earth]-vessels of wrath -with much longsuffering, fitted not by Him but by their own deeds for destruction. The word *katartizo*\* (Rom. 9:22) means to correct, repair, mend; then in its participial form, fitted, prepared. The word does not suppose a decree of God, but a work of man." Nevertheless, Mr. Pink says, "He fits the non-elect unto destruction by His fore-ordaining decrees." p. 118.

Pharaoh was a cruel despot long before Moses and Aaron were sent to him with a demand from God that he let Israel go. Even before Moses was born, a previous Pharaoh had issued the decree that all the male children should be drowned in the Nile, and Moses was delivered from that fate by the providential intervention of God. Pharaoh was hardened in his cruel course of exterminating God's chosen earthly people, long before God began to work to deliver them from under his power. God may justly have cut him off in his sin against Him at that time, but He endured the wicked king, and finally hardened his heart in His government so that Pharaoh rushed on headlong into the jaws of death in a way calculated to demonstrate God's power.

But Mr. Pink speculates, and says that Moses when grown up in Pharaoh's house was "a powerful check upon the king's wickedness and tyranny," and so God "designed by removing this restraint, to give Pharaoh full opportunity to fill up the measure of his sins." pp. 108, 109. There is not the slightest hint in all Scripture that such was the case; it is just human speculation.

A young scoffer once accosted a faithful servant of Christ about God's hardening Pharaoh's heart, but he received a stern rebuke in the words, "Beware, young man, lest God harden your heart." And in like manner, Christendom, which is largely rejecting God's grace today, is going to be given a lie to believe, so that those who will not have the truth may perish in their deception. (See 2 Thess. 2:9-12.) "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. 10:31. God is patient and long-suffering, but when grace is despised, He will act in judgment. It is dangerous for one to resist the overtures of grace; he may then be blinded as his just desert.

## Faith in Enoch

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"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Heb. 11:5.

This verse gives us a most blessed example of faith in Enoch. A great deal is said about David, Solomon, Josiah, and many other saints, but all we hear about Enoch is, that he "walked with God: and he was not; for God took him"; and before his translation he had this testimony, "that he pleased God." Doubtless he had his failures, as we all have, but the characteristic feature of his life was, "he walked with God." And it is this that the Holy Ghost records. Beloved friends, is this what we are doing? What appears to me so very beautiful in this narrative is, that Enoch is not a man soaring far above our heads in circumstances we know nothing about, but one who walked with God in all the realities of everyday life - in his business and his family. Very likely he led about his flocks as a simple shepherd; certainly, for God's Word tells us so, he "begat sons and daughters," and it was in these relationships "he walked with God."

## The Father's Love

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"For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God." John 16:27.

Our Lord Jesus Christ received these precious words from the Father who commanded Him to speak them for our comfort (John 12:49). They sweetly assure us of the Father's love. We read of God's love "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. We read also of Christ's love - "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it." Eph. 5:25. We read of the Father's love, which is exercised toward those who through grace have been brought into relationship with Himself - "The Father Himself loveth you."

The Father's love has wrought for us in accomplishing redemption through the death of His Son, and in Him risen and ascended, according to His eternal purpose, thus giving us life in Christ and bringing us into the relationship of children, as well as uniting us to Christ by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

The Father's love has wrought in us in revealing His Son unto us. When our Lord said to Peter, "Whom say ye that I am?" and he replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus immediately said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Matt. 16:15-17. Thus we see that every one who has apprehended the Person of "the Christ, the Son of the living God," has only done so because of a distinct revelation of the Father to him. Without this, whatever else we may have known, we should have been in darkness as to the Person of the Son, concerning whom it is said, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John 5:12. To apprehend the Person of the Son of God is entirely beyond the scope of the natural man. He may have heard of His name and of His works, he may be acquainted with the external circumstances of His death on Calvary, and of the fact of His resurrection, and yet not know Him. Though to the natural eye Jesus was like another man, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," yet Peter saw by the revelation of the Father, that He was "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The Father has also wrought in us in having drawn us to Christ as sinners to a Savior. It is only by the working of the Father's grace in our hearts that we have thus had to do with Him whom the Father sent. Unless the Father had specially wrought in us in this way, it is certain we should never have found our true place, as hell-deserving ones, at the feet of a gracious Savior. It is well to have the sense of this fact constantly fresh in our souls; for Jesus said, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him"; and again, "No man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father." John 6:44, 65. Thus we see that the Father's love sent the Son to accomplish redemption for us, brought us into nearness to Himself, called us into the relationship of children, given us the Spirit, revealed His Son to us, and drawn us to Him as our Savior. How sweet to think of the various yet distinct actions of the Father's love! Well might an inspired servant cry out, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us."

How astonishing then is the fact that there are those on earth who, though poor and feeble in their own eyes, sensible too of much failure, coldness, and forgetfulness of Him, are the constant objects of the Father's love - those on whom He ever looks with a Father's watchful eye, and ministers unto with fatherly care. He is the perfect Father. He knows the state of heart, as well as the need, peculiarities, and circumstances of each child, and withholds or gives, sends adversity or prosperity, as is most for our real good. He disciplines and chastens for our profit, that we may be in subjection to Him, and be partakers of His holiness. It is well that we should receive all from Him, for all is dealt out in infinite wisdom by the hand of perfect love -

"A Father's heart can never cause His child a needless tear." He desires us to cast all our care upon Him, for He cares for us - to make all our requests known to Him by prayer and supplication. And in this our Lord encouraged us by saying, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" Matt. 7:11.

But one of the children of God may inquire, How much does the Father love me? We are told that the Father loves us as He has loved Jesus (John 17:23). Our blessed Lord said to His disciples, "As the Father hath loved Me, so have loved you." John 15:9. His love to us then is the same as the Father's love to Him. And elsewhere we find He prayed that by-and-by the world may know that the Father loves us as He loves Him. Thus we find that the infinite, eternal, unchanging love of the Father to the Son is the measure of His love to us His children. This too will be manifested ere long in answer to His prayer, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word... And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that... Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." John 17:20-23. In perfect keeping with the activity of this infinite, eternal, unchanging love, the Father has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 1:3). Thus we are always before His eye in all the nearness, acceptance, righteousness, and life of Christ, and blessed in Him with all spiritual blessings; and all this and more to be known now for our present enjoyment, and power for service and conflict. What a precious assurance for our poor hearts are these few words of our adorable Lord - "The Father Himself loveth you." It is, indeed, a great secret for our souls when such words are received in faith, and we grasp them as infallible and settled forever. We then shall be able to say in the hour of deepest sorrow and affliction:

"Although my cup seems filled with gall,

There's something secret sweetens all."

But why do we not enjoy the Father's love more than we do? Because the Holy Spirit, which is given to us, by whom the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, is grieved. When we walk obediently, we abide in His love, and enjoy the presence of the Father and the Son. To be loved by the Father is a precious fact for every child of God; but to enjoy the Father's love and presence is the privilege of those only who are walking obediently to His will. Jesus said, "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." John 14:23. But let no believer imagine then that he will have the comfort of the Father's love if he is not walking in the truth according to the Father's will. In the path of disobedience, the Holy Spirit dwelling in us is grieved, and we are not in the place where the Father's presence can

be known. Our blessed Lord said to His own loved ones for their encouragement, "I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." John 15:10.

We are told here who are the objects of the Father's love. They are those who have loved Jesus, and have believed that He came out from God - not those who say this and that, but those who have the two grand cardinal points of vital Christianity - faith and love. They always go together when there is a divinely wrought work in the soul, for faith worketh by love. Every true believer loves. He loves the Lord Jesus and all that are His. He loves the brethren, the truth, the service of the Lord, and all that is in association with Him. The believer loves, and he who loves, believes. Without this love, whatever else he may boast of, he is as "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Love is a vitally important point; for "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha." 1 Cor. 16:22. We love, because we believe the love of God to us. "We love Him, because He first loved us." We most certainly believe that Jesus came out from God; we have no doubt of it. We grasp the divine love that gave Him, and we cannot but love Jesus. We believe and love. Oh, the preciousness of the Savior's words, "The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God." The more we ponder this precious subject, the more our hearts become melted, and our ways molded, according to this elevated and eternal relationship. To be "children of God" now, while in mortal bodies, and in a world where sin reigns unto death, is indeed a glorious fact; and, because we are sons, to have the Holy Spirit sent into our hearts, crying, Abba Father, is love so rich, so free, and so abundant, as never could have entered into the heart of man to conceive. And yet, how true it is! Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. Wondrous grace! All "To the praise and glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved." Eph. 1:6. While looking then to our glorified Lord, we can say:

"Yea, in the fullness of His grace,  
God put me in the children's place,  
Where I may gaze upon His face,  
Lamb of God, in Thee!

"Not half His love can I express;  
Yet, Lord, with joy my lips confess  
This blessed portion I possess,  
Lamb of God, in Thee!

"And when I in Thy likeness shine,  
The glory and the praise be Thine,  
That everlasting joy is mine,  
Lamb of God, in Thee!"

## Feeding the Multitudes

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There are two miracles of the Lord's feeding the multitudes. Each has its own characteristics for our instruction. Both prove His ready and almighty resources. Had each miracle appeared in a different gospel only, the skeptics would have insisted on discrepant accounts; but God has cut off such an objection, because Matthew and Mark record both (Matt. 14 and 15; Mark 6 and 8), Luke and John only the first of them (Luke 8; John 6). The miracle wrought twice signifies, if one may apply Joseph's interpretation (Gen. 41:32), that the thing is established by God, whatever be man's unbelief. The distinctions are marked, but in no way favor those of old who imagined a reference in the former to the Jew, in the latter to the Gentile. Both express Messiah's grace to the chosen people.

What then is the true difference? It is defined in detail, as well as in broad features. There were five loaves and two fishes in the first, seven loaves and a few fishes in the last; five thousand fed in one, and four thousand in the other; the surplus then filled twelve baskets, later seven. The very baskets employed had in each instance a differing appellation, meaning respectively a hand basket and a creel, as expressed without confusion in each account, and maintained in our Lord's recall of both in Matt. 16. The larger distinction will appear presently, though it may here be added that the first was in the spring when the grass was green, the second some months later; and in the second, the crowd had stayed three days, whereas in the first we do not hear of more than one day. Of the second we read:

"Then Jesus called His disciples unto Him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with Me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way. And His disciples say unto Him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude? And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes. And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children. And He sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala." Matt. 15:32-39.

On the first occasion the disciples took the initiative and proposed the dismissal of the crowds to buy themselves food in the villages. Their faith was weak indeed. How sad to overlook His presence who was pledged to satisfy Zion's poor with bread! Even His call that they should give them to eat failed to awaken any sense of His fullness. So He took the provision they despised, and abundantly blessed it to the five thousand, and more; yet there remained over of the broken pieces twelve baskets full. Now this answers to the twelve apostles, being the number of full administration by or in man. But it was only a sign in His rejected testimony to Israel; and, sending His disciples to go before Him to the other side, on dismissal of the crowds, He went up into the mountain apart to pray - the figure of His priestly place on high. After this comes the wondrous

scene of Peter's leaving the ship to join Jesus on the water, which is peculiar to Matthew, as alone expressive of the divine design by that Gospel, and having nothing like it on the second occasion.

Here it is the Messiah yearning over His famished people. They were guilty; but He commiserated their distressful state, and gave His disciples a fresh opportunity of drawing on Him by faith. Alas! they were slow to learn. "Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?" He was there, and full of compassion; but unbelief, even in believers, is ever blind. The seven loaves which He took and distributed through His disciples, and the surplus in the seven baskets here named, point to spiritual, not to administrative fullness. All was ordered of God, all was meant to teach man, if he has ears to hear. It is Jehovah-Messiah acting in His own perfection. Here there is no going on high to pray; nor is there a rejoining the disciples for the other side, when and where all who once rejected Him welcome Him and His beneficent power, as will be in the consummation of the age.

## Four Consequences of Divine Love: Life, Propitiation, Power, Boldness

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There are many exceedingly beautiful points in this passage, but I will only touch on four of them. There is little of ourselves here; all is about God - what He is and what He does.

By nature, neither you nor I have any confidence in God. It was want of confidence in God that led Eve to parley with Satan. The moment there is any parley with the devil, he gets bolder. All the family of Eve have got their father's and mother's likeness stamped in their hearts - lack of confidence in God. And that is where the gospel comes in. What does it open up to us? I know a poet has written of "Paradise Regained," but it is false. The gospel opens up to us God's paradise, not man's. He displays what He is in Himself, in the life and ways of His Son. What begets confidence in our hearts is this - the discovery of what is in God's heart.

In this epistle God does not say He loves us; He proves it. You might slight the love of God, you may scorn it, you may trample it underfoot, but you cannot deny it; God is love!

Whence comes love? from the heart of man? No! from the heart of God. Is there any true, genuine love in your heart to any of God's people? It comes from God. If there be love in your heart to any of God's people, it will come out. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Chap. 3:14. Not because we say we are converted, but because we love. We cannot know God, and be born of Him, without these blessed characteristics coming out in us. Can you say you love? Then I will tell you something better - you are a child of the Father. Is there anything better in this world than to know God? He is revealed in the Person and life of His Son. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God." You cannot get in contact with Him without loving Him. It is the first mark of a converted soul.

Look how the Apostle, in this passage, unfolds four things. In the 9th verse, there is the love of God manifested in sending His Son that we might live through Him. You cannot say God does not love you; you dare not say it. You ask, Why? I answer, Because you are part of the world.

### 1. LIFE

In the 9th verse there is something God wants you to get which you have not got - life; and in the 10th verse He wants you to get rid of something which you have got - sins. Had I written this, I am sure I should have put the 10th verse before the 9th; that is, put the question of my sins first. But no, there is a deeper thing, the fact that I have not life - eternal life. "In Him was life." No one else had life; life was found alone in Jesus.

What is the state that Scripture describes as true of us? In death! "dead in trespasses and sins." I grant you, you have natural life; but you cannot be sure of it for twenty-four hours. I press this, that you have an eternal existence. You will last as long as God lasts; but that is not eternal life. Eternal life is being with Christ - knowing Him - not merely eternal existence.

Eternal life is association with Christ. What does the gospel present? There is a dead man, and God sends His Son to give him life. He might have left us alone. What an awful thing - to be left alone! But, blessed be His name, He brought in a remedy. "The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." What we have not got, He sends His Son to communicate; we get all through Christ; we are shut up to Christ.

But you ask, What about the law? Could the law give life? No; Christ gives life; having gone into death, He has brought life and incorruptibility to light. The life of Jesus will not do. We hear a great deal about His life, and very beautiful it is to trace His life and ways on earth; but He must die, for "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Hence we get

## 2. PROPITIATION

Not only does God propose to give me that which will fit me for His presence, but He says, Sinner, you have something about you that will keep you out of My presence. So He sends His Son to be the propitiation for my sins. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us." When did He give Him? When we were sinners. I have got the positive and the negative side in the gospel: the positive in what God gives, the moment you believe, you have it; the negative is, my sins are all taken away. He sent His Son, a propitiation for our sins. Do you believe that? The 9th verse gives us His life; the 10th gives us His death. On the cross Jesus makes propitiation for sin. He was made sin who knew no sin. He was there, pouring out His soul unto death, meeting all God's claims against sin. Look at it; the Son of the very God you have sinned against, has made propitiation for the very sin that would have brought you into eternal damnation. Now He is exalted and gone on high; the veil is rent; He is gone back as man; the work is all done for which He came to die. Atonement has been effected by Christ, accepted by God; and the fruit-peace-is to be enjoyed by the believing sinner.

What about your sins? you may ask. They were borne by Christ. There is the proof of the love of God to me - of the love of Christ - "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Sin was condemned, and sins were blotted out when Christ made propitiation for sin. "Herein is love." Do you want a greater or a better proof of love? The heart that believes can say, I have now got what I had not, and I have lost what I had; I have got life, and lost my sins.

## 3. POWER

There is another thing God does (v. 13). He gives us of His Spirit, and that is power. The moment you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ you cease to be a lost sinner; your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Look at Eph. 1:13: "In whom... after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." In The Acts also: "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." Chap. 10:44. On whom? On believers. It is the sinner who hears and who believes. He says, I need this salvation. His heart gets plowed up. I would like it, he says; I believe it; and God seals that one with the Holy Ghost. If I bought a flock of sheep at the market, should I drive them home at once? No; I should put a mark on them - my mark - before driving them home. Do you know how God knows His sheep? They have all got the Holy Ghost, and the price He paid for them was the precious blood of Christ. The devil's children have their mark; they are spotted with sin. God's children have a lovely mark.

#### 4. BOLDNESS

All this is the fruit of love - God's perfect love. It is love "toward us" (v. 9), love "in us" (v. 12), love "to us" (v. 16), and love with us (v. 17); and this gives us our fourth point, boldness. We get another "herein" in the 17th verse - "Herein is love with us" (as the margin rightly puts it) "made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." There are thus four things we get: life, peace, power (by the Holy Spirit), and boldness in the day of judgment. There is no fear in love. God's perfect love casts out all fear, because fear has torment. To paraphrase a common saying, when love comes in at the door, fear goes out at the window.

God's perfect love casts out fear, for "As He is, so are we in this world." Look at these nine monosyllables. Exactly as Christ is, so is the Christian. When he dies? No. When he has attained to a state of perfection? No, "In this world." I know nothing sweeter to the heart, than to see that peerless Man, who was in death, but has gone back to heaven, at the right hand of God; and God says, "As He is, so are we in this world." See Him, the Father's delight from all eternity. How is He? Is He on the other side of death? So are we. Is He where no sin can touch Him? So are we. Is He the Father's delight? So are we. If you believe this, you will have life, peace, power, and boldness in the day of judgment. I shall be at His side in that day. He is the One who took my judgment on the cross.

"Bold shall I stand in that great day,

For who aught to my charge shall lay?"

He has given us His place - "As He is, so are we in this world." The Lord lead us to rest in Himself, and thus to walk in the enjoyment of His love till we see Him face to face.

## Four Things Forbidden

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"Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.... That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well." Acts 15:19, 20, 29.

"Blood" here means what is drawn out expressly from the animal for culinary use, and thus manifestly distinct from "strangled," where the purpose is to keep the blood from flowing. Both are forbidden, for God demands that man shall by abstaining from them own that life belongs to Him. If any be so self-willed as to plead that they do not see or understand, let them own their ignorance and obey. It is not a Jewish or Mosaic statute only, but for man since Noah and the deluge (Gen. 9:4). "Meats offered to idols," though classed here like "fornication," with the other two, as things which the heathen counted indifferent, are forbidden as evils unworthy of Christians (one might add, of men) apart from the law, which the Pharisaic party in the Church strove in vain to impose on Gentile believers. But the decrees in no way meant to weaken the immorality of fornication, any more than the insult or indifference to the one true God in eating knowingly of pollutions of idols. The apostles were content here to determine that none of these things is an open question to Gentile converts, but that if they abstain from all these necessary things, they will do well.

## Funerals - Paganish - Ritualistic: the Editor's Column

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Recently we visited with a Christian funeral director in a large city. We found him rejoicing in the great things God had done for him, and he was ready to give an answer to those who might ask him about his hope in Christ. In fact, he seemed to be quite ready to speak for his Lord when the opportunity presented itself.

Our visit was also informative about many of the religious funeral services conducted in these days. Our Christian friend found most of them very distressing. The dead were generally eulogized, without any indication that they had faith, which is requisite for admittance to those regions of bliss where Christ is the center and the theme.' In such services, there is no real comfort for the bereaved, nor anything solid on which the living can rest. The flowers and beauty with which death is surrounded only tend to conceal the stark realities of death, while sickly, puerile sentiments and empty songs tend to obscure the importance of preparation for leaving this world.

Funerals run the gamut from paganish and foolish rites through ritualistic emptiness, and finally, on rare occasions, to a simple Christian testimony to the faith of the departed and a presentation of Christ to the lost. But preachers who have only empty platitudes, ideas on current world problems, reformation, or psychological panaceas to offer their congregations from week to week certainly prove their bankruptcy at funerals. There, behind all the beautiful facade, death is as real as ever. A loved one has left this world, never to return; and the living may soon have to pass the same way. Soothing words without the reality of life in Christ neither console the bereaved nor offer hope to the living. At many funerals, it is evident that the speakers are only blind guides leading their followers into an eternal ditch.

But this Christian director told us something more appalling. He said that many real Christian ministers, even some with a reputation for faithful gospel preaching, have given up telling out the gospel at funerals. They no longer present the way of life and the way of death to a company wherein are souls without Christ and without hope. And this is done under the specious plea that they are unwilling to preach the gospel to a "captive audience." By that they mean, people who did not come to hear the gospel, but merely came out of respect to the departed. That these unsaved listeners have invaluable souls which are on the brink of eternity, and that they need Christ desperately, does not move such preachers to present the Lord Jesus as the only way to life. The dictum of false propriety thus leads to a grave dereliction of duty.

We know a dear Christian who recently besought a preacher of some renown in fundamentalist circles to give the gospel at the funeral of a relative, but the plea was refused on that unsound basis of not taking advantage of a captive audience.

In the days of King Ahab of Israel, God espoused Israel's cause against the Syrian oppressors. On one occasion the Syrians were so routed that their king, Benhadad, sought refuge in the camp of Israel; and Ahab, instead of acting for God, sent the enemy away with a covenant of peace (1 Kings 20). He was soon to learn from the prophet who disguised himself and came before him in a

disheveled condition that God had sent that enemy to him, and he had failed in not acting for Him against the enemy. It was a most solemn matter for the king of Israel to fail to seize the moment after God had brought Benhadad to him, and the result was that Ahab's life was to be forfeited for the life of the man he let go. Let us just reverse the case, and picture to ourselves certain unbelievers who would never of their own volition attend a gospel meeting, but God so ordered circumstances that they unavoidably found themselves before a man of God who could point them to Christ. Perhaps the only time in their history where they had been brought face to face with a man who could tell them they were lost, and that salvation was freely available through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Shall the servant of the Lord who let them go unwarned, unprepared to meet their God, and without having been directed to the only Savior of sinners, be accounted guiltless? Shall such palpable neglect be overlooked?

Timothy was told to preach the word "in season and out of season," but he would be circumscribed today by human rules; he would be told that delicate propriety for the feelings of people (many of them on the threshold of the pit) would dictate times when "the word" simply should not be preached. The light would be concealed while people stumble on in the darkness. The rich man in hades (of Luke 16) was so concerned lest his five brothers on earth reach the same dread place where he was that he pleaded with Abraham to let Lazarus go back to warn them. But today even a Lazarus would under some circumstances be hindered from warning them. We do not believe that the rich man would have said, But be careful and do not let him warn them if they are a captive audience. Better that they be warned as a captive audience than be captives where the rich man was.

Shall a lifeguard at the beach say, I will not rescue a drowning man unless he signifies that he wishes to be rescued? After all, he is a captive audience, and a victim of circumstances; but is he to be denied rescue for that reason? Or, is a man on the road that leads to destruction to be denied the hearing of the one and only way of escape simply because he did not expect to hear it at a funeral?

There is much to be said for giving the gospel at funerals. For one thing, it is a conditioned audience that is in attendance. They are sobered by the reality of death. Lightness and levity of spirit that so often hinder reception of the gospel are not apt to be present. And when the departed has been a Christian, what better testimony can be given than publicly telling the grounds of the confidence that the departed had, and how the same is open to all who will accept Christ. Without the Scriptures there is no unlocking of the door to the future, for God alone can draw aside the veil that separates between the living and the dead. The best that an unsaved man can do is to come to the verge of eternity and say, "I am taking a leap in the dark." But it is not darkness to the believer; death is but the vehicle that speeds him to paradise - "Thou shalt be with Me in paradise." When Paul was caught up to paradise, he heard such things that it is impossible to convey them in human language, or to the human mind. That glory so enraptured his soul, that he had a fervent desire to depart this world and be with Christ. (2 Cor. 12:1-4; Phil. 1:23.)

Even the telling of the peace, joy, and bliss for the soul and spirit of him who departs this life with faith in Christ, should have an impelling effect on those who have it not. Perhaps they will say, That person has something worth having, something that I should have.

We freely admit that giving out the gospel to those congregated at a funeral should be done with the propriety that is becoming to a solemn assembly. Loud and boisterous preaching would be unbecoming and unseemly. The manner of the speaker should not bring reproach on the very truth he seeks to present; but if a kind and loving setting forth of the only Savior of sinners is objectionable, still, a man of God cannot forbear to speak. Consideration should be shown to the bereaved, and a lengthy service should be avoided. Never should it have the semblance of a harangue. But let not the speaker lose sight of his responsibility to the Lord.

A friend of ours was called upon to conduct a funeral service in the Middle-West of this country, which he did in faithfulness, and with proper decorum. In the audience that day was a young man and his wife, who were killed in an automobile accident later that same day, and their bodies were brought to the same undertaker. What would be on the speaker's conscience today if he had followed the practice of some, and avoided telling of the need of a Savior and the opportunity to accept Him then? Perhaps it may have been used to their salvation ere they were ushered into eternity. And even if they were not saved, the speaker delivered his own soul. That is what Paul meant when he said, "I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Acts 20:26, 27. He had obvious reference to Eze. 33, where we read, "So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at. My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." vv. 7-9. Specious pleas, notwithstanding, if he fail to warn them, he is guilty of their blood. What a solemn thought!

Shall the Lord have to say to such at the judgment seat, I sent such and such to you to hear the gospel at your mouth, and you altogether held your peace? We know that God has other instruments He can use if some are unfaithful, and that He is sovereign and His purposes will come to pass; yet a servant's responsibility is also clear. Responsibility is commensurate with the place of privilege a servant has. The parable of the pounds of Luke 19, and the talents of Matt. 25 bear witness to this. There we find the servant is not rewarded for his success, but for his faithfulness.

## Glories

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There will be a scene of glories when the kingdom comes. We commonly speak of "glory" as if it stood in that connection only, but this is wrong. Glory will be displayed then, it is true; glory will then be in the circumstances of the scene. But a much more wonderful form of glory is known already, and that is in the gospel. There God Himself is displayed - a more wondrous object than all circumstances. The glory of the gospel is moral, I grant, not material or circumstantial; but it is glory of the profoundest character. There, again I say, God Himself is displayed. The just God and yet the Savior is seen there. Righteousness and peace shine there in each other's company - a result which none but God Himself, and in the way of the cross, could ever have reached.

The gospel calls on sinners to breathe the atmosphere, as I may say, of salvation, to have communion with God in love, and to maintain it in liberty and assurance; and there is a glory in such thoughts and truths as these which indeed excels.

## God Our Justifier

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

There is deeply imbedded in man's religious mind the thought that he has to meet God as a judge - that he, as a sinner, has in some way or another to satisfy the claims of a righteous judge who will deal with him about his sins, and exact the very last farthing. As the dying gypsy exclaimed, when told that he was standing at the very portal of the eternal world, "What! must I gang afore the Judge wi' a' my sins upon me?"

Tremendous inquiry! If I have to meet God as a judge, it is all over with me. "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." Psalm 143:2.

Hence, therefore, a soul looking to God as a judge, must be filled with terror, inasmuch as he cannot answer Him one of a thousand - you cannot meet God as a judge. Condemnation must be the issue of a meeting between a righteous judge and a guilty sinner.

But, thanks be to God, He wears another character now. He is a righteous justifier. Yes, a justifier of such as cannot meet Him as a judge. God must be righteous in whatever sphere He displays Himself. Whether as a judge or a justifier, He must be just.

But, in this day of grace, during the acceptable year of the Lord, the day of salvation, He is revealing Himself as "a just God and a Savior" - a righteous Savior-God. What a character! What a stupendous triumph of redeeming love! What an answer to Satan! What a balm for the convicted conscience and stricken heart! A Savior-God! It is the very title that suits a lost sinner. It brings God near to me in the very condition and character in which I find myself.

If it be asked, as surely it must by every exercised conscience, on what ground does this grand reality hold good? the answer is as clear and satisfactory as the most anxious soul can possibly desire. It is this: God, as a judge, dealt with my sins at the cross, in order that God, as a justifier, might deal with me at heaven's side of the empty tomb of Jesus. The death of Christ, therefore, forms the ground on which God can righteously justify the ungodly. A righteous judge condemned sin on the cross, that a righteous justifier might pardon and justify the guilty. What a profound mystery! Well may angels desire to look into it; and well may sinners, whom it so blessedly concerns, bless and praise Him who has counseled, revealed, and wrought it all for them through the accomplished atonement of Christ.

People either know God as a justifier, or they must meet Him as a judge. No one can ever enjoy true peace until he knows and believes that God as a judge has nothing against him as a sinner; nay, more,

that He Himself is his justifier - that, in fact, in the death and resurrection of Christ, He has revealed Him as a just God and a Savior to an ungodly sinner. This is the solid and unassailable ground of peace.

## Godly Exercise in Discipline

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The thirteenth chapter of Leviticus is a fine study for all who are really interested in the condition of the assembly. We cannot attempt to dwell upon it here, but we earnestly commend it to the attention of our brethren. The priest was not to pronounce judgment hastily in any given case. The most patient care 'was needed lest anyone should be put out as a leper who really was not one, or lest any real case of leprosy should escape. There was to be no haste and no indifference.

It is of the deepest importance to understand the real object, nature, and character of discipline in the Church of God. It is to be feared that they are very little understood. The grand object of discipline is the glory of God as involved in the holiness of His assembly, and the real good of the soul toward whom the discipline is exercised.

And as to the nature and character of discipline, we should ever remember that in order to take part in it, according to the mind of Christ, we must make the person's sin our own, and confess it as such before God. It is one thing to stand up in heartless formality and declare one out of the assembly, and it is quite another for the whole assembly to come before God in true brokenness and contrition of heart to put away with tears and confession some evil that could not be gotten rid of in any other way. If there were more of this latter, we should see more divine restoration.

## God's Sovereignty

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The assertion of divine sovereignty, though a necessary truth which springs out of the very nature of God, is repulsive to the natural mind. Yet no other thought consists with right, when the subject is duly weighed; and every scheme which man substitutes is unworthy of God and unbecoming to man. The doctrine which denies God His majesty is self-convicted of falsehood; equally so that which would represent Him as indifferent either to sin or to misery. He is light; and light is incompatible with the allowance of the darkness which reigns in the heart and ways of man. He is love; and love is invariably free and holy.

## God's Sovereignty - Man's Responsibility: the Editor's Column

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It has been our purpose for a long time to discuss the subjects of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility in these pages. The two subjects are often set in opposition to each other, as though they were mutually contradictory, rather than complimentary. Both are true, and they are found side by side in the Word of God. Parties and sects have been formed around each subject, while much heat and little light have been generated on both sides.

A stormy controversy arose in the latter part of the 16th century between the followers of John Calvin (1509-64) and Jacobus Arminius, whose real name was Jacob Harmensen, or Herrnansz, (1560-1609). The battle between Calvinists and Arminians is still going on.

Calvin saw and taught the total ruin of man, that since Adam fell all his posterity were born in sin and possessed a will opposed to God. Thus Calvinism taught that mankind was hopelessly lost unless God stepped in and saved some, but that this He did, first by His own sovereign choice in a past eternity, and then by giving them faith in Christ when they were living on the earth.

Arminius denied that man was beyond the power to help himself, and contended that he could by exercising his own free will improve himself, and that at least he had the power to accept the good and refuse the evil, to exercise faith in Christ, or reject Him. This is generally termed the doctrine of "free will." Whether Arminius realized it or not, his doctrine had much of the Pelagian error in it. Let us consider Pelagius and his doctrine.

Of Pelagius's early life we know little; he probably died early in the 5th century. This much is known, that he was a monk in the great monastery at Bangor, Wales, and that his real name was Morgan. He had a close follower named Celestius, a native of Ireland. These two men went to Rome, then to Africa, and then to Jerusalem, spreading their evil doctrine. Grace to them was nothing more than a call to man to exercise his best efforts toward God. We shall quote the words of another about the Pelagian heresy:

"The fundamental error of the monk Pelagius was the denial of our total corruption by sin derived from Adam, and met only by the death and resurrection of the second Man, the last Adam. Hence he asserted liberty as now true of all men, not merely in the sense of exemption from external restraint, but of freedom within the nature as to good and evil, denying thus in the race internal bondage to sin. So he appears to have seen little more in grace, even in its Christian application, than pardon for this or that offense, not the impartation to the believer of a new nature, in virtue of which he does not practice sin, because he is born of God. Thus no room was left in the Pelagian scheme for man's being lost now on the one side, or for the believer's being saved now on the other. In fact the race was conceived to be in an innocence like the primeval state of Adam, till each sinned and thus fell under guilt and its consequences. The Pelagians denied the imputation of Adam's sin, seeing no more than the influence of a bad example. As the moral ruin of man was thus enfeebled and the relation of the head last, so on the other hand under grace were reckoned all the natural endowments of the human family, as well as the supernatural. Hence conscience,

law, and gospel were regarded as different methods, as well as advancing stages of righteousness, in every case the means and operations of grace being effectual only according to the measure of the tendencies of the will. Again, the redemption of Christ became thus, if not an amelioration, certainly an exaltation and transfiguration of humanity. Christ Himself was but the highest pattern of righteousness, some before Him having perfectly kept the moral law, and others since being stimulated by His work, love, and example to the evangelical counsels of moral perfection beyond law."

It should be apparent to the most superficial reader of the above that Pelagius denied both the fall and utter ruin of man on the one hand, and the only way of redemption through the work of Christ for, and the operation of the Spirit in its application to man, on the other. It was a deadly error that nullified the necessity of the whole counsels and operation of the grace of God.

It would have foredoomed the creature to remain in his alienation from God, although this alienation is denied.

If man is not lost, then the Lord Jesus needed not to come "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). If a man could elevate himself by the exercise of his own will, and by good thus performed, back to God, then God needed not to send His beloved Son to suffer and die. But God has faithfully told us that we were not only lost and without any strength to do anything about it, but that we were morally dead - dead toward God - that there is not one movement of our hearts toward Him. (Romans and Ephesians.) Being thus in such a plight, we needed One to rescue us, to save us; and we needed the impartation of life, an entirely new life.

But let us come back to Arminianism which is today held by much of Christendom, especially by large segments of evangelical bodies. Has man today such a thing as a free will morally? No! Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden by his Creator. He was perfect in innocence, for God, after creating him, looked at His creation and said it was "very good." He was happy in relationship with his Creator, but to remain so he needed to walk in obedience, for that was the only right thing for a creature. He was not outwardly forced to remain in that state; and one, but only one, test was applied to him in the matter of obedience. He was to abstain from the fruit of only one tree, and God warned him of the consequences of disobedience. As soon then as he exercised his own will, he sinned. This was not all; he became a sinner with a will opposed to God. From that moment forward, all of mankind (with the single exception of the "Lord from heaven," "the second Man," "the last Adam") have been disposed to evil. Since man's will is now inclined toward evil, how can he by the exercise of it bring himself back to God? Let us quote from another on the subject of free will:

"It is simple nonsense to talk of freedom when applied to man's actual condition, if he is already inclined to evil."

"A man being really set to choose between evil and good.. is alike horrible and absurd; because it supposes the good and evil to be outside, and himself neither. If he is one or other in disposition, the choice is there. To have a fair choice, he must be personally indifferent; but to be in, a state of indifference to good and evil is perfectly horrible. If a man has an inclination, his choice is not free; a free will is rank nonsense morally, because, if he have a will, he wills something. God can will to create. But will in moral things [in man] means either self-will, which is sin (for we ought to obey),

or an inclination to something, which is really a choice made as far as will goes."

"To say that he [man] is not inclined to evil, is to deny all Scripture and all fact; to make him free to choose he must be as yet indifferent, indifferent to - having no preference for - good and evil, which is not true, for evil lusts and self-will are there, the two great elements of sin, and if it were true would be perfectly horrible."

"The doctrine of free will helps on the doctrine of the natural man's pretension not to be entirely lost, for that is really what it amounts to. All men who have never been deeply convinced of sin, all persons with whom this conviction is based upon gross and outward sins, believe more or less in free will. You know that it is the dogma... of all reasoners, of all philosophers. But this idea completely changes all the idea of Christianity and entirely perverts it."

If natural man could by the exercise of his own will bring himself into favor with God, then it is not true that "They that are in the flesh cannot please God," but God's Word is true. It would likewise negate the positive declaration, "Ye must be born again." Why did the Lord say, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him"? Because man's heart is so far estranged from God that if man be left to himself he would never come. It is true, as in the parable, that when the invitation reaches needy sinners, "They all with one consent [begin] to make excuse." They not only have a nature disposed toward evil, but they are not disposed to accept God's gracious invitation, no, not even with God's beseeching them to come. If it were not for sovereign grace that drew any of us to Christ, none would have partaken of God's free gift. As the poet has so aptly said,

"Why was I made to hear His voice,  
And enter while there's room,  
When thousands make a wretched choice,  
And rather starve than come?  
'Twas the same love that spread the feast,  
That sweetly forced me in,  
Else I had still refused to taste,  
And perished in my sin."

Scripture completely sets aside any good in man, as our Lord said, "Ye will not come to Me," not even when He was graciously seeking them. The will was at fault. But the Lord said to His own, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." How completely that sets aside our doing, even in coming to Christ! Again we read of His own, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:13. And in Jas. 1:18, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." Even the faith to believe in Him is not of ourselves, but "is the gift of God." (See Eph. 2:8.) When the redeemed ones in glory render praise and worship to the Lamb who saved them (Rev. 5), there will be no one present who was saved by exercising his own will, or apart from the constraining of divine grace. Not one will be there who will mar that new song by taking any credit to himself, not even for his

faith. Every one there will be there as the evident trophy of God's grace, even as Mephibosheth in David's house was visible evidence of David's goodness (2 Sam. 9).

Arminius may not have realized how much he borrowed from the fatal scheme of Pelagius, nor how much he taught that which is one of the most natural weeds to grow in the human heart - that which in substance exalts the first man and sets aside the second Man, the Lord from heaven. (All was lost and condemned in the first man, and the believer in Christ is now seen in the second Man - he is a new creature in Christ.) Arminius may have been actuated largely from a desire to refute the excesses of Calvinism, and there are many. These we purpose, the Lord willing, to bring before our readers next month.

## Grace and Government

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Among the many names under which it has pleased God to make Himself known none is sweeter to the heart of the Christian than this - "The God of all grace" (1 Pet. 5:10). To grace we owe everything; it is the parent spring of all blessing. Exclude grace, and you exclude pardon and peace, eternal life and endless glory; for these are the gifts which grace - the free, unmerited favor of God - brings from the heavenly treasury. Let grace go, and nothing remains but our deserts; the light of day is gone, and we are shut up to a night that shall never end. It is the grace of God that brings salvation to all men (Titus 2:11). By grace the believer is justified (Rom. 3:24); by grace he is saved (Eph. 2:8); and in grace he stands (Rom. 5:2). The redemption which he has in Christ is according to the riches of God's grace, for He is rich in grace (Eph. 1:7). Moreover, in the ages to come, He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7). Angels, principalities, and powers shall then see Grace in her garments of glory. Never will she look more beautiful than when her handiwork is fully seen in the taking of poor sinners from the lowest depths of degradation and displaying them in association with Christ in the glory of God.

Well might Paul exhort Timothy to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:1). Well might he say to the Hebrews, "It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace" (Heb. 13:9). And well might he declare for himself that his only desire was that he might finish his course with joy, and pursue the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the glad tidings of the grace of God (Acts 20:24). Let us exalt Grace. Let us crown her with garlands - the rich, free, boundless grace of our God - for she is worthy to be praised.

But while it is true that every believer is set in the changeless grace of God, that he is always there, and never will cease to be in divine favor, yet let it be remembered that grace does not place him beyond the sphere of divine government. In this connection, his actions, the state of his soul, the way he carries himself hour by hour, acquire an importance not easily exaggerated. Grace and government go on together; they proceed on parallel lines; and if the believer is the object of the former, he is no less subject to the latter. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Gal. 6:7, 8. This is an abiding principle of God's government, from the application of which, either on the side of warning or encouragement, grace exempts none.

The lives of many of the Old Testament saints furnish striking examples of this great principle, by the aid of which we are able to distinguish clearly between grace and government. And this great principle of God's government changes not with the change of dispensations. "Them that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." 1 Sam. 2:30. Let us not think that because we are the subjects of divine grace, therefore we are beyond the range of divine government. Not so. For what do those words in 1 Pet. 1:17 mean? "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your

sojourning here in fear." Do they not tell us that if sovereign grace has set us in eternal relationship with the Father, giving us the place of children before Him, therefore the Father observes our ways, judges our actions and their motives, and deals with us accordingly? What a man sows, that shall he also reap. If a saint of God sows to the flesh, what shall the harvest be? Shall he reap joy and peace in the Holy Ghost? Sooner shall men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles.

In the face, then, of the fact that God does govern among men, let us ask ourselves, To what are we sowing? What are the things in which our hearts and minds live? Are we sowing to the Spirit? Do we heed the Word of God? Is the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven the One with whom we are increasingly occupied? There is untold blessing in being engaged with Him. "He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Let us seek the things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God; seek them as one that seeks for hidden treasure. Then we shall taste of heavenly springs, and shall sit under His shadow with great delight; and His fruit shall be sweet to our taste.

And if there be in our soul the humbling consciousness of having declined from Christ, we would desire to remember that we have to do with the God of all grace. However low we may have sunk, however great and grievous our declension, the thought of God as the God of all grace may encourage us to return to Him with a heart softened by the recollection of grace so unchanging, and loathing ourselves that we could have ever turned away from One whose grace is unwearied and inexhaustible.

## Have We Really Communion? Martha

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We have in John 11 what our Lord was as intrinsically in Himself, and yet how He did all things in dependence on His Father, which was His perfection as a man. Martha's faith went further than simply so far seeing the prevention of evil by Jesus' presence. She believed or knew that what Jesus asked, God would give Him. He shall ask for thee, for "he is a prophet." (Gen. 20:7.) Hence the force in that day, "Ye shall ask Me nothing"; and, "I say not that I will pray the Father for you." Being sons, we have the privilege of asking the Father directly. We ask in His name. Her apprehensions were confused, not practical; for she owned the fact of His Sonship, nothing of the office of Sonship. The Lord answers her case at once, her anxieties, in the power of what He was - the best way of meeting unbelief - and, while it draws out the point where there is want of intelligence in our faith, gives occasion to the meeting of it by that which is in Jesus. "I know that he shall rise in the resurrection at the last day." She recognized God as ordering this as a common point of faith for all; but there was no identification with Jesus in her mind. She knew that God would hear Jesus. She knew there was a resurrection in the last day. Such is the common faith. But Jesus' quickening power to His saints is another thing. "I am," said Jesus to her, "the resurrection and the life." The assertion is all-sufficient, and comprehends every point of positive faith, and as meeting the aspects of unbelief. There was a resurrection, and God would hear Jesus. Now, "I am the resurrection, and the life." Nor was it a mere general thing at the last day, but the intrinsic power of life in Jesus. "I am the resurrection, and the life." It was, in a word, what He was.

Martha did not intelligently understand or believe this. She believed what the Lord said to her as His word, and stated all she could of sound faith; but feeling she could not hold communion with the Lord in this, as soon as she had made what she could of acknowledgment of faith (yet she was not rejected), she departed. Ah! how does the world shut up the channels of access, the links of union, between the Lord's heart and ours! How does it now, a cold, loose, general belief in a resurrection in the last day, bar the communion with Jesus who is the Resurrection and the Life, and who opens out all these glorious and blessed truths in the identity of believers with Himself! He is the Resurrection and the Life. Martha was cumbered about much serving. She went to call Mary to relieve her mind apparently, though not unmixedly, from the Lord's presence, in that in which she could not hold communion with Him.

Oh, how does the world cheat us! Who would have thought that the zealous service of Martha should have hindered her from the joyous portion with the revealing Jesus? Yet so it was. And so it is ever. So much as we have of the world, so much is the glory of Jesus shut out from us. Great things may go first; everything must follow, or the heart sticks yet in the world. It may not seem so deep; it is often stickier; but, thank God, the Lord's love is better than all. Yet Martha was a believer; she loved, and Jesus loved her. Her name we have seen (lest she should be despised) is marked first. She felt a righteous, common interest with her sister, and there was good feeling mixed up with her bad state. It was marred, spoiled by her cumberedness; beautiful spots, but no whole; no illustration of Jesus; for many a spot was barren; none was really deep.

Often we turn to speak of Jesus to another because we have not communion with Him ourselves, to talk about Him because we are not able, we are oppressed, for talking with Him; we go to call some sister to the Master, but not to stay with the Master. Deep communion requires much communion; and though labor is good, the point to be presented to the Lord is the fruit. We look for someone else to hold communion with Jesus. We are conscious we cannot ourselves.

Yet Martha was loved, it was true; but how cold, "The Master is here"! It is plain that in the outgoings of her heart (and we know from what abundance it springs) she had not practically reached beyond this: The Teacher, the Master is here. Oh, world, world, world! how dost thou cheat us, and deceive us out of Jesus, in whom is all fullness, all fullness dwells; the Resurrection and the Life, all fullness; out of fullness we should receive!

## The Holy Spirit, the Seal

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The Holy Ghost was the seal of Christ's work, not of John's preaching righteousness. The second time He received the Holy Ghost was for the Church. He received for Himself (Matt. 3) at His baptism, but for us when He ascended, having finished the work of our salvation. The fruits of the Spirit in us are the consequences of the grace and righteousness in Him, He being the only righteous man. The first fruits of the Spirit in us are love, joy, peace - then come the practical fruits toward men. The first named fruits are toward God, then patience, temperance, etc., toward man. The Holy Ghost cannot be the subject for the Church, as such, to ask for now, seeing He has thus been given. Christ received Him for us. We pray by, or in, the Holy Ghost, not for Him now. We should pray for more of the working of the Spirit in us, and desire to be filled with the Spirit - poor little hearts indeed, but they may be filled. It does not at all follow that we are filled with the Spirit because sealed with the Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit would keep out evil thoughts. It will not take away the evil nature, which ever remains, but thereby that will be kept down. J.N.D.

## If Need Be

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Three gracious words! Not one of all my tears shed for naught! Oh, what a pillow on which to rest an aching head!

## Israel — Northern Army's Invasion ... : the Editor's Column

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Invasions by various kinds of locusts are not uncommon in the Middle East. Exod. 10 gives the account of one such which came upon the land of Egypt when Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites depart at the call of God. It was of utmost severity, as it was said: "And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt;... before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such." Exod. 10:14.

Locust infestations were also known by the Israelites in their own land, and Solomon made mention of them in his prayer at the dedication of the temple. He said to God: "If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence,... locusts or caterpillars;... then what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man.. in this house:... then hear Thou from heaven Thy dwelling place." God answered him, saying: "If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land,... if My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." 2 Chron. 6:28-30; 7:13, 14.

The latest Palestinian invasion of locusts has been this last winter, which according to Israel's Ministry of Agriculture has been the worst in 43 years. The breeding grounds seemed to be in some neighboring Arab states, so Israel sought their co-operation in attacking them at the source; but this was refused on account of their old animosities. Israel did not, however, follow the pleadings of Solomon, or God's instructions, in such an eventuality. They instead betook themselves to the most modern methods of extermination by mechanized vehicles and crop-dusting airplanes, which according to the Ministry of Agriculture were very successful, so that their crop damage was "the least of any of the invasions." All this bespeaks Israel's resourcefulness on the one hand, and that the day of the Messiah has not yet come, on the other. In His day pests will not ravage the land, nor drought parch it; nor will human ingenuity be necessary against manifestations of the government of God.

A most seasonable word for Israel is to be found in the prophecy of Joel; in fact, it would be well for us to review some of Joel's words in the light of the recent invasion of locusts, and the current world-situation.

Joel, it seems, was one of the earliest of the prophets connected with the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, although it would be difficult to give a date for "The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel." In his day the land of Israel was devastated by hoards of locusts, with resultant scarcity; and the Lord put into Joel's prophecy a warning plea to His earthly people based on such desolation - "Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. That which the palmerworm [or gnawing locust] hath left hath the [swarming] locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm [or licking locust] eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar [or consuming locust] eaten." Joel 1:2-4. (The words in brackets are from Mr. William

Kelly; and Mr. J. N. Darby says of these four names, "They are probably different species of locust, or in different stages of growth.")

Joel calls the older men to recall the former times and remember if such a desolation had been wrought in days within their memories. And all the people were asked to take serious note of what had just happened and to tell it to their children, that other generations might fear the Lord. The language used in the first chapter is very descriptive of depredations wrought by hoards of insects - the grape vine is dried up, the fig tree languishes, the pomegranate, palm, and apple trees, with all the trees of the field are withered, while the wheat and barley had perished, and the beasts, herds, and flocks were perplexed because they had no pasture. But from such desolations, which came as a result of God's governmental dealings with His guilty people, the prophet turns to look forward to the future and more severe judgments of God. The present visitation was solemn and called for repentance before God, but worse was to come - the day of the LORD with destruction from the Almighty was on the way (v. 15).

In the second chapter of Joel, the prophet by the Spirit changed from the invasion of locusts to a still more dreadful invasion to come, by what is called "the northern army" in verse 20, and Jehovah's army in verse 11. Ravages by insect invasions will be but small compared with the depredations of the northern army which will come against Israel at the ushering in of the day of the LORD. What a solemn time is coming for the Jews in Palestine! O that they would pause and consider when God speaks to them today by drought and by insects and by other dealings from His hand.

The "northern army" is also spoken of as the Assyrian, or that old enemy who occupied territory to the north of Palestine. And at this very time Iraq (in the old Assyrian location) is being wooed by Russia who would gleefully help to set up a foe of Israel on her northern flank. The old names of the former enemies of Israel have almost vanished, but the peoples are still there; and the old names may likely reappear. Many of the old names are found together in Psalm 83 as confederate against Israel: "They have said, Come, let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against Thee: the tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes; Gebal, and Ammon [incidentally, this name (with slight variation) is now the name of the capital of Jordan], and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tire; Assur [Assyria] also is joined with them." vv. 4-8.

Today almost 2,000,000 Jews are back in their land and have a stable government, but the forerunners of the dreadful scourge are already threatening them. Their foes are numerous, and the Jews are outnumbered more than 40 to 1 by the Arabs alone. O that they were wise and would take warning from such events as locust invasions and droughts, and turn to God in repentance!

Joel's description of the "northern" army's invasion of Israel is couched in words descriptive of desolations wrought by locusts: "The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them." Chap. 2:3. And the prophet Isaiah describes the same incursion in these words: "When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report." Chap. 28:18.

At the time of the northern army's invasion of Palestine, the Jews there will be under the leadership of their apostate king (often called antichrist), and through his machinations they will be under a protective covenant with the revived Roman Empire and its wicked head, called in Scripture "the beast." This wicked alliance will promote and protect idolatry and deification of man, even' to the extent of putting an image of the beast in the newly constructed temple, and demanding that worship be given to the beast and his image. On this account, according to Dan. 9, there is going to be a desolator for the Jews in Palestine - "and because of the protection of abominations there shall be a desolator" (v. 27; J.N.D. Trans.). This northern army, Jehovah's army, will be His desolator to accomplish His will against an apostate people in that day. But in the end the desolator will meet his doom from the hand of the LORD, and his army will be routed toward the east.

This latter-day enemy of Israel was also an early day adversary. One has said, "There will be a revival of those Gentile foes of the Jews. It is remarkable too that their final acts will bear the same moral character as their initiatory course. This intimates clearly a divine principle of dealing at the close for the sins of the beginning, because they will repeat their old sins at the end. The same jealousy of Israel, the same determination to exterminate the Jew, the same unbelieving opposition to God's counsels which characterized them at their earliest epochs will also be found in their latest appearance. The circle of their historical unity is made apparent from a moral point of view - the same character of guilt reproduced with God's judgment upon them because of it."

While it is not possible to exactly date Joel's prophecy, it seems that God caused him to write about a recent scourge of locusts and resultant famine, and to write probably just before Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, invaded Judah and laid siege to Jerusalem. At that time 185,000 of his army died in one night by divine intervention after Hezekiah cast himself and his people upon God for deliverance. Sennacherib made an inglorious retreat into his own land, where he was murdered by his own sons. It is characteristic of prophecy to use the present to give features of the future, and to allow some partial fulfillment in advance of the fulfillment of the real purpose of the prophecy. Even the signal defeat of the northern army in Hezekiah's day is likely typical of its resounding overthrow at the time of the end by divine interposition on behalf of His earthly people "when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isa. 2:19).

While we have turned aside to look at the prophecy of Joel for a little, we should also notice how the divine instruction about the two silver trumpets in Numb. 10 is brought into the prophecy. There were two general uses for the trumpets: 1) to gather the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle, 2) to blow an alarm when they had to meet the enemy in battle. This latter was not for the purpose of summoning warriors, but rather to bring God into the circumstances, for it says: "And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppreseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies." v. 9.

In Joel 2:1 the alarm provision is called for: "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand." In view of the Assyrian's invasion of Israel, they are to blow an alarm; in other words, they are to call upon God. Crop-dusting airplanes will not cope with the invasion of which locusts are only a type. The deliverance will come, not by military might nor by human ingenuity,

but from the LORD.

After that they will be called together before God in a most solemn assembly. "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly." v. 15. They are also to be called upon to rend their hearts, and not their garments, and turn to the LORD their God (Joel 2:13). A deep work of repentance will take place in the remnant of the Jews that are left at that time, for two-thirds of them will have been cut off during the judgments that fell on them, and the third part will be brought through the fires and purified as silver (see Zech. 13:8, 9).

What a solemn day of repentance that will be! They are to sanctify (or set apart to God) a fast, and call a solemn assembly. At that time the priests who minister in the temple are to come out from the temple and take their place with the people, and "weep between the porch and the altar." Zech. 12 gives us more details of Israel's time of repentance. Then God will "be jealous for His land, and pity His people." Joel 2:18.

He will dispose of Israel's enemies for them, and He will then make good all that they have lost by the depredations of hordes of invaders, still using the simile of armies of insects. Instead of great scarcity there will be an abundance of everything - wheat, oil, wine, and the fruit of trees. All that was lost shall be made up to them when He restores the years that the locusts have eaten. Then they shall eat in plenty and praise the name of the LORD their God, and His people shall never be ashamed (vv. 21-27).

But before the days of blessing for God's earthly people, there will be the terrible day of the LORD, for them and for the whole earth. That day is fast approaching, and many things indicate it; but first, He will call all the redeemed of this age to be with Himself and away from the very hour in which the trouble will fall (see Rev. 3:10).

The call to the Church to be with Christ will likely be heard just before the seven years of trouble begin, the latter half of which, or 3 1/2 years, will be known as the "great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21). During this awful time of trouble, which will close with "the great and dreadful day of the LORD" (Mal. 4:5), we, as the redeemed of this age, shall be with Christ in glory. Then when He arises to "shake terribly the earth" (Isa. 2:19), He shall come forth with the redeemed from heaven as "the armies which were in heaven" (Rev. 19:14) follow Him. He shall make His enemies His footstool (Psalm 110:1), and establish His kingdom on earth. We shall share in His glorious reign in His kingdom, even as He has promised (Rev. 3:21); although, perhaps more accurately, we shall reign "over the earth" (Rev. 5:10; J.N.D. Trans.) from a scene of glory displayed over and to the earth. What a bright and blessed prospect is set before us; but the best of all will be to dwell with Him, to see Him as He is, and be fully conformed to Himself (1 John 3:2). May our response be in truth, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20.

Before closing these comments, we will also refer to what Isaiah wrote about how God would use the Assyrian as a rod to chastise His guilty people; but when the rod vaunts itself, He will break the rod:

"O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, and the staff in their hand is Mine indignation. I will send him against a hypocritical nation, and against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations

not a few. For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calno as Carchemish? is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus? As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria; shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols? Wherefore it shall come to pass, that, when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man: and my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped. Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.... And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth." Isaiah 10:5-15, 20.

## The Israel of God

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"Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16) seems to be used here, not as a general phrase for every saint, but for the believing ones in Israel - those Jews who had repudiated their own works and found shelter only in Christ Jesus. Two parties are spoken of, and not one only. "As many as walk according to this rule" are rather the Gentile believers; and the "Israel of God" are the Jewish saints, not the mere literal Israel, but "the Israel of God"; the Israelites indeed, whom grace made willing to receive the Savior.

## Jacob or Israel

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It is interesting to notice the way in which the titles "Jacob" and "Israel" are introduced in the close of the book of Genesis; as, for example, "One told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed." Then, it is immediately added, "And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz." Now, we know, there is nothing in Scripture without its specific meaning, and hence this interchange of names contains some instruction. In general, it may be remarked that "Jacob" sets forth the depth to which God has descended - "Israel," the height to which Jacob was raised.

## The Correct Meaning of Jeremiah 31:22

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"How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man." Jer. 31:22.

This verse has often been ignorantly alleged to refer to the incarnation, when the virgin conceived and bore a Son, but it is not so. The context clearly looks on to the gathering of all the families of Israel, not to gathering a mere remnant of Jews provisionally. In that day Jehovah will be their God, and they will be His people. He that scattered Israel will gather him and keep him as a flock, when priests and people shall be satisfied with His goodness (vv. 1-14). Rachel's tears are to be no more; her children, instead of perishing, shall come to their own border. Ephraim will turn and repent, and Jehovah says He will surely have mercy on him (15-20). Then, as filling up the beautiful picture of Israel's return, we hear the call to set up waymarks and signposts, yea to set their heart toward the highway, once of sorrow, now of joy; for Jehovah bids the virgin of Israel, forgiving all past delinquency, to "turn again to these thy cities." "How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter?" What has one word of all this to do with the miraculous conception, all-important as it is, in Isa. 7:14? "For the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man." No matter what Israel's weakness, they will have no need to fear the strong, but shall go round about him. The word here used is never employed to express any such idea as is assumed, but is suitable for a phrase that imports one out of weakness made strong. And this is confirmed by all that follows to the end of the chapter.

The incarnation rests on grounds so plain and solid as to need no forced construction. For a woman to compass a mighty one has nothing in common with the idea of giving birth, but rather to freedom and exemption from the power of the strong, however weak in herself. Usage quite agrees with the force of the words. Where is the phrase applied to gestation? Scripture speaks similarly where any strikingly divine intervention wholly distinct appears; as, for instance, of the earth opening its mouth to swallow the apostate rebels, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Numb. 16:30). The phrase employed therefore embraces a far wider range than the incarnation, to which the terms of a woman compassing a man are in themselves wholly alien.

## Jesus Risen: the Remedy for Every Trial

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Deep and varied as are the necessities of the soul, they are all met by the death and resurrection of Christ. If it be a question of sin that affects the soul, the resurrection is the glorious proof of the complete putting away of it. The moment I see Jesus at the right hand of God, I see an end of sin; for I know He could not be there if sin was not fully atoned for. He "was delivered for our offenses"; He stood as our representative; He took upon Him our iniquities, and went down into the grave. "But God raised Him from the dead"; and by so doing He expressed His full approbation of the work of redemption. Hence we read, He "was raised again for our justification." Resurrection, therefore, meets the needs of the soul as regards the question of sin.

Then, again, when we proceed further and enter upon the trying and difficult path of Christian testimony, we find that Jesus risen is a sovereign remedy for all the ills of life. This is happily exemplified for us in John 20. Mary repairs to the sepulcher early in the morning. And, as we learn from the parallel passage in Mark, her heart was not only sad at the loss of her gracious friend, but also tried by the difficulty of removing the stone from the mouth of the cave. The resurrection removed, at once, her sorrow and her burden. Jesus risen filled the blank in her desolated affections, and removed from her shoulders the load which she was unable to sustain. She found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher, and she found also her beloved Lord whom death had for a season snatched from her view. Such mighty things could resurrection accomplish on behalf of a poor needy mortal.

Nor is it otherwise with us now. Have our hearts been broken and bereaved by the stern, rude hand of death? Has his cold breath chilled our affections? What is the remedy? Resurrection. Yes; resurrection, that great restorer, not merely of tired but of ruined nature, fills up all blanks - repairs all breaches - remedies all ills. If the conscience be affected by a sense of sin, resurrection sets it at rest by the assurance that the Surety's work has been fully accepted. If the heart be bowed down with sorrow, and torn by the ravages of death, resurrection heals, soothes, and binds it up, by securing the restoration and reunion of all who have gone before; it tells us to "sorrow not,... as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." 1 Thess. 4:13, 14.

It is commonly thought that time fills up all the blanks which death has made in the affections; but the spiritual mind could never regard time, with its sorrowful vicissitudes, as a substitute for resurrection and its immortal joys. The poor worldling may, perhaps, find in passing circumstances something to fill up the void which death makes, but not so the Christian; to him, resurrection is the grand object; to that he looks as the only instrumentality by which all his losses can be retrieved, and all his evils remedied.

So also in the matter of burden and pressure from present circumstances; the only relief is in resurrection. Till then we have but to toil on from day to day, bearing the burden and enduring the travail of the present sorrowful scene. We may, like Mary, feel disposed to cry out, "Who shall roll us away the stone?" Who? The risen Jesus. Apprehend resurrection, and you are raised above

the influence of every burden. It is not that we may not have many a burden to carry - no doubt we may - but our burdens shall not sink us into the dust, because our hearts are buoyed up by the blessed truth that our Head is risen from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of God, and, moreover, that our place is there with Him. Faith leads the soul upward, even into the holy serenity of the divine presence - it enables us to cast our burden on the Lord, and to rest assured that He will sustain it for us. How often have we shrunk from the thought of some trial or burden which appeared, in the distance, like a dark cloud upon the horizon; and yet, when we approached it, we "found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher." The risen Jesus had rolled it away. He had removed the dark cloud, and filled up the scene with the light of His own gracious countenance.

Mary had come to the sepulcher expecting to find a great stone between her and the object of her affections; but, instead of that, she found Jesus risen between her and the dreaded difficulty. She had come to anoint a dead body, but arrived to be blessed and made happy by a risen Savior. Such is God's way-such the power and value of resurrection. Sins, sorrows, and burdens all vanish when we find ourselves in the presence of a living Lord. When John, in the island of Patmos, had fallen to the dust as one dead, what was it that raised him up? Resurrection - the living Jesus. "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." This set him on his feet. Communion with Him who had wrested life from the very grasp of death, removed his fears and infused divine strength into his soul.

In the case of Peter and John, too, we find another instance of the power of resurrection. In them it is not so much a question of sin, or sorrow, or burden, as of difficulty. Their minds are evidently puzzled by all that met their view at the sepulcher. To see graveclothes so carefully arranged in the very tomb, was unaccountable. But they are only puzzled because, "as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead." Nothing but resurrection could solve their difficulty. Had they known that, they would have been at no loss to account for the arrangement of the graveclothes; they would have known that the Destroyer of death had been there, doing His mighty work, and had left behind Him the traces of His triumph. Such was the meaning of the scene at the tomb; at least it was calculated to teach that lesson. The Lord Jesus had calmly and deliberately passed through the conflict. He had exhibited no haste - no perturbation. He showed that it required no strained effort on His part to vanquish the power of death. However, Peter and John knew not this; and, therefore, they went away to their own house. The strength of Mary's affection made her linger still; love was more influential than knowledge; and though her heart was breaking, she remained at the sepulcher; she would rather weep near the spot where her Lord was laid, than go anywhere else. But resurrection settled everything. It filled up the blank in Mary's broken heart, and solved the difficulty in the minds of Peter and John. It dried up her tears and put a stop to their amazement. Jesus risen is, in good truth, the sovereign remedy for all evils; and nothing is needed but faith to use Him.

In verse 19, we have a fresh illustration of the principle on which we are dwelling. "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." Here the closed door evidenced the fear of the disciples. They were afraid of the Jews. And what could remedy their fear? Nothing but communion with their risen Savior. Nor did He (blessed be His name) leave them destitute of that remedy; He appeared among them - He pronounced His benediction upon them. "Peace be unto you," said He. "Peace," not because their

door was secured, but because Jesus was risen. Who could harm them while they had in their midst the mighty vanquisher of death and hades?

There is unspeakable value in this word "peace," used by such a One, at such a time. The peace that flows from fellowship with the risen Son of God cannot be ruffled by the vicissitudes and storms of this world; it is the peace of the inner sanctuary - the peace of God which passeth all understanding. Why are we so much troubled at times by the condition of things around us? Why do we betake ourselves, if not to the closed door, at least to some other human resource? Surely, because we are not walking with our eye steadily fixed on Him who was dead, but who is alive for evermore, who has all power in heaven and on earth. Did we but realize that our portion is in Him, yea, that He Himself is our portion, we should be far less affected by the prospects of this poor world.

The politics, the agriculture, the commerce of earth, would find their proper place in our hearts, if we could remember that "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." It is commonly said, that while we are here we must take an interest in the circumstances, the prospects, the destinies of earth. But then, "Our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven." We are not of the earth at all. Those who are risen with Christ are no longer of earth. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."

This is simple. "Things.. above" are those which we are commanded to seek, and that because we are "risen with Christ." The difference between Abraham, in his day, and a believer now, may be thus stated: Abraham was going from earth to heaven; the believer has come from heaven to earth; that is, in spirit and by faith. Abraham was a pilgrim on earth, because he sought a heavenly country; the believer is a pilgrim on earth, because he has gotten a heavenly country. The Christian should regard himself as one who has come from heaven to go through the scenes and engagements of earth. This would impart a high and heavenly tone to his character and walk here. The Lord grant that it may be more so with all who name the name of Jesus!

It may be remarked, in conclusion, that the Lord Jesus remedied the fear of His poor disciples by coming into their midst and associating Himself with them in all their circumstances. It was not so much a question of actual deliverance from the matter that caused 41, the fear, but rather raising their souls above it by fellowship with Himself. They forgot 4 the Jews, they forgot their fear, they forgot everything because their souls were occupied with their risen Lord. The " Lord's way is often to leave

His people in trial and to be with them therein. Paul might -

desire to get rid of the thorn; but the answer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee." It is a far richer thing to have the grace and presence of Jesus in the trial, than to be delivered from it. The Lord allowed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be cast into the furnace; but, when He did, He came down and walked with them therein. This was infinitely more gracious of Him and more honorable to them than if He had interposed on their behalf before they were cast in.

May it be our heart's desire to find ourselves in company with the risen Lord as we pass through this trying scene; and then, whether it be the furnace of affliction, or the storm of persecution, we shall have peace; whether it be the bereavement of the heart, the burden of the shoulder, difficulty of the mind, the fear or unbelief of the heart, all will be remedied by fellowship with Him who was

raised from the dead.

## Jordan - Middle East - Dispensationalism: the Editor's Column

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When the Lord Jesus was rejected by the Jews as their Messiah, He foretold that Jerusalem would be destroyed (which came to pass in A.D. 70 by the Roman Empire under Titus), and that there would not be left one stone upon another of that beautiful temple which Herod built (Luke 21:6). He also gave the believing Jews of that day a certain signal when to leave the doomed city - when Jerusalem would be compassed by armies (vv. 20, 21), as was done by the Romans who then withdrew, giving the Christians ample opportunity to flee the city.

He also foretold of the Jewish dispersion, saying, "And they... shall be led away captive into all nations." The destruction of the city and the dispersion of the people was to be followed by a long period of Gentile control of Jerusalem. There was, however, to be an end to this Gentile domination, as the Lord said, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24.

The "times of the Gentiles" is a period which began with the subjugation of the Jews to the Babylonian power under Nebuchadnezzar, which the prophet Daniel described. True, the Jews had a little respite when a remnant were permitted to return under the Persian power, but from Nebuchadnezzar's day forward they had Gentile overlords when they were in the land. And after Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus, the city was to be trodden down of the Gentiles until a moment would come when Gentile supremacy would be overthrown by the Lord Himself, and the Jews be restored to the favored earthly position. No evidence needs to be produced to show that this moment has not come, for Gentiles are the holders of world power yet, even though a remnant of Jews is again in the land. Therefore Jerusalem is still trodden down by the Gentiles.

We are well aware of the fact that Jerusalem is the capital of the new state of Israel, but let it be remembered that the city that is such is not the city of which the Lord Jesus spoke. A new city of Jerusalem has been built in the hills to the west of the former location, but the old city remains in Gentile custody - at present in the hands of the Arabs of Jordan.

To go back a little in history, we might note that the Turk Ottoman Empire ruled supreme in the Middle East, and even in segments of Europe, for centuries. But when the Turkish power in the Middle East was broken toward the close of the World War I by the British army under General Allenby, the area fell under the control of the French and British. They were given mandate powers in the Middle East by the old League of Nations.

The British and French then proceeded to carve the area up into separate countries which they administered. Some of the national boundaries of these small countries were laid out arbitrarily, and with very little logical reason. Some had boundaries which could scarcely be defended, and others had poor distribution of ethnic groups, and others were doomed to be poverty stricken and unable to support a suitable government of their own. All of this has not produced stability or tranquility in the region.

Then when the French and the British withdrew, it created a power vacuum, and left people ill-equipped to manage the autonomous governments. Added to all this, the discontentment of the Arabs gave rise to a tide of nationalism, and resentments against all Western powers. Into this disorganization many local chieftains have appeared on the scene who fanned the flames of Arab nationalism and Pan-Arabism. The greatest and most successful of all these has been Gamel Abdel Nasser of Egypt, who at this writing has captured the imaginations of most Arabs, and is hailed by many as the man of the hour.

Now to retrace a little: At the close of World War I, the British issued the Balfour declaration stating that they looked with favor upon establishing a homeland for Jews in Palestine. This raised bitter resentment and acrimonious charges by the Arabs against the Jews, and on all who looked with favor on a haven for Jews in Palestine. Nevertheless, many Jews immigrated to Palestine, and their numbers increased substantially. Great Britain truly found that Jerusalem and a Jewish homeland was indeed a "burdensome stone," as predicted by the prophet (Zech. 12:3). She found herself in the unenviable position of being able to please neither the Jews nor the Arabs, and both sides attacked British soldiers and civilians.

At length, in 1947, Great Britain passed the matter up to the United Nations for a decision; and in the fall of that year the United Nations reached a decision to partition Palestine and create both a Jewish and an Arab state. Whereupon the British decided to withdraw from Palestine early in 1948, which they did, without setting up any responsible government which could carry on. As soon as British evacuation was completed, the Jews announced a new state of Israel (May 14, 1948). This was the signal for Arab attacks from the north, east, and south in a strong determination to eradicate the new Jewish state before it could get established. The Arab attacks bogged down, however, and an armistice was forced on both sides.

Now all this comes back to the matter of the city of Jerusalem, and who controls it. Before the British departed and the state of Israel was founded, the Jews had access to the old city of Jerusalem. They made regular pilgrimages to the "wailing wall," which was supposed to contain some stones from Solomon's temple. It was 59 feet high and located by the Mohammedan Mosque at the old temple site. Here they made lamentations for the return of the city and of their old glory.

The United Nations' decision to partition the country had left Jerusalem out of both the Jewish and the Arab states, and declared it would be an international zone. It would thus be open to Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians, all of whom look back to Jerusalem as something of a sacred city. The so-called "holy places" in and around Jerusalem were to be of easy access to any of these three major religions of the world. But this international zone never materialized, however, for the so-called Arab legion of the little country of Jordan beat back the Jews from Jerusalem and made a bulge in their line of demarcation, so that Jordan possessed land on the Israel side of the Jordan river.

Conditions have been stalemated in that district, and the Jews even lost the privilege of access to the old city, of weeping and praying at the old wailing wall. Their boast now is that when they regain the wailing wall, it will not be a place of wailing, but of rejoicing. At any rate, it is still plainly evident that the city of which our Lord spoke is yet trodden down of the Gentiles. And the place the Jews want above all other places is that old city with its historic memories, for on Mount Moriah,

where David offered sacrifices and the plague was stayed (1 Chron. 21:18-27) - where mercy rejoiced against judgment - is the only place for the temple to be erected. This desire for the temple location is ingrained in Jewish nature, and indeed it is well founded on Scripture. But for all their intense desire to have it (and what would not world Jewry be willing to pay the Arabs for that spot?) it has been unattainable to them.

The Mohammedans value it and intend to keep it as a sacred spot for their religion, for they claim that Mohammed ascended up to heaven from it. Thus the struggle for the old city and for the temple site goes on.

At the time of this writing, the little nation of Jordan is on the verge of collapse. It is the poorest of the Arab states and the least able to sustain itself. It is torn with strife and intrigue, which is an ever present part of Arab life anyway, and the throne and government could be toppled easily in a matter of minutes if it were not for British and other outside pressure.

What Britain and all the Western powers fear is that if the little indefensible state should collapse, there would be an instant scramble by Israel and nearby Arab states to gather up fragments of Jordanian real estate. It is almost certain that Israel would drive on instantly to straighten out the boundary on its east by pressing to the Jordan river. This would give Israel Jerusalem, the old city, which they so ardently crave.

But the West knows instinctively that none of the Arab states would be willing to let that remain in Israel's hands. An Arab-Israeli war would be almost inevitable. One of the world's statesmen said recently, that an Arab-Israeli war would almost certainly involve all the world's major powers. Russia has nothing to gain by siding with Israel; it is to her advantage to side with the Arabs and so seek to get a share of Middle East oil. And the West has been trying to straddle the fence by seeking to placate the Arabs and yet not give in to the elimination of Israel. The West has been on the horns of a dreadful dilemma for a long time. But if and when the time comes for a struggle between the Arabs and the Israelis, the West will eventually be forced to side with Israel. They would like to revert to a policy of internationalization of the old city of Jerusalem, but it is impossible to predict what they will attempt.

This we do know, that the time is coming when the "beast" - the head of a revived Roman Empire - will go to the aid of Israel and will give them the temple site (for the temple will then be rebuilt), and will guarantee their boundaries (a thing which Israel has been seeking for a long time, but has been unable to get). He with his Western nations will be forced to support Israel in their land. This beast will make a league with them for seven years. It is described in the last verse of Dan. 9 And as surely as God has told us, it will come to pass as it is written. Everything is moving rapidly to the end. Developments point unmistakably to the coming hour of trouble for the world (Rev. 3:10), and "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). It is likely too that when the West goes to Israel's succor and guarantees her territorial integrity, that a verse in Numb. 24 will be fulfilled; "And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also [the owner of the ships] shall perish forever." The "coast of Chittim" describes a country to the west of Palestine, so it could well refer to the coming Roman "beast," or "prince" of Dan. 9:27.

The prophecy of Balaam ends with a long look into the future, for it even points forward to the coming of Christ to reign, and speaks of the "latter end" of Asshur, and says, "Alas, who shall live

when God doeth this!"

We, as instructed Christians, are not waiting for any of these events, for we "wait for the Lord." His coming is at hand. What a glad day it will be for all His redeemed from the earth and the tomb, but what an unparalleled calamity for this poor, Christ-rejecting world. His day of grace has almost vanished. May we warn people to "flee from the wrath to come."

And while the Jews under the beast will have Jerusalem for seven years, the Gentiles will still dominate the scene and will protect the Jewish state by the weight of Western armaments. The "times of the Gentiles" will not end until the Lord comes back with His saints as "King of kings and Lord of lords," and crushes the might and military equipment of the Gentile powers, and overthrows their armies. Then He will establish His power and right to the earth and will give a repentant, Christ-receiving remnant of Israel the "holy city" where they will be able to rest in peace and assured safety (Jer. 46:27).

(The pictures of the Arch of Titus and the remarks on Jerusalem in Prophecy are included in the new 32-page pamphlet, "Israel-the Land and the People," now obtainable at 25c each or \$2.50 per dozen.)

Continued from editorial on dispensationalism in December issue.

A word of explanation and warning should be appended regarding what is sometimes called "hyper-dispensationalism." This is an erroneous view, and some people who hold it have very serious error connected with it. Extreme dispensationalism is of comparatively recent origin, and has for its main tenet that the Church was not formed on the day of Pentecost. Those who hold this view insist that what took place then was only a transitional thing composed of Jews exclusively, and that the Church proper was not formed until later; in fact, until Paul was in Rome. In this way they take away from Christians The Acts of the Apostles and all the epistles Paul wrote before his imprisonment in Rome. A special dispensation for Jews is thus set forth.

It is true that only Jews or Jewish proselytes were in the Church at the beginning, but it was the Church of God formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit at that time. They were all baptized into one body. Later, Samaritans and, subsequently, Gentiles were brought in; the one in Acts 8, and the other in Acts 10. Eph. 2 makes it quite plain that Jews and Gentiles are all in that one body. That which took place in Jerusalem in Acts 2 was not fully understood - not until Paul wrote the epistle to the Ephesians - nevertheless, it was the Church. One would look and search in vain for any formation of a Gentile Church at a subsequent time.

One of the disastrous results of this error is to take away from Christians both baptism and the Lord's supper. These misguided people insist that these two things were only for the Jews of the transitional church; this is not so. Hyper-dispensationalists' rejection of all but the prison epistles of Paul has brought them into some strange incongruities. This may be best explained by an incident that was told to us. One of the preachers of this strange doctrine was speaking one day on Col. 2, which according to their theory is for the Church. When he came to the 12th verse, he read, "Buried with Him in baptism," etc. He then stopped and said, "I do not know why baptism is in Colossians; it should not be there." It did not set with his strange view that Colossians is for the Church, but not baptism.

On another occasion we came in contact with one who had imbibed these extreme views, and he contended that the Lord's supper was not for Gentile Christians. We carefully sought to explain to him the difference between Luke 22, where the Lord instituted the remembrance of Himself in death, and 1 Cor. 11, where the Apostle received the instructions on this memorial from the Lord in glory. In Luke 22, only men partook of the loaf and cup; in Corinthians, men and women. In Luke it is connected with remarks about the coming kingdom, while in Corinthians it is associated with His coming for His saints. At that time, the instructions were to do it until He comes back for us.

This poor brother was so influenced by the error he had been taught, that he pressed the point that 1 Corinthians was written only to Jews; whereupon we asked him to read a verse down in the 12th chapter: "Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led." v. 2. He refused to see it, even though it could not be plainer; these Corinthians had been Gentile idolaters before their conversion. For him, that epistle might just as well not be in his Bible, for he rejected what it said.

But apart from the folly of their erroneous teaching, what can be the state of soul of a true believer who can either refuse to be publicly identified in this world with Him whom it cast out, or be satisfied to not break bread in remembrance of Him who gave Himself for us? The Lord made only one request of us - "This do in remembrance of Me." Shall we carelessly fail to do so, or find some false principle that nullifies it? Far be the thought! He asked one thing of us; shall we fail to respond in that one thing?

Hyper-dispensationalism should not be confused with true dispensationalism which properly evaluates the Lord's promise of returning to take us before the world's judgment falls. May the Lord keep His saints out of the pitfalls on either side, and may the hope of His coming burn more brightly in our souls. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

## Journeys to Jerusalem

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The journey of the wise men from the east, as we read it in Matt. 2, and the journey of the queen of the south, as we have it in 2 Chron. 9, shine with something of a kindred beauty and significance before us. They, all of them, go to Jerusalem, but the wise men of the east began their journey under the sign or preaching of the star; the queen of the south began hers simply on the ground of a report which had reached her in the distant land. For, at times the Lord has visited and guided His elect by signs, visible tokens, dreams, voices, angelic visits, and the like-at times He has simply caused them to hear a report, as in the case of this illustrious lady. But let Him address us as He may, faith is cognizant of His voice, as in these cases. "My sheep hear My voice,... and they follow Me."

The wise men went to worship, and took offerings with them; the queen of the south went to inquire at wisdom's gate, and to learn lessons of God; and, trafficking for that which was more precious than gold or rubies, she took with her of the choicest treasures of her kingdom.

The journey of the wise men is rich in illustrations of the life of faith. But Jerusalem did not satisfy them. They had to go on to Bethlehem to reach the object of their faith. In the earlier journey of the queen of the south, Jerusalem answered all expectations. In it we may find some striking moral characteristics which carry several helpful and significant admonitions to our own souls.

In the first place, I observe that the report which had reached her touching the king in Jerusalem, at once makes her dissatisfied with her present condition, wealthy though it was, and honorable in no common measure. For she sets out immediately, leaving behind her own royal estate with all its advantages in the flesh and in the world. The fact of her journey bespeaks the uneasiness and dissatisfaction which tidings about Solomon and Jerusalem had awakened.

This speaks in our ears. It tells us of the operation upon our hearts which the report that has gone abroad about a greater than Solomon should produce. In like spirit, to this day, the quickened soul, under the report it has received about Jesus, is convicted and made restless in that condition in which nature has left us, and this report has found us. We have been upset by it-turned out of all the ease and satisfaction which we before may have taken in ourselves and our circumstances or our character.

But, again. As soon as this elect lady reached Jerusalem, she set herself to survey all the estate of the king there. She comes on that business, and she does it. She is not idle. She acquaints herself with everything. She puts her hard questions to the king, listens to his wisdom, and surveys his glories. The very sitting and apparel of his servants did not escape her-nor surely did the ascent by which he went up to the house of God.

This again speaks in our ears. When we reach Jesus, our souls make Him their object. We learn Him, we talk of Him, we search the secrets of His grace and glory. We carry the sense of this one thing, that our business is with Him. He is our object.

But, third. After this stranger-queen had acquainted herself with all that belonged to the king in Zion, she was satisfied. Her soul was satisfied as with marrow and fatness. She knew not what to make of herself. She did not understand her new condition. The joy was overwhelming. The half had not been told her, she says; and Solomon exceeded the fame that had reached her about him. There was no more spirit in her. She returned to her land and to her people, filled. She left Solomon as the woman of Sychar left Jesus- emptied of all beside, but filled and satisfied with her newfound treasure.

Such had been her wondrous path. Her journey had begun in the restless, uneasy sense of need, all her former fair surface of flattering circumstances being broken up. She had acquainted herself with the vast, mysterious treasures of the place where her journey had led her; she had done this carefully, with a heart only the more engaged and interested as she went onward in her search. She ended her journey, or returned to her own land, as one filled to the very brim of all her expectations and desires.

The journey from the south to Jerusalem, recorded in the New Testament, has much the same characters. I mean that of the eunuch of Ethiopia, in Acts 8.

He begins his journey as with an unsettled conscience. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship-but he left the city of solemnities, that city of the temple and service of God, with its priesthood and ordinances, still unsettled - and we see him an anxious inquirer on his way from Jerusalem to the southern Gaza. Nothing in that center of religious provisions and observances had given rest to the soul. He was dissatisfied with the worship he had been rendering there. His conscience was not purged. He had as yet no answer for God. There was no rest in his spirit. Jerusalem, I may say, had disappointed him, as it had the wise men.

But if, like the queen of Sheba, he were at first, on starting on his way, uneasy and dissatisfied, like her he was deeply engaged with what God was providing for him through His witnesses and representatives. The Word of God was addressing his soul. The prophet Isaiah was taking him out of himself. He started not at the surprise of the stranger's voice in that desert place. All he cared for, all he thought of, was the secret of the Book. He was inspecting that witness of God's grace, as the queen had once inspected Solomon's estate, the witness of glory. And Philip let him into the secret that he was searching.

And then he is satisfied. His heart, like hers, is filled with what had now been discovered to him. He pursues the second stage of his journey, from Gaza to Ethiopia, "rejoicing." Philip may leave him, but he can do without him. The woman of Sychar may again leave her waterpot, and find Jesus everything to her. With a soul satisfied as with marrow and fatness, he can go on his way. Another returns to the south, to Sheba or Ethiopia, with a heart rich in the discoveries he had made on this his visit to Jerusalem.

These kindred characteristics are easily traced in these narratives. But it was rather conscience that set the eunuch on his journey; it was desire that moved the queen. And she came in contact with glory in the court and estate of Solomon -he with grace, in the words of the prophet Isaiah. But whether God addresses us with a revelation of His grace or of His glory, whether He addresses the conscience or the heart, it is His high and divine prerogative to satisfy us, as He does these two distinguished individuals. He satiates the soul with a manifestation of Himself, let that

manifestation take what form it may, or adapt itself to whatever exigency or demand of the soul it please. And such satisfaction we get differently, but very blessedly, exemplified in these two cases.

And let me add one other feature that is common to both. Their spirit was free of all grudging. The queen surveyed the glories of Solomon, and she could look on his higher, more eminent and excellent estate, without the stir of one single jealous, envious movement. She was too happy for that. She could congratulate the king in Zion, and his servants that waited on him, and his people who heard his wisdom, and return home as one that was privileged only to visit him; but she begrudged them not the richer portion they were enjoying. Her own share of blessing filled her, though her vessel was comparatively small. And so the eunuch, I am full sure. He was willing to be a debtor to Philip-to know that it is the less that is blessed of the better. Be it so, his spirit would say. He was happy, he was filled; and if there was no void in his spirit, so we may assure ourselves, there was no grudging there.

What joy there ought to be as we look at such samples of divine workmanship! The soul disturbed by reason of its own condition - fixed in earnest searching after Christ-satisfied by the discovery of Him- and then too happy to dwell amid the tumults and jarrings of that nature that lusts to envy! And how noiselessly the process is conducted! It goes on in the spirit of a man by the power that works after the pattern of the wind that blows where it lists, but whence it comes and whither it goes we know not.

I have, however, another thought upon this subject of the journeys to Jerusalem. At times we find, as in the case of the queen of Sheba, that that great city answered all the expectations that had been formed by the heart respecting it. But Jerusalem has at times grievously disappointed the heart. It did, as I may say again, the wise men from the east, who went there looking for the King of the Jews. They had to pass it and put themselves on another journey, down to Bethlehem in the south. It disappointed the eunuch also, as I have observed.

He had gone there to worship, but he left unsatisfied in spirit, and searching for the rest which, as we saw, all the religious provisions of that city of the temple and priesthood did not, could not, give him. And I may add, it disappointed the Lord Jesus likewise. Instead of finding His welcome and His place there, He had to weep over it and to pronounce its doom, and meet there in His own Person what we may here rather remember than mention.

It will, however, in-the last days, as it were, revive and take again the character that it fulfilled in the first days. It will answer all the richest expectations of those multitudes who will then, like the queen of the south, go up there to see the King in His beauty. The highways will then be thronged with joyous visitors, and the hearts of the thousands of the nations will repeat again what they have found in the holy city. "All nations shall flow into it," as we read; "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He shall teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." And again we read: "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." And again: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:

whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD." (Isa. 2:2, 3; Zech. 14:16; Psalm 122:1-4.) These are among the divine, inspired witnesses of the satisfying virtue of these journeys to the city of the great King in the day of the kingdom, when the pledge which the journey of the queen of Sheba has given us shall be blessedly redeemed in the joy of the hearts of the thousands of the nations who, in the coming day of Zion's restoration, shall wait there to do willing service to the Lord of the earth.

The sequel then is simply weighed. Journeys to Jerusalem either satisfy or disappoint; and it is the Lord Himself who has to determine which. His glory was at that time displayed or reflected there, and therefore her visit satisfied the queen of Sheba; His grace was not then ministered or testified there, and therefore his visit disappointed the eunuch of Ethiopia. And thus the value of that city of solemnities was to be measured by the presence of Christ there.

And so, let me say, of all ordinances and services: Jerusalem is but a "city of the Jebusites," if Jesus be not the life and glory of it. It is "the joy of the whole earth," if He be. So too with mount Sinai or Horeb. It is but "mount Sinai in Arabia," or it takes the dignity of "the mount of God," according as the Lord adopts it or not. The ordinances of the law were "shadows of good things to come," the furniture of God's "beautiful house," or mere "beggarly elements," as Christ used them or disowned them.

## Justification

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There are three parties to my justification: God, Christ, and myself. On God's part there is grace - "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24); on Christ's part there is His blood - "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5:9); on my part there is faith - "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). Grace is the source, blood the basis, and faith the principle of my justification. This being so, what credit and glory God and His blessed Son get, and what full blessing is the portion of the non-working but believing sinner! And we learn elsewhere that we cannot take any credit for our faith, for it is "the gift of God."

## Known and Searched

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"O LORD, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising." And in verse 3, "Thou... art acquainted with all my ways." Now think for a moment of the intimate knowledge God has of all our actions. It is very solemn, and it is not a pleasant thing for a sinner to learn; but it is the very first step to blessing, and ends in nothing but blessing.

The Psalm divides itself into two parts - from the first to the thirteenth verse, and from the fourteenth to the end. In the first part the soul finds itself thoroughly known and exposed, and the desire is to get away from God. This is found to be impossible. Then, when it is fairly driven into a corner, it learns God's heart and works, and the result is praise.

Have you ever observed that God condescends to mark every little circumstance connected with you, that He has to say to little things as well as big? Even the seed you sow in your fields is quickened by God. Each individual seed is acted on by His power. I have been struck with this lately in reading Deut. 22:6 and 7. Think of God telling the Israelites what to do with a bird's nest! Here we read, in the second verse, that He understands our thoughts. Now men are sometimes ashamed of their actions, and do not like to have them known; but what do you think of your thoughts being exposed? No one would like that. Well, God knows them all. "Thou... understandest my thought afar off." And again, "There is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, Thou knowest it altogether." The result of finding this out is simply to make one honest with God.

In verse 5 we read, "Thou hast beset me behind and before." The presence of God is everywhere. All around you, wherever you go, you are never out of it, though you may not be consciously there. You may desire to get away from it, but it is impossible. You cannot get away. Even darkness cannot hide from Him; "The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." It is thus the soul is compelled to have to do with God. If you do not, be assured of this, you must have to do with Him hereafter. Do you remember the two thieves? One of them was honest about himself in time. He condemned himself, and acknowledged the judgment that had overtaken him as just, and "the due reward" of his deeds. He turned to the Lord Jesus, who hung on the cross beside him, acknowledged Him as Lord, and got far more than he asked - an entrance into paradise that day in company with the Lord Himself. Depend upon it, having to do with God is the beginning of blessing. Saul, in Acts 9, was brought into the conscious presence of God. There he learned what he was and what he had done, and that the One against whom he had sinned was his Savior. Thus he was converted.

In verse 14 of our Psalm, we have, "I will praise Thee," etc. Many can talk of God as Creator, but it is another thing to talk of Him as Redeemer..

Here the soul not only knows and speaks of His works, but knows His thoughts, and finds them precious. What do we know about His thoughts and heart? We get them unfolded in John 3:16 - "God so loved," etc. The gospel all comes from God's side. The rejecters of it are reckoned among the "fearful" in Rev. 21:8. If God would save sinners, He must do it in a righteous way. Judgment

must fall on another. The cross of Christ shows this. He was obedient unto death; and He was the only One of whom that could ever have been said. It is no obedience for us to die. We have no right to live. He had; He had never forfeited His life; it was His own. But. in Isa. 53 we read that it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and that the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all. This was the work of redemption, and God thinks so much of it that He raised Him from the dead and set Him on His own throne.

In verse 23 of our Psalm, we have one who knows God's thoughts, and what is his language? "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts," etc. Am I now afraid of His making any discoveries, or His heart being turned from me?

No. We have many discoveries to make about ourselves. God has none. He knew us when we had done our worst. He knows all.

## Labor and Conflict: Exposition on Nehemiah

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Before entering upon this chapter, it may be helpful to the reader to point out the structure of the book. Up to chapter 7:5, we have Nehemiah's personal narrative from the time he first heard of the affliction and reproach of the remnant in Judea, and of the desolate condition of Jerusalem, until the completion of the building of the wall, etc. The remainder of chapter 7 contains "a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first." The portion included in chapters 8 to 10 gives the reading of the law by Ezra, and the effect of it as seen in the confession of sins, and the making a covenant to keep the law and all the observances of the house of God; and this part of the book, if written by Nehemiah, is not written in the first person singular, as in the former part; but it is "we" did this or that. (See chap. 10:30, 32, 34, etc.)

Coming now to chapter 11, we find an account of how the people were distributed, both in Jerusalem and in the cities of Judah, with their genealogies, followed in chapter 12:1-26 by a list of the priests that went up with Zerubbabel and Jeshua, and also of the Levites who were recorded chief of the fathers at certain periods. In chapter 12:27-43 we have the dedication of the wall; and the chapter closes with the appointment of some "over the chambers for the treasures," and with an account of the duties and maintenance of the singers and porters. The last chapter (13) is taken up with a description of the abuses Nehemiah found on his return to Jerusalem after a visit to the king at Babylon, and of the vigorous efforts he made for their correction; and this chapter, as well as the ceremony for the dedication of the wall, is written by Nehemiah himself, as it is an account of what he himself saw and did.

Returning again to chapter 11, the first two verses, it will be observed, are distinct - complete in themselves. "The rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem." "The city," we have before been told, "was large and great: but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded." Chap. 7:4. In truth it was at this time little else than a desolate heap of ruins; and for the people at large, therefore, there was no means of subsistence. But as it had ever been the seat of authority, and still "the holy city," the rulers, who would also be men of substance, would naturally fix their abode within its sacred walls; for, if they were men of faith, they would view it not as it actually existed before their eyes, but as it would be in a future day - as "the city of the great King" - and, as such, "the perfection of beauty," "the joy of the whole earth." Still there was need for people as well as for rulers; and thus "the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts to dwell in other cities." Besides these, there were others "that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem," and of these it is said, "the people blessed" them. Those on whom the lot fell went of necessity; but those who willingly offered themselves were moved by their own choice and affection.

This spontaneous offering of themselves could only spring from love to the place which God had desired and chosen for His habitation, and was therefore evidence that they had in some measure entered into the mind and heart of God. "They shall prosper," says the Psalmist, "that love thee" - Jerusalem - because indeed it showed a heart in communion with the heart of God. So with these

men who offered themselves; for it was as precious to Jehovah, albeit He had sent Nebuchadnezzar to level it to the ground, in the day of its desolations as in that of its prosperity and splendor. It was as true in the time of Nehemiah as in that of Solomon, that "The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob"; and hence it must have been acceptable to Jehovah Himself when these men expressed their desire to dwell at Jerusalem. The people seem to have understood this, for they blessed those who thus came forward. If they had not the energy to do the same thing, they could not help admiring those who had; and, comprehending the privilege they would enjoy, they were constrained to bless them. They might have remembered the words of one of their own psalms - "Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; in whose heart are the ways.... Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." Psa. 84:5-7. How often it is seen, even now, that there are believers who can admire the blessedness of devotedness to Christ and His interests without having the heart or courage to pursue the same path for themselves!

In the next place, we have a description of the distribution of the people. (See also 1 Chron. 9:2-16.) In Jerusalem there were, besides priests and Levites, children of Judah and children of Benjamin (vv. 4, 10, etc.), while in the cities there were "Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinim, and the children of Solomon's servants."

We may briefly glance at the details. Of Judah there were in the holy city "four hundred threescore and eight valiant men" - all "sons of Perez" or Pharez; that is, they were traced back to the son of Judah as evidence that they could show their genealogy. Of Benjamin there were nine hundred and twenty-eight. Of these, "Joel the son of Zichri was their overseer: and Judah the son of Senuah was second over the city." We find here abundant confirmation of the fact that, apart from the priests and Levites, only the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, or representatives of these, were brought back from Babylon. That there might have been individual members of other tribes - such, for example, as Anna who was of "the tribe of Aser" (Luke 2:36) - in no wise affects this statement. As tribes, Judah and Benjamin only were restored; and thus the remaining ten tribes are "lost" to this day, hidden, in the ways of God, among the peoples of the earth; but the time is fast approaching, though it may be not until after the appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, when they will be brought out of their hiding place and set in security and blessing in their own land under the peaceful sway of their glorious Messiah. (See Jer. 29:14; 31; Eze. 20:33-44.)

Attention may also be directed to the care with which the genealogy of the people is stated. This, indeed, is of all importance to the saints of God, and especially to God's ancient people. For seventy years they had been in Babylon; and, knowing ourselves the influence of such a scene, it had been no wonder if they had settled down in the country to which they had been exiled, if, in the pursuits and occupations of their daily lives, they, or at least their children born in Babylon, had forgotten the land of their birth, and ceased to remember Jerusalem above their chief joy, and had lost their nationality by commingling with the Gentiles. The record of their genealogy shows that they had not done so, that they had continued to prize their descent from Abraham as their chiefest heritage, because it had put them among a people favored of Jehovah, and in the midst of whom He Himself had dwelt. These, therefore, were not like Esau, who despised his birthright; but they clung to it, amid all their tribulation and reproach, as their divinely-given title to all their national expectations and hopes.

It is a great thing for saints at any time to preserve the record of their genealogy. The Jew did it by guarding the written testimony to his descent; the Christian can only do so by walking in obedience, in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, who alone can enable us to cry "Abba, Father," and who Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Moreover, the presentation of their title was a necessity (see Ezra 2:59, 62) for the admission of their claim to dwell in the holy city; and as in Ezra so here (and we would emphasize the fact) the responsibility of producing the title rested on those who made the claim. It is well to remember this in a day of profession, when all alike, on the ground of that profession, assert their rights to the most blessed privileges of Christianity, and look upon it as a proof of narrowness and lack of charity if their demands are not instantly recognized. Many such may be really the children of God; only let it be remembered that on them lies the burden of proving it, and that proving it is an indispensable condition of its acknowledgment.

From verse 10 to verse 14, we have the account of the priests, the genealogy of the chief of whom is also carefully stated. All together they numbered eleven hundred and fifty-two. Of these Seraiah was "the ruler of the house of God," while no less than eight hundred and twenty-two were occupied in the work of the house. This was a blessed privilege, whether for the former or the latter, whatever the responsibilities connected with the respective offices which had been assigned to them in the grace of God. There are "rulers" of the house of God still, but none can rightly fill the post unless they are possessors of the necessary qualifications. (See, for example, 1 Tim. 3:1-7.) All may now assist in doing the work of the house, if they are living according to their priestly place in the holiest; for the work in this case was that which belonged to them as priests, and only those who are filling their priestly office can rightly be engaged in priestly service.

The Levites follow the priests (vv. 15-18); but altogether they only numbered two hundred fourscore and four. Among these were some who "had the oversight of the outward business of the house of God." Only the priests could minister at the altar, or in the holy places; still the Levites had a blessed place of service. They were originally given to Aaron (Christ) for the service of the tabernacle (Numb. 3) for all the work of the house of God outside of the priestly office. At the present time believers are both priests and Levites; for when they are in the holiest offering through Christ the sacrifice of praise to God, or when they "do good" and "communicate," they are acting as priests (Hob 13:15. 16); and when occupied for the Lord in other kinds of service, they exhibit rather the Levitical character.

There is indeed the same distinction in the Church of God: bishops - that is, those who answer to these as described in the epistles (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1) - are rulers in the house of God, corresponding with Seraiah (v. 11); while deacons (see Acts 6, etc.) are, like these Levites, engaged in the "outward business" of the assembly. Then one is specially mentioned, though others were associated with him, who was "the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer." There is nothing like this in the service of the Levites in the wilderness, for indeed the wilderness was not a place of song or praise; but this office dates from the time of David, who "appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to record, and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel." Thereon we read that "on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren." (1 Chron. 16:4-7; also chap. 25:1-7.) This will explain why Mattaniah's (v. 17) genealogy is traced back to Asaph, and is at the same time evidence of the care exercised to restore the service of praise "after the ordinance of David

king of Israel." (Ezra 3:10; Neh. 12:24.) All this was in harmony with the dispensation which then obtained; but now that the hour has come when the true worshipers worship the Father in spirit and in truth (John 4:23), only such as are led of the Holy Spirit can "begin the thanksgiving in prayer." (Eph. 5:18, 19.)

Besides the Levites, there are mentioned "the porters,... and their brethren that kept the gates," numbering a hundred and seventy-two, and the singers of the sons of Asaph that were "over the business of the house of God." vv. 19-22. Parenthetically it is noted that "the residue of Israel, of the priests, and the Levites, were in all the cities of Judah, every one in his inheritance. But the Nethinim dwelt in Ophel: and Ziha and Gispa were over the Nethinim." vv. 20, 21. Without going into particulars, it may be pointed out that all these details are given to show how complete for the moment was the restoration of divine order in the holy things of Jehovah's house among these children of the captivity. Man's will had wrought long enough; and now, once more back in the land of their fathers, the land of promise and hope, their one desire is that Jehovah alone should govern - that everything should be in accordance with His Word. But in the midst of this beautiful revival, there are remembrances of their sad condition in contrast with the past. Gentile authority is noticed even in connection with the house of God. Thus, after the introduction of the singers of the sons of Asaph, who were over the business of the house of God, it is added, "For it was the king's commandment concerning them, that a certain portion should be for the sinners., due for every day. And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabeel, of the children of Zera the son of Judah, was at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people." vv. 23, 24.

It was sad beyond all expression that the singers in the temple of the Lord should be dependent for support upon a Gentile monarch. They were Levites, and it was intended that they should be sustained by the willing-hearted contributions of the people (see Deut. 12:11, 12; 26:12, 13), forasmuch as they had no part or inheritance with their brethren of the children of Israel. But the people who had returned from Babylon were few in number; they themselves with their cattle were subject to the pleasure of alien rulers; they were servants in the land God had given to their fathers, and altogether were in great distress. (Chap. 9:36, 37.) It was not possible for them therefore to provide for these singers; and while God in His mercy had given them some reviving in the midst of their bondage, He would have them remember that their present condition was the fruit of their past ways, and that, since it was through the chastenings of His hand that they were subject to Gentile authority, it was a part of their obedience to His will that it should be acknowledged. Alas! the sentence of Lo-ammi had been written upon them (Hos. 1:9), though God, being what He was, could not but abide faithful to the covenant which He had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Hence He still loved and watched over the people, for His gifts and calling are without repentance; but having, on account of their manifold transgressions, transferred His earthly sovereignty to the Gentiles, the people must render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

It was the position of the people, restored by God's mercy. with the permission of the Gentile authority, and still subject. that rendered it necessary for the king to be acquainted with all the matters that concerned them; and Pethahiah was at his hand to give the required information - the representative, at it were, of his people. It is a shadow, however feeble, of Him who is at the right hand of God, gone into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us. How blessed for us to remember that there is one at the right hand of God in all matters concerning the people He has

redeemed - One who has undertaken everything for us, and who is able to save us through all the difficulties and perils of the wilderness, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for us.

The rest of the chapter comprises a statement of the location of the children of Judah in the different cities and villages, and also of the children of Benjamin. The former dwelt from Beersheba unto the valley of Hirmom (v. 30); the latter, in the several places named; and of the Levites were divisions in Judah and in Benjamin. These notices, of little significance to us, will doubtless be consulted with intense interest by the Jews of a later day.

#### Labor and Conflict: Exposition on Nehemiah

This chapter is divided into two parts: the first, reaching down to verse 26, deals with genealogical matters; the second, extending to verse 3 of chapter 13, contains the account of the dedication of the wall, together with certain reformations that seem either to have been connected with or to have followed upon it.

The chapter commences with the names of the priests and Levites that went up with Zerubbabel and Jeshua; that is (the reader will remember), those who went up in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia. (See Ezra 1 and 2.) The names only of "the chief of the priests and of their brethren," in the days of Jeshua, are given. Next we find the chief of the Levites, with Mattaniah, who was over the thanksgiving, he and his brethren; also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren who were over against them in their watches (vv. 8, 9).

It is worthy of note, in passing, what a prominent place praise and thanksgiving occupied in the Jewish ritual. The Psalm abundantly testify to this - many are filled with notes of adoration, and some commence and close with Hallelujah - "Praise ye the Lord." (See Psalm 148-150) The believer is enjoined in everything to give thanks; and yet it is a question whether praise (which can only be known in its full and blessed character in redemption) marks the assemblies of the saints as distinctly as it should. Not that it is to be supposed, even for a moment, that the notes of praise can be raised by any sense of obligation; they can only indeed spring from the hearts made "merry" by the enjoyment of redeeming love in the power of the Holy Ghost.

In verses 12-21 the names of the chief of the fathers (priests) in the days of Joiakim are recorded. Joiakim was the son of Jeshua (v. 10). Then in verse 22 we have the statement that "the Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, were recorded chief of the fathers: also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian." Comparing this with verses 10 and 11, we find that this goes five generations down from Jeshua; that, in other words, the above names are the high-priestly line of descent to the fifth generation from Jeshua. "The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, were written in the book of the Chronicles, even until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib"; that is, only so far as the great-grandson of Jeshua. Then the offices of some of the Levites are specified; namely, to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David, the man of God, ward over against ward, others being "porters keeping the ward at the thresholds of the gates." (vv. 24, 25.) The names of some of these correspond with some mentioned in verses 8 and 9, the reason of this being given in the next verse: "These were in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe." It would seem as if God had a special delight in those who were occupied in the service of His house in this time of sorrow, when it required more faith and more

spiritual energy to be devoted to the interests of His people. He has caused these names to be recorded - recorded, no doubt, mainly for Israel, yet containing lessons for us whose lot is cast in similar times. True that there was failure, very sad failure, with some here named; but in the eye of God, while He is never insensible to the failure of His people, they were robed with the beauty which He in His own grace had put upon them; and, in the preservation of their names, He would remember nothing but the fact of their service amidst His people in this sorrowful period of their low estate.

Passing now to the second part of the chapter, we have the dedication of the wall. From the place it occupies, it will at once be seen that the subjects of the latter part of the book are given in their moral rather than in their historical connection. It has already been pointed out that from chapter 7 on to chapter 12:31, Nehemiah, if he is the writer, no longer describes his own actions. In this portion it is "we" or "they," not "I." It might seem therefore that the dedication of the wall belongs historically to the first section of the book - to chapter 6, wherein we find the account of the completion of the building of the wall. But when the order of the intervening chapters is considered - the restoration of the authority of the law, the confession of the sins of the people, and of their fathers, the covenant made to walk according to the law, and to make provision for the services of the temple, etc.; the distribution of the people in Jerusalem and around, the ordering of all the affairs of the house of God under priests and Levites, according to the commandment of David the man of God - it will be perceived that morally it is inserted in its only fitting place. Taking all these things together, indeed, we have the pattern of all divine reformation. The commencement was made with the people themselves; then they proceeded to God's house, and finally to the walls of the city. They worked from within to without; thus, beginning from themselves, they worked outward to the circumference of their responsibility. And such is ever the true method, even as Paul writes: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Rom. 12:2. We shall find this order also illustrated in the procedure connected with the dedication itself.

First of all, the Levites were sought "out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps." The "sons of the singers" were also collected from their different places of abode (for they "had builded them villages round about Jerusalem") to aid in the observances of this eventful day (vv. 27-29). Next we read, "And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall." v. 30. Here again is the order (and it is most instructive) to which reference has been made; and we may also learn that unless we have "purified" ourselves, it is vain for us to attempt to "purify" others. This truth is everywhere affirmed in Scripture. For example, it would be impossible for any whose own feet were not washed (John 13) to wash the feet of their fellow believers; and the Lord Himself taught, that before we can take the mote out of our brother's eye, the beam must be taken out of our own eye. It is exceedingly interesting therefore to observe that the priests and Levites purified themselves as a necessary preparation for purifying the people, the gates, and the wall. (See also 2 Chron. 29:5; 35:6.)

The means of purification must be gathered from other scriptures. In the wilderness the priests had to wash their hands and feet at the laver every time they went in to accomplish their service (Exod. 30:17-21), and in the ashes of the red heifer, provision was made for all kinds of defilement that might be contracted in their daily life and walk by the people (Numb. 19). Now, as already

indicated, a provision of another and more efficacious sort has been made. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father\_ Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1. When therefore, through carelessness, or through the allowance of the flesh we fall into sin and become defiled, He in His love and mercy intercedes with the Father for us on the ground of what He is as the Righteous One, and of His perfect propitiation; and in answer to His advocacy the Spirit of God works, through the Word, in the conscience of the defiled believer, produces self-judgment and contrition, and leads to confession, whereon God is faithful and just to forgive the sin and to cleanse from all unrighteousness. Thus the believer is "purified," restored to communion, and so divinely qualified to be sent forth in service to others. It cannot be too earnestly pressed, that in order to be used in any way we must ourselves be "purified" from defilements.

This then was the first thing attended to on this day of the dedication of the wall. In the next place, two companies were arranged by Nehemiah (the reader will notice his reappearance) to make, as it would seem, the circuit of the walls. The first was composed of Hoshaiah, half the princes of Judah, together with certain whose names are given (vv. 32-34), and certain of the priests' sons with trumpets. Of the last, Zechariah (whose descent is traced back to Asaph) was the chief, for he and his brethren had charge of the "musical instruments of

David the man of God." (See 1 Chron. 15:16, 17; 25:6.) Ezra, the scribe, was the leader of this company; he was "before them." The composition of the other company is not given with such detail. Nehemiah says: "The other company of them that gave thanks went over against them [that is, we judge, on the opposite wall to the other company], and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall." And then, after describing the line of the procession, he says, "They stood still in the prison gate." It appears as if the two companies, starting at different points, proceeded to make the circuit of the walls until they met; as Nehemiah, after giving the route of each of the companies, says: "So stood the two companies of them that gave thanks in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers with me: and the priests; Eliakim, Maaseiah," etc., "with trumpets." vv. 40-42. If this were so, the service of the day took place after the procession was ended, as the statement follows: "And the singers sang loud, with Jezrahiah their overseer. Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off." vv. 42, 43.

Examining a little the details given, there were, we find, those who gave thanks, those who had trumpets, and those who sang; besides this, sacrifices were offered, and all rejoiced. Thanksgivings would seem to have been most prominent, and this is easily understood when it is remembered what the completion of the building of the wall meant for this poor remnant. Truly it was in "troubulous times" that it had been built; and, as we have seen, amid opposition and difficulties of every sort, inspired as their enemies had been by the malice of Satan. But encouraged by the indomitable energy of their leader, they had persevered, and now their work was completed; the walls of the city were once more raised for the security of those who dwelt within, and for the exclusion of evil as displayed in their enemies round about. Thanksgiving therefore was but the natural and appropriate feeling on this day of dedication.

Observe also that there were trumpets (vv. 35, 41). These were carried by the priests; for they alone, as those who had access into the presence of God, and might be thus in communion with

His mind, had the privilege of raising the notes of testimony through the sacred trumpets (Numb. 10). This day of dedication was for God; but whenever the claims of God are responded to in the energy of the Holy Spirit, testimony for Him also proceeds from His people. For example, when the saints gather together on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20), it is in response to His desire who said, "This do in remembrance of Me." It is for Him therefore they gather, for Him, without a thought of others. And yet as often as they eat the bread and drink the cup, they announce the Lord's death "till He come"; that is, though they gather in remembrance of the Lord, and, while thus occupied, their hearts are led forth in thanksgiving and adoration, they yet, by the very thing in which they are engaged, proclaim to all the Lord's death. The trumpets are in this way associated with their notes of praise. There were also musical instruments and singing. The singers indeed "sang loud," or, as it is in the margin, made their voices to be heard.

They thus, by the musical instruments and their songs, expressed their joy before the Lord. The character of this is given in the next verse in connection with the sacrifices; for they remembered again on this festival that the only ground on which they could stand before God, though it were to thank and praise His holy name, was the efficacy of the sacrifice. Joy could therefore flow out, and it was joy of no ordinary kind; for "God had made them rejoice with great joy." Nothing could be more blessed. Our poor hearts long for joy, and are ever tempted to seek it from human sources, only to find that it is both unsatisfying and evanescent. Hence the Apostle writes: "Be not drunk with wine" (type of the joys of earth), "wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Eph. 5:18, 19. Such was the joy of the children of Israel on this day; for it had its source in God, and He it was who had filled their hearts with thanksgivings and their lips with praise. They had, we might say, sown in tears; and now they were reaping with joy.

Mark also that all classes of the people participated in it. It is expressly said, "The wives also and the children rejoiced." This was precious to the heart of God; for the wives and children were numbered among His people (compare Eph. 5 and 6), and why should they be excluded from the gladness of this day? They had been assembled also with the congregation at the reading of the law (chap. 8); and indeed it is a characteristic both of this book and Ezra (see chap. 10), that the women and children were present in all the great assemblies of the people. The effect of their rejoicing was great, for we read that "the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off." v. 43. It went forth into the midst of their enemies as a mighty testimony to Him by whose grace they had been rescued from Babylon, and by whose protection and succor they had now been permitted to re-erect the walls of the holy city. They were proving anew that the joy of the Lord was their strength, both for praise and for testimony. And it is added that "Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited" (or stood), that stood in their places of service in the temple. It was joy to Judah to behold the services of the house of God restored, and the priests and Levites engaged in the work of their office.

In connection with the ceremonies of the dedication, some necessary things were attended to in the house of God; it says, "At that time" - not perhaps on the same day, but "at that time" - the time following upon the dedication of the wall. What they did was to appoint some "over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited." v. 44. There was evidently a continual tendency to neglect

the concerns of the house of God, and together with this the priests and the Levites were overlooked. It was so on the first return of the captives (Hag. 1); and it was so in every time of declension, as it has been also in every age of the Church. Ceasing to care for the house of Jehovah, the maintenance of the priests and Levites enjoined by the law was not forthcoming; for all were minding their own things, and not the things of the Lord. But when their hearts were touched by the goodness of God in permitting them to complete the wall, they at once remembered the ministers of their God, and again (see chap. 10:37-39) made provision for them. This is how God works in the low estate of His people. Granting them a revival, it may be under the power of some special truth, they, acted upon by the new impulse they have thus received, proceed to correct by the application of the Word the abuses that have sprung up on every hand. So it was in this case; and hence we find that the singers and the porters were also arranged, who "kept the ward of their God, and the ward of the purification, according to the commandment of David, and of Solomon his son. For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God." vv. 45, 46. They recall how it was in the beginning of the temple services, and their desire now was to be conformed to the original model. This is an abiding principle; for it is only by testing everything by what was at the beginning that we can discover the extent of our departure, and it is only by going back to it that we can be in harmony with the mind of God.

Moreover, we read: "And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters, every day his portion: and they sanctified holy things unto the Levites; and the Levites sanctified them unto the children of Aaron." This can hardly be more than a general statement (see chaps. 10:37-39; 13:10) to the effect that there were times, during the periods named, when all Israel owned and met their obligations to these servants of the house of their God. Their failure is not here recorded; that has to be gleaned from the other parts of the book. Here it is only remembered that all Israel had cared for God's ministers of His sanctuary.

Last, we are told that "on that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people"; and that when they found therein that "the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God forever," etc. (Deut. 23:3, 4), "they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude." (Chap. 13:1-3.) Again and again they had thus separated themselves (Ezra 10; Neh. 9:2, etc.), and again and again did "the holy seed" mingle "themselves with the people of those lands." In truth, then as now, alliance with the world was the most successful snare of Satan; and hence there has ever been need for vigilance and for the enforcement of the truth of separation unto God. But there is a special reason for the introduction of this subject in this connection. The meaning of the wall, as pointed out more than once, is exclusion of evil, separation of God's people from other nations (for us, from the world - from evil, whether in the world or in the Church), and thus to be set apart to God. When we read, therefore, of Israel's purging themselves from the mixed multitude, we see that they were simply maintaining the truth of the wall; that, together with its dedication, they felt themselves bound to carry out into practice all that its completion signified. The reader will not fail to perceive the force of the term "the mixed multitude." It was the mixed multitude that "fell a lusting" in the wilderness, and so became a hindrance and a curse to Israel; and ever since that day, whether in Israel or in the Church, they have been the source of almost all the evils that have afflicted the saints. It is among the mixed multitude that Satan ever finds ready

instruments to his hands wherewith he may disturb, harass, and ensnare God's people; so the only pathway of safety is to follow the example of Israel before us in separating from it.

#### Labor and Conflict: Exposition on Nehemiah

It is impossible now to determine the chronological place of the occurrences of this chapter. We are told only that "before this" Eliashib was allied unto Tobiah, and had been on great terms of intimacy with him, and that during this time Nehemiah was not at Jerusalem (v. 6). "Before this" would mean before the separation from the mixed multitude (v. 3); and hence the probability is that the dedication of the wall had been delayed through the absence of the governor, and that, if this were so, the events described here took place prior to the services in connection with the dedication of the wall. This however is of no consequence, for, as before intimated, what we have to seek is the moral and not the historical order. Interpreting the connection thus, there is no difficulty; for what was the object of Nehemiah's mission to Jerusalem? It was to build the walls of the holy city (chaps. 3 and 6), and by the good hand of God upon him he was enabled to complete the work to which he had been called. The wall had been erected, and he and the people had celebrated the event with great joy; and under the influence of that day they had set the house of God in order, and recognized that they were a people set apart to Jehovah.

And what was the next thing? FAILURE failure in everything which they had undertaken to do, and to which they had bound themselves, under the penalty of a curse, by a solemn covenant. (See chap. 10.) The lesson of Nehemiah's mission is therefore the lesson of every dispensation; namely, that whatever God entrusts to man under responsibility ends in failure. Nay, there is more than this; for we learn that failure is brought in by man at the very moment of God's grace in blessing. It is not only that each successive dispensation ends, but it also begins with failure. Adam, for example, disobeyed as soon as he was set in the place of headship and blessing; Noah, in like manner, sinned as soon as he could gather the fruit of his first vineyard upon the new earth; Israel apostatized before even the tables of the law reached the camp; and David incurred bloodguiltiness soon after the establishment of the kingdom. Nor is it otherwise in the history of the Church. In the end of Acts 4 we see the perfect answer to the Lord's prayer, "that they all may be one" (John 17:21), for "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (v. 32); and then in chapter 5 we have the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, and in chapter 6, the murmuring of one class of disciples against another. So also with the mission of individuals. As an instance, take the case of the Apostle Paul. Long before he had finished his course, he saw the outward failure of the Church; and "all they which are in Asia" had "turned away" from him (2 Tim. 1:15).

These examples will explain the significant moral order of Nehemiah's narrative. Scarcely had the echoes of Jerusalem's joy, in being surrounded once more by her wall of separation (chap. 12:43), died away, before all the evils which had hitherto afflicted the people, and which had been the cause of their long years of banishment, reappeared. And the book closes with the account of Nehemiah's conflict with the transgressors in Israel, and of his strenuous efforts to maintain the supremacy of Jehovah in the holy city.

The first thing mentioned is the sin of Eliashib. Eliashib was the grandson of Jeshua, who had returned with Zerubbabel. He filled the office of the priest, had "the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God," was allied unto Tobiah the Ammonite, and had even "prepared for him a great

chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil" - the portion for the Levites, etc. - and this chamber was "in the courts of the house of God." vv. 4, 7. This was corruption in the head and representative of the people before God; and, with such an example, what wonder if the people followed in his guilty steps? It is a terrible instance of the hardening effect of familiarity with sacred things when the heart is not upright before God. Eliashib was constantly engaged in the work of his high-priestly office in the holy places, and yet had become blunted and indifferent to the character of the God before whom he appeared, as well as to the holiness of His house. His office in his eyes was an office and nothing more; and hence he used it for his own purposes and for the assistance of his friends, a pattern that has, alas! been frequently reproduced even in the Church of God.

All this time Nehemiah, as he informs us, was not at Jerusalem. He had paid a visit to the king (v. 6); but, on his return, was made acquainted with the evil Eliashib had perpetrated in connection with Tobiah. And he says, "It grieved me sore." v. 8. There are those who can understand the grief of this devoted man. It was a grief according to God, for it sprang from a sense of the dishonor done to the Lord's name. It was akin to that of Jeremiah when he cried, "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" or again to that of the Apostle when he poured forth his earnest admonitions, entreaties, and remonstrances to his Galatian converts. Would that there were more filled with like zeal for the house of God! Nor was it grief only that Nehemiah felt, but it was grief that led him to purge this chamber of the temple from its pollutions. He cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah, and says: "Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense." v. 9. He thus restored the chamber, having purified it, to its proper use.

In connection with this, another discovery was made. "I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field." v. 10. Together with the admission of the enemy into the holy places of the temple, the ministers of God had been neglected. The Levites and singers had been wholly set apart for the sacred services of the house; and the burden of their maintenance, by divine appointment, fell upon, and had been acknowledged by, the people. But as soon as they lost, through the influence of Eliashib, all sense of the holiness of the house, they forgot their responsibilities; and the servants of the Lord in His house were compelled to have recourse to the ordinary means of support - they "fled every man to his field." The same thing is often seen in the Church. In seasons of devotedness, wrought upon by the Spirit of God, there are those who will give up all for the work of proclaiming the gospel or ministering the Word; and when the saints are walking with God they will welcome such, and have fellowship with them, rejoicing that the Lord is sending forth more laborers into His harvest, and to care for the souls of His people. But whenever decline sets in, and saints become worldly, laborers are forgotten, so that those who have not learned the lesson of dependence on God alone, that He is all-sufficient for their needs, are compelled to flee to their fields for support.

This difference, however, must be marked. There is no obligation now, as there was with the Jew, to support the Levites; but it is a privilege to do so. And whenever it is done as unto the Lord, the things offered, as they were to Paul, are "an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable,

well-pleasing to God." Phil. 4:18. Nehemiah proceeded at once to rectify also this abuse. He contended with the rulers, and said, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" Then he gathered the Levites and singers together and once more set them in their place. He thus went down to the root of the evil - forsaking the house of God (compare Heb. 10:25) - and at the same time dealt with those (the rulers) who were responsible for the neglect; for, if they were careless, the people would soon imitate their example. In fact, it was the cropping up of the evil that has afflicted the people of God in every age - minding their own things instead of being occupied with the Lord, His interests and claims.

The influence of the energetic action of Nehemiah was instantly felt; for we read, "Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil into the treasuries." v. 12. The people had a heart, and their affections toward the house of God and His servants were ready to flow out as soon as Nehemiah led the way. It is another instance that the outward state of the people of God depends almost wholly upon the character of their leaders. If these are earnest and devoted, so will be also the people; while, if those who take the lead are careless and worldly, these characteristics will also be displayed by the people. It is so now in different assemblies. Whatever those are who have places of prominence, so are the saints corporately. The leaders impress their own character upon the meeting. There may be individuals in the assembly of entirely another sort, but we speak of meetings as a whole. All this does but show out the solemn responsibility resting upon "the rulers," and will explain, at the same time, the character of the addresses to the angels of the seven churches; for the angels are but the collective responsibility, whether in one, two, or more, of the several assemblies; and hence their state is the state of all, and they are dealt with as responsible for it.

To provide against the recurrence of the evil, Nehemiah "made treasurers over the treasuries" (v. 13), the ground of his selection being that "they were counted faithful, and their office was to distribute unto their brethren." Upright himself before God, he was uninfluenced by any personal considerations; and, governed by the single eye, he had respect only to suitability to the post. Fidelity was the thing needed, as the office was one of trust, requiring faithfulness toward God and also toward their brethren: and hence he sought only such as possessed the necessary qualification. The very composition, moreover, of the treasurers - a priest, a scribe, a Levite, and another - shows how careful he also was in "providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." 2 Cor. 8:21.

This accomplished, Nehemiah turns to God with the prayer, "Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof." v. 14. It has often been pointed out that Nehemiah in his prayers was too much occupied with himself and his own good deeds. We do not say that it might not have been so, but they are capable of another interpretation. He was almost alone in the midst of prevailing corruption, and it was only in God that he found his strength and encouragement; and thus, in the midst of all his difficulties, we find continually these ejaculatory petitions. At any rate, it is clear that he looked for no recompense from man, and that he was content to leave himself and the recognition of his doings in the hands of God, assured, as he was, that it was God's work in which he was engaged, and counting upon Him alone for the recompense.

Forsaking the house of God was not the only evil Nehemiah had to contend with. The next was the violation of the Sabbath. "In those days," he says, "saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day," etc. v. 15. They were also selling victuals, and bought fish and ware of the men of Tiro on the Sabbath (v. 16). Having lost all sense of the claims of God as to His house, it was but a natural consequence that they should also neglect the sanctity of the seventh day, the observance of which, from redemption out of Egypt. (Exod. 16; Deut. 5:14, 15) and onward, had been enjoined by God in connection with every covenant into which He had been pleased to enter with His people Israel. The profanation therefore of the Sabbath was the sign that they had gone far in backsliding, that indeed they were verging upon apostasy; for they were sinning, in this respect, against both light and knowledge. Nehemiah, in his zeal for the Lord, was aroused, and he "contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath." vv. 17, 18.

It will be observed that as the rulers were in question in regard to forsaking the house of God, so the nobles are the head and front of the offense in respect of the Sabbath. In both cases the fount of the evil was in those who ought to have been examples to the people. It is ever so in times of general declension, inasmuch as it is only the leaders who can draw the mass after them into sin. But this very fact rendered the task of Nehemiah all the more arduous. Single-handed he had to contend with those on whom he had a right to count to sustain his authority and influence. Truly he was a faithful man, and because he was such God was with him in his conflict with the transgressors in Israel. Having convicted them that had sinned before all (see 1 Tim. 5:20), he used his authority as governor to prevent a recurrence of the evil. First, he commanded that the gates of Jerusalem should be shut before dark on the eve of the Sabbath, and that they should be kept closed until the Sabbath was over. It shows how few were to be depended upon for this service, in that he stationed some of his own servants at the gates to see to it, that "there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day." v. 19. In addition, he gave his own unremitting attention to the matter; and thus when the Tyrian merchants and vendors lodged without Jerusalem once or twice - their very presence being a temptation to the people - he testified against them and threatened to lay hands on them, and in this way they were driven off.

Finally, Nehemiah "commanded the Levites, that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day." v. 22. It is a beautiful picture of one devoted man seeking with all his might to stem the rushing tide of evil. To human eyes it might seem a hopeless struggle, and even, as to outward results, a failure. But it was God's battle that Nehemiah was fighting, and he knew it; and if but faithful to Him there could never be defeat. God is the appraiser of the conflict, and He counts as victory what human eyes regard as disaster. (See Isa. 49:4-6.) Nehemiah had in measure learned this lesson, and thus he turns again to God with the prayer, "Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Thy mercy." He looks not to man, but to God; and while he desires to be remembered for "this also," yet, in his true humility, conscious of all his own weakness and failure, he does but pray to be spared according to the "greatness" of God's mercy. Blessed state of soul it is when the servant is made to feel that, whatever his service, he has nothing to rest upon but the mercy of

God! On that foundation - for Christ Himself is its channel and expression - he can repose, whatever his trials and conflicts, in perfect peace and security.

There was yet another trial. "In those days also," he says, "saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people." vv. 23, 24. This was the evil that had so deeply afflicted the heart of Ezra (chap. 9:1-3), and which he earnestly sought to eradicate; but it had started up again, and confronted Nehemiah also all through his labors (chap. 9:2; 10:30, etc.) with its sad and open testimony to the state of the people. For what did it declare? That Israel was abandoning the ground of separation unto God, and breaking down the holy wall of enclosure - "the middle wall of partition" - by which He had shut them off from all the peoples that were upon the face of the earth. It was, in truth, no less than a denial that they were God's chosen nation - a holy people to the Lord - and it was thus a surrender of all the privileges, blessings, and hopes of their calling. It was no wonder therefore that Nehemiah was filled with such holy indignation that he "contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves." He reminded them, moreover, of the sad example of Solomon, that, though there was "no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then," he inquired, "hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?" vv. 25-27.

It must have been indeed a bitter trial to the heart of Nehemiah. It was the account of the great reproach and affliction of the remnant in the province, and of the wall in Jerusalem being broken down, as well as of the gates being burned with fire (chap. 1:3), that had been used to stir up the desire in his soul to remedy these evils. The desire of his heart was granted, and he had gone up to Jerusalem and labored there for years; and at length, through the goodness of God, he saw his desire accomplished. But now, together with the close of his labors, he has to mourn over the persistent refusal of the people to remain in holy security within the wall of separation. Having their treasure in the world, their hearts were there also, and they thus continually turned their backs upon all the blessings of the holy place in which they had been set. Still Nehemiah was undaunted, and with unwearied energy he persevered in his labors for the good of his people, seeking only, for the glory of God, to spend and be spent in their service. First, he "chased" from him one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, who was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite.

Eliashib himself, as we have seen, was "allied unto Tobiah," so that he and his family were linked up with the two active enemies of Israel. Here then, in the high priest's family, was the fount of corruption from which flowed out the dark and bitter streams of sin through the people. To drive the sinner away was all that Nehemiah himself could accomplish; but he had another resource, of which he availed himself - he committed the matter to God. "Remember them, O my God," he cries, "because they have defiled the priesthood" (Lev. 21), "and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites." (Mal. 2:4-7.)

Nehemiah nevertheless continued his work of reformation. He says, "Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business; and for the wood offering, at times appointed, and for the firstfruits." For the moment all is ordered

according to God; and in this way Nehemiah becomes a shadow, if not a distinct type, of Him who will "sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness." Mal. 3:3.

Thus end the recorded labors of Nehemiah. He had fully identified himself with the interests of the Lord and with Israel, and he had persevered in his labors amid opposition and reproach; and now that the close had come he is content to leave all results in the hands of God. Hence, looking away from his work and from himself, he cries, "Remember me, O my God, for good." This prayer has already been answered; for it is God who caused this account of Nehemiah's labors to be preserved, and He will answer it yet more abundantly, for the time will come when He will publicly acknowledge Nehemiah's faithful service according to His own perfect estimate of his work. For while it is true, and ever to be remembered, that grace alone produces the energy and perseverance of service in the hearts of any, it is also true that the same grace reckons the fruits of labor to those in whose hearts they have been produced. God is the source of all; He calls and qualifies His servants; He sustains and directs them in their labors, and yet He says: "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." To Him alone be all the praise!

## The Last Adam: a Quickening Spirit

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In the 20th chapter of John's Gospel, we find the Lord Jesus, in resurrection, consummating all the previous chapters of the Gospel.

He is here making known His resurrection and the power of it in the midst of the congregation. He is standing in the solitude of resurrection -a solitary Man risen from among the dead. Alone! There is none other such as He. He is fulfilling the 22nd verse of the 22nd Psalm. All the waves and billows of God's mighty judgment on sin have exhausted their strength on Him. He has endured them in His soul. He is here as having come out from under this judgment which none but He could have risen out of. He has borne the judgment of God upon man, and now stands in the midst of His disciples, and is making known His resurrection and setting forth the results of His victory in the congregation -consummating all He had declared in the previous chapters of this Gospel.

He is standing above the ruin of the first man, on the landing of resurrection. Let us see how He reached it. We must look at Him in other solitudes ere He reached it.

The world, as God made it, was ruined by man -he was the last thing made. The world is involved in the ruin which came in through man. Man filled it with corruption and violence, and God shrouded it in the judgment of the mighty waters of the flood. (Gen. 6-8.) Who is to repair the ruin? Who is to redeem it? Christ the Son of God comes in to make all things new. The heavens and the earth were the first things which God had made in the beginning. Now He begins the new creation with man.

He becomes a babe in a manger - touches the weakest point of humanity - a "babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12). He spends 30 years of His life in retirement, and then enters His ministry as God's Servant in the midst of a world of sin. Satan then comes to oppose Him (Luke 4); and He overcomes Satan as God's Servant, and Satan owns Him as Son of God (v. 41). For three years He walks in this solitude of power as the Servant, declarative of God. "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father" declares Him. It is God exhibited in a world of woe. The poor, the wretched, the sinful, and the vile find in Him a relief from every burden, every sin; and yet He puts forth no power for Himself. The poor and the vile ones of the earth find in Him the heart of God. In all this He is in the midst of men, in a distinct solitude all through. He is not the Savior yet, but the Servant, and so perfectly this, that at the end of His pathway He can say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." John 14:9.

His hour then comes that He must depart out of this world to be with the Father (John 13). When His hour was come, He entered another solitude - the solitude of misery and suffering. He says, as it were, "I will now go where I will be the victim." He had been in the solitude of power, anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, declarative of God, up to this - now, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." John 12:24.

There, He accepts all that God's mighty judgment required against the first man - all that His righteousness demanded to put an end to the offending thing forever. Satan opposes Him in this,

as formerly he had opposed Him as God's Servant. He now opposes Him as the sacrifice - the Savior. The Lord accepts the place of victim. He says, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done." Luke 22:42. It was a solitude of suffering in which He sought for comforters and found none. They who had followed Him in the time of His ministry, now "all... forsook Him, and fled." None could be with Him now. He was left alone, yet not alone; He says, "The Father is with Me." Judas intrudes upon this mighty solitude with a betrayer's kiss; and Jesus says, "Good for that man if he had not been born." All combine then and bear down upon Him. The world, Satan, religion, all! One of His disciples, too, denies Him to the enemy. He accepts it from the hand of God. He hid not His face from shame and spitting. He comes charged with this cup to the cross. There He bears the judgment of the sinner from God, and is forsaken of Him. He says, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He consummates the work by His death. He goes down into death, under which the sinner lay, but rises out of that place.

In John 20, we find Him in the magnificence of His victory - a solitary Man risen from among the dead. Every enemy is gone; He is occupied in dispensing the spoils of His victory, dispensing His blessings as the risen One. He had been in the solitude of power - manifesting God - in the solitude of suffering in which He drained the cup of God's judgment on man. He is now in the solitude of resurrection, making good in others the blessings of the victory He had achieved - saying, as it were, I will now make it all true in you. "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God."

He does two things, as the risen One. He pronounces "peace" - what does peace mean? It is peace on the other side of judgment. Many have a spurious peace - a satisfied feeling in their own hearts, which will some day pass away. Peace means that there is no hostile element that can ever rise again between the soul of the believer and God - not peace because of victories, nor midst enemies, but peace because of their overthrow, their destruction. Like Israel on the shores of the Red Sea, singing the song of triumph after their enemies were drowned in the depths of the sea, "The LORD... hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." This was the chorus of their song of triumph. Their enemies were defeated and destroyed. The Egyptians which they had seen, they should see again no more forever. They were drowned in the depths of the sea. They sank into the bottom as stones. They sank as lead in the mighty waters. Every hostile element was gone, to rise up against them no more forever! Can you say you possess this peace with God? It is the peace which Christ pronounces after He had risen out of the waters of judgment. He dispenses it to His people as the risen One, pronouncing "peace" - all your enemies are gone - it is what belongs to you as the new race of which He is the Head - the new creation of God. The old race (the first man) is judicially ended before the eye of the Judge. His righteousness demanded the end of the first Adam race, that His love might without check or hindrance flow out to those who believe. Every one in Christ is a new creation.

He now does another thing. You will find that the general desire is to get peace with God, so as to go on with an unburdened conscience in the world - the scene you are in. God does not stop there. This is why the people like to hear of the forgiveness of sins, and stop there, because this makes no demand upon them. But Christ does not stop after He has pronounced peace. You must now get the life of the Person who has given you peace (He is our Peace), the life of the Person who bore the judgment and triumphed over death. And so "He breathed on them" - imparting to them

His own life.

The Lord God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul (Gen. 2); but man fell, and this life was forfeited and under judgment. Here is Jesus Christ, "the last Adam... a quickening spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45), after bearing judgment and abolishing death, coming forth and breathing upon them, imparting His own life - eternal life - which makes us free from the law of sin and death. But it connects us with Him who has gone out of this scene altogether - one who has no connection with it whatsoever. He is the life of him who believes; consequently it connects the believing one with the place where He is, with the Father. "Your life is hid with Christ in God"; therefore, He adds, "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Col. 3:1. How then can I connect myself with the place, and the things out of which He has risen? If I have life in Him, and Him for my life, this life will assert its own qualities, and overcome the world. He that "is born of God overcometh the world." 1 John 5:4. Rising above the storms and disturbing elements of flesh and nature, and all out of which Christ has risen, it seeks its own native element springing up into everlasting life - seeking the level from which it came. The eternal life was with the Father - was manifested to us in the Son - and is now communicated to us by the Holy Ghost. It is thus a well of water - not a stagnant pool, but a springing well, seeking, like water, its own level, and springing up into everlasting life. Like the frigate bird, which, we are told, when the storms agitate the surface of the ocean, when winds and waves rage in contempt of life on every side, rises aloft into the calm above the storms, and floats securely and tranquilly in that peaceful atmosphere where it finds itself at home and rest!

The reason why the saints of God do not enjoy this cloudless peace, is that they are engaging their hearts with the things of earth, and cultivating the nature out of which Christ, their life, has risen; they are not cultivating the pursuits, the aims, and interests of that eternal life which is theirs in Christ.

The Lord lead our hearts into the heavenly atmosphere - the proper element in which this life which He has bestowed puts forth its leaves and fruit - and grant that His beloved people may walk in the vigor and power of that word, "Christ in me," through a world where every breath is against them, for His name's sake. Amen.

## The Law and the Gospel: Incompatible

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As all men before conversion, in every age and country, are imagined to be equally under the law, the Gentile no less than the Jew, so the Christian is put under the same law, not (they say) for justification, but for a rule of life. Every whit of the system is false; the whole is a denial in principle both of Judaism and Christianity, of law and gospel, and even of sin and holiness, as taught in God's Word.

It is certain from Rom. 2 and 3 that the Jew is under law in contrast with the Gentile. It is certain from Rom. 4 and 5 that between the fall and Moses not one could be said to be under law. It is certain from Rom. 6 and 7 that the Christian is not under law but under grace, and this not only for justification but for his walk; so that, even if he had been a Jew, he is become dead to the law and belongs to another - Christ risen. To be connected now with both is spiritual adultery and leads to bad fruit. Rom. 8 is distinct that God has wrought in Christ the mighty work of condemning sin and delivering ourselves who believe, in order that the righteous sum of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. And, in truth (as we are shown in Gal. 5), walking in the Spirit is the true guard against the lusts of the flesh; and if we are led by the Spirit, we are not under law; and yet we love, in which one word the whole law is fulfilled. For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, etc., against which there is assuredly no law. He that is under law does not love, but breaks the law; while he that loves fulfills the law (Rom. 13) without being under it (indeed, by being under grace and not law). For the law is the strength of sin, never of holiness (1 Cor. 15), and applies not to a righteous man, but to the lawless and disobedient (1 Tim. 1).

Those who desire to be law-teachers in our day are evidently, therefore, equally unsound as to justification and the walk of the Christian, and, what is more serious still, virtually frustrate God's grace, and annul for righteousness the death of the Savior. "For," says the Apostle, "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God [not who kept the law for me, but], who loved me, and gave Himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Gal. 2:19-21. Do you say Christ was only keeping the law in dying on the cross? Then you ignorantly blot out grace and debase the Savior's infinitely precious death to the mere doing of a man's duty; for the law is just the expression of man's duty to God, not of God's grace to the sinner, nor of the saint's devotedness to God, still less of all Christ did to glorify God in either life or death. But the notion is utterly false. "By the grace of God" (in contrast with His law) Christ tasted death for everything (Heb. 2:9).

## The Life of Moses: Providence Versus Faith

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Many saints cling to signs of providences as though they were to be the guide for faith. Nothing could be a more remarkable providence than that which placed Moses in the court of Pharaoh, but it was not the guide for the faith of Moses. Brought up as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, mighty in words and in deeds, there "Providence" had placed him. If ever there was a remarkable providence, it was in the case of Moses. After having been hid three months of his parents, till they could hide him no longer, he was put in an ark of bulrushes, among the flags by the river's brink. Thus exposed, and crying, the babe attracted the attention of Pharaoh's daughter who, with her maidens, was brought down to the place just at the moment. She had compassion on him, listened to the suggestion of the young woman, his sister, gave him in charge to his own mother, to be nursed for her, and he became her son. The first thing he did, when come to years, was to give it all up. Had Moses reasoned, his reasoning might have had great scope of argument; he might have said, God's providence has placed me here; I can use all this influence for God's people, and the like. But he never thought of such a thing. His place was with God's people. He did not act for God's people merely; he did not patronize God's people; his place was with and among them. God's providence had given him a position, which he might relinquish, but it was no guide for conscience. There may be the most plausible reasoning about a thing; but when the "eye is single," the "whole body shall be full of light." Moses saw in his brethren (though a feeble people) "the people of God," and identified them, as such, with the glory of God. This is what faith always does. They may be in a feeble and failing position, or they may be in a blessed position, but that is not the question. Faith identifies the people of God with the glory of God, and acts accordingly.

The children of Israel were in a very bad condition; still, they were "the people of God"; and the first thing recorded of the faith of Moses is, that he took his place among the afflicted people of God. If reproach was on them, it was "the reproach of Christ," and he esteemed it "greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." He reckoned with God, and this kept his soul clear of every other influence; he looked right on—"Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee." Pro. 4:25. The light cannot shine down along another path.

Faith had brought Moses into a straight line with "the recompense of the reward"; and, when in that path, faith enabled him to identify himself with God, to look up to God as his power. At once came the "wrath of the king." But the same faith that saw glory for him at the end of the path, saw God for him all through the path. That is the secret of real strength. What unbelief does, is to compare ourselves and our own strength with circumstances. Take the case of the spies (Numb. 13 and 14). They said: "The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." If the Israelites compared their stature with that of the Anakim, they had no business there. What said Caleb and Joshua? They stilled the people, saying: "They are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear

them not." That is, they compared these sons of Anak with God - what matter, then, whether they were giants or grasshoppers. They spoke the language of faith. It was no reasoning about circumstances; it was just simply saying, Greater is He that is for us, than all that can be against us. God was there. That is what makes the path of faith so simple. How did David reason? He did not go and reason about the height of Goliath and about his own smallness of stature; he brought God in. He said, There is an uncircumcised man, defying the armies of the living God - right, and very good reasoning!

When the glory set before us leads in the way of the promises, and we take our place with the despised and afflicted people of God, the world will not like it, and the "wrath of the king" will be the consequence. Now, this is always a thing feared and trembled before, until God becomes clearly known by the soul as a God for it.

## Look

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The story from beginning to end is "Look and live." As a sinner, I looked to Him and lived. And now, as a saint, I still look on; and every look brings back to me the light, and character, and beauty, and impress of the blessed One at whom I look.

## The Lord Jesus Christ

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When the Lord was down here on the earth, His name was Jesus (Matt. 1); but He was also the Christ (John 1:41, etc.). After His death and resurrection, He was made Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36); and He still retains the name of Jesus (Acts 7:59; Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 22:16; etc.). His full name for believers now (though He will have other names and titles by-and-by) is the Lord Jesus Christ. Now a name in Scripture is the expression of the truth of what a person is; and so understanding it here, it will be the expression of all that Christ is as the Lord Jesus Christ. The term Lord signifies authority (see Luke 6:46); Jesus is His personal name (Luke 1:31); and inasmuch as He was made Christ after His death and resurrection, this term includes His work.

## The Lord Our Shepherd

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It is ever soothing to the spirit to ponder the character of the Lord Jesus as our Shepherd, in whatever aspect of that character we view Him; whether as "the good shepherd," laying down His life for the sheep; "that great shepherd," coming up out of the grave having, in the greatness of His strength, deprived death of its sting, and the grave of its victory; or, as "the chief Shepherd," when surrounded by all His subordinate shepherds, who from love to His adorable Person and, through the grace of His spirit, have watched over and cared for the flock, He shall wreath the brow of each with a diadem of glory. In any or all of these stages of our divine Shepherd's history, it is happy and edifying to consider Him.

Indeed, there is something in our Lord's character as Shepherd, which is peculiarly adapted to our present condition. Through grace we have been constituted "the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand" (Psalm 95:7); and, as such, it is a shepherd we specially need. As sinners, ruined and guilty, we need Him as the "Lamb of God"; His atoning blood meets us at that point in our history, and satisfies our utmost need. As worshipers, we need Him as our "great high priest," whose robes, the varied expression of His attributes and qualifications, most blessedly prove to our souls how effectually He fills that office. As sheep, exposed to countless dangers in our passage through this dark wilderness in this gloomy dark day, we truly stand in need of the voice of our Shepherd, whose rod and staff give security and stability to our footsteps as we journey on toward home.

Now, in these verses of Luke 15, we find the Shepherd presented to us in a deeply interesting stage of His gracious work; He is here seen in search of the sheep. The parable derives peculiar force from the fact that it was put forth, together with the lost piece of silver and the lost son, as an argument in favor of God's gracious actings toward sinners.

God, in the Person of the Lord Jesus, had come so very near to the sinner, that legalism and Pharisaism, as represented by the scribes and Pharisees, took offense at it. "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Here was the offense of which divine grace stood charged at the bar of man's legal, proud, self-righteous heart. But it was the very glory of God - God manifest in the flesh - God come down to earth thus to receive sinners. It was for that He came down into a ruined world. He left not the throne above to come down here to search for righteous people; for why should He search for them? Who would think of going to look for anything but that which was lost? Surely the very presence of Christ in the world proved that He had come in search of something and, moreover, that that something must have been lost.

"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10. The soul should greatly rejoice in the fact that it was as a lost thing that it drew forth the grace and pity of the Shepherd's heart. We may inquire what it was that could have drawn the heart of Jesus toward such as we are; yes, we may inquire, but eternity alone will unfold to us the answer to the inquiry. We might ask the shepherd in this parable why he thought more about the one solitary lost sheep than he did about the ninety and nine which were not lost. What would have been his answer? -

The lost one is my object, it is valuable to me, and I must find it.

Jesus alone could see, in a helpless sinner, an object for which He thought it worth stooping from His Father's bright throne to save.

"He saw us ruined in the fall,

Yet loved us notwithstanding all;

He saved us from our lost estate;

His loving-kindness, oh how great!"

## The Lord's Love for His People

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The Lord takes notice of every circumstance, every shade of difference in assemblies, as also in individuals in them, thus showing that He is not indifferent as to the state of His people by the way - their daily steps - because He has secured blessing for them at the end. His love is not a careless love. We have all, more or less, lost sight of the judgment exercised by the Lord in His own house; and it is too frequently supposed that because the salvation of the saint is a sure thing, God is indifferent about character here. But to love - this is impossible. A child would eventually inherit his father's property; but then what parent would be satisfied, if he loved his child, with knowing that? Would he not anxiously train him up, watching every development of his mind and faculties, and ordering all things in his education so as best to fit him for his future destination? How much more is this the way of God's love with His children!

## Luke 9

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In Luke 8, Christ Himself preaches the gospel of the kingdom. In chapter 9, He sends forth His twelve disciples with the same testimony; and in chapter 10, having been rejected as "the Christ," and on the ground of this rejection, and after the declaration of His coming glory as "Son of man" (seen in the transfiguration), He sends the seventy on a wider mission, which the judgment day will vindicate if refused.

Now I find a remarkable break in chapter 9. The testimony of the twelve, and Christ's own testimony, had reached far and wide, even to king's courts; but what was the result of it? The power of healing the sick and casting out devils, which the Lord gave to His disciples, were samples of the powers of the world to come - the millennial kingdom - but it was all of no avail. In verse 18, the Lord asks His disciples what it had all come to - "Whom say the people that I am?" "They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again." You see it had all come

to nothing. "But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God. And He straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing." Why? Because it was of no use. "The Messiah" had been rejected; and now He speaks of Himself, not as the Christ, or Messiah, but as the "Son of man"; and this wider title characterizes the remaining chapters of this Gospel.

You will see a similar transition between the 2nd Psalm and the 8th. In the 2nd Psalm, the Lord is spoken of as the Christ, or "Anointed" - in the 8th Psalm, as the "Son of man." All things were once put in subjection to Adam and his wife, but they lost this headship through sin. And now the Lord Jesus - the Son of man - will not take the inheritance of all things simply as Heir, but as Redeemer Heir. He has a personal right to it, it is true, but could He take it apart from redemption as well?

He never speaks of His sufferings as Son of man, without speaking of His rising again. It is as the risen Son of man that He takes the headship of creation and all things, as we see in Heb. 2

In this passage in Luke 9, the Lord speaks of His sufferings as a martyr under man's hand, not as a victim under the hand of God for sin. You know His death had this double aspect. He suffered as a victim, and as a martyr. As a martyr, we can have "the fellowship of His sufferings." He tells His disciples then of the path of those who would follow Him in His rejection, but He does not speak of the path without showing what the end of it will be.

Would you mind a rough, thorny path, if you knew surely what the end would be? Here is the journey, and the end of it. Paul's desire was that he might apprehend that for which he was apprehended of Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:12). In the transfiguration, which follows, we get the end of the pathway in a figure of the coming kingdom and glory of the Son of man, in which those who are His have a share. We see in Moses and Elias the type of the saints raised and changed. How is this? Moses died and was buried. Elias was taken up to heaven without passing through death. These are the heavenly saints. Paul tells us that the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we which are alive and remain when He comes shall be changed, and all caught up to meet the Lord in the

air (1 Cor. 15; 1 Thess. 4).

Peter, James, and John, who were looking on, are typical of the earthly saints in the kingdom, who are looking upon the heavenly saints, raised and changed, in the same glory with Christ Himself. There is one glory of the celestial, and another glory of the terrestrial.

"But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep." This is typical of the spirit of slumber which will rest upon the Jewish remnant in the latter day, and who, like the apostles "when they were awake," will see His glory.

We have, too, what flesh is. It is ever the same - nothing can mend it. The disciples were asleep here in the presence of the glory, as we afterward find they were asleep in the presence of the agony in Gethsemane.

After Peter had made his mistake, "There came a cloud, and over-shadowed them: and [as it might be more clearly translated] they feared as those entered into the cloud."

What did the cloud signify? It was the symbol of Jehovah's presence. Why did the earthly ones fear then? Because nobody had ever "entered into" it before! It had led the Israelites out of Egypt and through the Red Sea. It became cloud and darkness to the Egyptians, and light to Israel. It spoke to Moses face to face. It rebuked them, and led them, and fought for them. But no one had ever entered into that which was the unveiled presence of God. Yet Moses and Elias were perfectly at ease there. The earthly ones could not understand this new thing of entering into the cloud. Here we get the end of the journey - the Father's house (John 14:1-3; 17:24) - for the voice that came out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son: hear Him." Who could say this but the Father?

Is it so much matter that the pathway is thorny, when we know it leads there?

Now, the Lord has shown them the journey and the end of it; but He does not have us to tread that way alone. He leaves the glory on the mount, and goes along the path with us, giving us His company to comfort us by the way.

In verse 40, we see their unbelief while He was yet with them, at their very side. "How long shall I be with you, and suffer you?"

They have had His company by the way, but His perfect devotedness exposes their selfishness. In verse 51, we find His intense devotedness; "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" - the place where He was to suffer. His was the entire surrender of self - the giving up of self altogether. The law only told me to love my neighbor as myself; the gospel goes immeasurably beyond. It teaches us to do what Christ did - to give up self altogether for His enemies. We find self exposed in the various traits of selfishness which actuate us, in this portion of the chapter (verses 46-56); and the perfect devotedness of Christ makes this all the more apparent.

The 46th verse shows us personal selfishness: "Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest." And Jesus rebuked them. Perceiving the thought of their heart, He took a child and set him by Him. "He that is least among you all, the same shall be great." This was true greatness, because most like His own.

Here we have another sort of selfishness in the next verse - the selfishness of a clique. They saw one laboring for the Lord, but as he did not go with them in everything, they forbade him.

Then in verse 54 we see selfishness under the cloak of apparent zeal for the Lord's honor; they wanted to call down fire from heaven to consume those who would not receive Him. How His presence exposes us!

I find a perfect contrast to all this in that beautiful chapter, the 2nd of Philippians. Every one gives up self in that chapter. First we see the Lord Himself emptying Himself of His glory. He "made Himself of no reputation," "humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Then self was nothing to Paul - what he cared for was the state of the Philippians. "Yea, and if I be offered [poured forth] upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." Timotheus was likeminded, and would care for their state. Epaphroditus, instead of being troubled by his sickness, was troubled that the Philippians had heard of his sickness, and would be anxious about him; he counted on their love.

What we want is occupation of heart with Christ. If you have a bad temper, and go on praying about it and mourning over it, you will never get a bit better, or overcome it; but if you are occupied with Him, do you think your temper will rise while He is before you? It is the only way to get the victory.

We get an exposure of nature in the 57th verse. One whom the Lord had not called offers to follow Him. "It is an easy thing to follow Jesus - anyone can do it," he thinks. But the Lord tells him that he had not counted the cost. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head."

Next, we find one whom the Lord had called finding a difficulty in following, and making excuses for delay. It was the effectual call of grace here. But he was not up to the mark, and, as we often do, he found difficulties and hindrances in the way when the call had come. "Let the dead" (to God) "bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God," is the Lord's reply.

There is, I think, a reference to Elisha in the next passage. You remember that one day when he was plowing, Elijah cast his mantle over him, and he said, "Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee." The real call had come, but he was not up to the height of the call just then; but Elijah answered, "What have I done to thee?" And Elisha returned and, after slaying the yoke of oxen, he arose and went after Elijah.

We get a great deal in this chapter: the rejection of Jesus as the Christ, or Messiah; and then the thorough change in everything which characterizes the remaining part of this Gospel. Then we have a beautiful line of truth. The Lord shows the path of those who would follow Him - a thorny way - a daily taking up of the cross - losing of life here. And He shows the end of it - the glory of the kingdom and the Father's house. Then leaving the glory, He gives His company to cheer and rebuke and comfort His people as needed by them; and He Himself being God's standard for us, exposes us to ourselves.

## Man: the Generation in the Day of Christ

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The incorrigibility of man under all persuasions becomes the ground of the necessity, and the vindication of the righteousness, of God's judgment.

The generation in the day of Christ was tested in every way. John mourned, the Son of man piped; but there was neither lamentation nor dancing. In His own Person, the Lord assayed Israel in every way, according to their own prophets. He came as the Bethlehemite, according to Micah, but they sought His life (Matt. 2). He came as the light from the land of Zebulon and Naphtali, according to Isaiah; but He was challenged instead of followed (Matt. 4). He came as the King, meek and lowly, according to Zechariah; but they received Him not (Matt. 21).

Then in the three parables, which the Lord delivered at the close of these testings of Israel (Matt. 21 and 22) - I mean those of the two sons, the husbandman of the vineyard, and the marriage of the king's son - He convicts His people under the law, under the ministry of John Baptist, and under grace.

Are we not, therefore, prepared to see the Master rise up to shut the door? The need of sovereign grace, as well as the vindication of judgment, is made to appear. "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma." Rom. 9:29. Man is past moral correction. He is incorrigible and incurable.

And this state of incurableness and incorrigibility has had a constant illustration in the Book of God, from the beginning to the end. Man has shown himself to be in full bondage to sin, so that he will go in the way of it, in defiance of every argument and every influence which may be used with him.

It is solemn to look at this, but it has its profit for us to do so. We can be at no difficulty to trace a line of these illustrations all through Scripture.

Cain went on with the desperate purpose of his heart, though the Lord came and personally pleaded with him to turn from his purpose (Gen. 4).

Nimrod made Babel the center of his empire, though God's judgment had just before so awfully signalized that place (Gen. 10).

Pharaoh repented not to yield himself under God's hand, though that hand had given witness after witness of its supremacy (Exod. 1 through 14).

Amalek fought with Israel, though the glory in the pillar and the water from the rock were before him, the witnesses of God's wondrous majesty and power (Exod. 17).

Israel murmured and rebelled again and again in the midst of divine marvels and mercies which spoke to them of love and almightiness (Numbers).

Nebuchadnezzar exalted himself after many witnesses of God's power and many gracious, softened movements of his own heart (Dan. 4:30).

Judas betrayed the Lord after years of converse with Him (Matt. 26).

The High Priest invented a lie in the face of a rent veil; the Roman soldiers consented to that lie in the face of a rent tomb (Matt. 28).

The Jews stoned Stephen, though his face was shining under their eye like the face of an angel (Acts 7).

These are among the samples or instances of the fact that man, by nature, is under bondage to sin, and that no moral influence is powerful enough to work his deliverance. The creature that has proved itself able to withstand such arguments and persuasives as these cases exhibit, has proved itself to be beyond the reach of all moral influence. Hell itself would not cure him or deter him. Man is incorrigible and incurable. Again, we may say with Isaiah, "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more." Chap. 1:5. Sovereign grace and power must come in. If God have not a seed, it will all be Sodom.

The Apocalypse, closing the Book of God, closes also this testimony against man. There, in the face of the most awful judgments, executed again and again, man refuses to repent, going on the rather to ripen his iniquity like Pharaoh of old, upon whom plague after plague spent itself in vain. And thus, we may say, this book of the Apocalypse (which is eminently a book of divine judgments - judgments not on Israel only, but on the whole world) is the vindication or justification, as well as the history, of judgment. We read there of judgments; but we learn, at the same time, the necessity and demand for judgment, for the incorrigibility of man, the desperate hardness of his heart, is fully exposed again. It is Pharaoh refusing to repent, Amalek defying and insulting the glory, or man as well as Israel saying, "Where is the God of judgment?" Mal. 2:17. Man is found to be the same from first to last.

Are we then, I still ask, to wonder that the Lord's hand is still stretched out? that vials, trumpets, and seals have still to usher forth the judgments of God, and that the sword of Him that sits upon the white horse has still to do its work of death?

Judgment is God's strange work, but it is His needed work likewise. "Is there not a cause?" (1 Sam. 17:29), we may surely say, when we have looked at these cases and read the history of the trial of man's heart from the beginning to the end of it. And I am sure it is well for the soul to hold this fact, this truth about man and his incorrigibility, in remembrance; for, as I have been observing, it so justifies the thought of divine judgment, and so tells us of the necessity of sovereign grace and the interference of divine power.

Judgments are to introduce the kingdom. The earth is to be conducted into a scene of glory by the taking out of it all that offends and does iniquity. For as grace has been despised, and the Lord who made the world has been disowned and cast out of it, judgment must clear it ere it can be the scene of His glory and joy. But "The Lord is... long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Pet. 3:9.

## Manna

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How vain for an Israelite to have searched for a large piece of manna - and yet when all the small pieces (the "small round thing") were put together, they formed a large piece, quite sufficient to each man "according to his eating." While vainly searching for a large piece, he would neglect to gather up the small pieces which were like coriander seed; and thus his time was spent, and the large piece not found. Do we keep looking for signal mercies? - for large revelations of Christ? and do we neglect to gather together and to store up and feed upon the little (?) mercies and revelations of Himself which strew our pathway all the day? and in which we learn the heart of Him who has strewed them around us on all sides. Could my eyes be wandering in search of a large piece when the wilderness is strewed on all sides around me with small pieces? Have I gathered them all up today? If so, depend upon it, I have more than my eating - "I have all things and abound" - surely I have enough at any rate.

The soul is on the way to find itself longing for fish, and onions, and garlic, if it is wandering after a large piece of manna. Life here is made up of little things, and the soul finds Christ in the little things (the "small round thing," so to say); and finding Him, I gather Him up and feed upon Him, and find myself stronger and stronger.

## The Ministry of the Apostle Paul

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"A light to lighten the Gentiles" was part of old Simeon's announcement in the sacred enclosure of the temple (Luke 2:32). He held for a moment the Babe in his arms, of whom the prophets had spoken. He saw God's salvation and was satisfied. Years, however, had to pass ere his prophetic words received a fuller accomplishment.

The Child grew, increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. He commenced His ministry on earth, called people around Him, ate with sinners, sent forth laborers to preach, but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The line which divided between them and the Gentiles, they were charged on no account to overstep: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles" was His peremptory command (Matt. 10:5), for to the lost sheep of the house of Israel was He sent (Matt. 15:24). How fully the Syrophenician woman felt the dispensational barrier that existed between her, of the race of Canaan, and the former conquerors of the land, the children of Israel. The centurion, too, though probably one of the conquering race of his day, and holding office in the Roman army which garrisoned the country, acknowledged that privileges in which he did not share belonged by birth to the people of Israel. So he sent the elders of the synagogue to ask the Lord to heal his servant who was sick (Luke 7:2, 3). Before the cross, no mission was sent to the Gentiles.

On the day of the Lord's resurrection, however, He announced to His disciples that Gentiles were not to be excluded from the blessings they were commissioned to proclaim. The day of Pentecost came, Jews and proselytes heard the word, and three thousand were converted and sealed; but as yet no Gentile was evangelized, though God that day announced by Peter, in words perhaps not then understood, His determination to bless Gentiles equally with souls of the house of Israel. "The promise," said Peter, "is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:39. But this divine purpose was still awaiting fulfillment.

The time for its accomplishment now drew near. Peter, who had made the announcement and had quoted Joel's prophecy, which was in harmony with it, the keys of the kingdom having been committed to him by the Lord (Matt. 16:19), used them to open the door to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. But as yet the Apostle of the Gentiles was unknown to the apostles. The hour having come, however, for Gentiles to be saved and to be made one with those who had been Jews, the servant especially intended to evangelize them was brought into light by the conversion of Saul, one hitherto most zealous for the law, and the determined opponent of the Lord Jesus and His disciples. He now became a most marked example of grace, and was a chosen vessel to bear Christ's name before Gentiles, kings, and the sons of Israel (Acts 9:15). Paul, separated for that work from the womb (Gal. 1:15, 16), was made acquainted by Christ Himself, while still on the ground near Damascus, with the special service to which he was appointed (Acts 26:16, 17). Still the hour was not yet come for him to go forth on that mission. Later on, in the temple at Jerusalem, while in a trance, he received his instructions to depart unto the Gentiles (Acts 22:21). Henceforth he was to be known as their apostle (Rom. 11:13).

What a mission was this! Gentiles, as such, formed the special sphere of his work, a sphere bounded only by the confines of the habitable earth in its truest and widest sense. The Romans viewed their empire as conterminous with the habitable earth (Luke 2:1). The limits of Paul's field of labors reached far beyond that. Wherever any of the human race were found, who were not of the seed of Jacob, there were some of those to whom Paul was commissioned to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. What a field, and what a message! Grace was thus displayed in a double way. Paul was a most wonderful example of grace. The persecutor of the Church, most zealous for the law, became the most ardent champion of grace, and the conserver of the liberty of those who had once been Gentiles (Gal. 5:1). To the Jews, the eleven could go, and Paul as well. His special work, however, was among Gentiles, who were no longer hidden in darkness as outside the circle of dispensed divine favor.

Those once far off shared in it equally with those who were nigh (Eph. 2:13).

But Paul had another line of service entrusted to him, and the field for that was only bounded by the number of the true saints of God on earth. It was given to him "to enlighten all with the knowledge of what is the administration of the mystery hidden throughout the ages in God, who has created all things." Eph. 3:9; J.N.D. Trans. For evangelistic purposes the Gentiles were Paul's field of labor; for teaching the dispensation of the mystery, he was to have all saints as his audience. Paul was a minister of the gospel and a minister of the Church (Col. 1:23-25). Wherever a Gentile was found, there was one to whom Paul could preach the unsearchable riches of the Christ. Wherever a saint was met with, there was one whom he was to enlighten as to the dispensation of the mystery, till then hid in God who created all things.

Gentiles heard the glad tidings and rejoiced (Acts 13:48). Saints too must have received with interest the unfolding of the dispensation of the mystery. Has every Christian who reads these lines entered into something of what this second ministry of Paul's really was? There was a mystery, now revealed, which concerned equally all the saints of God. Are all willing to hear about it, and to be instructed in it? But are only human beings interested in it? It is true, they alone share in the blessings connected with it. There is, however, another order of beings who feel an interest in the unfolding of it; namely, the angelic powers in the heavenlies, who learn by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.

What scenes have they witnessed! They saw earth emerge out of chaos at the fiat of the Almighty, and prepared by Him for the introduction into this scene of an entirely new creature - man - who was created on the sixth day (Gen. 1:27). They attended God at the giving of the law (Acts 7:53). The heavenly group praised God at the birth of the Lord Jesus. They ministered to Him in the wilderness; one of them strengthened Him in the garden. He was seen of angels while in life; His tomb was watched by them after His resurrection. He whom they worshiped and obeyed as God, they saw in human form as a man, and witnessed His death on the cross. The creation of man, the incarnation of the Son of God, His life of dependence on God, His death of shame and suffering, with all this they were familiar. But now a new thing was disclosed to them by the Church. He as man was Head in heaven of a body which was on earth, united to Him in the closest way. Of this wonderful truth the angels learned from the Church of God. He had ascended up to heaven, angels, authorities and powers being made subject to Him. And those very angelic powers learned that as man He was not complete without His body, He in heaven its Head, and the saints on

earth. His body.

What a ministry then was that entrusted to Paul, concerning as it did all Gentiles, all saints, and all angels. To no one else was such grace given. How fully Paul felt the grace of it! How far has each true Christian understood and entered into the subjects of it?

## Excerpts From Lectures on Nahum

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Nahum brings before us the character of God in remarkably vivid terms, and indeed with a majesty of utterance most suitable to the subject God entrusted to him. "The burden of Nineveh" means the heavy sentence of God against that famous city, a phrase customary in the prophets. In Isaiah we may remember the burden of Babylon, and of one place after another; that is, a strain of judgment which was therefore called a "burden." "The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. A God jealous and avenging is Jehovah; Jehovah revengeth, and is furious; Jehovah will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies, Jehovah is slow to anger." Are we not all of us apt to set these things against one another? But it is not so in truth; for the stronger the feeling of God against that which destroys His own glory, the more worthy it is that He should be slow to act on His indignation, as we should be for quite different reasons. Indeed, slowness to anger is ordinarily the proof of moral greatness, though there are extreme cases where waiting would bespeak want of right feeling. Scripture shows us both the rule and the exceptions. Not that it is of God or even of man that there should be slowness to feel; but to act on feeling is another thing. I am persuaded that the more there is the sense of the presence of God, and of what becomes Him, and consequently of what becomes us who are His children - to have the intense interest of His kingdom at heart, and also the sense of His honor dear to us, yea, dearer to us than any other consideration - so much the more ought we to cultivate a patient spirit in the presence of evil.

Yet it is certain that anger in the true and godly sense of abhorrence of evil formed part of the moral nature of our Lord Jesus. There is no greater fallacy of modern times among not a few Christians than the exclusion of holy anger from that which is morally perfect. Our Lord Jesus on one occasion looked around about with anger; on another He used a scourge of small cords with indignation; so also He thundered from time to time at religious hypocrites who stood high in popular estimation.

The Christian who does not share such feelings is altogether wanting in what is of God, and also in what becomes a man of God. I grant you that anger is too apt to take a personal shape, and consequently to slide into vindictive as well as wounded feeling. It is not necessary for me to say that there was an entire absence of this in our Lord Jesus. He came to do the will of God; He never did anything but that will - not only what was consistent with it, but only that. But for this very reason He too was slow, not of course to form a judgment, but to execute it on man; indeed, as we know, He refused it absolutely when here below. He could await the due time. God was then displaying His grace and, as part of His grace, His long-suffering in the midst of evil. And there is nothing finer, nothing more truly of God, than this display of grace in patience.

Here too it seems a remarkable feature that, even when the prophet proclaims the approaching judgment of God, he takes such particular pains to assert not only the certainty of His avenging Himself on His adversaries, but His slowness to anger. "Jehovah is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit [the wicked]: Jehovah hath His way in the whirlwind and in the

storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet."

His not imputing iniquity is a very different thing from acquitting. He never acquits the wicked as such. There is no stronger condemnation of wickedness than when He does not impute iniquity, because the ground of His not imputing iniquity to the believer is that He has not only imputed it, but dealt with it according to His own horror of evil and just judgment of all in the cross of Christ. More manifestly when it is a question, as here, not of His grace but of His righteous government on earth, it always remains true that God does not treat the wicked as innocent.

## The Need of Grace

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The whip and the scourge may be righteous, but there is no winning of the heart of man with these. Nor is it righteousness which reigns among the saints of God, but grace, through righteousness, unto eternal life. Alas! how many sins that might have been washed away (John 13) have been retained; how many brethren alienated for all time who might have been won back to God and to us, because we have hammered at the conscience merely, with the heart ungained; with the heart, shall I say? almost unsought. We have not overcome evil because we have not overcome it with good. We have taken readily the judge's chair and have got back judgment, but the Master's lowly work we have little done. But how little do we understand that mere righteous dealing - absolutely righteous as it may be - will not work the restoration of souls; that judgment - however temperate and however true - will not touch and soften and subdue hearts to receive instruction, that by the very facts of the case are shown not to be in their true place with God.

Man is not all conscience, and conscience reached with the heart still away will do what it did with the first sinner among men - drive him out among the trees of the garden to escape the unwelcome voice.

## Nicodemus

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We do not find any miracle in John 1. Andrew and his companions - Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel - were all brought to Jesus without miracles. The work was in their souls. The word, "Behold the Lamb of God," had awakened their 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 gave Himself to those who sought Him, and reached Him, in chapter 1; but He did not commit Himself to those who believed on Him in chapter 2 - believed on 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 companion to His dwelling place in chapter 1, so now He goes to the dwelling places of the Samaritans in chapter 4.

Such, however, is the beautiful variety of moral illustration in the Book of God, that in chapter 3, in the midst of all this, we get Nicodemus 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 - 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 committing 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 Savior - must form these links. And such links are at the end, I judge, formed between Jesus the Savior and Nicodemus the sinner.

Nicodemus 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 to carry him but a little 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 small measure owning the righteous One. But in chapter 19 he has surely advanced. Here

he puts himself on the side of the world's victim. He stands as with God Himself, in relation to Jesus there. God will provide that blessed sufferer with a glorious resurrection by-and-by; Nicodemus and his companion, Joseph, will, in their way, provide Him with a tomb and grave clothes now. Their spices shall perfume that sepulcher which ere long divine power shall rend asunder.

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

Do we know that Jesus has committed Himself to us?

## Nikita Khrushchev - End of the Age: the Editor's Column

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When Nikita Khrushchev, the great Russian leader, and head of world Communism, visited the United States some weeks ago, he delivered a speech before the United Nations Assembly in New York City, in which he projected himself as the great apostle of peace--a strange role for a master of intrigue and fomenter of world strife. His grandiose scheme for complete world disarmament within four years was thoroughly unrealistic and impracticable. He could scarcely have intended that it be taken seriously, but of course there are always some people who will be taken in by anything that would seem to offer a measure of peace. The Russian proposal could, if accepted at face value, be a modern "Trojan Horse" deception; for if a large part of the world would disarm they would then be at the mercy of that part which only concealed their armaments and preparations for a surprise attack.

Let no one deceive himself into thinking that an age of peace is about to be ushered in. This is not the time for peace, although there are some who say, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace." Neither Mr. Khrushchev nor any other mere man will bring about peace and tranquility for the earth, even if they so desire. There was a time when the "Prince of Peace" came to the earth, but the world with one consent cast Him out of it. How can there be peace?

The prophets Isaiah and Micah foretell of a time that is coming when the nations "shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks" and not "learn war any more" (Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3), but the time for this has not arrived. Before real peace will come to this storm-tossed and war-weary world, a false sense of peace will come. Men will actually cry out that the moment of "peace and safety" has arrived, only to awaken to find "sudden destruction" come upon them when "they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:3).

As we have frequently pointed out, there is to be a revival of the Roman Empire with ten kingdoms in alliance supervised by a powerful dictator. This man will brook no interference, nor tolerate any delay in carrying out his decrees; for when he comes to power he will pluck up three of those ten nations "by the roots." (Dan. 7:8.) He will be the man of Isa. 14 who will destroy cities and make the earth a wilderness. So great will be his power that the world will say in astonishment, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" Rev. 13:4. Men will then have what they like to call "a balance of power," or, as is said today, "a balance of terror." They will then feel that a stable peace has arrived, when no one will dare to challenge the devil-supported beast; they will say, "Peace and safety," only to find the terror of the Lord break forth upon them when He will come to execute the righteous wrath of God on the world. When He appears with "the armies which were in heaven" following Him, He will be "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood"-not the blood shed at the cross, but indicative of the blood of His enemies (see Isa. 63:1-3). At that time "the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies" will actually begin to make war against the Lord Himself when He comes with the armies of heaven. What mad rashness that will be! He will with his armies rush into the fray with the Almighty God, as is said in Job 15: "For he hath stretched out his hand against God, and strengthened himself against the Almighty: he runneth

against Him, with outstretched neck, with the thick bosses of his bucklers." vv. 25, 26; J.N.D. Trans.

The beast and his armies will rush on into destruction like the proud Pharaoh and his armies which were overthrown in the Red Sea. The second Psalm will have its fulfillment: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure." vv. 1-5.

Man's "peace and safety," when wickedness will have reached its peak, will be but short-lived. Sudden destruction will come upon them, and "they shall not escape," for we read:

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth." Rev. 19:20, 21. Of what use will be man's projectiles and hydrogen warheads against the Almighty God, or against Him whose armament will be a sword that proceeds out of His mouth? When the mob, with Judas as their leader, came to take the Lord in the Garden, He had but to say those words that tell who He is, "I AM," and they went backward and fell to the ground. The culmination of man's dedicated wickedness will be that he will actually attempt to fight against God and His Anointed, but "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." Sudden destruction will come upon them.

But to return to the Russian proposal of total disarmament; world statesmen would be wiser if they understood what God has said about Russia. This great power aspiring to world domination is seldom mentioned in Scripture, but the very few times that it is are very instructive. Let us notice the order of events in chapters 30, 31, 32, and 33 of Isaiah, in order to establish the part Russia will take. In the first two chapters mentioned, it will be seen that an enemy of Israel's is referred to as the Assyrian- an early enemy of Israel, and the one who took the ten tribes captive. A power will arise in this area north of Palestine which was once Assyria and later was the Syrian Empire; it will be a confederacy of Arabs and others hostile to Israel. This will again be one of Israel's enemies occupying a position to their north. Their leader will meet the same doom as the beast and the false prophet, according to the correct translation of Isa. 30:33. He will be dealt with after Christ comes with the armies of heaven and destroys the armies of the West which seek to make war against Him. Then after these three powerful men are cut down, the Lord will set up His kingdom and reign. Therefore, the 32nd chapter of Isaiah begins thus: "Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment," and closes, "And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." vv. 1, 18. This pictures Christ's reign.

So we see that after the Son of man shall have put down the beast (the head of the revived Roman Empire), and the "false prophet" (the apostate king of the Jews in Palestine), and the "Assyrian" or "king of the north" (the head of the confederated

Arab peoples on Israel's north), He will then set up His kingdom and reign in righteousness, and Israel will dwell safely. Then in the next chapter-Isa. 33-another enemy is brought before us-a foe that will come against the Jews when they are dwelling safely under their true Messiah, God's anointed King. This will be Russia.

The same order of events-first, of Christ's setting up His kingdom and setting Israel in peace and security in their land, followed by Russia and many peoples with her coming against Israel-is to be found in Eze. 37, and 38 and 39. In chapter 37, we read: "And David My servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd.... And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant.... Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them.... My tabernacle also shall be with them.... And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel." vv. 24-28. Then the 38th chapter begins with Russia's coming down against that people. The head of this enemy is called "the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal" (J.N.D. Trans.); is this not Russia, Moscow, and Tobolsk? Most learned expositors feel that this is so. It is therefore evident that the Son of man will not put down all of His enemies at one instant, nor will He begin to reign till most of them have been destroyed, although there will remain others to deal with when He does reign. David (a type of Christ) made war on many fronts and subdued all enemies before Solomon (also a type of Christ) reigned in peace. Even Solomon had much to put right before reigning in prosperity where there was "neither adversary nor evil occurrent" (1 Kings 5:4).

With the fact established that Isa. 33 and Eze. 38 and 39 refer to Russia, and that she and her hordes will be the last enemy of Israel, and that they will be destroyed on the mountains of Israel, then we may notice how this kingdom is described in Isa. 33 Note: "Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee." v. 1. This statement when understood in its context is worthy of note in this day when "total disarmament" is proposed as a means to secure world peace.

Another point that should be established is that between now and the false "peace and safety" which will be forthcoming temporarily on the basis of the West's supremacy of weapons of horror, there will be lots of troubles, and turmoil; for nation will rise against nation, and the rider on the red horse (of Rev. 6) will have power to take peace from the earth. We may well use the words of the prophet, and cry, "O earth, earth, earth"! This world that is guilty of the blood of Christ, and is going on carelessly to destruction, is soon to reap the awful consequences of its deeds. Instead of the nations beating their swords into plowshares, the words of Joel are first to be fulfilled: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong." Joel 3:9, 10. We as Christians need not expect a time of peace, where there is neither cold war nor hot war, but rather look up in blessed anticipation of soon hearing that shout that will call us away from the world to be with the Lord forever. And while we await Himself, we should not be troubled, but allow "the peace of God" to garrison our hearts so that in nothing we should be afraid. The peace of God is the peace of Him who is not troubled by any circumstances. He is above them all, and nothing here can ruffle His peace- may that peace keep us in tranquility and equanimity.

## Not of Ourselves

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"For by grace are ye saved [have been and are] through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2:8, 9. It was not necessary to say that grace was "not of ourselves," for grace means God's unmerited favor to us. But faith might be, as it has often been, argued to be of ourselves, because it is a subjective work of the Spirit in the heart. Therefore the Apostle carefully declares that this thing faith is not of us, but God's gift, that He might counteract and preclude that proneness which is in man to boast of something in himself.

## Ordinances

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An ordinance may be given by the Lord with power in it; as, for instance, the brazen serpent (Numb. 21:8, 9). But when the power is gone, holding the piece of brass (2 Kings 18:4) becomes a snare and a trap. It must have power in it, or it is worse than nothing.

## The Person of Christ

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The truth concerning the Person of Christ lies at the foundation of Christianity. Apart from what He was, even His death on the cross would not have made atonement for sin. It is necessary, therefore, to be clear on this subject because it is a component part of the Christian faith. On this account the Apostle John wrote: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine" (the doctrine of the Christ; that is, the true teaching concerning Him), "receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 1:10, 11 Such a one, while claiming to be a teacher, must not be regarded even as a Christian. The truth involved is both fundamental and vital, so that neutrality concerning it would amount to identification with those who rejected it.

Another remark is needful. Our Lord Himself said, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father." Matt. 11:27. By this we are to understand that no one\_ can grasp the mystery of His being, of the union in Himself of the divine and human natures. Acquainted with Him, we can be, for He has also said, "I... know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father." John 10:14, 15. There is thus no limit to the possible intimate knowledge of Christ Himself; but, together with this, it must never be forgotten that none but the Father comprehends the Son, the mystery of His being who when down here was God manifest in the flesh. It savors therefore both of presumption and profanity to seek to penetrate into that which is absolutely concealed from all human eyes. The attempt has often been made, as church history abundantly testifies; but those who have made it, left to their own imaginings, have always fallen into dangerous errors, and become the blind instruments of Satan to scatter the people of God, while those who listened to or read their unholy speculations were often drawn into the vortex of doubt and infidelity. What is revealed may be pointed out for reception with adoration, but to proceed one step beyond that is to forsake the light of revelation for the darkness of unhallowed reasonings.

There are three scriptures which in a very special way bring before us the glory of the Person of our blessed Lord; they are in John 1, Col. 1, and Heb. 1 We may then, first of all, look at these in the order named. The very first verse of John's Gospel brings Him in all His divine majesty before our souls - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And then it is added, "The same was in the beginning with God." Doubtless this precise title - if title it be - is used in relation to errors current in the Apostle's day. Into these we need not enter, for the term is simple and means, as has been said, that He is God and is the expression of the whole mind that subsists in God. Let the reader reverently ponder this statement, for what does it imply? Nothing less than that He is deity, for He who was the expression of the whole mind of God could not be other than Himself God. No created intelligence, however exalted, could by any possibility be the complete display of the divine mind. Prophets and apostles were often used, though they did not always understand the messages they had received, to communicate parts of God's mind; but none but the eternal Word could be its perfect expression. The saying of the old writer is strictly true, that only God could comprehend God.

The first verse, as often pointed out, asserts three things of the Word: that He is eternal in His existence - He was in the beginning; distinct as to His Person - He was with God; and He is deity as to His nature - He was God. That the words, "In the beginning" reach back into eternity is plain from verse 3, for the Creator of all things ("and without Him was not anything made that was made," whether angels, principalities, or powers, as well as men) necessarily was eternally existent. Creation indeed was the first expression of God, and that, as we here learn, was by Him who was the Word. In Him also was life, and the life was the light of men. (Compare Psalm 36:9.) Of whom could this be said but of one who was Himself absolutely divine?

Passing now to verse 14 we read, "The Word became [not was made] "flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." We may read in connection with this: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." v. 18. We have thus brought before us the mystery of the incarnation - the Word became flesh. He who was with God, and who was God, became man, and tabernacled among men in a human body. But though His essential glory was thus shrouded from the natural eye, there were those who, with their eyes opened by the Holy Spirit, beheld His glory - not simply His moral glory, but His divine glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. Thus down here as man, He was the perfect expression of God - the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. Creation was an unfolding, a display or revelation of God (see Rom. 1:19, 20); but the Word become flesh was the revelation of the Father, as He said to the Jews, "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also" (John 8:19), and to Philip, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." John 14:9. What then do we learn from these statements, but that He whom we know as the Lord Jesus Christ was the eternal and divine Word, that He was God, that He was the Creator of all things, and that He stepped forth into time and became flesh, a Man among men, very God and very Man? And this, we repeat, is one of the essential truths of Christianity.

We will now turn to Col. 1 The Apostle tells of how the Father "hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light... delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (literally, the Son of His love); and then, after adding that it is in Him (in Him who is the Son of His love) "we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins," he proceeds to describe His glories. First, He is the image of the invisible God. If the reader will look at Gen. 1, he will see that man was made in the image and likeness of God; and this indicates a twofold distinction. Man was made in the image of God; our blessed Lord was that image. Second, man was made in God's likeness; but it would be derogatory to the Godhead of the Son to say that He was the likeness of God. Being Himself God, He could not be the likeness, but, as manifested in time, He was the image of God. Man was made in the image of God, for he represented God in the first creation. When Christ came, He, as the image of God, not only represented Him, but was in Himself the perfect presentation of God. Truly read, therefore, this one brief statement is the assertion of His divine claims.

He was also the first-born of every creature, or rather the first-born of all creation. Let us borrow the words of another as to this: "He is then the image of the invisible God, and, when He takes His place in it, the First-born of all creation. The reason for this is worthy of our attention - simple, yet marvelous. He created it. It was in the Person of the Son that God acted when by His power He created all things, whether in the heaven or in the earth, visible and invisible. All that is great and

exalted is but the work of His hand; all has been created by Him (the Son), and for Him. Thus, when He takes possession of it, He takes it as His inheritance by right. Wonderful truth, that He who has redeemed us, who made Himself man... is the Creator! But such is the truth." And then, that there might be no misconception as to the glory of His Person, we read, "And He is before all things" - before the existence of a single thing, when the self-existent One, God Himself, dwelt (if we may venture the words) in the solitude of His own blissful being. "And by Him all things consist"; called into existence by His creative word, they are dependent still for continuance upon His power. And be it remembered that these things are revealed not to be explained, but to be received, and to be received that our hearts may be filled with adoration as we think of the essential glory and majesty of Him who came into this scene as man, and humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

In the epistle to the Hebrews we shall also find, if in connection with another line of truth, the glories of the Person of Christ unveiled. God, says the writer of this epistle, has in these last days spoken to us by the Son; and he adds immediately, "Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds." So we have in these few lines a very trinity of glories - Son of God, Heir of all things, and Creator. "All the vast system of this universe, those unknown worlds that trace their paths in the vast regions of space in divine order to manifest the glory of a Creator-God, are the work of His hand who has spoken to us, of the divine Christ. In Him has shone forth the glory of God. He is the perfect impress of His being. We see God in Him in all that He said, in all that He did, in His Person. Moreover, by the word of His power He upholds all that exists. He is then the Creator; God is revealed in His Person." But who, we may ask, is this glorious Being? It is no other than He who was crucified through weakness, Jesus of Nazareth, as He was known among men, the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, as depicted by the prophet; for as soon as we are told that He upholds all things by the word of His power, it is added, that it is He who made by Himself purification of sins, and has thereon sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. This identifies Him at once with the Christ who died on the cross, and who rose again on the third day, and is now at the right hand of God.

There is, however, still more in the chapter. He is the Son of God as born into this world, spoken of as such in the words, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." As the first-begotten, when introduced into this scene, "all the angels of God" are commanded to worship Him. He is addressed even as God: "Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom." Once more He is pointed out as the Creator; and finally, His position is given at the right hand of God until His enemies are made His footstool. It is glory upon glory which is here unfolded, and all alike centering in and radiating from the Son, in whom, in these last days, God has spoken, and who not only became flesh and tabernacled among men, but was also, as we learn from John's Gospel, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

But it is not only in such scriptures as these that the character of the Person of Christ is revealed. Everywhere the gospels tell of His deity and His humanity. If, on the one hand, He was a homeless stranger, a weary man sitting on Samaria's well; if He hungered in the desert, slept in the boat; if He groaned, wept tears of sorrow and sympathy; on the other hand, He wrought miracles, cleansed lepers, opened blind eyes, raised the dead to life, asserted His power over the winds and the waves, controlled the movements of the fish of the sea; in a word, He declared by His mighty

acts that, if a man, He was also God. Hence He said to Philip, "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake." John 14:11. And again, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man" (rather, no other one) "did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father." John 15:24. And the testimony which He gave by His words and by His works during His sojourn here was confirmed and sealed by His resurrection from among the dead, for He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Rom. 1:4.

There is even yet another line of truth pointing - unmistakably pointing - to the same conclusion. He received and approved the confession of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and traced it to a special revelation from His Father in heaven. His disciples and others fell at His feet and, in their measure and according to their light, rendered to Him what only belonged to God. Nay, He claimed from His own what could only be properly given to God. They were to follow Him, love and serve Him; and on His part He engaged to give them rest, peace, and eternal life; promised to return to receive them to Himself, that where He should be, after His departure, they should be also. Take the one instance of the thief on the cross. In his penitence and faith he turned to the One who was crucified by his side, and said, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." The answer was, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Luke 23:42, 43. That He was man was proved by the fact of His crucifixion, and these blessed words which He spoke to the malefactor demonstrate no less clearly that He was also God.

And such is the professed faith of Christendom, and nothing less can be received as Christian faith. This must be ever insisted upon with uncompromising fidelity, and especially now when there are not wanting signs of a rising wave of Socinianism which threatens to spread throughout the land, and which, as it is the result of increasing rationalism, is also the sure precursor of widespread infidelity and, it may be, apostasy. The enemy is very subtle. He will even commend Christ as man, if he may but thereby raise doubts as to His Godhead; and for this purpose he chooses rather to use as his instruments professed Christian teachers than open adversaries. We need therefore, as not ignorant of his devices, to be on our guard, and to cling to the precious truth with ever increasing tenacity, that the Christ, who as concerning the flesh was born of the seed of David, is over all, God blessed forever (Rom. 1:4; 9:5). And it is also written, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." 1 John 4:15.

"Thou art the everlasting Word,

The Father's only Son;

God manifest, God seen and heard,

The heaven's beloved One.

Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,

That every knee to Thee should bow."

## Brief Thoughts on Philippians 1

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The epistle to the Philippians has a peculiar character rather distinct from the other epistles, though there are indeed traces of the same in the epistle to Timothy. Taking it characteristically, it is the epistle of Christian experience.

We do not get doctrinal teaching in it, but the experience of Christian walk - not the experience of one who is going wrong, but of one who is going right - the experience which the Spirit of God gives. The Apostle is perfectly clear as to his position, yet here he counts himself not to have attained anything. He is on the road; he has not got there, but Christ has laid hold on him. When I speak of our place in Christ, as in Ephesians, it is in heavenly places; but, as a matter of fact, we are here going on through the earth full of temptations and snares.

Philippians gives us not of course failure, but the path of the Christian, salvation being looked at throughout as at the end of the wilderness. Paul had no doubt that Christ had laid hold on him for this blessedness, but he had not got there. Salvation is always looked at as the close of the journey, in Philippians.

It is so much the more remarkable as to the Christian's path that you never find sin mentioned from the beginning to the end of the epistle. The thorn in the flesh was needed when Paul came down from paradise; it was not that the flesh had become any better. The thorn was something to hinder sin, something that made him outwardly contemptible in his ministry. Everyone, probably, would have a different thorn, according to his need. There is no change in the flesh, but the power of the Spirit of God is such that the flesh is kept down. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus" would not be necessary if the flesh were any better. It is not that there is any uncertainty as to salvation or acceptance, but that we should so walk through the wilderness that the flesh should be shut up, as it were. Suppose I have a troublesome man in the house; if I keep him locked up, I am quite easy about him; but sometimes we are foolish enough to leave the door open. God looks at us as dead with Christ, and we are called on to reckon ourselves dead. I have a title to do it because Christ has died, and I am crucified with Christ. It is not only that we are born of God, but we have died with Christ.

Up to the middle of Rom. 5, sins are treated of, and atonement; in verse 12, nature is dealt with. We each have our own sins, but "by one man's disobedience" we have the same nature, we are all in the same boat; the remedy for this is that we have died with Christ. You cannot say to a man lying dead on the floor, "You have got bad passions and self-will"; he has neither passions nor self-will - he is dead.

Then we have the power of Christ. "In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." You say you are in Christ, then your acceptance is perfect; if you are in Christ, Christ is in you; then let me see Christ and nothing else.

If you are dead, you cannot live on in sins. If you have got Christ, it is in His death you have got Him. In Col. 3 we have God seeing us as dead; in Rom. 6, I reckon myself dead; in 2 Cor. 4 we

have "bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." This is going very far indeed. Death to a Paul was so realized that only the life of Jesus worked in him.

In chapter 1 we see the position and life of the Christian in this scene; in chapter 2 we see the pattern of Christ; in chapter 3 the energy that carries the Christian through this world, all things being dross and dung that he may win Christ; in chapter 4 we see the Christian's superiority to all circumstances. We have in this epistle the whole character of Christian life; this assumes that our place in Christ is settled. You cannot manifest Christ if you have not Christ. Assuming that Christ has borne our sins, and that we have died with Him, we get on that foundation the unfolding of the path of the Christian, the manifestation of this life we have got from God (a thing John looks at abstractedly in itself); "He that is born of God does not commit sin." The Christian is to manifest the life of Christ, and nothing else. "Ye are" (not ought to be) "the epistle of Christ," and let Christ be read in you as plainly as the law in the tables of stone. As Christ represents us before God, so we appear in the presence of the world for Christ.

It is a great thing to say that my heart is so full of Christ that nothing but Christ appears. If I am in lowliness of heart before Him, living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, I shall manifest Christ. In these days when the Word of God is so called in question, it is blessed to think how a single verse of Scripture was sufficient for Him for authority, and sufficient for the devil, who had not a word to say.

There is no uncertainty as to the faithfulness of Christ in bringing us through the wilderness. The moment the Christian looks at himself in Christ, there is no "if"; but the moment you get a Christian in the wilderness, there are "ifs"; not that there is the smallest doubt, but to bring in dependence. We are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation"; this suffices, but in dependence. I am "the righteousness of God in Him." "If ye hold fast the beginning of your confidence"; if I hold fast I am to be trusted. There must be positive dependence every moment; I learn that. The mischief of the state of heart is that, as to will, man has got independent. The whole thing for us is to get to absolute dependence on infallible faithfulness, on unwearied love to carry us through. The heart is brought back to blessed dependence; the dependence is blessed, but the sense of that faithful love is unfailing joy and rest. It is not that the "if" is not true, but the Father's hand will never let it take place. We have grace to help in every time of need; without Him we can do nothing; with Him, in a certain sense, everything. We learn here that we can never excuse ourselves if we let the flesh act. The existence of the flesh does not give a bad conscience; otherwise we should never have a good one.

"And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in all knowledge and in all judgment, that ye may approve things that are excellent." There is growth. What I desire to press is, the practical place into which God has brought us in grace to Himself. "Thou hast guided them by Thy strength to Thy holy habitation" That is where you are brought; God has brought you to Himself. It is not a rule imposed, but Christ revealed. The question for you as Christians is, Are you walking in the light as God is in the light? God is light and love - His essential names. You are brought to God without a veil, and there is light on everything you do.

God has brought us to know Christ. "This is My beloved Son"; that is what I delight in. The more we look at Him, the more we see there is the place God has brought us. If heaven opens on Him, it

opens on us; if God owns Him as Son, He owns us as sons.

Now we have to learn Christ. Has Christ had such a place in your hearts today that the things which spring from Christ sprang from you? Have you understood that Christ has brought you to Himself? Now especially it is important that Christians should be Christians. What He was before God in perfection reproduced itself before men to please His Father. Are you thus learning Christ day by day? When I look at Christ, I see God manifested in a man in this world - the expression and pattern of what God delights in. I am not before God on the ground of what I have done, or what I am, but on the ground of Christ. There is for us this continually learning Christ. God has been revealed to us; we have seen what He is - seen it in light to love it. It is not an effort that I may get more like Christ, but that, according to the knowledge I have of Him, there should be nothing contrary to that knowledge. One does not expect a babe to be a man. When one sees a babe delighting in its mother, and obedient, it is just as delightful in its way as to see a man.

"That in nothing I may be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, Christ may be magnified in my body whether by life or by death." Whether it were life or death that he came across, Christ would always be glorified in his body. The Christian, having his eye on Christ, knows no standard but Christ in glory. We are "to be conformed to the image of His Son"; that is the blessed hope of the Christian, and nothing short of it. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly"; there is no doubt, no uncertainty, of our having it or of what it is. Christ is "the firstborn among many brethren" - they like Him. Christ "shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

Seeing Christ up there, I get this unspeakably simple truth that, when I was a poor sinner, another Man stepped in and set me free. "Let these go their way," Christ said of His disciples; they go away, they run - poor work, but they are safe. He takes the whole thing on Himself, and He is to be the judge. The perfect good of God and the perfect evil of man met at the cross; everything was settled there. The new heavens and the new earth depend upon the cross. The Man who was there made sin is now sitting at the right hand of God in glory. The Holy Ghost comes down and makes me know that my place is settled before God. A sinner cannot have confidence if sin is not put away; but there He is, the pattern of what I am to be, our "forerunner."

I am going to bear the image of the heavenly; I want to attain that, to win Christ, to be like Him forever. The treasure is indeed in an earthen vessel, but I have got the treasure. I never rest until I am like Christ in glory. Christ is my life; that life lives on Christ as its object; I am going to be like Him; I shall never be satisfied till then. The Spirit of God realizes this in our hearts in power. The light that shines from the glory, shines in my heart.

Even before chapter 4, how perfectly the Apostle puts the heart at peace! "Some preach Christ even of envy and strife"; never mind, if Christ is preached. What peace of heart he had! He had been in prison for four years, in the most trying circumstances; "I know that this," he says, "shall turn to my salvation."

It is what is behind that faith gets hold of. The wretched Jews, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the sabbath day, sent the soldiers to break their legs; and what did they do? They sent one of them right into paradise.

Paul has been feeding the Church ever since from that prison at Rome.

"To depart and be with Christ is far better; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." So completely happy, so completely settled that I do not know which to choose! Self is gone. It would be worth while to stay because I can labor for Christ. Christ loves the Church; then I shall stay! With him it was laboring for Christ, or living with Christ. Christ had such a place that the power of circumstances disappears. How near he lived to Christ! There was not perfection - not yet. But he had Christ completely. He was living up to Christ in the measure to which he had attained.

We may get a blessed truth, as Peter did, revealed by the Father, a real revelation (I do not question that); but the flesh may not be broken down to the measure of what we have been taught. Peter was doing Satan's work, and Christ said to him, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." Would not Christ have to call you Satan in something?

If we are not bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, our condition of soul is not up to the measure in which we have been taught.

Have you the true desire? Is there a locked-up chamber in your heart? Christ will open it up some day. Can you say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart... and lead me in the way everlasting"?

The Lord grant us wisdom to understand His love! J.N.D.

Note: The Scripture quotations in this article are as the author gave them.

## Brief Thoughts on Philippians 2

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In this whole epistle is little or no doctrine, but the practical exhibition of Christian walk by the power of the Spirit of God.

The chapter before us shows us the spirit in which Christ walked while down here, as the true character and spirit of the Christian, the meekness and gentleness of Christ, as in chapter 3 we see the energy of divine life. In the last chapter we see superiority to circumstances. In some Christians there is a certain degree of natural energy. When Moses killed the Egyptian, he had not forgotten the fleshly energy of Pharaoh's court. Flesh on God's side can never stand flesh on the devil's side. Moses had to be kept for forty years keeping sheep that he might learn to be quiet. If one side of Christian character is wanting, the other is always defective too. You never get one side by itself without even that being defective.

In this chapter we see the perfect blessed giving up of self, and the most delicate consideration of others. Wherever true love is at work, you always reckon on the love of others. Epaphroditus was very uneasy because he perfectly reckoned on the love of the Philippians when they heard that he had been sick. You see the thoughtfulness and considerateness of grace where self is done with. It was perfect in Him.

Where there is not the positive power of Christ's presence, self will be there directly.

How gently and graciously the Apostle speaks! The Philippians had thought of him in prison. He had heard of disputings among them; Euodias and Syntyche were not of the same mind; but he cannot rebuke them sharply when he had just received their kindness. "Fulfill ye my joy"; if you want to make me perfectly happy, you will be like-minded, "having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" - a rebuke, but a very gentle one. The spirit in which he writes is exceedingly beautiful.

Here we find that which in Christ leads to all this. In Him there was the total absence of self; in us there ought to be the suppression of self. "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." This will be no difficulty to us if we are practically with Christ. With Him, if I think of self at all, what do I think of? My faults, of course. I see in Christ such obedience, such love and grace, that I must think of my own failures. If I look at a brother, I see the blood of Christ upon him; I see the Spirit in him when I look on him with the eyes of Christ. Wherever the heart is feeling with Christ, one cannot but see good in others. Paul always speaks first of the good among those to whom he writes. There is only one exception to this among the epistles. Take Corinthians (which is not an exception); they were going on shockingly ill, and yet he says, before there is a word about the evil, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in everything ye are enriched of Him." The epistle to the Galatians is the exception; there he plunges right into the evil at once. Where doctrine and faith were touched, he was a great deal more severe than when Christians were walking badly - not that there is any excuse for a bad walk. "I stand in doubt of you," he says to the Galatians; but in the next chapter, "I have confidence

in you through the Lord"; his mind rises up to Christ.

In the ordinary path of the Christian, the heart being with Christ, the thing I see in myself is never a good thing - not that it brings distrust, for this is all wrong. I do not doubt His love, but the effect of living near Him and being with Him is that, while love is perfect, light is perfect too. Suppose one Christian a powerful evangelist, another a teacher; the teacher will think, What a poor evangelist I am! The evangelist will feel, Oh, I know only the elements! He does see Christ in his brother. We are wretched creatures in ourselves, but this is not a cold measure of what a person is, but the thought of Christ about others and about self. The man who has a great gift from God will be thinking of bringing it out as pure as he got it in - "He has lit a lantern in my heart; does the light come out as pure as it went in?" It is wonderful the happiness with which a person walks when going through the world in that way. Self is gone. As a Christian, he sees that God has lit up grace in his heart, but alas! the walls of the lantern are sometimes dirty; when he looks at others, he sees they let out a little light anyway.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." What was the mind that was in Jesus? It was always coming down. We shall call it a long journey from the throne of God to the cross; it was very far, indeed, and it was always down. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The more He humbled Himself, the more He was trampled on. He begins His ministry with "Blessed, blessed"; He has to end it with, "Woe, woe." He goes down, whether trampled on or not, till He can go no lower, down to "the dust of death."

He "being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation." He always was God, but He laid aside the form of God, the outward glory, "and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." He will never cease to be a servant, though Lord of all; He will never give up this service of love to minister to our blessing. In the condition of Godhead to begin, He takes the form of a servant, and He was always obedient. He had no will of His own; nothing could be more humble than this. We find in this chapter the path the Lord went, from having the form of God, down to that death on the cross. Adam was in the form of man, and he did set up by robbery to be equal with God; he was the first example of "He that exalteth himself shall be abased." The last Adam abases Himself and is exalted; He lays aside His glory and takes a servant's form.

Man (especially in these days) is just the opposite; man's mind does not want God. The whole effort is to get the first man up; and you find even Christians joining in this, following where they cannot lead. Are children more obedient, servants more faithful, men of business more honest? It is the exaltation of man's will and the setting aside of God. The second Man's path was exactly the opposite; He always went down. Are you content to do this? Are you content to have the mind that was in Christ Jesus, content to be always trampled on? This was God's path in the midst of evil, and this is what we want to get. People talk about God's creation - why it was sin made it as it is (not the physical world of course, but the world as we have it). When was the world embellished? By Cain, when he went out from the presence of God. Man tries to make the world pleasant without God; this is the true and real character of the world. You continually hear it said, What harm is there in music? what harm in painting? There is harm in not one of physical things; the harm is in the use I make of them. What harm is there in strength? None whatever; but if I use my strength to knock a man down, there is harm in that. The harm is in the use people make of things.

What harm was there in the trees of the garden? none. Men have in a certain sense lost God, and they try to get on as well without Him as they can.

Christ was in this world in the form of a servant, a poor carpenter. Love delights to serve - blessed, infinite love! Nothing could be more divine than when He gave up "the form of God" and went down, down till He came to the gibbet - I do not say the cross, for the cross has become an honored name, but the actual gibbet. Then God exalts Him as man.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." We see the perfection of love that takes the form of a servant and gives up self in everything. If this mind is in you, you do not look at self to look at the good that is there, or to spare yourself suffering. "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God"; such is the character of divine love come into this world of evil. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" will not do now. The world would be a paradise if that were done, but it is not a paradise; and what we want is a spirit of love that will carry us through the world. "For us, an offering and a sacrifice to God"; there was in Christ the absolute giving up of self for what is perfectly worthless, and yet with a worthy object. Take the divine side of love; the worse the object, the greater is the love; but if you take the human side, the greater the object, the greater is the love. We find both in Christ. If I take the creature side, the excellence of the object makes the greatness of the affection; if I take the divine side, the worthlessness of the object makes the greatness of the affection. We see divine power come into the midst of evil - there never was anything like it. God could not come among angels as He came in this sinful world. "Unto the glory of God by us." "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." "Which things the angels desire to look into."

Christ is the center of all that. I find His divine Person tracing this path all the way down. He never gives up the service of love. He will reign as King above all; all must confess His Lordship. But the service of love He will never give up, as indeed it is a higher thing. He is made Lord (He was always God, of course), but He makes Himself a servant.

"Jesus knowing that... He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself." If He was going out of this world, the disciples might say, He is gone into glory and has left us here; His service is over. No, says the Lord, and He shows them that He does not give up His service. The key to John 13 is this: I cannot stay with you, but you must have a part with Me - a spot will not do there. He will take the place of a servant even in the glory. "He shall gird Himself... and will come forth and serve them." His love is His glory; the nearer we are to Him, the more we shall adore Him.

In 1 Cor. 15 we read, "Then shall the Son also Himself be subject." He gives up the kingdom which He will rule in, but He keeps His place as man. He will be the "First-born among many brethren" forever and ever. His ear was bored to the doorpost. The slave had a right to go out free after six years of service (Exod. 21), but He says, "I will not go out free," I will be a servant forever, when He could have had twelve legions of angels at His command. Down here He was as much God as before He came down, but He had the form of a servant. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us," and it will be His delight and joy to minister blessing throughout eternity, and thus make it doubly precious to us.

If I get hold of the path, the spirit, the mind of Jesus, nothing could be more hateful to me than anything of self. You never find an act of self in Christ. Not merely was there no selfishness but there was no self in Him. He has given us the immense privilege of always going down to serve others as He did.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

Salvation is always looked at as the end of the journey, as the thing arrived at, in this epistle; therefore, he speaks of working it out. "Work out your own salvation"; this is in contrast with Paul's working, not with God's work, as people so often misunderstand it to be. Paul was in prison; they had lost him. They had not lost God, but Satan seemed to have got the victory. If you are there with Joshua fighting Amalek, it is a very solemn thing; and if you have not Moses' hands up, you will be beaten.

There is no uncertainty, but it is exceedingly serious to fight God's battle against Satan. Perhaps you think it must be easy to fight God's battles. It is not easy, even with the Lord to help me; it is a most solemn thing that my business is to overcome Satan. There was no conflict in Egypt; the Israelites were slaves there. When out of Egypt, there was both the conflict and the trial of the wilderness. When they got over Jordan, they entered into Canaan; and whenever Joshua crossed the Jordan, conflict characterized their state. "Art Thou for us or for our adversaries?" There was no circumcision till they crossed the Jordan; the stamp of Egypt was on them till they were dead and risen. It is a solemn thing that I stand in Christ's place, in Christ's name (every Christian does, of course) in the scene of Satan's power.

We are vessels of God's power against Satan. Here, I am standing in Christ's name in Satan's world! God works in me; but this makes it only the more serious still; I should not fail. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings." Before God, we never murmur, never dispute. If God were seen, there

would not be one murmur, one disputation; and faith realizes His presence.

It is remarkable as to the exhortation which follows that if you take it to pieces you see Christ in everything. "That ye may be blameless and harmless"; He was that. He was the Son of God, "without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation." He was "the light of the world." while He was in it; "holding forth the word of life" - this is just what He did.

"Ye are the epistle of Christ" - filled up with mud it may be, and hard to read. but still ye are the epistle of Christ. "That the life also of Christ might be made manifest in our body." I owe everything to Christ; I owe Him salvation, heavens, everything. I owe Him myself. The heart becomes engaged with this manifestation. He is gone, and He has left us here; and He says, "I am glorified in them."

Is that kind of desire yours? - not the desire of the sluggard who has nothing, who roasteth not that he took in hunting, but the real desire of manifesting Christ - the desire that cannot bear anything that is not of Christ? God helps us in this. Paul could speak of "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus"; he takes death and holds it on himself. He wants to keep the walls of the lantern bright, so he would rub them.

"Always"? this is a great deal to say. What we have to do is to carry about with us the dying of the Lord Jesus, and then the flesh would never stir. We fail in this, and the Lord comes in and helps us. "We which live are alway delivered unto death." The flesh is always present; there is no change in that. The Lord knows He has to help us, and He puts us through the trials and exercises; the Lord makes everything to work for good to us.

The Apostle could say, "delivered unto death for Jesus' sake." When we look back to a past life, we have more to be thankful for our trials than for anything else. Till the root is reached, the Lord does not let you go; the heart desires this - would not let the trial slip away. Oh, if we only trusted God, there would be confidence in His love! "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen." Are your hearts on the things that are seen, or on the things that are not seen?

There are three spaces in our hearts. Christ must be at the bottom of our heart and at the top also; it is what is between the two that shows my state.

Has your heart been open all day for the things of the world to trot over? Has the highway of your heart been open all day?

May God give us to be anything or nothing, so that the Lord Jesus may be everything!

## Brief Thoughts on Philippians 3

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In this chapter we get the energy that carries the Christian on through the wilderness in view of the glory.

It does not give us the meekness and gentleness of Christ like chapter 2, but the energy that counts all but dross and dung to win Him. Doctrine is not the point in this epistle. Salvation is always looked on as at the end of the journey. The Christian is viewed as in a race, and in that race he is entirely under the power of the Spirit of God; the flesh is not looked at as acting. Christ is before us; the thing we are predestinated to is to be conformed to His image. There is no thought now, inasmuch as there is a Man in the glory, of any place or object for the Christian but to be with and like that Man on high.

As Christ was taken up as man into glory, we shall be taken up the same way to be like Him. The thought of the believer can never rest short of this. Paul says that he wants not to be unclothed, but clothed upon. "To depart and be with Christ" is blessed, but it is still waiting. The Apostle here says that He will "change our vile bodies." The cross having come in, it has given us the death of the old man, and the reception of Christ as head of the new family in glory; we look off from everything to this. The hope that is in Christ is that when He appears we shall be like Him. Thus we look to be like Himself, with Himself surely, but like Himself; nothing short of this is the object of the believer. He would grow undoubtedly, but still it is growth by looking at an object we shall never attain to till we are raised from the dead in His image or changed into it.

There is no mending of the flesh, no sanctification of nature, no forming of man as he is; there is death to it. The old man has been entirely and finally judged, but another is now in the glory as man. This we could not have as an object of faith until Christ was risen. God has "provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" - "perfect," that is, in glory. That could not be, nor was there any title for it, till the work upon the cross; therein is the title and groundwork for all this. There is no connection with Christ as man among the children of Adam; He was a true man, but there was no union whatever. He was one of them, but He was alone. He was a man without sin; we were men with sin. You can never unite the two, for they "are contrary the one to the other." He could come in grace as a true man among us, but He abode alone.

In Heb. 2, four reasons are given why Christ took flesh and blood: first, to make atonement; second, for God's glory and counsels; third, to destroy him that had the power of death; fourth, that He should go through every sorrow, and so have sympathy with us. There was perfect grace in Him, but He was alone. People speak of Him as "bone of our bone," but this is totally false; we are bone of His bone now that He is on high. Wherever you find the thought of Christ being bone of our bone, you get redemption and atonement made unnecessary, or at any rate muddled up. When atonement has been wrought, then by the Holy Ghost He unites us to Himself, and says we are "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."

Thus we learn that the only thing by which the flesh can be dealt with is death. Until atonement was made, God could not deal with sinners in the way of righteousness; He could forbear - "for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God." The difference with us is that righteousness is now before Him, and we are in it. Our souls stand in divine righteousness in the presence of God.

The Apostle does not talk of sin in the flesh here. The flesh has its religion as well as its lusts, and this is much more attractive than worshiping God in the Spirit; the flesh cannot do this. "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh," such is the flesh's religion. Paul was the most positive enemy of God all the while. Suppose this blamelessness of Paul's - to whose credit was it? Paul's. Wherever religion is a credit to us, it is not worth anything; worse than that, it deceives us. You may have all the truths which do not test faith, and yet be without this. The time will come when whosoever "killeth you will think that he doeth God service." They thought they were doing God service, but they would not hear of the truth that tested faith - the Father revealed in the Son.

Thus the whole system of the religion of the flesh is set aside here. It is always the truth that tests faith. Suppose I fast twice in the week, and give tithes of all I possess; to whose credit is this? Mine. The moment I get the cross, the flesh is judged, and that is no credit to me. The thing that tests faith, flesh resists. The disciples would not hear of the Lord's death, because it tested their faith. Peter, the very man that owned what He was going to build the Church on, says, "That be far from Thee," and the Lord has to call him "Satan." Although he had got a truth, he had not the flesh judged up to the measure of what he knew; he would not have a truth that breaks through the flesh in a way he does not like.

"That I may win Christ" - this is the great principle of the whole chapter, and you get perseverance in it, which is more. Suppose a man just saved; what does he think about the world? That it has deceived him. Leave him for a while, and his family twine around him, and soon he begins to seek the things of the world. Paul sees Christ on the way to Damascus, and he gives up his importance, his Pharisaism, his teaching, everything else, and he counts all but loss that he may win Him. "And do count them but dung that I may win Christ" - not "did count," which would be comparatively easy.

The value of Christ must be fresh enough in the soul, as a present thing, to enable one to count all the rest mere dross and dung. Everybody is governed by the object he is pursuing, and, what is more, everybody judges of others by the thing he is pursuing himself. One man makes money his object, another pleasure. The man who loves money says, Oh, what a fool that man is to spend so much on his pleasure! And the man who loves pleasure says, What a fool that man is to hoard up his money; it is no better to him than so much clay!

The moment I want to win Christ, all besides is dross and dung. You have only to lay aside every weight, Paul could say, with Christ as his object - only to lay aside is easily said, but the moment it becomes a weight it is easy. When I say, I must get Christ, death may be on the road, but never mind so that I get Him. The desire is not weakened by the eye being dimmed by present things. Paul goes on. There we get testing. He went on looking at Christ. He had found Christ the satisfaction of his soul, and he did not hunger, he did not thirst, as the Lord says, for anything else. People talk of sacrifices, but there is no great sacrifice in giving up dung. If the eye were so fixed on Christ that these things got that character, it would not be a trouble to give them up. The thing

gets its character from what the heart is set on. The moment the heart is set on Christ, all the rest becomes dross. The man with one object is the energetic man. The Christian's one object is Christ - the object God has and the object the Spirit gives to the heart of the Christian. Have we only to say that Christ is the one sole object of the heart? are there not distractions? We allow other things to come in; the eye is not single.

Paul however would "be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness... but the righteousness which is of God by faith." The Apostle was still looking forward as he is always doing in this epistle. Here he speaks of righteousness in contrast (not to his sins, but) to his righteousness. A poor man may not part with his old coat; but if you give him a new one instead, he will soon have done with it. The moment the soul has the eye fixed on the Lord Jesus, all his righteousness becomes filthy rags, and the heart revolts from mixing it up with Him. When the Spirit is come, He will convince the "world of sin, because they believe not on Me." The world's sin was proved by not believing on Jesus; all are under sin together. The one single righteous Person was turned out of the world; where will you find righteousness now? At the right hand of God. The world will never see Christ again except in judgment. Satan was never called "the prince of this world" till Christ came, till the cross. When He comes, Satan raises the whole world against Him. There is the prince of this world, the Lord says. He might rule before, but in the cross Satan was proved the prince of the world.

Again, we hear of "the righteousness which is of God by faith" - not now righteousness of man for God, but of God for man. "Being made conformable unto His death." In a world where Christ has been rejected, the object of all my hopes is at the right hand of God. I have got a life completely paramount over death. The resurrection of Christ was past sin, past Satan's power, past judgment, past death. The second Man had gone into death, was made sin; but He is risen, and all that is past. God has been glorified, and death belongs to us now as we belonged to it in the first man. We have got this divine life which is above everything in the world. If I know Him, I want to know the power of His resurrection that left everything behind. What comes next? "The fellowship of His sufferings. Being made conformable unto His death"; all was gain to Paul. Do we not see the blessedness of being a martyr?

"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"; death might be on the road, but death would be positive gain because one would be like Christ. Christ risen becomes power in me going through the same scene as He did. The Apostle was a man of like passions with us, but he was single-eyed. Here he gives us not only the Christ he was going to win, but something he was going to win for himself - "the resurrection from among the dead."

In Mark 9:9, 10 we read of "the rising from the dead," about which the disciples questioned; every Pharisee, every orthodox Jew, believed in the resurrection of the dead. What did the resurrection of Christ mean? It was God's seal on everything He was, and everything He had done during His life here. He took Him out from among all the other dead. If He takes people out from among the rest of the dead because He delights in them, that is the seal of their acceptance. Paul says, No matter what it costs me, I will attain to that. What condition is the saint raised in? "Sown in weakness, raised in power; sown in dishonor, raised in glory." "Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming."

As God put His perfect seal on Christ and Christ's work, and raised Him, so, when He raises us up, He puts His seal on us; only it is because of His righteousness, not our own. The Apostle was apprehended of Christ Jesus, but he had not got it yet. What I am looking for is to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold for me. When we attain to that, we get Christ Himself and being like Christ; we do not, could not, get that down here.

Perfection as to the state of the Christian means perfect conformity to the image of Christ in glory.

Three classes are spoken of here: the "perfect," those "otherwise minded," and those who are the "enemies of the cross of Christ." The perfect are those who have entered by the power of the Spirit of Christ into this truth of being perfectly like Him. Many a Christian knows only the forgiveness of sins; he has not got the thing that is before him, but the thing that is behind him. The thought of having Christ in glory and being like Him governed Paul completely; but, like a man going through a straight passage with a lamp at the other end of it, he got more of the light as he went on, though as yet he had not attained. Every step the Christian takes, he has got more of the light - "beholding... we are changed into the same image," though in a certain sense we have nothing of it. One has not merely seen redemption that has given him the object, but he is running after the object. He has got what Christianity gives - got all of it - and this in a certain sense is perfection. "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling [calling above] of God in Christ Jesus." Till we are above, we have not got the calling - the effect of it, I mean. It cost Paul suffering, it cost him difficulty, but it filled his heart with joy - filled it with Christ.

You know persons who have found they are poor sinners, who see their sins are forgiven, but they do not see further; they are "otherwise minded," but God will reveal this to them. Wait a while, have patience.

"But many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ" - those who call themselves Christians and love the world. Men who mind earthly things are the enemies of the cross of Christ. The cross and the glory go together, not at the same time of course, but the one depends on the other.

The cross of Christ toward this world is saying, "The world seeth Me no more." The cross is perfect security for heaven, but entire judgment of this world. Paul's heart having followed Christ up there, his object, his heart, is there. "One thing I do" - that is the Christian. You may be in various circumstances, you may be a carpenter as Christ was; but the Christian's "conversation is in heaven." What is he waiting for? For Christ to come and take him to Himself. His heart is fixed on Christ's Person. He has found Him at the cross, who has carried him into heaven with Him. I am changed into the same glory as Christ, while it is acting on my soul that I am to be like Him; it governs the heart the whole way.

The righteousness of the law was the righteousness of man, the law being the measure of man's righteousness. Christ Himself is our righteousness. I have got life and righteousness from God; both are Christ. The power that raised Christ from the dead, the Spirit will exercise to raise or change our bodies. These are God's thoughts about us. What am I going to get? Christ, and to be like Christ - then run after Him. Can we say we are doing that?

I distrust the moral condition of the man that thinks much of crimes. The thief went into paradise to be with Christ; the moral man went out.

Can we say, "This one thing I do"? I have but one thing, and I am pushing on. If you wanted a person to get to London, would you rather meet him four miles from London with his back to it, or four miles from Holyhead with his face to London? Even a babe may have his face turned to Christ. Are you going God's way? Can we honestly say, with glory before us, with Christ before us, "One thing I do"? Which way does your eye turn? Which way are you going? God has only one way - Christ.

There is the constant solicitation of distractions on the road; quite true, everything round us is a temptation. When the people came to Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, of what was it the occasion to Him? Of perfect obedience. Of what to Peter? Of temptation. What one looks for in the Christian is the single eye. One of the comforts of heaven will be that there I shall not require my conscience; I need it every moment now; I cannot let my heart out now.

The Lord give us in all liberty of heart so to see Him before us that we may run hard after Him, having our hearts kept by the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord!

## Brief Thoughts on Philippians 4

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This chapter takes up the entire superiority to circumstances which characterizes the Christian. The Apostle had gone through very trying circumstances; he had been in prison for four years, chained to a heathen soldier—a terrible kind of thing. There he had been to have the experience that no circumstances could ever separate from the love of Christ, and that the life of Christ was paramount to everything. Christ felt all, far more than we do; but there was that which sustained Him and made it positive joy to Him. It is a great thing to see that the power of Christ in us can set us entirely above everything. Paul knew how to suffer need, and he knew how to abound (a far more dangerous thing); for if we suffer need, we are thrown on God necessarily. What we find all through this epistle is the power of the Spirit of God raising him above all circumstances and sorrows; it is always the power of the Spirit of God which sustains him.

Sin is never mentioned in the epistle, nor flesh as a gross thing, but only in its religious shape. But we get the power of the Spirit of God carrying us through this world where temptations are—not that the flesh is any better, but there is such a thing as living above it. This is a very important principle for all of us. It is true that "in many things we offend all," but Scripture never supposes that we are going to offend; and we can never excuse ourselves if we do offend. The flesh is as bad as ever; and what we get is not the grace of God for it, but a thorn in the flesh, the thorn being from the grace of God of course.

If we are conscious of weakness and are leaning only on grace, we need not offend; there is power for us. It is possible that at a given moment I may not have power, but this is because I have been going wrong previously. Christ was witnessing while Peter was denying, but Christ had been praying while Peter had been sleeping. The armor should be put on before the battle, not just at the battle. When Satan came to Him with his wiles, the Lord had only to rest quietly in obedience; there was no longer reasoning, no confusion about it. Satan says, "Command that these stones be made bread"; the Lord answers that He is come to obey. For it is written that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Then Satan tells Him to cast Himself down (that is, not to trust God), but is told, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." These are wiles; but when Satan comes openly, then resist Satan. "Get thee hence, Satan"; then he flees. We have not to overcome him who is overcome, but we have to overcome his wiles by the word, in obedience.

The only effect of trying circumstances is to give much deeper acquaintance with the Lord's faithfulness, and withal much deeper joy. At the end of four years in prison Paul could say, "Rejoice in the Lord always"; he had nothing else to rejoice in. He says, as it were, The more I know of every trial and hindrance in my work as an apostle, the more I can tell you, You can rejoice in the Lord always. It is a beautiful thing to see Paul the person say, You must be always rejoicing. The thing that hinders our rejoicing is not trouble, but being half-and-half. If in the world, his conscience reproaches the Christian; if he meets spiritual Christians, he is uncomfortable there; in fact, he is happy nowhere. A man's affections do not hinder his work for his children. If we

are serving Christ simply, we should go back to Him all the happier when the service is done.

We never can give a reason for not rejoicing in Christ, except the evil of our hearts. Here we get what is so important practically--to rejoice always. Anyone can rejoice in the Lord when the Lord gives him what he likes. "Bless the Lord at all times"; that is the testing point. "In everything give thanks." "Jehovah is my Shepherd, I shall not want"; not, I have got blessing and shall not want, but "Jehovah is my Shepherd, I shall not want." "He restoreth my soul." He stood by me when in misery, sorrow, failure it may be. I may get my own weakness, death in the way; but the table is spread in the very presence of my enemies (like Joshua and the Israelites eating the passover before ever a blow was struck). God's natural work is to give us green pastures and still waters, but He makes everything work together for our good; it is not the circumstances, it is the Lord. "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." After the sorrowful and trying things Paul had passed through, he was full of comfort. He had had green pastures, pleasant things from the Lord; but he rejoiced all through, whatever the circumstances.

Again, he says, "Let your moderation [yieldingness] be known unto all men: the Lord is at hand." He does not insist upon his rights, because he trusts the Lord; he is not careful. Abraham says to Lot, "Go to the left and I will go to the right." Lot chooses Sodom--always the effect of choosing for oneself. The part Abraham seemed to have lost was Sodom and Gomorrah.

Then there is another exceedingly strong thing connected with it: how long is this going to last? "The Lord is at hand." You have got your joy and strength elsewhere, and "the fashion of this world passeth away." If conscious that my portion is in Christ, the looking for the Lord who is my portion, makes me sit loose to everything here. If our expectation, if the feeling of our hearts, is that the Lord is at hand (I do not mean prophecy, but the personal expectation of the saint himself), it must be so. What event is there between you and heaven? The only one is our going up there. If I am looking for Christ to come straight down from heaven and take me up, what event is there between? It is no great wonder if the Christian has power to go through circumstances and master them; he has joy in the Lord that nothing can touch. In waiting for Christ, what must be done before He comes? "The day and the hour knoweth no man"; but there is only one thing that must be done--the gathering in of the saints. "The longsuffering of God is salvation." "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise," but He is waiting on poor sinners. Prophecy does not speak to us of heaven; faith looks to heaven and sees what is there. Prophecy is God's politics, and it saves us from human politics--a great mercy too. Our portion is Christ Himself.

There are trials in the way; but then you get, "Be careful for nothing." This is a magnificent sentence and leaves no loopholes. It has often stopped my mouth completely when I have thought of the Church, the saints. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God." He does not say, Do you go and do the will of God, but reckon on God that you are going to get the best thing. Present your requests to God; thank Him before you get them. He does not say you will get them always; it is the interest which God takes in us that is the point here. Paul besought the Lord three times that the thorn should be taken away. Indeed I am not going to take away what I sent for your good! such virtually was the answer. "My grace is sufficient for you."

"And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts." This is not peace with God, or that your heart keeps the peace either. The peace keeps your heart, and it is the

peace of God-the peace He is in. My own peace I understand very well. The peace He is in keeps my heart, and it passes all understanding-of course it does, because it is "the peace of God." I do not know what I may get, but of one thing I am sure-I shall get the very best thing, though it may come in a way very grating to my feelings.

When this is the case, I can think of what is good. God thinks of my trouble; I can now think of what is good. "Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are of good report,... if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." What a blessed condition of soul this is, beloved friends! There is no burden in my cares; I cannot burden God when I put them there. "And the God of peace shall be with you." Cast your care on God, and the peace of God will keep you; walk as a Christian ought to walk, and the God of peace will be with you. You have a companion in the path of trouble and sorrow, and such a companion too! "The God of peace"! He is never called the God of joy. Joy is an uncertain thing; peace is always there. The word continually through Scripture is attached to God's name. Where peace is, there is no trouble.

Rejoicing in the Lord always, his moderation known unto all men, the Lord is at hand, no care-what a happy picture of the Christian!

There is more: "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again, wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity." Observe the delicacy of the Apostle here; "I am glad that at the last"-this proves that he had been in trouble, in want-I do not mean you were forgetting me, but ye lacked opportunity. I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content; this is the effect of trusting Christ in it all. "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound." He was in abundance sometimes, and this is much more dangerous; we are apt to rest in the gift instead of looking at the giver, but with Paul it brought out only thankfulness.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." This is the epistle of experience. It is not, People can do all things, but "I can do all things"; Christ is always sufficient. Paul found it so. He had gone through perils of all kinds, but Christ was always sufficient. He was in abundance now, but Christ in all things was sufficient. It is a blessed truth that, though we may fail Him, we cannot be in circumstances Christ is not sufficient for. Whether it be the Church or individual saints, it is impossible to be in a place for which Christ is not sufficient. Paul was in danger from the flesh, and a thorn was sent to him. The thorn was something which made him in some way despicable in his ministry. The wonderful effect of his preaching, then, did not come from him; the evidence of the power of Christ was there. Then let me have it, Paul says; "I glory in my infirmities." The thorn was not power, but it was the way of power; the flesh is broken down completely that Christ may come in. If there had been a fourth heaven, the flesh would have been only the more puffed up; you cannot correct what is evil in its nature. What came to make nothing of Paul is not power, but Christ is there. 2 Cor. 12 takes two sides; we have there a man in Christ (a man in the flesh totally put down), and then Christ in a man, the other side of the Christian life-the power of Christ in us, and with us.

Do not say, A Christian can do all things; it is quite true in the abstract, but not what the Apostle says. "I can do all things through Him who strengtheneth me." "I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content." He found Christ always sufficient. His whole heart was full at the same time of affectionate remembrance of the Philippians. "Even at Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto

my necessity."

I think it is beautiful how the Apostle does not take himself out of a man. Superiority is to go through circumstances and feel them all, and yet be above them. Look how he speaks of Epaphroditus in Phil. 2 As a doctrine, if he had died, he would have gone to heaven; but it was not that. He felt it as it was; it was not a hard mind that cast off the trial. When the Lord saw the widow, "He was moved with compassion." There was no insensibility in Him, but in going through the circumstances He was sensible of them, yet above them. The way we should walk is as never governed by circumstances, not in insensibility, but in superiority. Christ is the answer to it; cast your care on Him.

Paul attaches all the importance of divine grace to their service. You see what a link there is in the Church of God, even in gifts. Poor old bedridden women may have prayed for Paul. "My God shall supply all your need." It is "my God"; he knew Him-the God I know, the One I have been with, as if answering for the God he knew. How his heart gets up to the source of it all! The heart gets back to God. What was to be the measure of supply? Was it their need? No, "His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." We find here a blessed picture of the way in which the Spirit of God lifts him, while feeling everything, above the circumstances. It is perfect impressibility by the circumstances here below, but we have this source of strength in Christ Himself. The thing I have to learn is my own weakness.

We make a mistake about the apostles; we often think of them as if they were eagles soaring above all. Paul says, "I was with you in weakness and fear, and much trembling." There were great people in Corinth. Paul was a blessed vessel, but the vessel must be made nothing of. What we have to learn is being nothing that Christ may be everything. If a person is humble, he does not need to be humbled; but if he is not humble, he must be.

Are we content to be nothing? Are we content to walk in the secret of God? The Lord give us to learn practically what it is thus to pass through this world. You can get neither the Christian nor the Church in a state that Christ is not sufficient for. The Lord give us to know our nothingness.

NOTE: The Scripture quotations in this article are as author gave them.

## Power in Weakness

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"And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." 2 Cor. 12:9.

The first sentence of this verse is sometimes overlooked -"He said unto me." Paul got it from Christ. You may tell me that Christ is sufficient, but I must get it myself personally from Christ in heaven, and that will assure my heart. If we want to be delivered from ourselves, or from whatever difficulties may

be in our pathway, He is sufficient. The result is, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities." He besought the Lord thrice before to take away the thorn, but now a communication from Christ has altered everything; the voice of Christ alters everything. There is no third party here; it is

not He said unto us, but unto me. I do not mean anything imaginative - only the simplicity of intercourse with Christ about everything in our pathway. "That the power of Christ may rest upon me." (Or, "power of Christ may tabernacle" - "Have its dwelling-place on me." J.N.D. Trans. note.) For the saint of God who walks in conscious weakness and powerlessness there is an invisible power overshadowing him all the pathway through. I believe we often try to get up power like getting up steam, but it is in the sense of weakness that there is power.

## The Power of Affection

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There is danger nowadays of making the Bible "easy." The clear and full character of revelation in our dispensation is one of its great distinctions. That is true and very blessedly true. "Blessed are your eyes, for they see," said the Lord. But still the facility with which divine knowledge may now be attained has its snare and its danger. We may get pleased with the attainment itself without being stirred up, as we ought to be, to walk in those richer affections and in that deeper moral power which is alone consistent with our enlarged measure of light and understanding.

The church at Corinth abounded in knowledge (1 Cor. 1:5), but their walk was so unspiritual that the Apostle would not treat them as though they had knowledge (1 Cor. 3:1). And this shows us how the Lord abhors the trafficking in unfelt truth. In heaven there may be ignorance or want of knowledge, but no such thing as the possession of unfelt truth. The angels are heavenly creatures, but they confess their ignorance by their desire to know (1 Pet. 1:12). Ignorant of certain truths they are, but not uninterested about them. So, righteous men and prophets have been ignorant, but not uninterested. (Matt. 13:17; Luke 10:24 Pet. 1:10.) And in the person of the patriarch Abraham, we see how some of old, in dispensations of less light and communicated knowledge, had such right affections that the Spirit carried them beyond the measure of the stature of their age.

Speaking of Abraham the Lord says, He "rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad." John 8:56. His rejoicing was the early or previous condition of his soul. It tells us that he took an interest in the notices which had been afforded him of Christ. They were comparatively few and faint, but they captivated his soul. The glimpses were powerful. And the Lord honored such an affection, and gave His servant a fuller vision. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it." And then, as we further read, "he was glad." He used the knowledge he attained aright, as he had sought it aright. His affections were engaged in the search, and they were not cooled or deadened when he had found it.

Here was knowledge sought and used in the due order. Our hearts can say, O for more of this within and among us!

## Praises at Midnight

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"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God." Acts 16:25.

It is one thing to know Jesus as a Savior, and another thing to enjoy Him whom God has glorified as the satisfying Object of our hearts. The difference in the two states of soul is immense. For a sin burdened conscience to have to do with Him whom God gave to bear our sins in His own body on the tree, gives unutterable relief; but to have to do with Him, after this, at the right hand of God, as our satisfying portion, is most blessed. Not only does it lift our hearts to where He is, but it delights us with what He is. We know Him as the One who has attracted us to Himself, won our hearts, and brought us to God. He is to us the Object which outweighs every other; and we find that God in Christ is our resource as well as relief. Precious discovery indeed! He becomes known as our brightness in the darkest path, our strength in weakness, our joy in adversity, our consolation in affliction.

So long as believers think that Christ is revealed only to give relief, they will not be likely to know God in Christ as a resource; they will be tossed about by circumstances, instead of rising above them all and being occupied with Him as He is, who can temper all our joys, sweeten every bitter cup, and reveal Himself to us as the fountain of eternal and unchanging joy. Such will sing praises at midnight, and find springs of richest consolation when circumstances are affecting them with pain and sorrow.

It was so with Paul and Silas. They were in the path of obedience. Having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word of God in Asia, after being exercised before the Lord as to the way He would have them go, they assuredly gathered that it was His will they should visit Europe. Being at Philippi, they were called to suffer for the gospel's sake. After having been beaten with many stripes, they were sent by the magistrates to the common prison, with the express command to the jailer that he should keep them safely. He consequently thrust them into the inner prison - no doubt the most loathsome compartment - and made their feet fast in the stocks. But they were men of faith. They were servants and followers of the Lord Jesus. They knew that it was given to them, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to suffer for His sake. Though their backs were deeply lacerated with the scourging they had received, and their way-worn feet keenly felt the pressure of the rude stocks, to say nothing of the dark and unwholesome character of the dungeon, yet they were fully assured that all was well. They had not a doubt that God was leading them by the right way, that, however inscrutable to man the path might appear, He could make no mistake. They could confidently pray that all might be turned to account for His glory and for the furtherance of the gospel. They could consider Him who had endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, and had perfectly trodden the path of rejection and suffering for righteousness' sake, but is now crowned with glory and honor. Their surroundings in the house of malefactors were gloomy indeed, and personally they were suffering affliction, but they looked up and saw by faith the glory of God in the face of their glorified Savior. an object that could more than fill their hearts.

Thus captivated and cheered by being occupied with Him in the glory, they rose superior to their circumstances, and prayed and sang praises to God at midnight. To joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation, is the climax of delight. Happy indeed are those who thus know God. While abounding with thanksgivings for blessings by the way, such have done with creatures and circumstances as springs. They know that God in Christ is the alone fountain of living waters, and that permanent and satisfying blessings flow only from Him.

## This Present Evil World

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"In time past ye walked according to the course of this world." Eph. 2:2.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom [whereby] the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. 6:14.

"He was in the world,... and the world knew Him not." John 1:10.

"The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." 1 John 3:1.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." John 17:16.

"I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." John 17:15.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this,... to keep himself unspotted from the world." Jas. 1:27.

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." John 9:5.

"Ye are the light of the world." Matt. 5:14.

"The sons of God,... in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." Phil. 2:15.

"Marvel not... if the world hate you." 1 John 3:13.

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." John 15:18.

"Be not conformed to this world." Rom. 12:2.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." 1 John 2:15.

"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2:15.

"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 2:16.

"The world passeth away, and the lust thereof." 1 John 2:17. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" Jas. 4:4.

"Whosoever... will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Jas. 4:4.

## The Prodigal

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The prodigal found a higher place, and tasted higher communion than ever he had known before. "The fatted calf" had never been slain for him before. "The best robe" had never been on him before. And how was this? Was it a question of the prodigal's merit? Oh! no; it was simply a question of the father's love.

## Psalm 150

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What a close of the Psalm of David! what a close of the ways of God! Joy indeed has come in the morning, and struck its note for the "one eternal day." Praise ye the Lord! Amen.

Yes, praise, all praise; untiring, satisfying fruit of lips uttering the joy of creation, and owning the glory of the Blessed One. This is righteous happiness.

## Revived Roman Empire - Nato: the Editor's Column

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In one week at the turn of the year tremendous strides were made toward that which the world has sought since the fall of the Roman Empire - a united Europe. The dissolution and dismemberment of the great Roman Empire of the West in the year 476 A.D. brought considerable chaos to Europe, and for many years the political situation was one of flux and uncertainty. Europe became a mass of seething, restless humanity. All this seemed strange after Rome's rule over almost all of the civilized world for more than 600 years. Since men beheld the great contrast, it was not surprising that various ones arose from time to time and attempted to forge the shattered fragments of the old European Roman power into a cohesive working unit again.

Charlemagne (742-814) reached a marked measure of success in building a united European kingdom, although it was not a Mediterranean but rather a European power. But this did not long survive his decease, at least not in any vigor. Then in the beginning of the 19th century, Napoleon made a great start at welding European nations into an empire, but it was short-lived. Again in our day, Hitler and Mussolini cut a wide path of destruction and bloodshed in a vain effort to control Europe.

Some men have vainly thought that it has been within their power to build empires and control the destinies of men and of nations, but they have left God out of their calculations. They were ignorant of the fact that "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. 32:8); and that He who sets limits to the oceans, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38:11), has "determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26). God has allowed men to go on very much according to their own desires, but He has not abdicated nor given up His rights. He is not ruling openly, but rather from behind the scenes in a providential manner. Nevertheless, there are decreed limits beyond which men cannot pass; for instance, there are His divine prophetic words which no man can thwart or avert. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end" (Deut. 32:29)!

When God brought the Israelites triumphantly out of Egypt, He was called "the Lord of all the earth" (Josh. 3:11), but when Israel sinned and did worse than the heathen whom He had displaced, He turned them over into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian king, and then He is called "the God of heaven" (Dan. 2:44). He had, as it were, removed His throne to heaven. The subjugation of the Jews to the Gentiles began what is called in Scripture, "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). These times have continued and will continue until "the God of heaven" sets up a kingdom after crushing and displacing Gentile dominion.

At the beginning of "the times of the Gentiles," God revealed the future of these "times" to Nebuchadnezzar by dream and through the prophet Daniel, and then to Daniel himself. Babylon was the first world power. Various details are found one place or another in the book of Daniel, but the tenor of it all was that after the heyday of Babylonia it should fall and another world power

should arise - the Medo-Persian (all Persian except the first king). The Persian Empire extended its boundaries all the way to Europe which was just rising; but, exactly as God's Word had declared, it was overthrown very abruptly by Alexander the Great. Then the Grecian Empire extended its sway until it fell before the growing power of Rome. God said there would be four world powers - Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome - four, but no more.

Let us read what He said about the fourth empire: "I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it." Dan. 7:7. Where is the historian who can give a better description of the Roman Empire, its might and its conquests, in so few words? It was in the days of the fourth empire that the Lord Jesus died on the cross under sentence rendered by its appointed representative, Pontius Pilate. And although "the times of the Gentiles" continue until this hour, there has never been another world empire. It is useless for man to attempt what God has not appointed.

But the same prophecies that limit the number of world empires to four from the days of Nebuchadnezzar until the return of Christ to reign, also definitely tell us of a resuscitation of that fourth empire. It fell apart once, and its fragments have never been gathered together into one again; but God adds a brief remark to the verse we have already quoted from Dan. 7 "and it had ten horns" - this is a description of it in its latter days. Much is said about these horns in Dan. 7 and Rev. 13 and 17. The ten horns, or ten kingdoms, will be united under a federal head to form the predicted revived Roman Empire. That this is to come is as certain as that there will not be a fifth or sixth world power. Russia, as great as it is, and with time running on its side, will never dominate the world; but there is a man coming who will be the object of admiration and worship of an astonished world (Rev. 13:4). The united ten kingdoms will give their power and strength to this coming world figure (Rev. 17:12, 13). This same man is described in Isa. 14 under the title of "the king of Babylon" because he will be the last holder of the power that began with Babylon.

Therefore we know that there will not be a power on earth that will strike terror into all hearts and be able to assert its will on earth without reference to any, except the head of the resuscitated Roman Empire of the future. We have the world's history written for us before it happens, and with more accuracy than men can pen it after it happens.

During the two world wars, European armies were more or less united in sheer self-preservation. As soon as tensions relaxed after World War I, it all fell apart. Since World War II, Russia's intransigence and greed has forced the retention of a military alliance, now known as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This has been a potent weapon of the so-called "cold war," for it demonstrates the determination of certain allied powers to stand together in war rather than be destroyed singly by one means or another. Each participating nation has provided certain manpower for the combined military establishment, and has sacrificed certain of its national prerogatives to this form of self-preservation. Only dire circumstances could cause the intensely nationalistic nations of Europe to act thus. All this is but the preparing of the way for the revival of the Roman Empire. Coming events cast their shadows, sometimes long before the events crystallize.

The present NATO organization is not yet the thing that is to come, but it shows the way. It is not the ten kingdoms (very likely, with their offspring in America) who will forge that mammoth world power; but the actual shaping of the ten parts of the coming confederation will be only a matter of circumstances which God will providentially bring to pass in the proper time.

Now another gigantic step has been taken - not forced, but voluntarily entered upon - which has been hailed as the greatest thing in European unity since the days of Charlemagne - 1145 years in all. Momentous days are here. Heretofore unheard-of things are taking place. In just one week, as the year 1959 began, that which men have longed for from the breakup of the Roman Empire and from the days of Charlemagne began to appear as more than a dream or idle wish - some way of uniting Europe. Now what is called the Common Market, although it is anything but a common thing, is functioning.

A new Little Europe composed of France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, or an area roughly the size of Charlemagne's empire, with a combined population of 166 million people, began to function with the cutting of tariffs between each other by 10%, and increasing by 20% the amount of goods that may be imported from each other, by the member nations. The plan as now laid is for the eventual removal of all tariffs and barriers and to allow free interchange of merchandise, labor, and money.

This new international body is to be governed by a Council of Ministers with decision making powers. A statement from the Bank of Montreal,

Business Review, says: "But the benefits that may be derived from the union justify the risks each country is taking in partially surrendering control over its economic and social affairs to an international authority." When we see such unprecedented steps in our days, need we wonder that the nations of Western Europe will of their own free will turn their power and sovereignty over to the "beast" of the Roman Empire? for of that time it is said: "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." Rev. 17:17.

Europe has successfully experimented with the European Coal and Steel Community which welded 455 mills and 459 mines into one industry. The letter of the Bank of Montreal said of the assembly which controls the coal and steel, "For the moment, the powers of the Assembly appear to be quite limited, but it is easy to see in this the kernel of a European parliament."

Another great step toward economic unity in Europe came at the New Year with ten European nations making their currencies externally convertible. It has been said that the most fertile form of integrating nations is the free convertibility of their currencies. Who would have thought that Europe, which only a few years ago was looking out from tangled rubbish, its commerce gone, its industrial plants in ruins, its currency valueless, its agriculture in chaos, would today emerge as a powerful force, readying itself for the tomorrow of Scripture when ten sovereign nations will unite for a common goal. Surely the formation of an economic union by six of them today, not by bayonets, but by common consent without force, should clearly and unmistakably point out to Christians that we are on the eve of that blessed moment for which the Church has long waited - the call, "Come up hither," to meet our blessed Lord in the air.

The early Christians waited and watched for their Lord to come back for them, but after a while they settled down and slept like the world (see the parable of the ten virgins in Matt. 25). The hope was entirely lost for generations, but, blessed be God, He sent forth the midnight cry, "Behold the bridegroom," to awaken sleeping Christians. This call went forth about 140 years ago, and the Church experienced a blessed reviving; but, alas, alas, it is now being given up by those who once fondly embraced it. Even that part of the Church which seemed to have been shaken loose by the midnight cry has all but gone to sleep again. But with the evidence before our eyes that the prophetic scriptures are about to be fulfilled, how can we "sleep"?

Can we treat with indifference what our Lord has made known to us? We should be daily mindful that He may come at any moment. There is something sadly wrong with the spiritual eyesight of those who do not discern this time. The Lord's coming for His own is the only answer for the Church's low and fast-declining state. And what an answer it will be for all the trials and tribulations of the Lord's dear people!

"It may be at morn, when the day is awaking,  
When sunlight through darkness and shadow is breaking,  
That Jesus will come in the fullness of glory,  
To receive from the world 'His own.'

"It may be at midday, it may be at twilight,  
It may be, perchance, that the blackness of midnight  
Will burst into light in the blaze of His glory,  
When Jesus receives 'His own.' "

## Rome - Babylon - Demon Worship: the Editor's Column

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From time to time we have called attention to decided trends in the world which are leading on to those awful days of the tribulation period that are to "come upon all the world" after the Lord has called His heavenly people home to be with Himself. Trends are everywhere in evidence of their preparing the way for "the man" - the violent head of the revived Roman Empire, with his active cohort, the false king in Jerusalem -and "the woman" - that vast false and corrupt religious system to be known as "Babylon the great" with headquarters in Rome. Forces are at\* work, moving things in these two opposite directions, which will in the end bring them into conflict with each other. Then all that is represented by "the woman" will be utterly destroyed by "the man."

Another trend is more secretly at work, but will become more and more apparent as the end draws near. This movement is preparing mankind for actual commerce with the devil and his hosts of evil spirits. It will not be a new thing in the earth, for it is of old; but it will reach new heights during the great tribulation when Satan and his angels will be cast to the earth (Rev. 12:9). At that time all the masks will be removed, and men will readily and openly render obeisance to the powers of darkness.

Perhaps the most open demonstration of the present trend is what took place last New Year's Eve on the beaches of Brazil, when an estimated 600,000 devotees of spiritist cults gathered to pay homage to various demons (TIME, January 12, 1959). Rich and poor mingled in what seemed to be a mad medley, but which gave every evidence of Satanic organization. Altars and offerings were almost everywhere on the beaches around Rio de Janeiro, while valuable offerings were tossed into the ocean to Yemanja, goddess of the sea. The wild orgies of heathen lands were repeated as the pace of the drums quickened, and those possessed by wicked spirits writhed and groaned on the sand. What a sad spectacle in Christendom!

It is now estimated that 10 million Brazilians, out of a total population of 61 million, are indulging in these spiritist meetings, and that in a nation with a claimed 95%, Catholic population. When the Roman Archbishop attempted to compete with the spiritist rally by holding a mass on the beach, he got only one person to attend for each 1000 who indulged in the spiritist demonstration.

With many Brazilians, their heathen demons have merged identities with personalities of Roman devotions; thus, their deity Oxala is Lord of Creation, and is also Christ; Yemanja, their sea goddess, is the same as "Our Lady in Glory," or Mary; while Xango Agodo, their deity of medicine, is the same as John the Baptist; and the war god is identical with St. George. This is really nothing new either, for did not Constantine, the Roman Emperor, make heathen feast days festivals of Christian worship? And Constantine, who made Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire, became head of the church and also remained high priest of the heathen. He was not baptized till on his deathbed. Satan has ever attempted to join himself to Christianity and thus corrupt it. The Apostle Paul withstood this when he refused the advertising of himself and the gospel by casting out the spirit of python which possessed a damsel at Philippi (see Acts 16). But few have followed Paul's steps in utterly rejecting such affiliation when proffered.

When God first placed Adam and Eve in the garden of delights, Satan at once set to work to bring about man's downfall, which he accomplished by deceiving Eve through his subtlety (2 Cor. 11:3); so man gave up God for a piece of fruit after Eve believed the devil's lie that God was not good but was knowingly holding back something that would be good for man. He libeled God in His own creation, and man lost God by believing the lie. Now man's restoration depends on his believing that God is good, that God is love. John 3:16 gives the lie to Satan's story, and believing that truth is the only way for man to be brought back to God. Even today, the devil's lie against God is being told over and over again. It has a new dress but it is the same falsehood; namely, that God would not be good if He put the rebellious sinner in hell. But a holy God could do nothing less to the rejecter of His goodness, for God will be no partner in anything that dishonors His own Son who at such an infinitely great cost provided the only way of salvation. See Acts 4:12.

After man was expelled from the Garden of Eden, he soon felt the fruit of his estrangement from God, and of Satan's devices, for murder - violence (Cain killed his brother Abel) - came into the world. God left man to himself without governments, without law and order; and man became utterly lawless (the sad consequences of bondage to Satan) so that the earth soon became filled with violence and corruption. Man became a prey to his lusts, and he utterly corrupted himself. Conditions became so bad that God in faithfulness cleansed the earth by the flood, thereby removing the evidences of man's corruption and violence. He brought Noah and his family through the flood to re-people the cleansed earth.

Subsequent history proves that man's heart was not improved, and that Satan became more openly active; for after that time, man was deceived into worshiping demons. The devil did not show himself openly at first, but got man to worship images "made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Rom. 1:23. What a fall! man degenerating into worshiping images like poor, fallen, mortal man, instead of "the only true God." Thus man sank lower by lowering the object of his worship, and lower and lower he went until at length he was worshiping the serpent - that form used by Satan when he seduced Eve to give up God. Thus the fall was perceptible and great, from the worship of God to worshiping man, then all the way back to the serpent - back to the devil.

Because of man's giving up of God, God gave him up to all manner of uncleanness (see Rom. 1). If man will give up God, he must reap the consequences. Things progress by degrees, but when man will turn from even the formal acknowledgment of God to idolatry, he becomes the tool of the demons, and quickly degrades himself further and further. Idolaters did not realize that back of the idol, an invention of fallen man, was a demon. Behind the idol is a wicked spirit - a part of Satan's kingdom of wicked spirits. "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils [demons], and not to God." 1 Cor. 10:20. A writer of a previous generation wrote: "An idol, the creation of man's fancy, is nothing; but it is not possible that men could be moved to worship nothing; there is a real power behind it. The heathen think that they are sacrificing to deity; but their offerings ascend to demons, and by their sacrificial feasts they establish a fellowship with unclean spirits."

The Jews of old were warned by God time and time again not to have unholy intercourse with the idols of the heathen, or with any who had such commerce. God's Word strictly forbade any allowance of contact with the supposed spirits of the dead, or with those who used witchcraft or

enchancements. There are some today who would tell us that all such spirit manifestations are faked, and that there is no reality in spiritism; but such persons are surely ignorant of the facts. Satan is a great power, and he has hosts of wicked spirits in attendance.

No doubt there is some trickery in spiritism, and some things are plainly faked; but beware lest in inquiring into what is supposed to be false, we fall into the trap of the real thing. Perhaps that which is false is planned by the enemy of souls to trap the unwary by his decoys. They may be but the entrance into open and avowed fiendish intercourse.

Speaking of Israel's being forbidden to indulge in such diabolic practices, we all know how sadly they failed. They went into idolatry and practices that were even worse than the heathen whom the Lord cast out from before them. For their idolatry, the two tribes finally were taken into Babylonish captivity - the ten had already been taken to Assyria. After the restoration from Babylon, the Jews departed from idolatry, so that when the Lord came to them He found them as an empty, swept, and garnished house. The evil spirit of idolatry had departed; but, alas, it is to return. The departure is only temporary. Hear the Lord's own words:

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation." Matt. 12:43-45. There can be no doubt about the meaning of these verses, nor to whom they apply. The Jews were there before Him, and they refused to believe in Him whom the Father had sent. They demanded of Him signs by which they would believe. They rejected Him who came as a greater than Jonah (the prophet) or Solomon (the king) or the temple (where the priest officiated). vv. 6, 41, 42. So with all their religious zeal and abandoning of idolatry, they rejected their Messiah when He came as their true shepherd. The spirit of idolatry is to return - "so shall it be also unto this wicked generation." And there will also be a sevenfold increase in this wickedness, for the wicked spirit is to return with seven other spirits more wicked than himself. Here is an instance of the number seven being used for completeness in evil.

A portion similar to that of Matt. 12 is found in Luke 11: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first." Luke 11:24-26. We have often noticed that Luke takes a larger view than does Matthew; for instance, only in Luke do we have the seventy disciples sent out. Both Matthew and Mark speak of the fig tree as the symbol of Israel as a nation being revived; Luke alone speaks of the fig tree and all the trees (chap. 21:29). So here in Luke 11, the Lord does not restrict His remarks to Israel concerning the returning spirit of idolatry, for He omits the words, "So shall it be also unto this wicked generation." Luke 11 gives a broader sense than Matt. 12, and it becomes apparent that the wicked spirit of idolatry, in a sevenfold worse form, is to return to Christendom as well as to the Jews. That it is on its way in the former is evidenced by the news from Brazil. It is said that this return to demon worship there is the product chiefly of the last decade. Nor should we think that spiritism is confined to Brazil; it is making

progress in other countries - only perhaps more covertly.

The culmination of the wickedness of demon worship (for we have seen that demons are behind idols) is to be found in the last state of that obnoxious Christendom called "Babylon the great": "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils [demons], and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Rev. 18:2. These wicked spirits will actually be housed, or confined, within Christendom at the end.

Nor is it to be only in Christendom, for when the head of the revived Roman Empire - the beast - and his confederate kings turn against Babylon, they will destroy it, root and branch, only to go still further into the worship of evil spirits; for men will then worship men whom they have deified, and openly worship the devil - Satan - in defiance of God (Rev. 13:4). It will be the climax of man's wickedness when he in full-blown apostasy gives up even the nominal acknowledgment of God for Satanic worship. O Christendom! thither art thou bound. The last downhill descent will be swift and accelerated until the whole thing is thrown into "the great winepress of the wrath of God."

Dare Christians look upon this world with favor, and speak of its progress as though God could approve of that which is so soon to feel the weight of His wrath? Fellow Christians, may He give us a clearer perception of where this world is headed at breathtaking speed. How we need to set our minds on things above (Col. 3:2), and enjoy our treasure which is there; for where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also (Luke 12:34).

## Russia - Red China - Coming of the Lord: the Editor's Column

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Christians who understand something of the dispensational dealings of God as revealed in His Word, know that this present period is a parenthesis in God's prophetic revelations concerning the earth. This is the time when God is visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name-for heavenly glory (Acts 15:14). When the Church has been completed and translated to heaven, then God's purposes and plans for this earth will begin to unfold. The prophetic clock has, as it were, been stopped while a heavenly people have been gathered; but as soon as the Lord takes them home, the clock will accurately and surely tick off the appointed times for the fulfillment of God's purposes for the earth. Men, save those who are in the current of God's thoughts, know not that God has a program which He will put into effect on earth. Christianity is not going to prepare the earth for the righteous rule of the Son of man; unparalleled troubles and direct judgments from God will do that. God has not forgotten the earth, nor what it did to His Son when He sent Him into it in grace. A day of reckoning is fast approaching.

This parenthesis began after the Lord Jesus rose from the dead and went back to heaven. He then sent the Holy Spirit down into this world, and He has been personally present ever since. As Abraham's servant went into a far country to secure a bride for the son who had been on the altar, so the Spirit is here seeking the heavenly bride for Christ. As the servant led the bride across a trackless wilderness to Isaac, so the Spirit is leading the bride home to the One of whom Isaac was but a type. The parenthesis has been more than 1900 years long - a vast space of time when we consider that God's prophetic disclosures for the earth deal with years, months, and even days. But let us ask how close we are to the closing of that great gap, that long parenthesis. Everything indicates that the moment which will complete it is almost here. It may happen at any instant now. There will be the shout, the call, the departure of every true believer in the Lord Jesus from the earth, and from the tomb, and the Holy Spirit's leaving with the Church; then the parenthesis will have closed. Our present position in regard to God's parenthesis might be illustrated by the placing of an X to indicate where we are; thus, ( X).

We are so connected with sight and sense that we are apt to forget how late it really is - much, much later than we think. If we realized our close proximity to the end, we would be daily, even hourly, expecting to hear that shout. And if we lived in such expectancy, our sense of relative values would be much altered. One real obstacle in the way of Christians' discerning this time is the unparalleled prosperity in the Western world. Never before in history has any people reached such a high level financially or attained to such an elevated standard of living. The mad scramble for material things is blinding the eyes of them that believe not, so that they rarely think of having to meet God in their sins. Even Christians who believe that the Lord is coming before long are being caught in the swirl, and seldom cry:

"Lord Jesus, come!

Nor let us longer roam

Afar from Thee and that bright place  
Where we shall see Thee face to face.

Lord Jesus, come!

"Lord Jesus, come!

Thine absence here we mourn;  
No joy we know apart from Thee,  
No sorrow in Thy presence see.

Lord Jesus, come!"

Troubles tend to force our poor hearts out of the world, but attachment of heart to the Lord Jesus should continually draw them out under any circumstances. In John 20, Mary of Magdala is found with a bereaved heart. She had lost Him whom her soul loved, and nothing else mattered. She did not go away to her home like the two apostles; there was no rest for her troubled heart where He was not. Not even the sight of angels could enthrall a heart thus bereaved; she saw the angels but turned her back to them. O for a little of a kindred spirit!

At this point let us take a look at the world and see what its state is. Suppose our hopes and aspirations are here, rather than in heaven. What would we have? Where has the world drifted in just the last ten years? Apart from any thought of the sure judgment of God soon to break over this scene, what is the world's outlook?

The period of the last ten years is almost insignificant as a measure of time, but it is probably the most epochal decade out of thousands of years. In this brief moment of history Russia consolidated her hold on the Baltic states, East Germany, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, and Albania. She has absorbed much of the heartland of Europe and pushed her advantages beyond any hope of liberation for millions of people in the area.

In this same decade, the Red Chinese have attained absolute power over 600,000,000 Chinese. Has anything like that ever happened before in so short a time? Her rulers are absolute masters of China. Besides, they have taken over North Korea, North Vietnam, and gained footholds in Malaya and Indonesia, from which it is doubtful if they can be pried loose. They have taken Tibet and crushed resistance. They have gained much ground in other places on their periphery.

Today Russian-Chinese Communism controls the great land mass of Eurasia with almost one billion people to do its bidding. It was once said that he who controlled that great land area controlled the world, but sea power enabled smaller nations to contain great land powers. These advantages of maritime powers to confine land armies have about ceased to exist. Daily the Russian navy expands, especially in the great submarine fleet, and has access to ports in the Baltic, the Mediterranean, along the China coast, and can at will push on to the Persian Gulf from Iraq. While on the one hand the peripheral maritime powers are poorly united and often work at cross purposes, a handful of dedicated Communists in Moscow direct world strategy without restraint. Air power has been a deterrent of Russian control of the world, but this is no longer the prerogative of one side. Neither it nor sea power have the advantage of a decade ago.

If we look at the Middle East, we see the same deterioration of Western dominance and influence that has been witnessed in many quarters. Ten years ago Russia was an outsider in the Middle East, and she was not to be reckoned with; but today her voice is probably the loudest in the area. English and French influence dropped sharply while Russia moved in to fill the vacuum thus created. The United States sought to close the gap, but indecision hindered her success. The only bright spot in the area for the West today is the resurgence of the thriving nation of Israel. Often her cause was hindered, or at least not espoused by the West, for fear of offending the Arab nations which were of uncertain loyalty; and now many of them are virtually lost to the West.

In the same decade there have been great stirrings in the continent of Africa with its teeming millions and untold natural resources. Old alignments are being broken, and new untrained nations are emerging, all seeking a voice in world affairs. The condition is ripe for Russian subversion and intrigue, all to the detriment of the West. In fact, it is evident that the whole world is astir, and the statesmen are bewildered. None knows where to go from here. This reminds us of a story, supposedly with a comic twist, which was told to a college graduating class. The professor who addressed them told of the strange answers which were received by a man seeking directions on how to go to a certain place. The man who tried to answer him said to go one way, then changed his mind and the directions. This was done numerous times, and finally the seeker was told, "If I were you, I wouldn't even start from here." The present generation has been born to a bewilderment - they know they are in confusion, and do not know where they are going, or even how to start. "The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?" Jer. 8:9.

All the frantic efforts of Western leaders have failed to hold the line against Communist encroachments in one area after another. The last decade has been a period of tragic loss to the West. Nowhere on the horizon is there the least hope of reversing the trend, no, nor even of containing Russia and China at this point.

Western conceit has received some severe jolts in the last ten years. It was once thought that the Russians were too slow and backward to master the sciences, that they were too retarded to match the inventions and technological advancements of the West. Nevertheless, the Russians managed to set off an atomic explosion in 1949, and in 1957 sent the Sputnik aloft, beating all nations to the day of sending man-made satellites into orbit. In those years they also outran other nations in missile developments. When Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal, it was freely predicted that the canal would stagnate when once Western technicians were withdrawn. But it has continued operating under Egyptian control.

The West has been especially blessed by God. They have had the opportunity of the gospel and an open Bible. They were blessed with great natural resources and God-given intellects whereby they made use of His materials. But have they continued in God's goodness? (Rom. 11:22). It is painfully evident that they have not. The Western world has been almost synonymous with Christendom, but cannot the arraignment of Rom. 3 be applied to them? Where are those who really seek after God? Where is the fear of God dominant? Man under the most favorable circumstances is living to himself, forgetful of his Creator. The West's day is fast running out. And when judgment comes, it will fall most severely on these most favored lands. "O that they were wise,... that they would consider their latter end." Deut. 32:29.

If the Russian march has not and cannot be stopped in the fields of intrigue, of subversion, and of military might, what of the latest threat? It is no secret that Russia and China today are bent on overtaking and surpassing the West economically and industrially. Let no man hide his head in the sand, ostrich-like, and pretend he cannot see such a possibility. The great Russian leader freely predicts that in another six years they will produce more than half of the goods in the world. Perhaps it is a fantastic boast, but their boasts have come true before. This man has also boasted that the Russian ruble will replace the dollar in the world of commerce. If there is anything that the Russo-Chinese combine needs to know to forge ahead, their espionage is fully capable of supplying all the necessary data. Then think what 850,000,000 people who are used to obeying strict discipline can do when directed by men dedicated to outrun and outmaneuver the West.

Russian gold and market manipulations could disrupt world currencies. Dictator Khrushchev is at work on economic and industrial incorporation of the satellite nations of Europe into a single working unit to further these goals. Perhaps the Soviet economic offensive will be more effective than any means yet used to accomplish world domination.

Time is on the side of the communistic world, and a crisis of unparalleled proportions is in the making. This is no new thing in history, for nations have risen and fallen, empires have come and gone during the centuries. Only a hopeless optimist can fail to read the signs of these times. The day is fast approaching when men's hearts will fail them for fear and looking forward to the things that are coming on the earth. There will be distress of nations, with perplexity (Luke 21:25).

Perhaps some readers will ask, Do you think that Russia will dominate the whole world? No, we do not, for Scripture is too plain for that. The point we make is that, but for God's intervention, it would be so, and that in the not-too-distant future. Our aim is to point up the significance of world conditions, showing that it is on the eve of great convulsions. If we survey Russo-Chinese advances in the last ten years, and would allow them a comparable advance in the next decade, they would either control the world or have that power within their easy grasp. If then God's decrees forbid that, the end is here. Let us not fear then, nor be distressed. Rather let us lift up our eyes in joyful anticipation of our Lord's imminent return. Sober reflection would make us marvel that we are still here so close to the end of this age. Shall we paraphrase a verse and say, "Now is our salvation much nearer than it was a short time back."

There are several reasons for understanding that Russian and Chinese world domination will be halted, by God's decree, short of full mastery:

1) The Word of God is clear that there will arise a beast with seven heads and ten horns (Dan. 7). This beast is the revived Roman Empire which will be a ten-kingdom federation, the most powerful force ever seen on earth. The man who will head this confederacy will be worshiped as one with whom no one can make war (Rev. 13:1-10). The Western world is soon to be headed by this man. A Communist world domination would preclude such an event.

This confederation will at first be linked in close affinity with the greatest exhibition of church unity ever seen on earth. This ecumenical church will be "Babylon the Great," and its headquarters will be in Rome. The revived Roman power will carry this great, false religious system, characterized in Scripture as a corrupt woman - a harlot (Rev. 17:1-7). If Red Communism could master the world, there would be no church left in Rome to exert mastery over the soon-to-be-revived Roman

Empire.

Israel is to have a dynamic head who will work hand-in-glove with the Roman beast (Dan. 11:36-39). In fact, the Roman Empire under this head will give Israel a guaranteed protection treaty for seven years' duration (Dan. 9:27). If Russia could take over the Middle East, and eliminate Israel, this would not happen; but God has decreed that it shall. Therefore, Russian world domination will be blocked by soon-to-be fulfilled events. We would not, however, rule out other happenings before the taking away of the Church.

If these three developments must come before Russia can enslave the world, and they will be fulfilled after the Church is taken to heaven, and they must come soon to forestall Russia, our departure from this world is an hourly probability. In view of that blessed hour, so soon to be realized, surely we can sing:

"It is not for us to be seeking our bliss, And building our hopes in a region like this; We look for a city which hands have not piled - We pant for a country by sin undefiled."

May the Lord grant us to be more heavenly-minded, and may we more earnestly lay up in heaven a treasure that faileth not. With the disintegration of all that man has set his heart on here coming apace, may we who have a hope that is sure and steadfast, and that cannot fail, have our hearts weaned from this poor world, and our thoughts, our hopes, and our aspirations set on the goal that is before us.

## The Sceptic and the Jew

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Some years ago, in a place in London where the gospel was often preached by some of the Lord's people to the crowds that gathered there, several stood up and proclaimed the gospel through the Lord Jesus. This was followed by a young man, a skeptic, who made light of the Word of God and especially of conversion, saying he had had a Christian mother, and at her death he was exercised and prayed to God, if there were a God, to convert him and make him know that his prayer was heard. All was vain; God did not hear, and now he knew there was no God.

And so he went on with considerable force for a half hour, and closed scoffing at God, at Christ, and at conversion, to the seeming dismay of the witnesses for Christ that had preceded him. Then, quietly and with much feeling, an old Hungarian Jew that knew the Lord took his place on the stone from which the skeptic had spoken, and said:

"Friends, the young man that has been speaking seems very strong in his infidelity - quite a giant, a Goliath - but I think that from my satchel I can take two little pebbles with which I can slay him and overthrow all his testimony. The first pebble," he said as he drew out his Bible, "you will find in it Kings, 18th chapter, where the priests of Baal cry to their god so long in vain. Not so Elijah, for Elijah's God heard him. But," he said, turning to the young man, "your god was away; you did not cry loud enough, or he was asleep, or had gone hunting. Your god probably was asleep. And then, young man, you did not show the zeal that the priests of Baal did, for they cut themselves with knives. And now the second pebble is found in John 10:27. 'My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.' It is clear you were not one of His sheep, or you would have heard His voice. You were an unbeliever, in darkness. It is plain why you had no answer. `Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.' So," he said, again addressing the young man, "your case is clear. No wonder you had no answer. O hear His voice now. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Thus ended the converted Jew's testimony, so faithfully and so powerfully given. May the day show that his words were an arrow from God, even to the young skeptic!

## The Scope of the Gospel

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Everything we find in the good tidings, or gospel, makes God's side prominent. We like to make the sinner prominent because we are thinking of ourselves; but in the gospel we ever find God's side prominent - God's manner to the sinner. It is the extent of His blessings in Christ for the lost one! The prodigal not only got a new mind, but a new appearance, and a new place; so it will not do to limit the gospel to the sinner's need. It is not enough to see the judgment removed; but you must see that all the thing which was under judgment, is also removed - the sinful nature that earned the judgment of God. Paul says, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Rom. 8:10.

If I have learned, ever so feebly, the scope and purpose of the gospel, I am anxious not only to keep clear of sins, but to keep clear of the flesh itself, the nature which produced the sins, and all that to which the flesh would respond.

Look at the story of the prodigal son, and see what it discloses. It gives us a simple tale of endless blessing - the father's feelings about the prodigal. It is he who runs in the story. The prodigal wakes up in the distant scene of his disgrace and ruin, but he only learned the father's heart from the father himself. We lose sight of the motive which actuated the father's heart, and consequently we are weak in learning what it effects. In these two points we are defective - the motive on the father's side - the effect of the motive on the prodigal's side. The father says to the servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." His investiture is entirely new. He is not only new in heart and mind, but new in appearance too. It was not putting a new robe on over the old rags. This is what is effected by an imperfect gospel; and therefore imperfect practice comes from imperfect doctrine. He must go into the father's house, new in heart and mind as well as in appearance. He must go in a manner suited to the father's heart and house. Everything had come forth new from it to fit him for his place; it was not restoring anything to him of that which he had squandered and lost. A wretched prodigal transferred to the highest place, as well as the highest condition - this tells out its own tale of the heart of God to a poor, ruined sinner.

Look at the case of the thief. A man brings himself to an ignominious death - he has not one word to say for himself - and there you see God's Son beside him, revealing the depth of the Father's love to that poor prodigal! That is what the living God has done to tell out His heart for a poor prodigal. Yet the prodigal's blessing does not stop even there. No; he is to come into the father's house, to eat the fatted calf with the father! How sad to find souls stopping half way. They are content to know their sins forgiven, and to go on without the sense of the investiture suited to the Father's house. Yet it is in this sense, I find, while I journey here, that God is made known to my soul, as a poor prodigal, so that I may joy in Him! Even here I get the consciousness of being a new creature in Christ - one who is to be conformed fully to the image of His Son - one who is created in Christ Jesus for a new order of existence altogether. Therefore Paul says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our

Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. 6:14. I am severed from it, and it from me.

Souls sometimes exclaim, Oh, but how about my business? Well, you have got the grace of Christ for it too; even a slave is to adorn the doctrine of God his Savior in all things. You are to carry about the dying of Jesus here, that the life of Jesus may be manifest in your body - an earthen vessel carrying about a treasure - a lamp within a pitcher. You are to go through the ordinary transactions of life in the grace of Christ.

Now do you believe that if you had tasted the joys of the Father's house, anything in the world would have power to detain you here? The brightest thing would pale before them - all your projects and prospects would go.

Poor and feeble as we are, some have tasted of these satisfying springs. But then, are we living on the earth to manifest down here that we are saved from it, from the flesh, from all our ruin? that we are saved to walk as Christ, in the power and character of His life? - in joy of heart because in spirit in all that is suited to the Father's house, as having tasted of its joys, and eaten them? Are we marked as a singular and peculiar people as we pass through the world?

We ought to be a peculiar people, the exhibition of the divine colors - the life of Jesus manifested in our bodies. Souls sink to a low place when they know not fellowship with the Father and the Son. They lose the sense of having life and incorruptibility for their portion, when they have to do in practice and will with the world and the flesh which is judged. Do you wonder then that they are not happy? They have no sense of present deliverance in Christ - of a place in Christ. Interest yourself for a moment in the grandeur of what God offers you; get a glimpse of that which "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" (1 Cor. 2:9, 10); and then tell me, "I will go and look for other things to fill my heart." You could not. Will you turn away your eye to a poor fleeting world, soon to be submerged in judgment? We know not how soon the trumpet may sound - very soon it may be!

## Scripture Testimony to the Deity of Christ: Christ Is God Over All

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2. Because the voice of inspiration declares, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh,... believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Tim. 3:16. If Christ were but an inspired teacher, as one of the prophets, how is He God manifest in the flesh? What is there peculiar in His character? How does it differ from that of the prophets?

3. Because Isaiah, in so many words, announces Him as "The mighty God, The everlasting Father" (as this phrase imports, the Author and Possessor of eternity). Isa. 9:6.

4. Because John, in the most explicit manner; testifies to His deity. "The Word was God." John 1:1. What more decisive could the disciple have said? That this is Christ, is learned beyond a doubt from verse 14; "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father)."

5. Because He is styled the Lord of glory. "Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." 1 Cor. 2:8.

6. Much has been said and written of late to prejudice the public mind against our most excellent translation [King James Version] of the Holy Scriptures, as though it were unwarrantably partial to Trinitarian views. That it is perfect, would be to say that the translators were more than human. That they were firm Trinitarians is granted, as the great body of holy and learned men have always been; but that on the whole a more fair and just representation of the original was never produced, has been acknowledged by all denominations of Christians speaking the English tongue, for more than two centuries. However, we do call attention to two passages where we believe a better rendering is sanctioned by the highest authorities. 2 Pet. 1:1 may be read, "Through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ." Also, Titus 2:13 may be read, "And the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." This makes our Savior the great God.

7. Because He is pronounced in so many words to be God over." all. "Of whom [the Jewish nation] as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." Rom. 9:5. Is anything above Him who is God over all? Note also that His humanity is stressed: "of the seed of David according to the flesh." Rom. 1:3. "God over all," and "of the seed of David according to the flesh."

8. Because Christ claims, in unqualified terms, an equality with the Father. Christ, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Phil. 2:6.

9. Because it cannot be said that "in Him dwelleth all the ' fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9), unless He be essentially God.

10. Because He is the JEHOVAH whom Isaiah saw in vision. "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up.... Above it stood the seraphim.... And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts.... And He said, Go,... Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes." Isa. 6:9, 10, 1-3.

That the Being seen in this vision is the supreme God, none will doubt. Now, the evangelist John informs us this was Christ and. His glory. "Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes.... These things said Esaias, when he saw His [Christ's] glory, and spake of Him." John 12:39-41. Therefore the Holy Spirit has declared Jesus Christ is JEHOVAH Of hosts.

11. Because He proclaims Himself to be God, and invites the ends of the earth to look to Him for salvation. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by Myself.... That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Isa. 45:22, 23. The Apostle has declared that the Person who here speaks is Christ, and. quotes the last verse as an argument that all must appear before His judgment seat. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." 2 Cor. 5:10. "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." Rom. 14:11. Here you will observe the titles, Christ, Lord, and God, are used interchangeably, as of equal import.

12. Because the Father addresses the Son as God, in express terms. "Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." Heb. 1:8. Compare Psalm 45:6, from, which this is quoted, and where it is an address to God. But here we have the authority of an inspired apostle, that it was addressed to Christ. Then, without controversy, Christ is God.

13. Because the Lord God of the holy prophets, and Christ, are represented as the same Being by the inspired John. "The Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done." Rev. 22:6. Observe, the Lord God sent His angel; then read the 16th verse. "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." Do you not perceive here "the Lord God" and "Jesus" are the same? They assume the same style and the same prerogative.

14. Because Isaiah again announces Him in prophecy as Jehovah of hosts. "Sanctify the Logo of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear.... And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling," etc. Isa. 8:13, 14. Is the Father anywhere represented as a stone of stumbling to the Jews? This language applies only to Christ. Compare 1 Pet. 2:7, 8, where the Apostle settles the question by interpreting the prophecy as of Christ.

"Unto you therefore which believe He [Christ] is precious: but unto them which be disobedient,... a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense."

15. Because He is the God whom all the Israelites tempted in the wilderness. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." 1 Cor. 10:9. Compare Exod. 17:7, and Numb. 21:5, 6. "The people spake against God,... and the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people." The psalmist says, "They tempted... the most high God." Psalm 78:56.

16. Because an apostle has declared that the following sublime description of the LORD God, by the psalmist, was a description of Christ. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the LORD is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men." Now observe the application as quoted by Paul: "Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.... He that descended is the same also that ascended up

far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. And He gave some apostles; and some, prophets"; etc. Psalm 68:17, 18; Eph. 4:8, 10, 11. Here the psalmist informs us that the Being who ascended up on high and led captivity captive, is God the LORD. The Apostle informs us that this Being, who ascended up on high and led captivity captive, is Christ. Then, on apostolic authority, Christ is God.

17. Because Thomas, in so many words, pronounced Him to be his Lord and his God. "And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God." John 20:28. For this act of faith Christ commended the adoring disciple. This is not a profane exclamation, but an address to Christ; Thomas answered and said unto Christ, My Lord and my God. Now had not the lowly Savior been worthy of such divine honor, would He not have administered a reproof instead of a blessing?

18. Because He is called "the Lord from heaven" and "Lord both of the dead and living." 1 Cor. 15:47; Rom. 14:9.

19. Because He is denominated, Lord of all. "Preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all)." Acts 10:36.

20. Because He is also solemnly announced by Paul to the Jews and Gentiles as Lord over all. "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." Rom. 10:12. Compare verse 11 with 1 Pet. 2:6. Is He not the supreme Lord who is Lord of all and God over all?

21. Because it is said He has a name that is above every name (Phil. 2:9).

22. Because He is addressed as Lord, Creator of heaven and earth. "Unto the Son He saith... Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands." Heb. 1:8, 10. The 10th verse is connected with the two preceding verses by the conjunction and, and is a continuation of the address to the Son. Compare Psalm 102:25-27.

23. Because He is repeatedly proclaimed, "Lord of lords, and King of kings." Rev. 17:14; 19:16. God is styled precisely in this way in 1 Tim. 6:15, and Deut. 10:17. He is also above all. "He that cometh from above is above all." John 3:31. Now who can be His superior, who is Lord of lords, and above all?

24. Because He is called, in so many words, the true God. "We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." 1 John 5:20. What more explicit declaration of His deity can even the most incredulous demand?

25. Because the following passages demonstrably show there was formed a union of deity with humanity at the birth of Christ. "God was manifest in the flesh." 1 Tim. 3:16. When a child, He is denominated mighty God: "Unto us a child is born,... and His name shall be called The mighty God." Isa. 9:6. "Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." Rom. 9:5. He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but... was made in the likeness of men." Phil. 2:6, 7. "He... came down from heaven." John 3:13. "The Word was God.... And the Word was made flesh." John 1:1, 14. He repeatedly alluded to His original glory. These passages, and others like them, allude distinctly to His two natures, and are utterly unmeaning unless there were a union of the divine and the human at the birth of our Savior.

26. Because we are expressly informed that, to know Him is the same as to know the Father (John 14:7, 9).

27. Because to see Him is the same as to see the Father (John 14:9).

28. Because Paul offers prayer to Him jointly with the Father, in the same manner and for the same blessings. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father,... comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work." 2 Thess. 2:16, 17. Is it not idolatry to address prayer to Christ if He be not really God? What propriety is there in praying to a being who is not omniscient to know our desires, and omnipotent to satisfy them? To show that the usual mode adopted in Scripture, of placing the name of Christ after the Father, implies no inferiority, it is in this instance placed first.

29. Because Stephen, when full of the Holy Ghost and in most solemn circumstances, prayed to Christ and commended to Him his departing spirit. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Acts 7:59, 60.

30. Because Paul besought the Lord (Christ, as is seen in the subsequent verse) thrice, that the thorn in his flesh might depart from him (2 Cor. 12:8). He also received from Him an answer: "And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee." v. 9. Christ then is both the hearer and answerer of prayer. Is not this the prerogative of God alone?

31. Because it is written, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord [Christ] shall be saved." Rom. 10:13.

32. Because Paul speaks of his dependence on Christ, and of Christ dwelling in him, in a manner in which it would be impious to speak of any one but God. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13. "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal. 2:20. How could this be said of a being who was not omnipotent to aid, and omnipresent to sustain? "I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD." Psalm 71:16.

33. Because we find Him joined with the Father in a solemn petition for divine guidance. "Now God Himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you." 1 Thess. 3:11.

34. Because. Paul prays for His never-failing presence with the soul of Timothy, just as we find the accompanying presence of the Father is everywhere prayed for. "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit." 2 Tim. 4:22. Does not this prayer imply omnipresence?

35. Because the same Apostle speaks of Him as the being to whom he habitually looked for success in all his concerns. "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you." Phil. 2:19. Was the Apostle's habitual reliance then upon a creature? "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." Jer. 17:5.

36. Because those Christians whom Paul persecuted before his conversion habitually offered prayers to Christ. "Here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on Thy name." Acts 9:14. "Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this [Christ's] name?" v. 21.

37. Because the custom of addressing their petitions to Christ was so prevalent in the apostolic churches, that Christians of that day were designated by that feature of their worship. "With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Cor. 1:2. Would inspired apostles have offered worship and prayer habitually to one who was not God?

38. Because we find Christ solemnly addressed alone in prayer eight times in this particular form. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." Rom. 16:20, 24; 1 Cor. 16:23; Phil. 4:23, etc.

39. Because we find the name of Christ associated with the Father, and equally the object of a most solemn and comprehensive prayer, sixteen times in the epistles and once in the Revelation - also Rom. 1:7 Cor. 1:3 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3, etc. And in more than forty different passages through the New Testament do we find, either examples of prayer offered to Christ, or the duty of praying to Him expressly implied.

#### Scripture Testimony to the Deity of Christ: Christ Is God Over All

40. Because we find it is written, every knee shall bow to Him - a homage due to God alone. "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth." Phil. 2:10. Compare this language with Rom. 14:11; "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

41. Because the Apostle Peter ascribes endless glory to Him. "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen." 2 Pet. 3:18.

42. Because we hear all the angels of God expressly commanded to worship the Son. "And again, when He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him." Heb. 1:6. Does the Father command the angels to be guilty of idolatry?

43. Because, after the miracle of stilling the tempest, He permitted His disciples and others to worship Him. "Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God." Matt. 14:33. "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Matt. 4:10.

44. Because, just before His ascension, those of His disciples whose faith was strongest, paid Him divine honors. "And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted." Matt. 28:17. Immediately after His ascension, we find them all united in paying Him this divine homage: "He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem." Luke 24:51, 52.

45. Because there are fifteen instances recorded of worship being actually paid to our Lord while on earth, without so much as a hint of disapprobation on His part. The reader will remember that Paul and Barnabas at Lystra, and the angel in Revelation, instantly repelled the worship which was about to be offered them. Would not the meek and lowly Savior have been equally jealous of His Father's honor, and so indignantly have repelled such idolatry, had He not been God, equal with the Father, and the proper object of religious worship? Would He otherwise have endured for a moment even the appearance of divine homage?

46. Because the mention of His name calls forth the worship of the redeemed first on earth: "To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." Rev. 1:6, followed by their praise in heaven: "Thou art worthy to take the book,..," Rev. 5:9. Is the whole host of the redeemed in heaven continually employed in acts of idolatry?

47. Because John again testifies, that "the four beasts [more correctly, living creatures] and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors." But what are these odors, which the leaders of this celestial band, with such profound adoration, present to the Lamb? The Apostle has told us; they "are the prayers of saints." Here, then, are we certain that the Lamb is the object of worship, and of prayer, by the saints on earth, and the highest orders in heaven (Rev. 5:8).

48. Because this Apostle further informs us that he heard "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,... saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Rev. 5:13.

49. Because John again opens another scene to us, and the same lofty adorations are paid to the Lamb. "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations... stood before the throne, and before the Lamb,... and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Rev. 7:9, 10.

50. Because John says again, "I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts [living creatures], and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Rev. 5:11, 12. What more can be ascribed to God? And if this be not supreme worship, what is?

51. Because, in short, it is not in the power of language to express acts of confidence and homage of a higher character than those which the Scriptures frequently represent as rendered to Christ.

#### CHRIST IS CREATOR OF ALL THINGS

52. Because, "By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers." Col. 1:16. Creation is everywhere appealed to as a prerogative of Jehovah. "Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, and He that formed thee,... I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by Myself." Isa. 44:24. The evasion, that it was by Christ, as an instrument, is, besides being an absurd supposition, absolutely forbidden by God Himself. Mark His language: "I am the LORD... that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth the earth by Myself." Notice also how the name LORD and God are coupled together in Deut. 26:10: "And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God."

53. Because the inspired John bears a similar testimony, "The world was made by Him." John 1:10. Now the eternal power and Godhead of the Father are clearly understood by the things that are made (Horn. 1:20). Then do not these same works, which are repeatedly and in the most express terms ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ, clearly show His eternal power and Godhead?

54. Because this Apostle confirms the same truth in another passage, with still more emphasis. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1:3. The Holy Ghost then has settled the question of His deity. "He that built all things is God." Heb. 3:4.

55. Because in the following passage the Son is addressed, not only as the Creator of all things, but also as the unchangeable God. "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands. They shall perish, but Thou remainest... and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same." Heb. 1:10-12. (See Psalm 102:25-27.) What language could more sublimely describe the works and the immutable perfections of Omnipotence?

56. Because it is written, "All things were created by Him, and for Him." Col. 1:16. Not only then is Jesus Christ the Creator of all things, but likewise the ultimate end for which all things were made. But the Scripture saith, "The LORD hath made all things for Himself." Pro. 16:4. Then Jesus Christ is this LORD, or Jehovah. If being the Creator and the end of all creation does not designate the Supreme God, what does?

#### CHRIST IS JUDGE OF ALL

57. Because it is written, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. 5:10. He who is worthy to preside over the scenes of the final judgment, distribute rewards, and decree the final destiny for eternity, must be God.

58. Because Christ Himself declares, "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another," etc. Matt. 25:31, 32. Now the Bible forbids the belief that any being can weigh all the motives of all the actions, secret and open, of the human heart, but the omniscient God.

59. Because Paul again bears testimony to the same solemn truth. "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Rom. 14:10.

60. Because he confirms this testimony in 2 Tim. 4:1. "The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at His appearing and His kingdom [or, as it is better translated, 'and by His appearing and kingdom']."

61. Because we again hear Christ Himself declare, "The Son of man shall come... and then He shall reward every man according to his works." Matt. 16:27. But is not the Judge of all the earth God? See Gen. 18:25. Then is our Lord Jesus Christ, God, for in many different passages is He represented as the final Judge of the world. Are there two final judges? It is very evident we must stand before the throne of God and the throne of Christ; and render an account to God and to Christ; and receive our reward from God and from Christ. The Judge is God alone; but Jesus is the Judge. Therefore Jesus is God.

62. Because He is that Being whose almighty voice will raise all the dead. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His [Christ's] voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of

damnation." John 5:28, 29.

## Scripture Testimony to the Deity of Christ: Foreword

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In these days of increasing apostasy as to the Person of Christ, it is indeed refreshing to read the solid testimony of one who contended for the faith well over a century ago.

Early in the nineteenth century, Unitarianism appeared and became very articulate in the religious writings of New England leaders. God raised up an able champion against them in the person of Samuel Green (1792-1834), who wrote a most able defense of the truth of the deity of Christ. It was in the form of a pamphlet, printed and circulated (1848) by the American Tract Society of New York City, under the title,

"More than One Hundred Scriptural and Incontrovertible Arguments for Believing in the Supreme Divinity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

The present publishers have felt it would be timely to make this treatise available for use today in combating the fatal delusion of Arius (280-336 A.D.). His heresy in denying the deity of Christ caused a great schism in the Church, and the false doctrine has never been eradicated. While it was pushed with vigor a century ago, by the Unitarians, and is still held by them, its most active propagators today are Jehovah's Witnesses. It is also currently found in Modernism of many denominations, and more subtly in Neo-orthodoxy. Accordingly, we present to our readers this reprint. We have felt free to make some slight changes in the text of this article, but such alterations in no way affect or color the author's basic thesis.

While we commend the author's able presentation of the

basic truth of the deity of Christ as co-joined with His humanity, we would caution our readers against any allowance of human speculation about the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. To try to ferret out the mysteries of His Person or to seek to draw a line of demarcation between His deity and His humanity may only lead one into error or, at best, produce barrenness of soul. There is a verse which is important in this connection: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Matt. 11:27. The Son has revealed the Father, but it is not said that the Father reveals the Son. The statement stands, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father." The mysteries of the Son of God, that One who was both God and man in one Person, are inscrutable. They are not to be known by the keenest human perception.

When Moses was in the presence of God at the burning bush, he was instructed, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Exod. 3:5. Let us realize that when we are discussing the Person of the Lord Jesus we are treading on holy ground, and that the unshod foot of reverence alone becomes us. May we feed upon Him as the bread which came down from heaven (John 6:56), and have God's thoughts about His Son (1 John 1:3), and never allow any human speculation to enter into our thoughts or discussions of Him.

May the Lord be pleased to use the testimony of this servant as of one "who being dead yet speaketh."

(After this refutation of errors, with the presentation of positive truth, has been run serially in Christian Truth, we purpose, the Lord willing, to publish it in pamphlet form for wider distribution.)

#### Deity Of Christ

"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Phil. 3:8.

#### Inconsistency Of Unbelief

Do you say, I cannot comprehend God as existing in three persons - FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT? But can you comprehend His existence in one person? In what consists the unity of that Being who is personally present in millions of worlds at the same instant of time? Grant that He exists in perfect unity - what then? can you comprehend one of the attributes of this

infinite Being? Can you conceive of His eternity, that existence which had no beginning? Can you comprehend His omnipresence? or how He could create a world where before there was nothing?

You reply, Though I cannot explain these things, yet to represent God as existing in three persons is to represent Him as being wholly unlike any other being. True, He is unlike any other being, and this too in His eternity, self-existence, and omnipresence, as well as in His triune nature: "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Job 11:7. "To whom then will ye liken God?" Isa. 40:18. You say, there is so much more simplicity in the belief that He is one without any distinctions in the Godhead - but is there therefore more truth? Is simplicity in such a case evidence of truth? How various and incomprehensible the attributes of Deity! How complex and mysterious His works of creation and providence! You say, The terms Trinity and Trinitarianism are not found in the Bible. Where in the Bible are the words Unity and Unitarianism to be found? That is, in the sense of the Unitarian error which speaks of the "unity of God" to the denial of the deity and personality of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

But, you say, It is impossible that Christ should be both God and man. Why so? Do we not say of man that he is mortal and immortal? But he cannot be mortal and immortal in the same sense. No more is Christ God and man in the same sense. As to His divine nature, He is God; as to His human nature, He is man. Still you say, It is a great mystery, that God and man should be united in one person, and I cannot comprehend it. Your good sense, however, will not permit you to urge this as a reason why you should reject the truth. Are you not a mystery to yourself? Can you comprehend how a thought moves your arm? or how the blades of grass under your feet grow? or what are the properties of a single pebble you may take in your hand?

There is no more confusion or inconsistency in speaking of Christ sometimes as God, and other times as man, than in speaking of man sometimes as mortal, and other times as immortal. The humble Christian, in his seasons of near and holy communion with the Son of God, feels no difficulty on this point. Because we hear it said of man, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou

return" (Gen. 3:19), we do not disbelieve those passages that speak of the spirit that shall "return unto God who gave it." Eccles. 12:7. Could a thousand texts be arrayed in an argument asserting expressly man's earthly origin and mortality - what then? Are not those likewise true which speak

of the immortality of his spiritual existence? How then does proving the humanity of Christ disprove His deity? While in the humble form of a servant, assumed that He might make an atonement for our sins, what then is more natural than that He should be generally spoken of according to that humble form? Was not His humiliation real?

That He is truly man, we entertain not one doubt; and equally certain are we that He is the Word become flesh, God manifest in flesh. In His divine nature, He is God (not that we would try to separate His being, but rather bow in adoration). For this belief, we urge, among others, the following reasons.

#### THE WORD BECAME FLESH

1. Because there is no evidence to the contrary, a hundred arguments to prove that Jesus Christ is a man, and as a man inferior to the Father, do not prove that a superior and divine nature does not exist in alliance with the human.

"My Father is greater than I." John 14:28. What does this prove but that which Trinitarians readily admit? that in His human nature and mediatorial office He is inferior to the Father. It surely was never intended to contradict another text, which declares that in His original divine nature He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Mark 13:32. This is a matter of course, if He be truly man. But does this disprove His deity? Man "fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (Job 14:2). Does this disprove man's immortality? Is it not expressly said of Christ, that He knoweth all things? and that He is to preside over all the decisions of judgment? He says (John 8:15), "I judge no man." Shall we thence infer that He is not to be the final judge?

"If He called them gods, unto whom the word of God came...; say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" John 10:35, 36. Some have alleged that the Savior here denies His deity. But how do His words bear such a construction? The Jews accused Him of making Himself God. He does not deny that in so speaking He made Himself God, but denies that He blasphemed, and this on a ground that might fully justify Him even in claiming the honors of deity; namely, that He was the Messiah, the Son of God, Immanuel. That the Jews did not consider Him as in the least receding from His lofty claims, is evident from the continued enmity that was manifested. See verse 39 - "Therefore they sought again to take Him."

"Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." Matt. 19:17. The Savior's object seems to be to test the young man's view of Himself, whether he applied this significant epithet as a mere compliment, or in the exercise of faith in Him as Immanuel. "Why callest thou Me good?" Do you intend, indeed, to acknowledge My deity?

"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Matt. 28:18. As mediator, He acts in a subordinate capacity; the Father is the bestower, and He is the recipient; but then, could He be the recipient of all power in heaven and earth, unless He possess the attributes of deity to sustain and exercise it? A finite being who is the recipient of all power is a far greater mystery than the doctrine of the Trinity; it is a contradiction in terms.

Jesus was made "a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." He was made lower for the accomplishment of a specific object - what was He originally? This is perfectly consistent with His being God, and "all the angels" being commanded to "worship Him." Ungrateful mortals, because you behold your Lord in the form of a servant, and suffering death for your redemption, will you take occasion from this very expression of His condescending love, to rob Him of His divine glories?

"To sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." Matt. 20:23. It is a sufficient explanation of this text to observe that our blessed Savior has elsewhere promised to bestow this very reward in His own right. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne." Rev. 3:21.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2:10.

We have been surprised to see those texts which represent Christ as sent and instructed by the Father, and as offering prayer to Him., alleged over and over again as proof incontrovertible that He was not deity, whereas they are wholly irrelevant. If the Son of God actually took our nature (albeit, not in its sinful state), it was befitting Him in that condition, like a perfectly holy man, to pray and exhibit an example of obedience and submission, to seek not His own glory, but the glory of His Father. Nor were His prayers offered to Himself; there is not only a real distinction between the Father and the Son, as all allow, but it was the Son in human nature that prayed to the Father.

"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3. In this and similar passages, the Father is called the only true God, in opposition to idols, and not to Christ or the Holy Spirit. Nothing is said which intimates that there are no personal distinctions in the Supreme Deity. And such passages were never intended to exclude the deity of Christ, because the Scriptures expressly call Him God, the true God, God, beside whom there is none else, as we shall hereafter see.

All these expressions of inferiority, therefore, relate to Him in His humanity, and in His official character as Savior. The kingdom which He is to resign is a mediatorial and inferior kingdom; His subjection to the Father, then to take place, is an official subjection. The tears which He shed were human. In short, was Christ's humiliation only in pretense, or was it real? If real, why should He not manifest it in words and actions? The question is not whether the Son of God appeared in human nature - this is admitted - but whether He possessed deity with which humanity was combined - a question in which the whole plan of salvation is essentially involved. Texts to prove the existence of His human nature we have seen adduced, but not one that even intimates that He did not possess a divine nature, or that in that divine nature He is inferior to the Father.

## Scripture Testimony to the Deity of Christ: Omniscient - Omnipotent - Omnipresent

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63. Because He assumes the disposal of the rewards of heaven, the peculiar prerogative of God. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2:10.

64. Because the Scriptures declare Jesus knew the thoughts of men. "And Jesus knowing their thoughts," etc. Matt. 9:4. The prerogative of God alone. "Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men." 1 Kings 8:39.

65. Because it is positively declared, "He knew all men... He knew what was in man." John 2:24, 25.

66. Because He is solemnly appealed to in prayer, as knowing the hearts of all men. "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men." Acts 1:24.

67. Because He proclaims Himself to all the thousands of His worshipers to be the great searcher of hearts. "And all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts." Rev. 2:23. That the Son here speaks, see verse 18. Is not this the very air of deity alone? "I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins," etc. Jer. 17:10. What can be more manifest? If Jehovah alone search the heart, and yet the Scripture expressly affirms that Christ possesses that prerogative, then Christ must be Jehovah.

68. Because His disciples bear testimony to His omniscience in so many words, just before His crucifixion. "Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things." John 16:30. Would the meekness of Jesus have suffered the divine attribute of omniscience to be thus ascribed to Him had He not possessed it?

69. Because the same solemn testimony to His omniscience is repeated by Peter after His resurrection, and the faith of His disciples had been wonderfully strengthened. "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." John 21:17. Can language be more expressive?

### CHRIST IS OMNIPOTENT

70. Because He says, "I have power to lay it [His life] down, and I have power to take it again." John 10:18. What creature ever possessed this power? Are not the issues of life and death with God alone?

71. Because He is "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Eph. 1:21. What more could be said of God?

72. Because He is absolutely declared to be "the head of all... 'power." Col. 2:10. The head of all power must be He who originates and wields all power; and who is this but the Almighty God?

73. Because He is not only represented as the creator of all things, but also as the upholder of all things, and this not by an effort, as creatures sustain a burden, but by His Word. "Upholding all things by the word of His power." Heb. 1:3. What more sublime description of Jehovah! He is called also, "The mighty God." Isa. 9:6. Who is this Being, that upholds millions of worlds with all their splendors by His powerful word? Is it a dependent creature, or is it the only true God?

74. Because of the divine authority which He assumed in healing the leper. "I will; be thou clean"; and the leprous man was cleansed (Matt. 8:3). Is not this the language of Him "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will"? Eph. 1:11.

75. Because of the divine majesty and power with which He spoke to the paralytic. "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house; and he arose, and departed to his house." Matt. 9:6. Here is the air and manner of Jehovah alone: "Let there be light"; "Let there be a firmament," etc.

76. Because He assumes the authority of God over the elements. When the winds and the waves were raging, "He... rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." Mark 4:39. Does not this remind us of the psalmist's description of the Almighty? "O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto Thee?... Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them." Psalm 89:8, 9.

77. Because He assumes divine authority over death. He said to the widow's son, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up." Luke 7:14, 15. To Lazarus He said, "Come forth," and he that had been dead four days came forth (John 11:43, 44). The prophets had to wait for special commissions from heaven, but "the Son quickeneth whom He will" (John 5:21).

78. Because He assumes divine authority over demons. "He cast out the spirits with His word." Matt. 8:16. In these instances, it was not borrowed power, be it remembered. Jesus manifested His own glory by His miracles. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory." John 2:11. So when He raised Lazarus He said, "I am the resurrection and the life."

79. Because the disciples wrought miracles in the name of Christ, thereby acknowledging that their authority and power to suspend what are called laws in nature, were derived from Him, as the God of nature. "His name, through faith in His name, hath made this man strong." Acts 3:16. "Peter said unto him, Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." Chap. 9:34.

80. Because then, in a word, He wrought miracles - by His own power - according to His own will - for His own glory - with a divine authority - and likewise commissioned His disciples to work them in His name.

81. Because He says, "I... have the keys of hell [hades] and of death." Rev. 1:18. He also declares Himself to be that Almighty Being who "openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." Chap. 3:7. Is not this the prerogative of God alone? "Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." Psalm 68:20.

82. Because He asserts His omnipotence when He says there is no work which the Father performs but He performs likewise. "What things soever He [the Father] doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." John 5:19. Observe these expressions; do not the works of the Father prove Him omnipotent? But the Son performs the very same works in like manner; then, without

controversy, they prove the Son omnipotent.

83. Because He is represented as the great fountain from which Christians of all ages and countries receive their supplies. "Of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." John 1:16. This is just as God is represented. "With Thee is the fountain of life." Psalm 36:9.

84. Because He says to Paul in a season of severe conflict, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness," etc. 2 Cor. 12:9. Who but the all-sufficient God would presume to use such language! Says the psalmist, "God is the strength of my heart." Psalm 73:26.

85. When, therefore, the Savior says, "I can of Mine own self do nothing," He does not intend to deny these claims to omnipotence, but to deny all separate interest from the Father, and to declare His essential oneness with Him; or, we may consider Him as speaking of Himself in the humble form of a servant which He assumed; in both respects the assertion is obviously true and in perfect harmony with His claims, as God, to omnipotence.

86. Because He in so many words assumes to Himself the attribute of omnipotence. "I am Alpha and Omega,... the Almighty." Rev. 1:8. He is the One of verse 7, who was pierced.

87. Because He not only healed all manner of diseases and raised the dead in His own name, but, with the same air of divine authority, said to the paralytic, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Mark 2:5. Would not this be blasphemy, were He not Himself the great Lawgiver, the supreme Judge, even God? "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Mark 2:7. The language of Jehovah is, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions." Isa. 43:25. Jesus Christ authoritatively pronounced the forgiveness of sins; He is therefore God.

#### CHRIST IS OMNIPRESENT

87. Because He declared Himself to be in heaven at the same time He was on earth, thereby showing that He is omnipresent. In conversation with Nicodemus He says, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." John 3:13. Paul to the Ephesians, chapter 1:23, speaks of "the fullness of Him [Christ] that filleth all in all." This accords with the language of Jehovah: "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD."

88. Because He says, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20. Who could make the promise but the omnipotent God? Compare this with the language of God in Exod. 20:24: "In all places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."

89. Because He promises His disciples and, through them, all Christians, to be present with them as an unfailing source of consolation. "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." John 14:18. Is not this the common consolation which the omnipresent God gives His people? "Fear not; for I am with thee." Isa. 43:5.

90. Because He again promises He will manifest Himself to the man that loves Him, and in the same manner as God visits every pious soul. "I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.... My Father will love him, and We will come unto him." John 14:21, 23.

91. Because there is a holy, familiar communion maintained between Christ and believers over the whole earth. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." 1 John 1:3.

92. Because He proclaims Himself to be that omniscient and omnipresent Being, who, though on His Father's throne in heaven, yet at the same time walks "in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks [the seven churches]." Rev. 2:1.

93. Because He declares in so many words, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28:20. Not merely by good wishes, but by an efficient presence, so that Paul could say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13. Does not our Savior here assume the omnipresence of God, and claim the confidence which belongs to God alone? "The LORD is the strength of my life." "In God I have put my trust." Psalm 27:1; 56:4.

#### HIS ETERNAL EXISTENCE

94. Because in prophecy He is represented as existing from eternity. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Mic. 5:2. Compare Matt. 2:6, where the evangelist applies it to Christ.

94. Because He says, "Before Abraham was, I am." John 8:58. God, in His message to Pharaoh, styled Himself, "I AM." Exod. 3:14.

95. Because Christ prays, "Glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was," or from eternity, to which the phrase is equivalent. John 17:5.

96. Because it is again written, "He is before all things." Col. 1:17.

97. Because we hear Him expressly and repeatedly say of Himself, "I am the first and the last." "And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen." Rev. 1:17, 18; 2:8. Who but the eternal God would dare to assume the prerogative of being the first and the last? Can any being but God be the first and the last?

98. Because the following language unequivocally designates eternal and immutable existence. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." Heb. 13:8. Who is unchangeable, and forever the same, but the eternal God? Jesus Christ is here pronounced unchangeable; He is therefore God.

99. Because He is expressly declared to be "The everlasting Father" (the Father or possessor of eternity). (Isa. 9:6.)

## Scripture Testimony to the Deity of Christ: Upholder of All Things - Summary

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Because it is not only declared, that all things were created by Him, and for Him, but also that "By Him all things consist [subsist]." Col. 1:17. is not that Being, who supports all things, God? Then is Christ truly God, for He is the Creator and Supporter of all things.

Because Paul ascribes glory to Him in precisely the same manner as to the Father. "And the Lord [Christ] shall it deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." 2 Tim. 4:18. Compare verse 17 with Acts 23:11.

Because we cannot for a moment believe that any finite, dependent being, would be joined with the Almighty, and denominated the temple, and the light of heaven. "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it [the city].... The -4' glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Rev. 21:22, 23.

Because we are commanded to baptize in His name. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. 28:19. A most solemn form of entire consecration to each of the three Persons in the Godhead, consequently to the Person of the Son, as well as to the Father, and the Holy Ghost. Are we identified in this most solemn rite with a finite, dependent creature? Or is the Son, as well as the Holy Ghost, truly God?

105. Because we find it required in so many words, "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." John 5:23. Would the Father thus speak, were not the Son truly divine? His language is, "I am the LORD; that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another." Isa. 42:8. Now to ascribe to the Son anything short of real deity, is to degrade Him infinitely below the Father; for between God and the most exalted creature there must be an infinite distance. This requirement is absolutely and necessarily broken by all men who do not believe in the real deity of Jesus Christ. They rob God our Savior. Weigh the solemn thought!

Because no person was ever censured by Christ, when on earth, for entertaining too exalted views of Himself; but, for admitting low conceptions of Him, multitudes were condemned. Thomas's exalted views of Him as his "Lord" and his "God," were approved, and a blessing promised all others who should exercise a similar faith. Whereas, "He that believeth not is condemned already." John 3:18.

Because the inspired apostles, so far from intimating a fear or even a possibility of exalting Christ too highly, exhaust language to set forth His glories, and the consequent efficacy of His atoning blood. "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die... for the name of the Lord Jesus." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." I have "a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Ye are

redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ." "Considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow." When He who is the believer's life shall appear, "we shall see Him as He is." "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." "To Him be glory forever and ever." Does Unitarianism produce such adoring views of Christ?

108. Because most of those who have rejected the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, have gone on progressively in a course of error, letting slip one great doctrine after another, till they have denied the inspiration of most or all of the Holy Scriptures. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."

Heb. 2:1. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit,... after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Col. 2:8.

Because there is no instance recorded in the Bible, nor on the page of ecclesiastical history, nor have we ever heard of the case, where a person lamented on a deathbed, that he had reposed too unreserved devotion in Him, or ascribed to Him more glory than was His due; while lamentations of the opposite character come with a mournful frequency. "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." John 8:24. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Would the reader wish to die thus?

Because John closes the canon of Holy Scripture with a solemn prayer to Christ. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." Rev. 22:20, 21. May the reader close his life with such triumphant and adoring views of the Son of God. Amen.  
TESTIMONY OF THE SO-CALLED EARLY FATHERS

Subjoined are a few of the very numerous testimonies to the deity of our Lord, which might be selected from the writings of the early Fathers. These men must have known what were the opinions of the apostles on so important and prominent a point.

Ignatius was a disciple of John, and "bishop of the church" at Antioch, and honored with martyrdom in the year of our Lord 107, and says, "We have also a physician, the Lord our God, Jesus the Christ, before ages the only begotten Son and Word, but afterward man also of the virgin Mary; for the Word was made flesh." And again, "Christ my God."

The venerable Polycarp, a disciple of John, born A.D. 82, and called to a martyr's crown at the advanced age of 100, finished his prayer at the stake with this doxology, "I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, by the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son; with whom to Thee, be glory, both now to all succeeding ages. Amen."

Justin Martyr, born A.D. 103, and beheaded at Rome, A.D. 167, has the following sentence: "That ye might also know God, who came forth from above, and became a man among men, and who is again to return, when they who pierced Him shall see and bewail Him."

Theophilus was ordained "bishop of the church" at Antioch about the middle of the second century, and says, "The Word was God, and came from God."

Irenaeus suffered martyrdom under Severus, A.D. 202, was a disciple of Polycarp, a disciple of John, and says, "The Ebionites are vain, not receiving the union of God and man, by faith, into

their souls."

Clemens Alexandrinus, the friend of Irenaeus, says, "Believe, O man, in Him who is both man and God: believe, O man, in Him who suffered death, and yet is adored as the living God." This father was an energetic writer about the close of the second century.

## SUMMARY

We have now seen that all those texts which speak of Christ as in a subordinate condition, have not the least weight in disproving His essential deity, being all easily and naturally explained by the fact, that, though He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, He took on Him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death for the redemption of sinful men. We have seen of Jesus, that His name is God; JEHOVAH OF HOSTS; the LORD GOD; the LORD of GLORY; the LORD of ALL; He is THE TRUE GOD; the MIGHTY GOD; LORD of LORDS; and GOD over ALL; the FIRST and the LAST; the self-existing I AM. We have seen that all the attributes and incommunicable perfections of JEHOVAH belong to Christ. He is ETERNAL; IMMUTABLE; OMNIPRESENT; OMNISCIENT; OMNIPOTENT. We have seen that the works which can be done by none but JEHOVAH Himself, are done by Christ. He created all worlds, and upholds all things by the word of His power; He governs the whole universe and is the light of heaven. By His omnipotent voice He will raise the dead. Although the company before His awful tribunal will be as innumerable as the sand upon the seashore, yet will He perfectly recollect all their actions, words, and thoughts, from the birth of creation to

the end of time - impossible for any creature, but easy for Christ. He is also to His Church what none but God can be. He is the source of all grace and eternal salvation to His people, and we are to act toward Christ exactly in the same manner as we are to act toward God the Father: to be baptized in His name; to believe in Him; to pray to Him; to serve and worship Him, even as we serve and worship the Father - and not thus to honor the Son is the same, and equally sinful, as not to honor the Father. These are some of the things which irresistibly prove the deity of the Savior. What stronger proof can the power of language convey?

## CONCLUSION

Now, reader, what thinkest thou of CHRIST? A question of greater moment, more vital to your eternal well-being, cannot be asked you. Answer it with His own solemn warning before you. "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." Will you incur the guilt and run the hazard of robbing your Savior of His divine glories? Will you not this moment imitate the angels and all the redeemed, and cast yourself at His feet, and with adoring gratitude ascribe all glory to His name? As His personal dignity is exalted or debased in your estimation, so will be your confidence in Him, and expectations from Him. A creature as your savior, however exalted, cannot satisfy your soul, cannot pardon your sins. Rise, then, to loftier views; let a heaven-born faith present Him before you as that Being in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Then, great indeed will be your expectations; and they will forever rise and swell, as you gaze on the glories of His Person, and the unsearchable riches of His grace. And I beseech you, remember, whatever be your views of Christ, in a few days you must stand before His judgment seat. He that lay in swaddling bands in the manger shall come in clouds, when every eye shall see Him, even they who have pierced and dishonored Him.

"Thou art the everlasting Word,  
The Father's only Son;  
God manifest, God seen and heard,  
The heaven's beloved One;  
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou  
That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow.  
"In Thee most perfectly expressed  
The Father's self doth shine;  
Fullness of Godhead, too: the Blest, Eternally divine.  
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou  
That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow.  
"Image of th' Infinite Unseen,  
Whose being none can know;  
Brightness of light no eye hath seen,  
God's Love revealed below.  
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou  
That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow.  
"Of the vast universe of bliss,  
The center, Thou, and Sun;  
Th' eternal theme of praise is this,  
To heaven's beloved One:  
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou  
That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow."

## Seeking the Lost Ones

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We learn from 2 Cor. 5 that two motives impelled the Apostle Paul to preach the gospel. One was, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." If he thought of the solemn and awful reality of judgment to come, it urged him to go out to "persuade men." Do we feel the weight of this serious and solemn fact, that souls are perishing around us, standing, as it were, on the brink of a lost eternity?

But another motive also acted on the Apostle. He says, "The love of Christ constraineth us." That love had shone like a sunbeam into Paul's heart and produced a revolution in his whole life and thoughts. It had changed the bitter persecutor of the Church, Saul, into the earnest servant of God, Paul.

What a change the love of Christ can bring about! It can melt the hardest heart and break down the most stubborn will. And the knowledge of this can give strength and courage to make it known to others.

May the Lord Jesus so fill our hearts with the joy and blessedness of His love, that we cannot but tell, out of full hearts, the story of His wondrous grace to the poor perishing sinners around!

## Service and Communion: a Word to Young Believers

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If I had the ear of my younger brethren in Christ who seek to serve their gracious Master in the ministry of the Word in Sunday school work, in street preaching, in tract distribution, or any other form of Christian labor, I would say to them in deep affection, See to it that your service is the outcome of communion with Christ. Rivers of living water can only flow from those who go to Him and drink, and they must go continually. Be careful to suffer nothing to becloud your enjoyment of divine love, and seek to realize for yourselves the exceeding preciousness of Christ, so that when you speak of Him it may be out of the fullness of a heart made abundantly happy. It is true, the outward form of service may be sustained by the mere energy of nature, and apart from communion with Christ, but then every element will be wanting that makes the service acceptable to Him; and your own souls will be enfeebled and become like withered grass.

And I would further say, Be on your guard against making service your one object. They seldom serve well who do. We have known earnest men who have fallen into this snare. They are never satisfied unless always on the move, and they think little of others who follow not in their steps. Now Martha served much, and found fault with one who seemed to serve less; yet the latter received the Lord's commendation, and Martha missed it. There is a zeal that compasses sea and land, but it is not fed from celestial fires. There is a running to and fro with restless feet, and a doing of this and that which, after all, may be but the religious activity of the flesh, which fades away.

Cultivate communion with God, be much in prayer, and spend time over the Word of God, that your own soul may be fed. How else shall you feed others? "It is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written." 1 Cor. 9:9, 10. In thinking of others, and laboring for their good, God would have us feed for ourselves. We shall soon famish if we do not, and spiritual strength will decline. We will be keepers of the vineyards of others while our own vineyards have not been kept.

You will find it a deadening habit to read the Word only to search out something for other people. It is Gibeonitish service (Josh. 9:21). Moreover, what you gather up and set before others will be mere religious information in which there will be no heavenly unction. It differs from the living ministry of the Holy Ghost, as chalk from cheese.

Be faithful also in little things; it may be that God will then entrust you with greater matters. We are a little afraid of those who neglect the commonplace duties of everyday life for what they are pleased to think and call the work of the Lord. At all events, do faithfully and well whatever comes to your hand. In a humble school, far removed from public observation, God is wont to train His servants for their higher mission. Moses was forty years in the back side of the desert, keeping the flocks of his father-in-law, ere he was called to lead out the tribes of Israel from the house of bondage; and David in the wilderness watching over the few sheep of Jesse, was there prepared for his conflict with Goliath in the valley of Elah. The years thus spent were not wasted years; the

fruit of them was seen ever afterward.

## Serving the Lord

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It is a very harassing and profitless occupation to lose time asking oneself, What shall I do now? The next thing to be done is always at the very door, for the smallest thing often leads to the greatest results; and it is in neglecting these that the greatest misadventures have occurred. Nothing is neglected by God.

If at any time I am at a loss to know my true path, I shall ascertain it better by drawing near to the Lord than by cogitating the various bearings of the circumstances. I may be very laboriously fishing all night, and have taken nothing; but if the Lord is with me, I shall surely find the difficulties vanish.

## Seven Churches - Apostacy: the Editor's Column

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It is an inescapable conclusion that the Lord's addresses to the seven churches in Revelation (chapters 2 and 3) are written to us for our learning and that we might be exercised thereby, for seven times it is written: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." We are responsible to hear and heed what has been written.

That we have seven distinct and separate conditions and states constituting a sevenfold prophetic outline of the professing church on earth from the days of the Apostle John on to the very end of Christendom is evident to all who with subject minds and open hearts have examined the two chapters. We say "professing church" because it is seen in its outward form as a witness for Christ on earth; these seven churches are seen as seven candlesticks, or lamp-stands - as that which was set to give light. But, alas, there is a mixture of that which is real and that which is false in the picture, and it ends with Christ's spewing the nauseous thing out of His mouth. It is not the picture of Christ's Church which He builds, for nothing spurious will ever be incorporated into that; and there will be no breakdown in it (see Matt. 16:18).

When John wrote by the Spirit, declension had already set in; for in the first address the Lord's complaint is that they had "left" their "first love." They had grown cold in heart toward Him, and the Lord felt the coldness. This reminds us of God's charge to Israel, saying, "I have loved you, saith the Lord"; but they replied, "Wherein hast Thou loved us?" Mal. 1:2. Leaving the first attachment of heart which we had toward the Lord Jesus when we first tasted His love toward us is the beginning of departure and failure, both individually and collectively. Thus in the professing church the failure began there and increased and accelerated generally through its history, except for His grace that recalled it betimes as He did in the days of the Smyrna period by allowing most severe persecution from the pagan Roman Empire.

It then becomes evident in this prophetic outline that the last stage will be marked by cold, calculating indifference to Christ. It could brook anything that disparages Him, as though it were a matter of no concern. That this stage is now present is abundantly clear; we are at the very end of this day of grace. The spirit of Laodicea is widespread; it characterizes nominal Christianity and casts its pall over that which is true and real. All of us who know and love the Lord Jesus need to be on our guard lest the spirit of the day gain the ascendancy and our hearts lose their fervency. If such has happened, we need to get back to Him and judge every hindrance while we seek His help to enjoy Himself.

One of the characteristics of the Laodicean state is great claims: "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." This is their estimate. And is not this condition prevalent today? Church membership, both in total numbers and in ratio to the population, is at or near an all-time high. Money contributed to the supposed cause of Christ has kept pace with the rising trends, while church buildings have grown in number, magnificence, and wealth. And this has not been confined to mere nominal Christians, but the spirit of it is quite general. "Thou sayest" stands in sharp contrast to Christ's rebuke: thou "knowest not that thou art wretched, and

miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." -What a contrast between men's thoughts and God's thoughts of outward Christianity today! "Rich" versus "poor"! "Increased with goods, and have need of nothing" versus "wretched, and miserable" and "blind, and naked"! "Blind" is not to see beauty in Christ; "naked" is to be devoid of Christ- mere false profession. What a state, but by and large it is representative of a vast proportion of Christendom; and that which is real is being contaminated by the spurious. Laodicea is here, and far advanced. Men go on as though God would tolerate their counterfeits and approve of them because they make great claims and much display. But "God is not mocked," and His wrath is coming. If God spared not Israel when they apostatized, neither will He spare Christendom; or, as the Scriptures say, "If God spared not the natural branches [of the olive tree of blessing], take heed lest He also spare not thee [the grafted branches of Gentiles who in this day have privileges above any heretofore]." Rom. 11:21.

Another characteristic of Laodicean departure is found in the Lord's solemn charge, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot:... thou art lukewarm." "Lukewarm" (spiritually) means to be indifferent to Christ and His claims. In other words, it is neutrality; but the Lord said long ago that "He that is not with Me is against Me." There can be no neutrality in this war; it is a war to the finish. This world cast out Christ and rejects His claims; and to be indifferent to Him now is to be a traitor to Christ. Of vast multitudes today He will later say, "I never knew you: depart from Me." Matt. 7:23. They were never His at all. May these words search the heart and conscience of any one who reads them who has never had a personal experience with Christ, who has never accepted Him as his personal Savior, and so has never had his eyes opened to see beauty in Him - "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious" - and who has never been clothed with "the best robe" (Christ Himself).

Now let us document the present state of Christendom by a reference or two to current religious writings and happenings. One of the representative periodicals of Christendom in the United States is a magazine called Christian Century. It speaks the language of much of the profession in Protestantism. In the April 2, 1959 issue their editor denied the virgin birth of Christ. Now that is nothing new, for it has been the language of apostasy for a long time; but the manner of his doing it is relatively new. He took the stand that it did not need to be disproved, for it was a matter of perfect indifference, an irrelevancy. How shocking to a true Christian! Does it not make any difference whether the Lord Jesus was born of a virgin according to prophecy, and according to the express statement of the New Testament? Any truehearted believer would rise in justifiable indignation at such a suggestion; for they would say with Mary, "They have taken away my Lord." If He be not the Son of the virgin, then Scripture is utterly false, and true believers have been false witnesses of Christ down through the centuries. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ" - the One born of the virgin, the Seed of the woman, the Son of man and Son of God - "let him be Anathema, Maranatha," or, in other words, "be accursed, the Lord cometh."

Such language as that of the Christian Century is luke-warmness and indifference to Christ of major proportion and consequence - it is Laodiceanism in essence and development. Faithfulness to Christ demands a scathing denunciation of such betrayal of the One who saved us by His atoning death.

Christian Century further said that if the virgin birth were admitted it would mean that Christ was God in "His structure," but this was rejected as untrue. Has mortal man become wiser than God?

Dare the thing formed reply to Him who formed it and reject His pure Word - "Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven." Psalm 119:89. But man will have the audacity to condemn it on earth!

We are thankful for every Christian who raises his voice against such daring apostasy, for those who "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," but we deplore delicacy in handling such unholy deviations from the Word of God; for there are some who handle things that are derogatory to our blessed Lord in such a timorous and weak way that even their criticisms are benign and inane. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD." Jer. 23:28.

The drive in Christendom for a "one church" world, for ecumenicalism, has fostered the proud, boastful, complacent spirit of Laodiceanism, which in turn has produced an abundant crop of insipid indifference to Christ. Broadmindedness is extolled at the expense of the truth of the Word of God. A sample of this can be seen in a carefully prepared statement of faith to be submitted to the second General Synod of the newly formed United Church in the United States. This body is an amalgamation of the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church. It may well set the pattern for merging other bodies of Christians in the vanguard of the trend toward Rome and the greatest confusion of all in Babylon the Great, for it is a model of using words to express nothing except the luke-warmness of Laodicea which is so noxious to Christ that He will spew the whole thing out of His mouth.

They begin their statement with, "We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father." Just what does this mean? Almost anything could be made from it. Are God the Father and the Holy Spirit not to be distinguished in the Godhead? Is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ our Father in the same way? Could not one who denies the deity of Christ give assent to this statement? And, incidentally, the essential deity of Christ is nowhere affirmed in this "testimony of faith"; nor is His virgin birth mentioned; nor is the availing, shed, precious blood of Christ given a space in this watered-down, anemic, inert "testimony." Such erroneous statements as "reconciled the world to Himself," "to share in Christ's baptism," "to join Him in His passion and victory" are there.

And then fearing that perhaps someone may object to something supposedly orthodox in this statement, it is said that this is only a statement of faith and not a test of faith. Could not a member reject orthodox truth and remain in good standing? The only one whose rights and claims are ignored is the only One to be considered - the alone worthy Lord Jesus Christ. Tolerance is at the expense of the glory of Christ. O child of God, sinner cleansed by the precious blood of Christ, how can you tolerate this being "neither cold nor hot" to the glory and virtue of your Savior? Remember that to have fellowship with those who deny the virgin birth, the deity or humanity of the Lord Jesus, or His atoning work and shed blood, is to be disloyal to Christ. It is traitorous. "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of their sins" is said in respect of that final combination to which Christendom is hastening-Babylon the Great. One thing that is being widely discussed in Christendom at present is the discovery

of 13 leather-bound papyrus books found in a tomb in Egypt. In days of indifference to Christ and His claims, it is easy for spurious writings to gain credence. This "find" is supposed to be a

"Gnostic library." Gnosticism was that religious plague from the East that infiltrated early Christianity, and against which the Apostle Paul wrote time and again. It was a curse to the early Christians, for it sought to add to Christianity something which would in reality deny the full value of the work of Christ and of the believer's perfect standing in Him. The Apostle wrote against this in his warnings in the epistle to the Colossians. May real Christians not waste their time on these unprofitable "discovered" writings - one of them fraudulently called the Gospel of St. Thomas.

God has marvelously preserved to us the whole canon of the New Testament - in fact, of the whole Bible - and we do not require any extracanonical books to enrich or further our understanding of the Holy Scriptures. Many spurious books have appeared from time to time, and the enemy of Christ would gladly see them propagated. But

Christians who dabble in such things do so at a loss to their own souls. As for the four Gospels we have, there is every reason to believe there were no more intended to be given us, and that the four give all of the different characteristics of our blessed Savior that the Holy Spirit planned to give us. To add another would be to spoil the plan. The four we have are like the four sides of one house.

One of the so-called "unknown sayings of Jesus" found in this new discovery is: "Jesus said: If those who lead you say to you: Behold, the kingdom is in heaven, then the birds of heaven will precede you; if they say to you that it is in the sea, then the fish will precede you. But the kingdom is within you and it is outside of you." What utter nonsense! One needs only to read it to see that it does not begin to comport with the true sayings of the Son of God. "His word was with power," but what power is in the above quotation? A man who is well trained in the handling of genuine money easily discerns a counterfeit when it is passed to him. We do not need to know all about counterfeits, for their name is legion; but there is only one truth of God, and that is embodied in the Person of Christ and in the written Word. May God graciously preserve us from the spurious and give us to gaze on the Lord Jesus Christ with ever increasing and adoring eyes - on Him who is at the right hand of God for us.

## A Still Small Voice

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Elijah was surrounded with violence and impiety on all hands, and this he denounced unsparingly. Consequently, he felt that his message would be unwelcome and his life in jeopardy; but he was at once assured that the Lord would shield him against all opposition. According to his word, "There shall not be dew nor rain these years." Terrible famine would necessarily result, but all through it the prophet would be cared for. He would find water by the brook Cherith, and there be supplied with meat by the ravens. And when that supply was exhausted, another would be provided. He would be sent to Zarephath to live and bring life out of a widow's penury "until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth."

The Lord draws the gospel out of this last incident or event. In the synagogue of Nazareth, He reads the passage of Isa. 61:1, 2, short of the last clause. "The acceptable year of the LORD" was then running; "the day of vengeance of our God" was postponed. Thus read, the passage was pure gospel, and, according to the divine order, it was "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." So the Lord warned His hearers of what would befall them if they refused it. "Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow." Luke 4:25. It was as good as saying, I offer grace unto you with all its blessings, but if you refuse it, it will run to others. And, on their obstinate refusal, it has run to others. Nationally, the Jews have been rejected, and the Gentiles at large have inherited the benefits of the gospel. "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Acts 13:46. Thus Elijah turned from the same stubborn people to the widow of Zarephath, a Gentile.

In the third year of the famine, the prophet is again sent to Ahab, to let him know that rain would fall from heaven, whence Ahab never looked for it, since he sought for water only unto all the fountains and brooks (chap. 18:5). But ere the rain fell, the source of iniquity must be dried up; the prophets of Baal must be exterminated. They were the misleaders who had contributed mostly to corrupt king and people. They were the servants of Jezebel. To this end Elijah received power both to confound and to slay them. This was strictly a ministry of righteousness, in the accomplishment of which he proved himself faithful, cost what it would, as he had been faithful three years before in announcing the drought and famine. Surely he had cause to trust the Lord after having thus experienced His protective grace and power. Yet it is just at this point that we are brought to see a most painful crisis in his faith. Let us not be too severe with him on this account. Grieved we may and should be, but we have no right to be hard. If placed in similar circumstances, who can say that any of us would be more firm? It is far from meritorious to detect flaws in others under trial when things go easy with oneself. Scripture gives us more than one instance where the faith of the greatest men of God sank under trial.

In Elijah's case the circumstances were such as to put faith to a very severe test, and the prophet ill stood it. Evil of the worst character had full sway in Israel, and God did not interpose to sweep it away. It was as though Elijah's burning words and mighty deeds had been all in vain, and he resented this rather keenly. True, he did not, like Jonah, refuse to deliver his message and fulfill his service, but nevertheless there was something of the spirit of Jonah in him at this time. The juniper tree and the gourd witness the same discontent in both prophets, and the discontent is expressed almost in the same words; and therefore to both the probing question is relevant, "Doest thou well to be angry?" But the Lord forbears with Elijah. He knows there is much around him to discourage and He sends an angel to strengthen him. How gracious! And yet he is not satisfied with this token of God's care and tender regard. He can go forty days in the strength of God's beneficent goodness, and, without fainting, reach Horeb, the mount of God. But when there, what does he do? God meant him to stand on the mount, as intimated in verse 11; but he hides himself in a cave, apparently little disposed to carry out the divine intention.

Well, God will meet him where he is, and put the scrutinizing question, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" His answer shows that he was not at all in touch with the mind of God; and when God repeats the question, he repeats the same answer: "I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." Downcast he is, to be sure. To say that he, and he only, had been left, was more than he knew, and in fact was a grievous mistake. How is it that he did not know a single one out of the seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which had not bowed before Baal, and every mouth that had not kissed him? When he says, "I, even I only, am left," he seems to think that only prophets were worthy to be taken into account. God thinks differently. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence." 1 Cor. 1:27-29. Evidently at this hour, the prophet was disheartened.

By way of contrast, let us approach the Apostle Paul. He too has known, even to a greater extent, persecution and violence on the part of both Jews and Gentiles, as summed up in 2 Cor. 4:8-10, and 2 Cor. 11:23-28; but he never gave way under the pressure. "None of these things move me," he says. His life! - he did not count it dear unto himself, so that he might finish his course and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus. And when his course was finished and he looked back upon the field where he had achieved his most brilliant victories, his heart might have completely failed him as he had to say, "All they which are in Asia be turned away from me." For he loved these saints intensely, and suffered intensely too by their defection and desertion. But there was One above them all that he could fully confide in under any and every emergency. So he says: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." (See 2 Tim. 1.) His own soul, his work, the saints who had been converted through his instrumentality, he could leave peacefully in the Lord's keeping. He knew Him, had drunk deeply into His love which passeth knowledge; and he could not question for a single moment His sufficiency. Steadfast and unmovable, with a work abundantly fruitful behind him, he knew that his labor was not in vain in the Lord.

Elijah was not so strong in the Lord and in the power of His might as was the Apostle; nevertheless, the Lord is mindful of his integrity and of his devotedness, and He does not wait until His servant has ascended the mount to come near him; He passes by, but not without leaving impressive signs of His presence. We, in our hardheartedness, would have said, I can have nothing to do with you as long as you lodge in that cave. The Lord, on the contrary, does something, the effect of which is to draw Elijah out. The first three signs - the great and strong wind, the earthquake, and the fire - were such as Elijah would have expected to find the Lord in; but He was in none of them. Not that He will never deal in judgment, but He has fixed a day for that; and, alas, we are prone to take the work out of His hands and do it prematurely, whereby we spoil it all. Besides, before the day of judgment there was to be a day of grace; and grace it is that speaks in the fourth and last sign.

"And after the fire a still small voice." In it was the Lord. Elijah was conscious of it. This was the voice that drew him out of the cave and made him stand at the entrance, his face wrapped in his mantle. He was both subdued and attracted, but not yet in the secret of the Lord, for he repeats his complaint, "I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts," etc. It takes a long time to bring us to understand the forbearance of God, and yet are we not all the time ourselves the subjects of it?

Happily, God will not be turned from His purpose by reason of our not understanding Him. He would speak with the still small voice, and with it He has spoken most distinctly for now nearly two thousand years. It came from heaven with Him who could say, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned." Isa. 50:4. And thus He spoke to the weary and heavy laden in Matt. 11:28-30. Thus He speaks to His sheep from the moment they follow Him, the Good Shepherd; and though, alas, they may be dull of hearing, yet will He say in His untiring grace, "The sheep follow Him: for they know His voice." This tells of intimacy, "and He calleth His own sheep by name." How sweet the still small voice that says to one who stood, bereaved and brokenhearted, by His empty grave, "Mary"! And how quickly she heard and how well she knew the voice that thus called her by her name. Such is the manner of His love. His voice gladdens the heart that knows that love. And it is now as it was then. The sorrowing soul that seeks His companionship, He will minister to in the words of the "still small voice."

"O patient, spotless One,  
Our hearts in meekness train,  
To bear Thy yoke, and learn of Thee,  
That we may rest obtain.  
"Jesus, Thou art enough  
The, mind and heart to fill;  
Thy patient life - to calm the soul;  
Thy love - its fear dispel."

## Suitable Response

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"The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy." Psalm 147:11.

Nothing gratifies love (we may, from this, say) like using it. Love does not act to be admired, but to be used. Nothing answers the heart of Jesus so much as drawing from Him, and trusting Him. The woman of Samaria far more refreshed Him by going away with a heart filled out of His wells, than had she stayed to give Him (though He needed it then) out of her pitcher. For that enabled Him to say, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." This was Jesus on earth; this is God in heaven. And Israel will give Him this delight by-and-by, as now every poor sinner does who knows that the blood of Christ and the righteousness of God are his precious property, and therefore takes them, and all things with them, as the gift of grace, with confidence and joy of heart.

## The Testimony of the Presence of God: Power of Assembling and Journeying

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In this chapter we get the first movement of the armies of the Lord, but before anything is set in motion the trumpets are brought into use. They were for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camp; this was their proper but not their only use. The energy of the Spirit is here brought out in public utterance before all the congregation. As the Levites were given to the priests, so here the priests are to blow the trumpets. The priest is always the type of communion with God, and here is the character of the power of gathering: it is in the power of communion. All the testimony flowed only from the mouth of those in communion with God - the testimony of those in the sanctuary.

There were three special uses of the trumpets: first, gathering the congregation together (not here in figure the quickening power of the Spirit, but gathering); the energy of the Spirit in the power of communion bringing out the utterance of the Lord and acting collectively, calling the assembly. Next, journeying. And when in the land "ye shall blow an alarm"; also, "In the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days... ye shall blow," the utterance of that which is in the mind of God. So when in war; it was not merely supplication, asking God to help them, but a memorial of their calling on God. "Be not afraid of their terror." They were to blow an alarm; and "ye shall be remembered" in this public utterance of God's mind. They were to blow an alarm because God was there to help them - not to call the people to come and help, but calling on Israel to lean on Israel's Strength. Thus it was the power of faith in the consciousness of God's strength, God's presence being already there. In 1 Sam. 13:3 Saul blew a trumpet, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear." This was not according to God's mind; for he did not say,

Let Israel hear, nor, Let God hear, but, "Let the Hebrews hear." The Gentiles called them Hebrews; God called them Israel.

The natural effect of the trumpet was gathering them together. While in the wilderness there was no question of oppression. There might be trial, but there could only be oppression in the land. It was no privilege to be in the wilderness - it was a trial - but to have God's presence with them was a privilege. We are in these days leaving the wilderness; we know very little about war, it is more getting out of the world into the wilderness. The natural use of the trumpet was gathering the assembly together to move onward according to the power of God's presence which was with them, and not for war. We may get oppression by unfaithfulness. The apostles were occupied with the calling of assemblies - the souls of men. They never said a word against the high priest; but when they were called before the rulers, they said, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts 4:19), giving no heed to the opposition of men. The saints are not to be "fenced with... a spear" (2 Sam. 23:7), but to exercise and manifest grace. When the tares were found in the field, the servants were not to root them up, but let them grow, because they were not to exercise judgment, but grace. The fishermen gathered the good fish into vessels; their business was with the good fish. The consequence of blowing the trumpet,

though it might arouse the enemy, was to bring in God.

In verse 10 there is another use of the trumpet, the utterance recognizing God and the people. "Blow up the trumpet in the new moon" (Psalm 81:3); the old moon had passed away, and now it is the new moon. "Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee" (v. 7); but now it is the day of their "gladness," and they sing aloud to God their "strength" (v. 1). In Lev. 23 we have first the sabbath, then the Passover and feast of unleavened bread, the waving of the sheaf of first fruits and Pentecost; but Israel is left until the seventh month. "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets," then the feast of tabernacles, the day of gladness (v. 24).

Note the sovereignty of God in ordering their journeyings; the directions here are more minute than in the beginning of the book, as showing the energy of the Spirit more than occupation with outward order. In chapter 2 it is simply "Then the tabernacle... in the midst"; here more detail. In Psalm 80:2, "Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength," calling on God to act as in those days. The proper place of the ark was in the center, but it went before them; and so in Josh. 3:4, a way they had not passed heretofore - death. We have the power and presence of Jesus with us in our journey and in our worship. If we are resting, it is to learn God; if journeying, it is for the display of God's power in ordering. Among them ought to have been the resting place of the ark; God's sovereign goodness takes its own place, beyond all set order, in seeking a resting place for them. Thus it is now, "When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them"; or resting, "Where two or three are gathered together... there am I." In verse 35, "Let them that hate Thee flee before Thee" - not those that hate us. Faith blows the trumpet, the battle is the Lord's. Then, when it is resting, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel."

## Thy Name Is As Ointment Poured Forth

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In this language is portrayed the preciousness of Christ (as the Bridegroom) to the bride. This will be at once perceived if the context be examined. "Let Him kiss me," cries the bride, "with the kisses of His mouth: for [now addressing Him directly] Thy love is better than wine." S. of Sol. 1:2. It is not so much the love itself, as the enjoyment of the love, of which she speaks; this is it which is "better than wine." Every renewed heart will respond to this statement; for while the love of Christ is ever beyond all our thoughts, infinite and unspeakable, it is only as we enjoy it that we in any measure enter into or appreciate it. But when the heart expands in the power of the Spirit to its blessed influences and constraint, when it opens without let or hindrance to the inflowing of its mighty tides, then the soul learns experimentally the marvelous character of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Another thing is equally true. The more we taste of the love of Christ, the more we desire it. Every experience of it begets an ardent longing for a larger measure of it. Thus, if the bride had not previously known something of the Bridegroom's affection, she would never have uttered this passionate desire.

It is, moreover, through the heart that all divine knowledge is received; and hence, as here, the bride passes from the expression of her estimate of the enjoyment of the Bridegroom's love to the declaration of the effect of His excellencies and perfections. Her heart apprehends, through the enjoyment of His love, the savor of His "good ointments." Still, it may be remarked, in the language of another, that "however strong" the bride's "affections may be, they are not developed according to the position in which Christian affections, properly so-called, are formed. They differ in this respect. They do not possess the profound repose and sweetness of an affection that flows from a relationship already formed, known, and fully appreciated, the bonds of which are formed and recognized, that counts upon the full and constant acknowledgment of the relationship, and that each party enjoys, as a certain thing, in the heart of the other. The desire of one who loves and is seeking the affections of the beloved object, is not the sweet, entire, and established affection of the wife, with whom marriage has formed an indissoluble union. To the former, the relationship is only in desire, the consequence of the state of heart; to the latter, the state of heart is the consequence of the relationship."

This distinction should be well weighed and apprehended, for it contains the key to the interpretation of the "Song of songs." But it is still true, whether in the heart of the bride or in that of the Christian, that love is the means of, the capacity for, divine knowledge; that, in a word, he that loves most knows most. (See 1 Cor. 8:1-3; Eph. 1:18, reading "heart" instead of "understanding.") Mary Magdalene is a striking illustration of this point. Peter and John had more light than she, for they (or certainly John) had seen that the sepulcher was empty, and had believed, while she was in utter darkness as to the resurrection. And yet it was to Mary that the Lord revealed Himself. The two disciples, having satisfied themselves that the sepulcher was bereft of its prey (and John, at least, believing that the Lord had risen victor over death), "went away again unto their own home." But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping. Engrossed, in the intensity of her affection, with her Object, she was rooted to the spot; having lost Christ, she had lost everything, and all the

world was but a sepulcher to her if Christ were not living. The state of her heart was right, although her spiritual understanding was not enlightened; and hence it was that the Lord could come and disclose Himself to her, and make her the glad messenger of the blessed tidings that henceforward He associated His brethren with Himself in heaven, before His Father and God, in His own place and relationship.

If the reader has understood the divine principles which have been enunciated, he will easily comprehend the language of the bride, which must now be considered. "Because of the savor of Thy good ointments," she says, "Thy name is as ointment poured forth." The "good ointments" will represent for us the blessed fragrance of His excellent perfections, as seen in His life, in His acts of tenderness and grace, as well as in His words, and in His walk of entire dependence and obedience before God in His pathway through this world. They will, doubtless, be apprehended and enjoyed in the intimacy of His own presence, in His manifested relationships with the soul, in His ways and personal dealings. The bride, indeed, could not have known the savor of His good ointments in any other way. And it is ever true that the nearer we are to Christ the more fully we enter upon the experience of the beloved disciple who was admitted to the intimacy of reposing upon the Lord's breast, and the clearer will be our perception of His beauty and grace. We may be much impressed by report and testimony, even when at a distance like the Queen of Sheba; but it is only when, like her, we hear and see for ourselves, that we are lost in adoration in the presence of the fragrance of the good ointments.

If, therefore, we would be absorbed with the sense of His graces and beauties we must press on with the two disciples, drawn onward by His attractions, to the place where He dwells. Having part with Him there, the savor of His excellencies will constitute the perpetual joy and rejoicing of the soul.

Before proceeding further it should be noticed that the sweet savor of the life of Christ, as may be gathered from Lev. 2, was first and foremost for God. The priests might eat of the fine flour mingled with oil, of which the meat offering was composed, but all the frankincense thereof was to be burned with a part of the offering upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord. How blessed to know this! If there had not been a single soul upon the face of the earth to delight in the savor of the good ointments of Christ, His life would not have been in vain, inasmuch as it brought glory to God and filled His heart with infinite joy. No! our blessed Lord could not have wasted His sweetness "upon the desert air," because there was One whose eyes ever rested upon Him with unspeakable complacency, noting with joy the perfection of His every thought, and act, and word, and step. It was this which drew forth from the overflowing heart of God the words, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And the more Christ was tested - and He was tested in every variety of way, even by the holy fire of the altar itself - the more abundantly did His sweet savor flow forth to gratify the heart of His God. We call attention to it, because if the bride is, if we ourselves are, permitted to participate in the enjoyment of the sweet savor of His life, to feed upon the perfections of His entire devotedness to the glory of His God, it is only because God has first had His portion, and because He, in His ineffable grace, has called us to share in His own delight in the pathway and Person of His beloved Son.

Remark also that it is through the savor of the good ointments that His name, the revelation of all that He is, is spread abroad as the fragrance of ointment poured forth. In this way, as expressed in

the hymn -

"Like fragrance on the breezes,

His name is spread abroad." Illustrations of this abound in the gospels. "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And His fame went throughout all Syria." As we read in another place, "And from thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tiro and Sidon, and entered into a house, and would have no man know it: but He could not be hid."

This is doubtless only one side of this precious truth, for what our scripture brings before us is rather the soul's entrancement with the preciousness of Christ through the apprehension of His various excellencies as displayed in Himself and His ways. Still it is always through our needs that we first get to Christ and learn what He is in His love and grace. Then, when our needs have been met and satisfied, we are at leisure, set at liberty from ourselves, and at liberty in His presence, to contemplate Himself. The savor of His good ointments, indeed, scarcely steals into the soul with its gladdening refreshment until every question affecting ourselves and our relationship with God has been settled. In rare cases Christ Himself may be known at the commencement of the spiritual life; but, generally speaking, it is a troubled conscience which has to be appeased through the efficacy of the blood of Christ before we are free to survey His glorious perfections. Then, as these surprise and awaken the soul's delight, His name, even the very mention of it, will fill our hearts with the sense of its sweetness and fragrance, and produce such emotions as can only be expressed in adoring worship at His feet.

Another thing should be mentioned. The savor of the good ointments of Christ may flow out through the holy lives of His people. Every trait, every perfection exhibited by Himself in His walk through this world may be reproduced in those that are His. Look, for example, at the precepts and exhortations of the epistles. Every one of them has been perfectly exemplified in Christ; and unless this is remembered, so that they may be associated with Himself as the living Word, they will become hard and legal obligations. Christ in us, Christ our life, as set forth in Colossians, is to be followed by the display of Christ through us, in the power of the Holy Ghost. For this we need to be much in His company; for the more we are with Him and occupied with Him, the more we shall be transformed into His likeness, and the more certainly will the savor of His good ointments be spread abroad. And this will be a mighty testimony to what He is, for in this case His name will, through us, be as ointment poured forth; the sweet savor of the name of Christ will flow forth from our walk as well as from our words. The Apostle Paul uses the very words in speaking of his preaching, when he says, "We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ"; and in a subsequent chapter (2 Cor. 4), he points out that testimony is connected with the life as well as with the lip. As we meditate upon it, may we not say, "What a privilege! What a mission, to be sent out into the world to make known the savor of the good ointments of Christ, that His name may through us be as ointment poured forth!"

The effect of this has yet to be noticed: "therefore do the virgins love thee." The fragrance of the name of Jesus attracts the hearts of the virgins. A very distinct thought is connected in Scripture with the virgin. It is character, moral character, speaking as it does of the absence of defilement, of uncontamination with the polluting influences of the world (see Rev. 14:4). Virgins, therefore, stand

in this scripture for those who have been enabled, through grace, to maintain a holy separation from the defilements of the scene through which they are passing, those whose hearts have been kept true to Christ, and guarded in loyalty to Him through the sense of His claims, and of His love. A heart possessed of Christ is fortified against the most seductive allurements of the world. It is absorbing affection which always distinguishes the virgin, and this affection is ever intensified and deepened by every new discovery of the perfection of Christ. In other words, those who partake of the virgin character always respond to the display of the preciousness of Christ. He being the sole object of their hearts, they are in the condition of soul to enter into and enjoy His beauties. They will detect His presence, the blessed fragrance of His words and His acts, where others will observe nothing. They live in His presence; they are wholly for Him; and hence it is the delight of Christ to disclose Himself to them in such attractive ways as to increase and elicit their affections toward Himself.

It follows from what has been said, that the state of our souls may be discerned by the effect produced upon us by the name of Jesus. If our hearts are careless and irresponsive when He is the subject of conversation or presentation, we cannot be in communion with the heart of God. Why, even the name of a beloved object on earth will produce pleasurable emotions. How much more should the name of Christ, the object of God's heart - and also of ours, if we know Him - awaken within us holy feelings of delight, which can only be expressed in praise and adoration!

## Till the Heavens Be No More

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Job said, "Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up; so man lieth down, and riseth not." Job 14:10-12. There, people very often stop, but not so the Spirit of God here by Job. For it is plain here he really does say what Scripture fully warrants - "till the heavens be no more." A very remarkable expression. It might have been thought to be - and that we could easily understand as a natural thing - "till the earth be no more"; but man lives and dies, and does not rise - not till the earth be no more, but - "till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep."

Surely, what is here said is very striking, that even man without God - man who is only born of woman, and not of God - man is to sleep till the heavens be no more. Now take the last book of the New Testament. In the 20th chapter of the Revelation you find that, after the last outbreak of the world and the external nations of the world in the Millennium, all that are not converted during the Millennium will fall victims to Satan, after his release from the abyss; and they will all be rallied by him against Jerusalem on earth. They cannot touch Jerusalem above, the holy city. And not merely that, but "the camp of the saints about" - another striking thing. Why is there a camp of the saints around Jerusalem at that time? Has Satan gathered all the outside nations for one great effort to destroy the righteous that will then be on the earth? All the righteous flow up to Jerusalem; and as it will be entirely beyond the capacity of that Jerusalem to take in the saints from every quarter of the world, they will make a vast encampment around the "beloved city"; and that will be the great mark for Satan. Against that he thinks to hurl his battalions - all the rebels of the Millennium on earth. And what happens then? Fire comes down from God and destroys them all. And what then? Satan is cast at last into the lake of fire. There is to be no temptation any more; everything is going to be changed now. It is not merely that he is bound - he is cast into the lake of fire. There is no use which God can put him to; he is now to be punished forever. And that is not all.

Heaven and earth flee away. And as the fire had consumed these wicked nations, they now are raised from the dead, and not only they, but all the wicked since the world began. This is the resurrection of the unjust [the last resurrection], and they will all be in one company, and without one righteous person. You may ask what is to become of the righteous. Oh, they are translated, just as we are at the coming of the Lord for us before the tribulation. They will be with the Lord. They are not spoken of; there is no need to speak about them. They were never promised to sit upon the throne; we were. They had their comfort all the time of their righteousness. They will enjoy nothing but comfort; and, consequently, as they never suffered with Christ, they are not to be glorified with Him. Nevertheless, they are to be raised; or, as I should rather say, they are to be changed, because they do not die. But they will no doubt be changed.

That great principle of change will apply to all that are found alive - all the saints on the earth at that time. And we do find them in the next chapter. "The tabernacle of God is with men." There they are the men; they are not the tabernacle. The tabernacle of God are the glorified saints - are

those that had been already with Him and reigning - all those that were His - and they are particularly, as far as I know, the Church. I do not know that one could predicate it properly of any but the Church. Still, all the others will be blessed throughout all eternity. But the tabernacle of God is with men, and I presume that these men that are spoken of are the saints that are transported from the earth into the "new earth." You may ask me, How and why? I say, God does not tell us, and I cannot tell you, beyond that I know it will be; and we are all bound to believe that will be, because the Word of God says so. So, the tabernacle of God is quite distinct. And now when they are all in this city, fit for all eternity, the tabernacle of God, instead of being up in the air, comes down. It is not that it mingles with the other, but there it is. It deigns to be in the midst; God Himself is there; and all those that are in especial nearness to God will be there; hut all the blessed inhabitants of the millennial earth will be there as the men with whom that tabernacle shall then be.

So nothing can be plainer than how this coalesces with the words of Job. The wicked lie in the grave till the very end of the earth. Not merely the end of the age, but the absolute end, not only of the earth, but, of the heavens; and therefore it is said, "till the heavens be no more." For it might be thought that at the beginning of the Millennium the earth sustains a very great change, and so it does. But it is not then; it is "till the heavens be no more," and that will never be till the absolute end of all the dispensations of God; and then it is that the wicked from the beginning and up to the end of the Millennium will be all raised for judgment. And this entirely agrees with the 5th of John. You recollect that very remarkable drawing out of the grand principle of life and judgment by our Lord Jesus. He is the source of life, and He is the executor of judgment. In giving life He had communion with His Father. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." But He, and He alone, will judge the dead. And in effect He carries on the judgment of the living also - the "quick" or "alive." But at this time all His enemies will be dead - all the wicked from the beginning of the world - and they will be sentenced therefore to that which lasts when the world is no more, when there is nothing but the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. They will meet their doom then. And it is lovely, it appears to me, that God should bring those whom He loves into their blessing, long before those that are accursed meet their doom; and they will all meet this doom together.

## **Trials of Faith**

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While trials must be felt, God pledges His faithfulness, that with each temptation He will make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it. He will never try us above what we are able to bear. Though it may seem that we are shut up on every side, He knows how to deliver! What a trial to Isaiah, when sent to tell the people of Israel that their hearts should be made fat, their ears heavy, and their eyes shut, lest they should be converted and healed! What a trial to Abraham, to go out of his country and from his kindred, and come into a strange land, not knowing whither he went! What a trial to Noah, to be mocked and regarded as a fool while building the ark, according to the command of the Lord! How Isaac's faith was proved in Jacob; how Jacob's was in Joseph; how Moses' was in choosing rather to suffer affliction, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches. What a trial to forsake Egypt under the wrath of the king! When we seek to place ourselves in the condition of each of these sufferers, and consider every accompanying feeling, how it makes our trials say to us, "O ye of little faith"! Gideon! Barak! Samson! Jephtha! David! Samuel! Yet out of weakness were they made strong!

## Truth Held in Communion

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There is nothing more dangerous than to use the Word when it has not touched my conscience. I put myself into Satan's hands if I go beyond what I have from God, what is in possession of my soul, and use it in ministry or privately. There is nothing more dangerous than handling the Word apart from the guidance of the Spirit. To talk with the saints on the things of God beyond what I hold, is most pernicious. There would be a great deal not said that is said if we were watchful as to this, and the Word would not be used in an unclean way. I know of nothing that more separates from God than truth spoken out of communion with God; there is uncommon danger in it.

## Two Night Scenes

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In the first of these scenes we are introduced to the house of a woman that has a familiar spirit at Endor (1 Sam. 28:7). She is a true emissary of Satan - one who has for long carried on her diabolical deceptions by means of witchcraft, and has by some means or other escaped the raid which had been made upon such persons by Saul in his religious zeal (v. 3).

Through the darkness and gloom of that eventful night might be seen three figures moving on with hurried steps toward her abode. Silently they speed onward, lest the darkness should pass away and the morning dawn ere they had accomplished their miserable and wicked purpose. How true, "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light." John 3:20.

The figures too are worthy of notice. One at least of the three is remarkable. Though no kingly robes adorn him, and no train of followers mark out his position, yet in that tall figure, head and shoulders above the others, disguised though he be, we perceive unmistakably Saul, the King of Israel. A look of despair is settled on his countenance. Darkness and gloom have taken up their abode in his breast. His state within answers to the state of nature around. He is on his way to consult with the witch, in the consciousness that he is given up of God.

Awful discovery! the heart sickens at the thought - Saul given up of God! Yes, the man who had been anointed king, whose hand had slain thousands of the Lord's enemies, who had seen the wonderful intervention of Jehovah on behalf of His people in so many ways and was so familiar with His power, who in his religious zeal had put away all the wizards and witches out of the land, was now given up of God, and coming out in his true colors.

In spite of all God's tender and gracious dealings with him, in tracing his history we find he disobeys His word (chap. 15), hates and seeks to kill God's anointed (chap. 19: 10), destroys God's priests (chap. 22:18), and finally, when he finds that God does not answer him, instead of falling down on his face and repenting of his wickedness, he fills up his cup of iniquity by turning from God and appealing to Satan. He turns to what he had professed to give up, like "the dog is turned to his own vomit... and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. 2:22). Consummate wickedness! which meets its fearful but well-deserved doom.

Arrived at the woman's house, he finds a difficulty in getting her to act because of his own previous conduct; but after giving her his oath that no punishment shall happen to her, she goes as usual to bring up the familiar spirit, when God interferes, and, to her utter amazement, Samuel appears. This opens her eyes to the fact that she is in the presence of the poor God-deserted king.

"Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?" said Samuel. Listen to the despairing answer of him who was the greatest and most favored man in Israel - "I am sore distressed... God is departed from me,... therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do." v. 15.

Then from the lips of the disquieted Samuel he hears his doom - the loss of his kingdom, as the fruit of his disobedience (v. 17, 18). Besides, "Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me" (v. 19) - the loss of his life for inquiring of the witch of Endor (1 Chron. 10:13, 14)!

The poor, terror-stricken king no sooner hears his doom pronounced by Samuel than he falls to the earth in a swoon; strength departs from him. As soon as he is restored and refreshed, he and his servants rise up and go their way. It is still night. Pale, haggard, and weary, the doomed king returns to his army. Next day they go to the battle, when the word of the Lord by Samuel is fulfilled. Saul is wounded by a Philistine, falls upon his sword to put an end to his miserable existence, and finally is slain by an Amalekite, one of the cursed race whom he spared when he disobeyed the word of the Lord (chap. 21; 1 Kings 1). That memorable night his sentence was pronounced; the next day it was executed. And Saul passed from time into eternity, numbered with the dead, according to the word of Samuel.

The next scene, though a night scene, has a freshness and charm about it which the former entirely lacks. It is not the greatest man politically, but one of the greatest men ecclesiastically, "Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews" (John 3:1). Not the king on his way to consult with Satan, but the ruler on his way to consult with Jesus. He "came to Jesus by night," not terror-stricken and forsaken of God, but conscience-smitten and desiring to know God.

Timid and unable to rise above the thoughts of others, yet feeling the need in his soul, fearing to come by day, he steals to Jesus by night, ready to acknowledge Him as a teacher, but failing to see Him as the Savior.

No sooner does he reach Jesus and inform Him of what he does know, than Jesus begins by telling him what he does not know. "Ye must be born again." He lays the ax at the root of the tree, and levels all the pride and pretension of this ruler with one blow: "Ye must be born again."

Standing, reputation, character, are of no avail here. A new life is needed, or eternal banishment from God into the lake of fire will be his portion. New birth is indispensable, or the second death is unavoidable.

Darkness reigns around, but equal darkness reigns within the mind of the religious but inquiring Pharisee. Patiently the blessed Savior follows him in all his foolish questions, hemming him in at every point, until at last the conscience-smitten, needy, and inquiring ruler is brought to the very heart of God. Blessed terminus! glorious station at which to alight after such a journey! From distance to nearness! From the depths of ignorance in his own heart to the spring of love, the source of blessing, in God's heart! From the midnight darkness of nature to the marvelous light in the Lord!

How marvelous the ignorance and unbelief displayed by Nicodemus (vv. 10-12)! If earthly things were disbelieved, what use was it to speak of heavenly things? Moreover, who could speak of what was in heaven, but He who had come from heaven?

Then the mind of that great man was taken to the simplicity of the gospel in the picture of the serpent on the pole to heal the bitten Israelite in the wilderness, there to learn the truth of "life in a look." And as the serpent was lifted up, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that the bitten dying sinner might not perish, but have everlasting life. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His

only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. It is all of God, and from God, and goes back to God in praise and worship. God loved - God gave - we believe - and we have!

## What Is Inspiration?

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By inspiration we mean that which is God-breathed. We are told, "All [or every] Scripture is given by inspiration of God." It might be rendered, "Every Scripture is God-breathed." (2 Tim. 3:16.) The Scriptures are therefore a revelation from God, and their force or authority to our hearts and consciences flows from that fact. If Scripture be not God's Word, it has no more value to us than the writings of good men. But it is His Word; hence it comes to us with the authority, love, wisdom, and holiness of God. Though its pages run over thousands of years, take us back before time was, and lead our thoughts on to the eternal state, and some of its books were written more than three thousand years ago, it is unlike any other book, for it is always new. Take up an ordinary volume of human composition, written two or three hundred years ago, or even go back to one of the so-called Fathers, and you will find you have scarcely patience to read a few pages; but Scripture, as we have said, is always new. It carries with it a freshness and power to the heart and conscience that no other book does; and all the changes in the world and in mankind never affect it.

Scripture warns us against "men" and their "philosophy," ritualism and its imposing ordinances, and of putting "tradition" in the place of authority instead of Christ. While addressing itself to the heart and conscience, it always has a voice of instruction and blessing to those who believe and receive its words from the mouth of God. Those who do not believe cannot understand it, for "by faith we understand." "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him." Psalm 25:14. And we have "joy and peace in believing." But, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God:... neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2:14.

The Bible is the only Book that faithfully tells us what we are, and that even to the discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This shows it to be divine, for only God searches the heart. It also truly reveals God, so that when the Word is received, it brings our souls into the consciousness of

God's having to do with us. This also shows its divinity, for the world by wisdom knows not God (1 Cor. 1:21). The variety of aspects in which the Son who came forth from the Father to save sinners is presented to us - His personal glory, moral perfection, finished work, walk, words, ways, life, death, resurrection, ascension, glorification, present offices, and future judgments and reign - as the leading truths of Scripture, give it also a divine character. Its unity too carries with it the stamp of divinity as nothing else could. The way in which the different parts are adapted to each other - types in the Old Testament having their antitypes in the New, a multitude of prophetic statements in the former having their accomplishment in the latter, and the immense number of quotations in the New from the Old Testament, to prove the soundness of the doctrines taught - combine to give it a divine character which is incontestable. It is not then surprising that an inspired writer should commend "the word" to us as if in its operations it possessed divine attributes. "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of

the heart." Heb. 4:12.

There are many who, instead of bowing to Scripture as God's Word, and allowing it to judge them, sit in judgment on the things of God and thus take common ground with the infidels. Alas! such is the pride of man in these last and closing days, that many prefer their own opinions to Scripture, and, as of old, make void the Word of God, that they may keep their own tradition. Hence, also, the Word is being solemnly fulfilled in men's rejection of holy Scripture, that "seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." 2 Tim. 3:13.

If we have not the words of God, we have no basis for faith and must therefore be tossed about with irremediable uncertainty; but having divinely-given communications, we have on their authority divinely-given certainty as to eternal salvation. By it we have present assurance, founded on the redemption work of our Lord Jesus Christ, that our sins are forgiven, that we

have eternal life, are the children of God, and shall not come into judgment. (Acts 10:43; John 3:36; Gal. 3:26; Rom. 8:1.) If such are asked why they believe on our Lord Jesus Christ, and why they have such certainty as to their present and eternal blessings, their reply will be, "Because God in His Word says so, and faith needs no other authority for confidence, and no other rest for the heart and conscience."

The days are indeed evil and perilous. Time was when heathen idolaters were chiefly those who scoffed and mocked at the Scriptures being God's own revelation of His mind; and later on, avowed infidels in Christendom treated the subject with scorn and ridicule; but in our day it is those who profess to be servants of Christ and guides of the flock of God, who are so busily engaged in undermining the eternal verity of the holy Scriptures and their divine authority. This too is seldom attempted as a whole by one person, but by different persons in various places, so that it may be, by Satan's artifice, the less manifest. At this moment there is scarcely a vital and fundamental doctrine of Scripture that is not being assailed or corrupted within the length and breadth of Christendom.

What has especially stirred many hearts at this time is the consciousness of the appalling state of souls in the neglect of the Scriptures, and the skeptical thoughts that are current among professors of Christianity as to their divine authority. Not that we imagine that we have power to lead any to see and act differently, for we are told that "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." The prayer, however, of not a few, has been that God will yet work by His Word, and bless and help souls according to His own thoughts and for His own glory.

## What Perfection!

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How the whole life of Jesus was the great contradiction of the way of Adam! Adam was nothing, but sought to be as God. Jesus was everything, consciously equal with God, yet made Himself nothing and emptied Himself. The person He assumed, the form of a servant; the station He filled on earth, a carpenter's son; His life, His ways, His testimony - all was the full contradiction of him whose departure from God in pride has fashioned the course of "this present evil world." He was ever hiding, ever emptying Himself. He could have commanded legions of angels (as Psalm 91:11 entitled Him; Matt. 26:53), but He was the silent captive of His wicked persecutors. If He taught, and the people wondered, He would say, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." John 7:16. If He worked miracles, He would say, "The Son can do nothing of Himself." John 5:19.

What worship, what fragrant incense before God, was this life of Jesus! That divine delight in Him is here expressed (Psalm 91:14-16). And what rest and solace to the heart, yea, what satisfaction to the conscience, to know that God has been so honored, so refreshed, in this world of ours. What savor to the death or blood of Jesus does the life of Jesus render! His blood is the sinner's plea, his only title; but all God's delight in Him aids in enforcing the claim of that blood on the poor sinner's confidence.

## When I See the Blood

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"When I see the blood, I will pass over." It is not a question of my value of that blood, but the conscience rests on the value God finds in it. God looking upon the blood cannot see sin. My heart wants to value it more, but the question is, How could I be in the presence of God with a spot upon me? God looks on that blood and, if He looks on the blood, He cannot look on the sin; if He did, it would not value the blood. Where is the blood? It has been presented to God, not to man, and God has accepted it. Impossible that God can impute sin to a believer; it would be slighting the blood of Christ.

## With All Thy Getting Get Understanding

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The great desire of God is that we should understand every act and leading of His grace toward us. Human parents do much for their children without ever making known to them their intent and pleasure, and therefore much of the lives of the children is spent in misunderstanding the parental treatment, and endeavoring to escape from it instead of cooperating with it. Very different is the way of our God and Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessing, I believe, whether it be place, gift, or anything else, is often postponed and delayed until we are intelligent enough to see its value. The Lord unfolds to His servant the gift according as he attains the ability to comprehend it; and God acknowledges the exercise of it and gives scope for it according as the servant has intelligence or subjection to follow simply with His mind therein. In order to "think so as to be wise, as God has dealt to each a measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3; J.N.D. Trans.), a man must know the measure; and therefore if he is skillful "in the word of righteousness," he is grown up and able to discern between good and evil. If I am able to discern, I understand God's dealing with me, and get the blessing of it; and if not, I am only a babe, and "unskillful in the word of righteousness." I have need of milk; solid food is unfit for me. (See Heb. 5:12, 13.) I am alive, but I have no sense or intelligence of God's ways with me.

Now a want of this sense must debar me from the communication of God's mind and purposes. You would not talk to a babe about its inheritance; you would only speak and open your mind to it according as it gained intelligence to understand. This, I believe, God does in a special manner - not only with regard to blessings but, in the same way, though in a lesser degree, in chastening. I do not say that He does not chasten unless we understand the good of it, or that we always do understand it; on the contrary, I believe He often chastens to vindicate His own care when His child does not notice it at all; but what I say is that unless we are exercised thereby, no good comes of it, and no soul who knows His love will be satisfied to let His chastening pass by without understanding it. If an earthly friend indicates any coolness or distance toward me, do I not, in proportion as I love such a one, seek explanation of it? And just so with regard to the love of Christ; in proportion as we value it, shall we seek for an explanation of any marked visitation from Him to us. This is the way of God with us in either chastening or blessing, but we see it more plainly and markedly in blessing. It is "to him that hath" that "more shall be given." The man who had made most received in preference to any who had made less. God, I repeat, unfolds according as we are prepared for it; and hence circumstances are constantly used to prepare us for a due appreciation of His blessings.

Paul in the prison at Rome, and John at Patmos, went through circumstances prepared, the one to reveal the heavenly glory as from heaven, and the other to reveal the Lord's glory on earth. When Jonah lost his gourd, he was able to understand God's feelings; and when thus prepared to hear them, they were imparted to him. God wants us to know the way whereby we go, and to be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. I do not believe that any soul, no matter how great its acquisition of knowledge from the Scriptures, has really got on beyond its intelligence of God's ways with itself; so that it is in proportion as I understand God's

ways with myself that I have been taught of Him. If I understand His ways with me only in the wilderness, then. I am in the wilderness; that is to say, the wilderness is the measure of my attainment and advance. If in heaven, then I am in the same sense in heaven, and so on.

I dare say some of us have observed very often how some spiritual desire like a flash of light has engaged the soul; but though the enjoyment of it be remembered, we find that we have not reached it practically; and the reason for this is, that we are not prepared for it. I have no doubt that the grapes of Eshcol are often tasted by us when we have a great deal of exercise to go through, and intelligence to acquire, before we reach Eshcol. Caleb, after tasting the grapes, needed forty years of preparation ere he was in actual possession of Eshcol; and surely his heart must then have acknowledged God's gracious way with him. And when he was in full possession - when he comprehended the nature, order, and value of the blessing he had so long before tasted of - he could then sing "with understanding."

It is when we reach Eshcol that we see how necessary it has been for us to go through so much exercise and toil of spirit; for there it is that we comprehend the excellence of the blessing, and are in it too. To be in the place of blessing, you must not only prize the blessing, but you must also feel that you are suited to the place, and, as a necessary consequence, separated from what is unsuited to it. It is not all in a -moment that we see how our idolatry stands in the way as a harrier to our reaching the place or the possession of the grapes, the taste and excellence of which we feel we appreciate. And chastening may often fall on us in order to remove the obstacle and prepare us.

There can be no basket of first fruits (see Deut. 26) unless we understand our blessings and possess them. Hence the prayer that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, that we "being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height," etc. Eph. 3:17, 18. The Lord give us to understand the nature, order, and value of His blessings, that we may be prepared to enjoy them suitably!

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