

CHRISTIAN TRUTH VOLUME 13

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

A collection of articles and writings by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan from Christian Truth Volume 13, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

92 Chapters

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Christian Truth Volume 13

Some Typical Teachings of 2 Kings 4: Forgiveness, Life, Sufficiency of Christ

The stories related in this portion of God's Word, read in the light of the New Testament, teach us of forgiveness and life for the sinner, and of Christ's sufficiency for the believer.

The widow's oil is a proverb of exhaustless supply, and is a fit emblem of divine grace. The empty vessels in her house illustrate needy hearts; for so long as there was one vessel to be filled, whether large or small, the oil stayed not. Well may we say of our need, whatever it be, God's grace can meet it; and, in a sense, the greater our need, the more is God's grace magnified by meeting it. The larger the vessel, the more wonderful seemed the little jar of oil as the widow poured out. How her poor heart would rise up blessing Jehovah as she saw vessel after vessel filled as full as each could hold with the ceaseless oil!

Forgiveness Of Sins

But how came the widow to know the richness of the pot of oil? Her sons were about to be sold for debt; she had no possible way of delivering herself or them; her creditor was at the door, and, having "nothing to pay," the foreclosure was before her eyes. It was in her depths of distress that the poor bankrupt betook herself to Elisha, the man of God, from whom she learned that (as Elisha's name signifies) God is salvation!

Of all lessons, the sweetest to learn in the heart is that God is salvation! Do we need forgiveness of the debt of our sins? Do we owe the five hundred pence, or the fifty? God is salvation! When the debtors had "nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both." Look well over your religious stores; what have you left? If your answer be: "I am destitute; not one good work, not one worthy desire, not one holy prayer; no, should justice put in its claim, I am hopelessly lost; I must be sold into endless captivity," then be it with you as with the widow; for there is (bless God for it!) still the pot of oil, still His boundless grace to meet all your need. Your need called forth His grace.

God forgives us our sins upon the principle of grace, through Jesus, whose blood was shed.

Let none think that God's salvation is mere kindness. Kindness it is indeed to love us as He does; but righteousness as well as kindness is to be found in God's forgiveness, since it is alone in Jesus that we obtain forgiveness, alone in Him who died for our sins, alone by His precious blood-"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Eph. 1:7.

God can now forgive, and yet uphold His own righteousness. Yes, the cross, the blood of His dear Son, testifies to God's holiness as nothing else can; for, were He to punish every sinner forever, even that would not show His hatred of sin as does the blood of His Son. Moreover, since Jesus has satisfied the claims of His holiness, God's righteousness is shown out by His forgiving guilty sinners who trust in Jesus and in His blood.

But the widow found somewhat beyond having her debts paid in God's grace toward her. She had more than enough. After her debts were paid, there was still a fund of riches in her hand. What was she to do with it? Live upon it, was the divine word. Live in the famine-stricken land upon the unmerited bounty of God! Very precious to the saved sinner's heart is the knowledge that he is not only saved by grace but that so long as he tarries in this sin-stricken world (a world where there is a mighty famine of all that sustains the soul), he has God's grace to live upon.

Do not let us shut up God's grace to the bare fact of the forgiveness of sins. Just suppose the poor widow and her sons freed from the creditor's hand, saved from bondage, yet without a penny to carry them through the years of famine. What a mercy to be saved, we might say; yes, but would such a salvation answer to the character of God? Far from it. And while we are verily saved from all our sins, each one being forever forgiven when we believe in Him who died for us, there is also a boundless supply for each hour of our lives; there is a fullness which our wants can never exhaust, and the Lord delights in our making Him our resource at all times, drawing from His treasury, so that we may say, "Of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace [grace heaped upon grace]." John 1:16.

Life In Christ

Shall we stop at forgiveness? Shall we stop at that grace which follows us to the end of our earthly journey? Is the Christian only like a ransomed prisoner with a fund of riches to meet all his wants to the day of his death? Far be the thought, we are much more than forgiven; we are the possessors of everlasting

"The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23. Jesus not only died for our sins, He rose for our justification (Rom. 4:25). His blood blotted out our countless crimes; He is our life. Bad as it is to be in debt, it is worse to be dead. And we are by nature "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). If we are saved by God's salvation, it is both forgiveness and life for us.

The fond mother of Shunem had death in her house; the child of her desires lay lifeless upon his bed. Who could meet this extremity? Who but the living God could give life? Life is God's gift. When Adam was formed out of the dust, God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (Gen. 2:7). Not the hardest strivings, the bitterest tears, could bring back her son's life, and this she knew full well; but she knew more. She knew that Elisha, Jehovah's servant, if it were Jehovah's will, could bring back her child to life. She had "faith in God." She could say, "It is well," knowing that God can raise the dead.

The Shunammite went straight to Jehovah's prophet. "Drive, and go forward," she said; "slack not thy riding for me." This was the energy of faith. And when Elisha inquired how it was with her, she said, in the calmness of faith, "It is well."

The prophet came to her child (as God's salvation comes to us), down to the very place where he was. Elisha lay upon the dead child; his mouth, his hands, touched the lifeless body. But Jesus has taken our place actually, our very place; He died on the cross; He went down into the grave for us. Have you considered His stoop, from the glory to the grave? Have you pondered His work, the Maker of all worlds as a man lying dead in the tomb? It is only by Him that we obtain life: "The --, gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23. His blood cleanses all our sins away.

We see the little chamber where the dead child lies, and our God alone can raise him up. Why should it be so difficult to believe that God alone gives dead sinners new and everlasting life? The answer is not far off; it lies in the hardness of our hearts, that find it so difficult to believe that we are "dead in trespasses and sins."

The joy of the mother when she clasped her child-the living, the living-in her bosom, was deeper than the rich joy of her who had the money in her hand to pay her debt, and deliver her sons from bondage; and surely there is a fuller joy when we know the gift of God, which is eternal life, than even when we know that we are forgiven all our sins through the precious blood of Christ.

The Sufficiency Of Christ

However blessed it is to be assured of the forgiveness of our sins, and to know that we have in Christ everlasting life, yet there is somewhat beyond this that belongs to God's people.

The world is another place to a man immediately he knows Jesus; and heaven too becomes also another place to him; the world in his eyes is desolation; heaven, home. But whether the believer regards himself as a pilgrim traveling homeward through a scene of desolation, or whether he realizes his position in heaven in Christ, he equally needs the sufficiency, the sustaining grace, of Jesus Himself.

There is a famine on earth, and let the believer turn which way soever he will, there is not a particle of nourishment for his soul to be gathered from the earth; but the whole of his spiritual food is heavenly, the bread of God, which is Christ Himself. At the present time, man gathers for his need (as did the sons of the prophets in the dearth-vv. 38, 39) what their hands may find; each goes to search for some good and pleasant thing. But sooner or later comes the woeful discovery that death has spoiled the sweetest things; and then when the discovery is made by the soul as touching his own case, he is apt to cry out with the sons of the prophets: "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot." Death in the pleasantest, in the loveliest, in the dearest things of earth; death in the family; death beneath the rosy cheek of childhood; death within the frame of strong manhood; death upon the gray hairs of age; death in business; death in the household; death everywhere, in everything, on earth. Heartbreaking discovery! Oh, who can eat of the things of life and earth! who can endure its sorrows! "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof."

And how came death into the world? Sin entered, and death by sin; which knowledge, when the heart that hates sin discovers it as applied to itself, is bitter, bitter indeed.

Then where is the remedy? How shall we go through life's sorrows and tears? The man of God gives the sons of the prophets the remedy. Is there death? "Then bring meal." Now, meal is a figure of Christ as a man on earth; and when we know Him in His tenderness and sympathy, when we consider Him who has gone through every bitter sorrow that human heart ever felt, then as the sons of the prophets could eat of the food which had death in it (for when the meal was put into the poisoned food, there was "no harm" in it), so can we pass through all the bitter things of our earthly way and find them sweet; yes, all sweet which once was bitter, when Jesus is known-pain, sorrow, death, all, all sweet.

Beloved fellow-Christian, there is more in Christ than a sweetening of your bitter circumstances, more than friendship and sympathy for you as a tired soul on earth; for Christ is not here any longer; His feet have left this weary scene; you may trace the imprint of His steps as the Holy Ghost has recorded them in God's Word, but Jesus Himself is risen. He has passed through death and has reached the land of glory; He has left the sorrowful land and has sat down in the home of unmingled joy; and His fullness in that rich place is yours.

The sons of the prophets ate of the loaves of the first fruits, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord God. There was an abundance in the supply which went beyond their need, for the supply was after Jehovah's measure.

The loaves of the first fruits, the earnest of the harvest, the promise of coming abundance, tell us of our risen Lord. Christ the first fruits (1. Cor. 15:23) is evidence of the end of the famine. Upon Him let us now feed our souls, and, feeding spiritually upon our risen Lord Jesus, know by the power of His Spirit of that fullness which far exceeds our earthly wants, which is exhaustless, which is heavenly, after the measure of the love, grace and power of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You may check your answers with those given on page 236.

1. To whom did the Lord say, "O thou of little faith"?
2. Of whom did the Lord say, "I have not found so greats.
faith... in Israel"?
3. To whom did the Lord say, "Thy faith had made thee whole"?

Advocacy Now, Soon the Father's House

It is very common, even among the children of God, to confound the Christian hope with prophecy; but Scripture gives no countenance to anything so lowering to the heavenly calling, though prophecy is a very important part of Scripture, either directly, or indirectly as in the book of Genesis. All the blessings of a converted soul in the days of Genesis lay in the future, so that it is not in order to disparage prophecy that I claim a higher place for the Christian hope. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. It was so in the Old Testament days, and will be again. The more we distinguish that which is for the earth from that which is for heaven, the more honor we give not merely to the heavenly, but also to the earthly. God's purpose is to bring both earth and heaven under the Lord Jesus. The great mistake is to make the earth the scene of the Lord's being peculiarly glorified, and the saints with Him. For the earth is what God intends for Israel. They are the people to be exalted in the earth. There is not one part of the universe (I do not speak of that awful but suited vision throughout eternity of the lake of fire) in all the scene of blessing but will be under the direct control of the Lord Jesus. But as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are the heavenly blessings than the earthly.

God means to bless every family of the earth. It was the promise given to Israel. But what about saints raised from the dead and glorified? To have them for the earth is a terrible blunder. It is a sorrowful thing that any saint could look for a place on earth when a heavenly hope is made known. The effect is to blot out Israel's portion (which cannot fail) and to lose all sense of heavenly glory into which Christ is gone, and gone as our forerunner.

Now it will help if you know the context of the words read (John 14:1-3), for you are never sure you have the real truth if you take a few words by themselves. But if the surroundings are of a similar character, they strengthen the true meaning. From the beginning of John 13, the Lord opened out the entirely new character of Christianity - that which follows His total rejection by Israel. The great doctrine of the Gospel of John is that we are children of God and know it and are now fitted to enjoy it. The Apostle Paul, who says we are to bear the image of the heavenly when Christ comes, also says we are heavenly now. "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." 1 Cor. 15:49. John 13 brings before us a most remarkable act on the part of our Lord. After the intimation that He was going to leave them, for the chapter begins with, "When Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father," etc.-that is the way His departure is looked at; not that He should die, though He was going to die. It proceeds, "And supper being come [not "ended"]... Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands.... He riseth from supper," etc. Here is a very remarkable thing, though we might pass over it as nothing peculiar. Jesus is here not looking for the throne of David, for Jerusalem, and the land - all to be given Him by-and-by. That is what God will do for His beloved Son who by His death not only reconciles the creature to the Creator, but glorifies God about that in which He had been so dishonored. But now that the Lord Jesus (viewed here as no longer in the world where we still are, but) is gone to the Father, He devotes Himself on high that we, while walking here, may nevertheless by His advocacy there, be maintained in blessed

communion with Him now glorified. This is to have "part with Him," and is effected by His cleansing our feet from the defilements of the way by "the washing of water by the word."

In these chapters the Spirit of God gives a far deeper account of that which never had been revealed in the Old Testament. What! the Messiah wash our feet! There is nothing in the Old Testament Scriptures nor in the heart of man to prepare for such a thing, and it astonished the disciples; it astonished Peter. Peter had part in Christ, eternal life in Christ; but the Lord would give him part with Christ; that is, communion with Him in heaven while still walking down here on earth. Christianity is not only our being born of the Spirit; the Old Testament saints were that, though they did not know it. They rested on the coming Savior; and there is nothing good for God without that, without faith. What is needed is that which is of God. We are called to acknowledge the utter ruin of all that is of ourselves. This is repentance - taking part with God's righteousness and holiness against myself. But this is negative; faith gives us the positive - the Lord Jesus. He presses on Peter the necessity of washing his feet, not his whole body; for if a man is regenerate by being born of water and of the Spirit, that is done once; there is no repetition, as there is none of the death of Christ.

Washing of feet meets defilement of our walk. Is that nothing? or am I merely to fall back on forgiveness of sins through His blood? It is as Advocate He washes our feet. The advocacy is one grand characteristic of Christianity. His priesthood is quite distinct. As Priest, He strengthens us against the enemy; but if we break down, His advocacy comes in. What makes a man repent? Not sinning, that hardens. It is an Advocate with the Father. Not with God - God is the Judge of sin but with the Father, for we are children of God.

In the case of Peter we see the Advocate. He was warned not to enter into temptation. The Lord endured temptation. That is very different from entering into it. But Peter, bold enough to get into the difficulty, failed; and when he denied the Lord, the Lord looked upon Peter; then Peter remembered. This is a little specimen before the time of advocacy. It is eminently belonging to the Christian. Though Christianity rests on Christ's death, it is characterized by His resurrection and ascension - all facts. There is nothing so simple as a fact, but these facts are the groundwork of all the truths of Christianity.

The same chapter also shows the death of Christ in quite a different way from Isa. 53 or Psalm 22. Judas went out to betray the Lord, "and it was night"; and he was going into the deepest darkness that a poor soul could enter - going to sell the Lord for the price of a slave! What does the Lord say? "Now is the Son of man glorified." What! By being crucified? Yes. There is no glory so bright as moral glory. It was an easy thing for God to give the Lord Jesus actual glory, but it was no easy thing for Christ to suffer. In that, God was glorified, not as Father, but as God, the Judge of sin; and that insoluble question was about to be settled for all eternity! The Father had been glorified in all the life of Jesus; He was His delight. Christ, who by His love, humility, and entire obedience had glorified Him in good, had now to glorify Him about all that was bad. "If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." That is what He has done. God having set Him, not on the throne of David, but on the throne of God, where no man can sit but Himself, He is there as man; but if He were one hair's breadth less God than the Father, there could be no Christianity.

He is glorified in Himself- that brings in Christianity. The Holy Spirit is sent down from Christ in glory, and every one who truly believes is "one spirit with the Lord," and this leads me into my subject. "Let not your heart be troubled." It seemed one of the greatest troubles that He was going to leave them; but He says, as it were, You ought to rejoice if you care for Me, for I am going to the Father; but I am going to care for you in a way impossible otherwise. "Ye believe in God," though you never saw God; "believe also in Me," when you no longer see Me. Thomas gives a good sample of the Jew, but "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Who are they? Those who, unlike Thomas, believe on Him before they see Him; though it was precious also to see Him, for His life lays the foundation for love of His Person. "In My Father's house." The temple was entirely too low. What can match the Father's house? the description of that place where God the Father shows His delight in His Son! Here is the blessed hope - room for you all - room for every Christian - room for you to be "with Me." In all heaven there is but one Father's house, only one place worthy of the Son; and, says the Lord, I am going to have you with Myself. They are to be "with Me." Prophetic scriptures are connected with Israel's hope. Association with Christ is ours now, and by a tie that cannot be broken - the Holy Spirit.

Every member of Christ's body will be there - a matter entirely of sovereign grace, though there will be reward according to faithfulness.

Armstrong Heresy

For several years we have been receiving inquiries from people in various places, from the State of California to the Province of Quebec, regarding a certain new religious organization which is very aggressive. Its promoters are sending out broadcasts on about seventy-five radio stations of prominence in various parts of the world-North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. They are also quite lavish in the distribution of printed matter; one monthly publication (called The Plain Truth) in the United States has a circulation of 200,000 copies. Their advertising in various magazines is of a rather flamboyant type, and is quite widespread.

The master mind behind all of this seems to be one, Herbert W. Armstrong, who uses the names Radio Church of God, The World Tomorrow, and Ambassador College. He has recently acquired such a school on the outskirts of London, which is to be known by the same name as the parent school in Pasadena, California. We have no desire to delve into the vagaries of all the last-day religious concoctions; their name seems to be "legion." But in the last few months we have received more than 500 pages of printed literature of this strange organization, not counting duplications, which have come to us for analysis by people who have been receiving it-some of whom have been contributing money to it.

A word of warning is certainly in order, for it is strange indeed that any true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ could read such religious rubbish and not discern the error which is to be found on nearly every printed page. One should see enough to turn away from it with revulsion and righteous indignation, for there is scarcely a truth which we hold dear that is not undermined or denied in this veritable hodgepodge of error. Many of our readers who would disdain to read or listen to such religious poison might wonder what justification there can be for the publication of our opinions on this matter, but often the truth can be hammered out on the anvil of error. The real truth of God may frequently be impressed on readers by seeing it in all its lustrous rays against such a dark background.

Aside from warning some who may be misled by this systematized error, we have no other objective in writing this than to minister the truth of God. We desire that it may be so set forth in bold relief that souls may be more firmly established in the present truth. The Apostle Paul wrote: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth." 2 Pet. 1:12. He also warned the saints of the devious ways of false prophets who were to come.

We shall not make any distinction between articles written by Mr. Armstrong or his son, Garner Ted Armstrong, or any of his handful of writers; for they all speak the same things and, after all, he is the editor and responsible agent in all cases. He is given to sensationalism. His heady religious mixture is composed of much of the legal system found in Seventh-day Adventism (minus Mrs. White as the "spirit of prophecy" which he seems to have replaced), a religion of works for salvation, an earthly hope, the nonsense of Anglo-Israelism, the non-existence of the souls Of the dead, denial of eternal judgment, denial of the Trinity of the Godhead, a thorough system for

forcing tithing, and, in our judgment, derogatory remarks about the Lord Jesus Christ, among other grossly erroneous doctrines. Let us look at some of the errors of this system and consider them in the light of the Word of God.

Mr. Armstrong is not troubled by any modesty in making claims for himself, for he uses the very language of inspiration given by the Apostle Paul thus: "The Gospel which is preached by me is NOT AFTER MAN, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but BY THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. He revealed it to me IN HIS WRITTEN WORD! Then when it pleased God, who called me by His GRACE, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him to the world" 1; here he continues that he conferred not with flesh and blood, but went directly to the Word of God. This amounts to a claim to divine revelation. He further says, "In these last days WHEN THE GOSPEL MUST GO AROUND THE WORLD, Jesus chose...HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG." 2

Mr. Armstrong is not content to merely preach his strange gospel, but he condemns the preaching of the "gospel of God, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 1:1-3.) Here are his own words: "The GOSPEL to be preached was not the present-day message ABOUT the Person of Christ, but the Message He brought and preached-the Good News of the GOVERNMENT of God... a message that has not been preached for 1800 years or more!" 3 In another place he says: "Today what is called organized 'Christianity' appropriates the NAME of Christ- exalts His PERSON-worships Him-but continues to DENY HIS MESSAGE, and to rebel against God's laws." 4 Again, "It is one thing to believe ON Christ-that is, in His Person-and something altogether different to BELIEVE CHRIST- to believe what He says" 5; he also speaks of many "preaching CHRIST to the world-and yet DECEIVING the world." 6 And again, "But men crucified Him, then later appropriated His NAME, began proclaiming His deity, exalting His PERSON, while they DECEIVED the world and kept it in darkness estranged from God by rejecting His Gospel." 7 O that what Mr. Armstrong says about Christianity were all true! O that more would believe on His Person, exalt Him, and worship Him! God's gospel concerns His Son, as is said in the emphatic words of Rom. 1:1-3, but Mr. Armstrong disagrees. In another place this apostle of error says, "In this modern day, is it important which MESSAGE we believe? Today many modern ministers say, 'Just believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.' 8 Perhaps this is twisted a little from what true ministers of Christ say, but is it not basically what Paul said to the repentant jailer at Philippi? (Acts 16:31). It is, however, utterly condemned by this modern law-teacher; but he does not hesitate to take verses from Galatians where the Apostle is contending against law-teachers and use them against those who preach the true "gospel of the grace of God."

But why does Mr. Armstrong refute the gospel concerning God's Son and insist on a gospel which he says Christ taught when He was here? Simply to bring in his warped gospel, which is not gospel at all, but pure LAW. He refers time and time again to Matt. 19:16-19 where we read: "Behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And He said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but One, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." This is Mr. Armstrong's pet verse, for he relies on it to prove that the Lord Jesus taught obedience to the law of Moses as the only means of obtaining eternal life. But here was a young man who came to Jesus as to a teacher seeking to learn what he could DO to attain eternal life. If any man will seek to come to God on the

ground of his own works, he will find the law; but the law never saved any man, nor did keeping the law do it. Man is doomed in his sin if there is one thing he must DO to be saved or to have eternal life. The only answer there would be to a man who wanted a means of doing, would be the law; but when Jesus applied it to his covetous heart (for the tenth commandment forbade covetousness) he went away-the price was too high. Man cannot DO anything for salvation!

Mr. Armstrong goes on in Matt. 19 to the 25th and 26th verses and makes a false use of them. He connects the 17th verse to the 25th, as though the disciples said, "Who then can be saved?" when they heard Him refer the young inquirer to the ten commandments. The fact is, however, that in the intervening verses the Lord took up the case of riches as being a hindrance to man's entering the kingdom of God. This was what amazed them, and not, as Mr. Armstrong says, How then can a man be saved if it is a matter of keeping the commandments? That was not the subject, so Mr. Armstrong's use of "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (v. 26) is in error. It is a twist to make keeping the law for eternal life seem easy, with God's help.

Mr. Armstrong speaks with all the air of authority, but test it by the Word of God. Listen to him: "But how the god of this world would blind your eyes to that! He tries to deceive you into thinking all there is to it is just 'accepting Christ,' `with NO WORKS'-and presto-chango, you're pronounced `SAVED'! But the BIBLE reveals that NONE is yet `saved'! 'He that endureth unto the end, the same SHALL BE saved' (Matt. 24: 13)." 9 Here he uses a verse that has nothing to do with this time of the grace of God, but is strictly connected with the Jewish remnant who pass through sore trials in another day. (But of course, Mr. Armstrong knows nothing of this, for all his prophetic interpretations are confusion, and are contrary to the understanding of any well-taught Christian.) That there is "NONE" saved yet is a stark contradiction of the Word of God. Was not the Philippian jailer saved? How about such words as these, "And hath saved us"? Whom are we to believe? Of course no one has been, or ever will be, saved by a gospel of works as taught by Mr. Armstrong.

The Word of God says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." Titus 3:5. And, "By grace are ye saved through faith,... NOT OF WORKS." Eph. 2:8, 9. But this Judaising teacher says: "But actually, Satan is the master deceiver-and these are his ministers! These false ministers teach a doctrine of 'no works'- no obedience to God's law." 10 But hear what the Spirit of God says: "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Gal. 2:21. No flesh can be justified by WORKS of any kind; and those who follow Mr. Armstrong will end in the lake of fire, in spite of his teaching that there is no lake of fire.

Placing men and women today under the law for salvation is the warp and woof of Armstrong's false doctrine, but it picks up many other bad doctrines as it goes. Let us notice another remark of his: "It is absolute MOCKERY to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ as 'Lord' and then deny the message of obedience to the laws of Almighty God which He brought to this earth and on which He based His entire life and teaching." 11 We are bold to say that if that was the message the Lord Jesus brought, then there is no gospel at all. The law was here before; what need of one to come and teach it? "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." John 1:17. Judaising teachers have been the bane of the Church from the days of the Apostle Paul until now.

As with all such false doctrines, 1 John 3:4 is frequently quoted as it is found in the King James Version of the Bible, and there, it is one of the blunders of the Version. It should not read, "Sin is the transgression of the law," but, "Sin is lawlessness." There is a vast difference between the two

words and their meanings. Lawlessness is the exercise of my own will, while transgression is the breaking of a known prohibition. Now Mr. Armstrong should know better than to use "transgression" there, for he comments on the word translated "Wicked" in 2 Thess. 2:8 and says that it means "lawless"-it is virtually the same word in Greek in both places. He himself says, "The original Greek word means 'opposed to law' or 'lawless.'" 12

Breaking a known commandment, if one is under the law, is certainly sin; but sin is not confined to that-sin is the doing my own will without regard to my Creator. "Sin is lawlessness." The misrendering of the verse seems to be an essential peg to hang law-keeping on, both with the Seventh-day Adventists and Mr. Armstrong. There is one verse in Rom. 2 which settles the matter; namely, "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law." v. 12. The Gentiles did not have God's law, but they sinned without breaking a known commandment; and they died without law, and will also be judged and punished, even though they were under no law. The Word of God also says, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Rom. 5:14. Adam had a law, and he broke it; but there was no law thereafter until the day of Moses, yet people sinned and died. Mr. Armstrong suggests that people do not know what sin is, but it is they who limit sin to breaking a law who little comprehend the heinousness of sin before a holy God.

Some who may have read Mr. Armstrong's articles or heard him on his "World Tomorrow" program may say, But does he not mention accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior? Yes, very occasionally this creeps in, but let us see what he says it means: "Accepting Jesus Christ as personal Savior, truly, means letting Him 'who went about doing GOOD' live your life for you henceforth-just as HE would live it! It means living henceforth by every Word of God-making the Bible your guide, your AUTHORITY in life." 13 Here then is the crux of his teaching: Jesus Christ is your personal Savior if you let Him live your life so that you live by every word of God-by the ten commandments. In other words, He saves you by helping you do works. Such, reader, is not the "gospel of God"; it is not the Savior whom God provided; in fact, it is no Savior at all, but a mere helper of man to elevate himself to God. It is the way of Cain! It is the way of death! "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," not to help them accomplish it and His sacrificial death on the cross is the sole means of salvation to any-"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." Titus 3:5. But all this means nothing to this do-it-yourself scheme. Listen to this bold statement of error: "Yes, Satan the Devil has MINISTERS! They appear to be the ministers of Christ. But actually, they teach a doctrine of 'no works'-no obedience to God's law." 14 On the same page he calls them "false ministers who preach a counterfeit Christianity." 15 It is Mr. Armstrong who is in error, perhaps himself deceived. We read in the Word of God that Satan's ministers pose "as ministers of righteousness" and not of grace (see 2 Cor. 11:13, 15). Is not the Armstrong doctrine a false doctrine? Is it not a doctrine of so-called righteousness and not of grace?

What is "conversion" in this strange cult? Let us see: "Real conversion, then, involves a real surrender to obey God and His laws." 16 It is law, law, law. There was really no necessity that God should send His Son into this world of sin if the real object was for Him to teach obedience to the law. That was nothing new, for James said in Acts 15, "Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day." v. 21. Armstrongism is based on an utterly false concept of Christianity it is not Christianity. For him to speak of the Christianity

of Christ, or of His day, is plain ignorance. When the Lord Jesus came into this world, He came as "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." Rom. 15:8. He came "unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel"-this was not Christianity. But when He was rejected by them and crucified, God made Him to be an offering and a sacrifice for sins on the cross. This was the foundation of the gospel and of Christianity, although properly speaking it really did not commence until after His resurrection, ascension, and the descent of the Holy Spirit. Christianity started after the cloud received Him out of their sight and the Spirit of God came down to announce the good news of salvation WITHOUT WORKS, through faith in Him and His work. Christianity is connected with a glorified Christ and is founded on the finished work of atonement.

Law-teachers like Mr. Armstrong turn the so-called "sermon on the mount" into a declaration of the gospel, whereas it is the Lord's setting forth the principles on which His kingdom will

be established in another age, although when He gave it, He and His kingdom had not been finally rejected by Israel.

(To be continued next month)

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Armstrong Heresy

This is the second part of our review of the false religion propagated widely today under such names as "The World Tomorrow," "The Plain Truth," "Ambassador College," and under the name of its promoter, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

This false system brings in confusion at every turn. Notice Mr. Armstrong's remark: "The BLOOD of Christ does not finally save any man... But we are SAVED-that is, given immortal life-by Christ's LIFE, not by His death." 17 What is this but a deliberate slight on the blood of Christ? Have we not boldness to enter the holiest-that is, the very presence of God-by the blood of Jesus? (Heb. 10:19). Surely we have, for God says so; but Mr. Armstrong says that it is insufficient to save us. Is not the wish parent to the thought, so that all can turn on our keeping the law, as though Christ lives our life, so that we keep the law for salvation? A careful examination of Rom. 5:10 will prove that when we were enemies of God we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son-all the enmity was broken down-but are we to be forgotten or forsaken now that Christ is risen? No, never; "We shall be saved by His life"; that is, in His living, He secures our salvation to the very end. There is no law-keeping in the text; it is only so in the false doctrine that perverts it.

Now let us see what Mr. Armstrong says of repentance. He states: "Repentance means to quit sinning, and sin is the transgression [here is that error again] of God's spiritual LAW-so repentance means to begin living according to God's Commandments!" 18 This is unadulterated error. How is a sinner going to stop sinning? you may as well tell him to quit breathing. Only if he did that, would he stop sinning. Repentance, rather, is the judgment that I form of myself in the presence of God. Job was finally brought to repent and abhor himself in dust and ashes, whereas this erroneous teaching would have a man lift himself out of the mire of sin by his own effort. True repentance would have me see the utter ruin of myself and have me own it before God, while looking away to Jesus, my sinless and holy Substitute, and His finished work.

Here is another fundamental error of Armstrongism: "If we obey God's commandments as revealed then by God's spoken Word, but now by the Bible, we clothe ourselves with God's kind of righteousness and are acceptable to God." 19 If this were possible-to obey the commandments-it would be our righteousness and not God's, and the Scripture says that all our righteousnesses are "as filthy rags." The Apostle Paul, a blameless Jew in his day, said that he desired to be found in Him-in Christ -not having his own righteousness, "which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. 3:9. The "righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." Rom. 3:22. Here is the righteousness of God, and it is for all those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ-not for those who pretend to keep the law. We say pretend, for we are bold to affirm that there is no man that does keep it so as to stand before God, accepted by Him. People who say, We keep the whole law, are either very careless with the truth, or they lower God's law to suit their own selves. The (perhaps) best natural Jew that ever lived was Saul of Tarsus, but he said the law killed him. He verily thought he was keeping the law until the sharp edge entered his soul by the tenth commandment-"Thou shall not covet." Where is the man who can say before God, "I have never lusted, I have never coveted anything"? God's righteousness is for those who had none, and it is on the basis of faith and not of works-not of law-keeping.

These people who in substance say they are Jews, but are not, put great stress on absolutely keeping the Sabbath. But perhaps the Lord's word to such in His day would be in place, "But none

of you keepeth the law." How many Sabbath keepers keep it according to the law? Yet Mr. Armstrong says we have to keep the letter and spirit of the law. Does he not know that the letter kills (2 Cor. 3:6)? Which of them does not light a fire on the Sabbath? Now the letter of that law would preclude turning on the gas stove or flicking a light switch; yes, and even turning on the automobile switch. These are just the modern counterparts of the old ways of making a fire. O that those who desire to be under the law would believe God: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse"! Gal. 3:10. Not merely those who break the law.

We have noticed before that this false cult denies that a sinner is saved instantaneously when he accepts the Lord Jesus as his personal Savior-as the One who died for him and his sins on the cross. Now notice what this system says salvation is: "The Creator is still creating! He is molding, fashioning, CHANGING us, transforming us to His own noble, righteous, holy, spiritual CHARACTER! Yes, creating in us this perfect CHARACTER! Salvation, then is a PROCESS!" 20 What a fable! Salvation according to this system then is but a process of creating a character, as the false teacher says: "Salvation is merely the COMPLETING of CREATION.... Character is created by experience... SALVATION IS THE COMPLETING OF CREATION." 21 In another place this character building process is spoken of thus: "Holy, righteous CHARACTER is something even God cannot create instantaneously! It is produced, or developed, only through EXPERIENCE! Experience requires TIME, and CIRCUMSTANCES!" 22 If all this process of salvation could be true, then the Philippian jailer and his household were not saved as Paul told them they would be by simply believing in the Person of the Lord Jesus, nor had they any reason to rejoice as the Scripture tells us they did. Neither was the converted thief received into Paradise that day (as promised by the Lord), for he had no time to build a character; nor have we received the salvation of our souls. Nay, but let God be true, and Armstrongism be found a false witness; and this goes even further and says: Christ "WROTE that salvation BY HIS EXPERIENCE." 23 Reader, have you had enough of this religious contradiction of the Word of God? BEWARE OF POISON! The false system is spiritual poison.

But as we have gone this far, perhaps we should examine the doctrine a little more. With the background of law-enforcement, it was easy for this system to press the absolute necessity of giving God at least one tenth of your earnings, and then after pressing this on the basis that if you do you will reap rich rewards here and now, it was an easy transition to press the point that only to God's chosen ministers could the tenth properly be given. As all others were to them false teachers and even ministers of Satan, then it could be urged that you should seek out God's true ministers as the only ones to whom the tithes should be givens-this quite naturally then applies to themselves as the only proper recipients. We marvel at the credulity of so many people who have sent them their money.

We wish to further call attention to certain remarks which we deem derogatory to the glory of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is one: "No one, outside of our Savior, has yet attained to immortal life." 24 This may sound innocent enough, but is it? That blessed One was the author, or originator, of life; He had life in Himself; yes, He was the life. As a man, He could lay down His life and take it again. No mere man could "lay down" his life. Even as a man, no one could take His life. To say that He attained to immortal life at His resurrection is to degrade Him. Really, it is a part and parcel of that false doctrine found in Seventh-day Adventism (which Mr. Armstrong seems to have taken from them intact) called "conditional immortality." Its reasoning is that man does not

possess an immortal soul that lives on and on after death, either in weal or woe. It is a flat denial of the Word of God which tells of those who die in faith as being "absent from the body, and present with the Lord." The soul and spirit do not die at the death of the body, nor do they sleep. Luke 16 takes us behind the scenes and lets us see the misery of the soul of a man in hades, whose body was buried on earth. "Conditional immortality" is false in every way. In the working out of that scheme, the Lord Himself is supposed not to have existed when He lay in the tomb; whereas, He sustained the universe at that very time. Therefore, to say that He had to await resurrection to get immortal life is a denial of the glory and truth of His Person. "Conditional immortality" also denies that the converted thief went to Paradise that day to be with Christ, as promised.

Another Armstrong statement that requires notice is: "Jesus Christ was the most FULL-GROWN man who ever lived. He alone had COMPLETE emotional stability and maturity." 25 Is not this statement dishonoring to Him who was absolutely the perfect Man in every way, and who was God manifest in flesh as well?

Let us not start to compare Him with fallen human beings, but ever stand in awe when His blessed Person is mentioned. We need the unshod foot of reverence when we approach this ground, as did Moses and Joshua in His presence in another day.

Here is another statement which we deem derogatory: "Melchisedec was the High Priest of God during patriarchal times. And Christ occupies the same office now, holding the same rank"; 26 and in another place, "We know Melchisedec was High Priest-that He held the rank equal to that of Jesus Christ, actually one of the Godhead!" 27 To us this is nothing short of blasphemy. Who has the same rank as Jesus Christ? No one who is not God, and Scripture gives NO hint of Melchisedec's being anything but a man. He was purposely introduced without giving any genealogy, as a mysterious personage who could be a type of the Lord Jesus when He reigns as "priest upon His throne." Mr. Armstrong's denial of the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead opens the way for this strange doctrine.

And another erroneous statement is: "A greater man never lived-a man never lived who could exercise more gigantic, all-encompassing POWER than Christ! There never was a more dynamic, lively, energetic, personable, talented man!" 28 Do not these remarks lower Him to the level of man? To compare Him with mortal, sinful man, even favorably, is to degrade Him. Frankly, we are shocked at the language found here. Psalm 50:21 comes to mind: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee." We have been struck time and again with the evident lack of consciousness of who and what He is, and the very infrequent use of His title, "Lord."

Now we come to another piece of consummate error, which is the counterpart of what we have been considering: "We shall then be BORN of God [at the resurrection]-WE SHALL THEN BE GOD!... The PURPOSE of your being alive is that finally you be BORN into the kingdom of God, when you will actually BE GOD, even as Jesus was and is God, and His Father, a different Person, also is God!... You are setting out on a training to become CREATOR-to become GOD." 29 Can anything be ranker than this? Is not this lifted from Mormonism? Think of it--man to become God. This is a gigantic falsehood. That is what the devil suggested to Eve in the Garden-a way to become God. Here it is in our day. How can a true believer read such gross error and not burn the paper containing it forthwith? In our previous paragraph, this false doctrine put

Melchisedec in the Godhead; now it puts all who attain the resurrection (on the basis, as we have seen, of their law-keeping, with perfect characters obtained thus) into deity. Mr. Armstrong says that Jesus is no more God than we shall be! And this is palmed off as the last great message from God for this age! Is it not rather the doctrine of antichrists? (1 John 2:22).

Let us notice the facts according to the Word of God. We will never become God-never be deity-we shall always be creatures, and He the Creator. The Lord in His prayer in John 17 desired that He might have the truly saved ones with Him in the glory above, that they might behold His glory, a glory which He had before the world was-that is a glory we will never partake of, we will only behold it with awe and admiration of Him whose it is. He said further: "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." Here is a glory, a glory He gained as man, which we shall share with Him. May we ask you, reader, Can anything be right in a system so thoroughly permeated with destructive error-error to damn the souls of those who truly accept it? May God deliver any believers who may have become ensnared in it through ignorance.

We said before that Armstrongism denies the Trinity, although it is a cardinal truth of the Word of God. This truth was first clearly revealed at His baptism by John at Jordan, when the Father spoke from heaven to the Son on earth, and the Holy Spirit came visibly upon the Son, sealing Him as a man down here for His ministry. It is somewhat obscurely mentioned in Isa. 48:16, "The Lord GOD, and His Spirit, hath sent Me." But this is what the false teacher says: "One of the pagan concepts originating with Semiramis is the false idea of a 'Trinity.'... The Hebrew word for 'God' here [Gen. 1] is Elohiyrn, which is plural. The Father and He who was to become the Son [note here the denial of His eternal Sonship] are here referred to (John 1:1). The 'Spirit' means the Holy Spirit of God-that divine force by which so much good is accomplished and which resides in both Father and Son." 30 And in another place: "They

began teaching the pagan Trinity doctrine and the immortality of human souls." 31 Is not this wresting the Scripture to their own destruction? The Spirit of God is spoken of in Scripture as one of the Trinity, a Person in the Godhead. Notice these words: "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come." John 16:13. He is also spoken of as God in Acts 5: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost.... Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." vv. 3, 4. Beware lest you who dabble with this false cult bring on you the "sin against the Holy Ghost," for it is dangerous ground.

Perhaps another quotation or two should be added here so that anyone will see that we have quoted Mr. Armstrong correctly and fairly: "GOD IS A FAMILY, NOT A TRINITY OF PERSONS. GOD IS A FAMILY COMPOSED OF TWO BEINGS WITH A COMMON SPIRIT.... The pagans... made a Trinity. SATAN WAS CONFUSING MANKIND." 32 And: "The false doctrine of the 'Trinity,'... at present only two persons-Father and Son, comprise this Family. But we can become members of that Family!" 33 Are we not reading about those of whom Paul wrote by inspiration, "deceiving, and being deceived"? (2 Tim. 3:13).

And now with the vital parts of Christianity removed or damaged beyond recognition, is it any wonder that such an outward thing as water baptism is made an essential to salvation (this is also true of Mormonism)? Mr. Armstrong says, "Water baptism, then, is a required part of the way of salvation!... He commanded baptism as an obligatory ordinance for this Gospel dispensation." 34 What a strange Gospel! and one not found in Holy Scripture, surely. But after all their mumbo

jumbo of character development and law-keeping, it is not strange that when all this is set forth, the Christian's heavenly portion is emphatically denied and rejected-all this doctrine of Armstrongism is to fit a man for earth-are not these those who are spoken of in Revelation as "those that dwell on the earth," or rather, "earth dwellers"; those whose hopes are here? A strange concoction is produced in this baptism essential of Armstrongism; with them, "a new life, a life that is begotten AT BAPTISM [is] to grow for the remainder of our time of trial and testing-a life that will be born AT THE RESURRECTION." 35 Is there any wonder that the true gospel of God concerning His Son has been set aside?-room had to be made for all the frills conjured up by this new sect.

Another strange thing about their false doctrine on baptism is that it is not for young people, for it is said, "It is almost impossible to be ABSOLUTELY SURE about young people under 21 or 25-and especially under 18." 36 Poor young people who want to be saved! If baptism is essential and they cannot have it, they are shut out; but if they had this baptism it would not benefit them anyway. At this point Mr. Armstrong lets his readers and hearers know that being baptized in the accepted sense of orthodox Christianity will not do; it is all in vain, and only those ordained preachers that believe as he does should do the job; so he has baptizing teams roving the country to bring converts into his fold.

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Armstrong Heresy

This is the final part of our review of the false religion propagated widely today under such names as "The World Tomorrow," "The Plain Truth," "Ambassador College," and under the name of its promoter, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

Let us further note that the Christian's heavenly calling and hope are thrown into the rubbish by this false system. Here is the proof: "But did Jesus promise 'heaven' to the poor in spirit? NO! nowhere in all the Bible is HEAVEN promised as the reward of the saved. Here is another GREAT OPPOSITE that is the very BASIS of 'Christian' doctrine today-and did not come out of the Bible!"
37 Reader, are you willing to settle for earth, even the millennial earth? That is all Armstrongism offers, and those who come on its basis shall miss earth as well as heaven. In denying heaven to the saints of this period, Mr. Armstrong deviates in part from the Seventh-day Adventists, whose doctrine would take people to heaven for 1000 years while the earth remains the ruin of a great holocaust, and then bring them back to earth, so that in the end they all land back on earth. We remember having our attention called to a remark by one Adventist writer to the effect that it would be wonderful to have an eternity to develop a country estate. Both this and Armstrongism remind us of the elder brother of Luke 15 who claimed to have kept his father's law perfectly, and yet desired a kid to make merry with his friends-not with the father. But Scripture reveals to us our portion in heaven as being with Christ and enjoying Himself forever. An earthly country estate is a repugnant thought to one whose affections center on the One who will be all the glory of that heavenly scene, and the portion of our hearts for eternity.

When Mr. Armstrong comes to John 14:1-3, he boldly affirms that Jesus refers to the earth when He says, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." He says that the Lord will be on earth, so that will be where He will take us. This is nonsense. The Lord had said, "In My Father's house are many mansions [or, abodes]"; there are abodes for Seraphim and Cherubim, the Archangel, and we know not how many families in heaven (Eph. 3:15 should read, "Every family in heaven and earth"), but there was no place for men, not even redeemed men, until our blessed Redeemer went back to heaven as a man. Thus He has prepared a place for us in His Father's house above. How could His Father's house be on earth? And when Mr. Armstrong comes to the Lord's words, "Great is your reward in heaven," he dodges that by saying that the reward will come down to earth.

We are all more or less familiar with that precious portion in 1 Thess. 4, where we are told that the risen and changed saints are going to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so be forever with the Lord. Of this, this false teaching says: "Notice there is not one single word about Saints going to heaven!" 33 Well, so they read it, and evidently the wish for earth rather than for heaven is the father of the thought. This false doctrine teaches that the saints will rise to meet the Lord in the air and immediately descend with Him to the Mount of Olives. All those scenes of the

redeemed in heaven in Revelation are cast aside. In one article, G. T. Armstrong scoffs at our going to heaven by saying that, in a new jet liner, "We actually flew in a man-made airplane MUCH HIGHER than your Bible says the Saints will rise when Christ returns!" 39

Mr. Armstrong says that our blessed hope came "from Antichrist-that man of Sin who claims to be God!" 40 Then he adds: "It is time you opened your eyes to this HERESY that has stemmed from 'BABYLON THE GREAT, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.'... Unless you recognize this vile doctrine for what it is, YOU AND MILLIONS WITH YOU ARE PLUNGING STRAIGHT FOR THE MOST FIENDISH, DIABOLICAL TIME OF TORTURE EVER INSTITUTED BY MAN!" 41 There can be no mistake about what this cult teaches against our heavenly hope and the coming of the Lord for His saints, calling it a "vile doctrine." To send your money to help propagate this wicked doctrine is to have a part in undermining the truth of God. And even to listen to it, is

to have fellowship with the works of darkness. "Take heed what ye hear."

We have not even touched upon that egregious folly of British-Israelism, or, Anglo-Israelism. It all fits with an earthly scheme of things. In this Mr. Armstrong is in company with the "Destiny of America" group. By their speculations and foolish traditions they have assumed that the "ten lost tribes of Israel" are the British, Irish, Canadians, Americans of the U.S.A., and the Australians. It is neither scripturally nor historically sound; it is a most absurd teaching. Must we accept it just because someone says it is so? Cannot we ask questions? For instance, how the English were Ephraimites in England and, by crossing the ocean, they became Manassites.

British-Israelism is largely based on the silly assumption that wherever one finds a few letters of a name that resemble something else, then it must be that; for instance, din, den, dan, dun, dunn, are in any names evidence of its having been derived from the tribe of Dan, as with Lon-don, Danube, Dub-lin, etc. Then "British" is supposed to be derived from b'rith, meaning, "covenant" in Hebrew, and "ish" meaning "sons" in the same, so the British must be the sons of the covenant. And the name "Saxons" is supposed to have been "Isaac's sons." This will not hold water, and a little imagination could think up the most ridiculous connections. The Edomites, now mixed with the Arabs, would be Saxons too then, for they were sons of Isaac through Esau. One author suggested that because a fox and a hare each have bushy tails, they must be the same thing. But H. W. Armstrong says, "Yes, we are God's chosen ISRAEL!" 42 It is simply not true. He gives statistics to prove that the British and the Americans have the most of everything, supposedly proving that is a sign they are sons of Joseph; but his tables are out-of-date now that Russia has advanced.

The dispensational chapters of Romans-9 through 11- would upset all the schemes of Armstrong's Israelism if they were intelligently read. For all this, however, Armstrong's flights of fancy and vagaries of British-Israelism, while they are thoroughly unrealistic and untrue, are not such deadly poison as his blatant heresies which undermine every essential doctrine of vital Christianity. Our sober and considered judgment is that his whole scheme is corrupted Judaism rather than real Christianity. It is Galatianism in a deadly form, linked with other equally gross heterodox views. Flee from it!

In closing this review, we call attention to another violation of Scripture truth; for when Mr. Armstrong speaks of a murderer he says: "He has no hope unless and until in the general resurrection after the millennium he repents of his sin." 43 Here is the false doctrine of a second chance. In many of these doctrines, Mr. Armstrong is in the company of Jehovah's Witnesses-so-called.

We feel a great relief to have finished reviewing this false system of religion which now is being palmed off as "the last message" of Christianity. It has been an odious task, and a barren one. There was not one thing in all this review to satisfy "the longing soul." Israel did not trek through as barren a wilderness for the body as the doctrines of Armstrongism are for the soul and spirit. Israel had "that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ," from which the water flowed; but there is no refreshment in the burning sands of false doctrine. We would rather have spent our time on that which nourishes the soul, but we have need to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." There are those who would steal it from us. We trust that through our review we have brought into some relief the truth of God with which Armstrongism stands at variance. May God graciously use this review, not only to help saints withstand the onslaughts of error, but to more firmly establish them in "the truth."

We take this opportunity to suggest to the Lord's dear people -a people for heavenly glory-that they close their eyes and ears to anything that does not come from a sound source. Water cannot be pure if it comes from a polluted source. The Apostle Paul gave his credentials to Timothy-"Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life," etc. May we check the credentials of any who would attempt to teach us. "Take heed what ye hear," and "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." Pro. 19:27.

If one who does not possess "peace with God" through the finished work and the resurrection of Christ should read these lines, we beseech you to put your whole trust in Him. When

Paul went to Corinth, he preached the basic facts which underlie true Christianity, as he said: "I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." 1 Cor. 15:1-4. A mere mental assent is insufficient; what is needed is to acknowledge one's need and to lay hold of the blessed facts concerning Him for one's individual soul. You need to see Him taking your place, bearing your judgment, and then going down into death, and coming forth the mighty Victor. You probably are aware that Mr. Armstrong contradicts this and says that the common teaching of the day is to put before sinners the "mere belief in the FACTS of Christ's existence, His sacrifice, and His saving work. Just accept these FACTS, and accept HIM -without any obedience to God's Laws!" 44 He dares to condemn acceptance of Him and His saving death and resurrection, and to quote a verse out of its connection, and say, "If thou wilt enter into LIFE, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS! "M> THIS IS UTTERLY FALSE, and if you follow that way you will end in hell.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31. This is God's truth in simple and precise language.

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Twelve years have elapsed since Israel again became a nation; for the tiny nation, these have been dramatic and eventful years. Two wars were fought and won, and a firm polity established. Industry, commerce, finance, agriculture, education, and the revival of the Hebrew language have all been firmly founded. It is definitely the work of a dedicated people and, to a large extent, the Old Testament, the land, and the language have been the nuclei of their efforts.

Some people see in all this, which stands unprecedented in world history, a fulfillment of the prophetic scriptures; but we are persuaded that it is not so. This is not the national resuscitation of Israel as spoken of in Eze. 37 (the vision of the dry bones), nor is it that of which Daniel speaks in his last chapter as those that sleep in the dust of the earth, awakening. This is man's own effort, and it lacks the elements of repentance before God and the acknowledgment of their Messiah which will accompany God's work for their restoration.

While it does seem that there is a growing interest in their Old Testament Scriptures in Palestine, and a re-awakening as to their past glories, the New Testament and the Lord Jesus are summarily rejected. In many places, His name is not to be mentioned. A recent statement by a Jewish rabbi is indicative of the prevailing attitude. He first warns all missionary societies that "missions to the Jews are by and large doomed to failure." He then says: "The Jewish people have survived pleadings, the sword and the crematorium in their steadfast devotion to the faith of their fathers. The Jewish position has never been stated more beautifully than in Mic. 4:5: "For let all the people walk, each one in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever." Rabbi Aaron Pearl in Time magazine for April 18, 1960. This reminds us of the Apostle Paul's saying, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Acts 26:9. But Paul had his eyes opened not only to his error, but to the wonders and glories of the Person of Jesus. Henceforth He filled Paul's vision and heart, and then Paul speaks of the very condition that exists among his people at this day-"that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles he come in" (Rom. 11:25). Then they will return to Messiah their Prince. But the situation as it stands in 1960 is not their future restoration under God.

The present existence of Israel among the world powers has in it the elements that might be the means of her own destruction. She is like a tiny island, surrounded by a hostile ocean bent on the eventual dissolution of that island. The Arab world has not accepted her presence in the Middle

East, and the million or more displaced Arabs loitering on her periphery is a constant irritation and provocation to Arab aggression. President Nasser of the United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria) continues to make inflammatory speeches, and so do other Arabs. Nor is the situation what it was in 1956 when Israel pounded the Egyptian armies almost to pieces. Since then, Egypt has been rearmed with many of the latest Russian implements of war.

President Nasser continues to press that a state of war still exists between the U.A.R. and Israel. He continues to blockade the International Waterway-the Suez Canal-to all Israeli shipping, and has been confiscating any shipments found on any "neutral" ships passing through the canal. This is very embarrassing to the United Nations (whose secretary-general has sought by every means to stop the blockade, and at times thought he had assurances from President Nasser that it would be stopped), and to the United States (whose President Eisenhower made assurances to Mr. Ben Gurion of Israel that their rights would be protected if they withdrew from Egypt in 1956).

Perhaps all this is building up for an Arab war of extermination against Israel by the combined Arab forces, which may bring about the final coalition of the Western Powers-the revived Roman Empire-which will come to Israel's succor, defeat the Arabs, and place the Jews back in their land, under an alliance for seven years. This contract will provide for a new temple on the old temple site, but we know that it will be broken in the middle of those seven years, as far as allowing the Jews to continue their temple ritual is concerned. (See Dan. 9:27.)

Peace, settled world peace, is not on the horizon. Events are in the making that may easily lead up to the terrible day of the great tribulation. But, fellow-Christian, we look for the Lord Jesus to take us home before that dreadful time comes. The moment of our departure to be with Christ in the Father's house is at hand.

Catholicism - Ecumenicalism: the Editor's Column

The election on November 8 of Senator John Fitzgerald Kennedy as the next president of the United States, along with certain other recent developments, furnishes material for serious consideration in the light of the prophetic scriptures. As nearly everyone is aware, Mr. Kennedy is the first Roman Catholic ever to be elected to this high office. It had previously been thought that a Catholic could never be elected president; and the only other Catholic to ever run for the presidency, Mr. Alfred E. Smith, was overwhelmingly defeated in 1928. Certainly, some change has taken place during the last 32 years that made Mr. Kennedy's election possible. In fact, it is suggested by some competent analysts that Mr. Kennedy's Catholicism furnished him with the necessary margin for election; so, in this short span of time, Catholicism has become an asset, rather than a liability.

From a purely statistical standpoint, Catholicism played a very small part in the early history of the United States; but each year the Roman Church has increased its share of the constituency. In 1790 there were less than 40,000 Catholics in the United States, or only one per cent of the population; in 1928, when Alfred Smith ran for president, there were 19,000,000 Catholics, or 16 per cent; in 1960 there are more than 40,000,000 Catholics, or 24 per cent of the population. This is now approximately one Catholic in every four persons of the total population. In other words, the Roman Catholic Church is becoming an increasingly important influence on the political life of the nation. And as their numbers and activities increase, the percentage of Catholics to non-Catholics may be expected to increase.

Now there is one question that may arise in the minds of our readers: What accounts for the rate of growth of Catholicism? There may be many reasons and numerous explanations. One reason probably has been the increase in immigration from the nations of Southern and Eastern Europe, where Catholicism is dominant. Another reason probably is the missionary fervor with which the Roman Church has sought to gain converts; this is being done largely at the expense not of the atheists, or of the non-churched, but of the old Protestant denominations. This may seem unrealistic in the face of swelling church rolls of Protestant denominations, but many of these converts to Catholicism are without much doubt still carried on the rolls of the Protestants. That there is a drift toward Rome is surely evident. And this may be accounted for to a large degree by the apathy of much of Protestantism. It is being served an insipid, empty form, with little more than religious tranquilizers; while politics, race problems, and every other common topic is a subject for discourse, while "pure religion" is left out.

Now while all this has been going on, Rome has steadfastly maintained her boasted traditions, her elaborate and imposing ritualism, which does have an appeal to the natural man. Since it is almost devoid of that which the soul really needs, yet there is in it an appeal to those who have found that their contacts with Protestantism have left them empty and unsatisfied. From this standpoint we may expect an increase in the drift toward Rome. There has been a note among numerous Protestant leaders that they feel the public wants more ritualism, and this again increases the

trend.

Another change noted in recent years is the so-called broadmindedness of large segments of Protestantism. They have only shallow convictions, and in trying to shun everything that might seem to be what is called "bigotry," they are willing to go along with almost anything. In fact, the strong currents of ecumenicalism are sweeping much before them. Nearly every major denomination has strong ties with the National Council of Churches, which is the ecumenical body that is working day and night to promote what they call Christian unity. This aim for "one Christian church," which goes along with the "one world" movement in politics, can only be accomplished by uniting with Rome. This, be assured, is the coming thing. There is no doubt about it's coming, for the Word of God has foretold it. Any union with Rome will be accomplished on Rome's terms, and the city of Rome will be the world headquarters of this great world-church (Babylon the Great).

On the political scene, the world has been veering toward a union of Western nations. This could come about very quickly by an overt and provocative act by Russia and her satellites. The groundwork has been laid; the means have been explored, and this union of a Western confederacy could come very quickly. This, according to God's Word (see Dan. 2; 7, and 9; Rev. 13), will come about. It will be the revived Roman Empire, for it will rise up out of those countries and from those peoples formerly of the old Roman Empire. The new supra-government will astonish the world and will be the one great balance of power to offset Russia's great and growing might. Scripture speaks of the head of this confederacy as the "beast" in the first part of Rev. 13; the "prince that shall come" in Dan. 9; the "little horn" of Dan. 7 which will control the beast.

Before we go further, may we say, Christian be alert; the coming of the Lord for His own must precede these sure-to-come events, and if on the one hand everything is ready for this great political and military power to arise, and the great religious union on the other hand, then our home call may come at any moment. "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 4:8). Let us lift our eyes toward the dark sky and watch for the appearing of the bright Morning Star. He will come while the dark, moral night still envelopes this world.

One thing that the prophetic scriptures make quite clear is that there is to be a woman, clothed in gaudy attire, which will at first ride this beast. She will be the false church-Babylon the Great. It will be what is left of empty Christendom after the Lord takes all the true believers out of every segment of it, the Roman Church included. Then when all the Christians are gone, ritualism and traditions will have their day to the full. It will be the most imposing sight the world has ever seen in a religious way. The Roman Church and the confederated Western world will have a wedding of convenience, and it will dazzle the world. The ecumenical movements are the advance guards of this great development. Rev. 17 gives the details of the system as a corrupt woman in contrast to the true Church. (Compare the introduction to this corrupt woman of the 17th chapter to the introduction to the heavenly Church in Rev. 21:9, 10.) Rev. 18 describes the same false church in its world-wide organization as a city.

Now while we consider the trend in the United States, both toward Rome ecclesiastically, and to the Roman power to arise and dominate the world politically and militarily, let us not be unmindful of the trends among the European nations which will help to compose this great politico-religious combination. Consider that Italy, Spain, France, Western Germany, Belgium, and others are at present ruled by Catholics, and are all interested in the military consolidations. Is not the world

being readied for the events which will take place after we are gone from the scene? And when true Christians are all gone, the Western world will have no obstacle to agreement on any sort of compromise to form the religious mammoth.

Nor will we stop here. One may wonder where England will be in all this. Is she not to be a part of the revived Roman Empire? Yes, undoubtedly, for she was a part of the Roman Empire in days gone by. Well, then, how about England's part religiously in the great ecumenical church? Are we left without any clues as to this? No, indeed! The Archbishop of Canterbury, the primate of the Church of England, has announced that he will visit the Pope at Rome on December 1. This is a startling development. Not since the 14th century has a leader of the Church in England been to visit the Pope. The Church of England has been a militant foe of Rome through centuries, and England has been the greenhouse of Protestant growth. There a selubrious climate aided the Christians of England to export Christianity throughout the world. Their Bible societies have circulated the Word of God in many languages and countries of the world, and God has blessed Protestant England. But, sad to say, the English populace have been drifting away from God and His Word for years. The decline has been great. The Church of England with its cold formalism has drifted toward Rome by degrees; and, now at length, it is deemed propitious for the great Archbishop of Canterbury to go to Rome to visit a man who would have been considered their foe only a few years ago.

And what will these two great religious leaders talk about? Dr. Fisher said they may talk about trivialities; but he added: "Talking trivialities is in itself a portent of great significance.

The pleasantries may be pleasantries about profundities."

Here is what one of the news media had to say about it:

"Actually, the proposed visit is more than a mere courtesy call and less than a first step in rapprochement. Last August, the ecumenical-minded Pope permitted a Catholic observer to attend the meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council [of which the National Council is the United States part] of Churches in St. Andrews, Scotland, and it is said to have been through him, Dutch, round-faced Msgr. J. G. M. Willebrands, that the meeting between the Pope and the Archbishop was arranged. Last month Roman Catholic Archbishop John C. Heenan of Liverpool, a member of the forthcoming Ecumenical Council's Secretariat for Christian Unity, reported that Pope John had recently expressed 'great affection for the Anglicans.' And Dr. Fisher, in the Canterbury diocesan leaflet, praised the new secretariat as 'full of godly promise.' "

-Time, Nov. 14, 1960.

Pope John has called for his own ecumenical council, and intermediaries are evidently at work paving the way for rapprochement between a leading Protestant group and Roman Catholicism. If anyone cannot see how the wind is blowing, he must ignore all the straws and chaff that are being carried in its wake.

We have just received some pages from "America" - a Roman Catholic weekly of September 24th, 1960. In this we get the Protestant ecumenical movement looked at from the other side of the religious fence. Bernard Leeming, S.J., gives a firsthand report of the World Council of Churches meeting in St. Andrews, Scotland. This meeting was held from August 3 to August 25.

He first gives his Catholic readers a little information about the World Council of Churches. He says: It "is a large and complex organization. Its aim is to overcome the divisions among Christians and unite all into one Church of Christ. The members are 173 'churches,' that is, autonomous ecclesiastical bodies, from all parts of the world, representing the main denominations of Protestantism, and a number of Eastern Orthodox churches. All told, perhaps, it represents about one-third of the Christians in the world, the main bodies outside it being the Catholic Church and a variety of churches of Evangelistic and fundamentalist character."

The noted Catholic observer at the conference remarked that "The first impression one got was a sense of urgency. References to rapid social change were frequent and manifested the feeling that the work of uniting Christians is a present necessity, that the swift march of events in the world makes delay disastrous, since events are forcing decisions, and even to make no decision means to be left hopelessly behind."

Reader, is it not apparent that some greater Hand is directing and providentially ordering the current world events in all categories to the ultimate fulfillment of the prophetic scriptures? Surely the end of this period is at hand, and man is powerless to stay the onward march. Man, in either the political, social, or religious field is being pushed along by circumstances which are beyond his control. But the Christian understanding God's dealings and end (dispensational truth) remains calm and undisturbed, for he knows Him who is directing all things according to His own will and purposes.

Other remarks by this Jesuit priest observer should perhaps be noted in brief: "What was not said was perhaps as impressive as what was said... Denominational points of view or convictions were never advanced, save only on two occasions [which he explains]... Nothing was said, far less proposed, which could be offensive to any communion of Christians. Indeed, one speaker, a Presbyterian, in discussing the place of the formula 'according to the Scriptures,' urged that it ought not even appear to reflect upon our Roman Catholic friends.' " It must be evident from these statements that the eventual aim of the W.C.C. ecumenicalism is union with the Roman Church.

The Catholic observer's opinion of the ecumenical leaders who were in conference in St. Andrews is: "The leaders appear to me to be men of shining integrity; they are wholeheartedly devoted to the cause of unity, and they are men of considerable wisdom and foresight." This is no doubt true on the basis of worldly wisdom, but is it "the wisdom that is from above"? Is it not rather; the wisdom of this world that comes to naught?

Another enlightening statement is, "The effort is to find from Scripture and the early Church unassailable principles by which present divisions may be resolved. Above all, the conviction has grown even stronger, in spite of increased recognition of the difficulties, that division is wrong, and that unity in one sole Church is the will of God and an essential-if not the exclusive-ecumenical aim." Of course, this can only come about by a return to Rome, although Rome may offer a few concessions to that end.

The Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the W.C.C. gave out this statement: "The Ecumenical Council called by Pope John XXIII is meant to have considerable indirect influence on the ecumenical situation. Thus, the Pope announced a new secretariat for the unity of Christians, under the presidency of Augustin Cardinal Bea and Monsignor Willebrands as its secretary.

Cardinal Bea has announced that the secretariat will have a double function: a) to enable non-Roman Catholics to follow the work of the Second Vatican Council; and b) to help the churches not in communion with Rome to arrive at unity within the Roman Catholic Church." This is the considered judgment of the top leaders of the Protestant ecumenical organization. They further said that "The fact that dialog with the Roman Catholic Church becomes possible is to be welcomed." And, "The opportunity for dialog is to be grasped." The men chosen by Pope John XXIII are doubtless well chosen. "Cardinal Bea has had long and varied experience in international contacts," and an acquaintance with non-Catholic scholars "verging toward personal friendship." And Monsignor Willebrands has been "secretary of a group of Catholic scholars interested in ecumenism, and he has won wide esteem and trust because of his knowledge, discretion and tact."

Another effort to force ecumenism is coming from the "newly independent churches in Asia and Africa" which are impatient with denominationalism. "They can scarcely control their indignation when condemning it."

The whole world is marching on to the end of this age. We have no part to take in the dispute over the ecumenical drive. We are neither proposing nor opposing the movements, but we are interested spectators of the march of events that signal the imminence of our Lord's return. Nothing of the strife of words about the religious or the political world course affects us, except to encourage us to look up and watch for our Lord from heaven.

The trends herein stated, together with the atheistic advances as shown in last month's editorial comments (which we interrupted to bring this report, but expect, D.V., to continue next month) are opposing forces which are marshaling their resources-Godless atheism and ecumenicalism-for the final struggle when a godless society will overthrow Babylon the Great, and then itself go down swiftly to the judgment of "the great and dreadful day of the LORD." We recommend a pamphlet entitled, "Toward the Man and Toward the Woman," written by C. H. Brown, and obtainable from our publishers, as enlightening on this subject.

The Church in Pergamos

In the message to "the church in Pergamos," the Lord is seen exercising a special form of judicial power, as "He which hath the sharp sword with two edges" (v. 12). We read (Heb. 4): "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged 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." The Lord is here presented as having this thoroughly piercing power, which judges and discerns the secret workings of the heart and conscience.

"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." v. 13. That is where the Church now found itself, where Satan's throne is - for he is the prince of it - in the world. And the faithful may find themselves there too, if the Church be there (Caleb and Joshua had to go the whole round of the wilderness with the rest, though not sharers in their unbelief); we have to separate ourselves from the evil around, though we may not be separate from its results. We may find ourselves to be in feebleness and weakness, as the faithful in this church did; but our comfort like theirs is that the Lord says, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest."

God in His grace takes full knowledge of all that concerns us, not only of our conduct, our ways, and condition, but also of the circumstances in which we are, saying, as it were, I know that you are where Satan's seat is, and this, even when He may still have "somewhat" against us. There is great comfort in knowing this. We may be placed, by means over which we had no control, in a very trying position, but in one which it might not be at all the mind of the Lord that we should quit, where Christian conduct would be very difficult; as, for instance, a converted child in an ungodly, worldly family, where there is nothing of the Spirit of Christ. The Lord would not merely in such a case judge His child's conduct, as to those things in which she might have failed. He would do that indeed, but He would also take the most thorough knowledge and notice of the circumstances in which she was; yes, of every little circumstance that rendered it trying. He just as well knew the power of Pharaoh and the detail of his tyranny as He did the crying and groans of the Israelites. "I know," He says, "that he will not let you go." There is indeed great comfort in thus seeing the Lord's perfect knowledge as to where we dwell, because it may not be always His will to take us out of the place, nor yet to change the circumstances in which we are. He may choose to have us glorify Him there, and learn through them what, perhaps, we could not learn elsewhere.

We are too apt to think that we must do great works in the Lord's name, in order to glorify Him; there may not always be opportunity for this (there does not appear to have been opportunity for great works in service without to this church). He takes notice if we do but hold fast His name amid circumstances which make even that measure of faithfulness difficult - "Thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith," etc. v. 13.

The Lord gives His people all this encouragement, and yet says, "I have a few things against thee." (vv. 14, 15.) In the first place, they were slipping back into the world, some of them having already fallen into the habits of it, eating and drinking with the drunken (Matt. 24:49). And second, they were beginning to allow of evil in the church, through pretense of liberty. He therefore warns,

"Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth." v. 16. Worldliness characterized the danger of this church, and it required the sword with two edges to cut between their evil and the circumstances in which they were; if this were not effected, it is "I... will fight against them with the sword of My mouth."

But at the same time that He thus warns, there is plenty of encouragement given - promises suited to counteract their temptations (v. 17). Were they tempted "to eat things sacrificed unto idols" with the world? the promise to "him that overcometh" is, I will give him "to eat of the hidden manna." If they had grace to separate themselves from the open evil, He would reward them with the unseen blessing of the heavenly places; there should be this feeding on "the hidden manna." Again; were they tempted to deny the name and faith of Christ? the promise given is "a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." To keep them from slipping back into the world, to strengthen them in incurring, as must needs be, in separation, the disapprobation of so many, He promises them inward blessings to cheer their hearts.

The "white stone" seems to mark the individual approbation of Christ; the "new name," peculiar intercourse between Christ and the individual, different from that which all shall share alike, different from the public joy. There is a public joy. All saints will together enjoy the comforts of Christ's love, will enter into the "joy of their Lord," and with one heart and one voice will sound His praise. There will also be joy in seeing the fruit of our labors, as it is said, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" 1 Thess. 2:19. And again there will be another joy in seeing the company of the redeemed, all according to Christ's heart in holiness and glory. But besides this public joy, there will be Christ's peculiar private individual recognition and approval - the "white stone" and the "new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

Christ speaks elsewhere of His own new name as Head of the new creation. There are old names belonging to the Lord Jesus, but His new name is connected with that into which His Father brings Him, when all things which have failed in the hands of man will be established and developed in Him; and having thus Himself a new name, He gives us also a promise of a new name. We are not only to know Jesus and be known of Him according to present circumstances, but to have a special knowledge of Him in glory according to the glory.

Our souls must value this personal approval of Christ, as well as think of the public approval. The latter will be great blessedness, but there is no peculiar affection in it, nothing that stamps peculiar love on the individual. Glory will be common to all, but glory is not affection. This "new name" is a different thing; it is the proof of Christ's value for a person who has been faithful in difficult and trying circumstances, for one who has acted on the knowledge of His mind, and overcome through communion with Him. This will be met by special individual approbation. There is the public joy and approval in various ways, and the manifestation of our being loved by the Father as Jesus is loved. But this is not all that is given for our encouragement in individual conduct through trial, failure, and difficulty; there is also this special private joy of love.

When the common course of the Church is not straight, not in the full energy of the Holy Ghost, though there may be a great deal of faithfulness, yet there is danger of disorder. We find that the Lord then applies Himself more to the walk of individual saints, and suits His promises to the peculiar state in which they are. There is a peculiar value in this. It takes one out of all fancied

walking (the especial danger which belongs to such a state of things), each according to his own will, chalking out a path for himself because of the unfaithfulness and disobedient walk of the professing body. What faith has to do in such circumstances is to lay hold intelligently, soberly, and solemnly on the Lord's mind, and to walk according to it, strengthened by the promises which He has attached to such a path as He can own.

But, beloved, are we really content to have an approval which Christ only knows? Let us try ourselves a little. Are we not too desirous of man's commendation of our conduct? or, at least, that he should know and give us credit for the motives which actuate it? Are we content, so long as good is done, that nobody should know anything about us? - even in the Church to be thought nothing of? - that Christ alone should give us the "white stone" of His approval, and the "new name... which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it"? Are we content, I say, to seek nothing else? Oh, think what the terrible evil and treachery of that heart must be that is not satisfied with Christ's special favor, but seeks honor (as we do) one of another instead! I ask you, beloved, which would be most precious to you, which would you prefer? - the Lord's public owning of you as a good and faithful servant, or the private individual love of Christ resting upon you, the secret knowledge of His love and approval. He whose heart is specially attached to Christ will respond, The latter. Both will be ours, if faithful, but we shall value this most, and there is nothing that will carry us so straight on our course as the anticipation of it.

The Circle of the Church's Affections

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come." Rev. 22:17. We get the whole circle of the Church's affections. When the Spirit of God is working in the saints, what will be the first affection? Christ. The Spirit and the bride turn to Him and say, "Come." What is the next affection? It is the saints; therefore it turns and bids him that heareth say, "Come." If you have heard Christ, you come and join the cry. Even if you have not the consciousness of relationship, would you not be happier if you saw Him as He is? Therefore say, "Come." The first affection is toward Christ Himself; but the bride would have every saint to join in these affections and in the desire to have the Bridegroom. But does it stop with those who have heard the voice of the Lord Jesus? No; the first effect of the Spirit's turning our eyes to Christ is the desire that Christ should come; and next, that the saint who hears His voice should have the same affection. And what next? We turn around to those who may be athirst, bidding them come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. The saint who has the sense of the blessedness of having drunk of the living water which Christ gives, wants others to have it also.

Clarification of Previous Statement on Hell: a Reader Inquires

Question: What is meant by your statement in, the last November issue of Christian Truth which says, "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" (p. 305)? Did not the rich man in Luke 16 go to hell? This is the substance of several inquiries.

Answer: In order to answer the above questions, it will be necessary to look at what is meant by the word "hell" in various places in the Word of God. There are four different words in the original Hebrew and Greek texts that are translated "hell" in our regular King James Version in English. Let us look at them one at a time:

The Hebrew word sheol is frequently translated "hell" in the Old Testament, but sometimes it is translated "grave," and three times it is given as "pit." See Numb. 16:33, where Korah and his company "went down alive into the pit"; and Jacob said, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning" (Gen. 37:35); and Jonah said, "Out of the belly of hell cried I" (Jonah 2:2). These are samples of the word sheol's being translated into three different English words.

Another instance of the use of the word sheol is found in Psalm 16:10 where the Lord Jesus prophetically says, "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell" sheol. Here it seems to refer to the soul's being apart from the body, for next the Lord says, "Neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption," which refers to the body. When we come to the New Testament, this same verse is quoted thus: "Because Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption," and "He, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption." Acts 2:27, 31. In both instances in Acts 2, the Greek word here translated "hell" is hades. Thus we see that in the sense of the soul's being separated from the body, sheol and hades mean the same thing—the one being Hebrew and the other Greek.

To answer our reader's second question first, we would call attention to the fact that in Luke 16 the Greek word is hades for the place where the rich man went after his death. His body was buried, but his soul went to a place of departed spirits. We also learn from Luke 16 that in the unseen world of souls separated from their bodies there is a great gulf fixed between the saved and the lost, and that there is conscious bliss for the one, and conscious woe for the other. For the believer today, when his body dies his soul and spirit are spoken of as departing from this life and being present with Christ (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8). This then is the portion of the believer, while the rich man's case shows the present condition of the soul and spirit apart from the body for all who die in their sins. It is not a sleep of the soul, but the believer's soul and spirit are in paradise with Christ (Luke 23:43), while the unbeliever is in conscious torment, with his memory still active in remorse.

Another word in the Greek which is translated "hell" is Gehenna, which is the Greek equivalent for two Hebrew words signifying "valley of Hinnom." It was a place near Jerusalem where the Israelites in their pagan rites made their children pass through the fire to heathen gods. Refuse

was deposited there, and there was a continual fire burning which the Spirit of God has used as a symbol of eternal punishment. The word "Tophet" in the Old Testament has reference also to this place and its emblematic use for the lake of fire.

The Lord Jesus, in Rev. 1:18, speaks as the mighty victor over death, who now possesses the keys of hades and of death-the former referring to the confines of the soul, and the latter to the dissolution of the body. At the Lord's coming for His saints, their bodies will be raised in glory, in incorruptibility, and their souls and spirits will be united in these spiritual bodies, entirely fitted for the coming scene of glory. At the resurrection of the wicked dead, the confines of both hades and the grave will be emptied out into the "lake of fire" (Rev. 20:13). Then the wicked-body, soul, and spirit- will be banished from God for all eternity. This is variously spoken of as "the lake of fire," "the second death," "outer darkness," "the blackness of darkness forever," "everlasting fire" (Rev. 20:15; 21:8; Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30, 41; Jude 13).

This place of eternal punishment was "prepared for the devil and his angels," but, sad to say, unrepentant man will share it with them. But no man is in that place yet. The first ones who will go there are found in Rev. 19:20: "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." They will be taken in open-handed rebellion against Christ when He comes in judgment, and they will be summarily cast into that place of eternal torment without a trial. We read of them 1000 years later as still being there. See Rev. 20:10 which tells of the devil's being cast into it at least 1000 years after those two wicked men were, and they are spoken of as being there then. No, there is no such thing as annihilation.

We take it that others will be sent into the lake of fire from Christ's throne of glory on earth, according to Matt. 25:41, 46, while the wicked dead will be raised at the end to stand before the Great White Throne and be sent from there into eternal punishment. It is called the "second death" because it will be the whole man separated from God for all eternity.

There is one more word in the Greek text of the New Testament which is translated "hell" in English; that is, Tartarus, but it is only found in 2 Pet. 2:4. It is a word that was used by heathen writers to designate the "deepest Abyss of the infernal regions," a place of extreme darkness. The Spirit of God has chosen to employ it as descriptive of the present place of confinement of certain angels that sinned. We cannot say more about it.

Cleaving to the Lord: Acts 11

It is worthy of remark that in this chapter we have the first account of Gentile converts, of God's receiving in sovereign goodness and grace poor sinners who had not even the promises to boast of which He had given to the Jews. To such it was that Barnabas came with the earnest exhortation contained in verse 23: "that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."

What Peter was taught here as to the Gentiles we all have to learn as to ourselves. When the blessed news of grace and pardon first reaches a sinner's ears and heart, he rejoices in the thought of pardon and forgiveness. He does right. Jesus, the blessed Son of God, has met him in mercy with His precious blood. And with this the light enters into his soul. When there have been deep discoveries of sin before the soul has become happy, the peace of the soul is more settled. The sin to which grace is applied is in a measure already known. But when, through the proclamation of divine pardon, without previous convictions, the soul has suddenly received joy (though there is always the discovery that we are sinners), the knowledge of the depth of sin in the heart, and what has to be forgiven and cleansed, is very small.

The consequence is that, after God has called us and the divine light has broken into our souls, we feel disturbed and uncertain, and even begin sometimes to doubt the fact of our being cleansed. This is wrong. The deeper discovery of sin and the knowledge of our own heart are useful. If we walk humbly and near to God, this knowledge will be made, comparatively speaking, peacefully; but if not, then it will be learned in humiliation and failure. But you may not call unclean what God has cleansed. God has brought cleansing and pardon to us down here. We have not to wait for it until we go up there. God has cleansed you. You are clean now. But I desire to lead you to some further exercise of heart upon it, and clearer apprehension of God's ways-to a fuller exercise of conscience, that your peace may be as solid as your joy was genuine when you first heard of grace and forgiveness.

In Luke 15, the great principle set forth is, that it is God's happiness when we are brought back to Him. Of course, the joy of the restored one comes in; but it is not the primary thing. The object of all three parts of the chapter is not to show our joy, but the joy of God in our restoration. The three parts all teach the same grace; but we get, I believe, the joy of the Son, of the Spirit, and of the Father. But remark, that in the first two we find a grace which finds and brings back what was lost, without any further question of the state of the soul. In the third, we have man's departure even into the lowest degradation of sin, and what passes in his soul on his return, till he is clothed in divine righteousness, with Christ, in his Father's house.

God has foreseen and provided for the whole case of the sinner. The younger son was as really a sinner when he left his father's house as when he was eating husks with the swine. He had abandoned God to do his own will. But the Lord pursues the case to the full degradation of sin-for sin degrades man. The young man comes to himself, turns back toward God, is converted; but he has not yet met God, nor has he the best robe on him. He did not know, in his conscience, divine righteousness. When he really meets his father, not only is he in tender love-only the more shown

because he has been lost-received when in his rags into his father's arms, but he is made righteously fit for the house, clothed with Christ. His father was on his neck when he was in his rags, but he was not received into the house in that state; he could not have been.

But God has provided for the sinner what Adam in his innocence had not. He has provided Christ. Grace reigns through righteousness. The best robe, no part of the son's portion before he left, is now put on him; and he is fit for the house to which that robe belonged. All the extent of the soul's departure from God has been weighed. The soul may be exercised about it, and will be, till self is wholly given up as a ground on which it can stand before God-no going in legally, as a hired servant. Before God, it is either rags and exclusion, or the best robe and joyful admission. All true experiences lead to that emptying of self, and Christ's being all, and we in Him before God. Then, as I have said, our peace is as solid as the joy of the thought of forgiveness was blessed, and the joy itself deeper, if not more genuine.

Another truth is connected with this. God having perfectly cleansed us by the blood of Christ, the Spirit dwells in the cleansed heart. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. 8:14. The Spirit gives us the consciousness of our relationship as dear children. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal. 4:6. What manner of persons ought we to be, who are the temples of the Holy Ghost, we may well continually ask ourselves. But do not let failures make us doubt that we have it. Low and wretched as was the state the Galatians had fallen into, they never doubted they had the Spirit of God; but they were getting wrong as to the ground of their standing, as to how they received it; so that the Apostle had to ask them, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Gal. 3:2.

We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance. We have life as truly as Christ is alive, but we are not yet in heaven. The thief, indeed, was privileged to be taken directly home, believing only "to-day," but "to-day" the first companion Christ had in paradise! We do not look for such immediate departure, but our ground is the same; we are as truly saved, but not so soon to be in heaven. Rather have we to go through this evil world-to go through it as crucified with Christ, dead indeed, but risen - to go through it with His Spirit dwelling in us. Be careful lest you grieve that Spirit. You have to go through the world bearing the name of Christ upon you. See that you bring no reproach upon that blessed name by being inconsistent. The world will be quick to exclaim, There are your Christians! You will have to go through the world, but with God dwelling in you; to carry this treasure in an earthen vessel; entrusted with this treasure, an habitation of God through the Spirit. Of course, it is only through His grace that you can carry such a treasure through an evil world; but there is power in Christ; there (is sufficiency in Christ for all He would have you do or be.

Barnabas exhorted them that they should cleave to the Lord. Depend on Him. Some are allowed to have a long season of joy on first believing; but God knows our hearts, and how soon we should be depending on our joy, and not on Christ. He is our object; joy is not our object. Do not let your joy lead you to forget the source of it, and then it need never wane. This joy is right and beautiful in its place; I am not saying a word against it-God forbid. But I warn you against resting in it. Do not lean on it for strength. There is danger of joy, however genuine, making you forget how dependent you are every moment. Depend upon Him; cleave to Him with purpose of heart. Do not be content

with being happy (may you continue so), but, with Paul, forgetting the things that are behind, press on, etc. (Phil. 3).

I have seen many Christians so full of joy that they thought there was no such thing as sin left. It is true that sin no longer remains on you, but the flesh is in you to the end. The old stock is there, and you will find that if you are not watchful, if divine life is not cherished and cultivated in your hearts by looking at Christ and feeding on Him, it will be sprouting forth into buds; if it does, they must be nipped off as they appear. No good fruit comes off the old stock. It is the new that bears fruit unto God. But though the flesh is in you, do not be thinking of this, but think of Christ- cleave to Him. And may your soul be maintained in this truth, that Christ is your life; aye, that Christ is so your life that Christ must die (the thought of which is blasphemy) before you can perish! And as He is your life, so is He the object of that life. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal. 2:20.

As you grow in the knowledge of Him, a joy grows, deeper than that of first conversion. I have known Christ, more or less, between thirty and forty years; and I can say that I have ten thousand times more joy now than I had at first. It is a deeper, calmer joy. The water rushing down from a hill is beautiful to look at, and makes most noise; but you will find the water that runs in the plain is deeper, calmer, more fructifying.

Observe, they are exhorted with purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord. A distracted heart is the bane of a Christian! When my heart is filled with Christ, I have no heart or eye for the trash of the world. If Christ is dwelling in your heart by faith, it will not be the question, What harm is there in this or that? Rather, Am I doing this for Christ? Can Christ go along with me in this? If you are in communion with Him, you will readily detect what is not of Him. Do not let the world come in and distract your thoughts. I speak especially to you young ones; we who are older have had more experience of what the world is; we know more what it is worth. But it all lies shining before you, endeavoring to attract you. What else does it fill its shop windows for? Its smiles are all deceitful; still it is smiling upon you. It makes many promises it cannot fulfill; still it promises. The fact is, your hearts are too big for the world; it cannot fill them. They are too little for Christ, for He fills heaven; yet He will fill you to overflowing.

Observe again, it is to the Lord they were to cleave-not to duty, or law, or ordinances, but to the Lord. He knew how treacherous the heart was, and how soon it would put anything in His place. You will have to learn what is in your heart. Abide with God, and you will learn your heart with Him and under His grace, else you will have to learn it with the devil, through his successful temptations. But God is faithful, and if you have been getting away from Him, and other things have been coming in and forming a crust round your heart, and you want to get back again, God says, What is this crust? I must have you deal with it and get rid of it. Remember, Christ bought you with His own blood, that you should be His, and not the world's. The denial of this fact is an artifice of the devil. Do not let the devil come in between you and God's grace. However careless you may have been, however far you may have got away from Him, return to Him; doubt not His joy in having you back; count upon His love; look at the sin which led you away with horror, but do not wrong Him by distrusting His love, any more than you would an affectionate husband or wife, by throwing a doubt on their love if you had been for a moment ungracious. Hate yourself, but remember how He has loved you and will love you to the end. Mistrust not His work; mistrust not

His love. "God [hath] also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (v. 18). All is of God.

I would have you carry away in your minds three things which by grace are given you. First, cleaving to the Lord; second, perfect forgiveness; third, a purged conscience. To illustrate this last, take the case of Peter. He denied his Lord-denied Him to a maid servant. But the Lord had turned and looked on him, and he had gone out and wept bitterly. A few weeks after this (Acts 3), he could say that Israel was a lost and ruined people because "ye denied the Holy One and the Just"; the very thing he had done himself, in a worse way, too, for he had been with Him as His friend for three years. But his conscience was purged; he knew he was forgiven; and now he could turn around and fearlessly charge others with the very thing he had done himself.

One word more. Talk with Him. Never be content without being able to walk and talk with Christ as with a dear friend. Be not satisfied with anything short of near intercourse with Him who has loved you with such manner of love!

A Cloud of Witnesses

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which Both so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12:1, 2.

We are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, not spectators of us, but giving testimony to faith; but the call is to look away from all else to Jesus, the leader and completer of faith. Neither sentiment nor superstition can do anything here but hinder our running the race well; and this can only be with endurance rather than energy.

Collected Thoughts From Letters

The Church is the temple of God. Among its services it has to teach angels, to edify itself through joints and bands in the Holy Ghost, to lead those outside to own God in the midst of His saints, to exercise discipline, to worship as a holy priesthood, and to show forth the Lord's death. It is, moreover, "the pillar... of the truth," and as such must keep itself erect and firm. The writing on it is to be large and legible. Nothing is to be allowed to shake or blot it. Some may claim a right to try their hand with it, and plead many pretenses. They may talk of brotherly forbearance, the gentleness of Christ, and the duty of not judging another man's servant. But the pillar must still hold itself firm and inviolate. No such pretensions or pretenses, nor any other, can be listened to. And occasions will arise when the integrity of the pillar is to be guarded with increased vigilance because of the enemy.

And let me say, I honor the service of those who keep watch in the camp. The trumpet is made, among other purposes, for sounding an alarm on the approach of an enemy. All we can desire is that it may be used with priestly skill, and, when it has called the camp into action, that the action itself be conducted according to the mind or word of God; for the battle is to be in His name, and for His kingdom. I hold, at the beginning, the broken, ruined condition of the Church. I know, and still would testify as ever, that "the great house," with its different vessels, is around us. I will say, as before, that no gathering of the saints can assume to be the candlestick in that place, and treat as darkness all that is not of itself; such order and such authority are gone. This we have ever said and still say. But with all this, we avow it, that we are not together as a convention- a voluntary convention of believers-but as part and parcel of the Church. And we have to take heed that the principles and testimony of the house of God be preserved among us, according to our measure and in the Spirit.

We have to take heed that the order and testimony of the house of God pass through our hands without contracting defilement. And indeed I would add, for my own admonition especially, dear brother, that we also have to take heed of heartless exercise of the mind over principles or doctrines. God is not to be so served. "My son, give me thine heart." Pro. 23:26.

The Conflict

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12) - not your own forgiveness, but your own salvation. It is said to those who were already forgiven. Salvation, in the sense spoken of there, implies the whole conflict with the power of evil we are passing through. We know that we have to do with the common enemy, but God is at work in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). We know the deep concern and regard which God feels for us, as committed to this conflict. We are fighting under His orders - doing His will in that thing as well as in others. So far is God from leaving us in any way, that He assures our soul He is pledged to see us through to the end, but He will have us have a solemn sense of the war with Satan in which we are engaged.

Congo - Witchcraft - Catholic President: the Editor's Column

In our last issue we commented on the conditions existing in the former Belgian colony of the Congo in Africa as the aftermath of its being granted independence. When restraints are removed, man shows what is in his own heart; and often, as in this case, it soon becomes apparent that he is but the willing (but frequently unwitting) tool of Satan. In this present situation, excuses are made on the basis of what some call a lack of education of the Congolese, or even refer to their not being far enough removed from savagery. But it was a so-called civilized world that cast the Son of God out of it. There Satan became "the prince of this world," for he moved all classes against "the Lord of glory."

History abounds with records of the most cruel and wholesale slaughter of human beings, coupled with acts of wanton plunder and pillage, while the basest lusts of supposedly civilized people were turned loose. Just one example of such excesses is the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror at the close of the eighteenth century. But back of the French Revolution was the giving up of even the nominal recognition of God. As bad and corrupt as the church in France was in the eighteenth century, it was Voltaire (1694-1778) and Rosseau (1712-1778) who brought forward the philosophies which in turn gave birth to the revolution. The former attacked the church as an evil to be uprooted and destroyed, asserting that man was fundamentally good by nature, and was corrupted by religious institutions. The latter claimed that mankind was enchained by the past, and should be freed. So, when the atheist Voltaire and his contemporary "thinkers" overthrew all sense of responsibility to God on the one hand, and set man free from all restraint and convention on the other, he became the slave of his vile lusts and evil passions; chaos ensued.

The first chapter of Romans gives us a brief but comprehensive view of the depravity of the pagan world. When they gave up such knowledge of God as they had and rejected even the semblance of submission to Him, He also gave them up to vileness. The Congo but bears witness to the same things. Many Christian men and women have gone into the Congo and have been there for years to bear the glad tidings of the grace of God to a people who had been held in bondage by superstition and demon activity. These courageous workers for the kingdom of God found many open hearts, but on the whole the masses have remained without God and without Christ. The often-seen picture of myriads of heathen with uplifted hands pleading for the gospel is not true in fact. Man is estranged from God, and he needs to be reconciled. And where the gospel is preached in truth, whether in America or Africa, or elsewhere, much of the same opposition is encountered; and the devil is at work to snatch away the seed that is sown.

Soon all Christendom is to turn away from God and readily accept the devil's lie (2 Thess. 2:11). When the Lord has called His Church home to Himself, what is left of lifeless profession will be the plaything of the devil. Soon thereafter, peace will be taken from the earth (Rev. 6:4); and the false, empty church on earth will be overthrown (see Rev. 17 and 18) on a mammoth scale, compared to what was done in the French Revolution. Then men will worship a man (Rev. 13; Dan. 6), and Satan himself. The recent strife, plunder, and blood-shedding in the Congo is but an infinitesimal

sample of what is coming on the earth; only, that which is coming will be followed by the awful judgments of God. He will make great desolations in the earth (Psalm 46:8).

But to return to the Congo situation. We have been in communication with a servant of Christ in this country (C. W.) who formerly labored in the gospel in the Congo; he has given us excerpts from two letters he received from two Christians laboring there (both are very trustworthy and would not exaggerate the conditions). The first is from a doctor, formerly of Switzerland. He wrote in April, and at that time he expected to stay on after the nation was freed by Belgium. His present whereabouts are unknown to our correspondent. The doctor wrote:

"We are in the midst of all sorts of currents. Witchcraft of every kind is being revived these days. The most incredible rumors are spreading like wildfire, and false cults are taking hold of many. False prophets proclaim that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior of the white people, but Simon Kibangu is the savior of the black people. This idea is mixed with worship at the grave yards under the control of a witch doctor. Those who dare to resist are severely punished, even unto death, by orders of the witch doctor. We have no idea where all this is going to lead, nor what will be the eventual outcome. We do know that nothing takes place without God's knowledge, and God's eternal plan will be accomplished, even through all of this.

"We hear that on one of the neighboring mission stations the younger generation native leaders openly say that the missionaries better return to their own land. They are already planning to occupy the missionaries' houses, take possession of their cars, etc. The real Christians, who are in the minority, do not go along with this. We are still welcome in the villages with the Gospel in our area; however, one of our missionaries was forbidden by a witch doctor to enter a village and threatened with physical violence. All this is due to the political unrest; but we know, too, it is Satan's plan to hinder God's Word from going forth."

The second letter is from a faithful Christian sister, whom some of us have known for years. She wrote on June 29, just over 24 hours before so-called liberty was to be "enjoyed" by the natives. Her present whereabouts are also unknown to us. She writes:

"Greetings from this land of turmoil and confusion in the name of Him who is our Peace.

"It is June 29, the eve of Congo's Independence Day. For weeks the atmosphere has been tense with expectation. It is certain that many of the Congolese are expecting a miraculous transformation to take place tomorrow - the waving of some magic wand which will suddenly exalt them to the place of authority and wealth which the white man previously held, while they gloat over the fate of the latter who will become their cringing, obedient slaves! How we long that they might know real independence from the slavery of sin and enter into the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. We hear much which could strike fear to the heart. Many Belgian officials have gone home, or have sent their wives and families out of the country. Those who remain in this region have come into Kikwit for protection. Army planes have been zooming low overhead. We hear that all roads leading to the town are under guard. It is wonderful how the Lord gives peace and quietness in the midst of it all. Yet we need not wonder, for God is but fulfilling His promises, and is answering the prayers of many sincere hearts on our behalf. It is to thank you once again for your love and prayers and to encourage you to continue in prayer for us and for the native Christians that I am writing to you now. No one can predict what the future holds, nor how

independence will affect our mail service. But whatever comes, let us keep in touch via the throne of grace. Nothing can sever that connection, praise God!

"In recent months there has been a revival of paganism at its worst. Witchcraft, demon worship, false cults of every kind, and tribal hatred have swept through the country like a mighty tidal wave."
Signed, R.H.

Both of these letters bear the same story of the fast return of the populace to witchcraft, demon worship, "paganism at its worst"; and this will be accompanied by all its old orgies and corruption. The Congolese are but treading in advance the path to be taken before long by so-called Christian nations. Fellow-Christians, our hope is the coming of the Lord to take us home beyond this scene of confusion. O the folly of those preachers, who once preached the imminence of the Lord's coming for His own, who are now willing to put it off for 500 or 1000 years! Years of what? Atheism, Communism, paganism, violence and corruption, and all the worst in fallen man turned loose! Well may we cry, "Lord Jesus, come"! and not merely to take us out of the turmoil but to be with Him whom we love; as the poet said, "to see Thy face we long."

Perhaps never before in a presidential election in the United States have so many people been aroused, both nationally and internationally. It is indeed a crucial year in world history, and the world is so involved that what happens in one place is vital to all. When one member of the world's family of nations has played such a prominent role for so long a time, then a change in its administrations is bound to be of concern to the other members. But it is to be deplored when Christians who are "partakers of the heavenly calling" forget their strangership here and become active participants in the struggle between the potsherd of the earth. In fact, it is generally taught in Christendom that the Christian, of all people, should take an active part in politics and thus help to improve the world by seeing that the right men get elected. This erroneous teaching is enhanced by the attempted overthrow of dispensational teaching which emphasizes the momentary expectation of the Lord's coming to take His own out of the world. If we can put off this hope to another day or generation, then we can easily drift into the idea of a Christian's trying to improve the world and make it a more comfortable place in which to settle down.

The interjection of the religious issue into this year's political campaign will fire many Christians with a new zeal for political activity. Many true believers among the Protestant groups will fervently oppose the election of a Catholic president - a thing previously unknown in the United States. But we submit that the only desideratum in this matter is, what is God's will and purpose? If He chooses to give this nation a Catholic president, then all the combined forces of Protestantism will not be able to prevent it. Christians forget the truth of Cowper's words: "His purposes will ripen fast." He has decreed, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." Isa. 46:10. If "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord (Prov. 21:1), so is the choice of the electorate.

The Roman Church has launched a campaign to make Catholicism the leading religion of this country, if not actually the state religion. Friends of ours who labor in South America told us this some years ago; they said it was frequently told them down there. Her great efforts have been paying off handsomely. According to her own statements, she has now passed the 40-million mark in membership in this country. This is not merely according to the nation's increase in population, for she claims a 47% gain in the last decade, which is far out of proportion to the percentage of population growth in the same period. She has been conducting extensive advertising campaigns

in secular newspapers and magazines, which in turn bring a flood of requests for further information on Catholicism. These well-edited papers, which cleverly present only one side of the argument, are then put in people's hands, and are later followed up with letters of inquiry as to whether the recipients would like further information or an introduction to a local priest. This has paid off with over 100,000 so-called conversions to Catholicism each and every year of the past decade. Rome is on the march, and even though her man may not be elected, she has come of age in the United States, and is in a position to make her influence felt as never before.

That the Roman Church will be merely an observer in this election is scarcely true. This is a matter which she must consider of vital importance to her, and is a chance to test her organizational strength. The Catholic press in this country has 580 newspapers and magazines with more than 25 million circulation. This is a religious power in the press second to none. Pope John XXIII recently said, "Today the Catholic press exists, above all, to exert an active presence and testimony. Its presence must be active, intelligent and alert in respect to the innumerable problems posited by present-day life." Rome speaks with one voice; there is unanimity not to be found in any other group or set of groups. She also exerts a dominant influence over her more or less subservient membership; for everything can be construed to be connected with "faith and morals," so that all falls within the scope of the Church's dictums.

Let us not forget that the Western world is going to be dominated by the Roman Church with its world headquarters in Rome (Rev. 13; 17:18). Scripture makes this plain; it is coming apace. Every single bit of evidence that points that way is but another sign that the coming of the Lord is very near. Soon He will shout that shout that wakes the sleeping saints and changes the living to be caught up together to be forever with the Lord. Happy anticipation! And when the real Christians are taken out of this world, the present trend in Protestantism, especially as represented by the National and World Council of Churches, toward ecumenicalism will sweep Christendom like a prairie fire. All will be finalized in "BABYLON THE GREAT," which will shortly thereafter be destroyed by men who will turn against her and her domination. The utter destruction of every vestige of the false church will make the destruction in France during the Reign of Terror seem like child's play. (Read Rev. 17 and 18.)

Let us in heart cry, "Lord Jesus, come," and not become involved in aiding or abetting what we think might hold back the evil day. We look for the Savior from heaven. And if God chooses to place a certain man in the United States presidency, then, so be it. But even a non-Catholic president may find it expedient to become subservient to Rome's wishes. Witness the conditions in Cuba and Latin America, where Rome has a strong hold over the people, and where the United States obviously needs someone to work behind the scenes against the fast growing inroads of Communist ideology. There are wheels within wheels, of which we know little; but all will work together to bring to pass God's great purposes - the ultimate of which is to dash the world powers in pieces like a potter's vessel, and set His King upon His holy hill in Zion (Psalm 2).

The Contractor's Estimate

I had to see about some work being done the other day, and asked the contractor how much it would cost.

"It won't cost very much," said he, "because we can use all the old material."

Now that is precisely what God could not do. There must be a new start altogether, with new material.

If there is to be anything for God in man, or any capacity to estimate things according to God, a man "must be born again." There must be an effectual operation of God by His Word and Spirit producing a new moral being in man, the effect of which is that he begins to think God's thoughts about himself.

The Course of Judas

Men love something. Trace the course of Judas. What was it that led him astray? He loved money, not so uncommon an evil. In this he was the world's prudent man - "Men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself." Psalm 49:18. But observe the progress of corrupt nature; a little circumstance in John 12:3-6 may help us to see the connection. Satan suggests a way to gratify the lust there. Well, he goes on, and what is his next step? Satan puts it into his heart to betray his Master. Judas, it may be, thinking that the blessed One would have been delivered in some way, as at other times, and thus he get his money and yet save his character, consents. Man will excuse himself by any folly. Sin has its progress with a defiled conscience. Hypocrisy now enters; he sits with Jesus at the table (goes on with religiousness) even after he had sold him. Mark, too, it was "after the sop" that Satan entered, never nearer to Christ in form. Now he is hardened against even the relentings of nature; he goes out and betrays the Son of man with a kiss. Here then is the progress of corrupt nature toward this fearful consummation - first, lust; second, a means of gratifying it in his office of bearer of the bag (all this goes on along with religiousness, in the very company of Christ, from day to day); third, he is led to the ultimate character of his crime, at a time and in circumstances of most blessing to a true disciple; fourth, the heart is hardened, so that the betrayal takes place even with a kiss, the token of affection. Sinning and religiousness go on together. Again we say, and here we have an illustration of it, that where the power of godliness is not, nearness to godly things is only the more dangerous.

Well, we have the solemn declaration that such shall be the history of Christendom. "Three unclean spirits... go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16) - that day when the long-suffering of God shall have closed, when, in fact, a longer delay would become the allowance of unrighteousness. Judgment will then be according to this nearness. Its full tide will roll in upon Christendom. At the present hour that long-suffering has been 1900 years running on; but when the testimony of truth has been fully rejected, the doom will come.

We speak not of the judgment of the dead, but of the living. Where then is the resource from this dreadful progress and consummation of wickedness, in the place where righteousness is expected? It is not in man's will, for through that he is the slave of Satan- nor in forms of religiousness. Satan can enter in with the sop. Neither the one nor the other will keep him out. Man's natural power, his capacity to do great things, may be vaunted on the one hand; and on the other, a reliance upon ordinances and observances may be insisted upon. For a time these may seem the most opposing schools, but a connecting link will be found in man's corrupt nature, managed by the craft of the great enemy; and at last both will subserve his purposes, who is to exalt "himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." 2 Thess. 2:4. The place of special privileges unheeded, of special light, will be the place of special judgment.

Darwin and Evolution

Charles R. Darwin's book, "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection," was first published in 1859. One hundred years have passed, and centennial celebrations of the Darwin theory of evolution have been held in many lands. Much ink has been used by writers of scientific, cultural, educational, secular, and religious organizations during this year in an attempt to evaluate the effects of evolution in this past century. It has been one of great progress. Most of the writings and appraisals have commended the theory, and been laudatory, even to the extreme of adulation of the man Darwin.

We feel that it falls within the scope of our magazine and in the interest of our readers to review some of these articles which have appeared, as well as some of shortly earlier production. Business Week, a magazine of no mean stature in the business world, gave an objective report of a scientific centennial celebration which took place in Chicago last December. Under the title, "What Darwin Means to the Space Age," Business Week comments that,

"Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the 'miracle of Darwin,' however, is the way scientists a century later are still riding on his coattails-rewording, reinterpreting, and rephrasing-but never really offering much fresh thinking or fresh reasoning on how the world of living things evolved...

"In predicting what man faces in space, today's scientists are leaning as hard on old Darwinian theory for their ideas as their predecessors have for the past four or five decades.

"Although they couch their suggestions in new, fancy terms, the world's scientists are even paraphrasing Darwin when they suggest the aims researchers should seek to achieve during the next 100 years. Basically, the most important thing, they agree, is to continue the search for new knowledge to 'fill the tremendous gaps that still yawn' in knowledge of man's evolution....

"In other fields of science, there have been men of tremendous foresight and vision. In virtually no other field has one man, for so long, dominated the thoughts of so many."-Business

Week, December 12, pp 103 106

Before we make any comments on the above remarks, we will herewith quote from a later issue of Business Week, in which a reader addressed the following letter to the editor:

"Dear Sir:

"Your article What Darwin Means to the Space Age [BW -December 12, '59, p. 103] was most interesting.

"Surely Sir Julian Huxley would not pretend that the space satellites now circling our globe came into existence through mere chance. Yet he proposes that the men who developed these satellites, the planet on which they live, and the universe of which we are a part, are all the result of 2.5-billion years of 'blind opportunistic workings of natural selection.'...

"It is revealing, I think, that these scientists' basic goal for the next 100 years 'is to continue the search for new knowledge to "fill the tremendous gaps that still yawn" in the knowledge of man's evolution.'..."

"Yes, gentlemen, I too am amazed that after 100 years of scientific advancement Darwin's theory still dominates the thoughts of some of the world's scientists.

"The entire universe, to the smallest particle of matter, exhibits order and regulation. It is inconceivable to me and contrary to all the 'laws' of nature that this well-ordered universe could have merely chanced to evolve. The creation's existence is irrefutable evidence of the Creator....
David H. Thiessen, Minneapolis, Minn."

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As the second century of Darwinian-dominated thinking begins, the Christian, and especially the young Christian, must be on his guard against the reasonings of the human mind. This is a day when reason is exalted to the glorification of man. One verse bears on this very strongly: "Casting down imaginations [should be 'reasonings'], and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10:5. Never in the history of this world has the human intellect been deified as it is now; and its workings are basically infidel, and at complete variance with the revelation of God.

God could not be known in times past by the debased and debasing conjectures and speculations of heathen idolatry, oriental mysticism, or Greek mythology. Nor can man know God in this great intellectual age by any of the atheistic philosophies of the day. He can only be known in the manner and to the extent of divine revelation. But man largely rejects the revelation of the true God, because it makes nothing of man; he would rather have a god small enough for his finite mind to comprehend (which would be small indeed), or plainly reject God entirely and revel in his great "freedom" of thought which makes him feel unaccountable to any higher power. But this is a fatal delusion.

One of the greatest snares today is the temporizing of Christianity with the unproved hypothesis of evolution by so-called (perhaps, real) Christian educators and clergymen. One would have to search to find many so-called Christian schools and colleges which do not somewhere do obeisance to Darwin and evolution. It is commonly taught in these quasi religious institutions that one may believe in God and evolution at the same time. Our young people are led to believe that to reject evolution as the life source of all living things would brand one as an incorrigible and willful ignoramus. Even some true Christians are so swayed by the love of worldly approbation that they fall in line with the trend, and compromise the truth of God. Of many of them it is to be feared that they love "the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43). But one need go no further than the writings of the greatest intellects in biology and other related sciences to find that those who try to harmonize the Holy Scriptures with the dark reasonings of unbelief found in evolution are not respected by the true evolutionist. They are (probably sometimes secretly) considered bigger dupes than the Christians who reject outright anything that does not honor God the Creator. Such adapters of Christian verities to the changing follies of man are not respected by the out-and-out evolutionist, nor are those who take that ground to be trusted as Christians. They

are no more stable than a weather vane which turns with every gust of the wind. They savor of those of whom Scripture speaks: "They please not God, and are contrary to all men" (1 Thess. 2:15). If anyone is inclined to believe the evolutionary scheme, let him listen to the evolutionists who are head and shoulders above the average and then reject God forthwith, and not try to palliate such an abominable mixture. Listen to some dedicated evolutionists:

"At last week's Chicago meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Harvard's George Gaylord Simpson, vertebrate paleontologist, seized upon the centenary of Darwin's publication of the Origin of Species to summarize today's consensus of scientific thinking on the nature and origin of man. The ancestry of man is still not fully known, he conceded, but he denounced 'pussyfooting' about apes in man's family tree.

"Apologists emphasize that man cannot be a descendant of any living ape, and go on to state that man is not really descended from an ape or a monkey at all but from an earlier common ancestor. In fact that common ancestor would certainly be called an ape or monkey in popular speech by anyone who saw it. Since the terms 'ape' and 'monkey' are defined by popular usage, man's ancestors were apes or monkeys (or successively both)... Man is in the fullest sense a part of nature and not apart from it. He is not figuratively but literally akin to every living thing, be it an amoeba, a tapeworm, a flea, a seaweed, an oak tree or a monkey. In a word, man lives in a world 'in which he is not the darling of the gods.' "

Then the Harvard paleontologist Simpson spoke of man's being unique in having a language whereby he could store his knowledge beyond the duration of individual memory. He also pointed out that man has a moral sense with a sense of responsibility; but note his comments on this:

"The evolutionary process is not moral-the word is simply irrelevant in that connection-but it has finally produced a moral animal."

Then to explain to whom man is responsible, Simpson added: "man is responsible to himself and for himself." See Time magazine, January 11, 1960, p. 30.

Thus according to an eminent paleontologist from a renowned university, man is purely a product of evolution; he was not created by God, nor is he responsible to God. His only salvation lies in saving himself from evolutionary degeneration. How is it that such degeneration did not set in long ago during the supposed millions of years that he has been working up from the smallest possible life that had just chanced to happen? This "salvation" is to be accomplished by man himself if he "takes a hand in determining his own future evolution."

Let us take another giant of the intellectual world and hear what he says of evolution and the Genesis account of God's creation; namely, Sir Julian Huxley, the British biologist, and grandson of the great T. H. Huxley who sided with Charles Darwin and battled to "convert the Christian Heathen of these islands [the British Isles] to the true faith," by which he meant "science." Time, May 9, 1960, p. 110.

This noted gentleman now says there need not be any conflict between science and religion, but what does he mean by "religion"? He does see a great conflict between Christian theology and science. In other words, Sir Julian will not have any truce with vital Christianity. In his opinion the battle has been won by science. He belittles Christianity as "a combination of an elaborate

god-theory with a subsidiary but equally elaborate soul-theory," and consigns them to mere hypotheses.

This is a clever twist to take evolution out of the unproved hypotheses category and place God and the soul there. Poor duped man! Some day he will learn the facts to his eternal sorrow.

Huxley attacks the idea that the universe must have been created and therefore must have a Creator as discarded foolishness. When he met with the contention of an English cleric, Dr. Eric Lionel Mascall of Christ Church, Oxford, that creation was not an act of God's in the past but was an incessant activity by which it is conserved, he scoffed and called it "double talk." His remarks according to Time were:

"The whole range of physico-chemical and biological phenomena can now be accounted for in principle in naturalistic terms: to invoke the operation of God in the process is not only unnecessary but intellectually dubious." Time, August 1, 1960, p. 45.

Another report on that assemblage of scientists in Chicago late in 1959 quotes Sir Julian Huxley as saying:

"The earth was not created; it evolved. So did all the animals and plants that inhabit it, including our human selves, mind and soul as well as brain and body. So did religion.

"Evolutionary man can no longer take refuge... in the arms of a divinised father-figure, whom he himself has created... nor absolve himself from the hard task of meeting his problems and planning his future by relying on the will of an omniscient but unfortunately inscrutable providence."

Here it is in plain language from one who ought to know about evolution if anyone does. There is simply no place for God in evolution, nor can God and evolution be blended together. We affirm on the basis of the leaders of the evolutionist cult that it simply resolves into this: it is either God and Genesis, or atheism and evolution.

Sir Julian Huxley predicted that a new evolutionary religion will arise (giving credence to nothing supernatural), a religion which "will sanctify the higher manifestations of human nature in art and love and will emphasize the fuller realization of life's possibilities..." - Newsweek, December 7, 1959, p. 94.

God has thus labeled those who reject Himself as God: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Psalm 14:1; 53:1. But modern man is still more foolish, for he does not confine his rejection of God to his own evil heart, but proclaims it from the housetops. It is our strong conviction that they talk more and louder to keep themselves sold; for we doubt that there is a single man living (despite his protestations to the contrary) who does not at times fear that his boasted atheism may not be true, and then fears also that he must meet that God in judgment. We are reminded of the boy who lived outside of a small town, and he had frequently to walk home at night. His way home took him by the cemetery, and for some reason he was always fearful of passing that place; so as he approached the dreaded spot he would begin to whistle, and the more he feared, the louder he whistled. So we conjecture that the loud boasts of atheism are but efforts to still the voice of conscience.

True evolution rejects God, denies His revelation, pretends to tell man where he came from, but there the scientific hoax must stop. Man's destiny beyond the grave cannot be solved by his brain. The devil has from the beginning of man's history distorted the facts. True religion has not evolved, for Adam came from God's hand with a knowledge of the true God. All the corruptions invented by the "father of lies" corrupted the knowledge of God which was handed down from father to son. Then there were distinct manifestations of God at different epochs, and the creation itself has always borne witness to Him. Not so, says the evolutionist.

Zophar, in the book of Job, asks a pertinent question: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Job 11:7. Man's searching by any instrument at his command will never find out God; He is known by revelation only, and it is a substantial reality to faith. But neither can man by the evolutionary theory cancel out God, or remove Him from His creation. He may as well try to remove the air which surrounds the earth. Well may we add the words from the second Psalm: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." But God has been longsuffering with wicked and unrepentant man; and because of this, many feel that they can with impunity treat Him as a myth, a delusion. We read: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Eccles. 8:11.

But of course there is no place for sin in the vocabulary of modern evolution or its counterpart, Freudian psychology. To them it is only a misnomer, a false idea of something nonexistent. So with no God to meet, no judgment after death, according to current atheistic teachings, man may as well do anything he can get away with. Is it any wonder that the crime rate is soaring to new highs almost every month? As an example of current thought, Albert Ellis, a Manhattan Psychotherapist, is reported to have said,

"No human being should ever be blamed for anything he does." If Mr. Ellis's son were kidnapped, or his life savings stolen, he might change his mind, for the moment at least. Thomas Huxley the atheist is said to have lived a circumspect life, but chiefly to prove that it could be done without any fear of meeting God, or of hell. So he had a reason for living as he did, but it was not to please God. Be it said with conviction, that man does behave better today because of the reflected light of the Christianity that he rejects. He fears even reflected light of the true light he shuns.

But we have more to say about the basic nature of evolution -that it is naturalistic and atheistic in principle and in net result. For our next "authority" on the subject of evolution, we will refer to one of the foremost biologists in the United States. one, Oscar Riddle. In 1939 he was ranked as "one of the half-dozen top biologists in the U.S." "He is a member of some twenty of the foremost scholarly societies in the United States, and holds honorary memberships in ten similar societies in Argentina, Brazil, Chili, Uruguay, Mexico, England, Italy, and India." "For many years he was attached to the Carnegie Institution's Department of Experimental Evolution at Cold Springs Harbor, New York."

This information is taken from the jacket of a book of Dr. Riddle's published by Vantage Press. The title of the book is The Unleashing of Evolutionary Thought. Its publication date is given as 1954, and while it is of a late date, it sold so readily that it was soon out of print. This book came into our hands at the suggestion of Dr. Stephen Wilhelm of the University of California. He wished us to review it for the purpose of seeing what evolution really is and where, it leads. Doctor Wilhelm, in

the course of his academic studies and research, has had to come to grips with evolution, and rejects it without hesitation as

being founded on the sands of human guesswork, as being atheist in teaching, and the source of much discredit to science.

Dead to Sin, Law, Crucified to World: 3 Different Things

It is not only blessedly true that the Lord Jesus "was delivered for our offenses," and that He "died for our sins," but there is the further truth (so little understood by believers in general) that in Christ's death I too have died, of which baptism is a type (Rom. 6:4, 5, 8; Col. 2:11-13), and so passed out of the condition where "sin has reigned in death," unto another where "sin shall not have dominion over" me; nor am I any longer "under the law, but under grace," which now reigns (instead of sin) "through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 5:20, 21; 6:14.)

As has often been remarked, the earlier chapters (1-5:11) of Romans deal with our guilt, the "sins" we have committed, of which there is no remission without shedding of blood. But from chapter 5, verse 12, we have the involvement of universal sinner ship, "by the disobedience of the one man"-Adam (v. 19). We were "by nature" children of wrath, but now, no longer in Adam, we are in Christ Jesus; and to such there is no condemnation. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed us from the law of sin and of death (chap. 8:1, 2), so that now we walk and serve in newness of life and of spirit.

That evil principle, or "law of sin and death" which is in us-here and elsewhere called "sin"-is the root from which that evil crop ("sins") is produced, and to which the Christian has died. It is not dead- "if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves" - nor is it forgiven. But it has been judged and condemned in Christ's death (chap. 8:3), and I am no longer called to own its authority or reign, but to reckon myself "to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ," in the power of a new and risen life.

So too with the law. It is not abrogated, but it is in force "for the lawless and disobedient," etc.; but its jurisdiction is gone for men that are dead, and the Christian has "become dead to the law by the body of Christ" (chap. 7:3, 4). "But now are we clear from the law, having [or, seeing we have] died in [respect of] that in which we were held." v. 6. "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, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal. 2:19, 20.

"Crucified unto me, and I unto the world." It is crucified -no longer sought after by the Christian; its charms are gone. It crucified the Lord of glory. How can it any more be an object for me? "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." And I am crucified to it. No longer of "its own," the child of God is despised and hated by the world, and should be content to be so for the Master's sake. Are we content to be thought nothing of, and to be thus a spectacle to it?

May we seek grace to be truly the followers of the "despised and rejected" One of earth, but the "exalted" of the Father, "received up in glory." He will be wondered at in them that believe in the coming day of glory for this earth, when the now reproached sons of God shall be manifested in the same glory with Christ.

Dealing With Evil

We need to seek as great a sense of God's holiness as we already have of His mercy. We know the power of sin from experience, but only in God's presence can we learn its guilt; and there the trifling errors which have caused us little sorrow are seen in all their depravity as brought into the light.

One has said that we do not get a right thought of sin until we realize what it cost God to put it away; and this we may only learn by prayerful meditation upon the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. "In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the LORD: it is most holy. The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: in the holy place shall it be eaten." Lev. 6:25, 26.

All that the Lord Jesus must have felt from contact with evil, we can little understand, because we are so accustomed to its presence; but His spotless soul must have recoiled with unutterable loathing from the foul stain of our guilt, since the anguish of Gethsemane discloses the agony of His anticipation of being made sin for us, and its consequences.

We may not dare to discuss that period which God veiled in darkness from the eyes of men. The contrite heart looks back to the cross to get there an adequate sense of what sin is in the sight of God. It is less a subject for pen and ink than for penitent heart searching in God's presence.

The fear of the Lord is wisdom's first lesson (Pro. 15:33; 1:7); and the fear of the Lord is to hate evil (chap. 8:13). If this lesson is not learned, we are out of God's estimate of sin, and lack an adequate sense of His holiness.

Deceptive Galatianism

Suppose a person were to say, I find myself very cold in worshiping God, and I want something to arouse my soul; what more proper than to have a picture of my Savior, that as I look upon Him and the crown of thorns, I may feel more deeply His love, and have my heart's affections more drawn out to Him? That is idolatry now, if it would not have been so at any time. But there were certain of these things allowed under the legal system, because of the hardness of their heart; they had sacrifices of beasts and an earthly priesthood; but for a Gentile to turn to these things is going back to idolatry in the sight of God. The Holy Ghost presses this upon these Galatian believers, for the evil was only in the germ. If this be true, what a sin to take part in, to countenance or sanction, in any way, that which is idolatry in God's judgment! The evil is increasing most rapidly. It is not confined now to popery, but the stride which has been made of late years toward Catholic principles is the same thing. If it has any religious element at all, it is an idolatrous one, making use of certain feelings of awe in our fallen nature to make people feel more reverent in worship. That is precisely the same thing that is opposed to faith. The essence of our blessing lies in the soul's enjoying Christ by the Word of God, the Holy Ghost giving this enjoyment of Christ apart from everything that acts upon the natural eye or mind. For it is precisely this very abuse that the Apostle so strongly denounces in Gal. 4, and which he calls the weak and beggarly element. What God prizes in worship would now be generally considered meager and poor; for it supposes the absence of outward decoration and of excitement, in order that it may be the real power of the Holy Ghost acting among the saints.

"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years." Not to do this now is the wonder. Alas! the Galatian evil is thought a proof of religion. He marks this observance not merely as an error, but as a proof of idolatry. In heathenism these festivals were of great account, and God permitted them in Judaism because the Jews had a means of religion suited to their state and the worldly sanctuary. But now all is completely changed, and the observance of special feasts and seasons as a means of pleasing God is put down with a high hand by the Holy Spirit. "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain."

Legalism is an insidious thing, because it looks fair. When this is the case, men fancy that they become practically more holy; but the contrary is the fact. What produces true holiness is that it is not merely the name of a day, or of an hour, or of a season, or place, but God working in the soul, both to will and to do of His good pleasure; and this, because "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." God brings the believer into His own presence, and puts him there as a child.

Persons may be really breathing the very life breath of popery who think that they have the most wholesome dread of it. Let us search and see for our own souls. We can always look up to God and count upon victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Let Satan rage as he will, yet God will always be God-will always be true to His own Word and Spirit.

The Denial of Eternal Punishment: a Reply to an Inquiry

My answer has been delayed through constant work and absence from the house for evening meetings, etc., but I should gladly help you in this to the utmost of my power; for this doctrine is a deadly and demoralizing heresy, or, rather, infidelity. I ever refuted it, but I never saw so much of it as lately. It issues in denying responsibility and conscience, enfeebling, in the most deadly way, the sense of sin, the value, consequently, of the atonement, and ultimately the divinity of Christ. All do not go this length, and are unaware of it; but it has led thousands in America there. It is its just result. The greatest part of their proofs are from the Old Testament; and the moment you know that the mass of their texts refer to temporal judgments on earth, all that part of the fabric comes down. Then they dodge to words in the New Testament; as if, for example, "destruction" means ceasing to exist. This is not true, as "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help." Hos. 13:9. In the original, it is the same word where it is said, "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." God can say, "I create," and, "I destroy"; but otherwise it is used constantly for ruin in a general sense, as in the boat the disciples say, "Carest Thou not that we perish?" They admit there can be no annihilation in nature, and do not like the word.

Death never means' ceasing to exist. Scripture speaks of casting the soul into hell after the body is killed; so, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, they subsist after death. They say that is a Jewish figure. I admit it, but it is a figure to show how they subsist after death. Again, it is said in Luke 20, "For all live unto Him"-dead men, but always alive to God. Besides, if it be then ceasing to exist, there is nobody to raise for judgment. The second death even is casting into the lake of fire, where they are tormented; that is, it is not ceasing to exist. They say eternal life and eternal death does not mean eternal. This is not true; eternal life and eternal punishment are spoken of together, and it is the regular force of it in Scripture

-"The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Cor. 4:18. Nothing can be plainer than that. So we have "the eternal God," "the eternal Spirit," "eternal redemption," "eternal inheritance,"-all contrasted with time.

What is so morally dreadful in it is the weakening the sense of sin and atonement. For if my sin only deserved death, Christ had only to bear this for me, which hundreds have borne besides. Sin becomes little, and atonement nothing. Hence a vast number speak of what Christ obtained for us by His death, but drop the atonement for our sins as of no consequence. Again, if death means ceasing to exist (and this is the basis of all their statements), then Christ ceased to exist. This leads many on to deny His divinity. If they say, "No, He was a divine Person, He did not," still, He was a true man, body and soul, and truly died; and death does not mean ceasing to exist. Further, this materialism as to the soul is entirely contrary to Scripture. In Genesis, the way man is created is carefully distinguished from beasts. God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; this He never did to the beasts. Hence, Adam is called the son of God, and Paul declares we are the offspring of God. Hence, to liken our souls to the beasts is false, besides what I quoted from the gospels as to its subsistence after death. The one text, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but

after this the judgment," proves demonstratively that we subsist after death. Death dissolves our present state of existence, but that existence does not cease at all. So far from death being the full wages of sin in this sense, it is after death we get all we are adjudged to. That is, death as to the body is the result of sin here; the judgment of the man, to receive the real consequences of it before God, comes altogether after it. Hence, there is a resurrection of the unjust, a resurrection to judgment. Remember, we conceive of eternity as prolonged time; that is, we do not conceive it at all. It is an eternal NOW. And this is the very definition of the word given by writers of the apostles' time.

I have thus given you rapidly, as far as a letter allowed, the way the question has actually come before me, and my reply. The effect in destroying responsibility was fearful and, in people with grosser habits, rejection of all truth, and immorality. The tree was bad, had a bad sap, and so was cut down; and there was an end of it. Where is sin and atonement there? Keep your mind simple if you can by grace, and receive what Scripture says in simplicity as it stands.

Devotedness

Devotedness is a much deeper and at the same time a much simpler thing than -many suppose. Most think that if they are earnestly engaged in the Lord's work, and looking to Him for guidance and blessing, this is being devoted; but devotedness is much more than this. It is having Christ Himself as the delight and resource of my heart, and the bent of my mind toward Him. The highest service we can render the Lord is to serve His heart, and that is a service to which few devote themselves. Occupation with Christ, with a view to becoming more intimately acquainted with His character, studying Him that we may learn what pleases Him, is very rare indeed. Many can be found who are occupied for Christ, like Martha; few who are occupied with Him, like Mary.

When we have reached this, we have reached the foundation stone of true devotedness. This is the Gilgal where the serving one returns to encamp, and whence he issues like the sun to run his course, and like a giant refreshed with new wine. It is because the saints know so little of this Gilgal in the Lord's presence that there is so much unsanctified activity and really profitless work. If there is zeal and ability without a knowledge of God's mind where and when to use it, how can there but be a turning to take counsel from nature? and how can we expect that the results flowing from such a source will be otherwise than profitless?

Does Creation Bear Witness to a Creator?

One may now frequently hear that science has laid the groundwork for the passing away of all religion, and over the tombstone carved for Christianity's burial has written, "succumbed to evolution." In this some scientists boast. Julian Huxley, great grandson of Darwin's associate, Thomas Huxley, recently asserted that evolution and the concomitant new order of thinking even now spells doom for the world's religions. Nor is it difficult to make out on which side, evolution or Christian, men in general are prepared to range themselves. In any apparent issue between them, there is certainly a tendency shown always to give science the benefit of the doubt. And all along, there are assumptions made for a yet lispng science which are denied to the clear and mature tones of Scripture's voice. For instance, to admit any cause-that you are reading this page even-is to admit a first cause; and indeed a child may frequently ask in wonderment, "Where did I come from?" Either God created in the beginning or, as some scientists have said, "A great catastrophe ushered in the universe." This catastrophe to them is the process whereby the absolutely nothing decided to become something. Maturity in judgment, depth in philosophy, soundness in science believes the former, that God created. And it is a matter of belief, for beginnings are beyond science, beyond what can be subjected to experimental test. Scientists may press upon us an unproven theory, even one unprovable by experimentation, with all the authority of dogma; and few are those who are not influenced by it, or even coerced into bowing down to it.

Science then is knowledge acquired by investigation, but certain facts must be accepted as axiomatic before investigation can begin. The tools of science are the experiment through which data (facts) are collected, and the drawing of valid conclusions from them. Though scientific experimentation is moving in the direction of increasing precision and validity, it is by no means perfect; and, where evolution is concerned, and we quote a leading evolutionist, "The subject is beset with difficult ties, with controversy, matters of interpretation, and with rival theories," the doctrine must be believed in as supported by science. And when evolutionists now boldly preach atheism, even through otherwise reputable avenues of science, they preach not that supported in any way by scientific fact, by a single fact known about the universe, and very little of what might be known is known, but only the atheism which is resident in their own minds. In this they discredit science. No fact ascertained by investigation, and no experimental evidence published in any scientific journal, supports the atheistic doctrine now promulgated by evolutionists. The evidence is all to the contrary; and indeed, as many scientists and even university presidents have said, the greatest truth of all science is the axiom sublimely stated in Gen. 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and some of these have added, "To know Jesus Christ as Savior is the most important thing in a man's life. To know Him as Lord in one's life and to acknowledge Him as Creator, Lord over and Sustainer of the universe, greatly enhances one's appreciation of Him as Savior."

Note that above we used the phrase "truth of all science." Science and truth are not synonymous, though the scientist searches, as he says, for truth. Scientific truthfulness is only relative. New facts are discovered, old scientific theories discarded or revised, and college courses are not

taught from textbooks written a generation ago. Yet, a generation ago, scientific assertion was as bold as it is today. To the Christian scholar, characterized by unswerving belief in God and His Word, truth in the absolute sense can only be that Word. Consider "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5); "God, that cannot lie" (Titus 1:2); "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). By that Word we test all that purports to explain life, beginning and design, in creation.

To entertain the doctrine of evolution as it stands now is to consign to oblivion the great argument of design in nature or forethought in creation. Yet we are still taught by some that this great discovery of the nineteenth century need not invalidate the evidence of design, for the "needs of nature" in view throughout the eons of the past and through the "means of nature (natural selection)" with ever upward progress could only have graced nature with the crowning product, man. Then, in evolutionary dogma, the needs of Godless nature demanded the product, man; therefore it produced him. Is it not better to frankly admit that this truly epoch-making hypothesis be indeed confessed, as it is, a doctrine for which supporting scientific evidence is impossible except for interpretations conjectured by those who first believe the doctrine and reject God and the Bible? Though several noted evolutionists in the past, cognizant of worth and authority in Holy Scripture, have tried to harmonize the evolution doctrine with Scripture, the two are utterly at variance; and, further, the disparity between the two must be faced. Certainly in the matter of man's origin the difference is marked enough between man as nature's crowning product and Adam (man) created in God's image. As to which affords true evidence, not only of design, but of divine care and interest, where is the comparison? The comparison lies in the kind of God we are content to prove the existence of. If One to whom every one of us must give account of himself; One with whom we have to do; if a God whose goodness unfallen creation proclaimed, whose love has since been manifested, and whose grace is presently offered to all; then such a theory which attempts to explain the production of all things, and man above all, to an evolutionary process acting through "natural selection" will provide little satisfaction. No, if God be the God we adore, the God whose Word we believe (and what have we, even if nature's witness were increased tenfold, if we rest not there), our universe owes its being to Him, and man infinitely more so, in a far more direct manner than evolution would teach. "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:9. "God... breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Gen. 2:7.

The real worth of evidence from studies of nature, or the estimate we take of this worth, relates heavily with its effect upon men; and by this criterion we shall now judge. The question is, Does creation inevitably lead to creation's God? For the Christian, whether scientist or layman, certain as creation exists, it points the way most truly to God. What does Scripture say of the witness of creation? The first chapter of Romans we may take in its later verses, surely, as giving an instance of how mankind may be affected by the testimony of creation. It is in no special sphere, such as Judaism, remember, that this history of man's attitude toward the knowledge of God is traced, but out in the open, among men at large-the Gentiles.

From verse 19 onward we are shown wherein the "ungodliness" of the Gentiles, previously spoken of, consists. This ungodliness of men, against which the wrath of God was revealed, was simply an entire absence of the fear of God, where there was sufficient testimony existing to render such a thing inexcusable. The Apostle, in reviewing this testimony, goes back to what is elementary. The largest, the most general sphere, is chosen first -creation, "that which may be known of God."

Pristine as is its witness, creation is still full of the manifestation of God. That which was knowable of God, from the testimony of created things, contained a voice for any listening ear, wherever or whenever found. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in [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 [divinity]; so that they are without excuse." Rom. 1:19, 20.

The works of God truly render eloquent testimony regarding their Author; and "that which may be known of Him," in respect of His Being and power, finds adequate expression there. His eternal power and divinity, invisible like all His attributes, apart from His disclosure of Himself, visible objects of striking character are eminently suited to proclaim. "The heavens," we read in Psalm 19, "declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork." Above man then appeared, and around him were strewn, wonders great and innumerable to draw and fix his attention upon that supremely wise and powerful One to whom they silently pointed. The most darkened heathen has never escaped the conviction that these did point somewhere. To say, however, that such heathen have merely missed, through inadvertence, the right direction in which they might have been dimly seen to point, would be to misrepresent the case. Had the indications been obscure, some such excuse might be found possible; but it is not a mistaken reading of the evidence that we must lay to man's account, but the wholesale rejection of it. The language that "day unto day uttereth" is as little ambiguous as its "pouring forth" (as some translate it) is meager. The knowledge that "night unto night showeth" is no esoteric doctrine, but breathes its whisper in the ears of all. "There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." Not in articulate fashion, yet "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."

Such widespread, continuous, and eloquent testimony would seem to leave little room for either ignorance or mistake. Yet what are the facts of the case? Take a man in the state he now is in of ignorance and darkness as to the knowledge of God. Take, on the other hand, the witness of creation to the Creator we have spoken of as of so great power and certainty. How are we to explain the lack of conviction wrought, and apparent unfruitfulness of this line of evidence? Is it not that the hearts of men have been so desirous after some alternative signification that they have willfully disregarded its true indication? They will not see that it points to God. Anyone or anything but Him, they would willingly invest with the glory of such handiwork. They say unto God, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways." Job 21:14. Yet even in the face of this want of desire after God, these silent witnesses remain, to be accusers if nothing more; and the sum of their accusation here is that ungodly men are "without excuse."

And, taken in the mass, this unbelief is all the fruit the witness of creation has produced in man! There is no clearness lacking, no inherent weakness in its testimony to a divine Creator. Rather might God be the inference of creation's evidence from which there was no escape. Yet the fact remains that, as a rule, man has not drawn that inference. Man being what he is, God is not in all his thoughts, however much creation seems to press Him upon his attention. Faith truly perceives creation to be His work, as Heb. 11:3 declares: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." But were we left with the fact only of creation's witness, not so much after all that "God is" as that "God must be," as the basis of appeal to men, we possess but little. Besides, at best, as has been said, to prove the existence of God is to descend to the very elementary.

On two occasions noted in The Acts, the Apostle Paul found it necessary to make primary truth such as God's existence the subject of discourse. Acts 14:8-18, and 17:16-34 give the accounts of them. It is particularly interesting to us today to notice who the hearers respectively were of these similar addresses. The philosophic Athenians would no doubt consider themselves far removed from the ignorant Lystrians; but such is the debased and darkened state of the natural mind that each needed the same first lesson to be taught them. Both are, as many today need to be, "set to spell the alphabet of creation."

We will refer now to the second of those great evidences to the existence of the one God. Account for it as we may, no fact in this world is more prominent or undeniable than the universal prevalence of religion. Religious beliefs and practices of some sort pervade the entire human family. One lecturer correctly enough insisted on this as remarkable. No community yet discovered, he says, no people, however remote or secluded, exist who do not have a religion. The most barbarous and ignorant, and the most civilized and intellectual among the races of mankind, however widely severed in other respects, are alike in this, that there is that in them which prompts veneration of some higher power. It may be they worship they know not what; but still they worship. "To the unknown God" even they may raise their altar, and it may be difficult to say whether it is a "what" or a "whom" they "ignorantly" reverence. The fact remains, they do revere.

Patent to all as this is, there are not wanting those who would fain explain it away on materialistic grounds. Of this school there are many. And it is these in particular against whom is directed a somewhat elaborate disquisition on the origin and roots of human religion. If we follow here, as we must so far, we shall do so on our own lines. The most convinced materialist, then, cannot deny the fact of man's seemingly essential religiousness, however he may attempt to explain it. They confess to having a task in hand in eradicating that idea so strangely prevalent in man, which postulates supernatural agency for phenomena which in any sense are obscure.

It may also be conjectured how much of a problem they have in satisfactorily explaining what seems the universal impulse of men to admit the supernatural. The materialist, in fact, is involved in difficulty all around. His quest after the roots of religion in man's nature has hitherto been attended with scant success. The conflicting testimony from investigators in that field is notorious. From Hume and Herbert Spencer on, there has been nothing but diversity. Each part of man's nature, his intellectual, his emotional, his imaginative faculties, has in turn been singled out as the sphere in which religion takes its rise. An unclassified sentiment based by some on fear, is really all that psychological analysis can as yet pronounce the religious instinct to be.

At present, at all events, the shallower species of materialists' favorite term, "superstition," does not approve itself to the more thoughtful; and, while carefully avoiding the term, all such seem unable altogether to escape some slight contamination of the theory of the innate consciousness in man of a power and personality higher than human. Thus Haeckel, while finding the crude beginnings of religion to spring "partly from the hereditary superstition of primate ancestors, partly from ancestor worship, as well as from habits which have become traditional," concludes his formidable list with the very indefinite phrase, "and various emotional impulses." Yes, just somewhere in that latter region will be found the solution of the problem-Why is religion such a universal feature, so inseparable from man wherever found? Exploration, discovery, the progress

of ethnological study have but multiplied the instances of its occurrence without solving the question of its origin. No solution seems possible but that which explains its unexceptional appearance and ineradicable nature, in the first place, by some inherent impulse in man, by an ingrained consciousness of a higher power.

Conjoined with this also, or a component part of the same instinct, there is the sense of moral accountability indelibly imprinted on the heart of every man. This is so plainly the case that no denial is possible. It is realized to be part and parcel of our very nature as men to feel accountable for thoughts entertained and actions performed. We can understand no normal human being without it, and as matter of fact we find none. Man is essentially a moral creature—from the beginning was so. A consciousness of responsibility, dim it may be, or uncertain to whom it refers, pervades the mind of even the most benighted, however distorted his ideas of the unknown Supreme may be.

In every human soul, too, Scripture testifies, since the fruit of the forbidden tree in Eden was partaken of, the voice of conscience makes itself heard. "Knowing good and evil" describes the new moral outlook of man in his fallen state, come under the power of evil now, alas, though his "conscience bearing witness," as we read in Rom. 2:15—not in regard to Jews, not in that sphere where the light of revealed truth shone, but among "those of the nations," "the heathen." Instances of commendable ethics among the Gentiles, rare enough no doubt, were sometimes in evidence. This does not prove, however, "the law" to be "written on their hearts." It is "the work of the law" of which this is affirmed, conscience bearing corroborative witness therewith. The thoughts of accusation or extenuation that flit across such dark minds show them capable, inherently so, of moral exercise, and evidence clearly enough the sense of moral accountability, and the witness of conscience to be, both of them, universal features. All this in its own way we must allow is testimony to the existence of God.

The Dwelling-Place of God

It is of the greatest value to us spiritually to trace the ways of God through Scripture, and the corresponding exercises of heart produced by His Spirit in connection therewith. Unfolded gradually as they are in the history of His chosen people, we find in them at the same time God's thoughts and purposes more and more distinctly set forth, in view of Christ's coming. All bears witness to Him.

The ways of God toward man, however they may vary in form in succeeding dispensations, remain the same in principle. As vividly presented in the Old Testament history, they lay hold of our hearts and command our attention; whereas the doctrines which embody them are often but little apprehended, and, alas! are readily set aside as having but little application to our daily life and walk. Besides this, there is the danger of the mind rather than the heart and conscience being in exercise with doctrines. We need to preserve the character of the "little child," who learns at first not by doctrine, but by observation of persons and facts to which his attention is drawn. Hence the importance of the Old Testament, by which we discover how truth is coordinated, and in what manner it should affect the heart.

As soon as God had gathered a people around Himself in separation from the idolatrous nations, we find that His purpose was to dwell among them. This will characterize the eternal state (Rev. 21:3). It is also essentially true of Christianity (2 Cor. 6:16). The divine principle remains unaltered. It was first indicated in the song that Moses and the children of Israel sang at the Red Sea (Exod. 15:2, 13, 17); and it is definitely stated in Exod. 19:4 and 25:8: "I... brought you unto Myself," and, "Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." God's purpose is undeniable, both for them and for us (Eph. 2:22); and the practical question arises, How do our hearts respond to it?

But let us recall the facts. From Exod. 29:42-46, we learn what was the position and external relationship with God, into which the redeemed people were brought. After the consecration of the priests, and the institution of the daily sacrifice, we read: "This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD, where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee [that is, Moses]. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to Me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will, be their God, and they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God."

Here we have God's thoughts in connection with the people He had brought out of Egypt. (Compare Isa. 43.) He would "dwell" with them, and "make Himself known" to them. In how much fuller measure and deeper blessedness this is to be realized by us now, through the Holy Ghost, we know; but we have to challenge our hearts as to the value we set upon these things, remembering that the history of the people of Israel was "written for our admonition" (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11).

In order to make the application more simple to us in our present position and circumstances, let us suppose that we meet the children of Israel after they have left Egypt and passed through the Red Sea, just as they are commencing the wilderness journey. Let us ask one of them, in the first place, "What are you doing here?" He would, no doubt, reply, "God has delivered us from Egypt, from Pharaoh's bondage, and we are on our way to the land He has promised to give us." That was God's purpose for them. He had brought them out of Egypt and He was going to bring them into the land promised to their fathers (Deut. 6:21-23). As has been often pointed out, in chapters 3, 6, and 15 of Exodus, there is no mention at all of the wilderness. They had left Egypt to go to Canaan. I take it for granted that all here are clear as to the application of this. Through God's infinite mercy we are redeemed from sin and Satan's power, set in Christ beyond death and judgment, and destined for heaven where Jesus is.

Let us now put a second question, and ask one of these Israelites, "What do you possess as a present portion while on the way to the promised land? Here you are in the wilderness, out of Egypt, it is true, but not as yet in the promised land; what have you got from God now?" Many a one absorbed, no doubt, with murmurs and complaints about the difficulties, dangers, trials, and disappointments met with by the way, could have given no satisfactory reply; but from a man of faith like Caleb, you would probably have received an answer in accordance with God's thoughts. "What have we now?" he would have said. "Surely we have God. God Himself is with us, and has promised to dwell in the midst of us."

The pillar of cloud betokening God's presence was ever over the tabernacle. They always had it in all their journeying, by day and by night (Numb. 9:15-23), the symbol of God's abiding presence over the tent in which He dwelt, marking out their path and going with them wherever they had to go (1 Chron. 17:5, 6). The tribes were arranged around the tabernacle, as we see in Numb. 2, three tribes on each side, and each one relatively near. Some, at least, of the tents of each tribe were in close proximity to the Levites, who encamped round the court of the tabernacle itself, and from their own tent doors could the people see the hangings of the court which enclosed God's dwelling-place. Of those who were farther off, some might be unable to see the tabernacle because of the intervening tents; but every Israelite could look forth and see the cloud with its descending pillar-cloud by day and fire by night resting upon the tabernacle in token that Jehovah was there in their midst. True, the pillar at night must have reminded them that God was "a consuming fire"; but, even so, grace and glory were the hidden basis of apparent judgment with its terrors. God is a "consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29), and always remains so. But while judging evil, He saves the sinner, acting in accordance with the manner in which He had revealed Himself to Moses in the bush at the "backside of the desert." (Exod. 3) The bush was a figure of Israel, failing, weak, worthless, but tried in the fire; it was not consumed. And why? For the very reason that God Himself, unchanged and unchangeable, was there, and there for them. In the last prophecy of the Old Testament, we are reminded of the same truth: "I am the LORD [Jehovah], I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Mal. 3:6. Is not this an immense blessing? - a very real thing for faith? We have to do with One who "abideth faithful," and "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

The people were tested by the law. In Exod. 20 are recorded the ten commandments. The chapter opens with "I am the LORD [Jehovah] thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." The record of what God

had done for Israel in sovereign grace and mercy, His work accomplished for them, lay at the basis of His ways and became the measure of their responsibility toward Him. They could not but own that they had known God thus, "long-suffering, and of great mercy," as the One who had delivered them from Egypt and from Pharaoh; and they were enjoined to have "no other gods."

Is it not striking to notice that, at the end of John's Epistle, after the fullest unfoldings of grace toward us through the revelation, in the Lord Jesus Christ, of the true God and the eternal life, we get a similar injunction? - "This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols." The knowledge in the soul of what God is as He has revealed Himself, is the spring of true piety, and that which determines the character of the practical walk.

When we reach Exod. 32, we find that the people had already broken out into open rebellion. God then says to them through Moses, "I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way." Chap. 33:3. Moses pleads for them, and, in answer to his intercession, God declares Himself to be "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin," while by no means clearing the guilty; and this from the very mountain whence, amid lightnings and thunder, had issued the fiery law. How beautiful to see Moses, who had laid hold of this declaration of God's ways, beseeching Him: "If now I have found grace in Thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray Thee, go among us" (34:9); "for," says he, "it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance."

God had given His verdicts as to the people, and He had declared Himself. The resource of the true soul is always and only God. God must needs go with them because of what they were-hopelessly ruined, irreclaimable, stiffnecked, and rebellious. In God was their only hope; He was their Savior and their strength. If He -went not with them, as Moses said, they could not go.

The Dwelling-Place of God

Let us now apply to ourselves the practical question: While on the way to the rest of God, what do we enjoy as our present portion; and how do our hearts answer to it? It is easy to get discouraged through dwelling upon failure, ruin, confusion, decline, and increasing indifference - all sadly true. Every kind of evil is rampant and increasing, and there is much to fill us with shame and sorrow. But, owning this, what is our resource? Beloved brethren, is it not the same as it was for Israel? We too have God with us, not because there is any good in us, but because of what He is. (Compare Deut. 7:7-9; 9:5, 6.) He is ever near for faith. How often the people of Israel "forgot" Him we are continually reminded as we read their history, even though they had the constant witness of His presence with them, showing that He, at all events, was faithful. And are we not in the same danger of losing the sense of the nearness and all-sufficiency of God for us in our pathway "here at the present moment?"

Let us now look at the heart's answer to this, as given in Psalm 27. We find there the yearnings of a true heart after God, one who delights in what God is-"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" v. 1.

If God had made known, as we have seen in Exod. 29, etc., His desire to dwell with His people, we find here the responsive desire in the soul to dwell with God: "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to

behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple." v. 4. "One thing have I desired"; the heart's aim is subject to dependence upon God.

Beautifully indeed is this expressed in connection with the daily path, in Psalm 16; only there in its fullness and perfection as set forth in Christ. None but the blessed Lord Himself could say truly, "I have set the LORD always before Me." But that is the attitude our souls should have.

Verse 8 of Psalm 27 is difficult to render. The words in italics in our English Bibles reveal an attempt to make the meaning plain. If we take the marginal reading and compare it with the text, it helps us to see its force, as presenting the promptings of the conscience in God's presence, saying, as it were on God's behalf, "Seek My face." May we not, on the strength of various scriptures, conclude that the first promptings of the conscience in God's presence, before there has been time for the will to act, are almost invariably right? The conscience is the channel by which the voice of God reaches us, and if we heed it without questioning or tampering with it, we get a right direction for our souls. The heart being thus brought under the influence of the strivings of the Spirit, witnesses and speaks for God. The will opposes that by human reasonings. We may understand it better if we refer to Isa. 30:21, where the heart's natural perversity is noticed, leading one to the right hand or to the left. Something attracts and would draw aside; and then by the ear is heard a "word behind," the voice of conscience, saying, "No; this is the way, walk in it." So here, the heart or conscience speaking for God, says, "Seek... My face." A deep impression is made on the soul in the secret of God's presence. No outward observer knows what is going on; no human eye can penetrate the exercises of the soul before God; but there, in secret, is heard the voice whispering, "Seek ye My face," leading to the ready response, "Thy face, LORD, will I seek." Such is the experience of a true heart that must have God really and experimentally for its object. Nearness to Himself will alone satisfy that soul.

In connection with this, the 6th verse is remarkable. He says, "I will offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD." The word used here for "offer" is the one habitually used for killing or sacrificing sheep and oxen, especially in connection with the peace offering, the particular class of offering which sets forth the various features of communion. He speaks of offering, not outside the tabernacle upon the brazen altar, which was the proper place for such sacrifices, but of coming inside the tabernacle, as if to the golden altar, before the veil, to "offer" and sing praises before, Jehovah. How wonderful that the soul should be led into such holy boldness! We are now,

indeed, through the finished work of Christ, called to enjoy as "sons" a far more intimate relationship with God than was made known in Old Testament times. But the principle is the same; the Holy Spirit shows how the Lord leads on, and satisfies with Himself, the soul that seeks His face. May we be so kept from the workings of our natural hearts and minds, that the Psalmist's holy desires in God's presence may be ours uninterruptedly. But the heart is treacherous, and if our wills are unbroken, communion is hindered.

Two examples often referred to will here serve to show us what our hearts are capable of: first, Jonah, as to the effect of the knowledge of God's ways of grace, apart from communion with Him; second, Jacob, as to the will being in exercise when seeking for blessing.

Jonah was one who knew the truth about God, in which Moses found the rest and joy of his soul. He probably understood better than anyone then living God's ways of goodness and grace; and God made choice of him to carry to the--greatest oppressor of Israel a message in which there seemed no room for grace at all, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." It was certainly a great, though a needed, test to the prophet to whom the Lord took pleasure in referring (Matt. 12, etc.). Instead of going to Nineveh in simple obedience to God, Jonah trusted his knowledge, and that led to his going to Joppa and sailing away in an opposite direction; that is, to Tarshish. Why he did so, we learn from chapter 4:2: "Was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: because I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil." In his heart, he said, I cannot go with this message; for I know full well that God will not overthrow Nineveh, and what will be said then of Jonah and his prophesying in the name of the Lord? Evidently he thought of his own mission as Jehovah's prophet and, constituting himself, as it were, the guardian of God's honor and glory, argued thus: If I go and declare that Nineveh is to be overthrown, and it turns out not to be the case, as I am perfectly assured it will not be, what will they say about Jehovah? In what will He appear mightier than the false gods? Compare Jer. 28:9. All the false prophets pretended to speak in God's name, though their habit was to prophecy of peace, not of judgment. But Jonah, reasoning as to the mere fact of the accomplishment or not of what was to be announced, thought the only way out of the difficulty was not to take the message at all; and with a bad conscience he goes away "from the presence of the LORD." This is stated three times in the first chapter.

Have we not here an example of the fact that mere knowledge, however correct, even of the ways of God, apart from obedience, is a dangerous thing? We see in Jonah one who was well acquainted with God and His ways, but whose heart was not in tune with the grace and goodness in which, in a sense, his heart found rest for himself - making him ready to be cast into the sea- but which he could not extend to others. Out of communion with God, because disobedient, his knowledge only misled him; and he proved himself unable to abide near the Lord, and trust Him to carry out His purposes in His perfect way.

Jacob affords another instance of the heart's workings. He was not a "worldly" man, like Esau. In his own way he wanted to be right, and he coveted earnestly the promised blessing; but, instead of waiting God's time, he tries to obtain it for himself, with the result that he has to leave his home and flee to Padan-aram. On his journey, God sends him a wonderful dream, speaking to him from the top of the ladder upon which the angels of God were ascending and descending, affording unmistakable evidence that God would continually minister to his needs. In the morning, on awakening, he calls the place "Bethel," the house of God. He is made conscious of God's presence, but this is more than he can bear; and he promptly leaves what to him was a "dreadful... place," because it was "the gate of heaven," and continues his journey alone (Gen. 28). In his subsequent history, it is noteworthy how he avoids Bethel.' Desirous though he was of obtaining blessing as an heir of promise, he was unprepared to meet God and have to do with Him in a close personal way. But God's grace pursued him. Twenty years after he had seen the vision, while still in Padanaram, God appeared to him, saying, "I am the God of Bethel, arise, get thee out from this land."

Jacob then sets forth on his journey to the well-remembered scene of God's gracious intervention on his behalf, where he had sworn conditionally that the Lord should be his God, and that he would render unto Him a tenth of his substance. On his way southward he gets tokens that God is caring for him, especially so at Peniel, where he has the most signal proof and assurance that God is with him and for him. He has only to continue his journey in the same direction to reach Bethel, but, instead of doing so, he deliberately turns aside and goes to Shechem. (Gen. 33.) He is still afraid of God. Unwilling to await God's time and accept His way of bringing His purposes to pass, he had sought to become possessed of the blessing before the time, and had thus lost the sweetest part of it; namely, its reception direct from God's hand as the portion bestowed by Him in His rich and free grace. Quiet subjection to God, and waiting on Him in confidence, he had not known. Hence Bethel is still for him that "dreadful" place.

Trouble met him at Shechem. Once again God appears to him, saying, "Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there" (Gen. 35:1). But notice now, what comes out. Jacob feels that the inner life and condition of his household is unsuitable for the "house of God," and he has to say, "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Bethel." vv. 2, 3. No wonder he had so studiously avoided "the house of God." But he could not prevent God having His way with him in grace, so as to bring his conscience into the light.

Who would have thought that "strange gods" would be found in Jacob's household? But so it was; and we too have to learn that our hearts are not to be trusted. Unless we are walking with God, our hearts and consciences being brought into the light and judged there, we may find ourselves going on with all kinds of evil things while, at the same time, there may be a great deal of outward earnestness, a show of piety, and a seeking after blessing.

We must not trust ourselves. Our only safety is to have everything tested by the light of God's Word, and to walk in nearness to the Lord, in humility and dependence upon Him, that we may learn His mind, know more of communion with Himself, and thus, as kept by Him, escape both the perils and the seductive influences of the scene around us. David, at Ziklag, after a course characterized by worldly wisdom and failure of faith, found out whither to turn, and "encouraged himself in the LORD his God" (1 Sam. 30:6).

The Lord give us to take to heart the lessons we see exemplified in Jonah and Jacob; and may it be ours to say in all sincerity, "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after"; and, with the Apostle, "One thing I do..."

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It will be observed that the purpose of the above address was to direct attention to the individual state of soul in connection with God's settled purpose to dwell among His people. There is, however, another side of this blessed truth, which should not be lost sight of, and that is, the collective responsibility of Christians. We are "builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). Hence the importance of that word, "WITH ALL SAINTS," in the expressed desire and prayer of the Apostle, when speaking of comprehending "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height," and knowing "the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," that we may be "filled with all the fullness of God."

Earth Slumbering - Heaven Stirred

It is striking and very humbling to notice the contrast between earth and heaven at the moment of the birth of the Lord Jesus, the most intensely interesting moment in the annals of time and in the counsels of eternity. It was night, and the world was slumbering when Christ the Lord was born.

Nevertheless, all unconsciously to themselves, the council chambers of the earth had been set in motion to accomplish the word of prophecy which had gone forth seven hundred years before (see Mic. 5:2).

Mary had returned to Nazareth (Luke 1:56) from the hill country whither she had gone to visit her cousin Elizabeth just before the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Messiah. Her family was poor in Israel, proved by the fact that when the time of her purification according to the law of Moses had come (Luke 2:22) she availed herself of the gracious provision of the Lord for His people (see Lev. 12:8). But her poverty would naturally have kept her at Nazareth at such a time; hence all the world is set in movement to bring it about that Christ should be born at Bethlehem. The Roman emperor makes a decree that all the world shall be enrolled. This evidences on the one hand the low estate of Israel as subject to the Gentile power; on the other hand, the faithfulness of God to His own word and promise, for it obliges Joseph to go up from Galilee to Judea "unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David,) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child." Luke 2:4, 5. This is intensely interesting - the whole world set in motion politically to accomplish prophecy.

But though this is true, yet how sad to see the utter unconcern not only of Gentiles, but of Jews as well. Bethlehem slumbered when Christ the Lord was born. A few humble shepherds were the only ones who were brought into proximity to the mind of Heaven at this stupendous moment in the history of the universe. How humbling to the pride of man-pride, that Satanic characteristic so hateful to God (Eze. 28).

While earth slept, all heaven was astir - "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God," etc. Luke 2:13. That moment revealed more than five hundred years before to Daniel (Dan. 9:25-27) had come, the Messiah was -born- "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

The angels return to heaven, which seemed so near; and the shepherds go to Bethlehem where lay the holy Babe cradled in the manger, the emblem of that rejection at the hands of men which marked His entrance into a world which soon was to give Him but a cross. Yet all the counsels of God were centered in that Babe. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Another evidence of the indifference of the world to the birth of Christ is found in the fact that even Simeon and Anna do not seem to have been aware of it for a whole month, notwithstanding the close proximity of Bethlehem to Jerusalem, and the daily intercommunication between the two cities. Expecting it they were, and, doubtless, they looked for it at about that time. Simeon had

received a special revelation as to it (Luke 2:26); and the godly remnant at Jerusalem were all looking for it (v. 38), most probably from their acquaintance with Daniel's seventy weeks' prophecy. But so little had the birth of the Savior affected the people of Bethlehem, that the news was not carried to Jerusalem. Had Simeon known that the Lord's Christ was already born, the short journey would undoubtedly have been taken to Bethlehem where the child Jesus was. Led by the Spirit into the temple at the very moment that Mary presented the child Jesus after the custom of the law, Simeon's lips are opened in praise to God: "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." v. 30. The godly remnant in Jerusalem knew one another, and soon through the instrumentality of Anna were speaking often to one another of HIM (v. 38).

Election

Election is a family secret. I would not preach election to the world. Election precedes all. I come to a certain door and I find written over it, "Whosoever will may enter in." That is the gospel. I enter and, on the other side of the door, what do I find written? "Whosoever gets in here will never get out!" That is my security, the fruit of election. There is nothing to trouble a soul in election, but, contrariwise, much to comfort. "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." Eph. 1:4.

Eternal Life

Christianity in truth begins with the possession of eternal life, and this life is in the Son: "the end" is also eternal life, but all is "the gift of God." We have eternal life while we are going on "in hope of eternal life." We find redemption also presented to us in Scripture in the same way. We have redemption now, and are waiting for redemption. Of the believer it is said, "In whom [Christ] we have redemption through His blood," and yet we are waiting for "the redemption of our body" (Eph. 1:7; Rom. 8:23). The same may be noticed as to salvation; we are saved, and yet we look forward to salvation. We receive "the end" of our "faith," even the salvation of our "souls" (1 Pet. 1:9), and yet "we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5:9). The same inspired writer that says, "who hath saved us," also says, "We look for the Savior" (Phil. 3:20) "Who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory" (Phil. 3:21; J.N.D. Trans.). This change and translation we are elsewhere told will take place when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). Then, having eternal life in all its glorious issues, we share with Christ the Father's presence in the Father's house, in all the unutterable blessedness of eternal glory.

Examination of Calvinism

Another grave error of the system under review is that God had decreed beforehand that Adam should take of the forbidden fruit and so sin. Take the following quotation from Mr. Pink: "Before He formed him [Adam] out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, God knew exactly how the appointed test would terminate.... But we must go further: not only had God a perfect knowledge of the outcome of Adam's trial, not only did His omniscient eye see Adam eating of the forbidden fruit, but He decreed beforehand that he should do so.... If God had foreordained before the foundation of the world that Christ should, in due time, be offered as a sacrifice for sin, then it is unmistakably evident that God had foreordained sin should enter the world, and if so, that Adam should transgress and fall." pp. 305,306. Here we see the same human reasoning that departs from what God has said, simply in devotion to a predetermined scheme. Why is it "unmistakably evident" that God decreed that sin should enter the world? It is not evident at all. God placed Adam and Eve here in perfect innocence only; and, in order that His creatures should be intelligent, He gave them specific instructions and warned them of the consequences of disobedience. To leave man as an intelligent and responsible being, God had to leave the entrance of sin a distinct possibility. We admit that God foreknew how it would be resolved, but we affirm with decision that this does not involve God's eternal decree that man had to sin. Away with such a thought! for hedge about his teaching as Mr. Pink will, it cannot but reduce if not remove man's responsibility.

Let us notice some more of his rash boldness: "To affirm that God decreed the entrance of sin into His universe, and that He foreordained all its fruits and activities, is to say that which at first may shock the reader [and well it may]; but reflection should show that it is far more shocking to insist that sin has invaded His dominions against His will, and that its exercise is outside His jurisdiction: for in such a case where would be His omnipotency? No; to recognize that God has foreordained all the activities of evil, is to see that He is the Governor of sin." p. 308. His conclusions are wrong, and the attempt to speak for God thus, is revolting. God does restrain "the remainder of wrath" and set limits beyond which He will not allow rebellious man to go; but to make God the designer and governor of sin is preposterous. He endures with much long-suffering men who boldly sin, and that against His grace. When God saw the wickedness in the antediluvian earth, "it grieved Him at His heart" (Gen. 6:6). We may well ask, Did God design and order the sin, and then be grieved about it? The thought is the boldest presumption and is rashly irreverent. In the days of Israel's great breakdown, it is said that God "had compassion on His people" and sent messenger after messenger to have them turn from their evil ways. Mr. Pink would in substance have us believe that this was not so, for He had marked out their sin beforehand so that they could not depart from it. (See 2 Chron. 36.) Did the Lord Jesus weep over Jerusalem's sinful activities in their rejection of Him, and yet dictate their course so that they could not do otherwise? To make such an affirmation can only be evil. Time and time again throughout the Holy Word of God, it can be seen that God bore in patience with that which grieved Him. What is so blind as dedication to a theory, especially in theology!

Mr. Pink takes such a verse as this: "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come" and then adds, "because God has foreordained them." p. 309. Is not this blind obsession with his own scheme? Who gave him or any other the right to interpolate those words into the text, or context?

Mr. Pink rejects the verse that says that God "wills all men to be saved," because Calvinism has already settled it that God has no desire that all men be saved; for according to it He has settled the issue by an eternal decree that they be damned. Mr. Pink recognizes no difference between God's will of desire that is in keeping with His nature, love, and His will of command, which orders and it comes to pass (p. 127).

Another error of Pinkism is to make God's foreknowledge of certain ones His "approbation and love." This he argues at some length and says that those to whom. He will yet say, "I never knew you," were not the objects of His approbation. pp. 70, 105. Now just what does such an argument prove? Does not approbation mean (according to Webster), "act of approving; approval; sanction; commendation"? If God back in eternity had approbation for those whom He chose, then election goes for nothing; for the word indicates only the approval of the thing chosen, and not supreme sovereignty at all.

On page 121, 1 Pet. 2:8 is forced to say that the Israelites who rejected Christ were appointed to be disobedient, whereas a careful examination will show that they, being disobedient, were appointed to stumble.

Election, which is God's sovereign choice, we believe, is often confused in Mr. Pink's book with predestination. These two things are not the same, for the latter is always spoken of as to something; as, to "be conformed to the image of His Son." Election is His choice of individuals, and not predestination; the latter is the thing to which He has appointed them, but neither is ever used to designate the doom of the wicked. Mr. Pink's chapter on God's Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility is a pitiable attempt to reconcile his doctrine with any offer of the gospel to the sinner. In one place he says that men are commanded to search the Scriptures, but he should know better than that. In John 5, where the verse is found, it is a challenge to the Jewish leaders, for the Lord really said to them: "YE search the scriptures, for ye think that in them ye have eternal life, and they it is which bear witness concerning Me, and ye will not come to Me that ye might have life." vv. 39, 40; J.N.D. Trans. They were guilty of willful rejection of Him, for they searched the Old Testament, and it gave ample evidence to His Person and work; but they would not come to Him. In another place, Mr. Pink approvingly quotes the Puritan Manton: "Let us do our duty, and refer the success to God, Whose ordinary practice it is to meet with the creature that seeketh after Him." p. 196. What is this but a gospel of works? And did not God say "there is none that seeketh after God"? (Rom. 3:11). Is not this setting aside of man's total ruin? which Calvinism is supposed to set forth.

The same thing is advanced on page 199: "His [man's] second duty is to cry to God for His enabling power-to ask God in mercy to overcome his enmity, and 'draw' him to Christ; to bestow upon him the gift of repentance and faith. If he will do so, sincerely from the heart, then most surely God will respond to his appeal." Can any man apart from the Holy Spirit's work in him draw nigh to God in this manner? for in coming to God thus, the man must have faith-"He that cometh to God must believe that He is." Is not this asking man to take the first step to salvation on his own

strength, when he is "without strength"? How can a man in nature "sincerely from the heart" approach God, for his heart is incurably bad (Jer. 17:9).

Other remarks on the preaching of the gospel are indeed strange: "God suffers the Gospel to fall on the ears of the non-elect.... The preaching of the Gospel to the non-elect is made an admirable test of their characters." What strange language! Is God using His precious gospel concerning His Son just to test characters? Man was proved bad long before, according to Rom. 3 His trial was over then, for it ended in the cross.

When Mr. Pink says (p. 234), "God has to put His laws in our minds, and write them in our hearts (see Heb. 8:10)," he is applying to us what strictly belongs to the houses of Israel and Judah in the Millennium-see Jer. 31:31-34. Christ in our hearts and occupation with Him in glory are the safeguards of our conduct, not the law given to Israel-of-old being in our hearts. To say this is to lower the whole standard of Christian living.

Mr. Pink is guilty of using the language of Scripture very carelessly. This is seen in many places, but on page 72 he says: "It surely does not need arguing that the Father had an express purpose in giving Him to die, or that God the Son had a definite design before Him in laying down His life." Did God the Son die? Could God die? To be specific, He was rejected and suffered as the Son of man, a title first mentioned in Psalm 8, and that in connection with His rejection and His coming reign. The Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross, and the Son of man had to be lifted up, but carelessness in use of words is dangerous and can lead to serious error, as is witnessed in Mr. Pink's statement.

On page 75, Mr. Pink makes a remark about substitution, which says: "The persons for whom He acts, whose sins He bears, whose legal obligations He discharges." This is sad, for to make Christ merely discharge our legal obligations is to remove grace and God's forgiveness. If He merely discharged our legal obligations, then nothing needs to be forgiven; but Scripture teaches God's forgiveness, and in such a way that God remains just while justifying the ungodly (Rom. 3:26).

We must now bring our review of Mr. Pink's book which sets forth the Calvinistic line of teaching to a close. Much more might be said, but we leave with our readers the challenges we have made and commend them to the Word of God-"prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thess. 5:21.

In closing, however, we wish to again affirm that we stand squarely on the fact of man's total ruin and helplessness, and maintain that besides the work of Christ on the cross for the glory of God and for the putting away of the sins of all who believe, the work of the Spirit of God in the soul producing new birth is an absolute essential in the saving of souls. We close with the words of the poet Cowper:

"Of all the gifts Thy love bestows,
Thou Giver of all good!
Not heaven itself a richer knows
Than the Redeemer's blood.

"Faith, too, that trusts the blood through grace,
From that same love we gain;
Else, sweetly, as it suits our case,
The gift had been in vain.

"We praise Thee, and would praise Thee more,
To Thee our all we owe;
The precious Savior, and the power
That makes Him precious too."

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*STRONG'S GREEK DICTIONARY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT: to complete thoroughly; i.e., repair (lit. or fig.) or adjust:-fit, frame, mend, (make) perfectly join together), prepare, restore. (see p. 325, Dec. issue.)

Correction: In our Oct. 1959, issue, we gave the approximate date of Mr. Pink's death as during World War II, but we have just been informed it was in 1955.

The Exercise of Gifts

There is a point in your letter I would just touch upon, and that is respecting the exercise of gifts. When the object in going to the Lord's table and to meetings for worship or for prayer is to "exercise gift," it is plain that the true character of such meetings is not understood. I do not go to exercise gift, but to break bread, to worship, to meet Him who has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them"; and, "This do in remembrance of Me." The very expression shows a wrong thought in the mind, giving one the idea of a performance, which it too frequently resembles. This was the case with the Corinthians. They came "behind in no gift"; but instead of using them in subjection to the Holy Ghost, to the glory of God and the edification of His children, they were exercising them (that is, glorifying themselves by them). I do not know anything more sorrowful or dishonoring to the Lord, or that has brought more, sorrow among gathered saints than this.

Real subjection to the Holy Ghost, with a sense of the Lord's presence, would at once put a stop to the thought of "exercising gifts." A sense of His presence at once displaces all thoughts of self. It is indeed most grievous, when we go to wait upon the Lord and to enjoy His presence, to find some forward, self-sufficient one making himself the center of the meeting, occupying; the time, filling the minds of his brethren with painful thoughts about himself, instead of happy thoughts about Christ, thus marring communion, interrupting worship, and hindering blessings in every way. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17)-a liberty in which the Spirit leads (and not the energy which is of the flesh). Then the Lord alone will be exalted, for no flesh shall glory in His presence. Then God is everything and man nothing. May the one object of all our hearts be that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever! Amen.

Faith Versus Reason

The very thing by which man proves there must be a God is a proof that he cannot know God. Take this world - there is evidence of skill, there must have been a designer, someone must have made it. So with a watch (the common illustration), someone must have made it. I am not capable of conceiving of such a thing existing without a cause; but if I see it there, I must get a former of it. I am so constituted that I cannot think of such a thing without a cause. This is exactly what it amounts to. God must have wrought - without a cause you cannot think it out. I cannot conceive of anything existing without finally a causing cause. But a cause uncaused is above me! The thing that proves He must be, proves I cannot tell what He is. Logic says, If so-and-so is true, then so-and-so must be; but this does not say that it is, which is a very different thing to my soul. If I say, "must be," that is a mere inference. The moment I get a testimony that it is, how different! I get a divine testimony and set to my seal that God is true. This is faith, divine faith. One thing flows from another, and I cannot help inferring. That is the constitution of man, and he must think according to what he is; he cannot think otherwise.

Intellect never discovered anything in divine things; it may deduce correct conclusions, but it never can go above itself. That is another way of looking at it. If intellect pretends to go above itself, it is an absurdity on the face of it. If it pretends to rise to God, He is not the true God at all, but the mere conclusion of my mind. God can act on me, as physics act on man; but that is not what I am. God has given us receptivity so far as that goes. It is as simple as ABC. Here is God, and if I bring Him in, it closes reasoning; and if I leave Him out, everything is false.

Nine-tenths of our ideas come from relationship, not from intellect - just as a child knows its father. Relationship is never known by reason; the mind is fond of a kind of metaphysical reasoning about this, but it is all folly. The moment relationship is formed, all moral duty flows from it, and from it alone. Duty has nothing to do with intellect. This it is that makes us totally dependent. Man at the outset tried to get out of dependence on God, and really got into dependence on the devil and his own lusts. "By every word of God shall man live" was dependence and obedience, and that was where Christ was; it is the proper place of" every intelligent creature, who ought to be both dependent' and obedient.

The Father's House

There is no portion we are more familiar with than John 14. Surely there is no chapter more frequently read and turned to for comfort-and rightly so. "Let not your heart be troubled." The Lord anticipates the disciples' being found in circumstances of sorrow and trouble. Of course He refers mainly to His own going away; but when He comes down to verse 27, and has spoken of His going away, and of giving the Holy Ghost, He again says, "Let not your heart be troubled."

Christ has been refused; men would not let Him remain here. He had a title to everything here, but He accepted this place of rejection. As long as the disciples had the shelter of His wing, they knew what it was to dwell under His shadow and have a place of refuge. Whatever opposition and trouble they met, they had One to whom they could go and tell their sorrows; they "went and told Jesus." No one can tell what it was to those disciples to walk in the Savior's presence here. Who can tell what it was to them to hear His voice, to have His ear ever open to them, and to know His care and His presence? Think what it was for these poor men, who walked in the company of the Son of God in this world, to hear Him say that He was going away, and that He was going to leave them in a world where He Himself met with rejection. He said He would not leave them comfortless; but they, for their part, looked at the terrible blank the absence of Christ would make to their souls. We must place ourselves in the very circumstances the disciples were in at that moment in order to understand it.

"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Matt. 8:20. He had not a place here, but He was going to speak to them about heaven, with which He was perfectly acquainted. He knew all that was there, though it was an entirely new revelation to the disciples. Where can you find in Scripture anything before about the Father's house? There had never been anything unfolded about it before, and now we speak about the Father's house as a place we have heard of all our lives! But think of the Lord's going away and leaving these dear ones He had drawn to Himself-ignorant perhaps, but they loved their Master.

In an earlier day (John 6), when the Lord had been speaking of His rejection, and some went back (men who had been outwardly near to Christ, and had seen what they had never seen before, but had no real link in their souls with Him- merely a passing interest-and when the moment of testing came, they parted company with Christ), yet still these disciples were true to Him; and when He said, "Will ye also go away?" there came that beautiful answer, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." They could answer in all the certainty of what they had learned from Christ, and they could answer rightly. They were not intelligent perhaps, but where a person's heart is true to Christ, everything else will follow rightly.

Christ has gone to prepare a place for those that are His in this world. It is one thing to have a place prepared outside this world, and another thing to have it prepared inside this world. The gospel of God does not propose to prepare a place for us in this world; there is the unfolding of that which is heavenly, and not the giving us a place or anything down here in this world.

Christianity gives us the most wonderful circumstances outside, but it does not propose to give us anything in this world.

"Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." We have God before us as an object of faith. The invisible God, they had believed in; now the Lord was going away, and He was to become an invisible object likewise, but He claims their faith. The Savior who stood upon this earth is now up in heaven, but He is just the same Lord Jesus and, in the midst of our sorrow, we can know how real a thing it is to be brought into personal acquaintance with Christ in heaven.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life." There is no other way to God. The fact of Christ saying He is the way, declares that man has lost the way. What man wanted was a way back to God, to the Father; and Christ says, I am that way. And, He is "the truth" as to everything-the truth in relation to God, in relation to man, in relation to time, in relation to eternity-and if you do not know Christ, you do not know the truth about anything. Your judgment of things in this world is a false judgment if Christ is unknown to you. And is He not "the life" too? He claims these three things for Himself.

Having claimed their faith, He speaks of His Father-a new thing to them. Who can tell what the Father's house is? It was home to Christ. Christ had not a home here; He came from heaven, and He measured things here by it. He saw the poverty, the sorrow, the ruin, and death here; and He came down from heavenly glory to tell us what the Father was in Himself, to open up the way to Him, and to speak of the Father's house. Is not that a divine reality? Supposing it were possible to annihilate the opening verses of John 14, would you feel a blank as to the future? Supposing you had never read them before, what a revelation it would be to you! What could be more wonderful than that the Savior should tell us all about it? It is as if He said, I do not propose to find you comfortable nests down here, and to guard you from every anxiety; but I open up a place for you in heaven.

A place! That is the whole thing in this chapter. No place here, but a place in heaven, a place for man, a place in the Father's house. And when the soul has learned that, it has got hold of divine possessions, of surroundings which God has given for our comfort in this world.

The place which Christ prepared for them is prepared for every believer in Christ today. Our place was prepared the moment Christ went in as a man. If Christ is your Savior, where He goes you go. Christ never goes anywhere that the believer has not a place with Him. As a man on the ground of accomplished redemption, He goes up into glory and there prepares a place. We have a place in heaven, not among men, but a place, a present place, in heaven. The moment Christ is our Savior, God is our Father, and, in virtue of what Christ has done, we are brought into the family of God; and that which is proper to the family, is the home. You never get into the thought of verse 2 unless by meditation and prayer before God. The Father's house is greater than the glory of the kingdom.

A Christian is a person who can stand in this world and say, I am ready at this moment to step into the Father's house. As surely and as really as Christ stood on this earth and told them what He was going to do, so surely did He tell them that He was coming back. Do you believe Christ is coming for you? I do not mean, Do you believe in the second coming? but, Is it Christ coming for you? If you believe it, it would settle ten thousand things for you. It is blessed! It is the heart of Christ which will find out in this world every loved one, wherever they are; the heart and eye and

hand and almighty power of Christ will gather them out of this world. That, next to the cross, will be the greatest expression of divine affection. Do you know that may take place now? There is not a word of Scripture to be fulfilled ere He come, and, before another hour has passed, Christ may be here. We do not know what the circumstances of the rest of our pathway may be, but we do know Christ is coming.

Have you weighed and measured everything connected with you in the light of God's eternity? Can you say, Thank God I have a Father, and a place in the Father's house; and thank God I have a future so brilliant and so blessed that nothing can touch or disturb it? Is it not wonderful? that Christ is really for us, that notwithstanding the poverty of our testimony for Him, His heart has not grown cold, and He never loved His people more than at this moment. He was never in greater activity for them. You can look up to heaven and say, Christ never loved me more than at this moment, and He is only waiting to have me with Him forever. One moment we shall be here, and the next moment up there, received unto Himself. Then there will be no separation from Christ forever. Is it not beautiful?

But the moment Satan gets anything in between our souls and the coming of Christ, it has no power over us. If the coming of Christ is a near thing to you, it has power. Make it tomorrow, and its power is gone; you cease to wait and to watch. Christ has been refused here, but He is accepted there; and the weakest saint that ever looked to Him is dear to Him, and He will come and fetch that one.

May God make His coming the next thing to us!

A Word About Feelings

Looking to feelings has caused much misery to people who did not look away from themselves to the finished work of Christ; because they did not feel that they were saved, they therefore concluded that they were not. This has been a great mistake. Feelings are no guarantee of anything; feelings and emotions have been aroused in people by music, by stories dramatically told, both good and bad. Religious feelings can be very deceptive; they may mean no more than those displayed when the women of Jerusalem wept as Jesus went forth carrying His cross. Much may be said against any reliance on feelings, however deep they may seem to be.

But there is plenty of scriptural proof that tender feeling is produced by the Spirit of God, and should not be suppressed, even as in many instances it cannot be. The prophets were sometimes so overcome by the extraordinary nature of the revelations made to them that they could not hide their emotions. Elisha wept as he foresaw the havoc which Hazael's sword was to work in Israel. The revelations made to Daniel filled him with trouble before he could make them known to the king. Jeremiah tells us his experiences in a most touching way, and his abundant tears showed how compassionately he shared the sorrows of the city and people, whose sins he denounced and whose judgments he declared. The 9th chapters of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel prove the soul-stirring sense of the sins of Israel possessed by those holy men.

When we turn to the New Testament we are at once struck with the tender feelings of Christ, the record of which is to be found on almost every page. It was not without reason that popular opinion identified Him with the weeping prophet (Jeremiah) rather than with Isaiah or Ezekiel. We might recommend a studious examination of the gospels in connection with the subject of the emotions of Christ. It will be found how sympathetic they were with human need and sorrow, and at the same time how pure and holy they were for God. He was deeply moved with His own messages, sometimes speaking out in burning denunciations, or melting compassions, in His matchless words and loving entreaties. But the frankincense of the meal offering was never absent, whether in moments of sorrow or of joy.

The tears of the great Apostle to the Gentiles flowed freely as a libation over his own self-sacrificing services, for such a heart must needs enter keenly into all that he was so truly a part of. We hear him saying, "By the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Acts 20:31. Was the letter to the Corinthians a merely official rebuke and a dispassionate exhortation? No. "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart," he says, "I wrote unto you with many tears." 2 Cor. 2:4. And his letter to the Philippians was bedewed with grief as he thought of professors who were in truth enemies of the cross of Christ (Phil. 3:18).

Such tenderness of heart is not the weakness of nature, still less is it the sham and pretense which could cover "the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out" (Mal. 2:13); and it is as far removed from the burning lips that hide a wicked heart, fitly compared by the wise man to "a potsherd covered with silver dross" (Pro. 26:23). True feeling is inwrought by the Spirit of God, and can no more be imitated or artificially produced than can the morning dewdrops.

Some have been blamed for an excessive exhibition of emotion, and we agree that there should be self-control; all the same, it is true that he who never feels too much never feels enough. But it is the absence of appropriate feeling which is most frequently to be regretted.

Service without sympathy and solicitude is like the rainless clouds that pass over the thirsty plains and leave no blessing behind them. The excitement of the flesh is indeed to be deprecated, but the stir of ardent feeling in the soul produced by the Spirit of God leads to action, and the best things ever done for God have been effected under its impulse. The liquid, glowing metal may be poured into the mold and take the shape the workman designs, but if he waits till the iron is cold his work is a failure.

It is not meant for a moment that emotions should be cultivated for their own sake, but the inquiry may be suggested why brotherly love ever has so limp a hand shake, and so chilling a demeanor, why compassions are so cold, why preaching and lecturing may become so frigid and so formal, and why joy runs so low in places where gladness should possess the heart and light up the countenance. With reference to this last remark, it may be remembered that grief and sorrow belong not to the house of God. There all is happy and joyous. We leave our own things behind when entering there, and our depression and gloom among them. Then in His presence we share, and by His Spirit feel too, the gladness proper to His house. Self-occupation, with the heaviness it may induce, will certainly bar the way into the place where all is of God.

If emotion is always lacking in our experience and service, let us seek in the presence of God for those sympathies of the Spirit and affections of Christ which certainly must, in their very nature, make us feel what we speak of and stir us to earnest action where action is called for.

Filled With the Spirit

Being filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) is the Spirit which is in me so taking possession of all my mind and faculties that naught else is there, and the things He reveals occupy the mind, and there is power from God in the soul as to them.

Giving the Heart to God: a Perversion of the Gospel

The story has been often told of the Indian chief who sought to obtain salvation by offering first his blanket and then his gun to God. He was told that gifts like these would not purchase the divine favor, but that if he wanted to be saved he must give his heart to God.

Now this sounds very right and good; and the phrase "Give your heart to God" generally passes unchallenged as sterling coin from the mint of truth. The writer, however, has met with persons who have been driven into the bypaths of doubt and legality by the use of this very phrase. Not content with hearing the advice given, earnest souls seek to act upon it. Awakened to a sense of their sinfulness, and impressed with the importance of being right with God, they kneel by their bedside and earnestly seek to dedicate their hearts to Him, and their lives to His service. With a sense of relief in having made the "surrender," they rise from their knees determined to live a holier life in the future.

Before very long, however, they find by bitter experience that their hearts, instead of beating with love to God, are just as bad as ever, and that the old sinful thoughts come crowding into their minds again with overwhelming force.

Perhaps they think that the surrender has not been wholehearted enough; so, kneeling down again, and with greater earnestness than before, they try to "give their hearts to God," and beseech Him to take them and keep them. But with what result? Alas! after the first impression of relief and expectation has passed away, they have again to acknowledge their lack of success, and soon conclude that it is no use trying any more. So they sink down into a hard, indifferent state of soul, and perhaps turn to the attractions of the world, hoping to deaden their feelings of disappointment by flinging themselves into the whirl of its pleasures.

To speak of giving one's heart to God in order to gain His favor is a great mistake, and arises from three causes: 1) a wrong estimate of your own heart; 2) a wrong use of Scripture; 3) a wrong idea of the gospel.

One who has seen and estimated his own heart in the light of the Word of truth, could never think of thus securing God's favor. Observe carefully how the heart is described in the following passages of Scripture:

"The HEART is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Jer. 17:9.

"Out of the HEART proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Matt. 15:19.

"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his HEART was only evil continually." Gen. 6:5. (See also 8:21.)

These three scriptures are very clear and to the point. They need no interpretation. Their meaning lies upon the surface. Beyond all doubt they teach that the human heart- yours and mine-is

naturally full of deceit, and incurably wicked, the source of every kind of evil, not merely sometimes, under great provocation, but "continually."

With this divinely inspired description of the heart, compare the common thought, "I must give my heart to God." What! am I to bring as a present to the holy God a thing which He Himself declares to be the very fount of evil—a thing which is desperate in wickedness, and surpassing all things in deceit? Will that induce Him, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, to look with favor upon me? One must be blind indeed to think so, or not to perceive that such a present, instead of purchasing God's good will, could only call forth His holy condemnation and wrath.

Let the reader then consider the character of his own heart in the light of Scripture, and accept the true and divine estimate of its utter worthlessness.

"But does not the Bible itself say, 'Give Me thine heart'?" asks one.

You refer, I suppose, to Pro. 23:26, but have you ever noticed the two significant words with which that verse opens? "My SON," it says, "give Me thine heart." These two words, "My son," show that the one addressed stands in a known relationship to the one who speaks. But can you claim that such relationship exists between you and God? Are you indeed His child? And is He indeed your Father?

It is not everyone that can say "Yes" to this question. God is the Creator of all, but the Father only of those who are His by redemption ties. The New Testament makes it abundantly clear that all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and they alone, can claim to be God's children. (See John 1:12; Gal. 3:26.) If you, as a guilty sinner, have trusted in the Savior, and have received from His blessed hands the forgiveness of your sins, you are indeed a child of God. In that case, by all means lay your renewed heart at His feet. To you the exhortation, "Give Me thine heart," applies with full force. You are now no longer your own, but His; and, constrained by His love, it will be your greatest joy to hold all that you have at His disposal—your possessions, your abilities, your time, your influence, your life, your self; in other words, to give Him your heart. And He is worthy!

But until you can say that you have been saved by His love and power from the worst of fates, and been washed from your crimson stains by Christ's precious blood, do not dare to speak of giving your heart to Him. You have no right to arrogate to yourself family privileges until you belong to the family circle. Passages of Scripture such as, "Give Me thine heart," "Yield yourselves unto God," "Present your bodies a living sacrifice," refer only to real believers, those who have found salvation through faith in Christ. To apply them to any others, or to use them as an indication of what should be done in order to gain acceptance with God, is to make a wrong use of them, and to sow the seeds of a sad harvest of disappointment and despair.

But the misuse of such passages is generally the outcome of an imperfect acquaintance with the gospel. People are not sufficiently careful to learn for themselves from God's own Book what God's own way is of blessing sinners.

There are two important points in connection with the glad tidings.

First of all, God is revealed in the gospel as a giving God. He did not always appear before men in this character. On mount Sinai He spoke as a demanding God. He had a full right to the homage and love of men's hearts, as well as to their obedience; and it was this that He claimed.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment." Matt. 22:37, 38.

But alas! among the thousands of mankind, not one was to be found who gave God His due and loved Him with all his heart. If then salvation could only be obtained in this way, not a single sinner would ever have been saved.

The day of demanding, however, came to an end, and the day of giving has taken its place. This is the great contrast between the law and the gospel. The law says, Thou shalt love God; the gospel says, God loves you. The law claimed love and obedience from man, and cursed him because he did not produce it. The gospel takes for granted that man is unable to meet any just claim, and therefore demands nothing, but brings every blessing with it. God is now revealed as the great and good Giver.

If it be asked, What has brought about this great change? the answer is soon given. As long as men were upon the ground of law in their relation with God, there could be nothing but a curse for them. God is too righteous a governor to suffer any violation of His law to pass unpunished. But besides being a God of unimpeachable righteousness, He is a God of infinite love. He saw that unless His wisdom devised a plan, and unless His heart made a sacrifice, He could never address men in terms of grace and mercy.

So instead of continuing to demand, He gave. And what was the gift? The very best that He could give. He "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son."

For what purpose? That He might so fully meet the just claims of God, that God need make no more demands upon men, but that He might freely give all that was in His heart to give.

It was this that took place at Calvary. The curse was endured by the spotless Victim, and the full right was acquired for God to take the place of giver instead of being a demander.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive," were the words of the Lord Jesus; and as a result of the God-glorifying work of the cross, God gets the more blessed place, and we have only to take the place of thankful receivers.

"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Rev. 21:6. This is the wonderful message that now rings down from heaven into this dark world of sin; and as if to emphasize it, and make it of even wider application, the invitation is added: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17. Mark those golden words, "I will give," and, "Let him take." Instead of the sinner giving and God taking, it is God who gives and the sinner who takes.

Does not the thought of it make your heart leap with gratitude to the giver of all good? Do you desire to make some response for His grace?

Say then like David of old, "What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits?" And let your answer be like his: "I will take the cup of salvation." Psalm 116:12, 13. Nothing could please Him better, or be a more acceptable way of showing your gratitude, than for you simply to take what He so freely offers.

"I will give"; "Let him take"; "I will take." Precious words!

If the reader of these lines has not yet accepted God's free gift, may he do so without further delay.

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

The Glory of God

The path of the glory through Scripture may be easily tracked and has much moral value for us connected with it.

Exod. 13 It commences its journey in the cloud, on the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, when the paschal blood, in the grace of the God of their fathers, had sheltered them.

Exod. 14 In the moment of the great crisis, it stood separating between Israel and Egypt, or between judgment and salvation.

Exod. 16 It resented the murmurings of the camp.

Exod. 24 It connected itself with Mount Sinai, and was a devouring fire in the sight of the people.

Exod. 40 It leaves that mount for the tabernacle, the witness of mercy rejoicing against judgment, resuming also in the cloud its gracious services toward the camp.

Lev. 9 The priest being consecrated, and his services in the tabernacle being discharged, it shows itself to the people to their exceeding joy.

Numb. 9 Resuming their journey in company with the tabernacle, the congregation enjoys the guidance of the cloud, which now attends the tabernacle, while the glory fills it.

Numb. 16 In the hour of full apostasy, it shows itself in judicial terror in the sight of the rebellious people.

Deut. 21 In the cause of Joshua, an elect and faithful vessel, it reappears in the cloud.

2 Chron. 5 On the temple's being built, a new witness of grace, the glory and the cloud reappear, to the joy of Israel, as of old.

Eze. 1 to 11. Again, in another hour of full apostasy, the glory taking wings and wheels to itself, as it were, leaves the temple.

Acts 7. Stephen, an earth-rejected man, sees it in heaven in company with Jesus.

Rev. 21:9. In millennial days it descends from heaven in its new habitation, the holy Jerusalem, "the Lamb's wife," resting above in the air, from whence it shades and illumines the dwellings of Israel again (Isa. 4:5), as it once did from the cloud in the wilderness; it will enter the temple again in the days of the Millennium (Eze. 43; Hag. 2).

Such is the path of the glory, the symbol of the divine presence. Its history, as thus traced, tells us that, if man be in company with grace, he can rejoice in it; but that it is devouring fire to all who stand under Mount Sinai. It tells us also that, while it cheers and guides them on their way, it resents the evil and withdraws from the apostasy of God's professing people.

It is very instructive and comforting to note these things in the history of the glory, which was the symbol of the divine presence.

God's Order in the Offerings

I have often thought that John 13 is better understood practically by us if we take the scene at the close of the chapter as a kind of introduction to the former portion. Of course the order of the chapter as it stands is divine, but God often deals in His Word with a subject from His own standpoint, while we habitually apprehend things as they affect ourselves. In a certain way this is very natural and just. The thing that troubles us as sinners is not, How can God be "just, and the justifier," but, How can a man be just with God (Rom. 3:26; Job 9:2)-not how is God's glory affected by my sins, but how can I get pardon for them.

The opening chapters of Leviticus set forth in type the different aspects of the work of Christ. God starts with what has (if we may so speak) the first place with Him, the "burnt offering," which expresses the devotedness of

Christ, the holy Victim, even unto death for God's glory. The following chapters give us the "meat offering," the "peace offering," and the sin and trespass offerings, which speak respectively of Christ's perfect life, tested to the uttermost, but ever rising in sweetest perfume to God; Christ's work as bringing believers into communion with God and with one another; and His work as sin-bearer. But you will notice that in 1 Cor. 15, when the Apostle states the gospel, he begins, as we should say, at the end. He says (v. 3), "I delivered unto you first of all... how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," for this is what meets my need as a sinner. Elsewhere he touches on the other aspects: Christ "our peace" (Eph. 2:14), and Christ "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor" (Eph. 5:2).

God's Wisdom and Power

Nothing can be less reverent or more inconsistent with modesty than [some man's] offhand and random statements about the Word of God. The truth is that Scripture is always perfect, but men are not competent to speak unless taught of God. Thus, humanly speaking, there are those who could appreciate the wonders of the heavens, but are dull to perceive the divine construction of a daisy; yet, to anyone that estimates aright, the perfect hand of God even in a daisy is just as clear and certain as in the solar system. It is only a question of the place which each creature of God occupies in His own immense scheme. His wisdom and power are displayed no less in the minute than in the grand and massive and sublime. Thus there is no doubt that, if the telescope opens many a wonder to man, the microscope is not less impressive. They are both important instruments in the hand of man, and they are both intended, doubtless in God's providence, to show man from the natural world a witness of divine power in what is above and also in that which is beneath. But in all things what ought to be gathered from it is not incense for man (without denying the great dignity of him who is the head or natural chief of creation), but the wonders of God in what He has wrought. A similar principle applies to the Word of God; for therein if God displays Himself in what is vast, quite as much does He appear in ways whose minuteness might easily escape observation. Everywhere perfection is claimed for God, whether in what He has made or, above all, in that which He has written, and in what He has written beyond that which He has wrought, because His mind and ways must transcend His outward works. For the Word of God is claimed the very highest place as the expression of His wisdom - His inner wisdom. For that which is connected with matter must yield to what has to do with the mind and the affections, and, above all, the display of the divine nature.

A Good Conscience

No person is so liable to a fall as one who is continually administering the truth of God, if he be not careful to maintain a good conscience. The Apostle does not say, "Pray for us, for we are laboring hard"; but that which gives him confidence in asking their prayers is that he has a good conscience (Heb. 13:18).

His Request

Let us meditate briefly on this verse: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." 1 Cor. 11:26.

If the Lord had not requested that we remember Him in death according to His own prescribed manner, Christians might still have wished to commemorate His death in some fashion. But if we were left to ourselves to devise a way to do it, there would probably be as many ways, or variations, as there have been Christians who had such a response kindled in their hearts. Even as it is, with the Lord's direct and implicit directions in our hands, there are many innovations and inventions added to or taken away from its beautiful and meaningful simplicity - a loaf of bread and a glass of wine, the "fruit of the vine."

If saints on earth had been left to conjure up some method of remembering Him, some might have set up ways that only the rich could keep-as with Mary, whose precious ointment would cost about a year's wages for a workman. Most of us could not do such a thing. Caste and society might have entered into it in other cases. But to take a loaf-that which unbroken reminds us of His body now composed of all true believers on earth, Himself the Head in heaven, and when broken reminds us of His body, the body prepared for Him, in which He suffered on the accursed tree-and thus remember Him in His body given for us is the simple way He ordained. And to take the cup, that which reminds us of His precious blood that flowed from His wounded side as the cost of our redemption, is blessedly simple and not costly. We sometimes sing:

"When blood from a victim must flow,

This Shepherd by pity was led

To stand between us and the foe,

And willingly died in our stead."

Should we, however, in our search for a way to remember Him, have hit upon this very way of which He has told us, we would miss much, for we would not have had the assurance that it pleased Him. But in keeping up this remembrance of Himself in this way, we know we are doing that which He would have us do, for He Himself instituted it just before He went to the cross, and confirmed it to us by a direct word from heaven through the Apostle Paul, who said, "I have received of the Lord" those very instructions. What a privilege it is to thus remember Him according to His own prescribed manner, knowing that it is most surely according to His mind and will.

Then a question arises about when it should be done. The Lord has left the matter open, by saying, "as often as ye eat this bread," etc. It is not laid down by legal requirements as the Jews under the law were required to keep the Sabbath. Years ago, when certain ones were engaged day after day in the examination and careful study of the prophetic scriptures, they broke bread every morning in remembrance of Him in His death. They feared that the study of prophecy might

get them away from the personal enjoyment of Christ and His death, although they considered the perusal of the prophetic word very important.

But we have a precedent for doing so each first day of the week, given by divine inspiration. In Acts 20 we read, "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread." What a fitting time to remember Him-the day that marks His mighty victory over death and all the power of the enemy-the day on which He who lay in death came forth in triumphant power. But for many saints, once in three months, for others, once in a year, will suffice. In that case, we would almost need to read that verse thus: "as seldom as ye eat this bread."

It would be a poor response to such great love to be satisfied to do it on rare occasions; and what is so calculated to warm our own hearts and keep us fresh in the enjoyment of what He accomplished, as the weekly observance of this remembrance of Himself in His death? Surely our poor hearts need to have Him thus brought often to mind.

And how long did the Lord intend that this commemorative service should be kept up? The answer is precise, "Till He come." Right up to the very time of His coming to take the Church to Himself, this feast is to be observed. Now as the end is at hand, and the moment of His coming for His own may take place at any moment, how important it is that each Lord's day, unless unavoidably detained (in which case He knows all about it), we respond to His own blessed request, "This do, in remembrance of Me." 'What a privilege it would be to remember Him, as it is written, the last Lord's day before His coming! Some will do it; may none of us be willing to let anything else take precedence over that one thing which He has asked us to do.

Some people, even real Christians, may account it "waste" to spend the time on a Lord's day to go aside from the world and remember Him in death. The disciples called Mary's action in breaking that alabaster box of costly ointment and using the contents on Him, "waste," but He approved of her devotion. Do we wish His approval?

In the days of Malachi the prophet, things were at a very low ebb. The Jewish remnant that had returned from captivity in Babylon in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah had grown cold, and even said to God, "Wherein hast Thou loved us?" They called the proud happy, and set up tempters of God as examples to follow. In such a condition, there was a feeble remnant who thought upon the Lord and called upon His name. Whatever the rest of the Jews thought of them, they had His approval. He, as it were, stooped to listen to their conversation as they "spake of Him" and caused a special book of remembrance to be written of them. He will even reward them in a day that is coming - the day when He makes up His jewels. No special book of remembrance was written for godly Jews in the days of Solomon when it was comparatively easy to be a godly Jew. We are now living in days comparable to those in which Malachi prophesied; may we then take courage from God's word of encouragement written at that time.

Jesus Walking on the Sea

Bright was the witness, as it is still, to the rejected Messiah. This glory is great, but He is greater still - Immanuel and Jehovah-and it shines out the more that men despise Him.

"And having dismissed the crowds, He went up into the mountain apart to pray. And when even was come, He was alone there, but the ship [or boat] was already in the middle of the sea tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. But in the fourth watch of the night He went off to them, walking on the sea. And the disciples, seeing Him walking on the sea, were troubled, saying, It is an apparition. And they cried out through fear. But Jesus immediately spoke to them, saying, Take courage; it is I: be not afraid. And Peter answering Him said, Lord, if it be Thou, command me to come to Thee upon the waters. And He said, Come. And Peter, having descended from the ship, walked upon the waters to go to Jesus. But seeing the winds strong he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught hold of him, and says to him, O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt? And when they had gone up into the ship, the wind fell. But those in the ship came and did homage to Him, saying, Truly Thou art God's Son." J.N.D. Trans.

Whatever His own title, and it was truly divine, our Lord had become man and loyally maintained His dependence on God, of which prayer is a signal expression. It is peculiarly prominent in the Gospel of Luke, where His humanity is most brought before us in all its lowliness and sympathy, in all its piety and obedience. And it has its due place in Mark's Gospel of His service. But the disciples on the tempest-tossed sea were as distressed as their boat, and the wind was contrary, so that they toiled in vain at the oar. He waited long enough for them to realize their danger and their powerlessness, and then came unto them, walking on the sea. Troubled at what they thought an apparition, they cried for fear; but immediately He bade them take courage. "It is I; be not afraid."

No doubt the enemy stirs up storms of every kind to alarm and endanger the disciples; but what of it, if the Lord sees all with watchful eye and fails not to give His guardian presence? This will be true and sure for His Jewish remnant in days to come as well as then when He was on earth; so it is assured to the Christian and the Christian assembly now, however few they may be. He who has His way in the whirlwind and in the tempest, with the clouds as the dust of His feet, was there in the Person of Jesus walking on the waves to say, Be courageous. It is I; fear not. They ought to have known already that winds and waves obey Him, their Creator.

Peter yields a little intimation of what was at hand. He quits the boat at the word of the Lord, and goes to meet Jesus on the sea, as the Church did, gathered to His name, apart from the Jews and the Gentiles (1 Cor. 10:32). But he quickly displays the instability of his faith. To the Christian also, Christ is all. If we look away from Him, we begin to sink as he did. What if the storm raged and the waves rose ever so high? Had the sea been smooth instead of rough, could Peter have walked across it? But he saw the strong wind and began to sink, and cried, Lord, save me. And the Lord's outstretched hand was the answer, though there was the loving reproof, "O thou of little faith,

wherefore didst thou doubt?" Such is He to us now-faithful, gracious, and superior to all circumstances. But we have to walk by faith, not by sight. Yet, if our faith fail, He does not fail to deliver.

By-and-by He will rejoin His Jewish disciples in their unequalled trouble at the end of the age, bespeak a calm which is not the Church's portion while on earth, and bring at once the old ship into the desired haven [see John 6:21]. For heaven and for the earth, for the Church as for Israel, Jesus is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Isa. 45:22.

The Jew and His Adversary

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree [or, be of good will] with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

It is evident that Jewish disciples as yet under the law are those addressed. In fact it is the rule in this Gospel as a whole; and it must be so till in the death of Christ the middle wall of partition was broken down, and thus the way was opened to reconcile both Jew and Gentile that believed in one body to God, the enmity being slain. The discourse of our Lord anticipates no such unity, nor even the call of the Gentiles, in any one clause. But it is a profound mistake that this indisputable fact takes away the profit of a single word from the Christian, though we stand now in a position of grace which could not be then. There is the richest instruction morally for every one who honors Him who spake as never man spake—a spiritual estimate of unequalled depth for those who know redemption and have the indwelling Spirit wherewith to enter in far more fully than those who heard His words of divine truth at the time He uttered them.

Thus the Lord enjoins the disciple who was bringing his gift to the altar, if he remembered that his brother had anything against him, to stop short of his devoted purpose as to God Himself, and be reconciled to his brother before returning to offer his gift. What tenderness of conscience was looked for, brotherly affection, lowliness of mind, readiness to own wrong, and desire to win an offended brother! It was the very reverse of anger, contempt, or hatred, which He had just treated, as His servant in measure re-echoed at a much later day (1 John 3:11-15). And that reverse was the Jews' case. For, absorbed in bringing their offering to the altar, they were blind to their wrong against Him who deigned to be their brother, with far more than a brother's love, born for adversity as they knew not. But they refused to be reconciled, and persisted in their offering, however offensive to God. It was presumptuous sin, and high-handed self-will under cloak of religion.

What follows points to a still more solemn consideration. Who that weighs Scripture can

doubt that the Lord in verses 25 and 26 refers to the position in which the Jew then stood with God? This was a far deeper consideration than any other brother aggrieved; their Lord became their brother. The awful truth is that He who loved Israel and would die for them, Jehovah-Messiah, was made their adversary by their perverse disobedience and blind unbelief; and His presence, which had been their salvation and best blessing if received, must bring on the inevitable crisis by their utter rejection and hatred of Him. The Lord at this point avails Himself of the occasion in His infinite grace to urge their agreeing, or making friends, with their adversary quickly, while in the way with Him. How His heart yearned over them, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings! But they would not. Their deadliest aversion was to their loving Messiah.

Hence the case was just about to come before the Judge, and the Judge would deliver to the official the convicted one; and he must be cast into prison till the last farthing be paid. It is no question here of eternal judgment, but of divine government morally on the earth; but all is plainly true of His people found guilty and consigned to suffer long. In that prison still lies the guilty debtor, till his heart turns to the One he despised. Then the word shall go forth, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare [time of sorrow, or suffering] is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins." Isa. 40:1, 2. "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?" Mic. 7:18. Is not this the true, unforced bearing of our Lord's words? One may apply it to Christian use or unchristian warning. But it is an evil to twist Scripture or to complain of those who bow to its full force. Such ignorance has led men into the fable of purgatory.

Jew's Guilt, Gentile's Guilt, City of Refuge: the Editor's Column

We suppose that all of our readers are well acquainted with the fact that anti-Semitism is not condoned in Scripture, and that Christians, of all people, should remember that the Jewish people are beloved of God "for the fathers' sakes." Any anti-Jewish feeling in a Christian is wrong, basically wrong. But our attention has been called to some remarks of Dr. John C. Bennett, dean of faculty at the Union Theological Seminary, to the effect that Christian teaching prepares people for a negative attitude toward Jews. When he was asked to comment further on this, he spoke of the " 'misuse of the Crucifixion story' when it is implied 'that all Jews-even contemporary Jews -share responsibility for the crucifixion of Christ.' " -B'nai B'rith Messenger, Los Angeles, April 15, 1960.

That such a deduction might be made by some people who read or hear of the account of the crucifixion of Christ, is possible, but not justifiable. Facts of history should not create bias and prejudice. Teaching the elementary truth of the death of the Lord Jesus is not, as the B'nai B'rith headlines its article, per se, "teaching 'Hate' in Sunday Schools."

The Bible certainly is not "anti-Semitic" or, more properly, "anti-Jewish" in any way. The Word of God gives a faithful account of man's sin, be he Jew or Gentile. It also tells of God's special favor to the Jews -from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob on down through their history. They were God's chosen earthly people, and in them God tested a choice sample of the human race to see if the race were reclaimable by His special culture; but, alas, they failed at every turn, and all the world is guilty before God (Rom. 3:19). He gave Israel promises, great leaders, His holy law, also statutes and judgments to regulate their lives, the priesthood, prophets, and kings; they, however, turned to idolatry; and later, when God sent His Son to them, they rejected Him. Now the Bible that records their failure, also promises future great blessings for them. The Old Testament abounds in descriptions of their future glory, and this is borne out in the New Testament; they are in perfect accord. But all the future blessing awaits their looking "on Him whom they pierced," and repenting of this deed.

But can the Gentile lift up his proud head and point the finger at the Jew for the crucifixion of Christ? Definitely no! Is he not also involved in the casting of God's Son out of this world? Yes, for all classes were arrayed against the Lord Jesus. The Jewish nation was surely guilty-the leaders and the people; the Pharisees with the Herodians and the Sadducees with one consent sought to get rid of Him. But what of the Gentiles? They have guilt in the same matter. In them we see the common people as expressed by the soldiers. They not only fulfilled the orders of their superiors in crucifying Jesus, but they expressed the enmity of their hearts toward Him and, consequently, toward the Father who had sent Him. It was no part of their duty as soldiers to strip Him of His robes and array Him in robes of mock royalty, to place the crown of thorns upon His head, to put a reed into His hand in imitation of a royal scepter, and to bow the knee in mockery. They also expressed their utter contempt for the lowly Jesus by spitting in His face. (Matt. 27:27-36.) The heads of the Roman government in that area displayed their hearts too: witness Herod the king-

he was glad to see Jesus when He was sent to him by Pilate. He wanted to have his curiosity satisfied regarding Him, but failing in this, "Herod with his men of war set Him at naught, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate." (Luke 23:7-12.) Then take Pilate the governor: several times he rendered a verdict of acquittal because of His innocence, but under pressure he reversed his decision and ordered a confessedly innocent man cruelly scourged and then crucified, and that without even the semblance of new evidence against Him. Pilate might disclaim responsibility on the one hand, but confess it on the other; for he said, "I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee." John 19:10. The enmity of man's heart toward God stands revealed-Jew or Gentile, ruled or ruler, orthodox or infidel, pagan or Jew. All, all had their sad part in the rejection of the "Lord of glory."

There were degrees of guilt, it is true. As the Lord Himself said unto Pilate, "Therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin." The Jews had the light of the Old Testament, which light availed them not. But the Jewish people of that day went even further in their desire to get rid of Him who had come to shepherd them, for when Pilate wavered as he thought of condemning Him whom he publicly acknowledged to be innocent, they were urgent in their demands, and said, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Matt. 27:25. Does not that augment their guilt? But while the Jews of today generally still reject Him, they are adverse to being charged with the special guilt which they at the time of His death readily accepted.

The B'nai B'rith article seems to take special exception to the thought that "contemporary Jews" share responsibility for Christ's death. What they fail to realize is that contemporary Gentiles share the same grave charge. It is axiomatic that those who are born and grow up among a band of thieves and remain a part of it are guilty of the acts of the band unless they separate themselves from it. When God looks down on this world, He sees the whole race as guilty of casting His Son out of it. It is not possible for mankind today to absolve themselves from this guilt by Pilate's ineffective mode of washing his hands and saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person." The whole human race stands guilty of the death of the Lord Jesus. It is utterly impossible to effect neutrality in this matter. It is only by an individual's confessing his sins before God in true repentance, and accepting that blessed One as his own personal Savior, that he can extricate himself from the judgment to come on Christ rejecters. One must change sides and come out for the One whom the world crucified. It is useless to plead that "I was not born then, hence am not guilty," for the whole world is ranged into two camps- those FOR and those AGAINST Christ. Reader, on which side are you?

In the Old Testament, God provided for the Israelites that there should be cities of refuge for those who became guilty of manslaughter, but were not guilty of premeditated murder. He also gave them statutes which showed He could under certain circumstances pardon sins of ignorance, but not presumptuous, or willful, sins. In line with this, when the Lord Jesus was on that cruel cross, He "made intercession for the transgressors," saying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." In substance, He was making their sin of rejecting Him, who came to them in full compliance with their own Scriptures, a sin of ignorance, so that there might be forgiveness for them if they took God's provision for it-the city of refuge.

The Apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, after Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, preached to the assembled throng of Jews in Jerusalem and charged their guilt home to their

consciences. Many of his hearers were stricken with the sense of what they had done and cried out in a measure of consternation, "What shall we do?" They were then told what they should do; that is, "repent and be baptized." They were to come out from among the people and confess their own sins and take His side. They were also told, "Save yourselves from this untoward [or, perverse] generation." They could separate themselves from them and the fate awaiting the nation; they could in that manner save themselves.

Thus, fifty days after the Lord's resurrection, the offer of pardon was made to them who according to the Lord's petition were guilty of manslaughter. In substance, Peter that day flung the gates of the "city of refuge" wide open to the very ones who had clamored for His death and said, "His blood be on us, and on our children."

And what is the city of refuge? The same chapter (Acts 2) tells us; namely, the Church of this age. Note the last verse of the chapter: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved," at that time believing Jews. They were added by faith in His Person, and confession and repentance - the latter made evident by their baptism. These were the ones who were to be saved from the fate awaiting the nation. The Apostle Paul makes use of the same truth when he classes himself with the other believing Jews as those "who have fled for refuge" (Heb. 6:18).

And how long does a Jew have to by faith remain in the Church to be safe? The Word of God answers this: "Unto the death of the high priest" (Numb. 35:25). This is indeed an odd provision, but one full of meaning if its typical significance is noted. The manslayer might have to remain in the "city of refuge" a year, ten years, or many more years, all depending on the continuance in office of that particular high priest. Now the meaning of this is plain; the Lord Jesus has gone on high as the "high priest over the house of God," and is to continue there from the time of His ascension until He calls the Church home. Thus in type, it was indicated that the Jews' only safety would be in accepting Him during this entire period of time. If a Jew professed Christianity and then gave it up and apostatized, he would be back where he was before, but in a worse plight, for he is then beyond hope. See Heb. 6:4-8 and 10:26, but remember that it is only profession and not reality that could apostatize; reality is proved by continuance.

But for the Gentiles to cry, "Christ killers," at the Jews is like one criminal who is awaiting execution taunting another who is in like case with the very charge of which he himself is guilty. May both Jew and Gentile awaken to the seriousness of their condition and repent and believe the gospel "while it is called today"; for the Scripture says, "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Heb. 3:15.

Job, Isaiah, and You

When a soul is awakened to the realization of his sins, is not his first effort, the natural effort, to turn over a new leaf, forsake his sins, and so get into the presence of God without them? But this can never be done. "Whenever one meets God for the first time, he will find himself in his sins in His presence. Nobody ever met Him in any other way.

God picked out the best man on the earth, and that was Job. The Lord said, "Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man?" There was not one like him, and God says it; but when Job finds himself in the presence of God, what does he say? abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

The Prophet Isaiah found himself in the presence of God, and probably he might have been the best man in Israel in his day; and he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim; each had six wings; with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried to another, and said, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts," etc. And what does Isaiah say? "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." (Isa. 6.)

You are not in bad company when you are in company with Job and Isaiah; but what they found when they got into the presence of God was that they were undone sinners. God alone can remove sins. If you get into His presence in the day of His grace, you will find Him for you. If you get into His presence in the day of judgment, you will find Him against you. In the day of judgment, He will be a just judge; in the day of grace He is a just Savior. Beloved friends, if you find yourselves in the presence of God in the day of grace, it will be to find He is for you and not against you; and to be in His presence as a sinner is salvation.

Job found it so; it was the end of his difficulty. "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" lifted him right out of where he was, and gave him more than he had before. That confession of Isaiah's, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips," brought the live coal in the seraph's hand to cleanse his lips; "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." And here we get a sinner with his sins, with a stopped mouth in the presence of God; and it is only to find God for him and not against him.

John 2

The second chapter of John is a chapter of signs throughout: the third day; the marriage; the vessels of purification empty; the wine failing; the water turned into wine; the, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"; the casting out of the temple the profaners of His Father's house; and the raising up of the temple of His body.

The first and second days in John 1 give us the ministries respectively of John the Baptist and Christ. John directs to Christ, the Lord gathers to Himself. With the third day, the scene is changed; we are here on resurrection ground. Jesus must come again, as they had seen Him depart. Great events belonging to that day are figured here in the marriage in Cana, and the cleansing of the house of God. The marriage of the Jewish bride will then take place, and judgment will overtake the profaners of the house of the Lord. "The day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come." Isa. 63:4. "She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework." Psalm 45:14. "Upon Thy right hand shall stand the queen in gold of Ophir." Psalm 45:9. We must not confound the description of the heavenly with that of the earthly bride. Bride of the Lamb applies to the heavenly assembly which He presents to Himself all glorious, without spot, morally perfect. The earthly bride, or queen, is also "all glorious within"; but the "within" seems to refer to the chambers of the King, the nearest relationship to the King. Compare the hundred and forty-four thousand belonging to Judah who stood with the Lamb on Mount Zion (Rev. 14). This was anticipative of the glory coming in. They are, I believe, of Judah, not of Israel (the ten tribes); the latter class had no part in the sufferings of the rejected Messiah. What a privilege to be permitted to share in His rejection! "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom." Luke 22:28, 29. The prophets who wrote after the captivity,

Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, speak of the Jews and Jerusalem in connection with Christ and the last day. Waterpots without water will no more be found in that city. "Every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts." "The pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar." (Zech. 14:21, 20.)

But see how He gives. All is from Himself in John-Himself and the Father. "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." "For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

Verse 7. "Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim." This was the measure, blessed word! oft repeated in various connections; but what marvel, from One in whom the fullness itself was pleased to dwell (Col. 1), and who but Himself could administer of this fullness? "Draw out now, and bear" - another word of power and grace. "The servants which drew the water knew." Those who do His will are let into the secret of their Lord's mind.

You will note the order: the water first, and then the wine; holiness and joy; separation to God, and then the power in the Spirit. To think of the wine first would be folly, the denial of the truth. "Fill the waterpots with water" was the word; the obedience of the servants was shown in filling them to the brim. The Holy Ghost, the living water, is the power of sanctification. Neither the heavenly nor the earthly people can be with God without it...and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Heb. 12:14. The way to real joy, to what God calls joy, is through sanctification, the Lord Himself being their righteousness.

Verses 9, 10. There were two mysteries here for the master of the feast: he knew not whence was the wine, nor how it was that the bridegroom had kept the good wine until now. The finger of God was there, nay, God Himself. Who but He could have wrought thus? And to keep the good wine until last is not man's way at all; with him all ends with the wine run out. Man's joy very soon passes away. Look at him in his most joyous and religious aspects; where Christ is not, how soon it withers away. Because it is only his, not the joy of the Lord, it all runs away from the beginning. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth." Isa. 40:6, 7.

We realize purity by walking in the Spirit, and joy as the fruit of it. The joy that we realize from mere human things, or even God's providential dealings in our favor, runs out; but He gives the true joy in communion with Himself. We abuse God's natural gifts, so the wine runs out. The Lord keeps the good wine, and He gives it in His own good time. In communion we realize it; we often say, "Thou hast kept the good wine until now." Practically, we constantly find it thus in our pathway here.

With regard to verse 4, which we passed by, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" I may remark, that the relationship referred to here represents that existing between Himself and the Jewish people. "Unto us," said the prophet, writing by the Spirit, "a child is born, unto us a son is given"; but what had He to do with them, in accomplishing His Father's business, or they with Him? "His own received Him not"; "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor"; when He called, none to answer (Isa. 50:2); when He "looked... there was none to help... none to uphold." And so in the end, when dying for that nation, as well as for others, it is said, "When He had by Himself purged our sins." Blessed word! who could be with Him there? In His path on earth He has said, "Who is My mother?" but when all was over and His work done, "Woman, behold thy son!" And to the disciple, "Behold thy mother!"

To go back a little, I suppose it is clearly understood that the marriage figured here sets forth His relationship to His earthly people in that day. Bride of the Lamb is the designation of the heavenly bride. It was Jesus who said, "Fill the waterpots with water"; Jesus who turned the water into wine. Considered apart from Him, how empty and unreal that festal scene in Galilee! The words of power were, "Fill... with water," "draw out," and "bear."

Verse 11. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believe on Him." This is His glory in connection with His earthly kingdom, His power to bring in the blessing. It is not like that of the transfiguration, nor that spoken of in the first chapter, the glory of relationship to the Father. In the transfiguration it is the heavenly glory of the kingdom in His Person - His garments shone as no fuller on earth could whiten them. They are very distinct forms of glory. (That which moves us most, and is indeed the deepest of all, is His

eternal relationship to the Father.) Peter says, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty." The glory of His Person shone there in heavenly radiance; along with that came the Father's voice, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." How attractive to the hearts of the saints, the Father's testimonies to His beloved Son! Peter would encourage them by telling them that it was no cunningly devised fable, that what he saw was the confirmation of the prophetic word.

In this second chapter also, the contemplation of His glory moves the heart. He manifested His glory, and His disciples believed on Him.

Verse 13. "And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." He goes up to Jerusalem and, finding the temple profaned, drives out the traffickers - this was a sign of judgment to come -and on the Jews asking Him, "What sign showest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things?" He answered, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." This was the sign of death and resurrection; also that God Himself was there. "I will raise it up." This passage also intimates that in His mind the house at Jerusalem was already judged. At the end He says, "Your house is left unto you desolate." His own body, then, was the only true temple of God. "He spake of the temple of His body." "When therefore He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them." Previously we are told that His disciples remembered that it was written, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up." This reminds us of the words of His youth, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" The thoughts of His youth were not name, His house, His glory - different from those of His was ever the first thought of manhood, as we speak. What the Son who is in His bosom. concerned the Father - His

A Few Thoughts on John's Gospel: Part 1

It seems that our Lord begins action in John 8 by sovereign power and a new grace which is continued in the four following chapters. This new action is consequent upon His return from "the mount of Olives," with which the first seven chapters ended.

If so, it is dispensationally in keeping (and will be morally so too in His future dealings with Israel) to find Him "early in the morning" in the temple, sitting down to teach the people. Equally in character with this position on His part was the act of the scribes and Pharisees, who brought before Him the "woman taken in adultery," that He who alone could pass judgment on the sin should take this place, and in righteousness condemn her. This scene not merely opens out the trespass to which their thoughts and intentions were limited, but has a far wider and more serious application to the nation and its rulers, under the guilt of whoredom and adultery, which should have lain heavily upon their consciences in the presence of their Jehovah-Jesus! Is not this the iniquity which has first to be judged and tried by the bitter water of jealousy, according to "the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled"? Numb. 5:29. Prophet after prophet had been sent unto them, mentioning this sin: "Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD." Jer. 3:20.

The scribes and Pharisees, who brought the woman and accused her, declared that "Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned"; but they are not in the current of His own thoughts about the deeper trespass which had been brought to light by His own presence in their midst. How could He judge or condemn the woman, and not in righteous jealousy curse them? They had set her "in the midst," and demanded, "What sayest Thou?" To His eye they had by their own act set themselves in the midst with her; and passing beyond the statute laws of Moses (see Numb. 5:17) into the depths of His own feelings about them, He refused to take their accusation. Long ago, He had sent Jeremiah, saying, "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown" (chap. 2:2); and now one greater than a prophet had come to win her heart back to Himself by His own grace. If He applied the law of Moses to the nation, as the accusers wished Him to do toward the adulteress, He must have taken "holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor... and put it into the water," and as a priest of the tabernacle bring up the question before the Lord. This He refuses to do. Now mark how He passes into His own heights and depths of love (cost what it may in the end) to justify Himself in not condemning either the woman in her sin or the nation in its greater trespass.

"Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not"; for in the love which had brought Him among them, and in which He was come to work, the sin of her who was taken in the act, and the sin of Israel, though equally under the eye of the sun for righteous judgment, was written on His heart in grace. He who came out from God, came not to

put her away, but to put away her sin, and to cleanse her and make her whiter than snow. Viewed in this light, how significant of their state, and of His own purpose in love, are the words which He spake unto them: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground." He rolls the sin and the accusers away from the floor, and thus purges it; nor will He gather up the dust thereof in any earthen vessel, or prepare the bitter water of jealousy between Him and them. He walks in a higher path of His own, which none but He could make, and so goes out of the midst and away from all their accusations and questionings, saying to them, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." He was left alone and the woman standing in the midst. "When Jesus had lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

As "the light of life," He has thus purged His floor cleaner than by the law of stoning! Blessed One, who had come to make the sin His own, and eventually pass into the ground and take the curse Himself, and die the death, that what He wrote upon it in the day of His grace may (whenever gathered up in jealousy) be pardoned and obliterated by the blood of atonement, t h r o u g h the depths of His own sufferings.

If chapter 8 introduced the national charge of Israel's departure and estrangement from Him who had espoused her to Himself, and come after her, chapter 9 is equally significant as showing their individual state and national blindness. As the former could only be portrayed by the woman taken in adultery, so in this it is by "a man which was blind from his birth." The state of the nation was not in either case beyond the typical virtue of the balm of Gilead, or the skill of the great Physician; and this instance only calls forth the power and grace of Him whose prerogative it is to give sight to the blind. It is remarkable that Jesus refuses to take up this case, in the form in which the disciples view it, when they asked, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" He will not look at it in this light any more than judge the treacherousness of the nation by the woman. In the governmental ways and dealings of God with men upon the earth, such a question might fairly arise as this; for He did visit "the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation"; but taken outside the responsibility of man, and viewed in connection with the counsels of the Father and the Son, "Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

In the pathway of the Word made flesh we follow Jesus thus showing "forth His glory"; and so the man that was born blind serves as exactly as the woman did for its display; yea, to the condemnation of those who stood around in unbelief and said they saw. As "the light of the world," He passed out from the temple, and from the midst of the woman and her accusers. In His true greatness, He refused to use that light in which He walked for condemnation, though He commanded it to shine in upon the consciences of each, so that all were convicted and made their escape from its searching power, "beginning at the eldest, even unto the last." There was yet another use of the light, and that is what we are now considering in the case of the man born blind; "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

It is a great action therefore that occupies Jesus at this time - not merely opening the eyes of the blind by sovereign power, but giving Himself as the object of sight in effectual grace to the man

and to the nation, if they will accept Him being likewise the light without which the eye, though opened, could not behold Him! In view of this, Jesus said: "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." Observe, day and night get a new meaning when they are looked at in reference to Christ's continuance and work upon this earth. "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay." The dust of the floor, and the water, and the earthen vessel which would have made up the compound in the hand of the priest for the infliction of the curse and the rot, upon the trial of jealousy and unfaithfulness, had been refused. He who alone can bring meat out of the eater (Judg. 14:14) gives us now to learn instead the virtues of the spittle, and the ground, and the mystic clay in the hand of Him that is come to work the works of God. Jesus said to the man, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." The dust of the ground, out of which the first man was made in the image of God, had been cursed because of transgression and Satan; but now, under the power of Christ, it is reclaimed and made available by the "sent" One through His spittle for bestowing an eye of faith to behold Him who came to bear away every curse, let it lie on whatsoever floor it may, and turn the curse into a blessing.

The light which had filled the temple just now and emptied it of every accuser (how could they abide in its searching power?), leaving the woman alone with Jesus, does the same thing among the scribes and Pharisees, now that the man who "was born blind" is brought into their midst. How well has the compound of the apothecary done its work in connection with the sent One? "If this man were not of God [he says to them], He could do nothing. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out."

Jesus and the woman were left alone. And now the man who had walked in darkness all his days, but who has received the light of life from Christ, and confesses His sovereign power, is turned out of the synagogue to follow Him. "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?" Two precious assurances flow from the lips of Jesus upon this inquiry, as He unveils Himself to the outcast one; "Thou hast both seen Him [the new object to the opened eye], and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him." New relations are thus formed which lead the Lord to take (in chapter 10) the place of the Shepherd to this cast out sheep, and to declare His love for the flock as well as His protecting care against every foe. He also reveals the secret of the double title and interest which the Father's love, as well as His own, have over the sheep. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."

We cannot fail to notice in these narratives how Jesus comes into the world, and accepts it just as it was by Adam's sin and Satan's power in death, to show Himself equal to every claim which the misery and wants of those in it daily and hourly brought across His path. More than this, for He passes through the world with the Father, in another and higher character than that by which as Creator-God the heavens and the earth and all that they contain were made by Him. Earlier in this Gospel, Jesus said to the Jews, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," introducing thus a power

which could turn everything round to His own glory and the development of the hidden purposes of divine love. "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." In this equality with God, there cannot be any uncertainty as to the nature of this new power, or its exercise; - "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will" is its scope; and we are the blessed objects in whom it is made good.

A Few Thoughts on John's Gospel: Part 2

John 11 gives occasion to our Lord to pass into a yet further glory upon the death of Lazarus, and to act by sovereign power in His higher titles, as "the resurrection and the life." Here also Jesus refuses to hold His intercourse with them about death, as they viewed it in relation to Lazarus, but teaches the disciples to look at it in the presence of Himself and His Father, that they may understand Him and the new doctrine which He declares. "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." How else could He act in character as "the resurrection and the life," without a Lazarus who was dead (in the twelve hours of man's day) and buried, and had been in the grave four days already, so that those who loved him said, "by this time he stinketh." Death and the grave and corruption looked at in their condemning and separating powers in relation to God in His righteousness, and man upon whom death was inflicted on account of sin, are indeed fearful; all men are guilty under the weight of this penalty, and every mouth is stopped at the grave of Lazarus. Jesus is alone here with God, in the presence of Satan and his greatest power!

The blindness of the man who was born so, whether through his own sin or the sin of his parents, left him yet alive in this world; and the transgression of the woman who was taken in adultery, and whom Moses commanded to be stoned, forfeited her own life to the curse of the law she had broken; but "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."

Jesus took this place in the temple and passed before the scribes and Pharisees as the light of it; but they left Him alone with the convicted woman as "the light" to her, who under the law, which they used, was appointed to death. He had also come to the man who was born blind and had so filled his vessel with "the light" from Himself, that the man needed only to learn further the Person who had brought to him "life" in the confession of "the Son of God" whom he worshiped.

Happy deliverance and trophies were these for themselves and for Him who was passing thus through the world in a power that was able to turn the very causes of human misery out of it, or, in the meanwhile, to find a new use for them for "the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." This is what the Lord is doing as "the potter" with the clay; and under His skill everything is seen to suit Him and serve His purpose very well for glory or beauty, and just as it is! The language and actings of Him, who now comes into Bethany as "the resurrection and the life," are all in correspondence with such a title. "He saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." In the hands of Him that quickeneth and raiseth, "this sickness is not unto death," though, speaking as those about Him to (after the manner of men), Lazarus was dead and buried, and in corruption.

Passing this, however, we see that even the faith of Martha and Mary, which recognized a resurrection at the last day" (for this was their hope), must open itself out to take in Jesus in the light of His own perfections "while it is called to-day," and learn all these lessons afresh in this connection with the Son of God. "The last day" therefore is out of place when Jesus is in their

midst to act as the resurrection and the life.

Here we may well challenge our hearts upon the importance of such a revelation as we are considering in all its parts. Now that Christ is come, He calls us out to learn our new lessons as "the truth is in Jesus" in His company, and as He teaches us, by act and deed. Old things are passed away in His creation, so that "sickness... unto death" and almost everything besides, which is the natural order and relation in Adam, have given place to another order in the Son of God, who was dead but is alive again and lives for evermore and has "the keys of hell and of death."

How slowly we make room, like the two sisters and the group at Bethany, for the display of "the glory of God," above and beyond all that sin and Satan brought into the world and put us under in the cruel bondage of death and corruption, not seeing that the Son of God had laid hold of it all for Himself, to be glorified thereby, down to the grave by means of death, and up to the right hand of the throne of God in glory, by means of resurrection! What a pathway of trespass and guilt - sin and blindness-sickness and death -have these chapters opened up; and what misery would they still record if Jesus had not passed through the midst as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and made all its stumbling-blocks His own steppingstones up to the right hand of the Father and the crown of glory which adorns the Victor's brow.

"When Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." But in this confidence of her love, she is not near enough to His own heart, in the secret that all He is, as the Son of God, for the objects of His affection; for "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." He did not come to reach His glory by preventing death, as Mary supposed (for He abode two days in the same place where He was), but came to win His spoils by means of death, and to bring in the Father of glory in due season to His own sepulcher, that He might raise and glorify His Son with other glories besides those which He had with Him "before the world was."

We may remark here that this visit of Jesus as the Son of God to Bethany, and the rolling away the stone from the mouth of the cave to bring out man who lay therein with a napkin about his face and "bound hand and foot with graveclothes," is a common companion picture to the "exceeding high mountain" in the other gospels, upon which Jesus stood and was transfigured before His disciples. His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light when "He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." 2 Pet. 1:17. The Son of man in righteousness, thus accredited to us by His transfiguration upon "the holy mount," was at His height in majesty and glory upon the earth; further, He cannot rise that way unless He goes up alone to God in the title of His own worthiness. On the other hand, Lazarus in his cave, "bound hand and foot with graveclothes," under the power of death, was sunk down into the depths of corruption! These two extremes are met in the Person of the Son, who passes through John's Gospel (not so much in the coming and majesty and glory of His earthly kingdom) as in the veiled power and title of "the only begotten of the Father," to work the works of God out upon the new platform and footing, that "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents" that he was born blind; or as to -Lazarus, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

Such a one in our midst makes the depths of this ruin and disgrace to man His own; and it is to be rolled away out of the floor in the title of Him who has written it upon His own heart, as before and

with His Father, in the fire of His jealousy, and the zeal of His house which had eaten Him up. How will He and the ground and the dust thereof (out of which Adam was originally taken) settle this new and last question now that man has been driven back "unto dust" by that death which his Creator inflicted upon him as a sinner? The work, the sad work of Satan, is before the Son of God at the grave - where man who was made in the image of God has been laid in the, separating power of death, the keys of which the usurper held upon the cave and over the captive dead-buried out of sight from those who were in tears at the felt desolation of that hour. A groan goes up to God from the heart of Jesus who has come into such a scene of helplessness and misery to "work the works of God" in the face of Satan's power and title at the grave's mouth. The groan found its answer between the Father and the Son; and "Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always." Nor is this new work of Jesus as "the resurrection and the life" to be only for the glory of God (as the first object, ever before His Son); but in truest sympathy and love for the oppressed and bereaved, He adds, "because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

In whatever way this grace could associate others with itself in such an act, it is ever the delight of His unjealous love to do! How like Himself it is, when Jesus bids them begin this mighty action, saying, "Take ye away the stone"- an act only to be rivaled, when all was over, by the same love which bade them, "Loose him and let him go." What a moment for them, for they did it! The groan to God brought its answer from above to the opened ears of Jesus. Perfect in the expression of His sympathy to the sorrowing and helpless ones with whom Jesus wept, they looked that these tears should be wiped away by power from Him, as the Son of God. Jesus is left in possession of the entire scene, and "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot." A new thing had been wrought already in the man who walked about upon the earth with his eyes opened by means of the clay which Jesus made out of it; but now a greater wonder is to be wrought in reply to the groan and the tears and the loud cry; for Lazarus comes forth from the depths of the grave at the bidding of Jesus the Son of God passing through the ruins as "the resurrection and the life." Blessed Savior, Thou hast won back all that the enemy had plucked from the hands of men, from Adam in paradise to Solomon in his kingdom and majesty in Jerusalem, as declared when Thou wast transfigured upon the holy mount. In this Gospel Thou art come down from that height, that Thou mightest be seen also to enter into the palace of the strong man and spoil his goods, and take from him all his armor wherein he trusted.

A Few Thoughts on John's Gospel: Part 3

John 12 opens after these triumphs, and presents Bethany under quite another aspect. It is no longer the house of weeping, for "There they made Him [Jesus] a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus [whom the grave and corruption had given back out of the tomb of death] was one of them that sat at the table with Him." Only one crowning act remains to be done for "the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby," in order that the counsels of the Father and our eternal blessing may be established beyond the reach of Satan's power, and outside the range of sin and the judgment of God. Who could take up this work, and by what new paths in life or death, incarnation or ascension, could such an end be reached, but by the Son of God come down from above, in the mystery of "the Word... made flesh," that He might accomplish it? In this spirit, Mary took "a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment."

Elias and Moses, the two men who appeared in glory on the top of the exceeding high mountain, spoke with Jesus of "His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem"; and He carried this secret down with Him into the house of Bethany, that He might declare it to those whom He loved, and in connection with this anointing.

To the natural thoughts of Judas (like the inquiry respecting the man who was blind from his birth, and its causes) this use of the ointment is but waste, and it should have been sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor; but Mary is in the current of her Lord's thoughts; and He said, "Let her alone: against the day of My burying hath she kept this." The act of Mary had this significance to the heart of Jesus; and He prepares Himself for the path by which the causes of human misery, and God's dishonor, and the world's bondage, should be met and overcome. Long ago the Spirit of prophecy had cried, "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction"; and now He is come, to whom that finger pointed. Jesus, knowing that His hour was come, speaks to His Father about it, and says about Himself, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He who proved Himself as "the resurrection and the life" at the cave of Lazarus, has in view His last and greatest work -expiation for the guilty. He sets Himself to descend into the belly of the earth, that the dust of the tabernacle floor- the writing of the finger-and the original curse upon the ground-may get their answer, and be set aside in His own death, as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

God the Father of glory may then take His new place, and raise up Jesus out of His grave on the third day, as the proof of His own glory over sin by death, and of our redemption; for "God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5:21. A deeper path than all these groans and tears at the grave of Lazarus, opened itself to our Lord, and Jesus said, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save

Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name."

It is no longer merely Adam's sin that is in question, or the transgressions of his posterity, multiplied as they may be; for "God manifest in flesh" has come into the midst of the family as a man, and brought every adverse power into crisis in His own Person at His cross. Satan's usurped rights over man were challenged and set aside by the perfect obedience in life and death of the last Adam. Tempted by the devil in the wilderness (when the temptations were ended), Jesus said, "Get thee hence, Satan." So again, in Gethsemane, when "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," in the knowledge that this was Satan's hour and the power of darkness; still He accepted it in the confidence that it was the path of the predeterminate counsel that led to the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby in life and in death, and at the right hand of the Father!

Obedience unto death was the only measure of His perfection as the faithful servant who loved his master, his wife, and his children, and would not go out free. The sin and

the iniquity of His own people, the flesh, the world, and Satan; the majesty and righteousness of God in their own nature, as well as in holy judgment against all evil, were gathered up by Christ at that hour, and made His own care at the cross. He not only vindicated the rights of God in His ways with men in government, but glorified the Father according to His own essential being and Godhead; and, in doing this, He proved at the same time who this Son of man must be, who did it. He who in grace to us and in infinite love to the Father made all these His own care, wrought them out in His atoning sufferings and death when "He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost."

In the righteous judgment which He bore, as the Just One for the unjust, it follows that the prince of this world must be cast out. In the same judgment which He took, and because of it, He further said, "Now is the judgment of this world." Unrighteousness must in due time be as publicly judged by God from heaven, because righteousness in the suffering victim was cast out by the world and its prince; and Jesus was with the Father.

As to Himself in grace to us, Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die."

Blessed Savior, what Thy people owe Thee! who hast broken through every yoke- borne the curse-put away sin by the sacrifice of Thyself- annulled him that had the power of death (that is, the devil)-brought life and incorruptibility to light-and set us in relationship with Thyself, and with Thy Father as our Father, and with Thy God as our God!

Chapter 12 closes, however, "in darkness" as regards those in whose midst He was thus shining forth as the light of life, and lighting up the darkest places of the earth by taking possession of them in His own glory, and so drawing out "the sting of death" itself, if they would only let Him, because He could not be holden of it. But they listened to the law instead of beholding the glory of the Son, and said, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?" and they too are offended at Him. Nevertheless, Jesus presents Himself once more to them in this group of chapters as the light of life, saying, "While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light," lest darkness come upon you.

Like the accusers of chapter 8, who went out one by one, and left Jesus alone with the woman; or like the scribes and Pharisees who cast out of the synagogue the man blind from his birth, who confessed Jesus and worshiped Him; so these in their turn compel Jesus to take an action for Himself (a last and final one), but in judgment against them; "These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide Himself from them"! The sun which had risen in such brightness upon them, and shed its beams across their path, has gone down in obscurity- and set, till another day, because of their unbelief. They have lost Jesus, and the light of the world has left it! The first seven chapters of this Gospel ended by every man going to his own house, "and Jesus... unto the mount of Olives"; they then parted company till His feet shall stand thereon another day. These five chapters finish, as we have seen, by Jesus hiding Himself from them and the world. Chapters 13 and onward open the new and blessed subject of the Father's house, and of our union there by grace in all the counsels of the Father, to the glory of the departed One who is the Son of His own love.

Thoughts on the Book of Joshua: Joshua and Caleb Part 1

This identification with God and His purposes and ways on the part of Moses and Aaron, and this twofold testimony on the part of Caleb and Joshua to the strength of His arm, and the delight of His heart in His people to bring them into the land, though adequate for faith, were insufficient to quell the rebellion. Separated as these four leaders were from all the congregation, and united in their confession of the one living and true God, He vindicated His witnesses; when the people bade stone them with stones, the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle, and He threatened them with pestilence and disinheritance. The intercession of Moses again prevailed against their sin, and they were sentenced to wander forty years in the wilderness, and to fall there. Moreover, the evil spies died of the plague, and the unbelieving generation was cut off. The confidence and repose of faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which characterized Joshua and Caleb as spies when they searched the good land, equally distinguished them as pilgrims in the wilderness throughout the forty years of their wanderings. Faith, which has to do with God alone, is not concerned about places and circumstances; it has simply to follow Him where He leads; the consequences are His care.

The forty years' pilgrimage inflicted upon the evil generation became a school time for the fuller qualifications of Joshua and Caleb when the set time should come for the crossing over Jordan, and for the settlement of the tribes in their inheritances. Moses and Aaron died in the wilderness; the high priest's garments were transferred and placed upon Eleazar as the successor of Aaron. Moreover, the Lord had given some of His spirit to Joshua, and Moses had laid his hands on him and put some of his honor upon him in the sight of all the congregation of Israel, that they might be obedient to him. Further, Joshua was to stand before Eleazar the priest, who was to ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim and Thummim before the Lord. "At his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in" (Numb. 27:21), and Moses did as the Lord commanded him; and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the high priest, and gave him a charge.

The original leaders of the people did not continue by reason of death; each one died governmentally for his own sin committed at the waters of Meribah, where they failed to glorify God; and these have now given place to Joshua and Eleazar. Moses and the rod of Jehovah's power stretched out over land and sea in Egypt for the redemption of Israel form the bright record of God's actings in the book of Exodus, as does the rod of priestly grace in Numbers, by which Aaron put away their murmurings. When the wars of the Lord begin on the other side of Jordan, these rods are superseded by the captain of the Lord's host with His drawn sword, and by Joshua with his spear; and now that "the LORD of all the earth" (Josh. 3:13) passes over before His people to put them into Canaan, Eleazar and the priests come into prominence. The ark of the covenant (in which was placed the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant -each to come out another day and be manifested in the Person of Christ and His offices in their perfection) was to precede the people in their journeyings, and to be the one object before their souls. "When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it." Josh.

3:3.

The faith of an individual like Caleb is no longer distinguished when confidence and courage mark the whole company of this newborn generation led forward by the Lord of all the earth in connection with the ark of the covenant borne by Eleazar the high priest and the Levites under the leadership of Joshua; so Jordan itself fled away from before the feet of the priests when they were dipped in the brim of its waters. The great city Jericho too fell down flat, and its giant walls also, before the ark after it had compassed about the city for seven days. In their onward progress, Jerusalem and its king, Adonizedek, with the other crowned heads, were all overcome, and hung upon five trees until the going down of the sun. Joshua is as great in his conflicts and victories against the enemies of God, as Moses was distinguished for his patience and meekness among the people of God. His jealousy for the Lord in removing the tabernacle away from the camp when the idolatry of the golden calf was in question, sanctioned as it was by the glory of the God of Israel, which appeared to him at the tent door and talked with him, was a day of remarkable moral character and beauty.

Perfect in its season as this act of Moses was, yet Joshua is equally distinguished in the day of Jerusalem's capture by the hosts of Israel. Joshua spoke to the Lord, and said. "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon" (chap. 10:12), until the people avenge themselves upon their enemies; "And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel." v. 14. The whole power of the enemy is broken up after one more battle. Now when Jabin the king of Hazor heard of these things, he gathered round himself the confederated nations of the north, south, east, and west, and came down like the sand which is upon the seashore for multitude against Israel, like the Gog and Magog nations of a future day (Ezekiel). These wars and their victories clear the way for peace. Though in chapter 11 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings, yet finally he "took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war." Chap. 11:23. In chapter 18, "The whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there: and the land was subdued before them."

Now Joshua was old and stricken in years, and he and Eleazar the priest cast lots at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in Shiloh, and distributed to the tribes their inheritances; so they made an end of dividing the country. God had thus overcome the enemy and established His people in the promised land, who were commanded to make no terms with the stragglers, but utterly to drive them out. Moreover, God had planted His tabernacle in Shiloh, and surrounded Himself with the thousands and tens of thousands of Israel, the seed of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Lastly, Joshua exhorts them to cleave to the Lord, and the people finally bind themselves with an oath to serve the Lord and to obey His voice.

Besides these public and prominent services of Joshua, the leader and commander of the people, and Eleazar the high priest who was appointed to ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord, there remain two important histories of personal faith, each perfect in itself, which the book of Joshua records: the first is that of Rahab, and the second is that of Caleb. In truth, we may say the records of Israel would not be complete without these, as not else coming up to the

mark of what God is, or giving the examples of the out flowing of His goodness and grace, wherever there was faith that could in defiance of every let or hindrance reckon upon this goodness, and cast itself upon the riches of His love!

Rahab, who was not one of the people, but on the contrary an alien and of the accursed race, threw herself upon the boundlessness of this grace that could not be confined to the limits of Israel but must illustrate itself by overleaping all bounds and saving a Rahab, even when dwelling in Jericho; yea, the conquests of the people of God in Canaan must give precedence to her. The scarlet line from her window, witness of her faith, and pledge of her identification in heart and soul with the hopes and interests of the Israel of God, was also a token to them and to her of the deliverance for which she waited. The scarlet line had saved the spies when she let them down from her house by its means, and it was to save her and all her family in the coming hour of Jericho's overthrow-and that is what faith is, whether then or now, from her window, or at the cross. The young men who were hidden by Rahab in the stalks of flax went in at the bidding of Joshua and fetched her out and all that she had, first, as they swore unto her, and then burned the city with fire.

The further history of Rahab and the dealings of God in grace with her are as remarkable as the beginning. In chapter 6, she has a dwelling place in Israel, as it is said unto this day, and in process of time is married to Salmon, one of its princes, and becomes a link in that illustrious genealogy through which the Messiah Himself was introduced into the world. In Matt. 1:5, in "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ," we read, "Salmon begat Booz of Rachab"; nor is this all, for she passes on from this genealogy to take her place in another, and got her record among the celebrities of Heb. 11, of whom the world was not worthy. Still another record awaits her, and a yet further example of her faith remains for the Apostle James to publish, where she stands side by side with Abraham, the head of the whole family of faith, and the friend of God. Likewise also he asks, Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when she had received the messengers and had sent them out another way? You see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. The chain is complete and as perfect as the grace of God always makes whatever it takes in hand- whether the pattern be "a Syrian ready to perish," a Rahab out of Jericho, a thief upon the cross, a Saul of Tarsus, or one of ourselves in this day of grace and of the coming glory.

Thoughts on the Book of Joshua: Joshua and Caleb Part 2

In Josh. 14 we are introduced to Caleb again; and in this chapter he comes before us in the double character of an heir of Judah, when that tribe was settled in its inheritance, and also as the claimant of that Hebron which had so won his eye and heart in the living associations which it recalled. Distinguished in the early days of faith and promise when Abraham walked with God, and still more so in the light of prophecy when David the king of Jehovah's appointment should take his crown and kingdom from Hebron, it became the spot of all others which was dear to faith.

Joshua's calling and work as leader of Israel was well-nigh finished, and he had become old and stricken in years and was going the way of all the earth, as he said, when Caleb's path as an heir of promise was only opening itself out. He steps forth from the children of Judah at Gilgal, and makes good his claim by reminding Joshua of what the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning them at Kadesh barnea. He comes out as young and as fresh at fourscore and five years of age, as he was at forty, when sent with Joshua to spy out the land; and he becomes in his place an example and pattern to every individual in every tribe of the whole-heartedness before God which was the source of his unflinching strength and courage. How different would have been the history of Israel, had each heir of promise been as Caleb and driven out the enemies from their inheritance, as he did from Hebron.

The language of faith has always the same character of confidence and calmness, whether it be in Caleb's assurance to Joshua that he would drive out the Anakim, or in David's account of himself to Saul, -touching the lion and the bear, and his bold avowal that so it should be with Goliath and the army of the Philistines. "I wholly followed the LORD my God," reveals the secret of faith's strength, either in first viewing the land and gleaning the grapes of Eshcol, or in wandering with the rebellious people in the wilderness for forty years, or as here in claiming the promise of Hebron from Joshua.

"Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. And Joshua blessed him." Here we get a man of the right sort, with a faith in God that does not give way before either giants or mountains, but declares, "As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in." It is a faith indeed that cannot be measured by days or weeks, or months or years; and even as to Caleb's history it is to be remarked that we get no notice of his death. The Spirit's mind takes a different turn and is marking out to us that he neither got old nor waxed feeble, nor became stricken in years, but wholly followed the Lord God of Israel, and was always young and strong. Such was Caleb the claimant. So Joshua gave to him Kirjatharba, according to the commandment of the Lord, which city is Hebron; and Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi; and he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir.

The faith of the wholehearted Caleb, which followed the Lord fully and knew neither ups nor downs, stamps its character also upon his house and family; and this is very beautiful. He would only give his daughter Achsah to the man of like faith, who could distinguish himself at Kirjath-sepher, as Caleb had done at Kirjath-arba; and Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it, and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. Nor is this all; for the faith that wholly follows the Lord God of Israel (who is, in these days, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ) is not only consciously blessed in itself, but delights and can make another as happy as itself, as Caleb did Othniel. Even further, it rejoiced to bestow a blessing upon Achsah when she lighted off her ass and, in the character of a claimant, asked her father for the upper and the nether springs.

There is a point of further interest to be noticed respecting Caleb and Hebron which comes out in the book of Judges and travels on to its completion in the records of Samuel and the Chronicles; for the faith which has to do with God must connect itself with His interests and all that He does. The personal faith which made Caleb illustrious as an heir and a claimant likewise gave its character to his relations and his family. He gathered those round himself, like Othniel, upon the one and the same principle of confidence in the God of Israel, which had been the secret of Caleb's unflinching strength and wholeheartedness. It was upon this pathway that he introduced Othniel at Kirjath-sepher, and as was the father, so was the son-in-law; for after the like term of forty years in the school of God, and in the midst of the declension of the tribes, this Othniel became the first of their deliverers, and of their judges. He was (as his name implies) "the hour of God" to them in their distress; for the Lord had sold them into the hand of the king of Mesopotamia for eight years, because they had forgotten Him, and served Baalim and the groves. But when the children of Israel cried to Him, the Lord raised up a savior for them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother; and the Spirit of the Lord came on him, and he judged Israel and went out to war. Moreover, his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim. So the land had rest forty years, and this rest might have been perpetual, which Othniel had recovered, but for the subsequent idolatry of the tribes. And Othniel died. Deeper corruptions set in, and other deliverers were raised up till, after the times of the judges, came the reign of the kings.

In the end of 1 Samuel 30, the introduction of David and his men, and their faith in God, lights up again the darkened page of Israel's royal history; and Hebron is mentioned as among the places where David and his men were wont to haunt, when by Saul's jealousy and persecution he was hunted like a partridge upon the mountains. After the death of Saul and Jonathan by the hands of the Philistines, and David's lamentation over them upon Gilboa, he inquired of the Lord whether he should go up to any of the cities of Judah; and the Lord said to him, Go up; and David said, Whither shall I go up? and He said, Unto Hebron. Caleb, the heir in Judah, and the claimant of Hebron years before, had given place to Othniel as their judge and deliverer of Israel from the oppression of the king of Mesopotamia. As we know, the prophet Samuel took the precedence when the Aaronic priesthood had been corrupted by the profligacy of Eli's sons.

David, the man after God's own heart, had been anointed as king from out of the midst of Jesse's sons; so David and his wives and the men that were with him went up with their households, and dwelt in the cities of Hebron. The men of Judah thus take up the purposes of God and the blessing pronounced on this tribe by Jacob, and in their turn carry them out by anointing David king over the house of Judah. The scepter and the law-giver are thus united, and kingship is now established upon Hebron-the bright answer to the faith of those who, in expectation of the day,

gave commandment concerning their bones, and lay buried there in the caves of Machpelah. So David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul became weaker and weaker, and unto David were born sons in Hebron; and the time that he reigned over the house of Judah was seven years and six months. The man to whom God gave testimony, this son of Jesse who should fulfill all His will, schooled as he had been in the sheepfolds of the wilderness, was now to be invested with the entire majesty and royalty of the throne, and as the shepherd of Israel.

"Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.... And the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed My people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel.... And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him." 2 Sam. 5:1-10. One object of the Lord in raising up David is stated in chapter 3:18: "By the hand of My servant David I will save My people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies." As the anointed king, his first exploit was to gain Jerusalem out of the hand of the Jebusites, for it was to be the city of the great king, and the appointed earthly center for the manifestation of his kingdom and the glory of the throne of Israel. The inhabitants of Jebus said to him, "Thou shalt not come up hither. Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which is the city of David. And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruah went up first, and was chief. And David dwelt in the castle." 1 Chron. 11:5-7. Traveling days and the journeyings of the children of Israel are well-nigh accomplished. God had brought them into Immanuel's land, and to the city of Jerusalem, and to Mount Zion; moreover, David was there and in their midst as the anointed king.

Thoughts on the Book of Joshua: Joshua and Caleb Part 3

The tabernacle in the wilderness was about to give place to the temple and the glory, and the next great business of David was to bring up the ark of the covenant from the house of Obed-edom. "And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites,... and said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought Him not after the due order." 1 Chron. 15:11-13. Unless the sense of God and His grace keep the heart in the enjoyment of His favor as better than life, the knowledge of Him is soon lost, and Israelites become identified with Canaanites, as the book of Judges declares, and reduce themselves to the same level. Baal had his altar in the house of Joash the rather of Gideon; nor could the mighty man of valor do the deeds of one against the hosts of the Midianites, with his three hundred and their lamps and pitchers, till he had thrown down this altar and first put himself right with God, as a worshiper. The Lord will not give His glory to another. Until Baal and his altar were thrown down by Gideon, there was confusion in Israel; for God and the idol were both there!

Here, we may observe, that in the history of the Judges no mention is made of the high priest or any other priest, or even a Levite [except the Levite who became an idolatrous priest], either for counsel or for action in any public way, from the time of Phinehas the son of Eleazar down to Eli. The knowledge of God was lost, and the relations in which He had stood with His people by the ark of the covenant violated and forgotten. When David sought to bring up the ark into the hill of Zion, after its capture by the Philistines, so unacquainted was the sweet psalmist with the ways of God respecting it, that a new cart and the two milch kine did as well for him as the shoulders of the Levites.

Priesthood and the priests, through the breach upon Uzza, come out brightly once more with king David, in the persons of Zadok and Abiathar; "And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings. And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod." 2 Sam. 6:13, 14. It is after God is thus owned by David and all Israel, that the Lord makes a covenant with him concerning Solomon, saying, "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be My son," etc. It is along this glorious pathway of God's purposes and counsels as to the throne and kingdom, the people of Israel, and the land of promise, the temple and mount Zion, the city of Jerusalem and the coming Messiah, that God has ever led the faith and expectations of those whom He called out to walk with Him. Abraham, Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Caleb, Othniel and the judges, David and Solomon, and all that family of faith, looked for a city whose builder and maker is God, and desired a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.

In the epistle to the believing Hebrews, we join them upon the heavenly calling as the Spirit by Paul guides their faith along this line of their ancestors; only adding this, "But ye are come unto

mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

The summing up of this epistle may very properly close these remarks on the ways of God with His people. This cloud of witnesses (some of whom have been noticed) are here brought forward into their new place, in association with our Lord; and though dead they yet speak, claiming their heirship and blessing through the Seed of Abraham and of David, which is the Christ of God, and wait for His second coming. Jesus is also presented as the "author and finisher of faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God," waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. By His death and resurrection, He has made the mercies of Jehovah's covenanted grace sure to Abraham and to David, as their Son and Lord, and secured the promises as Son of God, and made them "yea, and... Amen, unto the glory of God by us."

The mystery of the Church, as the body of Christ and the bride of the Lamb-the mystic Eve-is now being formed by the Holy Ghost. God is calling out from Jews and Gentiles the quickened members of the body, into union in life and righteousness with a rejected Christ, hidden in the heavens; for whose shout we wait, to catch us up to meet Him in the air, and to be changed into His likeness. Creation, likewise which groans under the bondage of corruption, waits in hope of its deliverance into the liberty of this glory, when the manifestation of the sons of God is come to pass. Only the last few touches remain to perfect the mystery of God, and the Lord will rise up from His place and quit the Father's throne to sit as Son of man upon His own throne in His own glory. Israel redeemed and brought into this scene of blessing, under Christ and the bride (the heavenly Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, having the glory of God) will then understand its own mystery that God has "provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." How gladly will they sing in that day, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." J.E.B.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

Everything will come out at the judgment seat of Christ! There can be no disguise at all in the pure bright light before the throne of the discernment of Christ, where all the full intelligence of His mind will beam out on His people. It is not the question of being saved, but of how we, as saved ones, have been walking. Is it strange, since it cost Christ so much to accomplish that sacrifice, that when He gets His people home He should say, Now let Us look at their walk, no question as to their acceptance; but let Us see whether they have walked according to My Father's thoughts, who would have His sons and daughters walking as those who are separated unto Him by the blood of His Son-as those bought with such a price- did they walk worthy of it?

King Jehoshaphat: Be Careful in Your Choice of Companions

Our readers will know that Jehoshaphat was king of Judah at the same time that "Ahab the son of Omri" was king over Israel. While David and Solomon reigned, "Israel" included the twelve tribes. After Solomon's death, the kingdom came to Rehoboam his son.

The young reader will remember that "all the congregation" of Israel came to Rehoboam, and complained that Solomon had made their "yoke grievous"; they desired a gentler rule. So the "old men" of experience were consulted; the young men also were asked to give counsel. The advice of the aged men was to act tenderly and with consideration toward the people, adding, that if the king acted in this manner, "they will be thy servants forever" (1 Kings 12:7). This advice was good. On the other hand, the young men advised Rehoboam to say to the people, "My father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions," a cruel instrument of punishment, a long and heavy scourge armed with numerous knots and with spikes of metal. As people grow older, they generally become kinder and more thoughtful for the sorrows and afflictions of others.

"Speak gently, it is better far To rule by love than fear"; and we have read that "you do not alienate men by allowing them opportunities of improving their condition, and a slack chain is less easily broken than a tight one." Well, Rehoboam drew the chain so tightly that it broke. In other words, the people revolted. "So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day." It was only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin that clung to Rehoboam; the ten tribes, now called "all Israel," made "Jeroboam the son of Nebat" their king.

Accordingly, from this time, we read of kings of Israel and of kings of Judah, and of these kings on both sides, some were good and others were bad.

Among the kings of Israel, you will remember Ahab the son of Omri, of whom it is said that he "did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him." While of Jehoshaphat, who reigned over Judah at the same time, it is written, "And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the first ways of his father David." As Israel was going on badly, Jehoshaphat strengthened himself against them. In those days riches were a sign of the favor of the Lord, but it does not follow that those so favored made a right use of the riches with which they were entrusted. It is to be noticed that Jehoshaphat's having "riches and honor in abundance" is connected with his joining "affinity with Ahab"; and we shall see what trouble this affinity or fellowship brought him into, though he did not get into trouble all at once-people seldom do. "After certain years he went down to Ahab to Samaria." 2 Chron. 1:8: 2.

In the fable of the owl and the moth, the latter inquired of the owl, how she should act with regard to the candle which had singed her wings; the owl counseled the moth to keep away from the candle, saying, Don't so much as look at the smoke. You scarcely know where the first wrong step in bad company will lead you, but certainly it will lead you away from God and from happiness. Ahab was evidently very much pleased to get Jehoshaphat down to Samaria; and, as people say, he made a good deal of him. Young reader, be careful of those who would make a good deal of

you; for when this is the case, we are inclined to make a great deal of ourselves; and Satan then often entraps those who are filled with self-importance. Would you not rather be like the violet than the showy poppy? It was easy enough for poor Jehoshaphat to be persuaded to go up with wicked King Ahab to Ramothgilead, after being feasted and feted. And now, he who had strengthened himself against Israel and refused to walk in their godless ways, says to one of their wickedest kings, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war."

This was just what Ahab wanted. Ahab may have said something like this: Now you are what I call large-minded and liberal, not like those narrow-minded people who will not join with one in well-intentioned schemes. Yet, however Ahab might flatter, Jehoshaphat was far from feeling comfortable. He had been in the habit of seeking the Lord's mind before engaging in any enterprise. "Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to-day." It was serious that Jehoshaphat had not done this before he went down to see Ahab. Let us learn to do the right thing at the right time. How many mistakes in life are made because young people do not inquire "at the word of the LORD" first, but perhaps think of it when too late!

How different and how serious is the difference between what is said of King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chron. 17 and 18. In the one it is said that he "strengthened himself against Israel," and in the beginning of the other it is stated that he "joined affinity with Ahab." This signifies a fall, and is not without its warning to ourselves. In chapter 20 Jehoshaphat is assailed by enemies. "The children of Ammon, and with them other besides the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle." The king is cast upon God; his language breathes a true spirit of dependence and real humility. He prays thus: "O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee."

All teaches us that we have greater reason to fear Satan as a flatterer than as an open foe. The serpent is subtle, the lion ferocious, and Satan is likened to both. He deceives, and he also seeks to devour. King Ahab did not come against Jehoshaphat as an enemy, but rather as a friend. It is here that we need to be on our guard. Jehoshaphat is by no means comfortable, however liberal he was in offering to be one with Ahab in retaking Ramoth-gilead. Who had ordered Ahab to undertake such a service? He was like certain prophets of whom we read: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied." Jer. 23:21. Jehoshaphat felt this. Moreover, Ahab was for madly rushing into battle with the Syrians without asking counsel of God or of anyone else. Now we come to a solemn matter for consideration. When men have made up their minds to do evil, like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil, God in His judgment may allow them to be deceived. Our Lord said in His day, "I am come in My

Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." Blindness from God is terrible indeed. Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel had four hundred prophets - they were numerous, but false-and the Lord permitted an evil spirit to deceive them all. "There came out a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will entice him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the LORD said,.. go out, and do even so." 2 Chron. 18:20, 21.

One might have supposed that what was said by so many must be true, but this shows how we may be misled by the devil with a cloak of sanctity. The four hundred prophets prophesy before the

deluded king, and say, "Go up; for God will deliver it into the king's hand." This is, as I have said, very serious and shows the need of prayer and acquaintance with the mind of God as revealed in His holy Word.

But Jehoshaphat was not satisfied with the four hundred prophets. Poor Jehoshaphat, one cannot but pity him; he was in a false position from which it was not easy to escape. He was like the poor fly that gets entangled in the web of the spider. "Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him?" said Jehoshaphat. Yes, there was one more - Micaiah, true, but persecuted. Ahab says, "But I hate him." He was hated because he was faithful. Wicked men and women do not like to be told the truth; they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. But soon it was shown that this solitary and persecuted prophet was right, and the four hundred fawning prophets were wrong. Ahab went to battle (and Jehoshaphat with him), but not to prosper, as the false men had said he would. God did not deliver Ramoth-gilead into his hand. On the contrary, a man drawing a bow at a venture sent the arrow unerringly through an opening in Ahab's armor and fatally wounded him; "and about the time of the sun going down he died."

Poor, but truehearted, Jehoshaphat cried out to the Lord; he knew where to look in danger and distress.

We cannot conceive Jehoshaphat King of Judah saying to another king outside of Israel,

"I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee," etc., as he so blandly replied to Ahab. No! it is an easier matter to discern evil in its open form and character in the world, and thus unhesitatingly to shun it.

Was not Ahab a king of Israel? Could he not say, "Know ye not that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still?" Is it not our common enemy who has taken Ramoth-gilead from us? It is here, we repeat, where discernment is needed; for while evil in its true and undisguised character is avoided, evil in its untrue character, so to speak, is often fallen in with. Albeit, Ahab was king of Israel, the people of the Lord, yet for all that, he was a very wicked man indeed. It is recorded of him that he "did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him." 1 Kings 16:30, 31.

Who would suggest that it was a proper thing for Jehoshaphat to have fellowship with such a wicked man, even if he were king of Israel, the favored people of God? Could anything be more shocking than to go on with wickedness, because pursued by those who bear the Lord's name? Far be the thought!

No less a number than four hundred prophets had assured Ahab and Jehoshaphat that it was not only the Lord's mind that they should go to Ramoth-gilead, but that He would deliver it into the king's hand; yet it is not to be wondered at that Jehoshaphat was dissatisfied with their flippant statement, for had not the Lord permitted a lying spirit to put the words into the mouths of these flattering prophets? If it be asked why the Lord put this lying spirit into their mouths, it must be answered by saying that it was done judicially, and has an analogy to the terrible statement respecting Ephraim who was "joined to idols," and meant to go on with them at all costs. "Let him alone" (Hos. 4:17). God could not go with Ahab in his undertakings, however commendable they

might appear to be, even if Jehoshaphat would accompany him.

One is led to wonder why King Jehoshaphat did not use means to extricate himself from the mess he had got himself into. Ah, herein lies a grave cause for consideration, which is, that the result of an evil alliance and position is to blind the eyes, and to enervate the spiritual energies of the soul. Look what a dragging it took to get Lot out of Sodom! Something of the seductive power of sin must have been known by the poet when he stated-

"Vice is a monster of such hideous mien,

As to be hated needs but to be seen;

But seen too oft, familiar with her face,

We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

It would appear that there was an abundance of false prophets in Ahab's time. Not long before, the faithful Elijah had caused four hundred and fifty to be put to death (1 Kings 18:40).

Besides these there were four hundred more "prophets of the groves" which did eat at Jezebel's table. It is ever so-more false than true. Four hundred false prophets to one. It is a striking disparity, and tells its own story. Yet, blessed be God! He has His precious piece of gold where there is so much brass - His faithful Micaiah, as distinguished from the faithless, flattering, timeserving four hundred. Micaiah, of course, must suffer; but he has God with him, is in communion with Him, and it has been asked, What can compensate for the loss of communion with God? It might be said that the four hundred prophets all spoke the same thing; they were unanimous. They were, but it was a unanimity with Satan as its author. Their counsel was taken, but it was not the counsel God would have been pleased to give; "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of Me." Isa. 30:1.

Doubtless it often proves trying to be singular, but if faithfulness to God is the cause of being singular, may we have grace singular to be.

Ahab escapes not, notwithstanding his cleverness in disguising himself, "for a certain man drew a bow at a venture [in his simplicity], and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness:... and about the time of the sun going down he died." 2 Chron. 18:34.

Through the mercy of the Lord, it is written of Jehoshaphat that he "returned to his house in peace," although not without rebuke; for "the son of Hanani... went out to meet him," and put this important question to the erring, if repentant, king: "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD." 2 Chron. 19:2, 3.

God had been very gracious to Jehoshaphat. He always is gracious; while rebuking the king, He did not forget that there were "good things" found in him. God in His holiness judges wrongdoing, but does not overlook any good in His people. It is said, "and by Him actions are weighed" (1 Sam. 2:3). God in His grace forgives, but then His ways in government must continue all the same.

When King David exclaimed, "I have sinned," the confession was met with, "The LORD. hath put away thy sin"; but we know if grace puts away the sin, government must decree that the sword shall not depart from the house of David. Repentance, to be effectual, must be heartfelt, yes, and

conscience-felt too; and then the fruits of repentance will be seen. Jehoshaphat was now not only desirous of being right with God himself, but we observe that he was desirous of bringing back those he had led astray; for had he not said to ungodly Ahab, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war"? But now "he went out again through the people from Beer-sheba to mount Ephraim, and brought them back unto the LORD God of their fathers. And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city, and said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts." This sounds wholesome. Jehoshaphat has learned a deep lesson; he now knows what a valuable thing is the fear of the Lord, and how serious a thing it is to act without the sense of that fear. We fear that a good deal of so-called repentance is very superficial and shallow. It is refreshing to read what the Apostle Paul says of the Corinthians: "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation.... In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." 2 Cor. 7:11.

Have any of our readers left their first love, or are they in danger of leaving it? Or are they unequally yoked with unbelievers? Cry to the Lord, for only He can deliver. Jehoshaphat might have used on his restoration, and after having nearly lost his life through backsliding, the words of the Psalm: "Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He hath broken the gates

of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder." Psalm 107:13-16.

Knowledge of the Truth

God has so ordered it that the soul is led into the truth by the Holy Spirit who will not act apart from the glory of the Lord Jesus. He may use means if He please, but every attempt to perpetuate truth in the abstract is vain. Apart from Christ it cannot be truly known. There is something exceedingly gracious of God in it, because in this way He keeps up the freshness of the truth for His saints. He does not permit it to become a science, which is in fact what theology is and boasts to be. But where, when, ever, did a soul drink of the living water in those dry beds?

Last Half of the 20th Century: the Editor's Column

Insecurity, instability, and uncertainty have dogged the steps of the human race since the day that our first parents walked out of the Garden of Eden. They had given up God for the devil's lie and had to reap the sad consequences. Estranged from God, the murderer Cain set about to make himself and his posterity happy by building a city into which he put the basic ingredients of the cities of the 20th century- wealth, commerce, industry, and the arts and sciences. Cain was no infidel or atheist, but a religious man whose religion was obnoxious to God. There are countless members of his religion today - a religion which is a sign of integrity, of affluence, of respectability in the world, but which leads men down to destruction and perdition. "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain." Jude 11. It is a natural religion which sets aside the atoning work of Christ and the shelter of His shed blood as the absolute for a sinner's acceptance before God.

Now that we are in the last half of the 20th century (which century many are inclined to view as the summation of all knowledge and wisdom) we may well take a look at the world at large and see what it presents. It is filled with contradictions, of which we will name a few. Great inventions have made life easier for much of mankind, yet man is not happier or more contented. He has increased his knowledge of the sciences and the wonders of God's creation about him, but he is as great a stranger to God as before; in fact, in his boasted knowledge he has, by and large, rejected the true knowledge of God. He has increased food production many fold, but more people go to bed hungry than before. He has harnessed rivers, stopped plagues, controlled many insect invasions, but has never been able to control himself. He has unleashed the power of the atom and now lives in dread of the monster he gave birth to. He has curbed the ravages of many diseases, but not his own lusts. By marvelous ingenuity he has increased the speed and means of communication so that all the tales of crime and horror reach him quickly; and then he makes a spectacle of such things to further debase himself and his posterity. He has made the earth relatively smaller by his conquests of the sky and the oceans, and now has nowhere to hide if some madman decides to let his missiles fly. In this country, both numerically and percentage wise, there are more people enrolled on the church registers than ever before, so that one might expect a decrease in crime; but rather the crime rate is disproportionately high and still increasing. So where is all the boasted progress leading? To the climax of man's day, the worship of a man and of Satan, and to the greatest folly and rebellion of all time, when man will actually attempt to fight against the Lord's Christ when "He ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isa. 2:19, 21), and comes back with the armies of heaven to execute judgment on those "that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:8). But fellow Christians, our Lord will soon call His own from this world to be with Himself. "Even so come Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20. It is indeed a bright prospect for all true believers, but a foreboding and fearful peril to those who reject or neglect God's great salvation.

One of the greatest changes of this century is the awakening and muscle-flexing of the non-Caucasian peoples, which, if the Lord does not come and bring an end to man's day, would ultimately bring an end to Caucasian supremacy. The multitudinous hordes of Asia and Africa

armed and marching forward could swamp the rest of the world. Added to this posing threat is the fact that International Communism is the driving force behind the Asian resurgence, and is at least suspect of stirrings in Africa. Already one third of the world's population is under Communist domination; and that all came about in much less time than the sixty years of this century. The world is marching with quickened pace to doom. Everything portends the coming judgment of God upon the world which, when He came into it in grace, spit in His face and cast Him out.

Most of the great European powers which had colonies in Asia and Africa have either lost them thus far this century or their hold on them is tenuous and of very doubtful duration. During only one month, July, 1960, four African countries became independent nations, while Italy, France, Britain, and Belgium watched the old colonies chart new and untried courses. In October, Nigeria becomes independent. Within two more years, three other countries are scheduled for freedom. The dark continent with its great natural resources is on the move, and many untried leaders of doubtful allegiance between East and West will come forward. Add the future uncertainties to the already nearly overwhelming perplexities of the present day and it is not difficult to imagine the heart-breaking consternation that is fast coming when men's hearts will fail them for fear.

The latest upheaval has been the terrible strife in the newly independent Congo. Man glories in his independence, but when there are no restraints he becomes the plaything of the devil. Creature perfection is characterized by dependence and obedience; these were the marks of the perfect Man when He was in this world. The Lord Jesus as that perfect Man said, "Preserve Me, O God: for in Thee do I put My trust." Psalm 16:1. He also said, "I do always those things that please Him [the Father]." John 8:29. The first man, Adam, was disobedient unto death; but the second Man, the Lord from heaven, was "obedient unto death" (Phil. 2:8).

Man's fall was brought about by disobedience to God, and independence of Him. So with man today; when he pleases only himself in independence, and there is no human power to restrain him, he becomes an abject slave of his lusts, and the willing tool of Satan. True liberty is only known by those who know the Lord Jesus as their Savior, and have been set at liberty from slavery to self and to sin, and thus are free in the "perfect law of liberty" to please another- even God. (Jas. 1:25.)

Russia has been a master at sowing strife and discord and then encouraging a minority to overthrow duly constituted authorities; then their tools often find they are in worse slavery. What a strange mess man has made of the world!

Look around today and you will find no segment of the world really tranquil and at rest. All of Europe is uneasy; West Berlin is like a time bomb, with none but Russia knowing the setting of the timing device; Italy has just been through the throes of another political crisis; France is involved in a war in Algeria which it is unable to terminate; Eastern Europe is either under the heel of Russia or straddling the fence between East and West; Belgium will feel the strain of the Congo crisis for some time. Then to the east, Turkey has been through a revolution; Nasser of Egypt and Syria still threatens Israel; Russia is stirring minorities in Iran (Persia) to topple the Shah from his throne; India has border troubles with China; Nepal and other countries on the periphery of China have the same; likewise Tibet is suffering, as China seeks to assimilate its people while ruthlessly crushing resistance; Indonesia has been in trouble from within and without; to say nothing of Indo-China, Korea, Formosa, and other nations who are threatened constantly; nor of Japan and the bloody

riots instigated by Russia. We have already considered Africa. In North America, all are aware of Russia's designs either to isolate its powerful nations from the rest of the world, or to eventually break them by force. To the south, militant and die-hard communistic groups are active in nearly all lands. Cuba has already succumbed, and the future is uncertain for any nation.

(As we go to press, another national upset with international complications has taken place, this time in the tiny, strategic kingdom of Laos in Southeast Asia. It lies between Communist nations, and between Communist and non-Communist countries. Less than one year ago it was rescued by the United Nations from military aggression by Communist North Vietnam. Now in the space of only a few hours, the pro-Western government fell in a military coup; and the new government ordered the French and the United States military advisers out of the country. This is another defeat for Washington, which has spent much money to bolster Laos as a buffer state; now Moscow gloats. It is all a part of a new kind of warfare, called "cold war," which is global in outlook and effect, and in which the International Communist conspiracy is the most adept. How wonderful it is that our rest and hope are in heaven, and not here!)

Thus the 60's of the great 20th century finds the world with all its boasted progress ripe for the day when peace shall be taken from the earth (Rev. 6:4). Then what of man's achievements? what have they brought him? He has lived without God, and he is about to perish in his own delusion.

Students of international affairs, and great statesmen, are often at their wits' ends. They see and grapple with matters that they cannot settle; they see the ominous trends toward disaster and are powerless to reverse or stay them. It is easy for one politician to criticize another, but not one of them is master of the situations they encounter; they can only go on from one crisis to another, devising some way to play for time, hoping for some method of escape that is not apparent. We quote herewith the "second Psalm" which shows that God is still supreme, and "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." All of man's puny efforts will come to naught, and in the end the One whom the world rejected will reign and subjugate all of His enemies.

"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. Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." Psalm 2.

"Thou art coming, gracious Savior,

Ah, to see Thy face we long;

Thou art coming, blessed Savior,

Righting all creation's wrong.
Nation rises against nation,
Trouble spreads from shore to shore.
Thou art God's supreme salvation,
Come, and chaos shall be o'er."

Looking Back in Decades: the Editor's Column

Many decades in world history have with the passing of time acquired certain descriptive appellations, such as "The Gay Nineties," which expresses a carefree way of life as characterizing those years at the end of the 19th century.

If we come down into the 20th century, we think of the 30's in relation to the worldwide depression which only really terminated with preparations for war. And the 30's ended with World War II in progress, but not yet engulfing most of the world.

The early 40's were marked by world conflict of major proportions, and then the aftermath of desolations and privations, with many nations either bankrupt or near to it. Another important milestone of the 40's was the coming of the nuclear age, which was introduced by the explosion of atomic bombs over Japanese cities.

Perhaps one of the most significant events of the 40's was the re-establishment of the nation of Israel as an independent power such as it had not been since the year 606 B.C., since Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of the land. But equally significant is the fact that in spite of all Jewish aspirations and efforts, the old city of Jerusalem remains in the hands of the Arabs as a remarkable evidence of the accuracy of the Lord's word: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24.

Remarkable reconstruction of nations in Europe, and of Japan, were clearly evidenced in the 50's; but the struggles between East and West, which became known as the "cold war," as each side jockeyed for positions which would guarantee it either world mastery for itself, or at least deny it to the other side, dominated the scene. This strange conflict is still unresolved.

The 50's probably produced more great changes than any previous ten-year period in history. Egypt became a world power again; many eruptions in the Middle East gave Arab nationalism a thrust forward; the West lost ground to Russia in that vital area, especially vital to the West because of its dependence on Middle Eastern oil. In these years Egypt seized the Suez Canal and, in spite of threats, coercions, war, and even appeasements, still maintains a hostile attitude to Israel and seizes her ships and cargo attempting to pass through the canal. The ages-old conflict between the descendants of Jacob and Esau became more unrelenting than for centuries—a precursor of even greater Arab hostility to Israel.

The advent of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons of destruction made the old gunpowder invention of the 13th century seem insignificant, for in all probability more destructive power was made and put into arsenals during the 50's than in all the intervening years put together. The very height of man's scientific achievements are the weapons of destruction and the means of delivering them; these are now in storehouses awaiting the greatest holocaust of his creating.

During these fateful years Soviet Russia made her entrance into the small group of nations which before had a monopoly on nuclear and thermonuclear devices. On Russia's exploding her first

atomic bomb, she began her challenge of the United States for the world supremacy which the United States had within her grasp at the close of World War II. From the day when the United States alone possessed these lethal weapons, and abounded in the means of their delivery, the balance has been steadily tipping more and more from the West to the East. Not that it has gone all the way yet, but the last fifteen years have witnessed a great change.

In August, 1957 Russia brought forward an intercontinental ballistic missile (I.C.B.M.), and the last years of the 50's were marked by rapid Russian achievements in this field; this was punctuated by her successes leading to positive dominance in the space field. So, as the 50's faded, added emphasis was laid on Russia's ability to deliver the most frightful weapons to any spot on the earth.

If we look through the 50's in a religious way, they are marked by increasing apostasy in Protestantism. Every vital truth of the Word of God is being attacked, and that by men using the language of orthodoxy. The truth of the Lord's imminent return as the Christian's proper hope and expectation was departed from by many who a decade ago not only held but preached it. The blessed hope was relegated to an insignificant place, or given up entirely, by those who fell in with making the truth of Christianity an adjunct to world betterment; and so their long range plans caused them to act out the part of the servant who says, "My lord delayeth his coming," by saying, "Oh, Christ may not come for 500 or 1000 years yet." While these departures from the truth were going on, other Protestant leaders championed the great ecumenical movement for a "world church." All this is a forerunner of the predicted coming of that apostate merger, "BABYLON THE GREAT" (Rev. 17 and 18). And the 50's saw Roman Catholicism make great strides forward. Truly, according to the Word of God, the great ecumenical church will have headquarters in Rome. The 50's furnished additional proof in the religious world that the time of the end is at the threshold.

A uniting of Western Europe, a dream of warriors and statesmen for centuries, took certain forms as blueprints were drafted for implementation of such a union. At first, military alliances and organizations were planned and then formed; and later, economic unions looking to further integration of fiscal policies were adopted. A century ago, students of the prophetic scriptures would have been astounded at the strides made during the 50's toward the creation of the predicted revived Roman Empire. Much of the impact is lost on Christians today, by reason of the whirl of other matters, and by a false sense of security due to the world's unprecedented prosperity. Never have so many people had so much material prosperity as they have today. This has a dulling effect on spiritual perception to the obscuring of the sobering fact that judgment is about to break on this world, and that first the Lord must come for His own.

The seventh decade of this century does not really begin until next January, yet men do speak of the 50's and the 60's; and so we may also take a glance backward and forward on this basis. What do the so-called 60's portend? Do they presage good or evil? There certainly is no reason to suppose that the decided trends of the 50's will be reversed in the 60's. Russia and International Communism is certainly not going to give up any of the tremendous gains made during the 50's, nor will they forego their planned expansion in the years ahead. They are bent on world control; by that we do not mean that they will achieve absolute world dominion, for the Word of God indicates the survival of an apostate Christendom into those years of trouble that are coming on the earth, as also the dominant power of the revived Roman Empire at the close, even until the Son of man

comes out of heaven and subdues all His enemies. Dan. 2 tells of this as a stone which will smite the image on its feet, thus breaking it all to pieces. The image represents the period of Gentile sovereignty, while its feet represent the revived Roman Empire.

But the future in the 60's is somber indeed, and foreboding. It is estimated that Russia today has a two-year lead over the United States in accurate missiles which are operational. The so-called "balance of terror" of the 50's is not sure in the 60's. This equation of terror against terror was supposed to be so evenly balanced that neither side would dare to use it. Unquestionably the West has more deadly weapons on hand than Russia, but a smaller number in the hands of men with better instruments of delivery could bring havoc on the scene. The West still leads in manned aircraft of great speed, but they are too vulnerable to match the I.C.B.M.'s.

Another potential for actual destruction is the fact that other nations too will soon have nuclear and thermonuclear devices. Reckless abandon in the use (or threat of use) of these weapons increases with the number of nations possessing them. China is working hard to join the number of nations possessing these terrifying weapons. It is estimated that she will soon succeed. And today China is more intransigent than Russia, and plays dangerously close to starting a world conflict. Even a comparatively small nation which would acquire nuclear weapons and the means of delivery could conceivably threaten and blackmail great nations unless the larger ones were willing to risk much destruction, or actually engage in a war that could scarcely be stopped short of calamity for the world. And so, as the world looks into the 60's, there is no room for any complacency. Disastrous trouble is in the offing.

Nor is Russia's (together with China's) determination at economic superiority to be overlooked. This could be as disastrous as any other form of world domination.

Now and then, information gets out about what men in high places in the United States, whose business it is to assess the global situation, say about the dangerous omens. Some have said that this nation faces the most serious problems in its history. The reason we refer to the United States is that it has not only felt secure, but has been a bulwark of security to many peoples. And so, as we go into the 60's, the whole world teeters dangerously on the brink of disaster. The time is fast approaching when men's hearts will fail because of fear. There is going to be "distress of nations, with perplexity" (Luke 21). There is nothing sure and certain in this poor world. Then why should we Christians have our hearts set on a place that is marching steadily forward to certain doom? Surely

"It is not for us to be seeking our bliss,

Or building our hopes in a region like this."

The world takes some comfort from "summit conferences" and talks of disarmament. Some think that the ban of bomb testing is a sign of progress toward peace. All this is mere wishful thinking. Man is like the demoniac who could not be bound, "no, not with chains" (Mark 5:2-4).

Has man ever yet developed a means of mass destruction and not used it? The answer is, No. Surely "Destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known." Rom. 3:16, 17.

On another front, well may we ask, Is apostasy about to recede in Christendom? No; instead, it will accelerate. Church buildings may multiply, and endowments increase, but Christendom is marching onward to full-blown apostasy. Is infidelity about to retreat? Is atheism about to be abandoned? Are the schools about to reverse the trends and start teaching that God created man, and that he is responsible to Him? Of course not. In the earliest grades of the common school, the teaching that man evolved from a little scum, or what not, is being actively propagated. And one who believes God's Word is looked down upon and branded as an ignoramus. But these things remind us of some in old times whom the world despised and even martyred, while God said, "of whom the world was not worthy" (Heb. 11:38).

So now as we look back at the rapid progress toward the time of the end, which came about in the 50's, and soberly reflect on the acceleration of these developments in the 60's, we can rest in His promise, "Surely I come quickly." May our hearts be more weaned from the attractions of this doomed world, and not be full of fear as we contemplate its end, but look up with a bright and steadfast hope-"The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." And may we have a ready response to His promise, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20. May we be like those of whom the Lord spoke in Luke 12, who will be so living in the good of that hope that we will be ready to open to Him immediately. May we have our loins girded and lights burning, waiting and watching for Him, and not have anything to set in order before we can welcome the thought of His being at the door. Another has recently said to us, "Waiting is readiness; watching is expectation."

The Lord Jesus As Revealed to Faith

The thoughts of men, even of such as had the Word of God in their hands, come out in this chapter in singular and open contrast with the mind of God. "Man at his best estate is altogether vanity." They wished to make Jesus a king, and this (though certain to be in due time, according to the prophets) for their own ease, interests, and honor. He had made bread for them to eat in the wilderness. This they coupled, and rightly, with the promised Son of David in Psalm 132. He in a special way will provide His poor with bread. Literally and fully that day is not yet come; socialism would antedate it. But the salient point of this chapter, as of others in the Gospel of John, is to show that men, and even Israel, were in such a condition that no predicted blessing, no royalty even of David's Son, could of itself meet the depth of the evil and ruin. Consequently, our Lord Jesus teaches all through that there was incomparably more needed by man, infinitely more and better in God's love and purpose. It was not only that He was heir of David's throne; He is the bread of life, which should come down from heaven and give life to the world. David did not come from heaven. But the bread for man to eat and find life eternal is He that comes down from heaven, which was in no sense true of David, nor transmissible from him.

Had our Lord been only the Son of David, He had never been the giver of life eternal. He is the Son of David in the truest and fullest sense; and so the Apostle calls Timothy to remember "Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead, according to my gospel." It might not be so according to the manner that others looked at the gospel from another point. But according to Paul's gospel, the Son of David must not merely be born and live and die and reign, but must be raised from the dead. And why? It is because Paul, looking at the accomplishment of the promises, the glory attached to the Son of David, pressed more profoundly than any that the door of death and resurrection would secure even those blessings and set them upon an immutable foundation.

Much more, when it is not merely the accomplishment of promise, power, and glory in the kingdom, but God's moral glory and the deliverance of sinners. Then it is the communication of God's grace and truth to the soul, when the saints set apart to God by the power of the Holy Spirit are now brought into the communion of God's nature, love, and mind, and made meet not only for worship and the witness of Christ, but for partaking of the inheritance of the saints in light. This is what the soul learns here: a divine Person come down from heaven and become man, that believing man might live (vv. 32-50).

Even so, the Lord further declares that not even His incarnation, beyond measure blessed and precious as it is, could alone have secured all. He came down with life eternal in Him, and giving it to the believer, not of the Jews only but of Gentiles also-life to the world. For he that believes on Him has life eternal. But there was another and a most solemn test necessitated by the nature and character of God, as well as by man's total ruin. Therefore it is that He should not only come down from heaven as the bread of life, but give His flesh to be eaten and His blood to be drunk (vv. 51-58). Thus was He not only a divine Savior come down as man here below, but He was going to

prove and display His grace even in death. And this is the central truth of the chapter. Therefore does He say, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." v. 53.

No matter how men pay other honor to Jesus, it avails not. Set Him on any imaginable throne as the crowd here wished, it is to no purpose and is rejected by God and His Son. Jesus then as now refuses and spurns a dominion of that sort. If the thing be conceived at all, it must leave Him to be a king without a people. Such was the ruin, such the sin, that He could have no subjects, not even one nation meet subjects for Him. The King must sit upon His throne without a people! But this could not be so. He would die atoningly, the Just for the unjust. He comes not only to bring the best good, life eternal, unto us, but to efface righteously all our sins. What must become of the evil that we were and had done? He suffered "once" for us (it was enough), and in His sacrificial death He brings us out of our evil and makes us to be the holy and joyful and righteous possessors of everlasting life. All is of His grace.

There is thus no longer a barrier against the outflow of His love. Till His death, there was. He had, as He said, a baptism to be baptized with; and how He felt it! Till it was accomplished in His death, He was straitened. Could He show His love as He desired to do? The love was there; nothing in us ever created it in Him or in the God who sent Him to save us, guilty sinners. Love, grace, filled His heart; but it was shut up and hindered from flowing freely till sin was judged in His cross. Now by His death (for without this all other obedience, however perfect, availed not), God was glorified even about sin itself! Only then and thus the love of God in respect of us was fully manifested (1 John 4:9, 10). And we who believe are its objects, and in mutual love, as verses 11 and 12 proceed to show.

The Lord give us to rejoice in such a Savior-not a mere royal Messiah, but an incarnate and atoning Savior to God's glory. It is indeed divine love proved in Christ's emptying Himself to become a man and a bond-slave; and when thus, humbling Himself, and being obedient as far as death, even the death of the cross, that we might not only have life eternal in Him, but our sins effaced in His death.

The Lord of Hosts and the God of Jacob

"The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." Psalm 46:7, 11.

Twice in this psalm, we get these remarkable words, "The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge"- a psalm, too, for the sons of rebellious Korah. It is like the wonderful refrain, "For His mercy endureth forever," occurring again and again in the Old Testament, and repeated 26 times in the 26 verses of Psalm 136-a mercy that nothing can exhaust or break down, a mercy that endureth forever.

"The LORD of hosts"! What a comforting expression! How it stills our hearts in the presence of all the power of the enemy! "The LORD of hosts," whose unlimited power and boundless resources make the victory certain. And if we can complete the sentence, however feeble and weak, we may well remain in perfect peace. "The LORD of hosts is with us." Absolutely feeble, absolutely weak, it matters not. "The LORD of hosts is with us." That settles everything.

No wonder the psalmist, with less light than ourselves, could triumphantly exclaim: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah."

Well might he pause (Selah!) at this point. What more suggestive of stability than the earth we walk upon and the everlasting hills? What more emblematic of instability than the restless sea? Yet when the most unstable thing overcomes the most stable, the psalmist has 'something immovable on which to rest. "God is our refuge and help."

Restless, troubled child of God, do you thus know "the LORD of hosts"? Do you think the power of evil can ever conquer God or thwart His purposes of love? No, how can you doubt for one moment?

The psalmist knew "The LORD of hosts." That was enough to deliver him from every tempest of fear. But we can go a step further. A step? -yes, many steps. We know God as FATHER. He numbers the hairs of our heads. He puts our tears in the bottle of His remembrance.

"Precious thought, my Father knoweth,

Careth for His child;

Bids me nestle closer to Him

When the storm beats wild.

Though my earthly hopes are shattered,

And the teardrops fall,

Yet He is Himself my solace,

Yea, my 'all in all.' "

When "The LORD of hosts is with us" we can be at peace in the midst of the storm, but when in spirit we are with Him we are where the storms come not. What a change!- from the waters roaring and troubled, and the mountains shaking, to the peace that surrounds Him. We read in the next verse: "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved."

What a contrast! We are across the bar of the open tempestuous sea, and have reached the calm, sweet haven of rest. The storm and the raging waters are exchanged for the river of God-calm, peaceful, gladdening, refreshing!

Doubtless this refers to an earthly Jerusalem-an earthly Millennium. But can we not transfer the simile and put it in the setting of Christianity? Do we not know what it is to leave our own tumultuous circumstances and make a journey in spirit into that region where the river of His pleasure flows, where there is no trail of the serpent, no blight, no sin, no death, no unsatisfied longing?

The storms but drive us nearer home, and the discipline of a Father's hand may all be turned to account. But how blessed to anticipate the peace of home, to drink even now of the river of His pleasure, ere we reach it and know it in all its blessed fullness and reality!

But the psalmist goes on: "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God."

For the present God is our refuge; in the future He will subdue all the power of the enemy, and the whole earth shall be at rest. Let us learn our lesson: "Be still, and know that I am God."

"The God of Jacob." Why not the God of Israel? "The LORD of hosts" gives us the sense of His power; "the God of Jacob" tells us the kind of people He shows mercy to, and the omnipotence of that mercy. None but God could have gone on with Jacob, and at the last brought him to worship as, in the weakness of death, he leaned upon his staff.

"The God of Jacob." How it appeals to us, for is there not something of Jacob in each of us? Scheming, plotting, covetous man! As Jacob, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, to commend him. He took advantage of his brother's dire need to deprive him of his birthright. He deceived his blind old father to secure it. His after-course was marked by intrigue and weakness. And yet the psalmist at a later date could write, "The God of Jacob is our refuge."

Was it that God condoned Jacob's plotting and wickedness? Far be the thought. And if we find, even as Christians, the tendency to evil within and constant failure that only our God knows, is it that He can go on with sin? We may be outwardly irreproachable in conduct; but how many, nay, all of us, mourn over our weakness and inconsistency? How, then, can God be the God of Jacob-our God?

Is it not that He breaks down the Jacob in us? Do we not all halt upon our thighs more or less? Step by step God weakened Jacob till at length, in the very weakness of death, he could, leaning on his staff, worship.

And so "the God of Jacob" deals with us.

May we trust "The LORD of hosts" more-may we submit to the way of "the God of Jacob" with us, and blessing will result. What a God is ours! How perfect are His ways!

The Lord's Supper: a Memorial of Christ

The Lord's supper is to be eaten as a memorial, or remembrance, of Christ. This is His own interpretation of it. The bread was mystically His body, the cup His blood, accomplishing the remission of sins. To eat and to drink of this feast was to express participation in the virtues of His sacrifice (1 Cor. 10:18); and it was thus eaten in remembrance of Christ, in token of the soul's fellowship with what His sacrifice had accomplished for sinners. It was therefore to be eaten simply with thanksgiving. The remembrance of what the sacrifice of Christ had accomplished would properly be accompanied with nothing else. No supplication would be needed, because it is a finished work. The table records a full remission.

To pray about the forgiveness of sins would be discordant with the voice of the table. It might be quite unintended, yet really a reproach upon the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. It would be building again the things which Christ had destroyed, and, in the language and sense of Gal. 2, making Him the minister of sin, making His blood like the blood of bulls and goats, only the remembrance and not the remission of sins.

But to surround the table with thanksgiving, to there praise Him for redemption, this would be knowing the work of the Lamb of God which the feast sets forth; and, accordingly, it is always as thus accomplished that the Scripture presents it to us. Jesus, on taking the bread and the cup, gave thanks. (Matt. 26; Mark 14; Luke 22.) He did nothing else.

The Lord's blessing and giving thanks are, to all moral intents, in the same sense; and in the like mind the Apostle calls it the cup of blessing, which we bless - the cup at the taking of which we bless or speak well of the Lord - because by that cup, or by the death and blood-shedding of Jesus which it sets forth, He has rightly entitled Himself to praise, or to hear Himself well spoken of. Again, Paul speaking of it says that when the Lord parted the bread and cup among His disciples, He simply gave thanks (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

It may be accompanied with confession of sin, because it implies our utter death in trespasses and sins; and therefore that would not be in discordance with the supper.

But still we do not find this attended to in any of the passages that refer to the supper, but in them it takes the simple form of a season of thanksgiving for the remission of sins. It tells us, not like the blood of bulls and goats, that sin is remembered, but that it is remitted. This is its peculiar characteristic voice. To give thanks in company with it is harmony; to pray about our sin is discordant.

But the service of self-judgment or self-examination may well precede this feast, because we are by the remission of our sins called to holiness; just as of old the feast of unleavened bread accompanied the Passover. And as the Israelites celebrated the redemption from Egypt, they also searched the house for leaven, (always used in Scripture as a type of evil) that they might put away all that offended Him who had redeemed them. This is most fitting, and indeed without this, the Passover was not kept.

So with us, if we do not walk in a self-judging spirit, we do not discern the Lord's body; in other words, I believe we do not keep the feast of the Lord aright if we are not honestly and holly searching for and removing all that would grieve the Lord. (1 Cor. 5; 6.)

This is in as full harmony with the table as thanksgiving is; and the cleansing out of the leaven should be done both from the congregation (1 Cor. 5) and from our individual selves (1 Cor. 11:28). For we are one in our standing, an unleavened lump; and so should we be in our desires and diligence of soul. For the Lord's supper shows forth the Lord's death till He come.

The death of Jesus had this twofold sense: it published remission of sins and all God's hatred of sin; it released the sinner and condemned the sin. And the supper eaten, both with thanksgiving and in the spirit of self-judgment, will be accordant with this. Eaten with prayer about our sins, or with a careless heart, in indifference to our sins, it will be utterly discordant.

It is to be a Passover in truth, with a feast of unleavened bread; and therefore there is to be the expression of conscious redemption from Egypt, the place of death and scene of judgment; and this is thanksgiving. Such I believe to be the simple character which the Scripture puts on the supper of the Lord.

Many indeed and various have been the additions which human religiousness has attached to it; but the Word of God reproves them.

There is no warrant for consecrating the elements or separating them by process to the service of the Lord's table.

The bread and the wine are laid on the table as bread and wine; broken and poured out to figure the broken body and shed blood of Jesus; but no form or process is needful to give them title to lie on the table for this use.

Neither, do I judge, have we warrant for asking God to bless us in the observing of this service, simply because it is our worship, or setting forth of His praise, rather than a waiting upon Him for some benefit to ourselves, either in soul or body. We bless Him in this act, rather than ask Him to bless us; we speak good of His name in it by setting forth the memorial of what He has done, and do not supplicate Him to bless us or to speak good to us by conferring some fresh favor upon us.

I believe, if the Word of God were very simply attended to in this matter, this beautiful service would be relieved of much that religiously encumbers it; and the table would give forth no uncertain sound.

Supplication about it, moreover, is utterly discordant with the service of this table; confession of sin might be made, but there would be no felt need of it; consecration of the elements would be altogether refused; seeking a blessing would not be thought of by the worshipers, but our blessing Him because we are blessed.

These common things would be laid aside, and the service would be an act of worship, giving the Lord the honor due unto His name in this age, until He comes again to gather fresh honors from the lips of His countless redeemed ones.

And it is this service or worship that ought to gather us to His name every first, or resurrection, day; and then things may be there given us of the Lord, such as the word of exhortation or of teaching, or the voice and spirit of supplication.

But we should go there to give to the Lord His praise such as the table (which publishes through the riches of His grace the remission of our sins) does give Him.

This is entering His house, duly entering it, with praise, because He has already blessed us, and not with supplication for a blessing; entering it in the spirit of conscious victory over our enemies; tearing asunder all bonds, and silencing every tongue that would charge or condemn us.

It would be entering His house in a way worthy of that house, where mercy has rejoiced against judgment, where the sword of the destroying angel has been gloriously staid; where, therefore, the spirit of the worshiper says as he enters, "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD." Psalm 27:5, 6.

May His courts be thus entered in spirit now! for the bread and cup are there, and the veil is gone.

Love and Brotherly Love

The common notion is that brotherly love is charity, and indeed its most perfect form. This is a mistake, as this passage shows. That brotherly love is a most sweet and precious fruit of grace is most true - precious in the heart that is filled with it and precious in its mutual development - but it is not charity. We are told to add to "brotherly love" (J.N.D. Trans.), "charity." The reason is simple: in brotherly love, brethren are the object, and though when genuine and pure it surely flows from grace, it easily in us clothes itself with the character which its object gives it, and tends to limit itself to the objects with which it is occupied and be governed by its feeling toward them. It is apt to end in its objects, and thus avoid all that might be painful to them or mar the mutual feeling and pleasantness of intercourse, and thus make them the measure of the conduct of the Christian. In a word, where brotherly love ends in itself as the main object, brethren become the motive and governing principle of our conduct, and our conduct as uncertain as the state of our brethren with whom we may be in contact. Hence the Apostle says, "Above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness"; and another apostle, "and to brotherly kindness, charity."

Now charity is love; but will not this seek to exercise brotherly kindness? Undoubtedly it will, but it brings in God. "God is love." "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Hence it brings in a standard of what true love is, which mere brotherly kindness in itself never can. It is the bond of perfectness for God, and God in active love is its measure. Brotherly kindness by itself has the brother for object; charity is governed by, exists in virtue of, the conscious presence of God. Hence, whatever is not consistent with His presence, with Himself, with His glory, cannot be born by the heart which is filled with it. It is in the spirit of love that it thinks and works, but in the Spirit of God by whose presence it is inwardly known and active. Love was active in Christ when He said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers"; in Paul when he said, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you."

Charity, because it is God's presence, and that we feel His presence, and look to Him in it, is intolerant of evil. In mere brotherly kindness, the brother being the object before my mind (and, if God's presence be not felt, we do not realize it, nature coming in so easily and here in its most unsuspected and kindly shapes), I put man before God, smother up evil, keep kindness going, at any rate so far exclude and shut out God. Charity is His active presence, though it will be in love to man; but it gives to God all His rights. He it is that is love, but He is never inconsistent with Himself. His love to us was shown in what was the most solemn proof of His intolerance of evil, the cross. There is no true love apart from righteousness. If God is indifferent to evil, is not righteous, then there is no love in grace to the sinner. If He abhors evil, cannot suffer it in His presence, then His dealings with us as sinners show the most perfect love. If I have ten children, and they go wrong, and I say, "Well, I am to show love to them," and I take no account of their evil ways; or if some of them go wrong, and I treat them as if there was no difference to my mind in their well doing or evil doing, this is not love, but carelessness as to evil. This is the kind of love looked for by unconverted man; namely, God's being as careless as to evil as they are; but this is not divine charity which abhors the evil, but rises over it, dealing with it either in putting it away or in needed

chastenings. Now if God were indifferent to evil, there is no holy being to be the object of my love - nothing sanctifying. God does not own as love what admits of sin.

The Love of the Truth: the Soul's Security

I fully believe that just and divine understanding of the present state of things must be accompanied by this trial of mind - that while the great advance in all the accommodations of life, and in the general refinement and culture of all classes is acknowledged, and the public boast in such things is allowed to have apparently most full warrant; all this is known to be only in progress to a something that is to meet the most awful judgment from the hand of the Lord - because it is to be a mocking of all that is blessed, and not really blessed - the kingdom of man, and not of "the Lord and His Christ" - the energy of the god of this world, and not of the Spirit of the living God.

This divine intelligence must bring its sorrows, for the saint possessed of it will hear that condition of things continually gloried in which he knows is most fearful. And the more the ground of this carnal and ignorant boast is day by day unfolding itself, the more does the saint discover the ripening of human pride and the progress of that fair structure of the enemy's device which is to bring the judgment. At midday there is to be night in the world's history. God will turn man's noontide splendor into the shade of night; as touching His own, He will turn the shadow of death into the morning, and at their evening time give them light (Zech. 14).

Such, I doubt not, is the position which the intelligent believer takes at this moment: one of sorrow to his spirit, as he listens to man every day; one of joy to his spirit, as he listens to the promise that the great redemption is only drawing the nearer, through all this that he looks at and listens to. His security lies in "the love of the truth" (2 Thess. 2). He is not to expect that the hand of God will interfere to stop the progress of this fair structure. He is not to commit himself to the hand, but to the word of the Lord. It is rather of the Lord to allow pride to get food whereby to nourish and swell itself, and to let the world prosper by its own devices. The soul that looks for providential visitations on all that is, and will be doing, is in most imminent hazard. "The love of the truth" is declared to be the soul's security.

How fair were the deceits practiced at Jerusalem in the days of Ezekiel! Paintings on the temple walls, and exquisitely wrought, I doubt not. Ancient men, men of character and of religion, kindling clouds of incense before them, adopting the delusions! Women melted into tears while occupied with their idols, exhibiting the fine and generous flow of human affections which is so attractive to the heart!

And the sun in his beauty, and rising at the east, worshiped! (Eze. 8). What witchery was all this! What fascination for the religious and amiable sentiments of our nature!

What protected the heart of the prophet while surveying it all? The hand of the Lord did not interfere; rain did not come down to quench the cloud of incense. It was allowed to wreath itself upward in lovely forms, as though He who dwelt in the house was accepting it. Another hand did not appear to write on the wall, over against the paintings, their judgment. No; but the word of his divine guide interpreted all these fascinations and called them "abominations"! This was the prophet's safety, and it is ours in a like moment. The truth that interprets according to God all that

is now going on must preserve our souls from taking part with this "fair show in the flesh," which is so much apparent comeliness, but real "abomination."

Man's Trial of Jesus: Results Godward and Manward

This scene, or rather these scenes of Matt. 28 are very striking and solemn. In them we see Satan and man acting, doing deadly work, and telling out their thoughts and feelings toward God's holy One - He in meekness and grace submitting to all. Here He is seen as the unresisting Lamb, whether in man's cruel and wicked hands, or in the hand of Him who made Him sin for us, and dealt with Him accordingly. It is marvelous the perfection that comes out in this lowly, self-emptied One as He passes through these scenes. Moral glories surrounded Him, which God alone appreciated, which our hearts, even now, but feebly enter into, but which will be a wonder to us throughout eternity.

The blessed Jesus has passed through the trying scene of Gethsemane; sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, has rolled down from His precious brow; the dark, deep cup of anticipation has been emptied. He has submitted to be captured and bound by His enemies; and, having been led to the high priest's palace and condemned by him, He is sent to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, to receive further trial.

"And Jesus stood before the governor." How strangely inconsistent! God revealed in flesh, standing at the bar of man - man daring to try at his faulty tribunal his Creator; the King of kings standing bound, to be adjudged of the princes of this world; the holy One of God, Jehovah's fellow, in the power of man, unholy man, to do with Him as he pleased, staying not in his Satan-led course until he had stained his hands in the blood of the Lamb of God! Herein indeed was the culmination of human guilt, the worst of man's acts, the full expression of his badness and enmity against God; but at the same time the heart is relieved by the lowly grace, the profound humility, the unresisting love, and perfections of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Man's side could not be darker, but how wondrously bright that of the Son of God!

Man's trial of Jesus was a moment above all others in man's history. Scan the past and look into the future; however bad it may be, it seems not to rise up to this. Man's future attempts to dispute with the rightful Heir (Rev. 19:11-21) will be but the result of his seeking to get rid of Him here. His hands stained with His blood, and having succeeded in casting Him out of the inheritance (Matt. 21:33-41), what more natural than that he should seek to retain an inheritance that he has "seized," and dispute the claims of the Son of man when He comes.

This trial of the Lord Jesus was a moment of deepest interest to the angels of heaven; for with what awe and deep feelings they must have gazed upon the scene, as it was in the ways of God with man. This act of man's, this full, deep and awful expression of his wickedness and what he was capable of doing, were but to be the moral judgment of man in the sight of God. "Now is the judgment of this world." John 12:31. After this it would be no longer man as a probationer, but as one judged already, although allowed to go on during the lingerings of divine grace and the accomplishment of God's purpose ere the sentence already passed be executed.

Now look at the scene. There is Pilate, the judge upon the seat of judgment, though not of justice; there are the priests and the people, Jews and Gentiles, kings and princes, yea, the representatives of the great human family; and in the midst stands Jesus the Son of God. What a moment for heaven and what a moment for earth!

Pilate says, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?"

The lowly prisoner says, "Thou sayest."

Pilate again speaks, but this time addresses the multitude before him, the accusers of Jesus: "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?"

His wife's dream interrupts him; and the chief priests and elders incite the people on, that they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus.

Again the governor appeals to them: "Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?"

What a moment! The Son of God and Barabbas are in the scales of human judgment. Which will man take? Whom will he choose?

Ali, listen! and let those who boast of human goodness be ashamed at the decision.

They said, "Barabbas."

"What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"

They all say unto him, "Let Him be crucified."

But one more appeal, and all is over; the Roman governor, as if somewhat alive to the innocence of his prisoner, says, "Why, what evil hath He done?"

This only irritated the foes of Jesus and the enemies of justice, and, as if they thirsted for His blood and were angry at the delay, "They cried out the more, saying, Let Him be crucified."

The judge having washed his hands of condemned innocence, and the people having taken upon themselves the responsibility of the deed, though in nowise clearing Pilate, the trial closes. The innocent One is condemned; oppression rejoices against judgment - but for a little.

Jesus is hurried from Pilate's hall to the common hall, there to receive at the soldier's hands further insult and scorn, of which the scarlet robe, the crown of thorns, the reed, the spitting, and the smiting are the witnesses - but without a murmur. Wonderful perfection!

From the common hall He is hurried to a place outside of the city, then by wicked hands impaled on the tree. Here the sentence passed was executed; the blood thirsted for was obtained; and, as if to make sure of the death of the object of their hatred, they pierce His holy side with a spear; and, to give a finishing touch to the dark picture, and a fuller expression to the wickedness and hardness of their hearts, they deride and scoff at the expiring Sufferer.

But not a word that spoke of murmuring, or that expressed aught but love, escaped His lips, but rather the contrary- "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34.

Man has done his worst, and seemingly Satan has triumphed; they have, for a moment, prevailed against the Son of God.

But, let us not hurry on as if this were all in this scene. It was not all. Man and Satan have acted hitherto; but ere the blessed One expires, He has to tread other ground, pass through other scenes, bear a mightier load, hear and experience the roaring of deeper waters, feel a heavier hand, and endure greater woes and sorrows.

The blessed One passes from the dealings of man to the dealings of God; from the scene of the expression of human sin to that where atonement was made for it; from the stroke of man to the stroke of God; from the abandonment of man to the forsaking of God. He must, in His death, be not only the expression of human guilt, which His death was, viewed in one way, but He must also be made sin, and the hand of God must lay on Him, the holy Substitute, the sins and iniquities of His people. And as such, He must turn His face from Him! Now He is alone, absolutely alone - no angel to strengthen Him here, as in Gethsemane! Gethsemane's sorrows reach not to these, though they lead to them. Anticipation of the cup then, but here, the cup itself.

Ah, now listen! listen to that cry from amidst that darkness, and from the depth of those waves. Listen to the roar of those waters; but this voice rises above them all: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

These are scenes whither we cannot come; these are waters we cannot fathom; and, blessed be God, these are woes, though due to us, we shall never taste.

There was a distance between the ark and the host (Josh. 3:4). And the Lord had said to Peter, when he vainly thought he could follow Him, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterward." John 13:36. Yes; when the terrible form of death had been taken away, and that which was its sting atoned for, and the strength of sin-the law--had in every way had its claims met, then Peter, as a martyr, could follow.

Flesh and blood would not avail him. Nothing short of the absolute perfection of the Lamb of God could stand in these roaring waves. The boastful Peter quailed at the words of a servant maid; but the One of whom we speak trusted in God, though forsaken and judged of Him.

Ah, yes; it is a reality of infinite worth to faith that He was judged of God. A substitute stands and acts in the place of another. So it was here. "The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief; when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin," etc. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." (Isa. 53.) "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." 1 Pet. 2:24. "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." Rom. 4:25. What treasures these passages are to the believing sinner, and what a clear note they sound as to the precious doctrine of substitution! Jesus took our place; made Himself responsible for His people's sins; placed Himself under the dreadful consequences of His people's condition; and God inflicted upon Him all the righteous judgment due to them. "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5:21.

"Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost." All is finished; God is glorified; redemption is accomplished; salvation is procured; God in righteousness can carry out all the purposes of His grace and love. God is "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). Wonderful facts!

But will God wait until the third day to give expression to His appreciation of His Son, and His estimate of what was accomplished? Ah, no; true, the full pleasure of God was expressed when He, by His power and glory, raised Jesus from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in glory; but before that He told out in unmistakable language His delight and estimate.

"And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." vv. 5153. Instantaneous was the response from God, glorified about sin, to the holy Sufferer now dead upon the cross. The Lord Jesus died having finished the work; God immediately expressed His divine satisfaction with what was done. The veil is rent, the rocks rend, and the graves open. Blessed threefold testimony of the satisfaction of Heaven!

What a voice this has for the believer! God had no pleasure in the multitude of sacrifices in the old dispensation; but in this He has infinite pleasure, because now He can in grace come out to the sinner and conduct him as a pardoned and justified soul right into the very holiest of all. God can have the sinner with Himself. Nothing short of this could possibly satisfy the heart of God. In this He has infinite pleasure and delight. God in righteousness can save the sinner, and, the sinner thus saved can stand within the holiest, having no more conscience of sins - having a conscience purged by the blood of Jesus.

Thus we see that that which gave a full expression to man's sin and Satan's enmity, also manifested God's great love to man; and in His divine wisdom He turned that death which expressed man's wickedness into a channel of blessing to him on the ground of there having been, by the same death, a full atonement for sin made, and the accomplishment of redemption. Thus God in the fullest sense made the wrath of man to praise Him.

He is glorified about sin, and every claim of His moral government maintained and established, while at the same time the love of His heart finds satisfaction in carrying out its blessed purposes respecting man.

And through the whole, the perfection of the Lord Jesus is seen, standing in marked contrast with man's extreme wickedness, keeping the place of the dependent and obedient One, submitting to the will of the Father, and accomplishing that will by enduring the unutterable woes and horrors of the cross - that cross which not only involved man's hatred and Satan's power and enmity and a violent death at their hands, with all the exposure and ignominy attending it, but which also involved being made sin, being forsaken of God when bearing our sins.

Surely it is the Christian's joy and glory to know that He who went down so far that He could go no farther down, has been seated on the pinnacle of glory at God's right hand, having all power and judgment put into His hands, and that there He is crowned with glory and honor, and from thence will come to assert His rights.

Mark 4:21-25

The seed which fell on good ground brought forth fruit in different proportions. We see the activity of grace in the heart, because it grows and bears fruit, and keeps on growing. He who has truly received the word in the heart is fitted to communicate it to others. He may not have the gift of preaching, but he loves the truth, he loves souls, he loves the Savior, and the light which has been lit in his heart is to light all around him. He too sows according to his strength, and is responsible to do so. All will be manifested, faithfulness and unfaithfulness, with regard to this, as in everything else. God sends light into the heart in order to give it to others, and not to hide it. We shall receive more if we are faithful in communicating what we possess; and, if there is love in us, this cannot fail. Truth and love both came in Christ, and unless the heart be full of Christ, the truth will not be manifested. If the heart be full of other things, or of itself, Christ cannot be manifested. If Christ-truth and love- be in the heart, the truth will shine out for the blessing of others, and we ourselves shall be blessed and more will be given to us; and there will be liberty and joy in the soul.

Two Miracles Peculiar to Mark's Gospel: Deaf and Blind Men

This is one of the two miracles peculiar to the Gospel of Mark, the other being the cure of the blind man of Bethsaida (chap. 8:22). They both illustrate the prophetic service of the Son of God. He had come to the lake of Galilee.

"And they bring to Him [one] deaf and hardly speaking, and they beseech Him to lay His hand on him. And having taken him away from the crowd apart, He put His fingers to his ears: and He spit and touched his tongue: and looking up to heaven He groaned, and saith to him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke aright. And He charged them that they should tell no one; but the more He charged them, the more abundantly were they publishing [it]. And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well; He maketh both the deaf to hear and the speechless to speak." vv. 32-37.

The minute accuracy of the Holy Spirit in recounting Christ's miracles is admirable. This case differs from others in that the sufferer is not said to have been absolutely mute, but to have had an impediment of speech, as well as deafness. Nevertheless the Lord takes special pains with him. The manner reveals the divine Servant's grace. There was no question of His power. Ordinarily He healed all that needed it in a moment, no matter how extreme, as when an unclean spirit was the cause of the dumbness rather than physical inability or defect. Here He was pleased to manifest His tender interest in detail, and His compassionate love no less than His power to heal. He does much more than what those besought who brought the patient to Him. Putting the hand on the needy one was the usual sign of blessing; and less than this, a word, would have been enough, if so the Lord had seen fit to God's glory.

But He took him aside from the crowd apart. For here it is not the crowd He thinks of, any more than the haughty scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem. Just before, He had met the desperate need of the Syrophenician woman on behalf of her demoniac daughter on the borders of Tiro and Sidon. Now He had come through the midst of the borders of Decapolis, where, as the prophet had long before predicted, light was to shine for a despised remnant when darkness brooded over the mass with city and temple dead to the rejected Messiah (Isa. 9:1, 2). So He took the deaf man apart from the crowd, and put His fingers unto, if not into (as the preposition may mean according to the sense required), his ears. But more than this; having spit, he touched the tongue of the stammerer.

He marked in both acts how all depended on bringing Himself personally to bear on the actual wants. He who wrought was man, but no less was He God, the Son incarnate and on earth, in His pitiful love serving God and man. It was not only that He applied what came from within Himself to the man's tongue, but looking up to heaven He groaned, and said to him, Ephphatha; that is, Be opened. Power truly went out of Him, and love was its spring in devotedness to God who is as truly light in His nature as love is the character of its energy, which His own service was manifesting. And thus, if He deigned to touch the man so intimately, He looked up to heaven whence He came

in a love that abides unchanging and above all evil, yet groaned in deep sense of it, while He said to him, Be opened.

The afflicted man was but an emblem of the state of Israel, unwillingly, alas! and unable through unbelief to hear God or to speak out their own misery and His praise. But as brought to Him, He set forth the remnant on whom light dawned in a region and shadow of death. And "straightway" (a word characteristic in the Gospel of His service) his ears were opened, and the bond or tie of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke aright. If the unbelief of the people and its chiefs made their blessing impossible, the poor of the flock prove the all-suffering of His gracious power, and reap the great blessing of faith, be it ever so small. And the love which so wrought will encourage a remnant in a future day, who will re-commence the Jewish history in the land, till it becomes a strong nation in that faithfulness which is unwearied and will never forget the promise.

For the present all was vain; and He charged them to tell no one, but the more He did, the more a great deal were they its publishers. Yet, true as it might be in word, it was not faith in the heart, but rather extreme astonishment. Even so, what a comment on Christ's service! "He hath done all things well: He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the speechless to speak."

The Blind Man of Bethsaida

Mark 8:22-26

This is the second of the two miracles peculiar to the Gospel of Mark. In the first, the Lord led away the deaf man who could not speak aright from the crowd apart; here He took hold of the blind man's hand and conducted him out of the village. The mass of the Jews had already had ample signs in testimony of who and what He was. It was but for greater hardening of their hearts to see more. They might get their sick healed, they might eat of the loaves He made and be filled; but even the most orthodox sought from Him a sign from heaven, tempting Him, so that He could only groan in His spirit and say, "Why doth this generation seek after a sign?" Had He not given them countless signs? In the sense of their unbelief, which a Syrophenician woman's faith rebuked, the Lord leads aside from the multitude, though He still acts in compassionate grace. This could not fail where they bring distressful need before Him, the Servant not more righteous than gracious.

"And they bring Him a blind man, and beseech Him that He might touch him. And taking hold of the blind man's hand, He led him forth out of the village, and having spit on his eyes, He laid His hands on him, and asked him if he beheld anything. And having looked up he said, I behold men, for I see [them] as trees, walking. Then He laid His hands again on his eyes, and he saw distinctly, and was restored, and saw all things clearly. And He sent him to his house, saying, Neither enter into the village, nor tell [it] to any one in the village." vv. 22-26.

It is the gospel of His service; and here, as throughout, we are made to behold the perfect manner in which His mighty works were done. It is not only the power of God ever ready to heal the sick and those oppressed by the devil. The way in which He answered every such appeal was worthy of the Son of God become servant to glorify God and win man. He had put His fingers to the deaf man's ears, He had touched the ill-speaking tongue; here He laid His hands upon the blind man outside Bethsaida. There was no necessity for any such actions. He had but to speak, and it was done. But love is far beyond power; and when man has power to wield it in ever so limited a range, how little he thinks of love! Least of all does he, conscious however scantily of his sinfulness, look

for love from the God he slights and dreads. The Lord, in the way He wields divine power, manifests divine love, and as Man in the midst of men. Nor is there the smallest ostentation, but its marked absence; all is done in genuine simplicity as well as tenderness.

There are the miracles in which the Lord uses His own spittle—here and in the cure of the man born blind, as told us in John 9. Whatever the reality and lowliness of the humanity He had taken up in His grace, there was divine efficacy in His Person; and the sign of this He applies in all three cases, each having its own distinction. When He touched the tongue, He looked up to heaven with a groan, and said to the man, Be opened; and immediately the happy result followed. When He mixed clay with what came of Himself and anointed the blind man's eyes, He told him to go to Siloam and wash; and only then did he come seeing. Here, the very intent was to mark by the twofold act of laying His hands on his eyes that the Lord would not have the cure partial. It was much to behold men, like trees, but walking. Yet the Lord would not let him go thus; He would give him to see distinctly. He therefore laid His hands upon his eyes, so that he was restored and saw all things distinctly. It was simply the way of love that the blind man might know the deep interest of His heart who might have dispensed with any or all of these circumstances and have effected the perfect cure with a word. But what a blank for the man and for our hearts if it had been only so!

What thanks shall one render when one believes that the same Jesus is the Son of God, not only the true God but eternal life, ready and willing to give life eternal to you who can find it nowhere else? This is the way, the best way for a saint, the only way for a sinner, to honor the Son. It is to believe on Him, for indeed He is the way, the truth, and the life. Thus believing, you do not come into condemnation, but even now have passed from death unto life.

Martha and Mary

They were both dear to the Lord Jesus, and they both loved Him; but they were different. The eye of one saw His weariness and would give to Him; the faith of the other apprehended His fullness and would draw from Him.

Martha's service was acceptable to the Lord and was acknowledged by Him; but He would not allow it to disturb Mary's communion. Mary knew His mind. She had deeper fellowship with Him. Her heart clung to Him. She sat at His feet, drinking in from the streams of grace and truth that flowed from His lips. Blessed it is to serve the Lord, but still more blessed to enjoy Him; and therefore the moment Martha would bring the outward services of the hand into competition with Mary's communion, the Lord lets her know that Mary was refreshing Him with a richer feast than the abundance of her house could supply.

This lovely narrative illustrates a great principle. It is the glory and delight of God to give. What He wants is the empty, longing, and believing heart, as a sphere in which He can allow His goodness to overflow. What He wants is to bring us into the enjoyment of His own blessedness. The highest place is properly His. He is the giver; and from Him we are to receive. The place of blessing is His; the place of debtorship is ours, for "without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better" (Heb. 7:7).

Acceptable to the Lord as are the willing services of His people, nothing is more grateful to Him than that we should be continually receiving out of His treasury of grace. Nothing honors Him more than that we take our place of creature dependence and acknowledge His Godhead glory, allowing Him to be still giving, still blessing, still pouring forth on thankful recipients from the inexhaustible fountain of His own fullness.

Mephibosheth: David Dispensing Grace

How lovely a foreshadowing of the grace of God we have in the brief history of this man as recorded in 2 Samuel. In his descent from the fallen, disobedient, and rejected King Saul we read our alliance with the man who fell, and who by disobedience plunged all his race into ruin and condemnation. "Lame on both his feet" depicts our actual moral condition in this place of condemnation. Far away from Jerusalem, the center of earthly blessing, we see the alienation of heart and mind in which we are from God, the only source and center of good.

In all this darkness the light of grace shines. David, now (chap. 9) at rest on his throne, the sovereign lord of all, forms a fitting type of the blessed God, whose throne of judgment has now been made a throne of grace-the place from whence all mercy and blessing are dispensed. David inquires, "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" The hatred and evil of Saul is not before his mind as the basis of action, but it is "for Jonathan's sake," the beloved one. We know surely what this signifies for us - Christ, the beloved Son, is the rule and basis of all God's action toward the believer now- and when once this is truly apprehended, we shall be prepared for the unfolding of the wonderful thoughts and purposes of God about us.

From his exile home in Lodebar, Mephibosheth is sent for, brought just as he is; for all rests not on what he is, but on the one beloved; and if Mephibosheth is blessed, the blessing is to express the royal pleasure in Jonathan. Amazed and confused to find himself in the king's presence, what could he more suitably say than, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?"-a very low place indeed to take, but a true one. David knew all, perhaps better than he could be told; but, after all is told, he must still be left to act according to the dictates of his own mind and heart; for he is a king, and this is the royal prerogative, as in the case of the father and the prodigal in Luke 15. It was quite right that the son should say what he did, and feel it ever so deeply; but it was equally right that the father should be allowed to gratify his own feelings in the favor and blessing he bestowed, though the object be "no more worthy."

All this speaks louder than words of the manner of God's love toward us, as well as the kind of blessing it bestows.

David's first words to Mephibosheth are, "Fear not"; very like other greetings in later times, for "fear hath torment," and love's first work is to take it away; for until the fear is gone there is no preparation to listen to anything else. Then follows the unfolding of his purpose: "For I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." These three things are here- the kindness, the inheritance, and the fellowship. All these have their counterpart in the present day of God's abounding grace - we stand in divine favor (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 1:6); we have an inheritance (Eph. 1:2); and our fellowship (1 John 1:3). What a position and what a portion is ours, who have in this day of grace submitted ourselves to the righteousness of God.

It was not only royal favor that Mephibosheth enjoyed, but instead of his alienation he is brought so near to the king as to eat bread continually at his table "as one of the king's sons"; this is exceedingly beautiful, and goes beyond the thought of the inheritance possessed. We have "in Christ" the inheritance, it is true; in Him too we enter into the divine favor; but what can go higher in experimental privilege than that "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ"? and, as with Mephibosheth, this is not a temporary or periodical privilege, but to be enjoyed continually. Our whole life in its greatest and smallest details may, by the Holy Spirit, be lived so near the divine presence as to partake of this fellowship. Of no lesser interest are the subsequent allusions to Mephibosheth in 2 Sam. 16 and 19, and they show the effect of grace upon the heart in the affection and self-forgetfulness there shown. It is worthy both of our study and imitation.

The Morning Star

"And I will give him the morning star." Rev. 2:28.

Is not this blessed? - not merely association with Christ in the day of His power, when the stronghold of men shall be broken to shivers like the vessels of a potter, but "gathering together unto Him" before that day. The hope abides in all its fullness, and as fresh as at the first. Christ only could so speak and act.

The sun, when it rises, summons man to his busy toil; but the morning star shines for those only who sleep not as do others - for those who watch as children of light and of the day. We shall be with Christ, doubtless, when the day of glory dawns upon the world; but the morning star is before the day, and Christ not only says, "I am... the bright and morning star," but, "I will give... the morning star." He will come and receive His heavenly ones before they appear with Him in glory.

May we be true to Him in the refusal of present ease, and honor, and power! May we follow Him, taking up our cross and denying ourselves daily! He will not forget us in His day; and He will give us, ere it comes, the morning star.

My Lord Delayeth His Coming

Few things are more clear to faith than the fact that Satan ever seeks to corrupt what he cannot destroy, whether the subject of his evil purpose be the saints of God, or any special truth of His Word which has engaged and blessed their souls. The truth of the Lord's coming as the blessed hope of the believer is no exception to this. Since the Lord has graciously revived it in this "midnight" hour, the closing period of the day of grace, it has taken so firm a hold, blessed be His name, upon the souls of His saints everywhere, as was never known before since apostolic times; nor was it since those days ever before so generally accepted (through His goodness, and because the time is so near) as it is now. No reason have we to apprehend that, as a doctrine of Scripture, it will ever again lapse into forgetfulness as it did during post-apostolic days down to the commencement of the last century.

At the beginning, the virgins all went out to meet the Bridegroom; but how soon this testimony was given up, and the whole thing sank down to this: "They all slumbered and slept." So torpid was Christian life, so silent was true Christian testimony!

But at midnight there went forth an arousing cry: 1) "Behold, the bridegroom"! 2) "Go ye out to meet Him"! How perfectly this has been fulfilled, and how closely these two things - the Person of Christ and the meeting Him, or outgoing of heart to Himself as the coming One in spiritual power and testimony, closely allied as they are in character - were connected in the recovered truth and revived testimony of recent times is patent to many. And we thank God that the power of the Holy Ghost has so accompanied this testimony that Satan's mightiest efforts will achieve no success in depriving Christians of what God has so graciously restored to His Church. But there is danger that the very depth of our convictions on this score may close our eyes to the more subtle snare to which we are exposed while scripturally sound on the doctrine itself. The finest characteristic which that hope possesses, regarded practically, is its dateless imminence - in other words, its undefined but certain nearness - and therefore if Satan could succeed in removing this peculiar feature, he knows well he would so emasculate it that, while the shell of the doctrine remained in its structural integrity to satisfy its adherents, the kernel would be abstracted and its intrinsic value surrendered, since it could no longer be an ever-operating power and "blessed hope" before the soul.

Such then is the peculiar danger of the present day; foreseeing which, Scripture in its divine perfection furnishes a parable expressly to warn against this singular snare which the enemy lays for professing Christians (Matt. 24. 45-51). Another scripture warns against the scoffers of the last days (2 Pet. 3); but that phase of the subject is not now before us. The special snare of Satan in this "midnight" hour, which is the winding up of the last days, is that of the retention of sound doctrine as to the second or pre-millennial advent, the advent and personal reign of Christ, or the Lord's second coming, whichever men may term it, with the worldliness and the like which the Lord sets forth in the beating of fellow servants, and eating and drinking with the drunken; in other words, the violence and wantonness which, whether exerted or restrained, are the real workings of

the flesh and the allowance of the world when developed and displayed.

Pressingly therefore would we bring home to our own soul, and to those of our readers, the deep importance of watching against this declension of heart as to the Lord's return, which is the last snare of our cunning and practiced foe. To put what we mean into clear and concise form, can we say, that having been looking for Him so long, for that very reason we are more and more convinced that He is near at hand, and both the desire and the expectation of His coming are, by reason of so long a time having elapsed, growing every day stronger within our souls? This is the true reckoning and conclusion of faith.

Of two things, one is clear, that if the long-exercised and dearly-cherished desire of our hearts has not yet been gratified, our souls' expectation not yet fulfilled, either we have therefore clung the more tenaciously to it, having the desire rekindled afresh and more cheerily in our affections each recurring day, and our daily expectation has approximated more and more toward a certainty that He is close at hand, simply because He is surely coming, and has now been expected for so long; or, otherwise, we have allowed our faith to fail, our desires to cool, and our expectations to falter, having said, We have expected Him all these years, and He has never come, nor know we at all when He will. Thus the sense of it, as an everyday increasingly "blessed hope," has escaped from the heart. No marvel that the poor faithless heart turns to the world which it has unwittingly allowed to betray it into declension, saying within itself, "My lord delayeth his coming," and in consequence giving rein to the flesh and its works. He did not say, The Lord is not coming, but he puts it off as a thing not at hand or expected.

How different it is to faith! Are earth's scenes at their darkest, the poor body brought down to death's door, as men speak, and life rapidly ebbing away? There is for us no darkness profound enough to be impenetrable to the piercing rays of the "bright and morning star," no time so short as to preclude His coming therein; since, if there be but time for an eye to twinkle, there is time for Him to come; and to the joy of His own heart, the first act of His coming will be to produce its full effect upon the bodies of the untold multitudes of His saints in the same twinkling of an eye! To shift the scene, it is equally the privilege of faith to find the Lord's coming the very brightest thing in our horizon, engaging our hearts supremely, and asserting its full place and power never more distinctly than when divine favors upon earth are in their most sparkling array before our grateful and gratified hearts. And if it be not so with us, we may well challenge our souls whether the adorable Person of Christ and the promise of His coming again have ever yet assumed their unrivaled place before the eye and in the heart as they should, and as most assuredly they would, were He to us all that He would love to be!

It may suffice if we add to this, that we know nothing that is used of the Holy Ghost more powerfully and more refreshingly to revive from time to time this precious doctrine and hope in the hearts of the saints, than the Lord's table. And so divinely interlocked are the two things, that seldom if ever are saints really right about either one who are wrong about the other.

The Lord's supper indeed possesses the wonderful and unique property of converging into one focus His death and His coming, bringing back His death as our only yesterday, and bringing forward His coming as our only tomorrow, the table being our only today, in which our fellowship is with the Father and the Son, and one with another "till He come." Our yesterday, Christ in death whom we remember; our today, a glorified Christ whom we are united to; our tomorrow, a coming

Christ whom we are longing for, shining upon us as the "bright and morning star," while we keep vigil through the long night of His prolonged and enforced absence.

May the Holy Ghost keep freshly before our souls this "blessed hope," nor suffer it to be impaired by any of the changing scenes of earth; above all, preserving us from, in ever so remote a degree, saying in our hearts, with Laodicean levity and worldiness, "My lord delayeth his coming."

The Mystery of Godliness

In 1 Timothy the Apostle would teach Timothy how he ought to behave himself "in the house of God"; and he then presents the formative power of all true godliness in the words, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Tim. 3:16.

This is often quoted and interpreted as if it spoke of the mystery of the Godhead, or the mystery of Christ's Person. But it is the mystery of godliness, or the secret by which all real godliness is produced - the divine spring of all that can be called piety in man. "God... manifest in the flesh" is the example and power of godliness, its measure and its spring. Godliness is not now produced, as under the law, by divine

enactments; nor is it the result in the spirit of bondage in those (however godly) who only know God as worshiped behind a veil. Godliness now springs from the knowledge of the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. It takes its spring and character from the knowledge of His Person as "God... manifest in the flesh"; the perfection of His obedience, as "justified in the Spirit"; the object of angelic contemplation, and the subject of testimony and faith in the world; and His present position as "received up into glory." This is how God is known, and from abiding in this flows godliness.

New Heavens and a New Earth

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Pet. 3:13.

The final part of the 2nd epistle of Peter is very solemn and at the same time very blessed to the believer.

The judgment of God is to fall upon the earth, and in such a manner that at the end everything shall be destroyed. The characteristic feature of the last days is alluded to here, and we find scoffers asking, "Where is the promise of His coming?" When scoffing and mockery become general, we may be sure that the end is nigh; and the Apostle speaks not only of the setting up of the power of Christ when He shall come to reign, but looks at the whole period of judgment (embracing the millennial reign) as going on to that day when the heavens shall pass away with noise, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

In the midst of the existing state of things, the believer looks for new heavens and a new earth; he belongs already in spirit to an entirely new order of things, and it is of great importance that all his conduct in the present time should be a practical test to this blessed expectation.

When public mockery as to God's great dealings and the Lord's coming in judgment becomes general, then we have a certain sign of the last days. At one time the doctrines of Voltaire carried away the upper classes, but we are living in a time when scoffing has infected every rank of society. The fall of man is denied; the deluge is questioned, and it is publicly taught that the solemn intervention of God by the flood was only a "local inundation" alluded to in tradition as the flood of Deucalion. Men are willfully ignorant; that is, they will not admit that a holy God once destroyed the whole world by water, and that a still more terrible judgment is yet to come, when the heavens and earth shall be destroyed by fire.

We live in the midst of a scene which shall close in one vast conflagration. Some one suggested once that a fire insurance company would have said that there was not much to fear for Sodom-there was so much water in that fertile plain-but Sodom was burned, and so shall this earth perish. I recollect some years ago passing through Paris with an old Christian, and saying that it seemed difficult to picture to oneself that all the beautiful city should be burned up; still, so it is, and we are living in the last days, and though our hope be heavenly, and we are waiting for our Lord to come to call us out of this scene before judgment falls (our hope is alluded to in the 1st chapter of this epistle), yet it is a very solemn thing to be living as witnesses for God amid the present state of infidelity.

Now I will say a few words about the new heavens and new earth. I believe that it refers here in Peter to the eternal state; no doubt the passage is quoted from Isa. 45, and there it applies to the Millennium.

But Peter goes further and, to understand the verse I have quoted, I think we should compare Rev. 21:1: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." The Word of God opens before us a vista of eternal stability and blessing. The eternal state of things in Rev. 21 is seen by John, in the Spirit, after the close of our Lord's reign, after the judgment of the great white throne, when the last enemy, death, is overcome. It has often been pointed out that the Church is shining out in the very pristine beauty that she had before the thousand years began; no change can take place in the eternal splendor of the holy city, new Jerusalem, and she is represented again here as coming down from God out of heaven in all her beauty.

What I wish to call attention to is this: that, great as the blessing and glory of the new earth will be, we belong to a still higher sphere of glory and blessing; and when the eternal state shall have begun, the new Jerusalem is presented as coming down from God out of heaven. With this in mind, we shall be kept from any wish to follow the spirit of the present age.

What a difference between the new earth and the present earth grown old in iniquity! There will be no more sea, no more fluctuating uncertainty, no more revolutions, but all will be established in eternal stability. The judgment is at hand. Men may speak of their eternal city, of the forty centuries of the Pyramids, of the unchanging sphinx, etc.; but the end is nigh, and all the glory of the earth in its present state is about to perish, and certain judgment fall upon everything.

Are we really looking for "such things," beloved brethren? Has not all God's discipline had this happy effect upon us, that is, to separate us in power from all that is perishable, and to make us diligent, that we be found in Him in peace without spot and blameless?

He has formed us already for a new and eternal state of things; in spirit we belong to it; we are a new creation. As we go on through this iniquitous world, where every day fresh exercise awaits us, we sigh for the time when righteousness shall dwell where iniquity is now rampant; we await the new heavens that shall be illuminated by the glory of the new Jerusalem descending from God, and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. May all our conduct, our lives, our words testify that this is indeed the case!

Nikita Khrushchev — Summit Collapse: the Editor's Column

The unceremonious collapse of the so-called Summit Conference, together with the vehemently acrimonious charges made by Nikita Khrushchev, left a world that is almost shockproof somewhat stunned. That which was supposed to ease world tensions only increased them as two world giants brought charges and counter charges against each other. Much smaller contentions have in times past brought on wars, with their resultant destruction and loss of life. But since in this day each side possesses most frightful weapons which could, if fully unleashed, make shambles of man's so-called civilization, only the knowledge that the winner would be a loser in such a contest causes men to halt just short of actual war. Some people refer to it as the strategy of "brinkmanship"; that is, to see how close they can come to war without actually engaging in it. But who can tell when someone may miscalculate, and the terrifying lethal machines be unloosed?

Mankind in general desires peace, but not peace at any price. If he were given an alternate choice of either having the uncertainties of the present with the haunting fears and terrifying prospects for the future on the one hand, or a full and complete surrender to God which would separate him from the pleasures and frivolities of the world on the other, he would almost surely choose the former. We know, of course, that the work of the Spirit of God in the soul, repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ would be requisite for the latter; but we are speaking only of man's preference.

The Old Testament prophesied of the coming of the "Prince of Peace"; and when He came into the world, He was hailed by angelic voices, saying, "On earth peace." But after His life of devotedness to God and service to man, His disciples were led to say, and correctly, "Peace in heaven." It was not the time for peace on earth. "He is despised and rejected of men," and, as Peter said, "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life." Acts 3:14, 15. Since men knew not the way of peace, and when the "Prince of Peace" came they rejected Him for a murderer, is it any wonder that true world peace eludes them?

The disillusionment of the great men of the earth who sought peace at the Summit Conference is still not as hopeless and disheartening as that which will yet come according to Isa. 33:7—"The ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly." Disappointment will meet all who seek a real peace in this world until the "Prince of Peace" will put down all His enemies and reign gloriously.

The Word of God gives us some glimpses of war and treachery between kingdoms of old, in Dan. 11, where battles, intrigues, and conferences were conducted between the warring Seleucidæ dynasties of Syria and the Ptolemies of Egypt. (So accurate is the prophetic account that infidels have contended that it must have been written after the events.) At one point in the alternating war and diplomacy ventures, the Syrian king gave his daughter to be the wife of the Egyptian king; but this supposedly master stroke failed, for she became loyal to her husband (v. 17). At another time, after a Syrian victory over Egypt, the two kings sat down to a conference; but God said beforehand, "They shall speak lies at one table." Treachery was in their hearts while peace was on

their lips. How well God knows what is in man!

Statesmen and so-called Russian experts are sifting every shred of information for the answer to why Russia should have chosen to wreck, in a torrential rain of invectives by their chief man, the conference which was to include the very chief men of Great Britain, France, and the United States. Is it not still evident that "The way of peace have they [men] not known"? Of course Mr. Khrushchev seemed to have some justification for his attitude, but this would not have altered matters if he did not feel he had more to gain by wrecking the conference than by letting it go on. Whether it be by war, intrigue, or so-called diplomacy, everything must subserve the Russians in their chief aim-bring more of the world under their sway. We are reminded of the words of another great Russian, Peter the Great (1672-1725): "The Russian nation must be constantly on a war footing, to keep the soldiers warlike and in good condition. No rest must be allowed, except for the purpose of relieving the State finances, recruiting the army, or biding the favorable moment for attack. By these means peace is made subservient to war, and war to peace, in the interest of the aggrandizement and increasing prosperity of Russia.'

Although Peter the Great thought it would be comparatively easy to set one nation against another, and then Russia take over the winner at will, and thus "keep steadily extending... frontiers," he never in his wildest moments envisaged a time when such a large percentage of humanity would be under the heel of Russian power; but he did let out the manner of manipulation, of which his modern successors have become masters. So we hear of Russia's power to destroy the world in war, then of a cold war which can just as really destroy nations by weakening the will to resist. Then we hear of "peaceful co-existence," but it is questionable whether a lamb would be allowed to co-exist with the Russian bear, unless the lamb were first inside of the bear.

As the world gets older, it becomes none the wiser; and so strife and uncertainty become an established custom. The moment is fast approaching when men's hearts will fail them for fear as they anticipate the awful unleashing of stored destruction. Scientific and technological skills increase while man departs further and further in heart from God. Soon all of man's greatest achievements will be rubble. May our hearts be set more and more upon those bright and pure scenes above, so that we can say with the poet:

"This world is a wilderness wide!

We have nothing to seek or to choose;

We've no thought in the waste to abide;

We have naught to regret, nor to lose."

We read in Isa. 14 of a man who is coming who will make "the earth... tremble," and "shake kingdoms." He will make the world a wilderness and destroy its cities (vv. 9-17). This man is called the "king of Babylon," because he will be the holder of that Gentile power which began with Babylon and will end with him. In this portion, the word which is transliterated "Lucifer" means merely "O Bright Star, Son of the Morning," and should have been so translated. "Lucifer" has been taken by many to mean "Satan," but later sentences prove it is a man. He is the "morning star" of the Old Testament, while Christ is the Morning Star of the New Testament. This man king of Babylon - is the beast of the revived Roman Empire. He will promise to usher in a new day, but

what a day it will be! The Scripture seems to indicate that at the very end, perhaps in the middle of those seven years when this man receives satanic power, he will unleash those terrifying weapons in the so-called "arsenals of democracy," and make shambles of the earth. God is going to bring down all the pride of man and allow him to destroy much of which he has boasted.

Fellow-Christian, we look for the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior who will take us home to His Father's house ere long. Those bright and blessed scenes are our prospect, and that in spite of the growing numbers of so-called evangelical leaders who are now denying the hope of the Lord's soon return-that which many of them once preached.

Two things rush on apace-man's great works, and his power to destroy them. He is much like a child who builds a beautiful house out of blocks, which he then with one sweep tumbles into a heap. It is a principle with God to allow man to reach his zenith before He will bring it all down.

And when we speak of God's power to destroy, we think of His word, "Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.... The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage." Isa. 24:1, 20. First He will let men destroy much, but then He will arise to "shake terribly the earth" (Isa. 2:19). Men may have forgotten that God has such power, and vaunt themselves of the power that they have created-in fact God is seldom thought of in connection with the earth and with men. But a few days ago, God gave just a little specimen of the power that He has, and many thousands were cut off. Man cannot harness what God sets loose. He may reason against God's having anything to do with it, but the fact remains that just an earthquake in Chile broke mountains, caused lakes to disappear, sent volcanoes into action, even where none had previously existed. But this does not touch the hearts of those who were not personally affected by it. It seemed a long way from them. This earthquake was not a small temblor, but was of about the same intensity as the San Francisco quake in 1906. It was not, however, the strongest one ever recorded. The seismic waves, rushing across the great Pacific Ocean at more than 400 miles an hour, destroyed property in Hawaii and the Philippine Islands, and sent waves 20 feet high into low-lying areas of Japan, 10,700 miles distant. It is estimated that this earthquake unleashed a force equal to 25,000 "A" bombs. How small man and all his doings really are when put side-by-side with God! His Word declares that there will be "great earthquakes... in divers places." And a time is coming when there will be "a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." Rev. 16:18.

God is not indifferent to what this world did to His Son, nor to its ungodliness, its corruption, its atheism, its infidelity, and its homage to the soul-destroying, unprovable hypothesis of evolution. Some day man will find he was wrong, but all too late. God will arise and shake terribly the earth. Men will see His power and also yet prove that His word was correct: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Heb. 9:27. If a sinner in his sins should read these lines, let him be warned now and flee to Him for refuge through the precious blood of Christ.

Paul and Silas in Prison

What could have been more dismal than the plight of Paul and Silas at Philippi? Thrust into the inner prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks; and what were they doing? They "prayed, and sang praises unto God" (Acts 16:25). They were exercising their holy and their royal priesthood in that prison. When they sang praises they were holy priests; when they said to the terrified jailer, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here," they were royal priests. It is a charming picture! They are as full of joy as they can be, and they get that jailer converted. There was the wonderful result of their bleeding, wounded backs; this soul was saved. Tribulation will come in various ways, but you must make up your minds to it while here-"Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Rom. 5:3-5.

Pictures of Moon - Ecumenical Movement: the Editor's Column

As we go to press, 1959 has almost passed into history. Another year of God's long-suffering and forbearance with the world that hated His Son without a cause (yea, in spite of His love) has come to an end. It has been another year of man's masterful achievements. His advancements in rocketry are truly astonishing, and this year his thrusts into the lunar regions have given substance to his theories and plans. If the pictures and reports are to be believed, man has now been able to take pictures of that side of the moon that he has never before seen. But all these successes only tend to inflate the human creature and to make him feel more independent of his Creator.

Another page in man's history was written when he placed an object of his making on the surface of the moon. A few years ago such a feat would have been considered impossible; but if the Russian claims are true (and we have no reason to doubt them), there are today intricate mechanisms on the moon which are marked "Made in Russia," or, speaking broadly, Made on Earth. When we think of man's ingenuity, we feel like saying, What a God there is who can make a creature of such high intelligence! Man has made automatons, and these products of the machine age do great things, but only as directed by man, while God's creature, man, is endued with a creative genius able to devise and make objects that serve his purpose. But none of man's inventions can do this.

Now there is another side to all man's greatness; it only calls attention to his alienation from God, for God is not given any credit for what man possesses. And when we think of man's handicraft lying on the surface of the moon, we recall that there is something manmade which is in a place much higher than the moon. There is in heaven a glorified Man who bears in His body the marks that were inflicted on Him at His crucifixion. What a story those marks tell! of man's guilt, and of God's love.

The believers rejoice that the One who bore their guilt in His own body on the tree is the same blessed One who lives for them at "the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3). It is the One who passed through this scene and felt its bitterness and woe, the One who wept at the tomb of Lazarus, who stilled the tempest at the call of His disciples, who fed the hungry and healed the sick, who sat at Sychar's well and awaited the coming of one poor needy soul that He might give her "living water" to drink, even the One who in the moments of His rejection, when they gave Him hatred for His love, touched the ear of Malchus and healed it, that very One who in the place of highest exaltation is touched with the feeling of our infirmities and waits on us to grant succor and timely help in our every need (Heb. 4:15, 16).

But those wounds in heaven also tell another story, for they are the evidence of man's guilt in casting God's Son out of the world. The world goes on indifferently to that which took place almost 2000 years ago, but the One in glory who bears those marks which were inflicted while He was on earth is soon to come as the executor of God's righteous wrath. He will make His enemies His footstool and rule the nations with a rod of iron. Times will soon change, and He who was rejected and crowned with thorns will come again crowned with "many crowns" and "clothed with a vesture

dipped in blood" (Rev. 19:12, 13).

God is not, and has not been, indifferent to man's guilt regarding the treatment His Son received here, but has been long-suffering (2 Pet. 3:9), waiting on poor sinners to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls. But man is augmenting his guilt year by year, and the moment is approaching when God's just vengeance will fall on the world that rejected the lowly Savior and now despises His rich grace offered to all who will believe.

When He comes again in glory, "every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." Rev. 1:7. And of the Jews it is said: "And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced." Zech. 12:10. Those imprints of the nails will still be evident, to the consternation of the Jews who will at that time come to the realization that it was indeed their true Messiah whom they rejected. Of these, Thomas in John 20 is a type; he would not believe unless he saw those marks in His body, so the Lord appeared at a later time among the disciples and showed Thomas the marks of the wounds. Then Thomas (as will the convicted Jews of the future) said, "My Lord and my God." John 20:28. Those marks that man has made will produce in the Jewish remnant of that day the spirit of repentance, deep humiliation, and contrition. It will be the fulfillment of the type shown to us in Lev. 16 and 23-the "day of atonement."

Those very nail prints in His hands and the spear mark in His side were the means the risen Lord used to speak once to the troubled disciples when Thomas was not with them. They could see that it was truly the One whom they had lost in death who was now alive. He who "made peace through the blood of His cross" could speak peace to them and give them visible tokens that it was He Himself in resurrection life. To us those marks in His body now in the glory of God let us know that He who died for us is now alive for evermore. His presence there is the assurance that every stain and every guilt is gone-gone forever-for He who bore the just desert of all our sins has removed them all and risen triumphantly. His place at the right hand of God is our blessed assurance, for He would not be there if His work of bearing our sins had not been completed.

So then, it is not man-made particles on the moon that mean much, but the man-made marks in the blessed body of the Lord Jesus in heaven-to us who believe they are the savor of peace and blessing, but to the world they bear testimony of its guilt and coming judgment. Man-made things on the moon, or even human beings there, if they can make it, prove nothing more than man's ingenuity, and in a certain sense his independence of God. It is the proud spirit of man which will actually attempt to fight against the Lord when He comes back to execute judgment. He was rejected when He came in humiliation, but He will overcome with the sword of His mouth when He comes again, although man's daring will reach its peak when he attempts to fight against the "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Rev. 19:16.

1959 also witnessed progress in many places and on various fronts toward ecumenicalism, that progress toward a world church which the leaders of the World and National Councils of Churches have been promoting. This is what we can expect as the end approaches, for current developments are all tending toward the confederation of churches which will become "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH," or, apostate Christendom. The present movement is permeated by rank modernism and giving up of the truth, and by a drift toward communistic ideology.

One of the sad things about the trend is that real believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are being caught in the snare. This may eventually show that some (even men of prominence) have been mere professors and not possessors of salvation and eternal life.

The Protestant drift to ecumenicalism goes along with the popular program of world betterment. The whole thing is a departure from the Biblical truth that this world is under judgment, and that real Christianity is taking out of the world a people for heaven. Not that true Christianity has not bettered the world in a sense by its influence even over the unconverted, for men are ashamed to do in the light that which they would work greedily and wantonly in the dark; but as for vital improvement, it will in the end be seen that it was no more effectual than Lot's moral uplift was on Sodom. That wicked city only damaged Lot and his family; there were no good results from his efforts. God could not find ten righteous persons in the city.

Nor has 1959 marked only progress in the Protestant ecumenical drive, but many indications have been seen that there is a drift toward Rome. Men in high places in Protestantism have spoken in different tones of Rome than have been heard since the Reformation. Many incidents and pronouncements during the year which show a very changed attitude toward Rome have been called to our attention. We will mention only one such-one that occurred in Toledo, Ohio, in October. The information was contained in *The Blade*, a Toledo newspaper, and in the independent Protestant magazine, *Christian Century*.

Dr. Gustave Weigel, a Jesuit theologian, was invited to speak at what was called an "ecumenical institute" in St. Paul's Lutheran parish house. Discussion periods followed each of his lectures, and the Protestant and Catholic clergy who attended the institute expressed themselves as "pleasantly surprised by the warm and friendly atmosphere which all appeared to feel."

The Jesuit priest admitted that a serious obstacle to Protestant and Catholic understanding or fellowship is to be found in the dogma of the infallibility of the pope, but this he excused as of much less consequence than Protestants believe. He commented that the real question is, "Is the Church a prolongation of the living Christ, and does the Church therefore speak authentically the mind and will of God?" Yes, this is the crux of the matter: Does the Church of Rome speak for Christ, does it have the authority to teach? The answer is plainly negative. According to Scripture, the Church on earth is taught, and has no right to teach. The ascended Christ gave gifts to the Church by which it receives teaching. The Lord Himself condemned the church in Thyatira for permitting a woman whom He termed "Jezebel" to teach (Rev. 2:20). As for the pope's being infallible, that is nowhere supported in Scripture; but Rome's assumed right to teach allows her to do many things in Christ's name. This has been used to enforce on all Catholics the submission to the grave error of claiming that Mary was taken bodily into heaven, where she now reigns as Queen of Heaven. They boast in Peter, but Peter so sadly erred that he was publicly rebuked by Paul.

The *Christian Century* editorialized that it was most significant that "The image of the Roman Catholic Church as projected by its new pope is definitely a more friendly one. Pope John XXIII has impressed the world with his magnanimity." In just one year of the new Pope's pontificate he has made definite progress in swinging some prominent Protestant leaders into thinking quite favorably of him and the system which he heads. The *Century* commented favorably on the institute, and said it was further evidence "of a thaw in the cold war among Christians." All of this

gives the drifting Protestant leaders a chance to drift further.

But, we may ask, has Roman Catholic dogma changed since the days of the Reformation?

Has Rome backed down and renounced her claims since the days of Martin Luther? Has the Roman Church become a docile lamb in countries where she is predominant and exerts some temporal power? Let the servants of Christ who labor in such lands, Spain for instance, tell what they have seen, and know, and have proved. Let these answer our questions.

The Roman Church authorities have remained somewhat aloof from such things as the great ecumenical conference at Evanston, Illinois; but is not Rome interested? She surely is! Dr. Weigel said that they have a higher hope than merely better understanding engendered at such institutes; their hope is "the union of all Christendom." Yes, this is their aim; and when it comes, it will not be on a basis of compromise on Rome's part, but Protestantism will return to Rome.

We have no doubt that this aim is being pursued by Rome, and Protestant ecumenicalism is becoming a willing ally. The great false church called BABYLON THE GREAT will have headquarters at Rome, where it will in the beginning of the post-rapture period exert its dominance in the revised Roman Empire (Rev. 17). We are not alarmed by the evidence that Christendom is drifting this way, for from the holy Scriptures we know it must come to pass; and the more evidence that there is of its coming, the more we know that the hour of our departure to be with Christ at His call is imminent. We should have some of the spirit of Him who wept over Jerusalem when He thought of the judgments that were coming on it, but at the same time we can rejoice in the portion that is soon to be ours with Christ, above the world and its confusion and its consternation.

Intermarriage between Catholics and non-Catholics will increase when Protestant leaders seek such accord at the top, and this will tend further to break down distinctive Protestantism and open the door to further capitulation. It will also make for more unhappy homes, because Rome demands that the children of such marriages be brought up as Catholics. And nothing divides families more than religious conflicts.

At this time, may we add one word of warning to all Christian young people who read these lines: Remember that you belong to the Lord, and you are free to marry only "in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:38). This means more than just marrying a Christian, for "in the Lord" signifies having His approval, being according to His mind. If you marry one who is unconverted, one who may possess a lovely character although unsaved, you are going to reap sad consequences of such disobedience.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." 1 Cor. 6:14-16.

The Power and Grace of the Name

How strikingly the divine design of the fourth Gospel differs from the three Synoptics, as seen in their reports of Gethsemane on the night of the betrayal! Who left to his own feelings would have so dwelt on his Master's agony as the beloved disciple? Yet he says not one word about it, though he alone of the evangelists was chosen to be near the Lord in that affecting and mysterious scene when He repaired again and again to them and found them sleeping. It fell to the others to record His exceeding sorrow in realizing the depths into which He was just about to enter, because it bore directly on the rejection of the Messiah, on the work the righteous Servant had in hand, and on the Son of man, as perfectly dependent on His Father in the hour of woe as in all the activities of power in loving service.

Here shines out the glory of His Person. Had we only the witness of John, rich as it is, what should we know of His anguish in anticipation of all before Him as He prayed to His Father, and of His entire submission, whatever it cost?

If most appropriately Luke alone mentions an angel strengthening Him, and His sweat as great drops of blood, here we see and hear the Son of the Father, to whom He had commended His own in chapter 17.

"When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden into the which He entered, and His disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am He. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked He them again, Whom seek ye? they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am He: if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, which He spake, Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none." John 18:1-9.

What communion with the Father, what prayer, what intercession, what tender care for the feeble disciples, what self-sacrificing interest on their behalf, what vigilant love of the good Shepherd, what pity for Israel, what outgoing of heart for the sheep not of this fold, had been known in that garden! Yes, Judas knew it, and took his measures accordingly under Satan to gratify the chief priests and Pharisees. Thither he led the band with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Men who do not know the Lord, talk of His "limitations," and forget that He is God, the Word become flesh, but no more ceasing to be God than a man can cease to be a man. Jesus knew all things that were coming on Him, the same Jesus who had gone through all in the profoundest grief, yet dependence on the Father; for He was truly man, the perfect Man. Now when horrors began to thicken, what calm pervaded His every word and act! He went forth and said to them,

Whom seek ye? They answered, Jesus of Nazareth; and on His reply, I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground.

God indeed attested what was due to that Name; for He too was God no less than the Father and the Holy Spirit. Nor was there ever a moment more befitting. So Judas the betrayer stood with them, and he too with them fell to the ground. What a testimony to their conscience, as well as to His glory!

When the wicked Ahaziah sent a captain with his fifty to take the Tishbite prophet as he sat alone on a hill, again and again came fire down from heaven to consume the captains and their fifties. Jesus full of grace and truth came to save the lost. Not a word more did He utter. He owned Himself Jesus the Nazarene. It was enough. In His name shall bow all beings heavenly, earthly, and infernal, and every tongue confess Him Lord, to God the Father's glory. It was but a witness then to that glory; but how blessed and suited and eloquent, if they had not had deaf ears, seared consciences, and hearts harder than stone! He whose name laid them prostrate could have in a moment consigned them to death for everlasting judgment. But no! He came that God might be glorified in His death for sin, to set free every sinner that believes in Him.

And so it was of His grace that, after the manifestation of power, He asked them again, Whom seek ye? As they gave the same reply, He answered, I told you that I am He; if therefore ye seek Me, let these go away. O what grace now manifested on behalf of His own, so unworthy of His love, yet loved unto the end, loved though He knew all would forsake Him and flee, and that one who ventured nearer in that night of desertion would there thrice deny that he knew Him! It was a fulfillment of chapter 17:12; but great as it was, how little compared with all those words mean and guarantee! And indeed such is His love that it covers all things great and small.

How are you who read these lines treating Him and His love? He, the Son of God and Lord of glory, was nothing to Judas and the Jews, but for the one to sell and the other to buy; and He submitted to be the willing prisoner, and the willing sacrifice, that you might hear and live. You have heard, but cannot live without faith in Him who is the life eternal-life now that you may live by Him-life evermore that you may have Him your life for the body in heaven as well as now for your soul on earth. But forget not that to hear and not believe on Him leaves one worse unspeakably than if he had never heard.

Prayer and Watching

If we could look at it aright we should perhaps be impressed with the fact that there are few things connected with our life more wonderful than prayer. It is the breathing of the hidden life-the expression of the soul's intercourse with God. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof," said Christ when speaking of new birth; so prayer is the sound that often indicates that this mysterious operation in the soul has taken place-as was said of newly converted. Saul of Tarsus, "Behold, he prayeth." Prayer is one of two tangible links with the unseen. The other is the Bible. In one God speaks to us; in the other we speak to Him.

It is also the expression of conscious weakness and dependence - the acknowledgment that man is insufficient of himself and must look outside himself-the standing rebuke of atheism and every form of unbelief. Indirectly it is one of the strongest evidences that there is a supreme Being.

Men have in all ages felt the necessity of prayer and found in it the greatest relief.

Years ago, a German emperor gave an address on prayer, in which he made use of the following striking illustration:

"Far away in the Taunus mountains some remarkable bells are hung on the summit of the peaks. No hand ever rings them. Silent, dumb, they hang there in the sunshine. But when the storm wind comes they begin to swing, and then to peal, and then their chimes are heard far below in the valley. God has hung in every heart a praying bell. Yet how often in the sunshine it is silent and dumb. But when the storm wind of trouble comes it begins to ring."

If prayer is so remarkable, what shall be said of answers to prayer? It is a great marvel to see a man of intelligence kneeling and addressing some One unseen, whom he has never seen; it is but a greater marvel still when from that unseen Person, thus addressed, there comes a distinct and an unmistakable response. Thousands of Christians can bear testimony to the fact that prayer is answered. The wonder is that more notice is not taken of it. Perhaps it is partly accounted for by the circumstance that answers to prayer often come so naturally that we are less impressed than otherwise we should be. God uses means, and it frequently happens that we lose sight of the answer to prayer just because means were used.

Should we not have more frequent answers to prayers if we were simple enough to make every need an occasion for asking, and were on the lookout for an answer? Not only praying always, but "watching thereunto." We are apt to think we can manage some things ourselves, and this is where we often stumble and stray. How apt we are to forget the exhortation, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Nothing is too small for

God's notice, or too trivial to be a subject of prayer.

We shall surely find subject matter for prayer in the very details of everyday life. Our families, our business, our service for the Lord will severally contribute; and if we watch unto prayer, and are

ourselves in a right state, we shall be favored by receiving answers. This will bring God very near to us, and make intercourse with Him a great reality. And if .this is done, not as a mere experiment, or in vain curiosity, but in artless dependence and childlike confidence, the gain will be great. Only let us be simple. It is not the long, flowery, eloquent prayers that necessarily are -answered, but the direct, believing prayers that go from the heart-these reach the ear of God. We may not be able to express ourselves very well; but if the heart is pure, and the intention right, God can interpret it.

Prayer will often accomplish great things. King Jehoshaphat discovered this. When a great multitude of the children of Moab and Ammon came against him, he "set himself to seek the LORD." And this is his confession: "We have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee." And what was the result? God fought for them. He set the enemy against one another. "And when Judah came toward the watchtower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped." All that Judah did toward it was to appoint singers to go before the army to "praise the beauty of holiness," and, to say, "Praise ye the Lord . . . for His mercy endureth for ever." Surely if our eyes were more upon the Lord our lips would more often praise Him.

Do we not learn from such incidents as this how much can be accomplished by prayer? We may not be great preachers or have much gift or be able to fill any conspicuous place; but we can pray, we can speak to the One without whose blessing preaching and gift and place are of no account. And perhaps we may some day discover that a result which we thought was due to some prominent brother was really brought about by the prayers of some humble believing saint, and God simply used the other in answer to those prayers. The instrument is seen, and very often down here gets all the honor; but in a future day that honor may have to be shared by another perhaps now unknown.

A servant of the Lord was once led to visit a certain village for the purpose of speaking to the people and distributing tracts. He called at one house and found the inmate a bedridden child of God. When he told her his mission to the place, he noticed her face light up with a sudden glow. On inquiry he found that for ten years she had prayed that God would send someone on the very errand on which he had come. Her prayers were answered. She could not do the work herself, but she could ask God to send another to do it. Will they not both have their reward in that coming day?

Preachers Urgently Needed

"How long have you been converted?" we asked of a young man the other day.

"About fifteen months."

"How did it come about? Was it through any special evangelistic service, or how?"

"No, it was by means of a young lady - a personal friend - that I was brought to know the Lord."

"Any particular passage of Scripture used?"

"It was not so much what she said that first arrested me, as her consistent, godly life. I was powerfully impressed by it, and that was how the work began in my soul."

Precious and beautiful testimony!

Preachers of that school are everywhere needed, and such preaching will be signally blessed of God. Aspire to be a preacher of that sort. No great gift is needed, no rich intellectual endowment, and you may begin at once. Now preaching with the tongue has its necessary limits, but this kind has none. A godly, consistent life is a continual sermon full of unction and power.

It is this kind of testimony that the Apostle Peter alludes to in the third chapter of his first epistle. He supposes a believing wife having an unbelieving husband. She cannot bring the Word before him with her voice. He will not stand it; and she, knowing this, says nothing. But her life is in itself powerful preaching - so wise, so discreet, with so much of Christ interwoven with it. And the unconverted husband is won by this - not driven, but won.

Christian men and women, boys and girls, in every station of life, who by God's grace will preach such sermons from January to December, are needed.

The Present Love of God

"The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of the Christ." 2 Thess. 3:5; J.N.D. Trans.

"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." So runs the witness of Rom. 5:5. It is God's own love to us, not our love to Him -love that towers high above a 11 earthly love, however great. The love of friend for friend may be wonderful, as was the love of Jonathan for David; and the love of a mother for her child is tender and unwearying; but the love of God to us-His own love-is incomparably greater and is all the more beautiful, in that there was nothing in us to call it forth. He loved us when we were sinners, and gave His Son to die for us.

Never can we doubt that love as we gaze upon the cross. Love emptied itself there. It gave its all for us-for you, for me.

What an answer is this to Satan's lie in the garden of Eden! There he succeeded in persuading Eve that God withheld something that would be for her good to have. Oh, what a harvest of sorrow and tears, and anguish and death, has followed that disbelief of God's love! But that love, suspected and disbelieved in Eden, has displayed itself at Calvary. How? He spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all. There we learn the mighty, measureless love of God.

And this perfect love casts out fear.' It must of necessity do so, for how could we be afraid of One who loves us with perfect love? Now God's love is perfect, and withal holy; for He has taken cognizance of our sins, and shown His love in the very thing that has put those sins away. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4:10.

We would not wish God to think lightly of our sins, nor would He if such were our wish. God abhors sin, and it is our joy and rest to see that all that was due to us and to our sins has been borne by God's own Son. The cross has put our sins away forever; and in accents solemn, and yet clear and sweet, it tells us God is light, and God is love.

But has that Love which thought of our deep spiritual need, and made such ample provision for it in Christ, withdrawn its eyes from us, not caring to behold us more till we are seen in glory? Oh, no! the very hairs of our head are all numbered. And if not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father, are we not of more value than many sparrows?

It is into the present love of God-the love that cares for us today-that our hearts need to be directed; for it is there they may find rest, and nowhere else.

We know no yesterday but the cross, and no tomorrow but the glory; but then there is today-the wilderness and the things that surely come upon us there.

The power of God, like His love, is infinite. He is able to make the rough places smooth, and never to suffer a thorn to pierce our foot. And the knowledge of God's power is the very door by which Satan often seeks to insinuate into the mind a doubt as to God's love. The soul reasons thus: "If God loves me with a Father's love, why does He not do this or that for me? Why do my prayers remain so long unanswered?"

Ah, believer, it is not because God does not love you that the answer to prayers is sometimes slow in coming, and sometimes never comes at all. God has lessons to teach, which would never be learned if our will guided His hand. How much the beloved family at Bethany would have missed if Lazarus had not been suffered to go down to the grave! And what a loss for Paul if the thorn in the flesh had been taken away in answer to his thrice-repeated prayer.

There are many things that may remain a mystery to us on earth. How often the life, which to our view seemed so necessary, is taken away! while one that might have been more easily spared, is left to linger on year after year. God does not explain all this to us. He does not tell us His reasons, but He asks us to confide in His wisdom and His love. Let us have patience. The night will soon be gone, and in the morning light of that endless day we will see what is now hidden from our eyes.

And if the past could be blotted out, and we could begin life's journey afresh, and God were to ask us whether we would choose our own path, and fill it up as it seemed best to us, or whether He would choose for us, would we not put it into His hand for Him to choose and lead?

"Choose the path, the way whatever

Seems to Thee, O Lord, the best."

Surely faith would say so.

This is the time of His patience. He is seated on His Father's throne, but He does not yet have His bride. He waits in patience to see the fruit of the travail of His soul. Nor does He have the world kingdom now; but He who said, "Sit Thou at My right hand," also said, "until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." Psalm 110:1. Hence He' waits in patience now. This is now the "kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9). Soon it will be the kingdom and glory of Jesus Christ. And before then we shall be ushered into His presence in bodies of glory like unto His. What a scene of unutterable joy and delight!

Then from those cloudless heights we shall look back and remember "all the way the Lord thy God hath led thee." Then thou shalt see that the hand that ordered everything was a Father's hand, and that His way was better than thy way. Rest in His love, lean on His bosom, till the day break, and the shadows flee away.

Prospect and Retrospect

How different oftentimes is the anticipation from the result! Conjuring up bright visions of the future, man looks forward with eagerness to what fades away as he approaches it, like the mirage of the desert; or, if the event expected really happens, the reality falls far short of the conception. The happiness anticipated either eludes the grasp, or comes alloyed with some bitterness, the fruit of man's sin. Eve desired the fruit of the tree to make her wise. She got it, and discovered her nakedness. Gehazi carried home the garments and talents, and found himself and his house burdened with the leprosy of Naaman forever. Judas received his price, but found life insupportable. God gave Israel "their request; but sent leanness into their soul" (Psalm 106:15). Yet we are to live in anticipation of the future. There is more to be enjoyed than we have yet entered into. We are saved in hope (Rom. 8:24). The Lord would have His sorrowing disciples embrace the hope of His return to sustain them during His absence. And this, the expectancy of a future of blessing, has characterized God's people in all ages. Man's visions of the future are often visionary indeed. What God has promised will surely come to pass. For though "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" (1 Cor. 2:9), He has revealed them by His Spirit.

There is a future then before His saints; they have a prospect, not a mere creature of the imagination, a phantom conjured up by the brain, but a solid substantial reality. Who can express what the joy of it will be? But the hope is none the less sure for that. So with the remnant of Israel in the latter day, but with this difference: their blessings are on earth, so can be described in words. Ours are in heaven, so what language can express them? We may enter into their joy at going up to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, chanting His praises in Zion, without fear of man. But who can yet enter into the joy of being in the Father's house? Separated by God's Spirit acting on their hearts from the apostasy around them, the remnant are taught by the same Spirit what to desire; and, their expectation being according to God, they pour out their hearts in full confidence to Him about it. This is what we have in Psalm 65. Psalm 66 is the telling out to the earth and all that fear God how fully He has responded to their desires. From the one we learn their prospect; in the other we have a retrospect.

As the righteous in Israel, their first thoughts are for God and His house. "Praise waiteth for Thee in silence, O God, in Zion." (J.N.D. Trans.) Such is the condition of matters in the city of the great King. A change will, however, come. "Unto Thee shall the vow be performed." We learn in Psalm 63 how the soul can be filled with marrow and fatness, even in the wilderness. But present personal enjoyment of God is not all that the godly soul desires. Has not God confided to such a one His counsels? Shall the soul, made the depository of such knowledge, be "...z. content till all is accomplished? In the wilderness it may find refreshment as it remembers Him; but what of His honor, His glory, and the place associated with the display of His power? Till all that God has spoken of in connection with His manifestation as King over the earth is fulfilled, the godly soul cannot rest satisfied. The altar profaned, the house desolate, the worship of God stopped, are no light matters, even though he may realize the presence of the Lord where -4 he is. Is there not

something here for believers of the present day? Is my soul's salvation the ultimate end to be desired? Am I then to be satisfied, or am I also to wait God's time, but wait, expecting till the Lord takes His place on His own throne? In a word, am I to be content with knowing I am delivered from wrath, or am I to look forward desiring the advent of His kingdom, that He should have His place, His inheritance?

Revelation 11

The book of The Acts of the Apostles gives us the account of the establishment of the Church, and its being called to be the witness for God. This involves the setting aside, from its place of standing before God, of Jerusalem. As a place, it was broken up soon after. From that time on, we have no recognition on God's part of any places upon earth as such. Individual persons as forming parts of the Church are recognized, and churches are recognized in the epistles; but places, as such, are never owned as having, as mere places, any interest in the mind of God.

In this 11th chapter of Revelation, however, we find a definite place on earth again recognized as the subject of special interest to the divine mind; and in that chosen place, in spite of all its evil, and in spite of all the evil of the Gentiles, we find a witness is raised and marvelously maintained there.

The Rubbish in the Garden

Suppose your neighbor had a heap of rubbish in his garden, and you saw him turning it over very diligently every day, and constantly coming away looking very crestfallen and disappointed. You would be sure that he had expected to find something that was worth the search. One day you ask him over the hedge if there is anything valuable in the heap of stuff he has got there. "Oh no," he says; "it is only rubbish, of no value to me or anyone else."

But the next day you see him turning it over again and looking as disappointed as ever; and this occurs day after day for weeks. You would think, "Whatever that man says, it is evident he has not given up the expectation of finding something there."

Many believers are like this. They say that there is no good in themselves, and that they do not expect to find any; but, nevertheless, they suffer a good deal of self-disappointment from time to time, and this proves that they have not really given up the thought of self-improvement. It is strange that we should be so foolish, in the light of Scripture and after all the experience we have had.

Let me carry the illustration a little further. One day you see your neighbor applying a lighted match to the heap of rubbish, and then standing by it until the whole is consumed to ashes. You stroll down the garden and then make some remark about it. He says, "I can see now what a fool I have been in wasting so much time over this rubbish heap. The owner of the garden knew all about it, and he told me it was nothing but rubbish, and I proved it to be so every time I turned it over; and yet I must have had an idea there was something good in it, because I was so disappointed to find nothing but rubbish. Now I am glad it is all burned, and I shall waste no more time over it."

You can see now that he not only says it is rubbish, but he has really judged it to be such, and has given it up as perfectly worthless.

God has judged the flesh absolutely in the death of Christ. "Our old man is crucified with Him" (Rom. 6:6). The heap of rubbish is burned; it is cleared away absolutely for God. But there is a needs-be that we should reach, in our souls, the same conclusion as God.

The Secret of Endurance

We may have often known what it was to be roused by a stirring word of exhortation, but incentives of this kind do not give power for endurance. They are like the crack of the whip, which makes the old horse increase his pace for a few yards, but he is soon back at his old jog-trot.

What is needed for endurance is to have Christ commanding the heart. Turn the tired horse's head toward home, and see how he will go! We need more of the attraction of home, more of the attraction of that blessed Person who is the center of all the thoughts of God and of the place where He is.

Self-Judgment Is Proper

Our first thoughts, on hearing of a brother's sin, should be of self-judgment. In what way have we contributed to the general weakness of the body, which results in the failure of one of its members? How often and earnestly have we prayed for that one? and in what way have we shown our care that his walk may be such as becometh the gospel? (John 13.) It has been said that our unconscious influence is greater than that we are conscious of exerting over others, and on this account the powerful influence of example will have a place in our consideration.

It is a remarkable fact, and little to our credit, that those who owe their present and prospective blessings to divine mercy alone, are sometimes most unmerciful in their judgment of others. Do we not often credit others with motives which we should be most indignant to have imputed to ourselves? "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Gal. 6:1.

Shall We Know Each Other in Heaven? the Editor's Column

We are constrained to consider a subject this month which differs from our usual form, but one about which there seems to be considerable misapprehension and confusion among Christians at large. Briefly stated, it is whether or not we shall know each other in heaven. It may astonish some of our readers to know that there is any confusion about it, but if they were asked to set forth from Scripture a solid explanation of the matter, they might be hard pressed to do it.

First, let us have it clearly before us that we are speaking of the time when all the saints will be at home in the Father's house, all in bodies of glory like unto Christ's. The subject of the knowledge of the souls and spirits of those who have already departed from this life to be with Christ is another matter, but the topic which we have chosen concerns not the unclothed state but the clothed state (spoken of in 2 Cor. 5), when we shall have our house which is from heaven - glorified saints in the glory with Christ.

There are not many express statements in Scripture on this subject, but there are enough that bear on it that we should be in no doubt. Perhaps one of the causes of lack of understanding is the supposition that the saints in glorified bodies will be lost in one indistinguishable throng, that all the redeemed will look alike and be alike. A little consideration will dissolve this misconception, for even in this world (which we all recognize as greatly inferior to the heavenly scene) there is an infinite variety without duplication. No two people look or act exactly alike; no fingerprints are alike, not even in all the millions that the United States Bureau of Investigation has on file, no, not in "identical twins." Some such cases have been claimed to exist, but when examined carefully they were shown to differ. Those who have studied the blades of grass, the leaves of the trees, and the snowflakes, tell us the same variation is true. When man makes pins, needles, or other objects, they come out uniformly the same.

Since, then, this creation is stamped by such infinite variety and lack of duplication, why should one suppose that the heavenly scene, "that which is perfect," will be otherwise. The deduction is unavoidable that there will be the same distinctions and personalities evidenced when we in bodies of glory will be with Christ. The "spiritual body" is not going to lack the distinctive individuality that has been in the "natural body." The chapter from which this last is quoted calls attention to various glories, even to saying "one star differeth from another star in glory" (1 Cor. 15:41). How could we suppose that the glorified body - the "spiritual body" - will lack personal identity which this body of our humiliation has possessed?

Were not Moses and Elijah distinguishable when displayed in the glory with Christ on the transfiguration mount? Was this only a mirage? an illusion? No, for Peter says, "we... were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (2 Pet. 1:16), whereby we had the Old Testament prophecy confirmed to us. Moses and Elijah were not phantoms, but the actual men who talked with Jesus and "spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31). They represent the heavenly side of the coming glory, just as Peter, James, and John in natural bodies portrayed the earthly side of the kingdom. Furthermore, Moses and Elijah were not angels, nor did

they appear as angels, for "there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias." Another point to discover here is that even those in natural bodies-Peter, James, and John -needed no introduction to those in glorified bodies, although they had never seen them on earth.

Another scripture that deals with this subject and is irrefutable in combating the idea that we will not know one another in heaven is found in 1 Thess. 2 "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy." vv. 19, 20. Not only will the Apostle Paul know those Thessalonian believers in the glory, and they know him, but they are to be manifestly his joy and crown of rejoicing. They will be there as the evident trophies of Paul's labors at Thessalonica. And if this is true of the saints at Thessalonica, is it not to be true of all the saints who were saved through Paul's labors? Why should only the saints in one locality be singled out for this place? Surely it will be so in all of Paul's labors, and if of Paul, why not of all the saints who have labored and seen souls saved through their ministry? Is there not a similar thought in John's second epistle, where he says, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward"? v. 8. John is speaking of his labors, and he hoped this "elect lady" would go on in the truth as he had taught her, so that he might have a full reward.

This brings us to another point: What about the judgment seat of Christ where all the saints in glory will have their works reviewed by Him who knew and understood all the thoughts, motives, and deeds. We are very poor judges of our own doings, but there is One who knows the thoughts and intents of the hearts. We are to be manifested before Him when we are with and like Christ. The Lord whom we serve is going to reward each one of us according to His perfect wisdom and love. If there is no distinct personality of the saints, who is there to reward? and what is there to reward? Furthermore, there will be rewards that will be bestowed in common with other believers. This would necessitate the knowledge of each other.

There will be rewards that will be distinctly personal and individual, as with the stone in which there will be a new name which no one will know but the one receiving it (Rev. 2:17). This will be for some personal devotedness to Christ that no one else knew of, and it will receive His private commendation-a beautiful thing to anticipate as of something personal between the individual and the Lord. But then there are those who will be made pillars in that day; that is, something that stands out for all to see. Surely the rewards will be commensurate, with the devotedness to the Lord, and according to the trials that made it difficult. And in Rev. 3:9 the Lord commends some who in great weakness held fast to His Word and did not deny His name. He says to these, "I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." Has this taken place yet? Will there not be a public acknowledgment of His approval of those who were faithful in the "day of small things," even though they were despised at the time by others? He is to make it plainly evident that they had His approval. There is a similar thought in the last book of the Old Testament - Malachi. The Lord had a special record made of those who feared Him and thought upon His name in the day of ruin. He says of them, "They shall be Mine... in that day when I make up My jewels." Then it will be seen who pleased God and who did not.

Another side to the judgment seat of Christ must also be considered. There are, sad to say, injustices and evil acts of Christians toward Christians now in this world, many of which have never been cleared or settled, nor will they be short of the coming judgment seat when all of our deeds

pass in review before Him. Will there be no redress of such injuries? Will the Lord not make it manifest what He saw and what He knew of the motives which were at work? We will all be happy to have these things cleared away then, for there will be no flesh in any of us. But how could all this take place if the saints in glory were one indistinguishable throng? After the rapture, and, we take it, before the marriage of the Lamb, everything that could possibly sully one atom of glory will have been judged and cleared in His presence. In the light of this, how important it is to judge ourselves now before Him, and to walk with a pure conscience day by day!

It is sad to witness some Christians being involved in altercations and quarrels with other Christians, and being willing to say, This will have to go to the judgment seat of Christ. Should we not judge it before the Lord NOW and, where necessary, before our brethren too; and, if it should be done, make restitution now? It is a solemn thing for Christians to allow difficulties with other Christians which remain unresolved until the day of Christ.

When that which is perfect is come, then we shall know also as we are known (1 Cor. 13:10, 12). We can little comprehend the wonders of those scenes into which we are soon to enter. "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." 1 Cor. 2:9.

Was it only for the Israelites that God said, as the end of the wilderness came into view: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness"? Deut. 8:2. Is there not an application for us as we too near the end of the wilderness journey? Shall we not review all His ways with us? and shall they not magnify His grace and His goodness? Cannot we sing with the poet:

"I'll bless the hand that guided,
I'll bless the heart that planned,
When throned where glory dwelleth,
In Immanuel's land"?

When we behold how His grace cared for us, and brought us safely to Himself, amid all our failures, we shall praise Him as we should.

The story has been told of the eccentric preacher of old, Rowland Hill (of "The Three Biddens" fame), who was one day asked by his wife, "Rowland, do you think we will know each other in heaven?" He replied tersely, "Do you think we will be bigger fools there than we are here?"

Surely we await the coming of "that which is perfect."

"We look to meet our brethren,
From ev'ry distant shore;
Not one will seem a stranger,
Though never seen before.
With angel hosts attending,

In myriads, through the sky;
Yet 'midst them all, Thou only,
O Lord, wilt fix the eye!"

Simplicity

We may be quite sure that the enemy of souls is ever seeking to turn aside God's people from the truth; and we need to be constantly on the alert lest he should catch us and hinder our joy and communion as well as our usefulness.

The fear of this filled the Apostle Paul's heart in respect of the saints at Corinth; and his words to them in his second epistle (chap. 11:3), when he speaks of this, furnish instruction of the very greatest importance. May the Spirit of God, as we meditate upon it, awaken us both to the danger and to the remedy provided against it.

What the Apostle feared was that their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Another translation renders this latter part, "simplicity as to the Christ," which, I think, helps us to see that there is a simplicity connected with the doctrine concerning Christ (that is, the truth generally), the loss of which is infinitely serious. The Apostle's words tell us how serious when he speaks of their being corrupted from this simplicity; for it shows us that the moment a child of God is turned aside from this simplicity, corruption has set in. All will admit that this is serious indeed.

Let us then inquire what this simplicity consists of, for it is evident that a right understanding of that is most necessary. The Apostle himself furnishes us the clue when he illustrates his point by a reference to the beguiling of Eve. The illustration is most apt, for he has just said that like as a bride is prepared for the bridegroom, so he had espoused them to one husband, that he might present them as a chaste virgin to Christ; and his fear is that they should be corrupted like as the first bride was.

If we turn to the story of this first beguiling, we shall easily see what this simplicity consisted of. When the serpent first approached Eve with his subtle suggestions, she answered him promptly, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." [The preceding italicized words seem to have been unwarranted, and if so, her adding to God's word gave the enemy an opening.] Now it is in this very answer that the simplicity is seen. God's mind had been communicated to Eve in words which presented no difficulty, and they had been received without question and up to that moment, obeyed. Could anything be simpler than that? No, for it is precisely the same principle upon which we deal with the tiniest child that has any understanding at all. We leave a little one alone in a room for a while, but before going we give some simple instruction that it shall not touch a certain article before our return. Does the child understand? Certainly! And what remains? Only that it shall obey. It may not yet understand why the command was given. That is not always necessary. The authority of the parent answers for that.

And in the same way Eve's attitude toward God's communications was, at the moment the serpent approached, characterized by the greatest simplicity. God had spoken, and she had without question believed and obeyed; and the effect of this was complete happiness. Now note what the

serpent suggested- that God did not mean quite what His words seemed to convey-. And here is the critical point of the whole question. It is what has been suggested thousands of times since, and what is being pressed with increased energy in our own day, but it is false. It cannot be too strongly pressed and pressed again that God's words mean exactly what they say. We may not always understand why He commands this and that, but (and I would appeal especially to the young believer, although it is equally applicable to the old) let us plainly understand that every word means just what it says, and nothing else. And in the putting down of our foot firmly upon this, lies all our happiness.

Brethren, I appeal to you, do not be robbed of your treasure. Cling to the Lord's precious legacy, and your happiness and welfare will be intact.

Eve was corrupted. She had enjoyed perfect bliss as a consequence of simple unquestioning obedience, but she surrendered her simplicity and immediately reaped its terrible consequences.

Friends! God always speaks in language we can understand. We do not grasp everything at once. We grow in knowledge. But we grow most when we simply take God's Word as it stands, whether we understand it or not.

Look again at what the Apostle says, "I fear, lest... your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

Ponder it well, for once the believer starts upon this corrupt path, there is no knowing how far he may depart from the truth; while, on the other hand, the simple clinging through all to the Word as it is given, although entailing suffering for the truth's sake, as it assuredly will, brings a happiness and peace that nothing else can. May you and I be preserved, dear reader!

Lectures on the Song of Solomon

We are about to look at a book of Scripture which, I suppose, has often exercised the minds of many of us. But it is remarkable that although modern thought might presume to speak lowly of such a book, there is no part of the Hebrew Scriptures which has more distinct, positive authority. That is to say there is not a single groundwork of divine authority which it does not possess, save one, perhaps, that might be brought up against it, and that is, that it is one of the very few books of the Bible which is not quoted in the New Testament. But there is not the very slightest ground for question on that score, and for this simple reason: that although it be not cited, the very groundwork of it is constantly before the mind of the Spirit of God. The first book of the New Testament most plainly alludes to the great thought of Canticles; that is, the bridal relation as the sign or symbol of Christ's special love to His people. For although, undoubtedly, we have in the New Testament the place of children and the Father's love; and although we have also the figure of the shepherd and his care for the sheep, still we see this very relationship taken up and used by the Holy Ghost as the peculiar figure of the nearness of love in which the Lord stands to ourselves. This, however, has exposed the book, I think, to be misunderstood.

In that haste which is at all times apt to characterize want of faith as well as want of spiritual intelligence, it has been taken for granted that the bride of the Song of Solomon must be the same as the bride of which the Apostle Paul speaks-the bride of which John speaks in the Revelation. But this in nowise follows, and I will endeavor to make this plain before I enter upon the book itself.

If we turn then to the Gospel of Matthew, we find that the first occasion in the New Testament where the bridal relation comes before us is in the 9th chapter wherein the Lord is vindicating His disciples on the occasion of questions being raised by Pharisaic prejudices. Jesus said to the disciples of John, who identified themselves with the feeling of the Pharisees, "Can the children of the bride chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?" Now, there we have a distinct allusion. But where do we hear of the Bridegroom? It is supposed to be something thoroughly well known. He does not explain it. Where was the title of the "bridegroom" got from? Unquestionably from Canticles-the Song of Solomon. That is, we have here, not, it is true, a quotation, but we have what appears to me to be even stronger than a quotation. We have it as a distinctly recognized fact. We have it as a grand truth that was thoroughly familiar to the mind of the Jews, and mark, beloved friends, with the stamp of the Son of God upon it. For it is not, you observe, a title which the disciples of John use in speaking to Jesus, but it is the Lord Jesus who uses it to them. "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn," says He, "as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then they shall fast."

Now, you will notice what singular beauty-and I need not say divine perfection-there is in these words. He does not speak of the bride. He simply speaks of the children of the bridechamber. He knew right well that He was about to bring out another to fill the place as His bride. But here there is no reference at all, for at this time our Lord was being simply proposed to Israel. It was a question of whether the ancient people of God would receive Him. Had they received Him, He

would have been the bridegroom, and they would have composed the bride. And it is plain, as I have said, that the Lord does not set this forth as something which He was making known for the first time, but as something which they ought to have been perfectly familiar with, and, of course, grounded upon the Word of God. Where was it taken from? From the book of which I have read a few words this evening.

Well, if we turn again to a later part of this same Gospel of Matthew-to the parable of the ten virgins which is so justly familiar to the Christian-what do we find there? We have the kingdom of heaven compared to ten virgins. It is not the bride, you observe, but virgins who went forth with their lamps to meet the bridegroom. Now, there can be no question whatever that the bridegroom is the Lord Jesus. It is plain that the bride is not the point in the parable of the ten virgins. It is virgins who were going forth to meet the bridegroom. And where then do we find the bride? Solemn silence. In the first allusion where the Lord spoke of the bridegroom, there is no reference to the bride. It is the children of the bridechamber, and not a word about the bride. Remarkable silence! The natural thing would have been to speak of the bride as well; and so natural is it that in some ancient copies-one of the most ancient copies-made of this very parable, the writer slipped into this mistake; for he represented the kingdom of heaven as likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom and the bride. They have added the words "and the bride." I need not tell you that there is not the slightest authority for it.

No, what I want to show is the striking wisdom of the Lord in that He does not say a word about the bride. There is the bridegroom, and he is coming-because that is the point: he is coming. It is not a scene in heaven; this is not the point. But here we find the bridegroom coming, and these virgins are going out to meet him. They are not the bride of Christ which He is going to take to Himself; and the ten virgins could not be the figure of the bride.

It is quite plain, then, that the bride is unmentioned-unseen -and the reason to my mind is most solemn. The Lord perfectly well knew that the bride, whom their hearts were familiar with from the Old Testament imagery, was to be no bride yet-that the bride would be faithless-that the bride would refuse the bridegroom for the time. The bride, therefore, does not appear in either of His allusions. For He was not like one who had to learn. He was not one who did not know the truth; He was a divine Person. It was all before Him. He might wait; but even when He did wait, and when it was too plain that He was thoroughly rejected by the Jews, and was now about to lay down His life as a sacrifice-not to come as a bridegroom for the bride, but to lay down His life as a sacrifice for sinners- even then, in this striking parable at the very close there is not a word about the bride. From first to last the bride appears not.

Now that, to me, is most instructive because one of the objects of the Gospel of Matthew is to show not more that He was the true and divine Messiah, Emmanuel, than that the true Emmanuel-the Messiah-would be rejected by Israel. Hence, therefore, there is a veil over Israel. How singular! He does not even name her. She would refuse Him. He does not say a word about her. He turns to that which was near to His own heart, not to guiltiness-the guilty unbelief of her that ought to have welcomed the returning Bridegroom, now present. He was the present Bridegroom even then; but He speaks of ourselves, really, for it is the Christian body, and, indeed, the professing Christian body, that He means by the ten virgins. He does not refer to the Jewish remnant, as some people have fancied. There is nothing at all about the Jewish remnant in the ten

virgins. The ten virgins are clearly Christian professors who go forth to meet the Bridegroom. That is our position, and they characterize Christianity.

The Jew will remain where he is, and be blest of God where he is, when the day comes to bless the Jew. They never go forth to meet the Bridegroom. The Bridegroom will come to them when their heart is turned. There will be that turn of heart, and the veil will be taken away when it turns to the Lord- the heart of Israel, as we are told in the 3rd chapter of the 2nd epistle to the Corinthians. The Lord was clearly speaking here of those that go forth, and He is speaking of some foolish and some wise. When the Jewish remnant comes there will be none foolish. The wise shall understand (Dan. 12:10), and they are the understanding ones-that Jewish remnant of the last days.

And what shows still more plainly that it is not the Jewish remnant is this: they have got oil in their vessels, whereas the Jews will have the Holy Ghost poured out upon them after their relationship with Christ is established. We have the Holy Ghost poured out when Christ went away. They will not have the Holy Ghost poured out upon them till Christ comes back again; so that distinction, therefore, is perfectly plain. And see how all corroborates this, because they go to sleep. The Jewish remnant will never go to sleep. From the time that they are called, they will pass through unequalled fires and tribulation. People do not go to sleep in times of tribulation, but in times of ease. That is what has come to pass in Christendom. There were times of ease, and people went to sleep; and that is what we find here -the Lord waking them up at the end. But, I repeat, the ten virgins portray Christendom, good and bad, wise and foolish, and not the Jewish body. The bride is nowhere seen. She is not even named. I have no doubt that the returning Bridegroom will take the bride after this; but the ten virgins are a totally different figure, and they are viewed here not as the bride, but as the cortege, as it were-the bridal procession-those that go forth to meet Him and go in with Him to the marriage. But then it is another who is the bride; and if you ask who that bride would be, if the bride were named at all, I answer, without hesitation, the bride of the Canticles-Jerusalem.

We must not suppose, beloved friends, that it is anything strange that Jerusalem should have such a title attached to her. The Prophets take it up, and the Psalms too. The 45th psalm refers most clearly to that Jewish bride. She is the queen. There are others to be blessed in that bright day, but she is the one that is all glorious within. And we must not suppose that this is any derogation from the heavenly bride, the Church, for I quite admit that the same persons who are the wise virgins in the 25th of Matthew do compose that heavenly bride. In short, we must remember that the bride is only a figure, and that there is the Church which has a nearer place than any of the others that are in heaven; and Jerusalem-or Zion if you will- will have a special place near to Messiah on the earth. The Lord's heart, surely, is large enough for both heaven and earth. He who is God as well as man-He who is the Head of the Church as well as the Head of the Jew--loves, and will love, them both with the fullest and most fervent love. Consequently, as in the Old Testament we have a bride who is clearly defined and most unquestionably not the Church, so in the New Testament we have a bride that is fully brought out; and that bride is as clearly the Church and not Jerusalem, as in the Old Testament it is Jerusalem and not the Church.

This, I think, will help very considerably in understanding the Song of Solomon. No person must suppose that this will make the Song of Solomon less interesting. The first point, beloved friends, is always to consider not what we count interesting, but to ask what is the truth-what is the mind of

God. Now, I think that whenever we have God's mind as a settled certainty, there is nothing that is of deeper interest; and I need hardly say that if such will be the love of Christ-so great and so tender-toward His earthly bride, would it be a fair inference that Christ's love is less toward His heavenly bride? I should have thought the contrary and, therefore, that we were most entirely entitled to infer that the Lord's love is larger than we thought it was -that the Lord will have an object most dear to Him upon the earth in a special nearness to Him, as the Lord will surely have an object which is peculiarly near to Him in heaven. And if we belong to Christ at all now, such will be our relationship, and such we are entitled to know is our relationship at this time. This, I repeat, is not to take away Scripture from our hearts, but it is to give us a true intelligence of Scripture.

I might refer to the Gospel of John in order to carry forward the same proof with regard to the figure of the bridegroom, and, consequently, of the earthly bride-for the Church was not yet revealed when the Lord spoke there or when John the Baptist gave his testimony to Christ there-but I prefer to put it upon the words of Christ. John the Baptist, no doubt, bears the same stamp as the Lord Jesus does-I would not say of inspiration. No; I speak of Him as a divine Person. He spoke the words of God, and John the Baptist gave here his testimony from God as truly as if it had been God Himself speaking; but, still, we must always distinguish between one who is merely an instrument and one who is God's express image. Such was Jesus.

I do not wish to merely bring a number of texts as if it were making the truth stronger. I hope that I am addressing those who would be quite satisfied with one scripture if there were one scripture only. The man who requires twenty scriptures evidently does not believe one. The man who thinks that Scripture is more certain because he multiplies the proofs, has certainly no proper sense of its divine certitude. I take my stand, then, upon this, that the books of the Old Testament-Psalm and Prophets-are alluding from time to time (I might say frequently) to the figure of the bride as that which Jerusalem is to fill in a day that is coming; and that the New Testament takes its stand on the lips of our Lord Himself sealing this great truth, the more important because Jerusalem was going to refuse Him, alas! How blessed His testimony! The Lord, however, although He does not speak of Jerusalem here as the bride, speaks of Himself as the Bridegroom. He did not fail in His love, although she failed in hers.

That is the great truth which I draw from it; but, that truth is founded, I repeat, upon the Song of Solomon. The Song of Solomon, therefore, is evidently stamped with the fullest divine authority, and not merely because it is in the very heart, if I may say so, of the Bible-not merely because it was always undisputed-not merely because it was in the very earliest translation that was ever made of the Scriptures. It is not like the Apocryphal books or anything that could be questioned. That book was translated into the leading language of the Gentiles long before the coming of Christ, so that there can be no doubt whatever as to its full divine authority. And, further, it was familiarly understood at that time, so that our Lord could appeal to the prominent figure of that book which, I may say, envelopes the whole of it; for the whole book is devoted to the love between the bridegroom and the bride. I know, of course, that Solomon was the author of it; and it has been thought by many that Solomon was the subject of it. Whatever may be the historical circumstances which gave occasion to the book, that is a matter which has no particular claim to occupy our mind. What we find is not the occasion which gave rise to it, but the truth of God in it-what the Holy Ghost meant for the edification of saints at all times, and, very especially, when this book will apply. For it bears another great stamp of divine truth about it, and it is this of which, I

am persuaded: that the true bearing of the book is future-that it is not yet accomplished.

The Jews have regarded it as a historical allegory--and there they missed the mind of God-of the dealings of God with the Jewish people-that it was the love of Jehovah for Israel from the day when He brought her out of Egypt. They naturally applied the coming of the bride and the bridegroom out of the wilderness to God bringing His people out of the house of bondage, and taking them for His own people before the face of all the world.

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But no, beloved brethren, it is evident that this is not at all the way of God's Spirit-to be writing a book, and a book at such a time, devoted to what was past, and what was even then passing into darkness and sin and ruin. Not so. The Word of God has in all its parts a prophetic character stamped upon it as a whole. The book of Genesis, even, has; and I particularly_ refer to that, because if anything might be supposed to look back at the past, surely it was Genesis. But Genesis could not close, and Genesis could not even make advance, without proving its divine scope, and withal the Spirit of God launching into the future. It might be in the form of type, of course; it might assume the character of prophecy; it does both. But I refer to it now to show that such, we may say, in a general way, is the character of all Scripture. It looks onward to a bright day. It has its root in the past, no doubt. It firmly deals with the present, but its aspect is always to the future. And no wonder, because if it is grounded upon the ruin of the first man, it looks onward to the glory of the Second. That is what all Scripture has for its great object and character.

Well, now, so has the Song of Solomon; and it is with reference to this that I will endeavor now to give a few suggestions, for I am only going to take it up in a general way. I do not profess to be acquainted with all the details of it; for I am really afraid to speak presumptuously, or in any way to take up the nice points which many persons raise whose inclination disposes them to what is commonly called allegorical interpretation. I repeat that I do not wish at all to expose myself to anything that is not of God. I wish to speak of what I know- what I most firmly believe-to be of God, and to speak, therefore, of the broad and deep characteristics of this wonderful book. But I think that the Lord may give sufficient to help the children of God to a larger view-a more correct understanding-and to have more than mere points of detail, which is never the most profitable way of looking at Scripture. What we want is to have it as a whole. When we have got the general idea-the outline of the map-then we can begin to look at the details; but the details I must leave to others. For my own part, I am content to give a few suggestions at this present time of a more general kind.

Now there is one thing that I would draw your attention to. I have been proving that the Song refers to the earthly bride and not to the heavenly one. I will not give you the spiritual reasons of that. I have given you dogmatic proof drawn from the Word of God; but I will now give you what I may call -spiritual or moral reasons why the Song of Songs, although most instructive and helpful for our souls, nevertheless does not present as its object the proper relationship of the heavenly bride, but rather of the earthly one.

And the first great difference between them is this, which we must always hold fast in looking at the Song: we come in as the bride between the two comings of Christ. The Jews will not. They had the revelation that they were to be the bride before His first coming; but they refused Him; they

rejected Him; they despised Him; and they never, therefore, took the place of being His bride when He did come. The Lord left them veiled in their own silence and hardness of unbelief. But not so when He comes again. Consequently, you observe, it follows from this that their taking up that relationship is purely and solely a matter of hope-purely and solely a prospective relationship. The bride here is not united to the bridegroom. I will give the reasons and the proof of this when we come to look at it; and it is of great moment, because many, from not seeing this, have interpreted the figures in what I must consider a very low and, I think, uncomely manner. The purity of the poem is perfect; but the purity of the poem is so much the more perfect because the bride is not yet in the relationship. You never find the language of this song applied to the heavenly bride.

When we come to look at the heavenly bride, we find that there is this very important difference-that we come into relationship with Christ after His first coming and before His second. The consequence is that we are in the most peculiar position that it is possible for souls upon earth to stand in, because we are now, by the Holy Ghost, united to Him. It is not exactly that the marriage has taken place in heaven, for that awaits the last member of the body of Christ; but, still, we are His body. We are in the very nearest possible relationship to Christ. We are viewed as really being members of His body-not that we shall be, but that we are.

That is not the case with the bride here at all. The bride in the Song of Solomon - in the Song of Solomon - is awaiting His coming. There is nothing at all about His having come. There is no such thing as redemption; that is, we never find redemption referred to here. We find no such thing as the power of the Holy Ghost baptizing into one body, or anything that forms the great substratum of truth for the Church of God. Nothing of that kind. You see we are in a present, known, settled relationship to Christ; and we know that His love is so completely ours that even when we go to heaven it is not that He will love us better, but that we shall enjoy it perfectly. But, I repeat, we are already His body; and He treats us as such. Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for us; and this is the very thing which is used-this very figure - in addressing husbands and wives about their mutual relationship. It is plain, therefore, that the Church stands in a very peculiar relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ, and peculiar in this way-that there is a present establishment of relationship, and, consequently, a present sense of His love such as the Jewish bride could not have till He actually comes. Then the relationship will be established between the Bridegroom and the bride-the earthly bride-but not before.

Now, unless this is seen, I think we are apt to get harm from the Song of Solomon. Let me refer to a proof which comes out-the exercises of heart through which the bride passes. She gets a vision of the Bridegroom, and He vanishes. She does not rise to open the door, and He is gone. Is that the case with the Lord? Does the Lord Jesus ever withdraw? Does the Lord ever hide His face from us? No, never. We may withdraw from Him, but that is not the point of the Song of Solomon. The point there is that He withdraws. Now I deny that that is the case in the dealings of Christ with the Church or with the saint-with the individual. I deny that the Lord ever withdraws from the saint now; so you see it becomes very important, because persons may take up Song of Solomon without seeing that there is a difference -that while there is a great deal which is common to us and to the Jewish bride, there is an essential difference, and this essential difference shows itself particularly in what I have now referred to. It is evident that we should be falsified in our relationship. We should be imputing to God's sovereignty (as people do in that case) what really is a matter of our own unbelief, thus throwing the blame upon Him instead of taking shame to

ourselves-the sole cause and, indeed, the sole fact. For the bride's carelessness is, no doubt, the cause here.

But the truth is, there is no such establishment of relationship viewed in the Song of Solomon. It is entirely anticipative; therefore one sees that the idea of a kind of bringing before us the secrecy of the love of a relationship which was not yet established is all a mistake. It is not a question of publishing to other people what belongs to a relationship that is formed. No; there is a most mighty and worthy object in it. It is the Lord preparing her for the relationship. It is the Lord making ' known to her who might have thought that He could not love her and did not love her. It is the Lord who is acting in His own perfect grace to guilty Jerusalem, and letting Jerusalem know that He who wept for her will love her-that He who shed not merely His tears, but His blood for her (for He died for that nation)-that that blessed Savior will work by His own Spirit in their hearts to form and fit them for His love, but to form and fit them for loving Him by the perfection of His love to them. This is the great object of the Canticles.

Accordingly, the whole beauty of it is the love which Christ expresses (not to her), and the love that Christ forms in her heart to Him before the relationship is established. With us it is a different thing. We are taken up as the poorest of sinners; we are converted; we are brought to God as children of God; and we wake up to find the wondrous fact that we are the body of Christ-that we are the bride of Christ-that we are now in the closest possible relationship to the Lord Jesus. Sovereign grace! Sovereign grace, and nothing else; whereas in the case of the bride of the Canticles, it is another thing. They well knew that they ought to have been the bride. They well knew from the Prophets - from the Psalms - that that was a place which they ought to have filled. "Ah, but then we have sinned; we have refused Him; we have despised Him. Have not we sent Him away? Will He ever look upon us again?" That is the question, you see; and that question is answered by the Song of Solomon. There is the answer of the Lord, for it is the Lord; it is their own Jehovah, but it is their own Messiah.

And here I must explain a remarkable feature of it which has not always been noticed. Solomon wrote the Proverbs; Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes; Solomon wrote the Canticles-the Song of Solomon. In his proverbs he uses "Jehovah" as a general rule. I am not aware that the term "God," as God, occurs more than once (25:2) in the whole book of Proverbs; though we may compare also chapters 2:5, 17; 3:4; 30:5, 9. Thus, at any rate, we see it is not characteristic of that book. The characteristic term throughout Proverbs is "the LORD"-printed in our Bibles in small capitals-meaning "Jehovah"; and the reason is plain. It is the wisdom that Jehovah provides for a people in a settled relationship with Himself. Hence the term Jehovah is always used there.

The same writer wrote Ecclesiastes, and it is remarkable that "Jehovah" never occurs in Eccles. I do not know that it does. It is not the characteristic word. It is "God" that you find as a rule. I do not mean to say that you will never find "Jehovah" in it. I have not been looking for the purpose of refreshing my memory as to that. Possibly one might find the word in it. I cannot positively say, but I can say that it is not the characteristic word. But you must remember that the exception, as men say, proves the rule; and there is always a great force in an exception which proves the rule, because it is the very thing that brings out a striking truth so much the more plainly, seeing that it is not the rule.

Well, now, you have another book of Solomon, and in that there is neither "Jehovah" nor "God." Surely there must be something very pointed that the same writer should do this, and the same writer not merely giving us something inspired and something that was not inspired. We read of Solomon having written-was it a thousand and five songs? He wrote a great many songs, at any rate. Well, we have not got these songs that he wrote. We have the Canticles-this book. Even where writers were inspired, you see, God did not preserve all that they wrote, but only that which was essential to the plan and purpose of the Bible. The rest might be perfectly true and perfectly good; but whatever was a part of God's purpose in the Bible, and that only, did He preserve. For it was as much a part of God's mind that the Bible should be complete as that there should be nothing superfluous. The Bible is perfect. To have had one chapter more than was necessary for the purpose of God would have spoiled the Bible. There is not a word too much. But, on the other hand, there is not a word too little. There is nothing lost; God has preserved exactly what was needed.

But I daresay you have all heard of the foolishness of German infidelity. I am speaking now, I am sorry to say, of the infidelity of theologians. You have all heard, I suppose, of the ravages of that fearful thing, and that they apply their thought to the Bible in this way. They see "God" sometimes, and "Jehovah" at other times; and they judge from this that two different persons must have written the books-two different authors-different objects-in different ages-different countries -different men. Look at the answer here. The same man wrote these books I have referred to. In one it is "Jehovah," in another it is "God"; in the third it is neither the one nor the other. Why this? Why is it not here? The object is evident for the very same reason-that after giving the title, "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's," the opening words are, "Let Him kiss me." I need not tell you that it is infinitely better as it is, than anything which could have been suggested. Would it have been the same thing to say, "Let Jehovah kiss me"? Every renewed heart would repudiate such a thing. No; certainly not. It would be unbecoming. Would it be right to say, "Let God kiss me"? Clearly not. "Let HIM kiss me." How blessed!

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"Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Thy love is better than wine." v. 2. Was He not Jehovah and God? To be sure He was, but He is man; He is their own Messiah. And thus we see the beauty of these words. It is the more striking, because, instead of saying, "Let Messiah kiss me," she says what is more proper, more becoming. There was only one object. As she was His object, so He was her Object; for this is the point, and she does not require to say who. And indeed, is not this its beauty? "Let Him." It could not be mistaken. There might be ever so many in the world, but there was only One, and that was the One whom she had so offended -whom she had refused and rejected and despised. "Let HIM kiss me." That is her feeling; and was it not needless to say whom? There was no one in heaven or earth that she desired but Him. "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth." No doubt it is the expression of the most tender affection; but, still, that is the very thing. Could she not desire it? She did most ardently desire it, but there was the thought that she had lost it. She thought that it could not be. Oh, if He were only to answer! And here again, how beautiful! You see, the heart of Israel must turn, and the Lord stands to that. He means to bless Jerusalem, and He will bless. His own secret grace will work. But she must speak the word first, as He said (when rejected and bowing to. the rejection here below) in the same Gospel that I have referred to, the Gospel of Matthew: "till ye shall say."

He left the house desolate and called it "your house." It is no longer His "Father's house" (John 2:16), nor Jehovah's house (Matt. 21:13); but, speaking of the temple, He says, "Your house is left unto you desolate." And He adds, "Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." There is the "He"; He is the One; He is coming in the name of Jehovah. But observe, it is still "ye shall say." What, they-the Jews who were then going to crucify Him? The very same. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"; and here it is answered. Here is the work of grace at length. How long they had waited for Him! But now the time-the set time-to favor Zion is come-God's set time. And as His servants take pleasure in her stones, and as the dust even is precious in their eyes, so now her heart desires that what seemed to be the lost relationship should be the formed relationship. Oh, that she might have Him! But she had refused Him. This then is the opening word. It is the desire of her heart that the Messiah would show His love to her He to whom she had shown such contempt and hatred.

"For Thy love is better than wine. Because of the savor of Thy good ointments Thy name is as ointment poured forth." Here we see how evidently it is no question of Solomon, or of anything that may have historically given rise to it. There is none but one named-none but one who could fill up. A greater than Solomon is here. "Thy name," as she says, "is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love Thee." Nothing can be more holy-nothing can be more pure-than the affection of her who thus breathes out her heart's desire-that He would only show His love to her. "Therefore do the virgins love Thee." Whom does she refer to as "the virgins"? Those who were uncontaminated by the corruptions of that day. This "Song of Solomon of the Canticles" supposes the heart of the godly in Israel-for they will be the true Israel; they will be the true bride when the day comes for this to be made good, at a time of excessive corruption and apostasy.

And this is the very thing which now she shows she values. There will be others having this very title. We see it in the Revelation. We find certain persons, for instance, in the 14th chapter of that closing book (where we have a scene of the last days after the Church has gone-after the heavenly bride has been taken up to heaven-for God has not done with blessing), one hundred and forty-four thousand who are seen on Mount Zion; and how are they described? They are described as those who had not been defiled. They are described, therefore, just in the very way in which she describes-"Therefore do the virgins love Thee." It is those that were not polluted by the idolatry and wickedness of that day; and her delight is that it was not merely herself-there will be others too, Jerusalem- the godly among the Jews will not be the only persons in that day. They will, I have no doubt, be very conspicuous; and the Lord will watch over them and bless them. Some of them will even die. Some of them will shed their blood for the truth's sake in that day. But it is quite evident that there are companions.

It is clear that there are the upright-that there are those whom she calls "the virgins." She does not, therefore, describe to us what we know now. We do not talk in that way. It seems that the earthly bride could talk about the virgins, and talk about the upright outside herself. Why? Because the heavenly bride now comprises all the godly on the earth. The difference, therefore, you see, is very manifest. When that day comes, there will be a special object, but not the only one; whereas now the heavenly bride consists of all that are Christ's. They all form one body. That is not the case then at all. I mention this for the express purpose of keeping our hearts clear as to the proper bearing of this wonderful book.

"Draw me, we will run after Thee." Now, mark here again. "Draw me, we will run after Thee." She in no way begrudged that others should be the objects of His love. She, no doubt, will have a special place; but she delights that others, who were uncontaminated by the wickedness of the world, should be precious in His eyes. And so they will be, but it was impossible for the Church to say that. The Church could not look on Jews or Mohammedans, or other people on the earth, and speak of them as the upright, or speak of them as the virgins who love the Lord Jesus; for, in point of fact, they are not upright and they do not love Him; and the whole state of things, you see, is different.

But, I repeat, it will be a different thing when this is true. Accordingly, I think, this helps to give the true bearing of the Song of Solomon. In its proper application, it looks at the heart of the Jewish bride turning to the Messiah-bridegroom before He comes-the heart prepared for it. So it is a great mistake to suppose that the conversion of the Jew will be when Christ returns in glory. Not so. That will be the day when she will be received. It will be the day when the bridal relationship will be established. But that is not at all as yet. It is not yet that day. The day is yet to break. As we shall see, that day is not yet come. The shadows are to flee away, but all through the Song of Solomon the daybreak is not yet; the shadows are still there. But the time is coming. She was perfectly conscious of this, and the Lord makes her conscious. It is Himself who lets her know that. As we shall find presently, the day is not come. She is preparing for Him and preparing for it. That is what we find here.

"Draw me," then, she says; "we will run after Thee: the King hath brought me into His chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in Thee, we will remember Thy love more than wine: the upright love Thee." She is anticipating what she hopes, but she is not yet there. She is looking for it in the language of faith; but we must carefully remember that the marriage has not yet taken place. She is a designated bride. She is to become more and more distinct in saying that she is to be the bride and take the place of the bride-more and more laying hold of the word that she really is so. Still, the relationship is not yet consummated. That is what we find as the object of the book. It is the preparing of the bride for the consummation of the marriage.

Now she turns to another thing-herself. Here she has another tale to tell. "I am black," she says-the first word which she speaks about herself. "I am black, but comely." She is conscious of what the law has wrought. She does not deny the curse of the law, but her first word is her own shame. She owns, therefore, how little she is according to the One that she desires. He is all fair: but as for her, she is black, though she can add, "comely." That is, she owns thoroughly her need of grace. She owns herself as entirely dependent upon the mercy of the Lord, and this at once connects itself with the language of the Psalm There are two things that mark the godly in Israel, that you will find in the Psalm The first is, sense of the need of mercy; the next, clinging to righteousness-real integrity of heart. They take the place of integrity, but their grand confidence is in His mercy. You will find it continually. Mercy and righteousness are constantly brought together, but Israel's first word is mercy. God's first word in looking at them is their integrity, if I may say so; but their first word is His mercy. So here you have it. She describes herself as "black." She owns it. It is really integrity of heart; but still it is because of her confidence in His mercy that she is able to say, "I am black, but comely."

Take the 25th and 26th Psalm and you will find exactly this very thing. In Psalm 25 the godly in that day own their sins; and what is the great word that they use about themselves? "Pardon mine iniquity"; why? "for it is great." What a wonderful thing to say to God! They could not say it to man. If a criminal were to ask the judge who was trying him to pardon his iniquity because it was great, I need not say that the whole court would stare with amazement at the man's presumption. But what would be presumption to the world and before men, is exactly the confidence of faith. And that is precisely what God works in a soul that is converted-integrity of heart in owning and confessing its sins-and so there is not merely a cleansing of the sins, but a cleansing from all unrighteousness. That is a different thing. There is clearly a work which is wrought in the soul. Guile is taken away from the soul. There is not the hiding of sin. There is integrity, but it is integrity produced by confidence in God's mercy.

And what is it in the 25th Psalm which had given confidence in this mercy? Ah! think of it! What had preceded? The 22nd Psalm. There is an order in these things. We must not suppose that the Psalm are just tumbled into their places. They are put in their places by God just as much as they were written by God's inspiration. They might be written at ever so distant a time, and I do not at all suppose that they were written in the order in which they appear; but they are arranged-they are disposed-in an order which is as divine as the words that compose them. You could not change the order of a single Psalm without spoiling the truth. It would be like tearing a leaf out of a most beautiful plant which would leave a gap most sensible to anyone who knew what the plant ought to be, or what it really was according to God's constitution of it.

Well, here then we see this very thing. The grace of God in giving Christ to suffer on the cross opens their heart to tell out their sins; and they can say, "For Thy name's sake, O LORD [Jehovah], pardon mine iniquity; for it is great." That is indeed the reason. The greatness of it, no doubt, requires such a sacrifice; but in the presence of such a sacrifice there is no asking for consideration because the sin was little, but, on the contrary,

to pardon it because it was so great. Then in the 26th Psalm the very same Spirit of Christ which leads to confess the sin takes the ground of thorough integrity-takes the ground of hating to be in the congregation of the wicked or have anything to say to those who did not fear Jehovah-takes the ground of washing their hands in innocency, and so surrounding His altar. These things all go together.

So then she was "black, but comely"; but I do not doubt that the blackness refers to another thing, and that is not merely the blackness of failure-of shortcoming-of sin-but the blackness of suffering. And the Lord will feel it too. The Lord will say in that day, Jerusalem has suffered double at the hand of the Lord for her sins. She has suffered too much. I will not allow her to suffer any more. She has suffered twice as much as she ought to have suffered. The Lord will espouse the cause of poor guilty Jerusalem in that day, and will not permit that she shall suffer further. So then she owns that whether it was her own fault, or whether it was the cruel persecution that she had endured in the just chastening of her faults, such was her condition-black, but, by grace, she was comely. "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar" -which, I suppose, are the figure of the one, and the curtains of Solomon, with all their beauty, of the other.

"Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me." There is what evidently confirms the idea that there was the scorching of affliction, as it seems to me, in this trial.

"My mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept." Jerusalem had high thoughts. The Jews did take the place of being a guide to the blind and a teacher of the ignorant. They ought to have been the witnesses; they were not. They ought to have looked after all the world for God. They ought to have been His great witness to every nation, tribe, and tongue; but, alas! the truth was that so far from accomplishing their relation to all the world, and being a blessing to every nation under the sun according to the word to Abraham that all the families of the earth should be blest, they did not keep their own vineyard. They did not preserve their own blessings. They did not fill up what the Lord required even as to their own ways before Him; still less were they a light to all the world.

Lectures on the Song of Solomon

This then, I think, is what she now acknowledges. "Tell me, O Thou"-now her heart turns, after speaking to the daughters of Jerusalem, to the object of her affection-"Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth"-for this is the great thing which comes out-"Thou whom my soul loveth." She does love the Messiah, and the Spirit of God puts this language into her lips; and she will take it up in that day. She will make it her own. These affections will indeed be wrought in her. How gracious of the Lord! It is not her doing. It is her believing. It is not her assumption; it is His grace which gives her these most comfortable words-if I may refer to Hos. 2:14-words which refer, I suppose, to somewhere about the same time. So she addresses herself to Him. "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest"-she wants to find Him-"where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of Thy companions?" Now we see that as she desired this relationship with Him and that He would show His love to her, so she desired to behave suitably to such a relationship. She had wandered long among the nations. She had gone after idols-gone a whoring after others-as the prophets so solemnly and sternly describe it, but so truly. Now her heart was for Him alone-Him whom her soul loved.

And the answer comes. "If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock." That was the right thing. The point was now to be found following the ways of the Word of God, and "go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock"-those who had trodden the path before -who were the sheep of Jehovah. "And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents." Hold fast the testimony of the Word of God- what God had given in His own Word-those whom God had raised up to guide His flock here below. That is, she is told, in short, to cleave to His Word before she knows that His heart is turned toward her-before she proves His love to her. But the answer comes from Himself. She acts upon it, no doubt. This is supposed. She is subject to the Word now; and this wonderfully encouraging word comes from the Bridegroom.

"I have compared thee, O My love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots. Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold. We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver." This appears to me to be the first word from the Bridegroom; but it does not yet reach to all that He will tell her. Yet she understands, and at once there is the answer of her own heart. "While the King sitteth at His table" -you see, she calls Him by the right name. She speaks of Him as the King. She is quite aware that that is the relationship. Is that the relationship of Christ to us? Do we speak of the King now? I have heard of such a title being given to Him. I believe that the practice is not yet extinct, even among Christians, to speak of the Lord Jesus as our King. We used to sing-and I suppose we did not see much harm in it then- "Our prophet, priest, and king."

The Scriptures do not thus speak of Him to us. Scripture never calls Him our King-not even the scripture in the Revelation which might appear to do so. There, "King of saints" ought to be "King of the nations." There is no doubt of this, whatever. But here she does not speak of Him as King of the nations, but "the King." In what relation does she look at Him? The King of God's people-the King of Israel. It is this which is evidently before her. "While the King sitteth at His table"- He is not yet come-"my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." She was quite aware that the Lord had been working in her own soul, and she does not in any way repudiate it. She can speak with a good conscience and with her heart quite confident that there is what was the fruit of divine grace in her.

Now she speaks of what He was to her. "A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts." It is purely a question of her affection. It is not at all anything which one would feel to be unsuitable if it were a mere question of the actual, established relationship. The relationship is not yet established. It is not yet come. But there is the expression of her perfect delight in such a one that loves her. "My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire"-or of Cyprus berries, more probably-"in the vineyards of En-gedi."

Observe now, how this expression of love to Him draws out an answer from the Lord! "Behold, thou art fair, My love." It is not that He is come, for He is not yet come; but there is the word which God provides that she shall know-that as truly as her heart takes up these words and expresses its affection to the Messiah, so truly God gives her to know that such is His affection toward her. What does He say about her? What grace! It is not, "I love thee," but, "Behold, thou art fair, My love." It is what the eye of love sees in her, though, perhaps, no other eye in the world would see it. I believe that at this time there will be what is most godly wrought in the remnant. I believe that they are really suffering, too-suffering for their faith. But this is His language, and how blessed it is! What a different thing it would be from any other mouth than His! "Behold, thou art fair, My love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes"-the expression, of course, of the modesty of her that was to be His bride-and her answer is, "Behold, Thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green. The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir." That is, it is not some mere tent which might be taken down. She looks for a settled habitation when the King comes and owns her as His own. She looks for all to be in that established relationship which shall be for the glory of God here below. And so it will be.

And in the next chapter-on which I may say a few words before I close this evening-we have, "I am the rose"-or narcissus, most probably-not exactly the rose. It occurs only in two passages of Scripture; and, although it would be rather a shock to some feelings to hear it, I suppose that in both places-in the present instance and also where it is said, "The desert shall... blossom as the rose" (Isa. 35:1)-it seems to be rather the narcissus than the rose. However that may be, it is of no great consequence; but I think it is more appropriate, because it is what she says herself. Now, the rose being pre-eminently the flower of beauty and fragrance, I do not think that that is exactly the language which she would adopt. If He had called her so, I could understand it; but the narcissus not being in any measure comparable to the rose, one can understand that she does not pretend to be more than she is. So she speaks of herself as a "rose [or narcissus] of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys." She takes a humble place. It is not some conspicuous place as yet. She is going to be in the place of glory by-and-by; but she was only, as far as that went, a lily of the valleys. I think that this confirms the thought that it is not "the rose of Sharon"-a very conspicuous object-but one

of a more recluse or retired character.

Then comes His answer, "as the lily among thorns"-for He takes up her word about the lily- "the lily among thorns"- that is what He compares others to. And so she is surrounded by that which is utterly opposed and hateful to Him and that which is to be given to the burning when He comes. "As the lily among thorns, so is My love among the daughters." This is the answer of the Bridegroom; and this is her word as she continues. "As the apple tree"-or citron tree, rather, the finest of all these trees, which the apple tree might not be, but-"As the citron tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love. Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love. His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me." Yet this does not mean that He was come. It is simply the love which He had shown her-the grace which He had shown her-her sense of His love to her even now, though she desired all that should be according to His word.

And now comes in an important keynote for understanding Solomon's Song. "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till He please." This occurs several times in the Song, and I think it is the perfect answer to those who suppose that the Song is merely a number of little songs put together without any particular order. Not so. There is perfect order and not only continuity but progress. It will be found that this charge is given three times. (There is one a little like it which we might consider a fourth, but not strictly so.) It occurs in this second chapter, also in the third chapter, and again in the eighth chapter; so it is clear from this that there is a very designed order. And this also helps to confirm another thing which I referred to, and that is that the Lord is viewed here as not yet married to her. It is, I think, the Bridegroom and the bride elect. The term "bride" is, of course, used; but we must not suppose that the marriage had yet been consummated. Not so. She is waiting for the establishment of the relationship. She has the sense of it, the grace of the Lord in deigning to look upon her; and, of course, her heart desires it.

"I charge you," then she says, "O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field"-referring to them, I suppose, as being the most sensitive of all animals as to noise -the most easily disturbed. She draws attention to her desire, therefore, that nothing should disturb Him-that He should rest in that love which He designed for her. For it is a sweet and wondrous thought that the Lord means to rest in His love for Jerusalem. I am now referring to the last chapter in Zephaniah, and my object in referring to it is to show the hidden links which connect this Song of Solomon with the rest of the Word of God. I have referred to the Psalms; I now refer to this in the Prophets. The mind of the Holy Ghost is one. He is to rest in His love; and, as to whom does He use that expression? To us? No, to Jerusalem. You will find this clearly in Zephaniah 3.

What follows? "The voice of my beloved! behold, He cometh" -but He is not yet come; He is coming. That is what she knows. "Behold, He cometh." There might be mountains and hills between, but what is that to Him? "He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart." Therefore, difficulties are nothing. "Behold, He standeth behind our wall, He looketh forth at the windows, showing Himself through the lattice." It is her heart, I presume, which here thus anticipates His coming-so much so as even to hear His voice. Not only does she say, "The voice of my beloved," but she gives His words. "My beloved spake,

and said unto me, Rise up, My love,"-for this is meant to fill her heart with confidence in His love-"Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past"-the long winter of Israel-"the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs"-you see the parable of the fig tree here which the Lord refers to in Matt. 24-"and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away."

And so He calls upon her then to let Him hear her voice.

Such was His thought of her, and desire-that she might know His love to her. "Let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." He desires also the removal of that which would hinder. He wished to see the fruits in His garden, because if He comes to His own, it is not only that He has got His own people, but His own scene-His own place. And He is looking to all being suitable to His coming by-and-by. So He warns, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes."

And now comes out another key word of the Solomon's Song. "My beloved is mine." This is her answer. "My beloved is mine." That is the first thought. She applies it to her soul. It is not yet the marriage; but it is His voice, and He has comforted her- given her confidence in His love. "My beloved is mine," she says, "and I am His." She enters into it. It is the preparation of her heart for the bridal. "My beloved is mine, and I am His: He feedeth among the lilies." It is not yet, I repeat, that He has taken His place upon the throne. He feeds among the lilies. "Until the day break." It is not yet the day shining; therefore, the day is not yet come. It is not yet "the Sun of righteousness.. with healing in His wings"; that is yet to come. "Until the day break," she says, "and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be Thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether."

But here I stop for the present. If the Lord will, I hope to resume and take, at any rate, a general view of this wonderful little book of God.

Lectures on the Song of Solomon

We now find ourselves in the great body of the Song; and the object of the Spirit of God, as I understand, in this portion is to show us the necessary exercises of heart through which the bride must pass in order to be spiritually fitted for the Lord Jesus - the King in His coming glory.

You will see at once that there is a very sensible difference from our position. The proper exercises of the Christian's heart begin when we are already in settled relationship with the Lord Jesus. It is not so with the Jew. In our case it is sovereign grace both of the deepest and of the highest character, because it is Christ on high in the presence of God - not merely the King, not merely on earth, however exalted, but in a new and heavenly glory, altogether above the expectations and hope formed by Old Testament revelation. Our relationship is of the deepest character, because it is no question of a people that had been previously chosen, and that had been the object of the dealings of God through ages, and blest because of God's love to their father Abraham.

Nothing of this appears in the dealing with the Church of God. For there it is purely and solely grace acting in view of Christ in God's presence, and expressly also gathering persons entirely

irrespective of any previous connection with God whatsoever. Now, it is not so with the Jew. He is loved, as we are told, even now-loved for the fathers' sakes. They are enemies, as we know, because of the gospel, but loved for the fathers' sakes. Now there we see the ground. Although they will be obliged to own that they have lost everything, and that blessing must be on the score of mercy alone, yet there was that ground. We can plead nothing of the kind. We really have nothing save what grace confers upon us, and confers all, fresh, and pure, and simple, from Christ, and for Christ.

There may be exercises of heart in a person who is not yet brought into the proper Christian standing, and there may be a putting oneself under law. There may be a pointing out of our utter weakness. There may be discoveries of this kind, but they are not what I may call the normal exercises of a Christian's heart. They are very wholesome exercises of a heart that is not yet at rest; but a Christian, in the proper sense of the term, means one who is not merely born of God and who is just clinging to God's mercy and goodness; but a Christian is a person who is at rest. A Christian is a person who is at peace with God. There may be Christians in a very abnormal state, but we have nothing to do with that in thinking of a Christian. We may have very much to do with it in looking at a particular soul - in getting that soul into a true and healthy condition-but if we talk about a Christian, we must think about him according to the mind of God. If he is not according to that mind, one must seek to remove the hindrances; one should seek to foster what is of God, to strengthen his faith and, by the Word, to clear away and deal with whatever hinders. That is all quite right but, properly speaking, no man is yet in a healthy Christian condition until he is settled-settled, without question, in Christ, and knows that he is a new creature - knows that all the old is judged and gone before God, and the man is walking in peaceful communion on the ground of it. I say that no person is in the proper Christian condition until that is his state.

Now it is plain that this is a very different thing from the bride here. If we look at the Church in the New Testament, she is always assumed to be in that state. There may be, of course, as we know in matter of fact, things which are quite contrary to what we may call the theory of the Church, or of a Christian. That is not God's idea. But I am speaking now, I repeat, of things according to God. But God does not look upon the bride in Song of Solomon according to that idea. Here therefore we come to the exercises through which the bride who is here contemplated must pass in order to be spiritually suited to the King in His glory. And we see her here in darkness. "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth." That is a remarkable condition. It is just what we find in the 50th of Isaiah - walking in darkness and seeing no light. But confiding, trusting; nay, more than that, with affections drawn out toward Christ.

In fact, the great point of this book is the forming the affections and the giving her who has such affections (though what are these to His?) - giving her who has real and true affections for the returning King, confidence in His affection as incomparably beyond her own. Thus she needs this; she needs it more particularly because she is obliged to look back and see and know that she was "black" - not merely comely, but "black." She is obliged to see what she has passed through, and why it was. It would not be wholesome, it would not be true, without this. For there cannot be stable blessing according to God, whether to the Christian now, or to the Jew by-and-by, or to any other soul, apart from truth. There never can be the real power of grace without the power of truth. There always must be truth in the inward parts; that is, there always must be the confessing of what we really are in God's sight, or what we have done in God's sight. It must be out between

God and our own soul. She consequently has to feel this very soon indeed. In spite of all that she has been or is, she, to her wonder, learns His love. It may not have that fullness of heavenly character that we know to be our portion, but it is nevertheless most rich and wondrous, and truly divine.

Well then, "By night on my bed." There may be this darkness. He has not come. It is not a question of the Lord's being there yet. And these figures are used to bring vividly before us what she is passing through. "I sought Him whom my soul loveth" - for now she is not at all afraid to avow it. "I sought Him, but I found Him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways." Just as if that were the place to find Christ! Not so. He is not regarded as coming through the broad ways or being in the streets; He comes out of the wilderness. That is where she knows, and where she will know, the Lord as taking and identifying Himself with the condition out of which Israel must come; whereas, that is not at all the place where we know the Lord.

We know the Lord in another way altogether; we know Him in heaven. That is our proper way of knowing Him, but she has these anticipative views of Him and at the same time is trained in a deepening acquaintance with His love before He comes. "I sought Him, but I found Him not." And no wonder; she sought Him not rightly. It was not the true place. "The watchmen that go about the city found me" - the guardians of order, but what could they say? "What could they do?" "To whom I said, Saw ye

Him whom my soul loveth?" for she does confess now. It is not only that she has got the affection, but she owns it even to them, although it might seem hardly the place. But so she does. "It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and would not let Him go, until I had brought Him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me." That is, it is her soul laying hold of His coming into a renewed connection with Israel.

There is great force in all these figures. The mother is always Israel according to Scripture. Not so the Church. The Church is never regarded as the "mother." Whom would she be the mother of? Not of herself - not of Christians. You could not have that. The Church is not the mother of Christians, still less is the Church the mother of the Lord. And there you see we at once find the importance of seeing relationship as God unfolds it in His Word. The mother, as I have said, is always Israel. The bride, the wife, is the Church. We do find a bride here, but we shall find that there is a difference. We must not confound the two. We must not suppose that the "mother" and the "bride" are the same; and it just shows the utter and dreadful blindness of system in the minds of men that the greater part of Christendom does regard the mother in the Song of Solomon and the bride to be the same identical person. Nay further, the grossness of darkness leads them to think that the virgin Mary is both. They are utterly dark, for I know nothing in paganism that is more degradingly dark than the superstition of Romanism. You would think it strange on the part of human beings who have got the Bible - who have got the New Testament - men, you must remember, of learning and ability, possibly some of them even converted to God, for I would not deny this. And yet I am telling you a plain and positive fact which it has been my experience to find out and know, when I say that these are the delusions which carry away and captivate souls at this present moment - nay, into which souls out of a certain yearning and aspiration after something better, which they cannot find in ordinary Protestantism, are breaking away. What a mercy,

beloved brethren, to have the truth and the word of His truth.

Now, if you look at the 12th of Revelation, how beautiful it is, and comforting to our souls, to find that a book which at first sight might not seem to be the key to other parts of Scripture, yet indeed is so. I suppose that most people think that you want a key to the Revelation; but the truth of it is, so wonderfully is the Word of God woven together, and so surprising the mutual uses of all parts of the Scriptures, that, as we find Genesis a key to Revelation, so also we find very often that the Revelation is a key to Genesis. And this is very encouraging to see, because it is God who has trained His people not to have their favorites - always a dangerous thing. Whether it is in living people or in the Word of God, it is a great thing to be able to use without abusing - a great thing to be open to the help of all that God uses for His own glory and for the blessing of His people.

Well, the 12th of Revelation makes it perfectly plain, for there we have the woman, and the woman in remarkable glory. She has got the sun and the moon under her feet, a crown of twelve stars, etc. Now what woman is that? I need not tell you what haste always says - Oh, it is the Church. Not so; it is not the Church. For you see that the woman there brings forth the male of might; and that male of might-who is he? Surely there is no mistake. The male of might who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron - can anyone doubt who He is? It is Christ and none but Christ. Christ is the male of might. Consequently, we see at once who the woman is, because it is Christ that always determines the truth of every person and everything.

Let me bring Him into contact with my own soul's state. Let me bring Him into contact with any soul anywhere. The moment you bring Christ in, you have the truth. I learn my own state, whether it is good or bad, by bringing the Lord in. And so also you learn who or what is before you by bringing Christ in. Well then, you bring Christ into that chapter, and you will see Christ in the male of might; and the woman is His mother. Who is that? Not the Church. The Church is not the mother of Christ. Israel, "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came," is the mother, as the Apostle Paul teaches in the 9th of Romans; so you see what Paul puts so finely in the 9th of Romans is what John teaches symbolically in the 12th of Revelation; whereas when you come to see the Church, then you have another thing - the bride, the Lamb's wife. Ah, that is the Church. Again, you find another woman (I may just say by the way), but she is neither one nor the other. She is the woman that pretends to be the Church, but it is the antichurch. Just as there will be a man that will be the antichrist, so there is a woman that is the antichurch. That is Babylon; Rome is the great center of Babylon.

Well then, the meaning clearly is that this woman in the Song of Solomon connects in her spiritual embrace, if I may say so, she associates the one that she loved, who was clearly the returning King, with the mother's house - "the chamber of her that conceived me."

"I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till He please." I have already shown the importance of this intimation that comes in now and again in the book. It always introduces a fresh view of the matter and of the Lord as anticipated by the heart of Jerusalem; for here you must remember that Jerusalem is to be the chosen bride - and I mean by that, Jerusalem that is to be. Not the Jerusalem that is on high - not the Jerusalem that now is, but the Jerusalem that is to be - the Jerusalem that is to be born of God, just as much as the Jerusalem on high is the great new creation in Christ. But this is the Jerusalem that is to be the chosen bride of the King when He comes again into this world.

"Who is this?" then is the word; "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant? Behold His bed, which is Solomon's." Nothing can be plainer. Solomon is not the figure of Christ in relation to the Church. David may be. I do not mean that David always is, but David may be so preeminently, because he at any rate knew more of the sufferings of Christ and was identified with the rejection in a way that Solomon never was. Solomon never knew anything but glory; he was the man of peace. All, so to speak, was bright and glorious as far as Solomon was concerned, and it is clear that this one that she looks for is not a suffering one.

Lectures on the Song of Solomon

It is not here then the Lamb rejected on earth and glorified in another scene. That is what we who are Christians are looking for; and, consequently, now we are willing to follow Him- glad to follow Him in His path of rejection. But in the case before us it is another thing; and so we find a beautiful picture of what is to be, what belongs to Him. Threescore valiant men surround-of the valiant men of Israel. "They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night"; for you see it is not yet the day. You must remember that. She is expecting and looking for the day. You find her here, but it is a vision of the night. She is on her bed; so when she does go forth it is from her bed, and so on. It is not yet the day. The day is expected, looked for, counted on, but not yet come.

"King Solomon" for there again it is the king - "King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver." There was grace there. "The bottom thereof of gold"-divine righteousness-just as much indeed for Israel as for us. It is no question of man's righteousness at any time. "The covering of it of purple"- as suits a royal personage. "The midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem." I need not say that the groundwork of it all is love. "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart." It is anticipative; He is not yet come; but that is what He is to be when He comes for her. Thus you see it is not at all the scene of one taken away into heaven; that is not the point at all. It is one coming- coming to the earth.

It is one that is crowned here; and again you observe the mother reappears, for her heart is different now. When He was here, what had she for Him? No heart at all, none whatever, not even Jerusalem-not even that which ought to have been an answer to His love as His earthly bride. On the contrary, if there was any difference between Israel as a whole and Jerusalem in particular, Jerusalem was the hottest of all against the King-against the Lord Jesus. But when this day comes, His mother reappears. Always remember that it is not the bride; it is His mother that comes out here. That is, it is not the bride only.

Now when we look at the New Testament, where we have the heavenly bride, we have the Father, but no mother. Why the Father there, and the mother here? Because for us, all is divine in its source. The Father-the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ-He is the One that is our God and our Father. But the mother is connected more with nature. The Father of Christ, who is the source of everything, is the One that gives us our place and being and relationship-but not the mother. We find here Israel's connection as the mother, so that I think there need not be a doubt on the part of any person who is open to conviction. Of course I am entirely hopeless of convincing those that

will not be convinced. But I think that those that are willing to face the Word of God need have no question whatever left in their souls as to the true intended bearing of this beautiful book.

Let no one suppose that I mean from this that we are not entitled to take all the love of it, for indeed we are. If Christ has, or will have, such love for them, how much more for us; for ours is much more, what I may call, a settled love. I mean a love that flows out of an already established, and divinely established, relationship. In their case, it is a relationship that is going to be established. I grant that there is a certain beauty in the affections that proceed, but they are not of the same kind. They are greatly associated with the hope; whereas, in our case it is not merely that. Ours is the present conscious love of the Lord Jesus, and not exercises through which we pass in order to know that that love rests upon us. We may need them. If there be anything that hinders, there must be exercises to deal with it and get rid of it; but that is not the proper state of a Christian person.

In the next chapter (4), we see how the Lord works to draw out the love of His people. And here we have a beautiful address which faith will lay hold of in the day that is coming.

They will know that it is the Messiah that says this of them, and it will be full of comfort. "Behold, thou art fair, My love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead." And so He dwells upon her personal grace and beauty. Well, I am not going to enter, of course, into the details of this; but everything is taken up that belonged to herself expressly. Not what she did; it was not her doings, because that is not the thing that sets the heart perfectly at rest. We cannot be always doing, and we may be very often too self-reproached because of the poverty of our doing; and if the love be to ourselves personally-if the love be told out, and told out not as a mere matter of feeling, not as a passing vision or anything of that kind, but if it be the unmovable, the immutable Word of God -how blessed for the souls that are awakened to say, That is His language to me; that is what He feels about us. Well, this is what will be brought home to their hearts in that day. You will notice the difference.

She speaks also. There is the interchange of affection on the part of the bride toward the Bridegroom. But I will point out one very marked and, I think, striking difference; and that is that, when He speaks, He always speaks to her. When she speaks, she speaks of Him, but not to Him. Now that is exactly what it should be. One can feel the propriety of this, and how perfectly suited it is in the relationship in which they stand, because what she wants is to know that such a one as He- that One so holy-that One so perfect-could love one who had been brought (in the very first chapter) to own that she had been the very reverse. Still grace had wrought, and she knew that grace had wrought; and she did not deny it. But still she wanted to know what He felt. And He speaks out; He lets her know.

The first half of the chapter then is occupied with the Bridegroom telling the bride how beautiful she was in His eyes. The latter part of it is something else, and that is it is fully knowing, fully appreciating the danger in which she found herself-the snares and the enemies that surrounded her. That is the meaning of the word, "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon" (v. 8); and this is explained still more where He goes on to say, "Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens."

There is nothing in Scripture without a blessed meaning, and in perfect grace toward the reader of the Bible who counts upon God's opening His Word. "From the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards." Clearly, these are images of the greatest possible danger. They signify that she had been, so to speak, in the lions' den. And so she had. The images show that she was surrounded by these most cruel enemies that are so eager to seize upon their prey. "From the mountains of the leopards." And so she had been in the mountains of the leopards! But, "Come with Me." He calls her away-gives her the certainty of deliverance; for who is He? Is not He entitled to do so? Can He fail? Impossible. It is not, therefore, merely a cry from her heart. That is not the character of it. It is not herself bemoaning her danger. It is not herself praying therefore to be delivered "from the lions' dens" and "from the mountains of the leopards," but it is He who feels for her-He who knows it all infinitely-better than she. It is He who says, "Come with Me from Lebanon." There is no reproach.

How did she get there? Departed from Him! How was she found in the mountains of the leopards? Was He there? Not at all. Did she go there to find Him? It was her self-will. It was her evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. It was that which had done the mischief for Jerusalem; it was that which had scattered the Jew to every part of the world. There they had been, no doubt, and even then they will be suffering, although they will be back in Jerusalem, as I suppose, when this Song applies. They will again be in the mere place-the scene-but not yet in the conscious favor and under the glorious protection of Jehovah. Far from that. The lions and the leopards will still have to do with them, although they may not be any longer scattered among the Gentiles; but the lion and the leopard will have their hand over them. They will have their paw, so to speak, over them still. For, as we know, it is exactly in that way-as the beast-that the Gentile powers are described in the prophets. And I refer to this as an evident link of connection between this book and, I might say, the Psalms also; but the Psalms relate more to individual dealings. There is one psalm, the 45th, and there may be other allusions, which form a kind of transition link between the book of Psalms and this wonderful Song of Songs. In that Psalm we have the bride, and the very same bride that is spoken of here. I only throw out this hint by the way as possibly helping souls who may not have considered it adequately.

Well then, the Lord pursues this second address, this invitation to come away from all these evil and dangerous surroundings and again speaks of what she is to Him. A very sweet word is added here-that after He had spoken of her as in the den of the lions and the mountains of the leopards, He should still say, "Thy lips, O My spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon." v. 11. It is just in keeping with the same spirit, only a little stronger than what we find in the prophets; that is, that whereas Jerusalem will have really been discarded as the unfaithful wife, the Lord will look upon her more as in the sorrows of a widow. That is, He will not reproach her with her being rejected because a guilty woman, but He will speak of her with tenderness and mercy as in the sorrows and weeds of widowhood.

Then in the next chapter (5) we have a further experience through which she passes, particularly in the 2nd verse. The first verse rather belongs to the chapter before.

"I sleep." It is still the same thought; it is night. "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to Me, My sister. My love, My dove, My undefiled." It is not

His actual coming. This is what passed through her soul. This is what she sees, as it were, in the vision of the night. It is not, as yet, His coming in the morning. It is not that. He will come in the morning without clouds; but, I repeat, you must always bear in mind that the morning has not yet come. This is, therefore, what passes through her heart which is filled with longing desire for His coming in the bright day. So here she, as it were, hears His voice, and she shows that her heart is by no means fitted, as yet, for His return; for this is the excuse-"I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" That is, though God's love was brought before her soul, instead of there being an answer at once by going forth to meet Him, she makes excuses why she cannot go, and why she cannot take the trouble to open the door; for that was all that was needed.

So "My beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door." There is still an appeal to her, but there is that which is intended to produce self-judgment in her. She, as it were, says that He lingers, that He does not at once turn His back upon one that so ill requited His love. "My beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for Him."

There was real affection, although there was not any right answer to His. "I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn Himself, and was gone: my soul failed when He spake: I sought Him, but I could not find Him; I called Him, but He gave me no answer." It was the needed rebuke for Israel-for Jerusalem. It was making her feel that this occupation with herself or her circumstances, this lack of freshness of heart in going forth to meet Him was what she had to rebuke herself for; and so, now that she has come to her senses, to feel the wrong that she had done to His love, she goes, and she calls, and she searches for Him once more. "The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me." Now, you see, it is worse. On the former occasion they could give her no direction to find Him whom her soul loved; but now they smote her, for what business had she to be out at that time of night? And so they smote her. "The keepers of the walls took away my veil from me."

It was no doubt because of the reality of her affection, and her desire to find the One that she loved; but still it was out of season. It was out of place; and they, at any rate, dealt with that. Thus the very desire she had to find the Bridegroom brought her into a false position. So she says, "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell Him, that I am sick of love." And here then we find fresh persons- not the watchmen, but her companions-Jerusalem will not be alone. There will be others; there will be others awakening at that time to whom she can speak, so to say. And, accordingly, say they: "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?" Now comes what I referred to-her confession of the beauty of the Bridegroom. You see it is not said to Him. Now you see all her heart goes out in speaking of the Bridegroom. She speaks well of the Lord. She is not ashamed to tell about Him. It is not now merely that she loved Him, but who He was, and what He was, whom she loved, are what come out in the rest of the chapter.

Lectures on the Song of Solomon

And in the chapter (6) that follows, we come to another point to which I have not yet called your particular notice; but I must do so briefly. The word had come: "My beloved is gone down into His

garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: He feedeth among the lilies." You will observe that just as there are charges followed by the announcement of His coming, which are a very important help to the understanding of the different parts of this book, so also there is the expression of the bride's affection to the Bridegroom. In the latter part of the second chapter, she did not say this. There it was another word-"My beloved is mine." That is in the 16th verse. "My beloved is mine, and I am His: He feedeth among the lilies." Here in this chapter we have what is better: "I am my beloved's"-it is the converse.

And this marks a very decided progress in her soul-in the affections of Jerusalem-when we come to apply it, not personally, but to the object of the book. And the difference is this. The first thing-and this is equally true of a renewed soul -the first thing that the soul wants is to know what we find in the second chapter-that Christ is mine. And Jerusalem will go through a similar experience, and very justly. It would be a poor thing to know that I am His, if I did not know that He is mine. Necessarily, where the Spirit of God works in power, the heart does not begin with my being Christ's. I know very well that you will find the contrary of this among many godly persons, and they put it into verse too, that is to say,

"Am I His, or am I not?"

But that is not at all the first thing that the Spirit of God according to the Word produces in a heart that is subject to it. When one is occupied with oneself, this is the first thing. The first thing then is, I want to know whether "I am His," because I begin with "I," but this is just what is bad for me- just the very thing that we want to be delivered from. And what delivers us from this? Is He mine?-that treasure, that object of God's delight-is He mine? Is Christ mine? And this is exactly what Christ does give, for that is the point. It is not, as people constantly say, that the first thing is for me to know that I am saved. The first thing is to know whether I believe in Him. That is, it is what Christ is to my soul, and not what my soul has got through Christ. You see, false theology always puts self forward-always makes that the first thing.

Now do not mistake me. I do not at all mean that there is not the fullest comfort for our own heart. It would be a poor theology indeed-it would be, above all, poor faith-for that is what it really comes to-it would be poverty indeed in divine things-if there were not the fullest satisfaction for the renewed heart. But then the first thought that God has, and the first thought therefore that, as a believer, I ought to have, is this: not whether "I am His," but whether "He is mine." That is what the bride is here brought to confess-what she does confess. We must remember, beloved brethren, that in this book we have not the bungle, if I may so say-the bungle of men- in making out a science of theology from Scripture. What we have in the Word of God is the guidance of the Holy Ghost- the perfect, sure way of God in dealing with souls according to Christ. The first thing therefore is, "My beloved is mine," but then she adds, "And I am His"-this follows. That I have got eternal life is very true, but the first thing is that I believe in Him.

Let me repeat-the first thing is not what I am to get, but whom I am to believe in-whom does God propose to my soul? Have I bowed to Him? Have I submitted thoroughly, simply, implicitly to Him? This then is the first thing-to believe in Christ, and not merely to believe that I am forgiven. My forgiveness is a consequence of knowing that I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But the first thing of all, I say, is not the salvation of my soul, but bowing to the Son of God; and it makes a great

difference in which way we put it. I could not give a more important lesson to a young evangelist than that-always to hold that before him, that the first thing is not the soul in relation to Christ, but Christ in relation to the soul. And if he settles that and keeps that forward, I am persuaded that God will use it not merely for the soul, but above all for the glory of Christ; and, after all, Christ ought to be more to me than all the souls in the world. It is not that one will love the souls of the world less, but, I say, Christ has the foremost place. The bride does not suffer for this. Far from it. She is more blest because she gets the blessing in God's way.

Well then, the next point of progress in this 6th chapter, which has given occasion to these remarks, is this-just the converse. "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." Now would it have the same force to us thus-"My beloved is mine, and I am my beloved's"? No, not so. Now, you see, she knows Him. She is perfectly satisfied that He is hers. The consequence is that there is a new thing that is permanent. Wonderful to say, "I am my beloved's." My beloved has been speaking to me; I have been speaking to Him. There have been those passages of affection by the spirit between us; and now, "I am my beloved's." It is not, therefore, merely the expression of spiritual desire, but here there is a growing apprehension of this relationship, although it be not yet a formally established one; but still there is the spiritual preparedness for it. That is what God is working in her soul. "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." The one is just as much in season as the other, only the one takes necessary precedence of the other.

And this is followed by another and very beautiful unfolding of the love and delight which the Bridegroom has in the beauty of the bride. "Thou art beautiful, O My love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as the army with banners. Turn away thine eyes from Me, for they have overcome Me." vv. 4, 5. A wonderful thought that is, of the Lord finding such attraction in Jerusalem that cost Him so many tears-that Jerusalem that has so slandered Him from that day to this. For Jerusalem is still the same Jerusalem that was, the same guilty, Christ-rejecting Jerusalem, but not always to be so. The Lord will make true these words, and give Jerusalem to believe, in the day that is coming. Of course, when I speak about Jerusalem, I mean the people; but still it is that very object and that people connected with that very city in the day that is coming.

So the Lord pursues this, and He adds at the close, "I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley" (v. 11) because He desired to see what were the fruits of the humiliation that Israel had passed through. Jerusalem had gone into the greatest humiliation, and He wanted to see what were the effects of it, whether there were spiritual fruits of that humiliation. And what did He find? "Or ever I was aware, My soul made Me like the chariots of Amminadib." That is, "of My willing people." That is the meaning of the word, and I presume that it ought to have been so rendered rather than put as a proper name. "The chariots of My willing people." That is His people who are made willing in the day of His power. Now we know that when the Lord was here in the days of His flesh, it was the day of His weakness. He was crucified through weakness, but He lives by the power of God; and we know Him accordingly in resurrection. They will know Him when He comes forth, and this shows what the Lord's feeling about His people is. And immediately this is followed by, "Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite?" That is the object of His love. It is Jerusalem that is to be "as it were the company of two armies." That is, just as when in the days of Jacob's dealings there was the same - the company of two armies when the angels protected him in the hour of his distress and fear - so it will be with Jerusalem in the day that is coming. They will be like the angels of God in their

might and power.

In the next chapter (7) the Lord gives a fresh expression of His love to Jerusalem. On this I need not say much. It is, I repeat, what He saw in herself. It is not glory; that would be a small thing. It is in her possession. It is not power. It is not what she has to do in the world or anything of that kind. I have not the slightest doubt that Jerusalem in the day that is coming is to be made the metropolis of the earth. I have not a doubt that the Lord is going to accomplish a most wonderful work by the converted Jew after that day, but that is not the point. It is herself viewed as a person - the object of His love. This again comes out in a most striking way, and it is followed by what we have for the third time in the bride's answer, "I am my beloved's" (v. 10). There is not the arriving at a settled sense of love - the possession of His love. "I am my beloved's, and His desire is toward me." It is not necessary to say, "He is mine." "I am my beloved's, and His desire is toward me." She began with, "My beloved is mine," but now she rests in this. It is no longer necessary to say that He is hers. It is so perfectly plain.

He has made it so manifest by all these expressions of His affection and all the beauty that He finds in her. "I am my beloved's, and His desire is toward me. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages." And this ends the proper course of the Song of Solomon.

The Spirit of Service

The Lord said, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me." Service is not doing a great deal, but following the Master, and the world and half-hearted Christians do not like that. There is plenty of doing in the world, but "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me." Paul wanted to serve every way, but we find the Spirit forbidding him to go into Bithynia or Troas, and yet, two years afterward, we read that "All they which dwelt in Asia heard the word." God's work was to be done, but it was to be in His time and of His ordering. His servant had only to follow in obedience. It was the same with Moses. Nature would say of him, Why not stay in Pharaoh's court, that the people there may be converted, instead of leaving it? Flesh cannot understand what faith leads to. Afterward he goes out in all the earnestness of his spirit; natural energy comes in, but then there is no deliverance. Moses has to go and keep sheep for forty years, to be broken down and made nothing of; and what were Israel to do all that time? To wait. Then, when he comes back to serve them, how is it done? There is the flesh appearing in another way. "Lord, I am not eloquent." Then Aaron is sent back with him, and the work is done in the power of God.

That I May Win Christ

Paul's desire was expressed in these words: "That I may win Christ." Was he not already a believer? Yes, but he looks on to the time when he should be with Him, and enjoy His presence in glory with Him. "Not having mine own righteousness," etc. A strange expression from one who, "touching the righteousness which is in the law," was "blameless." But this was of his own working out. All he wanted now was Christ. "The power of His resurrection." The religion of today starts with the incarnation - Paul, with His death, with the resurrection glory of the One who has passed out of this scene altogether. "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of [rather, from] the dead." He looked through the long vista to the time when he should be in his glorified body with Him; that is what he means by winning Christ.

Trees by the River of God

Young Christian, you have come to Jesus and have tasted of the water of life that He gives, and know that your sins are all gone, washed away by His precious blood. Are you as happy, as fresh, and as bright as when you first trusted in Him, when you felt as if you could never want anything more to make you happy? Some of us have many lessons to learn after we come to Christ, lessons of our own weakness and absolute powerlessness to live for Him as we should like to; so I am going to ask you to look at the great secret of being kept fresh and bright and fruit-bearing.

Have you ever thought about "the river of God, which is full of water"? (Psalm 65:9). You have tasted of the water of life and found that it satisfied your deep need as a sinner; and you know that it was from the heart of God it came-that mighty river of love that leaped over every barrier and obstacle that man or Satan could raise against it. And now what we Christians need is to go on drinking deeply from it, finding all our joy and refreshment there, even in Christ Himself, for He is the full expression of God's love. We need to be "rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. 3:17), so that we might be "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither" (Psalm 1:3); "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD,.. for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Jer. 17:7, 8.

The Lord allows things to come in to test us-"heat" and "drought"-things that would dry and parch and wither us up if our roots are not in the river. How important it is then not to let anything come in between our souls and Christ! In Him alone can the heart that has once tasted of His love find true refreshment and satisfaction. He is "the fountain of living waters." All that this world can offer you is like "broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13). There is nothing lasting there.

"Oh, Christ! He is the fountain-

The deep sweet well of love!

The streams on earth I've tasted,

More deep I'll drink above!"

Again we find trees beside the river in Eze. 47:12, "whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed"; but observe, it is "because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary." The source of their refreshment was in the presence of God. Now the way is open there for us; we can enter with boldness into the very presence of God. He has chosen us that we should be "before Him in love." Is it not an encouragement to go on? Perhaps you have only got ankle deep, as in verse 3; but go on, go on, deeper and deeper, until you find "waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over," even in "the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge" (Eph. 3:19).

Well, the result of this will be, not only shall we be kept fresh and happy ourselves as we delight in His love, but there will also be fruit, first of all for Him, as the "well of water springing up" returns to

Him in worship and praise, like water rising to its own level (John 4); and then there will be "rivers of living water"

(John 7:38) flowing out. Filled and overflowing our selves, others too will be refreshed and blessed.

Soon we shall be in His presence in glory, where we shall drink from the "river" of His "pleasures" forever, where the "river of water of life, clear as crystal," proceeds "out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1). Meanwhile, are you really thirsting to know Him better? He has said, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty" (Isa. 44:3). "He satisfieth the longing soul" (Psalm 107:9).

"Him to know is life eternal;

Nothing less can satisfy

Hearts that even once have tasted

Of His love, who came to die."

Two Masters: Matthew 6:25

When man fell, he abandoned God as Master; he gained by sin another master, even Satan, the great rebel against the true God. The race followed the fallen parents. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5:12. Such is the moral history of man, recorded in Genesis, there summarized, here reasoned on by the Apostle. So vain, so blind is every man, that he is apt to go no higher than himself in accounting for sin. But it is not so; neither Jew nor Gentile originated sin. It began with the head of the race long before those distinctions. It was an innocent man too, though Adam was not deceived, but the woman being quite deceived was involved in transgression (1 Tim. 2:14). Sin became the state of all, while each added his own sins also. Satan thus became master in fact of the race; and from the first the guilty pair hid away from God's presence, before "He drove out the man."

Henceforth, all for good turned on another, the second Man, the last Adam. Sinful man can neither atone for sins nor get rid of sin. And from the fall, Jehovah Elohim clearly intimated the great truth that deliverance can come only from the woman's Seed, who, Himself bruised, should bruise the serpent's head; that is, destroy the mysterious enemy. Jesus, the Son of God, born of the virgin, alone answers to this earliest oracle, and to every other in Scripture. How many besides His incarnation converge in Him and can apply to no other, in His life, death, resurrection, and ascension! Above all, He was to suffer once for sins, Just for unjust, that He might bring us who believe to God. For no external rite could adequately meet the dire need.

It was not purifying only, but atonement there must be by One who, being God and man in one Person, suited and alone could suit God and man, the Holy One whom God made sin for us, that we might become His righteousness in Christ. Hence repentance toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, must be in man.

There is thus faith-obedience, the root of all other obedience in practice. It is not mere outward separateness by circumcision or anything akin. The sanctification of the Spirit is thereby secured in a new life imparted to the believer for Christ's obedience as well as His blood-sprinkling (1 Pet. 1:2). We thenceforth obey as He did, not as slaves under law like Israel with the solemn sanction of the victim's blood on them and on the book of the law, threatening death on disobedience; we obey as sons, on whom grace rests, and as we are begotten of God, so have we Christ's blood that cleanseth from every sin. As we were in baptism buried with Christ unto His death (for nothing less could suffice even as a starting point), so we also, as He was raised from the dead, should walk in newness of life. What then? Shall we sin because, even if once Jews, we are no longer under law but under grace? Away with the thought. Know we not that to whom we yield ourselves bondmen for obedience, we are bondmen to him whom we obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? Through Christ and His work, set free from sin, and become bondmen to God, we have our fruit unto holiness and the end life eternal (Rom. 6).

Thus it is that sin shall not have dominion over us. No law, but grace gives power; and grace and truth came through Jesus, as John 1 expressly declares in contrast with law, which however good in itself could only slay one in whom sin was and worked. For sinful man, salvation hangs on Him. Without His blood is no remission; in virtue of it, He washed us from our sins and, in newness of life (His life as risen from among the dead), we are fitted to walk worthily and please God.

But Satan ever seeks to mislead. And no one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. "Ye cannot," said our Lord, "serve God and mammon." This tests those who bear His name. Never was mammon more widely sought in Christendom than now. How is it with your own soul? Are you, a professing Christian, a slave to mammon? A divided heart is a disloyal one. Think of the ruler who in sorrow turned away from following Christ, because he loved his possessions. Think of the Apostle, who for a paltry sum, sold his Master. How true it is that, hating the one, we love the other; or holding to the one, we despise the other! Mammon commands the world; and if we love the world, or the things in the world, we serve mammon. But what does a man profit if he should gain the whole world, and lose his soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Ye cannot serve two masters, God and mammon.

The Unpardonable Sin

It is ever Satan's way to harass and perplex simple souls by means of difficult texts; and, generally speaking, those most troubled by these texts are the very ones to whom they least apply. Matt. 12:31, 32 is a passage often used in this way.

A reference to the analogous passage in Mark 3:22-31 makes it quite clear to whom this awful warning applies; namely, to "the scribes which came down from Jerusalem." Those persistent opponents of divine grace, a grace borne witness to by miracles of divine power, were forced to admit the reality of all that the Lord was doing-"Unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him," etc.

A special case had just taken place (Matt. 12:22). A demon had been cast out by the Lord. The Pharisees had seen it; they could not deny it; and yet, rather than acknowledge that the miracle had been wrought by the power of the Spirit of God, they deliberately attribute it to Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. This was an unpardonable blasphemy. Mark 3:30 makes this perfectly clear: "Because they [the scribes and Pharisees] said, He [Christ] hath an unclean spirit." To attribute to Satan what was the manifest work of the Holy Ghost, showed up the incurable wickedness of the religious leaders of that day.

In order to deprive many people of the knowledge and joy of salvation, Satan has often raised the question, Is it possible for one who has done so-and-so to be saved? Let the harassed one triumphantly point to Acts 16:31, and say, It is impossible for one who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ to be lost!

What Does Romans 7 Describe?

We believe that in Rom. 7 the Apostle gives us the exercise of a quickened soul not knowing deliverance. It is, to use a figure, a man who has got out of a morass describing his feelings when he was in it. Do you think Paul was a "wretched man" crying out for deliverance, when he penned his epistle to the Romans? Most certainly not. He was a happy man rejoicing in full deliverance. But he is describing the exercises of a quickened soul still under the law and having no power against sin. This is not proper Christian experience. Can a Christian never do right? Must he always do wrong? Can a Christian say, "How to perform that which is good I find not"? The fact is, in all this part of the chapter, you do not get the Holy Ghost in His indwelling power. There is new life, but there is no power -no consciousness of victory. All this you have in chapter 8 which is proper Christian experience. But our space forbids our going further into this profoundly interesting, though sadly misunderstood, passage of Scripture. We believe that many of God's beloved people have never got out of Rom. 7; and while we must admit that we should much prefer being honestly in chapter 7 to being falsely in chapter 8, yet we do not and cannot admit that chapter 7 is the proper place for one who ought to know the enfranchising power of these words, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." It is very good for the soul to pass through Rom. 7, but it is not for the glory of God that he should stay there. If it is right for all to remain in chapter 7, then for what end did the Holy Ghost pen chapter 8?

Who Is David, Who Is the Son of Jesse?

Samuel the prophet, who had anointed David to be king over Israel, was just dead. His long life of perhaps over one hundred years in the service of God and Israel had now closed. He had also anointed Saul, and had had to grieve over his disastrous failures. Thus had Samuel been used to preserve and renew the links between Jehovah and His people. Saul was still wielding the power of the kingdom, and nothing outwardly emphasized the serious fact that the Spirit of Jehovah had departed from him. For although God may tolerate that which He has already judged morally, sometimes indeed continuing for a considerable time to do so, yet He can never sanction by His presence powers contrary in principle to each other. Sometimes in longsuffering mercy, and sometimes as in the history before us, for the more effective moral preparation of His chosen instrument, He exercises and strengthens faith in the hearts of the faithful, and further uses it for the perfecting of patience.

David was here set down to learn patience and waiting on God, and God had His own way of teaching it. In a time of need David turns to man for help, instead of to God! He proves its unprofitableness, and very nearly exposes himself to the curse of Jer. 17:5. Let us look at the circumstances.

"And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep. And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name: and thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there aught missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will show thee. Wherefore let the young men find favor in thine eyes; for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David. And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased. And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be? So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings." 1 Sam. 25:4-12.

A degenerate descendant of a man remarkable for faith in his day, Caleb, he offers an entirely unprovoked insult to David, who, in his resentment, at once prepares to avenge himself upon the churl. The flesh in David would meet the flesh in Nabal! Had such a conflict been allowed, who can tell how it would have ended? But God dealt graciously with David, softening his heart, and turning him from his purpose by an instrumentality prepared in secret but now fittingly brought forth. So David himself, too, had been beforehand prepared for the conflict with Goliath- not by the unproved accouterments of Saul, but - by the pledges of God's mercy in his deliverances from the lion and the bear. That this is the divine way of using experience is manifest. The great Apostle of

the Gentiles thus exercised himself. "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us." 2 Cor. 1:8-10.

God was not slow to avenge His tried and suffering servant. He took the matter into His own hand and made it clear that He would not allow any to revile His anointed with impunity. The purpose of God concerning Israel and the kingdom then in course of development did not interest such a man as Nabal in the least. God was not in his thoughts. Inordinate love of self had shut out every other object as unworthy of consideration. Clearly, he had no sense of the responsibilities attaching to his position as an Israelite, for had this been so, at such a season he would have gladly responded to the appeal David made to him, and have been overjoyed that he had it in his power to fulfill such an obligation of God's law (Deut. 26:12-15). His own blessing he would have found greatly increased by so doing. His serious fault was assumed ignorance of the divine purposes, and of the personality of David, affected as it evidently was, for his admissions betrayed and convicted him of impiety. His heart was not interested in what God had already wrought for Israel, nor in the blessing yet in store for His people. Selfishness had closed his heart against the stranger.

He was willingly ignorant and, like those of whom Paul writes (Rom. 1:28), he refused to have God in his knowledge. In his case it was not simplicity or ignorance, but enmity. Knowledge, however unwelcome, fixes responsibility upon the soul, and exposes to judgment. "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant.... Wherefore then gavest thou not my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?... For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him." Luke 19:22-26.

Nabal had claimed full and absolute right and control over all that God had given him in His fruitful garden ("Carmel"), speaking of them as "my bread," "my water," "my flesh," etc. God gave him an opportunity (which would not have been unrewarded) of owning, and of ministering to, His anointed, the future king; but he who had no faith was here proved wanting and failed to seize the occasion, and so lost everything, even his own life. Both folly and wickedness are manifested here. God alone has absolute right over all things. He says, "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine," yea, "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof." Man is but a steward, and must give account of all to God.

David asks for but a small part of what would all be at his disposal by-and-by. Nabal might perhaps have acceded to David's request if the latter had given him guarantee that it would turn out a profitable investment. All hangs on the personality of David. "And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master." All depended upon his estimate of the one who asked the favor. Blinded as to this, Nabal exposed himself to God's righteous judgment; but the Spirit of God reveals the truth to Abigail, and causes her to take immediate action that should avert the threatened judgment on the entire household, excepting its guilty head upon whom destruction so shortly descended.

"And when Abigail saw David, she basted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground. And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my Lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send. Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord. I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days. Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling. And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that He hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; that this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offense of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid." vv. 23-31.

It is beautiful to see that not only did Abigail save the lives of herself and her household by this timely and judicious action, but she obtained a good degree in Israel, becoming indeed the chosen companion, in adversity as well as in prosperity, of Jehovah's anointed, while David not only avoided the guilt of shedding innocent blood, but his heart was inexpressibly comforted and strengthened by this evidence of God's guard, care, and working on his behalf. The danger past and his necessities met, David's heart was now filled with such a sense of the goodness of Jehovah that he could only worship where he had thought to fight. "And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept His servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife." v. 39.

How remarkably does all this illustrate the character of this present age! Materialism, progress and development, science and religion occupy the minds of men; but a stolid indifference prevails with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ and His claims. Questions and learned disquisitions, speculative theories without number, have to a great extent taken the place of the simple and precious gospel which has gladdened the hearts and saved the souls of myriads of poor guilty sinners who have turned to, and believed on, the Savior. "Faithful is the word, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first. But for this reason mercy was shown me, that in me, the first, Jesus Christ might display the whole longsuffering, for a delineation of those about to believe on Him to life eternal." 1 Tim. 1:15, 16; J.N.D. Trans.

Man's great responsibility is to believe and obey, not to reason and deny, and so lose the blessing. The exalted Savior is also the Judge of living and dead, to whom all must give account. "Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from

the dead." Acts 17:31. The wisdom which the fear of God gives to the simple and believing soul delivers from the world's doom and implants the confident expectation that they shall also obtain the complete "salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

Who Is the Bride in Revelation?

As I read it, the bride is the city, but that bride is also the Lamb's wife. Although reigning with Christ may be common to all saints of all ages, yet being made "kings and priests unto God and His Father" may be peculiar to the saints of the Church period. And when we have this sort of kingship and priesthood introduced, as in chapter 21, we have the bride represented as the city; therefore the city must be the Christian bride, not the Jewish wife.

When we read; "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood [how like to Eph. 5], and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father," is not His Father said because the kingdom on earth (Matt. 13; 25) is about to be introduced, and to be subdued and administered by His Son, the Man of glory, who had got there because He had been the Lamb of Calvary (Heb. 2)? And He is seen in view of having all things put under Him, crowned with glory and honor as the Melchisedec King and Priest-ruler; and when He is displayed in honor and glory, it is in the city of Rev. 21, where He has His kings and priests with Him. It is the throne of God and the Lamb that is there displayed, but as associated with the bride, the Lamb's wife - the glorified Church, as I take it. None other class of saved ones could, with any appropriateness, be termed the bride, the Lamb's wife, because of the following considerations:

1. Israel is always represented as the married wife, the Church as the espoused one - the bride only the Lamb's wife after she is no longer on earth. Israel is the wife under divorce, and put away in the meantime, and to be received back on her repentance.
2. The word Lamb is representative of rejection; and only the Church could suffer with Christ and, as His affianced bride, occupy His place as rejected in this world. No other could be the rejected wife, for in no other age was there a rejected Lamb to be rejected with.
3. Also, as a third thing, the false bride - the harlot - is surely the harlot of this Christian period - not a Jewish adulteress. And if she be the Christendom harlot, then the true bride must be the chaste Christian woman, or there would be no contrast; for what is the false fornicating Christendom a travesty of save of the pure Church of God that shall come out of the awful defection, as "the bride, the Lamb's wife"?

Worldliness: an Easy Snare

What a terribly grasping spirit there is abroad today! Even many true believers seem greatly affected by it.

Much light has been given as to the heavenly calling of saints, which, if received aright, would set us, in spirit, outside the current of things here, waiting for an absent Lord.

It has been remarked that early Christians sold their houses and lands and gave evidence of their unworldliness and devotedness to the Lord, while there is now a tendency to add lands and houses, just like the world around us.

Surely the effect of this must be felt. It must dry up the very springs of spiritual life, hinder communion, and thus rob the soul of the true enjoyment of its heavenly portion.

Abraham with his tent and altar has often been spoken of as an example of a heavenly man, while Lot is seen as one of another sort-one exactly opposite.

There can be no question of Lot's conversion. The Apostle Peter speaks of him as "just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds:)." This was in the midst of Sodom, where he had made his home.

Lot is a sample of a saint who, knowing the truth, gives the practical denial to it in his ways. The well-watered plains of Jordan attracted his eye, and his feet soon followed. But he suffered greatly in his soul, in consequence, all his earthly days, and lost everything in the fire of Sodom at last. Besides, he was no testimony for the Lord. Unlike his uncle Abraham, he did not walk as a pilgrim and stranger here, and when the angels came down to give warning of God's judgment on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and he went and warned his sons-in-law, he seemed to them as one that mocked.

It has been remarked by others that Abraham never laid a foundation. He did not fix his roots here. He had his tent; but a tent is a movable thing, and the very opposite of that which is stable or permanent. This gave character to him, while his altar indicated the state of his heart. He would not lay a foundation here, because "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Heb. 11:10. He was truly living in the power of the world to come. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Pet. 2:11.

It is admitted that God may give more of this world's goods to one than another in His all-wise government. But God's giving prosperity is one thing, and the burning desire to possess it is quite another. Timothy is exhorted as a man of God to "FLEE these things," and to occupy himself with a different order of things altogether-and for a good reason, for some had coveted after them and had pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

But suppose God does give prosperity in earthly things, is it that we may lavish it upon ourselves? Is it that we should surround ourselves with what gratifies our natural tastes? Is it that we should be exalted in our minds above others? Surely not. Is it not rather that we should use it for His glory? Is it not that we should minister to the need of others, and to help spread abroad the sweet savor of the name of Christ?

The life of Christ was a life of self-surrender in all His pathway. He made Himself of no reputation. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. Has He not left us an example that we should follow His steps?

"Judge in thyself, O Christian! is it meet

To set thine heart on what beasts set their feet?

'Tis no hyperbole, if you be told,

You delve for dross with mattocks made of gold.

Affections are too costly to bestow

Upon the fair-faced nothings here below.

The eagle scorns to come down from on high,

The proverb saith, to pounce a silly fly;

And can a Christian leave the face of God

To embrace the earth and dote upon a clod?"

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