

CHRISTIAN TRUTH VOLUME 14

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A collection of articles and writings by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan from Christian Truth Volume 14, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

74 Chapters

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Christian Truth Volume 14

Apples of Gold

"Apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Pro. 25:11) means, divine fruit shown out in redemption. Fruit, the result of the Holy Spirit within us, is displayed on the beautiful picture of redemption, which we are in Christ Jesus.

Beginnings

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1. Go as far back in eternity as we will, before ever was a creature, angelic or human, in all the universe of God, we are told, "the Word was." It never began to be, for "the Word was God"-the Eternal.

"In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." Gen. 1:1. Now we have divine power speaking worlds into being by the fiat of His will. "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:9.

"That which was from the beginning" (1 John 1:1), as explained by the writer himself (John 15:27 John 1:6), takes us no further back than the incarnation of the blessed Son of God. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt [Lit. tabernacled] among us (and we have contemplated His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father), full of grace and truth"! J.N.D. Trans.

Thus all Scripture is in divine harmony with itself, and calls for our subjection to it, that we may believe and thus understand.

The Calmness of Christ in Presence of Evil

Matt. 26

What is so profoundly interesting to us in this chapter is, that we get what was in the mind of Christ. His spirit gives this wonderful moral picture of immense value to us- perfect calmness and real power. His soul is going through that which is coming upon Him, so that when He has to deal with other persons He is never disturbed. We see in Him what is so hard for us to have- not indifference, not the least stiffening of His mind against it, but so with. His Father about it, that there is not the smallest trace of disturbance in His spirit, no indifference or stiffness of heart, but the soul reached by the sense of what is upon Him. We have to trace in ourselves a certain hardness or indifference, unable to be free from the effects of it, and so turn from it, "sleeping for sorrow," or take a sword, or take to flight.

It is beautiful for us to see Him feeling everything perfectly-not only as a divine Person, but in perfect manhood. He learned obedience by the things that He suffered. The world never in that sense possessed Him. Two things marked Christ-obedience and dependence, prayer and doing the Father's will. In Peter we do not see obedience and dependence, but confidence in nature. Two characteristics marked him-he does his own will, and there is no dependence on the Lord. With the Lord Jesus, there was the going through the difficulties with God beforehand; and when they came, there was quietness and perfect self-command; for all had been really gone through.

There is nothing so firm as obedience, and nothing so humble-perfect firmness, because I know I am obeying-perfect lowliness, because I know I am dependent. If I am in sorrow, like Christ, in the presence of God I am awake; but if I am asleep then, when I come before man, I take the sword and act according to nature. Asleep when we should be with God about the trial; acting out of place when with man. Christ, when man came, was unmoved by his wickedness, because He had gone through the reality with God-betrayed by the nearest to Him; and as for the priests, all they would do was to plead against Him. Christ being there shows out man. Here was One always perfect, fully conscious of all that was coming upon Him. in perfect submission going as man to God about it; and when the judgment comes, He goes as a Lamb to the slaughter. He was not actually on the cross, but was looking at it (v. 39). He drank other bitter cups as man, but He never asked that any might pass from Him but this; and here was a cup that His piety desired might pass. He ought to have felt it-His very perfection made Him shrink from drinking that cup of wrath for man's sins. But He did drink it all with perfect meekness; and looking forward to it (the forsaking of God), He prays, in Psalm 22, "Be not Thou far from Me." He rehearses it all and turns to God. As to any comfort for His spirit, He had only sleeping disciples. It is terrible, when we think of it, how man showed himself. But it is good for our souls to have Christ before us here.

In the Psalm we see Him turning round and looking for some to take pity, but He found none; none could go through that-death coming with wrath. And if there were only a shadow of that, man could not go through it. He felt all that, and we see His perfection in it-see what His spirit and mind were in passing through it. Has it got hold of your hearts? have your souls been with Him thus? As

regards us, nothing stopped Him in His devotedness to save us. If you want to see perfection of love, if you want to see devotedness of love, go and see the Lord suffering in our stead -feed on it. If you want to know the love of Christ, it passes knowledge; by divine teaching we may apprehend it. It is blessed to see His grace in the midst of evil. Being with God perfectly, He had the right word for everyone. It humbles us; yet to see that He was perfect is joy to the heart.

Christ As High Priest Entering Heaven: As King of Kings Coming Out

It is the believer's privilege to see and judge everything in view of Christ; for He has not only revealed what God is in His nature and character, but fully brought out what man is. He has, moreover, made good at the cross, in and by His death, both the claim and the glory of God as to sin, having vindicated His majesty infinitely beyond the power of evil. If the cross encountered man's darkness in the deep and varied and complete guilt of a Christ-hating world, it was blessedly and forever answered by the light of God's glory on the throne above. Yes, it may be said most truly that man in the person of Adam was turned out of the earthly paradise because of his sin; but Christ the second Man has entered heaven, having accomplished redemption.

The fact of Christ's entering heaven testifies to the Jew and the Greek that He was rejected, being refused His every right and title. For those who should have hailed Him as their true King, said, Away with Him, we have no king but Caesar; and in place of His receiving His temple and throne, they nailed Him to the cross, thereby sealing judgment on Israel, man generally, and the world.

But what says heaven of Christ now hidden there? What says the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven? Let us learn God's testimony to the wondrous sacrifice Christ has offered up, and the present blessed privilege to be known and enjoyed by believers in Him. They are immensely beyond what ancient shadows and types pledged, as the epistle to the Hebrews plainly teaches. There Christ is presented as the antitype to Aaron the high priest who, on the day of atonement, entered the "holy of holies" with the blood of the slain bullock and the goat sprinkling it before and on the mercy seat. This secured redemption to Israel, priests and people, though only of value for twelve months; hence its repetition year by year. Even so, Aaron must retire from the presence of Jehovah, outside the veil, and never enter at other times, under the penalty of death. Such was Israel's representative, entering the earthly tabernacle by blood, for the yearly redemption, as the divinely appointed means of maintaining an earthly nation. Who on earth could boast its like? But how vast the difference for the believer today, founded on the infinite sacrifice of Christ the Son of God. He came at the consummation of the ages, at the close of man's trial, to settle the question of sin by becoming the sacrifice for it. On God's part this He did, as Heb. 9 and 10 solemnly declare, when "through the eternal Spirit [He] offered Himself without spot to God." By His shed blood, atonement was made. By the same death of Him, the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom; though the declaration of the truth (as in the varied aspects and application of His atoning death) was reserved for the timely moment to unfold that Christ by His own blood entered in "once for all" into the holy of holies, having obtained eternal redemption.

It may truly be said, all other wonders sink into insignificance in the light of Christ's death; yet its results, in the antitypical Aaron's entering heaven, associated with His precious blood, by which eternal redemption was secured, may truly fill us with praise. No more offering for sin; no more blood of atonement to be shed. The One who became the only sacrifice for sins on the cross is declared to have forever (in perpetuity) sat down on God's right hand. Thus the counsel of peace

is between them both. God the Judge of sin, and Jesus the Sacrifice for it, who met for judgment at Calvary, are now together in heaven for indissoluble peace, and this to all the redeemed, God's new creation. Already not alone the conscience, but the heart and ways of every believer are called in matchless grace to be in unison with it. By one offering He has perfected forever those sanctified, or set apart, to God in the value of His blood, which meets the majesty and the glory of God's throne. Not only has Christ by His blood provided eternal redemption for faith in present unbroken blessedness to know and enjoy, together with a conscience purged from sin; but heaven itself is open for the believer to follow his precious Savior into the true sanctuary. There assuredly, as a purged worshiper, he in spirit finds his liberty and home, before that same holy and blessed God he once dreaded.

Strange indeed, that consecrated places of worship should be set up on earth to imitate the Jewish worship in the temple. Has not Christ entered heaven? and while He is hidden there, has not the Holy Spirit come to witness to His finished work and present exaltation? Thereby is given corresponding effect to believers, so as to draw near to God in the holies through the rent veil, as worshipers in full liberty and known blessedness. Do we not possess Christ on high as the great Priest over God's house, which house we, believers, are (Heb. 3:6; 10:21)?

What now is the material temple? How contemptible its imitation, with its flowers, music, pictures, and all other human aids to worship! How sad to accommodate or reduce the work and Person of Christ to buildings, with a ritual earthly and sensational! Are we not now called to spiritual worship, in blessed association (for all true believers) with Himself on high? "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest [holy of holies]... by a new and living way," we are exhorted to draw near with a true heart.

The privilege was unknown and impossible in the typical days of Israel. Even Aaron himself had it not. Yet an assumed earthly ritual after his pattern (which ignores all believers as the only priests on earth, having free access to God in the heavenly sanctuary) is adopted growingly in Christendom, and sanctioned, alas, by those responsible to know better who act otherwise. If they would heed Christ, as having come, been nailed to the cross and gone into heaven, with the heavenly privileges ensuing to His own, true Christian worship in the Holy Spirit's power, they might learn; and they would refuse all which denies it, while awaiting the promised return of our hidden Lord and Savior.

If the truth of Christ the High Priest entering the holiest is thus significant, and exceedingly precious in opening up the heavenly privileges for the believer of today,

Christ's coming out of heaven as King of kings is most solemn for the world, and has its voice for all pursuing its course. Since the departure of Christ to heaven, men have largely been dragged into the profession of His name, but with the heart and mind quite unchanged toward God. This really adds to the condemnation of Christendom, for there remains the standing fact that God is at issue with the world about His beloved Son. The cross is its abiding witness; not this only, but the personal presence of God the Holy Ghost who, as stated in John 16, gives demonstration in a threefold form of coming judgment. "Now is the judgment of this world" said He; and in view of His leaving the world, "The world seeth Me no more" is solemn. The gospel, moreover, coming from heaven did not alter this. On the contrary, the gospel supposes that man is lost and the world become a ruin. It does not propose to improve either, nor yet to rule the earth in power and

righteousness, as the kingdom will ere long. The gospel saves men by faith, and calls them to heavenly glory with Christ.

Christ As High Priest Entering Heaven: As King of Kings Coming Out

Alas! Satan was made known as the god of this age, blinding the mind of the unbeliever. Christ's resurrection too, which justifies all who believe in Him, becomes the distinct evidence of coming judgment. So the Apostle presses at Athens in the hear t-searching language: "God... now commandeth all men every where to repent: 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 17:30, 31. Thus Scripture is emphatic, proving how God holds the world guilty respecting His Son, in its hatred of Him come in love and grace and in the glory of His own Person. What availed His presentation according to promise and prophecy? What, that He was the rightful God-appointed King? The divine Son and the King were the final truths raised, and rejected by the w or ld's representatives, religious and civil. They chose Barabbas and killed the Christ, God's Son, thereby closing the responsibility both of the nations (Nebuchadnezzar's image) and of boastful religious Israel with its divinely given temple, earthly priesthood, and typical ritual.

It is blessed to know that all the sin of the world can never alter the purpose of God respecting His Son as His appointed heir to rule and reign for Him when He comes in universal dominion as Son of man and as King in Zion over all the earth. The Old Testament scriptures abound with the glorious prospect. The very epistle to the Hebrews (which declares His present heavenly priesthood, and our worship in holy liberty before God without a veil or the smallest distance) speaks most clearly of the coming age of glory and blessing under the headship and rule of Jesus the Son of man. Chapter 2 speaks not of angels, but of Jesus as the Lord's appointed One to have all in subjection to Him.

But we are called to faith and patience in this gospel day when so many are deceived as to its nature and purpose, which is to take out of the world a people as God's sons for heavenly glory. If the believer knows what the future is to be for Christ, and sees things around exactly the opposite, faith, resting on God's intention as to the nearing future for Him, looks meanwhile up into heaven, beholding Him crowned with glory and honor there. But in these delusive times of outward greatness, of human boasting and pride, it may solemnly be asked, When, how, and by whom are the rights, honor, and glory of God's King to be established? Surely God Himself will not fail to bring back His Son by ways and means and at a time least expected by the world, putting forth an irresistible power to subdue all enemies. The voice of Scripture speaks plainly of righteous judgment preceding and accompanying the appearing of the King of kings from heaven to establish His kingdom in power and glory.

In particular, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him," most emphatically makes known the coming glories of the once suffering and now exalted Lamb. His worthiness and redemption rights are in heaven declared, in view of being established, displayed, and universally owned. Yet, be it observed, seals are broken, trumpets blown, and vials poured out in their varied degrees of wrath, all before the shining forth of the hidden King of kings. Amid the closing sorrows that usher in His return, voices in heaven in Rev. 11 state that the hour is come for the world kingdom of our Lord and His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. The redeemed elders

celebrate it by falling on their faces and worshiping God for having taken to Himself His great power, and reigning. But earth is at issue as to this, for the nations are angry that God's wrath is come. This discloses the guilt, veiled though it be under religious profession. The nations of the earth will then prove to have nothing but hatred and opposition to God and His Anointed who, according to Psalm 2, will have the nations for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. Then no longer hidden in heaven, like Joash the type in the temple of old, He comes forth from above, as we see in the emblem of glorious conquest seated on a white horse-the "Faithful and True"-who will judge and make war. Such is the description of Rev. 19:11-16, when the Lord Jesus will appear to this guilty and deceived world. Oh! the woe for those who now refuse Him as the Word of God in patient, matchless grace, only to be exposed to Him under the same title in unsparing judgment! Then shall fall the little stone smiting the image of Dan. 2 in its last stage. For Christ is to smite the nations, and rule them with the rod of iron. The fierceness and wrath of Almighty God is His unmistakable testimony to Christ coming out of heaven to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Thank God, the believer's hope is heavenly, in character with his heavenly life and position, not of the world as Christ is not, but awaiting the fulfillment of His parting promise: "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Oh! to view things in accordance with God's thoughts and purpose for Christ the only Savior, no less than ruler of the kings of the earth, who will, after cleansing by judgment, fill the whole scene with glory and blessing, with peace and righteousness.

Christ the Door of the Sheep

"Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep." John 10:7.

What did the Lord mean, that the souls who then heard, or those who afterward should hear, were to gather from the remarkable clause, "I am the door of the sheep"?

There is a change in the employment of the words. In verse 2 He represents Himself as the Shepherd, but does not yet call Himself the good Shepherd. He takes up a well-known figure of the Old Testament in which the kings of Israel were frequently designated their shepherds, the Messiah of course pre-eminently.

In this part of the chapter, accordingly, He speaks of the sheepfold. There is not as yet an allusion, as in verse 16, to the sheep which do not belong to the Jewish nation: "Them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one flock [not, as is familiarly known, "one fold"], and one shepherd." Those who conceive (and it is a general error) that there is now a "fold" go back in heart and mind to Judaism. The Lord has really a flock in immediate relationship to Himself. The Jewish sheep, as He tells us, He would lead out; others not of it He would join with them; and these should form not two companies, but one flock around the one Shepherd.

The chapter begins with telling us how He was really the Shepherd of Israel. He had come in by the door, in the appointed way, at the proper time, and subject to all divine ordinances. So when He was to be baptized by John, He says, "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Afterward He performed the miracles and manifested that character of mission which the prophets had predicted. He had come in by the door as the Shepherd-He only. Others might claim it, but they were thieves and robbers. Not that some before the Lord Jesus had not sought the good of Israel-Josiah, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, David, were far from being thieves and robbers-but they were witnesses to the coming Messiah, not usurpers. But those who had claimed the sheep as their own, while in truth they were God's, what could they be called but thieves and robbers? And the Messiah was very jealous, as was Jehovah, over Israel, His people reserved for His Shepherd.

But now Messiah was come, and they, alas! refused Him. The blind man had been cast out, because he, no longer blind, confessed Him. Some in the same hatred had before this taken up stones to stone the Son of God. In spirit He, rejected Himself, was now leading His sheep out. That murderous prelude on the part of His people was but an anticipation of His own death; and as with him once blind who now saw, so it would be with all who worshiped Him. Jesus would lead His own outside the world's religion. It was no question of staying to improve or reform, as the infidel school of progress thinks in every age. Grace was calling out from what is sentenced to judgment. He was not going to work now as they expected. Israel's blessing and the glory of the earth await another day.

A yet deeper task was in hand to be sealed in His blood. Therefore He would lead the sheep out and go before them Himself. He shows Himself as the Shepherd come in the due and

long-predicted manner which God's Word had led them to expect, as the Seed of the woman and of Abraham, as the Son of David and of man. He had seen their hatred of Him and His Father, and this would be soon apparent in His cross. There was no course now but one open to Him; and He was not only going outside the fold but about to lead His own out too. The blind man who now saw, was cast out by men blinder than himself, to be with Jesus.

The sheep follow Him, for they know His voice. A stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers. The ears of Israel were heavy; they could not understand. Yet there is not a difficult word in what the Lord uttered. Why is it that people, then as now, do not understand the Scriptures? Not really because of difficult expressions. It is the truth that grates on the reluctant will of man. This is the source of all unbelief. It is the resistance of the will to face the terrible fact of man's ruin; it is the pride that rejects God's grace and will not bend to one's own need of it. Hence the guilt of unbelief, not because man has a feeble understanding, but because he fears not God and believes not His love. Yet is not the truth good in itself, and full of goodness to man, in spite of his evil? Is it not the only means of blessing or of salvation? Is it not by the word of God that he is begotten, and nourished, that he can serve, enjoy, or worship God? be happy with Him now and forever? Why then does not man love it? Because he has departed from God and refuses to return in God's way. He indulges himself in the fond delusion that he would like some Lime, if not now, to serve God; but he really likes nothing but his own will. Yet if God is to be served at all, it must be according to His will which alone is holy and good.

But there is a deeper question than of man's serving God. Some people may flatter themselves that they would rejoice to serve God; but are they willing to take the place of having no good thing in them, of being lost and not merely in danger? Not merely that they have done evil in the sight of God, but that they are all wrong before Him? It is a serious thing when the heart of man bows to the solemn sentence of God, when one stands and confesses oneself lost before the God whose love and will have been slighted habitually. What then is to become of the soul? What of the body when resurrection to judgment comes?

Such then was the state of Israel, the fold; the Shepherd was obliged to go outside. The test that any were His own was that they heard and knew His voice. The crisis was at hand; when He has put forth all His own, He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him. It was the sentence of death on the best religion of the earth. The only persons who can boast of divine religion for their nation are the Jews; but here, solemn to say, the Lord virtually sentences the Jews and their religion. In the fullest love to them already had He gone into the fold, and they would not hear Him; so He goes out and leads His own out after Him. He always takes the first place, in sorrow as in all else-in the deepest of all He suffers for them, Just for unjust. Then He goes before His own sheep, whom He knows by name and leads out.

In truth all is in ruins, the world and man; the true Light has been put out, as far as man could do it. God Himself who came in love is gone. They felt not the sin. They believed neither His glory nor His grace. They could not understand His words; how few did even the disciples then understand! It was not merely the Jews who were blind and deaf; the disciples were half Jews and half blind still. Men do not understand what they do not like, not because there is not adequate, yea, abundant light vouchsafed of God, but because their own will is at work, producing darkness in the heart.

"If... thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." It is an unerring test; with Christ the object, our soul is full of light. Have I darkness as to this or that? If so, and so far, my eye is not single. Why do I say it but because it is the truth, and that you and I may look to Him who alone enlightens and makes us light? In vain look for divine light till you receive Him, and rest on Him, who will show you what He is for you and to you in the smallest need of every day, as in the greatest for eternity.

But there is more than this that follows (v. 7); the Lord Jesus takes an entirely new place now outside Israel. He introduces this truth in the same solemn manner, not the sentence of death on Judaism, but the opening out of life and salvation to sinners. "Verily, verily," says Jesus, "I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.... By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." How blessed! He speaks to the same souls. What love to the souls who could not understand Him! If the true Messiah was going outside His ancient people, He would save sinners. Ah! they were sinners, and till the sinner feels that he is a sinner, he feels nothing aright, least of all as to God or His Son.

This is the beginning of wisdom. The first lesson of goodness is that I know and confess my badness. There is nothing a man likes so little as to know and own that he is good for nothing before God; the grace that came by Him who is full of grace alone effects it in any. It is most true that I cannot have true faith in Christ unless I repent toward God. Never seek to divorce the one from the other. It is not only a human error but a snare of Satan for simple souls, where they are severed, for God has joined them in receiving the gospel. God would have souls feel and confess their sins. Repentance is when a soul no longer ignores God, cheating itself as to its own evil; he repents who by grace is willing to receive God's sentence on his own sinfulness in the sight of God. What a change! It is a man who abandons himself because of his evil as judged by God, and looks with horror on himself as before Him.

Christ is the test of this as of all else. Thus in the case before us, what could be worse in His sight than the self-will that refused to receive the Messiah? They did not like Him when they knew Him after a sort; they would have liked one to flatter them, and give them power and glory, making them the most exalted people on earth, and crushing all their enemies. This will all come in due time from God, who will yet raise Israel from their fallen estate and put them on the pinnacle of greatness. But they, as we, must be put down first in their own eyes as sinners. By-and-by they will be brought to God; they will then own that they pierced Him, that it was their guilt, though by lawless hands of others. In fact, no man can have the blessedness of the truth or the grace of God unless he bows and confesses himself to be a sinner. This is the necessary controversy of God with every soul of man as he is.

It is not faith to confess truth in an abstract manner, though in this way Satan often cheats souls. They own the forgiveness of sins in a creed, or as a dogma; but are they forgiven? They do not pretend to any such thing; it would be presumptuous on their part, they say. O senseless souls in the face of God's express message! Faith feels the truth about itself more deeply than about others. Unless I believe the reality of God's grace and truth for my own soul, it is worse than a form. This is the hour when God will have reality (John 4). The Lord had come to the fold, the place of forms; but He has led His own out of it, and He must have them in the truth. True worshipers, they must worship God in spirit and in truth.

The reason souls are not really saved is that they are not in the truth for their own soul's need. I must meet God about my sins in this world or at the judgment seat. No man can be saved in the day of judgment. It is in the place of my sins I must find salvation; where I am lost, I must be saved; where I have been an enemy of God, I must be reconciled to Him. The Savior is come, yea, is gone again; and the work is done. But Israel's eyes are blinded, and they see Him not. They are strangers to Him-not His sheep-they did not know His voice. There they remain outside, waiting for the Messiah who is come. They know not that the victim has been offered and is accepted on high. We by grace have believed without seeing, and know that, His blood having been shed for sin, He is gone into the holiest of all.

Thus, if the Lord opens a new figure, it is for a new truth. "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Whosoever pretends to bring man to God, to step between God and souls on earth, to claim Israel, the church or any souls as his own, as his people and his flock, is a thief and a robber. What! man stand between souls and God? Is he not himself a sinner? Does he not need salvation? "All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers." Jesus is the door. He gives us to see what He was about to do after leaving the fold. He would save sinners.

Now, accordingly, the door is open to any. "By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Grace and truth came by Him; man has neither. And the law can only condemn him, for he is a sinner. He needs salvation. It is no longer a question of being schooled even by the law of God; man is too far gone. As long as there is life, he will tell you, there is hope. But man has not life toward God. Earthly religion may try to remedy the disease by keeping up hopes before mankind; but it is all vain, for the patient is dead. There is no hope, no life for man in his natural state; and he has proved it by rejecting the Son of God. But if His death be the great sin man has done, it is the infinite grace of God there to meet him in the gospel. "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." There is more than hope now; there is present salvation in Christ. There is in Him life everlasting. Those who believe, as He declares, shall never perish.

Do you draw back, fearing this is too great grace? Then are you to give God the lie? If you are a great sinner, is not the Son of God a far greater Savior? Are you afraid to trust Him? Afraid to

trust your soul in the hands of Him who died for sinners and rose again? It is the express mission of the Son of man to seek and to save that which is lost. Granted that man is dead, but is not Jesus the quickener of the dead? By-and-by He will raise the body. Now it is the hour of quickening the dead who hear His voice. He quickens the soul and brings salvation. When He comes again He will change the body into the likeness of His glorious body; now He blesses the soul. How proper is the order! How blessed for those who repent and believe the gospel; but how dreadful for sinners to be raised sinners, raised for eternal judgment, raised to be cast into the lake of fire! But He is now come to save, having done the work needful for it.

Thus is Christ the door; and now, thanks be to God, you are invited to enter. Will you not come in? He is calling; do you not hear His voice? He may have much for you to do when you enter. He gives each of His servants his work. He leads even now into more and deeper blessing. But if you have not come in, this is not what you want. The sinner cannot serve the Lord till He has served the sinner-till He has saved him. Why then do you hesitate? To delay is most dangerous. It is now loss incalculable; it may be ruin irretrievable.

I do call on you to weigh with all seriousness these words of Jesus which evidently apply after He left the Jewish fold. He speaks as the rejected Son; He was going to the cross. He knew all that was coming; He required no prophecy about Himself, or God, or man. "Lord," said Peter, "Thou knowest all things"; and so He did-all things-excepting only, where as servant He waited for the word of His Father (Mark 13:32).

I invite and urge you then to believe in His name on God's testimony. He is the Savior, the only Savior of sinners; and you need a Savior. Believe Him to be what He is. Rest on the work He has done. The Savior and His work will perfectly suit your need, as they do the glory of God. Were He one hair's breadth less than He is, I could not trust Him for either. He could neither have glorified God nor save sinners. But the truth is that there is an infinite distance between Him and the highest of creatures, were they Gabriel and Michael themselves.

For they are creatures, and He is the Creator. He is God, even as the Father and the Holy Spirit in the Godhead; whatever be the difference of person and of function, Scripture is plain. Man is blind and unbelieving, and the worse, the less he suspects it.

Such then is the Savior; can you trust Him? Seeing that the Creator of all the world came to save from sin, yea, became Himself a man to save them righteously by His death for their sins on the cross, do you hesitate? Had He been only man, there could be no salvation, as far as such a one was concerned; but He that was God became man in order to do it. No doubt He was Messiah, and rejected. But God turns His rejection to our salvation, and opens the door to sinners. It is no question now of a Messiah for the Jew, but of a Savior. "By Me if any man enter in he shall be saved." He is not looking for qualities of which He approves but for sinners that need Him to save them; and there is no man now who hears His voice and remains outside but because of the self-will that refuses to bow to His word. Salvation and every other needed blessing are in Him. The first call of God, the first obligation of man is to believe in Him; the first blessing for my soul is to have life in Him and be saved.

Shall I tell you why men say no man can know that he is saved? They think that God is such a one as themselves. They attenuate Christ's glory, seeing neither His Person nor His work. When He bore God's judgment of sin on the cross, did He procure an uncertain salvation? Let none say so who fear God or honor Jesus. How could a divine person fail? It is His glory, at all cost to Himself, to bring in perfect salvation; and this He now gives freely to the believer. To bless is what God loves. Only sin made Him a judge. He does not judge His counsels, nor salvation, nor the saved. Judgment has been borne by Christ for the believer. And the Spirit seals them, instead of doubting them. Thus does He fill the heavens even now with due praise and adoration. God is love and light, not a judge, in His own nature; but He will deal with all that is contrary to His nature, and all the more solemnly with those who prefer self and sin to Christ. Judgment will be Christ's vindication on the unbeliever and ungodly.

If an unconverted man were brought to heaven, no place would be so irksome to him. What would heaven be to one with no feeling in harmony with Him whom all praise there? No place could be so unsuited to the sinner.

How can one then be fitted for heaven? "By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." What is implied in salvation? Two things at least, whatever more there may be- a new and eternal life, and

a propitiation for my sins. That life you cannot win, and no creature can give it to you. Shame on those besotted enough to say, even if they do not believe, that water sprinkled on one can give life. Do they not accept a fiction as baseless and, if it be rested on, quite as ruinous as his wafer-god is to some? We hear and know His voice; we know not the voice of strangers, nor do we follow them. The propitiation too is once for all in the Savior's blood. The mass, or anything equivalent, is Satan's cheat for it.

To have the dead with the living is a dreadful combination. It was so in the Jewish fold, but Jesus led His own out. Go not back to that which He has left forever. You who have come out to Him, cleave to Him; know that the only security is Himself, the one joy of His saints is to be with Him. He not only has life in His own Person, but He died that He might give that life to sinners. Sin must have been an everlasting barrier, but He died for it. Here is the One to look to and confide in; and He invites you. "By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." There is no question as to the result; we have the positive word of Jesus for it.

It is a false gospel that sends you to look at yourself for proof of life. If God tells me to look at myself, it is to humble me. It is reversing the gospel to judge of His grace or of my standing by myself. If God gives blessing, He wishes it to be enjoyed. People in this world seem to grudge what they do for others. Indeed it was the Greek or heathen idea of God, that He was jealous of man's happiness. The true God delights in the happiness of those whom He has called; and though men have sinned irreparably in the death of Christ by their lawless hands, it is by that death He blesses any in His own mercy, and this righteously. The moment I look to Jesus and His blood, at God's Word, my sins are gone. And this is only the 'beginning of the Christian's career.

Liberty to do as God likes is the essence of Christianity. It supposes responsibility to Christ, I am Christ's bondman, but free to serve Him. You who look to Jesus, are you not at liberty also? Do you say that you are still tied and bound with the chain of your sins? Such is not the Christian state but rather a denial of it. "He shall go in and out." This is the liberty in which we ought to stand fast; So, says the Apostle to the Galatians who had let it slip. Anything short of it is not Christianity, though it may be the state of souls born again. It is not merely your gain or loss that is in question, but the Lord's glory. For God has Christ before Him, and He blesses one by leading him to think of Christ as He does. Nor can you duly serve as Christ's bondman unless you know what it is to be His freedman. It is liberty to please the Lord, no longer like the Israelite under law, still less bound to the world or its conventionalities, its hopes or its fears, its pursuits or its pleasures. We are free to serve Christ, delighting in Him now. Having heard His voice, we shall serve Him in a changed body on high, as well as here in these bodies made the temple of God by the Spirit's dwelling in them.

The Christian and His Hope

Christianity is not the accomplishment of promise. The Jews were the center of the earthly part. But God meanwhile has "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3); and then, till Christ comes again, He is sitting on the throne of the Father, and has sent the Holy Ghost down.

The Christian is one in whom the Holy Ghost dwells, between the accomplishment of redemption by Christ and His coming again. The thought and purpose of God about us is that we should "be conformed to the image of His Son." The Holy Ghost is given to dwell in us meanwhile, to dwell in us individually and collectively too. That is what the Christian is: Christ is his life, his righteousness; it is a ministration of righteousness and of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:8, 9). "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9); it does not say, "if he is not converted," though that would be true, of course. You see many saints everywhere who are not settled in their relationship with God; the present power for this is the Holy Ghost come down.

The coming of the Lord Jesus is not simply a little of our knowledge which we may add to the rest, but it is the hope of the Christian. If we die, we go to Him; but what is held out to us is that the Christian is waiting for Christ. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28. If we die, we go up to Him, and blessed truth it is too; but that Christ shall come is the hope of the Christian -the only full hope. "To depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better," is true but this is not the purpose of God for us; the purpose of God is that we shall be like Christ (Rom. 8:29, 30). I would not be like Christ with my body in the grave and my spirit in paradise; the expectation of the Lord's coming makes the Person of Christ to be much before the soul. I am going to see Him and to be like Him. Scripture does not talk of going to heaven; "absent from the body,... present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). "To depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1:23); always, the thought is going to Christ. What we all want personally is, that Christ should have a larger place in our hearts: "Rooted and built up in Him"; "To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." "Christ is all," and "in all" as the power of life; having become our life

He is before our souls to fill them.

Christ is the motive for the Christian for whatever he does, whether he eats or drinks; and his desires are never satisfied, and never can be till he is with and like Christ. Therefore, he is always waiting for Him. The Thessalonians were converted "to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1:10). The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, instead of being a little prophetic knowledge, is interwoven with all the thoughts and condition of the Christian.

Lectures on the Books of Chronicles

1 Chron. 1-9

The books of Chronicles are much more fragmentary than those of Kings. At the same time they are more bound up with what follows, for this very reason---that they look at the line of promise and purpose. and hence, therefore, are occupied with David and those that inherited the kingdom of David's race. The books of Kings, on the other hand, look at the kingdom of Israel as a whole, and therefore show us the continuation of Samuel much more closely-show us the history of the kingdom viewed as a matter of responsibility. Hence, we have the failure of the ten tribes detailed at great length in the Kings and not in the Chronicles, because there it is not purpose, but responsibility; and we have, therefore, the contemporary kingdoms from the time of Jeroboam and Rehoboam till the extinction of the kingdom of Samaria, and then the history of the kingdom of Judah until the captivity. But the books of Chronicles look only at the history of God's kingdom in the hands of David and of his race. For that reason we here at once are connected with the whole of God's purposes from the beginning. We have the genealogy. Indeed all the early chapters are filled with genealogy for a reason which I shall afterward explain; but we begin with the beginning-"Adam, Sheth, Enosh" and so on, down to Noah, a line of ten from the beginning, followed by the various sons of Noah. and their posterity seventy nations springing from the sons of Noah. Then again we have Abraham as a new stock and commencement. Just as Adam in verse 1, so Abraham and his sons in verse 27 are brought before us, with also a list of seventy tribes, or races, that spring from Abraham and his posterity.

It is clear, therefore, that the Spirit of God purposely presents these things. They are not done in any way loosely or arbitrarily. There is a purpose. We can readily see this in the ten names that come before us first of all the ten forefathers of the human race, and the seventy nations branching out from the sons of Noah. Then again, we can see the seventy tribes branching out from Abraham and his family. But there is another thing too in this, as showing not only the general way of God here, but the principle of God throughout Scripture-"first that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual." We find it just the same here. Japheth and Ham, with their sons, are brought before us previous to the introduction of Shem, and the line of God's promise in Shem. Here is the Lord God of Shem. So in the same way even with Abraham. Although we come to the man that was called out, still, even there, "first that which is natural." Hence, therefore, we have Ishmael and his posterity, and even the sons of the concubine, and, last of all, "Abraham begat Isaac." But even in looking at the sons of Isaac, as the rule the sons of Esau are put first, as in the 35th verse. These are pursued, and even the allusion to the kings before there were any over the children of Israel. God's purposes ripen latest. God lets the world take its own way, and it exalts men in the earth. God means to exalt the Man that humbled Himself. We see, therefore, a common principle everywhere throughout Scripture. Thus, this genealogy, even if we only look cursorily at the first chapter, is not without spiritual fruit. There is nothing in the Bible without profit for the soul-not even a list of names.

Then we have the rapid rise of Esau's posterity, as I have already remarked. We have duke this and duke that; and, finally, in the 2nd chapter, we enter upon the called and chosen-Israel. "These are the sons," not merely of Jacob, but "of Israel." It is the purpose of God that appears. Here too they are mentioned merely in their natural order first of all-"Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah, Issachar and Zebulun, Dan, Joseph and Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher" (chap. 2:1). But the sons of Judah are very particularly brought before us in this chapter-not of Reuben nor of Simeon. The object of the book is purpose. Judah being a tribe first of all chosen for the kingdom, and that too with a view to the Messiah, we can understand why his sons should be first traced out at great length. This is brought before us, down to even the captivity, and after it; and most interesting notices there are here and there--some alas! who transgressed in the thing accursed, but others who were strengthened of God. Such is the history of man.

However, at the end of the chapter, the Spirit of God singles out Caleb's family; for he was the man who, of all Judah in these early days, answered to God's purpose. On that I need not now dwell. We see it in Numbers, in Joshua-the peculiar place that Caleb and his daughter had, the father confident in the purpose of God to give Israel the land. Let the strength of their cities be what they might, let their men be ever so valiant, let Israel be ever so feeble, the point of difference was this-that God was with Israel and against the Canaanites. So here we find the result, for faithfulness is fruitful even in this world-much more to life everlasting.

Then comes the third chapter-the grand object, the genealogy of David. "Now these were the sons of David" (v. 1)-himself singled out from among all the line of Judah; and as with Caleb from the earliest days of the planting in the land, so with David from the time that the kingdom became evident as the purpose of God. Saul is entirely passed by. David, though later in fact, was before Saul really in purpose, and even during the days of Saul was actually anointed by Samuel the prophet. So we find here the sons of David. Here again too, "that which is natural"- these horn in Hebron. They never came to the throne. "And these were born unto him in Jerusalem, Shimea and Shobal and Nathan and Solomon"-Solomon the last of these "four of Bathshua [or Bathsheba] the daughter of Ammiel," as the Spirit of God takes care to say. No flesh shall glory in His presence. The last becomes the first. The purpose of God alone triumphs. Solomon the last of the four, of her that was the wife of Uriah, is the man chosen to the throne. Others are mentioned too. "These were all the sons of David, beside the sons of the concubines, and Tamar their sister." Chap. 3:9.

And then the line of Solomon: "Solomon's son was Rehoboam." All this is traced down to the end of the chapter.

This is the first great division of these genealogies. The purpose of God is traced down first from nature in Adam, down to the kingly purpose in David and his line. Such was God's intention for the earth. It had come under a curse, but God always meant to reconcile, as we know, all things; so the Jew is here given to understand. Here is the certainty that God would recover the kingdom; He would restore the kingdom to Israel. Yet, they misunderstood the time. The disciples did the same. They thought they were sure of it when the Lord died and rose. Not so. The Father keeps times and seasons in His own power. Still, He will restore the kingdom to Israel. And we now have this line continued as far as it was given them then to trace.

And this is another thing to bear in mind: the books of Chronicles are fragmentary. They bear the impress of the ruin that had come in to Israel. In a time of ruin, it would falsify if everything were in

due order. The attempt to produce order now as a complete thing is fallacy, and would be a lie if it were made apparently true. Hence we see the utter folly of the religious world in this respect, because this is their effort. We know very well it is utter disorder when judged by the Word of God, because in point of fact even the very foundations are forgotten and supplanted. But supposing the theory were true, it would be a falsehood in its moral purpose, because God will make us feel in a time of ruin that we are in ruins. It is not but what His grace can interfere and abound. "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound." But it is a wholly different thing to assume that things are right, and to wear an appearance that only deceives.

Hence, therefore-for the truth is a very practical one-when men complain of weakness. and when they talk about power in the present state of things, there is danger-very great danger. We ought to feel our weakness. We ought to feel that things are ruined. We ought to mourn over the state of the Church. We ought to feel for every member of the body of Christ. When persons make themselves comfortable in a little coterie of their own, and imagine that they are the Church of God, they are only deceiving themselves. The whole state is contrary to the mind of God. The truth is that God and His grace suffice perfectly; but it is as to a remnant. Whenever we lose the sense that we are a remnant, we are false. Whenever we take any other ground than that of being those whom grace has, by the intervention of God Himself. recalled-but recalled in weakness, recalled out of ruin-we are off the ground of faith. This gives no license to disorder-not the least. We are thoroughly responsible-always responsible-but at the same time we must not assume that we have everything, because God gives us that which grace alone has secured.

This is all important, we shall find, both in our work and also in the Church of God. Here we find it in these collections of testimonies of God that are brought together in the books of Chronicles. They are fragmentary; they are meant to be fragmentary. God could have given a completeness to them if He pleased, but it would have been out of His order. God Himself has deigned and been pleased to mark His sense of the ruin of Israel by giving only fragmentary pieces of information here and there. There is nothing really complete. The two books of Chronicles savor of this very principle. This is often a great perplexity to men of learning, because they, looking upon it merely with a natural eye, cannot understand it. They fancy it altogether corrupted. Not so. It was written, advisedly and deliberately so, by the Spirit of God. So, I am persuaded, the provision by the grace of God for His people at this present time looks very feeble, looks very disorderly, to a man with a mere natural eye; but when you look into it, you will find that it is according to the mind of God, and that the pretension of having all complete would put us out of communion with His mind-would make us content with ourselves instead of feeling with Him for the broken state of His Church.

The books of Chronicles, therefore, really are a mass of fragments. We shall have more reason, perhaps, to see this as we go along; but I merely make the remark just now. They are only the fragments that remain. God Himself never gave more. In the books of Kings, we have a more complete whole; but Chronicles has a character and beauty of its own, and a moral propriety, beyond anything, because it takes up and shows that in the ruin of all else the purpose of God stands fast. That is what we have to comfort ourselves with at this present time. There is a ruined state in Christendom; but God's purposes never fail, and those who have faith settle themselves and find their comfort in the sure standing of the purpose of God.

The 4th chapter begins a somewhat new section, not that we have not had Judah before. And this is another peculiar feature of Chronicles—we have occasional repetition even where nothing is complete, but never a mere repetition. In the former section, Judah is introduced in order to bring in David and the royal line. Here Judah is brought forward because he is a leader among the tribes of Israel. And this section is not a question of David. We have had that. That closes with the 3rd chapter. Here we have Judah again merely in his place among the different tribes. Hence we have his line in a general way carried on as before, only with a view to the people, and not the kingdom. This is the 4th chapter, with some strikingly encouraging words of the Spirit of God interspersed, on which I need not dwell now. After Judah there is Simeon (v. 24).

Then in chapter 5 comes Reuben; for, having had before us the purpose of God, we are not taken back merely to the line of nature. Reuben falls into the second place. "Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's." v. 2. This is given as a kind of parenthetical explanation of why Judah is first among the tribes, and Reuben sinks into a secondary place. Reuben, however, is now pursued; and in chapter 6, come the sons of Levi after the half tribe of Manasseh too had been introduced in the verses before. We can understand why the sons of Levi are thus brought forward. Further, we have Issachar and Benjamin all brought before us in this section—Benjamin not merely in the 7th chapter, but also in the 8th, answering a little to Judah. Thus we have a repetition. The reason is plain. Benjamin and Judah are repeated because they were each connected with royalty—Benjamin with Saul—Judah with David—and as Judah is mentioned first in relation to David, and next to the people, so Benjamin is first brought in in relation to the people, and then in relation to Saul. This is why we have Benjamin again in the 8th chapter. We have the connection with the king, but the king after the flesh. Then there is another reason why Benjamin is brought in, and that is that he had a particular connection with Jerusalem; and we shall find that this is also a grand point in the Chronicles. It is not merely the land, but Jerusalem and Zion, as I hope to show later, all being connected immediately with the purpose of God.

"So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies." Chap. 9:1. Now it is well to make a remark or two of a general kind as to the importance of these genealogies. First of all, they were even more important after the kingdom than before—at least after David came to the throne—and for this simple reason: David altered, as we shall find later on in the book, the whole system of religious worship and its appurtenances. It was he that brought the ark to Zion; and it was in the city of David that the temple was subsequently built by King Solomon. But David ordered everything with a view to the great center of the land. This was not the case before. Nothing of the kind was found during the judges, nor even during King Saul's reign. The priests and Levites were all scattered up and down the land. After David came to the throne, and was inspired of God to bring in a great change, we find this the occasion of it. The king became the central thought. The king was the one on whom, according to purpose, all hung. The reason was that the king was the type of "the great King" that is coming. Impossible that the Son of God, the Messiah, should be the King, without being the One on whom all depends for blessing. God knew from the very first that there was no way to secure blessing but by that One.

Lectures on the Books of Chronicles

1 Chron. 9-11

If we reign in life, it is by Him and by Him only; and if Israel is ever yet to reap blessing and to be the means of blessing throughout the earth, all depends upon the Messiah. Little did they know that when they rejected Him! They never entered into the mind of God; and, when Jesus came, they were less prepared than ever. Never did God see them in a lower condition. They had been grosser; they had been more offensive in their abominations, but their heart was far from Him. In vain did they worship Him. Hence, therefore, they deliberately preferred man-and man false and guilty and rebellious-to the Lord of glory. "Not this man, but Barabbas." How utterly, then, all was ruined-ruined morally before the destruction came upon Judah and Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans. It is always so. Outward judgment follows, and is in no way the cause of our misery. The misery is from within, from self, from Satan's power through self.

So it was with Israel, so it is with each; and so, further, are we delivered by one Man outside ourselves, and that one Man the Son of God. All depends upon Him, therefore, for us now, for every day's blessing-not merely for our salvation, but for every day's light and guidance. All our mistakes arise because, alas! not Christ governs, but self. All our happiness is found where Christ takes the first place. So it will be with Israel by and-by. But this was not understood then. God shows that He understood it all along, and that He revealed it in His Word; for this it is that accounts for the books of Chronicles-the purpose of God. It is all hinging upon His purpose, upon His Messiah--His purpose to send His Son to take up that purpose and give it solidity, to make it unailing.

David, therefore, acting as a type of the Messiah, orders everything anew. The old state of things according to Moses did not abide in its arrangements. The grand principles, of course, are everlasting; but there was a most important difference in the form, and that difference of form was due to the superior glory of the one who was there even as a type. How much more when we remember the antitype, the Lord Jesus. David, therefore, orders an entirely new arrangement in this respect. The priests were divided into courses, and one course was to be always on the spot in Jerusalem. That state of things is not in the least referred to in the Pentateuch. But David not only arranged for a house of God, but houses for the priests. There were many mansions around that central house of God for the priests; and there the priests, each according to their course, lived. The consequence was that they required to have the offerings brought there-to Jerusalem. We can see the reason why. God had been preparing the way, even from the beginning, for the offering at that one place that is named-where His name should be placed -that one place that He should choose. Then when the place was chosen and the temple built, we can understand all, because these priests could not have subsisted a day unless Israel had, according to the command of God, brought their offerings and their sacrifices and the like. On this they subsisted. Had there been neglect in this respect, the priests must have of necessity gone back to their own places of residence, and left the altar and the incense, and all the order of the temple, completely neglected.

Accordingly, then, we see the great importance of the change that now took place, and why the genealogies became of such importance, because the books of Chronicles were written after the captivity, when everything was thrown into disorder. The Jews, disheartened by the destruction that they never would believe till it came, might have thought, "What is the use of a genealogy? What is the use of caring now about our lands or houses? Everything is ruined. All is gone." But the man who believed God, knew that seventy years would see them returning from their captivity;

and, therefore, care for God and confidence in His Word would make them jealously preserve their genealogies in order that, when they did return, they might enter upon the allotment of God. For this was what made every homestead in Israel so precious-that it was God that gave it. It was not merely something that man earned by his own labor or skill. It was the gift of God to them.

Therefore, if an Israelite was bound up very particularly with his family, it was no mere matter of vanity or pride, as among us very often; but in Israel it was bound up with the purpose of God. It was no question of what some rogue had done, so, perhaps, getting his family into favor, as is very often among the Gentiles; but in Israel, all was ordered of God. It was God's appointment, and the worthies there were men who were worthy according to God-men who had, by their achievements in faith, won, according to the will of God, a place for Israel; for all their blessings were more or less connected, although all was poor and feeble compared with that which shall be, but still it was a type of what is to be. Hence, therefore, patriotism, a genealogical line, families that held on to the remotest antiquity -these had a divine character in Israel, which they have not in any other country under the sun. Elsewhere it often becomes offensive; indeed, if people only knew the truth, a thing rather to be ashamed of than to be proud of.

But in Israel it was not so. There, although there were sad blots, and blots upon the fairest, still, for all that, there was that which was truly divine working in the midst of that poor people from the beginning downward. We can see therefore that these genealogies had a character altogether higher than might at first sight appear; and I have no doubt that most of us have read these genealogies, thinking it was high time to skip over them. I have no doubt we have often wondered why they were ever written at all, and why they should be in the Bible, though, perhaps, without in the least wishing to disparage what was inspired -for I am now supposing pious people. But I am quite persuaded that very few persons, comparatively, have a clear distinct judgment why God has attached so much importance to these genealogies. One reason why I have dwelt upon it now is this-to give, as I trust, a truer view, a simpler understanding, why the Lord in this wondrous book should give us so much that appears to be little more than a list of names.

Well, when they returned, these genealogies would be of capital importance, and of capital importance for the Israelites in order that they should not usurp-in order that they should not be unjust-in order that they should be content with what God had given to them-in order that they should link themselves with all that was great and glorious in God's sight in the past. These genealogies were of the greatest moment for this. In their weakness they would require every cheer and encouragement.

But, further, they were under responsibility, according to their substance, to give to the temple of God-to remember the priests and Levites who had none inheritance among their brethren, and, more particularly, as the order set up by the king would be restored again, the courses of priests. We find it in the New Testament. We see the birth of John the Baptist under these very circumstances. His father, according to his course-the course of Abia-was at that time doing service at the temple. He had left his house in the country. He was in Jerusalem. Thus the genealogies were of the greatest moment in order to settle justly, and according to the will of God, that which could not be haphazard and of the will of man; but there should be faith' in it, piety in it, an owning of God in it.

These, therefore, seem to be among the grounds-I do not say all the grounds, but among the grounds-why God led some of the Jews to pay such attention to their genealogies. And it is remarkable that at least one tribe, if not two, is left out here. I presume they did not think of it; many individuals in all the tribes may have been careless, but it is a solemn thing to find that, from one cause or another, almost in every case in the Bible where tribes are mentioned, one or two are left out. It is the failure of man. No matter what it is, it is the failure of man. If Moses speaks prophetically, Moses also leaves out. This was a sad and solemn sign-the omission of a tribe. The fact is, there will always be these irregularities till Jesus comes. There never will be order maintained in this world according to God until the Lord Jesus reigns. But at this time there was a peculiar disorder-the utter breakup of the people, of the kingdom, the carrying away into captivity, could well account for this. The genealogies, therefore, are very partial; but they were all reckoned by genealogies. And if a priest could not prove his genealogy, he was not allowed, as we know from the book of Ezra, which is the successor of the Chronicles-the natural sequel of these books. The priests were not allowed to minister at all unless they could prove their genealogy, though they might be ever so truly sons of Aaron.

The fact itself was not enough. There must be the proper register and proof of their genealogy-a thing of very great importance for us now, I would just observe, to draw spiritual profit from; for now in these days, when there is a universal profession of Christianity, we are called upon to prove our genealogies. You see there is no difficulty in bearing the name. The time was when a man confessed Christ to the danger of his life. Now it is a cheap and common thing. Nearly everybody does it. All the world (so to speak) is baptized in these lands. Therefore, plainly, in answering to the type of a priest as of a spiritual man that draws near to God, one must look for more than the mere fact of being baptized. It is not enough-we all feel that-and without knowing that we are acting upon this very principle; that is, we require the priests to prove their genealogies. By-and by, when the Lord comes, He may discover many a one that we may not have thought of. That does not prove we were wrong. It does show how full of grace He is, and how perfect His wisdom. But we must go by what appears. He acts by what is. He is the truth. We are not the truth. We can judge only according to evidence that comes before us.

So in the 9th chapter we have the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This is the peculiar feature of what begins here-the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And Benjamin is particularly mentioned with a view to that. But, further, the Levites and the priests are brought before us for the very same reason, and their various offices and work. And last of all, because they had been connected in so special a place-and, indeed, were of Benjamin-of the family of Saul. as mentioned before. These repetitions are very striking in the book. They are not casual; they are all connected with God's purpose, for now the great object is to show the passing away of man's will in order that God's purpose should reign. Man chose Saul for reasons of his own. The children of Israel wished a king like the nations. This never could satisfy God. God must choose a man after His own heart. Hence, therefore, the first part of the regular history of Chronicles, after the genealogies, is a brief notice of the passing away of the house of Saul in the next chapter.

Lectures on the Books of Chronicles

1 Chron. 10-12

"Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard after Saul, and after his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him, and he was wounded of the archers." Chap. 10:1-3. And then we find his death and his armor bearer's death: "So Saul died, and his three sons, and all his house died together." This is the introduction to the book of Chronicles.

The consequence was that all the men of Israel fled. Their hope was gone. But God was able to bring in the dawn of a better day; and, although the Philistines triumphed, and Saul was stripped, and his head was taken, and his armor, and sent to the land of the Philistines, carrying tidings to their idols and to the people; and although they put his armor in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon, and it seemed as if they had entirely their own way, yet the triumph of the wicked is for a very brief season. There were those who had sufficient respect for Saul to arise-certain valiant men of Jabesh-Gilead. "They arose, all the valiant men, and took away the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days." It was a noble act, and acceptable to God; and yet it was not but what Saul was an offense to God.

This is beautiful, this is grace, that God should specially single out the deed of these men, even for a king with whom He was so deeply offended. How little we enter into the mind of God! Very likely we should have thought the men of Jabesh-Gilead were very foolish. Why should they meddle? No doubt there was many a follower of David that would have blamed the men of Jabesh-Gilead. David did not. David understood the mind of God; and David is nowhere more noble than when he pours out his lament over not only Jonathan, but Saul. Indeed, it was what he had lived in; for if Saul envied and hated David, never did David so feel toward king Saul. "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against Jehovah, even against the word of Jehovah, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it."

There was both the disobedience to God's word, and the seeking of the word that was not of God, but of the devil. "And inquired not of Jehovah: therefore He slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse." But all the intervening circumstances are left out. It is the purpose of God that is the point here-not history, not responsibility, but purpose, divine purpose. This is the key to the difference between Kings and Chronicles.

"Then all Israel gathered themselves to David unto Hebron, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. And moreover in time past, even when Saul was king, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and Jehovah thy God said unto thee, Thou shalt feed My people Israel, and thou shalt be ruler over My people Israel. Therefore came all the elders of Israel to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Jehovah; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of Jehovah by Samuel." Chap. 11:1-3. But further, David and all Israel went to Jerusalem- another grand point of the book. "And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which is Jebus; where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land. And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither." That is, they defied him. "Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which is the city of David."

He had offered it as a great prize that whosoever took that stronghold should be captain of the host.

It is remarkable that Joab steps forward--not Abishai, not any one of those most honorable three, not Eleazar or Jashobeam, or any of the others (the thirty, those worthies that were with him in the cave). None of them, but Joab. Joab was not among them. The truth is that Joab was an ambitious man. He did not care to expose his person more than was necessary; but when there was anything to be got, Joab was the man. Joab was ready for action then, not to suffer but to gain. Joab therefore goes forward and takes the stronghold, and becomes chief. So it will always be till the true David comes. There will be no Joabs then. His people shall be all righteous; but till then every type has its failure, and it is a very important thing in Scripture to see first that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual. It is the purpose of God, but it is the purpose of God in David, and not in Christ. It is the purpose of God in one that looked for Christ, loved Christ, waited for Christ, but nevertheless was not Christ. When Christ comes, all will be according to the mind of God. "So Joab the son of Zeruah went first up, and was chief. And David dwelt in the castle; therefore they called it the city of David. And he built the city round about, even from Millo round about: and Joab repaired the rest of the city. So David waxed greater and greater: for Jehovah of hosts was with him."

Then follow the true worthies of David, the true warriors, not for what was to be got, but for David. And these are most minutely brought before us to the end of the chapter, not only their great deeds in cutting down the enemy, but their intense love for David. Hence the Spirit of God tells the tale of how "David was in the hold, and the Philistines' garrison was then at Bethlehem. And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that is at the gate!" He knew his native place, and longed after the water that he had, no doubt, often drunk. He uttered this without a thought of anything further; but these three men "brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David."

This was beautiful. It was no purpose of war. It was entirely outside the expedition. It was love. But David's act was more beautiful. "But David would not drink of it, but poured it out to Jehovah, and said, My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing; shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? for with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it. Therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mightiest." There are others however-not, it is true, among the three mightiest, but who were most honorable. God loves to mention what is an honor to His people; and hence,

therefore, after each of their names we find a record of their deeds. The Lord will do this and more for those who now and ever have lived and suffered for the name of the Lord. This then introduces us to David with his citadel Zion, and his warrior band.

In the 12th chapter we have another account, deeply interesting-not those that had been the companions so signal for their mighty deeds, but those that gathered round him. First of all, "These are they that came to David to Ziklag," that is, just before the close of all, when the kingdom was upon the point of turning. And a very beautiful thing it is to see that when God is about to work anything special on the earth, He knows how to give the secret of it to His people. There was a providential working on God's part, but there was a spiritual working in the hearts of His people.

It is the very same thing now in the consciousness that the kingdom of the Lord is at hand, in the deeper feeling of it, in the way in which it affects souls, far beyond anything that was ever known; not excitement, not people merely in a panic because the end is at hand, or persons fixing a date, to be disappointed and perhaps give up their faith, but persons who calmly rest upon His Word. Perhaps they could not particularly say why; but this they know, that, whereas they did not attach any importance to the scriptures that speak of His coming, now they do. This is not without the Spirit of God. So with the men of Israel. There was a movement of heart, even while Saul was still alive. There was a rush to David after Saul was dead; but I do not speak of that. This is a very different and a lower thing altogether. But the movement of heart to gather the men of Israel to David in sympathy, before it could be a matter of external allegiance, is a matter much to be noted. These then are described.

"Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war. They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow, even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin." Chap. 12:1, 2. The first men that are named were the very last that man would have expected—the men of Benjamin. It is not that there were so many. They were slow afterward. Even when David came to the throne, the men

of Benjamin still hung on to the house of Saul. They were slow as a whole, as a tribe, but God showed His sovereignty and His gracious purpose by calling "of Saul's brethren" from out of that very tribe, and who are the very first that He names as "of Benjamin." Thus we must never be disheartened; we must never suppose that any circumstances can hinder the way of God. God will bring out to the name of the Lord Jesus in the very last spot that you expect. We must leave room for the power of the Word of God, and also, above all, for His own grace, His own magnifying of Himself and His call. The men of Benjamin are the first, then, that are named as having joined themselves to David. "The chief was Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite."

Then further we find Gadites. "And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David into the hold to the wilderness men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains.... These are they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all its banks." It was even more difficult then than at any other time. "And they put to flight all them of the valleys, both toward the east, and toward the west. And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David. And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you; but if ye come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it. Then the spirit came upon Amasai, who was the chief of the captains, and he said, Thine we are, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse; peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band." Then we find of Manasseh also, they helped David; "for at that time," we are told, "day by day there came to David to help him."

But from the 23rd verse we have another. The crisis was come; Saul was gone. "And these are the numbers of the bands that were ready armed to the war, and came to David to Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of

Jehovah." Now it was not so much the anticipation of faith; it was the manifest following of the word of the Lord. Saul was gone. There was no question that ought to have exercised a heart. And we find, singular to say, "The children of Judah that bare shield and spear were six thousand and eight hundred." One of the greatest of the tribes, taken all and all, the greatest tribe of the twelve, the very one, too, that David belonged to, yet there were only "six thousand and eight hundred ready armed to the war." "Not by might nor by power." How different where man is in question. Take the false prophet of Mecca. Who were those that were his first band? His own family. Take any that are false; it is their own friends, their own companions, some tie of flesh and blood. But with David the first band, we are taught, were those who were most opposed; and, further, the least comparatively in numbers were those that were of his own kith and kin-only six thousand eight hundred. And when you come to look at the others, you will find it is more remarkable.

Why, even of Simeon, a tribe not to be named with Judah, there were "mighty men of valor for the war seven thousand and one hundred." "Of the children of Levi," although they were properly outside such work, and were more connected with the service of the temple, "four thousand and six hundred. And Jehoiada was the leader of the Aaronites." Even they, you see, felt the all-importance of this that was at hand. "And with him were three thousand and seven hundred," so that between the two there were evidently more. "And Zadok, a young man mighty of valor, and of his father's house twenty and two captains. And of the children of Benjamin, the kindred of Saul, three thousand; for hitherto the greatest part of them had kept the ward of the house of Saul"; that accounts for the smallness of number there.

But there is no account of Judah; it is simply left out. The fact is that God would not have His king trust to links of flesh and blood. "And of the children of Ephraim twenty thousand and eight hundred, mighty men of valor, famous throughout the house of their fathers. And of the half tribe of Manasseh eighteen thousand, which were expressed by name, to come and make David king. And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do"-a great change in Issachar. In the prophecy of Jacob he was merely "an ass couching down between two burdens," but now the men of Issachar had profited. They were men that had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do. "The heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment." Of Zebulun, a comparatively unimportant tribe in Israel, there were no less than fifty thousand "such as went forth to battle, expert in war, with all instruments of war... which could keep rank. They were not of double heart." And of Naphtali a thousand captains, and with them with shield and spear thirty and seven thousand. And of the Danites expert in war twenty and eight thousand and six hundred. And of Asher, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, forty thousand. And on the other side of Jordan, of the Reubenites and the Gadites, and of the half tribe of Manasseh, with all manner of instruments of war for the battle, an hundred and twenty thousand."

It is very evident that, excepting Benjamin, which, for the reason that is stated, was altogether exceptional and who held fast in the greater part to the house of Saul, Judah stands extremely short in all this list. So it was that God would not permit that the king of His purpose should be beholden to the strength of man or the ties of nature. But whatever might be the shortcoming here and there, and the differences among them, "All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king." That is, it was not a divided heart. It was set upon God's

purpose; and not only those who were there, but those who through circumstances were absent. "And there they were with David three days, eating and drinking; for their brethren had prepared for them." And so the scene of festivity and joy is brought before us. There was joy in Israel.

Lectures on the Books of Chronicles

1 Chron. 13-15

The next thing shows us what was most in David's heart. Not the throne-that was most in their hearts-that David should reign. But David's heart thought of Jehovah's throne; and therefore he consults and says: "If it seem good unto you, and that it be of Jehovah our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren everywhere, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us. And let us bring again the ark of our God to us; for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul." Chap. 13:2, 3. And all the congregation agreed. "So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim."

Shihor is, I presume, not the Nile, although it may be called so sometimes, but rather that brook of El-heresh that divides the land of Israel from the borders of the desert on the Egyptian side. "And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjathjearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God Jehovah, that dwelleth between the cherubim whose name is called on it. And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab; and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart."

There was the great mistake. It was all very well for Philistines to send the ark of God in a cart-not for Israel. Israel should have known better. When the Philistines did it, there was a propriety. They had an object too. It was not to be driven; it was to be committed to the kine that were yoked to it. It was particularly meant as a test, because the cows would naturally care for the young they had left behind; and the very point of God's power and manifestation of His glory was this-that although there was very natural feeling on the part of the cows to go after their young, on the contrary they took an opposite direction, and carried the new cart with the ark upon it to the land of Israel, thus giving a most illustrious proof of the power of God above nature. It was not chance; it was not nature; it was God that governed.

But with Israel it was a very different thing. Yet I presume they adopted the cart because it was the last thing. So it is that We often do. Even a Philistine tradition will carry away the people of God, so that although the only people, as far as we know, that ever employed a cart for the ark of God were these Philistines, here we find that wonderful man David, and the priests and the Levites, and indeed all Israel, all joining in this Philistinian way of bringing in the ark of God to the site that was destined for it.

Well, one bad step leads to another, and, although there was apparent joy, and no doubt there was plenty of outward honor to the ark, when they came to the threshing-floor of Chidon, God allowed that there should be something that tested their state. "Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Uzza, and He smote him, because he put his hand to the ark." He at least ought to have known better. He who belonged to the tribe of Levi-he who ought to have felt that God was able to take care of His own ark, let oxen stumble or not-he put forth his hand unhallowedly to sustain the sign of the presence

of the God of Israel as if He were not there to care for His own glory. He was smitten on the spot, "and there he died before God." David was displeased, instead of humbling himself, "because Jehovah had made a breach upon Uzza; wherefore that place is called Perez-uzza to this day. And David was afraid of God that day, saying, "How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?" That was the next effect; first displeasure, then dread. "So David brought not the ark home to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. And the Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had." There was such manifest blessing in that house that, as we find afterward, it could not abide; but there it abode at any rate for three months.

The next chapter, however, gives us not so much this religious picture of the state of things, which you will find to be extremely important afterward, but what I may call more practical-the manner in which the throne of David was regarded by the Gentiles-not the humiliation of the king before the ark of God (David's relation to Jehovah) but the Gentiles' relation to David.

"Now Hiram king of Tire sent messengers to David, and timber of cedars, with masons and carpenters, to build him an house. And David perceived that Jehovah had confirmed him king over Israel, for his kingdom was lifted up on high, because of his people Israel." Chap. 14:1, 2. The effect upon the Gentiles showed how truly it was Jehovah who had exalted David. Nobody ever thought of that when Saul was there.

We find, then, David in Jerusalem, and the Philistines now thinking that as he was anointed king it was time to bestir themselves. "So all the Philistines went up to seek David. And David heard of it, and went out against them. And the Philistines came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim." But David abides in the simplicity which brought him to the throne. He inquired of God. He did not say, Now I have got an army; if I was a conqueror over the Philistines in the days of my weakness, how much more when now in power! Not so. He inquired of Jehovah. It requires more faith to be dependent in the day of prosperity than in the day of adversity; and there is where we are often put to the test, and souls that stand well when they are tried, often fall deeply when they have been blest greatly of the Lord. This does not prove that the blessing was not of God; it does prove that we may fail to walk in dependence on God. But as yet David stood, and stood because dependent. "And David inquired of God, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? and wilt Thou deliver them into mine hand?"-for that was the great point. "And Jehovah said unto him, Go up; for I will deliver them into thine hand." There was his answer. "So they came up to Baal-perazim; and David smote them there. Then David said, God hath broken in upon mine enemies by mine hand like the breaking forth of waters; therefore they called the name of that place Baal-perazim" (the place of breaches). "And when they had left their gods there, David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire."

Thus you see vengeance was taken, according to Israel's God, on the insult done to the ark of God. If they had carried off the ark, they never burned it. It burned them, rather, and obliged them to consult how it should be restored to the God of Israel- to His people. But in this case they left their gods, and David burned them. Such was the requisition of the law of God as we find in Deuteronomy. David, therefore, walks not only in dependence and in obedience, but, further, "the Philistines yet again spread themselves abroad in the valley." That might have been an accident; "therefore David inquired again of God, and God said to him, Go not up after them." How beautiful!

We learn that God would have us ever to wait on Him; for the answer of God at one time may not at all be the answer at another. "Go not up after them; turn away from them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. And it shall be, when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt go out to battle; for God is gone forth before thee to smite the host of the Philistines. David therefore did as God commanded him: and they smote the host of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gazer. And the fame of David went out into all lands; and Jehovah brought the fear of him upon all nations."

Now the heart of David turns back, for meanwhile God has been blessing the house of Obed-edom. "And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched for it a tent." Chap. 15:1. His heart could not rest without that. "Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites." Now he has learned. He had been waiting upon God. He had got his answer from God in the outward affairs of the kingdom; now he gathers the mind of God as to what concerns His worship, and why his former plan had failed. "Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for them hath Jehovah chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto Him forever. And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem to bring up the ark of Jehovah unto his place, which he had prepared for it. And David assembled the children of Aaron, and the Levites."

Here we find the greatest care not merely to have Israel, but to have the priests and the Levites. But it is David that does it. The difference is remarkable-that now it is no longer a Moses or an Aaron. It is no longer the high priest. He is not the highest. There is a higher than the high priest. The king is above all-the shadow of Messiah. So we have them, then, ranged in due order. And David calls for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and tells them that they were the chief of the fathers of the Levites, that they must sanctify themselves, not merely the Levites who did the work, but these that were at their head. "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 Jehovah God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at the first, Jehovah our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought Him not after the due order."

We are often surprised why the Lord should deal with those who are walking according to the Word of God so as to expose them when anything goes wrong-why God should not allow things to be hidden, but should bring out what is painful and humiliating. This is the reason. It is the very fact of having His Word-the very fact of seeking to walk by the Spirit of God, by His Word. God, instead of allowing to pass what would be concealed elsewhere, discovers it. Thus we have all the profit, but we have the shame-all the profit of God's Word, but the shame of our own want of proper feeling. So it was with David and Israel now; "So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of Jehovah God of Israel. And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of Jehovah." And we find another remarkable feature now, and that is that David appoints, according to his word, music and psalmody. "And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy."

This is no warrant for Christians using such instruments in the worship of God, because the distinctive feature of the Christian is, as the Apostle says, to "sing with the spirit and with the

understanding also." But an earthly people would have an earthly form of expressing their praise. Therefore all is in season. "So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel." And then we find the singers and others-the doorkeepers, even-everything appointed in the most orderly manner.

"So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of the house of Obed-edom with joy. And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams. And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers; David also had upon him an ephod of linen." He takes a priestly place. He was the king, but although he takes the lead and was the manifest chief of all this great procession which brought the ark of God to Zion, nevertheless it is no show of royal apparel or of earthly grandeur. David was most exalted when he took the place of nearness to the ark of God. The linen and the ephod were for the very purpose that he might fitly be near to the ark of God. That was his point-not the throne but the ark. He had the throne-valued the throne as God's gift, and himself chosen and called to it; but the ark of God was to him incomparably nearer and deeper.

"Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah with shouting, and with the sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps. And it came to pass, as the ark of the covenant of Jehovah came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looking out at a window saw David dancing and playing; and she despised him in her heart." But there are no details here. We must look to the book of Kings for completeness. The Chronicles give us simply a glance, a fragment, and nothing more. The great point is God's part, and not man's. Michal merely represented the unbelief of Saul's house, the unbelief of the natural heart. She had no sympathy. She felt herself degraded with David's humbling himself before the ark of Jehovah. She had no appreciation of the moral grandeur of the scene.

I shall not dwell upon the next chapter now. except just to look at the simple fact that they brought in the ark, and that David, filled with joy himself, sheds joy around about him, and dealt accordingly to every one of Israel, as we are told; and then come the thanksgiving and the psalm, on the details of which I do not enter now.

Lectures on the Books of Chronicles

1 Chron. 16-19

I said but little of the Psalm that was sung on that day, delivered by David to Asaph and his brethren. In point of fact, it consists of portions of several Psalm put together in what might seem a singular manner, but surely with divine wisdom. They are taken from the 4th and 5th books of Psalms-I suppose most here are aware that the Psalm consist of five books with definite characters. The 4th book consists of those Psalm that anticipate the establishment of the kingdom of Jehovah; and the 5th book, the results of that kingdom. However, there is this particularly to be noted-that the ark of God was now pitched in a tent provisionally in Jerusalem. It was no longer with the tabernacle. This was a most striking change, and it belonged to the peculiarity of David's position. The authority of the king was the center of Israel now-the type of the Lord Jesus-for God has reserved the place of chief honor for His Son, and David represents this. Hence we see that the priests retired into a secondary place; the king came forward prominently. So it is said, "He left

there, before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, Asaph and his brethren to minister before the ark continually." The ark, which was the throne of Jehovah in Israel, was now in this close connection with the king more than with the priests. By-and-by all was ranged round this center, but it was only a provisional state of things.

David's heart is occupied with the glory of the future for Israel (chap. 17), and he tells the prophet Nathan of the exercise of his spirit. He felt it an egregious thing that he should dwell in a house of cedars while the ark of the covenant of Jehovah was only under curtains. Nathan bids him do all that was in his heart, for God was with him. But Nathan here had not the mind of God. The purpose of David's heart was right, but not the time or way. God had another plan, and this only is good and wise. So Nathan the same night is told by God to go and tell His servant, David, "Thus saith Jehovah, thou shalt not build Me a house to dwell in." It was reserved for Solomon. Nothing, however, can be more touching than Jehovah's message to His servant. He had gone with Israel from tent to tent after He brought them up out of Egypt; He had walked with them, but never had told any of the judges to build Him a house. He had taken David from the lowest position to be ruler over His people Israel. He had been with him everywhere-cut off his enemies, made him a name, ordained a place for His people that there they should dwell and be moved no more; "Neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more as at the beginning, and since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel." He would subdue all his enemies, but instead of David building the Lord a house, Jehovah was going to build David a house; and till that was done, He could not have a house built for Himself. How blessed are the ways of God! He must do all things for us before we can act for Him. David must have a house built for him. That is, the kingdom of Israel must be established firmly and immovably in the house of David; and not till then would Jehovah accept a house to be built by David's son. In fact, Jehovah was looking onward to Christ; and the whole meaning and value of the choice of David's house, and especially of David's son, was in view of the Messiah.

There is a remarkable omission in this chapter as compared with what we have already seen in Kings, strikingly illustrating the difference between Kings and Chronicles. In Kings, Jehovah tells David through the prophet that if his sons should be disobedient, He would chastise them; but He would not remove His mercy from them forever. It was not to be exterminating judgment, but chastening mercy. This disappears here. He simply says, "He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his father, and he shall be My son: and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee: but I will settle him in Mine house and in My kingdom forever: and his throne shall be established for evermore."

Kings is the book of responsibility, Chronicles of God's providence. This explains, therefore, the omission here of that which is so important in the book of Kings. The book everywhere presents the responsibility of the kings-not so much of the people, but of the kings, and hence, therefore, of David's sons or successors among the race. But inasmuch as the great point of Chronicles is no longer to show the moral government of God, and how truly kings as well as people reap according to their sowing, but rather to show this-that God's plan, God's intention, God's mind alone stands, so all the contingent circumstances of the house of David are left out of the Chronicles; only the ultimate thought of God is given.

Now, nothing more certainly will be fulfilled, for God will never give up Israel until He shall have established the throne in the Person of the true Son of David, the Lord Jesus. David bows to God, and, as it is said, comes and sits before Jehovah, saying, "Who am I, O Jehovah God, and what is mine house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto? And yet this was a small thing in Thine eyes, O God; for Thou hast also spoken of Thy servant's house for a great while to come." Indeed He has-as long as the earth shall endure. "And hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree." No wonder, seeing he was the forerunner of Him who will rule the whole earth in a way that has never yet been true of mortal man! "What can David speak more to Thee for the honor of Thy servant? for Thou knowest Thy servant."

Those who apply all this truth to the gospel greatly miss the profit of the passage. It is not but that we are entitled as Christians to take the comfort of the grace of God, or that we are not to rejoice in the glory of our Lord Jesus; but then there is a double mischief done by applying this to the kingdom as we know it under the gospel. First, it hinders us from seeing the deeper glory of the Lord, and our own higher relationship, because we are not mere subjects in a kingdom as the Jews will be even in this time of blessing that is predicted. No doubt we are in the kingdom of God's dear Son, but how? We are kings; we are kings with Christ even now. We are not yet reigning, but we are kings-kings before the reigning takes place. We shall reign with Christ, but meanwhile we are made not more surely priests than kings. "To Him that loveth us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests."

There is the great mistake which is made by those who apply the prediction to the present time, and to the present exaltation of Christ who is sitting as the rejected King in a new glory of which He is the head; and He is the head in order to bring in the grand counsel of God that we shall be His body-not merely subjects over whom He rules. But then there is another mischief that is wrought by the misapplication I have spoken of, and that is that people blot out the future for Israel. They do not see that God maintains that people in His secret providence, although He cannot any longer own them publicly as His people. But He will by-and-by convert them, restore them, exalt them, as no people ever have been-not even Israel in the times of David and Solomon. Hence we see how what might appear to be a trivial error may be fraught with the worst consequences both as to the present and as to the future.

David then enters into the grandeur of the plans of God, and delights to think not only of His grace toward himself, but also "what one nation in the earth is like Thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem to be His own people, to make Thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before Thy people, whom Thou has redeemed out of Egypt?" Now, it is one quality of what is divine, that it does not wear out. What is human does. All the works of men's hands grow old, but not so with what is of God according to new creation-according to Christ. Hence, therefore, the end will be brighter than the beginning; and man's notion of a mere wistful retrospect at a lost paradise is poor comparatively, for what God shows us is a paradise of God that will be the end, and not merely the restoration, of the paradise of man. So with Israel. They will have the kingdom incomparably more blessedly under Christ than under David or Solomon. "Therefore now, Jehovah, let the thing that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant and concerning his house be established forever, and do as Thou hast said. Let it even be established, that Thy name may be magnified forever, saying, Jehovah of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel: and let the house of David Thy servant be established before Thee."

In the next chapter (18) the Spirit of God shows us the power that was conferred upon David. He smote the Philistines who were the tyrannous enemies of Israel in Saul's day, by whom Saul himself was slain and his family. David smote them and subdued them. He smote Moab, the old enemy, the envious and spiteful against the people. "And the Moabites became David's servants and brought gifts. And David smote Hadarezer king of Zobah unto Hamath." This power extended beyond those who immediately surrounded Israel. "And when the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadarezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men. Then David put garrisons in Syria-damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, and brought gifts. Thus Jehovah preserved David whithersoever he went." Accordingly, we find that David dedicates the spoils, the silver and the gold, "from Edom and from Moab, and from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines, and from Amalek." Nor was it only David, but his servants, on whom God put honor. "So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people," and had his kingdom duly set out with servants adequate to the work.

In chapter 19, however, we see that there were those who distrusted David's generosity. The children of Ammon could not understand that David should show kindness to Hanun, the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to him; and therefore the princes of Ammon, thinking that it was merely a political device, in order to overthrow the land by spying it out, suggest an act of the greatest contempt for David's servants; but this only brought the most grievous retribution upon themselves. No doubt they hired chariots, but it was in vain! and, further, the Syrians were called in, but they were no help. They were put to the worse. Then they tried the Syrians beyond the river. Perhaps they would do better. The Syrians fled before Israel, so much so as to complete the slaughter. "And when the servants of Hadarezer saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they made peace with David, and became his servants: neither would the Syrians help the children of Ammon any more."

A Common Bond

How is it that I love strangers from another land - persons of different habits, whom I have never known - more intimately than members of my own family after the flesh? How is it that I have thoughts in common, objects infinitely loved in common, affections powerfully engaged, a stronger bond with persons whom I have never seen, than with the otherwise dear companions of my childhood? It is because there is in them and in me a source of thoughts and affections which is not human. God is in it. God dwells in us. What happiness! What a bond!

The Cross of Christ

"The cross of Christ" is where everything is morally perfected. There the whole question of good and evil was solved. The world despises the cross, and God meant it to be a despicable thing-a gibbet. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise;... that no flesh should glory in His presence." 1 Cor. 1:27, 29. There, on the basest thing in the world, He has hung salvation. But the moment I am inside, I find everything in the cross -the uttermost sin of man, in enmity against God, all the power of Satan, but the perfect man in Christ. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." John 14:30. But, on the other side, God is there in perfect righteousness against sin, and in perfect love for the sinner; and as you go on, you find that the new heavens and the new earth-all things in short-will be perfected by the cross. There I have perfect righteousness against sin, and perfect love toward the sinner, and I find peace and rest-not merely rest, but God's rest-for He rests in His love, in the blessedness of those He has brought near in Christ; and He will bring them into His rest in glory.

We are apt to make a mistake in speaking of our weakness and unprofitableness, forgetting that it is when we have done our duty we are unprofitable servants. When we speak of it, we mean our failure; and so when we speak of our weakness, of spirituality or conduct, we mean failure. But when Paul speaks of weakness, it is that which makes room for power ("when I am weak, then am I strong"), and the result fully produced is with the consciousness of there being no strength in us. This is a very different thing from our failure. Our failure ought to lead us to humble ourselves before God for that which led to the failure. If we have not done what we ought, why have not we? We cannot glory in not having done it. There is a strength that the babe in Christ may have and needs-power guided by wisdom-and this does not fail. When we have not been emptied of self, and are full of self-confidence, we must be broken down. Pretension to strength is always in the way for failure. The first step toward failure is forgetting our entire and absolute dependence. As Christians, we know we have no strength, but we forget we have none.

A Crucified, or a Rejected Christ

Glory in a crucified Christ will not, if alone, be the perfect thing of this age; there must be companionship with a rejected Christ also. I am thinking that Babylon may be brought to glory in a crucified Christ; that is, there may be much evangelic truth confessed in systems which will be judged at Babylon. For what is Babylon? Is it not a thing faulty or worldly in conduct, as well as idolatrous in doctrine? The 17th and 18th of Revelation gives me a sight of Babylon in its worldly iniquity, much more than in its idolatries. She may preach Christ crucified, but she is not in fellowship with Christ. Rejected-she does not continue with Him in His temptations. Is not the rejection of Christ the great practical thought for this moment?

Darvin and Evolution

The Unleashing of Evolutionary Thought is frightening in its implications; its author is a thoroughgoing naturalist who is opposed to anything savoring of the supernatural. He sees no hope for mankind or the world except in the complete overthrowing of all idea of God. He is a militant atheist who not only speaks for himself, but has well-documented his case for the irreconcilable nature of evolution with that of any religion based on a supernatural. He has brought forth quite an array of the names of great men who feel as he does, and he breathes contempt for any compromise of religion and evolution.

Dr. Riddle links the Christian and non-Christian religions of the world together when he gives battle to the supernatural. To him there is no difference between true Christianity and lifeless profession. His chief antagonism is reserved for the Roman Catholic Church which to a large degree education controls for its own people, and also seeks to control state education as well. This is done in spite of the fact that some prominent Catholic educators are willing to allow evolution up to a point where the soul of man is concerned. To this, he asserts that there is no place for the soul in the human body, and rejects it on the basis of "fact" and "reason."

When the noted biologist comes to the Protestant denominations, he allows that they have been and are more liberal toward evolution. (This is due largely to the lethargic character of a sizable segment of Protestant leaders.) Let us quote from Dr. Riddle:

"Protestantism, except, chiefly, its smaller sects, is a less consistent and less dangerous enemy of evolutionary biology and modern thought than is Catholicism. In part, this is a consequence of the disunity of Protestantism.... Protestant antagonism usually is so largely an indirect, off-campus and precollege affair that the true extent of its restraint is little recognized or resented even by the biologists who teach in these universities. It would be much more resented if it were better understood." (emphasis ours) p. 175.

Here is a thrust at Protestant leaders who allow varying degrees of evolutionary thought to be propounded; they simply do not understand its full atheistic implication. Dr. Riddle contends for "unmitigated evolutionary thought" (p. 176) as against "diluted evolution" (p. 177). It is high time that true Christians were awakened to what they are paving the way for by any allowance of evolution, mitigated or otherwise. Again, we say, It is either God and Genesis, or atheism and evolution. When once you leave the solid ground of God as the Creator and the Bible as His revelation, there is no stopping place until you come to the ship of "unmitigated evolution." Will you trust yourself or your children to this unsafe ship which is doomed to go down with all hands on board?

This book also deals with the attempts of biologists to compromise the issue with religion, thus:

"Biologists in nearly all countries, and particularly in America, have tried a compromise with religious creeds. That compromise has failed [emphasis ours].... Most youth of 1954... leave our schools without having an opportunity to learn that the worthy facts concerning man's origin and

destiny come not from religious traditions but from investigations made in biological and other sciences within the time of men now living." p. 195.

When that writer takes up the subjects of morality and ethics in man, he utterly rejects religion as the basis. He says:

"A denial by theology or religion of the purely natural sources of morality and of values is a bald and crude pretension.... But, in advanced societies, a religion based on revelation, or indeed one that looks to any intervention of the supernatural in human affairs, mainly offers confusion to the jobs that call for fact, clarity and unchallenged logic. In presenting an account of unmitigated evolution, the natural sources of morality and values -or at least their nonrequirement of a separate and 'spiritual world'-must now be particularly emphasized.... The entire structure of evolution has neither consistency nor any deep significance without it." p. 92.

We are also told that man's evolutionary upgrading had finally produced a conscience for him (pp. 77, 84, 86, 91, 95).

Conscience is that inward sense of being able to distinguish between right and wrong that a beast does not have; but, according to divine revelation, man acquired it in the garden of Eden by the fall. Prior to that he only knew good; thereafter he knew "good and evil," but without the power for doing good. The conscience which he thus acquired was a bad one, for he knew he had sinned. This made him a coward who hid behind the trees to avoid meeting his Creator. Let any Christian answer the question, Whom are we to believe, God or an atheist?

This great man of letters does not hesitate to belittle the men of solid Christian faith, as the renowned Sir Isaac Newton, and John Napier. Both of these Christian men expected the second coming of Christ. Not that they were thoroughly clear as to the prophetic word as it is now better understood. But Sir Isaac's expressed belief that the coming of Christ was at hand (and this was to have been the hope of the Church in all ages)-they were converted to wait for Him-only served as a base for Mr. Riddle's ridicule:

"If history can prove anything, it proves that when science was less developed than it is now many good scientists accepted some or all of the most violently absurd theology of their particular age and place of birth." p. 62.

Again, Dr. Howard H. Kelley, the great surgeon of Baltimore, and probably the father of modern gynecology, who was a devout and earnest Christian, came in for his share of criticism. Mr. Riddle takes issue with Dr. Kelley's statement that man was created in the image of God, and that his progress was downward and not upward, and for saying, "I am a thoroughgoing believer in the special creation of man." Dr. Riddle accuses Dr. Kelley of mitigations of the meaning of the word "evolution." Now, it should be evident to any eighth grade scholar that Dr. Kelley was not mitigating evolution, but denying it outright. His reference to man's downward course is taken from Romans, chapter 1, where God points out the original knowledge that man had of Himself, but that when he gave up God, God gave him up to his lusts and passions. Romans aptly describes the excesses of fallen man in the days of the Roman Empire, and before (yea, and largely today). Listen to Dr. Riddle in his castigation of these mitigations, by which he means what Dr. Kelley said, and what all believers in and teachers of evolution say who do not comprehend the real depths of this Satanic innovation and adopt full "unmitigated evolution":

"Rather similar mitigations of the meaning of the word `evolution' widely prevail in Protestant and other world religions.... These 'mitigations' everywhere rob the broader principle of evolution of its real meaning and of its vast ability to assist society to a level-of sanity and warranted hope. They rob the race of a chance to build a genuinely modern society It would seem that no story now needs to be more firmly written nor widely spread than that of unmitigated evolution." p. xiii.

While these men of faith are held up to scorn, such heretics, agnostics and atheists as Voltaire, Freud, Hans Reichenbach, Henry Ward Beecher, Thomas Huxley, Julian Huxley, Charles Darwin, John Dewey, and Thomas Paine, come in for his favorable comments and plaudits.

Dr. Riddle does not hesitate to say that astronomers and other scientists are not qualified to speak on biological evolution; but he, an atheist, does not hesitate to quote from the Bible and attempt to speak on Biblical items. Here his great ignorance shows. By his own principle he has no right to speak there, but he has no such reserve. Lest any think we overstate the case against Dr. Riddle's praise for skeptics and atheists before mentioned, note this is an example:

"The over-all philosophy of this book is essentially that of John Dewey. It is the same as that of Freud's booklet of 1927, *The Future of an Illusion*, in which he showed that psychology must resist and defeat religion. And it is also the same as that of Reichenbach, whose book, *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* appeared as the present work was nearing completion." p. xxi.

Here is a quotation from John Dewey:

"Faith in divine authority in which Western civilization confided, inherited ideas of the soul and its destiny, of fixed revelations, of completely stable institutions, of automatic progress, have been made impossible for the cultivated mind of the Western world." p. 60.

Much is made in this book of the "cultivated mind," "best informed minds," "intelligence of learned people," and it is assumed throughout that any really informed person would accept "unmitigated evolution," and reject anything supernatural. This is the acme of self-conceit. Only the rejecters of God are cultivated, learned, and informed. One may well wonder if there is not a source of some information of which they little dream.

Our thrusts are also directed at the so-called fundamentalist preachers and teachers who accept or teach a mitigated evolution, thinking that there is somehow or somewhere a meeting place between this (so-called) science and true Christianity. Let Mr. Riddle again speak on this subject:

"The eyes of unmitigated evolution, though not those of a protectively dwarfed and misty evolution [emphasis is ours], see the persistence of hot conflict down to our own day, in every quarter of the globe. Only the full retreat that is associated with a rejection of a supernatural element that exempts morals and values from considerations of time and place-from process of change-and with a resulting redefinition of religion would provide escape from this conflict. This required redefinition involves religion's abandonment to science of its former dominion - the origin, nature and destiny of man...

"As long as religion or religions. presume to provide an interpretation of man, of nature, or of conduct-or, again, as long as religion or religions have a supernatural content-nothing can

be more absurd than the, contention that religion and science

are distinct areas and are free from conflict." pp. 38, 39.

Some statements and quotations from others are too shocking to relate here, but suffice it to say that unholy hands (and brains) do not hesitate to compare God unfavorably to the beast Nero, and to scoff at the holiest of miracles-which to reject brings damnation. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." Deut. 32:29. Is this man not guilty of "wishful thinking"? Is not the wish that there were no God parent to his thoughts? And yet he uses the term "wishful thinking" along with "imagination and myth" to any who use the word "create" and hence a "Creator" for any process along the line, all the way back to an atom.

Lest any compromiser of evolution and Christianity thinks he has achieved a modus vivendi, let him note the following:

"To all this natural process and result, accomplished under natural, not supernatural, law, the term 'evolution' is rightly applied. And this clean and precise term would not now be widely misunderstood if church and theology, aided by an occasional scientist, had not, since Darwin's day, put their own several head-chopping mitigations on the true meaning of this word." pp. 45, 46.

But if you were to ask, But where did the creation come from? Dr. Riddle says:

"The 'earliest' state of the universe is, indeed quite unknown."

But he adds:

"Rather more than suspicion puts all matter of the known universe in an inconceivable concentrated `monobloc' occupying a fixed position in space, with an 'explosion' of the monobloc providing what our ideas of time call a beginning of galaxy formation." p. 45.

May we be permitted to be naive enough to ask, Where did the said monobloc come from? Dr. Riddle disposes of Christianity as myth and imagination, but does he not have a fertile imagination? After all the arduous task of seeking to prove that there is not, need not, and could not be a Creator, he ends up with having to invent a source from which all the tangled processes of evolution must have sprung. He, as do all of his kind, finally leads his followers up a blind alley from which there is no exit. Only by a retreat, by a complete reversal of direction, can they attain to the true wisdom.

"For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." 1 Cor. 1:19-21. May many persons be delivered from the deception of these "blind leaders of the blind," who can very ably state their case against God and the work of His fingers (Psalm 8:3).

Darwin and Evolution

Dr. Oscar Riddle, in *The Unleashing of Evolutionary Thought*, gives an outspoken, uninhibited, and unabashed declaration of the basic atheistic nature and aims of the evolutionary scheme. This coming from so eminent a man, with the support of the highest men in this field, is reason enough to consider the import and implications it has on our Christian heritage. As far as these men are concerned, there is a war to the finish between real-unmitigated-evolution and Christianity, with the fore-announced plan of frontal attack that will allow of no compromise. How sad it is when Christians, or persons professing to be Christians, propose a compromise between the true God of the Bible and His revelation, and an uncompromising enemy! Note the following excerpts from Dr. Riddle's book:

"The informed atheist of our day gladly looks at the passing of God as part of the dawn of the day of Man. Otherwise he views it as dispassionately as others view the passing of the fairies and the devil. And no void is left by the relinquished God.... Only an infantile emotionalism pillows the worthiness of human existence upon the supernatural. It is failure to grapple firmly with the natural that prevents one's finding a saner satisfaction in naturalism." p. 340.

How can the daring of man go much further? He wants to get rid of God, and longs for that time. He speaks of the dawning of the "day of Man"; but God has already spoken of that day, and it is present. God has told us that this day of man will culminate in the presumption of "the man of sin." Man is fast going forward to the time when he will attempt to fight against God and His Christ. When God's King comes forth out of heaven, the sin of man will reach its great climax. Man cast God's Son out of the world when He came into it in grace; but when He comes again with the armies of heaven following Him, He will make war in righteousness, and dash man, together with his atheism and defiance, "in pieces like a potter's vessel." Let us note what God• has to say about His day:

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Pet. 3:10-13. Man's day is going to end in the judgment of God, to be superseded first by the day of the Lord (1 Thess. 5:2), and then by the final day of God. But "the informed atheist" and all who reject the Lord Jesus will find their part in the lake of fire with the devil and his angels. (Rev. 20:10-15; 21:8.)

On page 42, Dr. Riddle also states:

"It seems certain, however, that in greater proportion than in any previous generation the living members of this learned group now reject ideas both of Blesser and Creator. Also, within this

learned group, a greater proportion of leading biologists and psychologists than of lawyers and writers now accept a Godless universe."

The learning of "this learned group" will avail them nothing when they stand before Him with whom we have to do, with Him whose eyes are "as a flame of fire," and whose sword will proceed "out of His mouth." He will have but to speak to break them in pieces or to consign them to the lake of fire.

One might well wonder why Dr. Riddle does not go to Russia where a godless society has largely been established, and where it is the avowed purpose of the ruling clique to annihilate God. Let us have a look at his remarks about Russia:

"An early acceptance of the implications of Darwinism in most public education would then have taken from many Western nations-long before the Russian (Bolshevik) revolution of 1917 -all traces of their trust in God to correct the ills of man. With that accomplished, the Communist ax would have been dulled before it was fashioned-for a different outlook upon religion was one additional way in which the ideals of that Socialist state must depart from those of other nations. And on this central point of intellectual outlook, the leaders of the Russian revolution could rightly feel that they were on firm ground, and far in advance of other nations. To what extent this solid and man freeing conclusion-though drawn by many on undigested evidence- further influenced the power and fervor of Bolshevik sentiment for radical social transformation, for unrelenting opposition to the non-Soviet world, and for a contempt of ethics by Soviet leadership, no one can ever know. But to this writer it seems entirely probable that past and present attitudes of Soviet Russia toward Western nations are far more antagonistic and dangerous than would have been the case if other nations had dethroned the personal God before Russia did." pp. 309, 310.

Here in unmistakable language is Dr. Riddle's personal opinion, an opinion based on unmitigated evolutionary thought, that the present struggle between East and West is due to the West's retaining some belief in God, which should have been discarded long before Russia cast God out. It seems evident that he longs for the day when God will be cast out everywhere. This man little knows that he is only helping to prepare the way for the awful carnage that will take place when the "beast" of the revived Roman Empire and his confederated kingdoms will do just that-cast off God and all restraint. After the true believers (a relatively small minority) are taken out of this world, and the remainder of Christendom will be united under the banner of Rome-Babylon the Great-man will then overthrow the whole structure of Christian profession. It will be destroyed root and branch. Read Rev. 17 and 18. But will the world be any better by having the real Christians taken out of it to heaven, and the lifeless profession that is left utterly destroyed? No; rather, it will be the consummation of wickedness, and the deification of man. Dr. Riddle's book, and the whole evolutionary scheme, is furthering the awful doom of this Christ-rejecting world. After all religion is destroyed or effectively suppressed, the "day of Man" will rise to its zenith, only to have the judgments of the "day of the Lord" dash all to pieces.

Another remark or two regarding Russia and Communism in relation to the Western nations should be noted:

"Thus, except for this vast injury from Christianity, the Western world-like the Russians-could have offered its brand of secular naturalism along with its secular technology to the Asians. Indeed, this could have been offered them long before the Russians had either communism or technology to

offer anyone. Western failure does not lie in failure to export its Christianity to the East, but... in its prolonged failure to accept a truer and worthier world view in the presence of that faith." p. 355. "Most cruelly and quite unconsciously, the religions persisting since the Darwin of 1859 have contributed to the spread and virulence of communism." p. 413.

No nation and no people will become so benighted as the ones who once had light from God and His revealed Word, and who in arrogance cast it away. We all know that the Christianity that Russia once knew was not the Christianity of the Bible (but in a very small part), but what shall we say of their present atheistic dogma? Has it not produced the most cruel and heartless oppression the world has ever seen? Has it not enslaved hundreds of millions? Have not millions of lives been sacrificed to state aggrandizement? But Russia is only a little ahead of the highly privileged Western nations who are preparing to cast off God. Then darkness and savagery will have their way, and the devil (at whom Dr. Riddle scoffs) will have the upper hand as he pushes men over the precipice into a whirlpool of excesses and madness. Then Dr. Riddle's remark will show its meaning:

"For marching men, worry and humility [emphasis ours] are excess baggage." p. 413.

There is certainly no humility seen in the Russian pattern today, but the One who was "meek and lowly in heart" shall one day rule with a rod of iron. The present condition in the world, and the characters marked out for the days ahead by the noted biologist, are all unmistakable evidence of the last days, as so carefully depicted for us by God in His Word.

To Dr. Riddle everything good for man can only come by bold naturalism that rejects God. But what does it promise the individual? Let us see:

"These [a few species] descended from the trees, mastered a new and greatly varied food supply, and later became subject to social heredity, through which they lost nature's means of ridding their species of the unfit. Sooner or later, man must find a substitute means for that discarded one of nature. And he must do this while he is still in possession of a better conscience than exists in any other species.... His species is the only one that can deliberately promote its own deterioration.... The informed person facing natural death at the end of a normal span of life can know that even timely decease serves a social end. If the biologically unfit of any social age-the present included-could live forever, there would be no hope for man. He who declares a 'love' for all men has either slight contact with the species or great power of self-delusion." pp. 84, 85.

"Let it be granted that there are various arguments against euthanasia, and some of them are not of religious origin. But ultimately it is Bible-born arguments... that... continue to deny this well-guarded form of merciful release to some persons who need and want it." pp. 341, 342.

Here is what evolution promises a man-the great liberating "knowledge" that he just evolved through millions of years by fortuitous circumstances; that he was not created by God; that there is no God to love him, or to punish him either; that when he has served his day he should welcome death for the benefit of society, and that the unfit should be eliminated by some method yet to be developed (or at least not stated by Dr. Riddle); and that should he tarry in suffering he should be able to be put out of his misery. This, reader, is evolution; and it is cruel. Thank God, He is, and "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Heb. 11:6. The God of the Bible is a God of love, but He is also a God who is LIGHT; and He must and will punish the wicked. Dr. Riddle

professes to believe that it is harder to believe in a Creator than in an evolutionary process that required no Creator. But he is not credulous enough to believe that about any work of man.

When Dr. Riddle quotes Scripture, he displays how little he knows about it. When he says,

"To learn early that one will never become an angel is swiftly to find reason for becoming a worthy person" (p. 341),

he is not quoting from the Bible; for nowhere in it is it ever said that any human being will ever become an angel. This is myth and not truth. That anyone might have said so, does not alter the fact that Scripture never said so. When he quotes a statement that the Lord Jesus and Paul did not know of the Trinity, or at least do not speak of it, this is gross error. Did not the Lord speak of the Father and also of sending the Spirit after He Himself returned to the Father? Many scriptures could be adduced to correct this! He quotes the unbelief of Bishop Colenso, that it was discovered that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, but these timeworn and discredited objections have no basis in fact. They only betray an attitude of opposition to God.

We are ready to admit that Dr. Riddle's contention is true; namely, that evolution is basically atheistic and cannot be made to fit in with Christianity. They are diametrically opposed, and never can meet. Those who seek to do obeisance to evolution to be accredited by the world, dishonor the truth and do not please a real evolutionist.

Dr. Riddle quotes from an approving letter which complemented him thus:

"I was particularly glad to note that you called attention to the essential dishonesty of the argument that a belief in evolution is quite compatible with 'a' religious faith." p. 383.

The battle is joined and the fight will be waged, for Dr. Riddle himself said,

"Society and evolutionary thought must now specifically wage a fight against the supernatural element (salvation included) of all religions." p. 336.

Then why should any Christian aid, abet, or give comfort to a system that is set to destroy the very foundations of our faith?

In one place he said that

"A completed 'blueprint' for the Fundamentalism and supernaturalism of our times would indicate that these have remained more formidable and more durable enemies of science and society than Nazism and communism." p. 396.

This challenge calls for some words of explanation. It is apparent from Dr. Riddle's book that Fundamentalism is charged with ignorance, intolerance, and many other unsavory things. It is even suggested that the Ku Klux Klan had its roots in it, and that bigotry abounds within its scope. Now no one doubts that fringe elements attach themselves to any movement, but that part of Fundamentalism which stood squarely for the Bible as the revealed mind of God, and rejected any philosophy and every suggestion that would nullify it, is another matter. Not that it is a foe of true science, or of society (although we hold no brief for the name "Fundamentalism"); but wherein any have stood firmly and squarely against the inroads of the deceptive and destructive reasonings of the evolutionary theory, they are to be commended. It is only sad to note that in the few

intervening years since Dr. Riddle's book was published, and today, many once stalwart defenders of the faith have fallen victims to evolution's seductive influence. But Dr. Riddle's statement shows how he views unflinching faith in God's Word; he deprecates it as worse than Nazism and Communism. Never mind, those of his persuasion will not have long to wait until all the faithful Christians (indeed all real Christians) will be taken out of this world; and then the unmitigated evolutionists can have the world with its anarchy and chaos as they like it, but not for long; for sudden destruction will come upon them, "and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:3).

When Jude wrote to the saints, he was minded to write of their common salvation; but then it was needful to exhort them to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." v. 3. If this was true in his day, it is decidedly more needed today. On every hand there are those who would by stealth or open assault wrest from us the precious truth which we have received. May God grant us grace to stand firm and unyielding in this day of battle. Many have already capitulated to the enemy. Young Christian, and all Christians, let us heed that word, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness." Eph. 6:13, 14. Not one foot of ground should be surrendered-not one atom of truth lost.

Depressed Servant: Elijah

God is not unaffected by this condition. He has His eye upon His servant, and will care for him. One of the lessons of the way is to get hold of how God can stoop, and delights to stoop, to arrange the little things for His servants. Alas! how distrust of the One whom we serve-distrust of the interests of His heart in us and in His people-thrusts its way oftentimes before the soul. Who would have thought of the blessed God preparing a cake, baking it, filling the cruse, and then sending His angel to that poor, weary, depressed servant of His, to tell him of what He had ready for him! Such is the heart of Him whom we serve. And Elijah eats and sleeps, and again is aroused by the angelic watcher to eat again. (How God lingers near us, so to speak.) "And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee." 1 Kings 19:7.

Oh, to be able to detect the "cake baked on the coals." There it is preparing, when the poor weary heart only requests "for himself that he might die." God's answer is in substance, Not yet Elijah, nor at all. The "chariot of fire, and horses of fire" are My way for you.

"The journey is too great for thee." He who cares for us has provided the sustenance. He who alone knows the need of the way meets it. Be assured there is the "cake baked on the coals" and the cruse of water for the depressed servant, and as we partake we gain strength. Cannot the servant who reads this bear witness? And so it ever is. "And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God."

Dispensational Truth

In some issues of Christian Truth during 1958 we dealt with the subject of dispensational truth which was then under attack from men who had been more or less connected with so-called fundamentalist circles where dispensationalism was valued and taught. We now feel obliged to refer to the same subject because the attacks continue, and departure from this precious God-given heritage is accelerating. We have no expectation of helping those men who have for various reasons given up this truth, but we write for those who may be misled by them.

A recent publication against the precious expectancy of the coming of the Lord to take His blood-bought, heavenly people home to be with Himself is a book entitled *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism*, which was written by Clarence B. Bass. He has degrees in theology, and a Ph.D. degree from the University of Edinburgh. He is one of that class who was originally brought up in dispensational truth, but who has departed from it.

Dr. Bass has not brought forth anything new as an answer to dispensational truth, nor are his arguments more convincing than those which have previously been advanced by others. There seems to be the same underlying will to reject that which for some reason seems to cut across a predetermined course. People often reject that which they are unwilling to accept, things which would be quite obvious to those with an open mind, or, in the case of God's Word, to those seeking to know the mind of God.

One of the most frequently recurring phrases in Dr. Bass's book is "historic faith." He seems to feel that because there is no record of the hope of the Lord's coming, to call His redeemed ones to Himself, to be found in the writings of the so-called church fathers, it cannot be true. But this is illogical on the face of it; for a search of the writings of the church fathers will not prove anything, but that they were almost without exception in error. Some of them were not even sound on the deity of Christ, and it is vain to rely on the church fathers for any truth. Departure and declension were coming in rapidly before the apostles left the scene. How good it is for us that God did not cast us on them, or on any pretended successors to the apostles, for the truth of God. In view of his departure Paul committed the saints to God and to the Word of His grace (Acts 20), and cast Timothy on the truth he had taught him, and on the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:14-17). John, in view of the apostasy, took the saints back to that "which was from the beginning," not to church fathers. Peter likewise did not refer to successors, but sought to have the saints keep in remembrance that which they had received.

And if we go back to Scripture and refer to the parable of the ten virgins in Matt. 25, we find that from the beginning these professors (some real and some false) took their lamps (symbols of profession) and went forth to meet the bridegroom. Here, in unmistakable clarity, these professors at the beginning started out expecting the immediate coming of the bridegroom. That this was true in early Christianity is abundantly clear from many scriptures. The Thessalonians turned to God from idols "to wait" for His Son from heaven. There was no disposition to reject the imminence of the Lord's coming in those days. But we read of an "evil servant" who said in his heart, "My lord

delayeth his coming" (Matt. 24:48). The basic fault was "in his heart"; he preferred to put it off because he did not desire to meet him. Perhaps this same evil is at work today.

The ten virgins were not at fault in this way, but they ALL went to sleep; that is, they forgot to wait and watch for their coming bridegroom. They at first wearied and became drowsy and then lost the hope of the Lord's return. They settled down in the world to live with and as the world. This continued for a long time, for they required an arousing call "at midnight" to awaken them. In view of our Lord's own parable to describe things after He left them, is it surprising that religious writers for century after century made no mention of the hope of the Lord's coming to claim His redeemed ones? The lack of such statements from the church fathers, and from all theological writers until the early part of the 19th century, is merely proof of the accuracy of our Lord's parable. It was necessary that the hope be lost and then finally revived to fulfill the scriptures. Thus, the evidence cited by Dr. Bass and others to prove that the Lord's coming cannot be truth because it was so long not mentioned, is but proof of its truth and verity.

Thank God that the parable does not say that they ever all went to sleep again; therefore His coming MUST be close at hand, for it is being given up on every side. It is coming under attack and would soon be lost, but before that can happen He will shout that shout and call us home. He will even take those real Christians who are rejecting it and opposing it-not to their disappointment at that moment, however; but how will they feel when they see His face and learn that they were really fighting against His truth?

Dr. Bass's search for supporters of his rejection of the truth of the Lord's coming for His Church leads him into some strange territory, for he makes common cause with a foremost Seventh day Adventist writer. He not only quotes from *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* by LeRoy Froom, but lauds his work; he writes thus: "LeRoy Froom's masterful survey of the history of eschatology clearly demonstrates that until the nineteenth century the church viewed Israel as having a place in the millennium, but not as a separate entity, a different kingdom, as dispensational literalism contends. Rather, Israel was viewed as a part of the continual reign of Christ instituted in the church." p. 24. Could he expect soundness of doctrine from a Seventh-day Adventist source? How could such a writer distinguish between Israel and the Church when their whole scheme is a conglomeration of Judaism with some Christianity added? And how about Dr. Bass's respect for anything an adventist could say about the Millennium when to them it will not be a time of blessing under the beneficent and righteous rule of Christ, but the earth will be a burned out cinder, with the devil the only inhabitant?

Could it be that the late Dr. Barnhouse was actuated by a similar motive when he sought to foist the Seventh-day Adventists on faithful Christians? For he also disclaimed dispensationalism, and said that he never preached on the Lord's coming.

As most of our readers are aware, dispensationalism is the understanding of the truth of the Word of God as it relates to mankind at different times. God has dealt in various ways with men and revealed Himself as He chose in each dispensation. He revealed Himself as the Almighty to Abraham when He was making promises to him-the One who promised was fully able to perform all that He promised. When He made a covenant with Israel, He revealed Himself as Jehovah-the unchanging One who would be faithful to all His covenant. After the death and resurrection of Christ, He was revealed to believers as their Father -the Son said in resurrection, "My Father, and

your Father; My God, and your God." To mix such titles all up together is monstrous. To see no difference between Israel and the Church, between God's purposes and plans for them in their respective places, is to compound confusion. In such a case the language of the Psalms, crying for vengeance on enemies, would be put into the mouths of Christians-how utterly unbecoming! And while Christians have benefited from the Psalms, they are not the language of Christians; nor is God as Father known in them. This is only one small sample of the confusion which results from being unacquainted with dispensational truth. No one will ever understand the Bible apart from seeing that God has one purpose concerning Israel and the earth, and another concerning the Church and a heavenly people.

Dr. Bass frequently attacks what he calls "the dichotomy of the church-Israel relation." He sets himself in bold opposition to a distinction between the two. In one place he says, "This summary reflects again the dichotomy of the system-that there is a different hope for the church and for Israel. The hope of the church is that it will share in Christ's glory, both earthly and heavenly. The hope for Israel is the kingdom on earth with Christ seated on the throne of David." p. 132. Will Dr. Bass dare to say that Christ will not yet gather together "all things in... [Himself], both which are in heaven, and which are on earth"? And does not the next verse say to the church at Ephesus (and so to the Church at large) in whom we also have obtained an inheritance? We, the Church, are His coheirs. Our calling, our hope, and our citizenship are all heavenly. This elevated position was never true of Israel, nor is it promised to them in the future. On the basis of obedience, they were promised blessing in "basket and store"; we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places.

Dr. Bass's battle is with Mr. J. N. Darby all through, whom he prefers to see as an adamant leader who acted independently of the scholarship of the past (we ask, If this scholarship was in error on the truth of the Lord's coming and the heavenly calling of the Church, why should he give heed to it?). He claims that "the basic elements, and hermeneutical pattern, of Darby's eschatology persist unchanged in contemporary dispensationalism." p. 128. On another page Dr. Bass says, "Darby's eschatology grows out of two basic principles: his doctrine of the church, which is itself rooted in his dispensational dichotomy between Israel and the church; and a hermeneutical application of rigid literalism, particularly to prophetic Scripture." p. 129. This rouses Dr. Bass's ire. He wants to merge Israel and the Church. But let him aver that Israel was ever called to heaven, or with a heavenly calling. And if the Church is merely a prolongation of Israel, why does he not keep the Sabbath and offer sacrifices? Israel was under the law, under a schoolmaster; are we?

The doctor's charge of "rigid literalism" is made because Mr. Darby and all Spirit-taught dispensationalists make the word "Israel" apply to Israel. And why not? Dr. Bass also attacks the late A. C. Gaebelain, saying, "Adhering to its rigid literalism and unconditional covenant, dispensationalism, however, insists that the church in no wise assumes any of Israel's relation to God; there can be no 'spiritual Israel'; and that the promises of the Abrahamic covenant are still inviolate." Then he quotes from A. C. Gaebelain in his charges, and says, "Gaebelain apparently overlooked 1 Pet. 2:9 where the church is called a 'holy nation'." Here the ignorance of a proponent of the so-called historic faith becomes evident. Did this gentleman never read Peter's address in the first verse of the first chapter? Peter wrote to believing Jews of the dispersion. They had lost everything for the time by identifying themselves with a rejected Christ, and he merely quotes from Exod. 19:6 where God had promised Israel certain blessings on the basis of

obedience (which they forfeited by disobedience), and now says to the suffering and believing Jews, You have come into blessing before the nation will. They came into these blessings in a higher and better way, far in advance of the nation. What a cheer this must have been to these oppressed Christians who had been Jews. But Dr. Bass, as all of his group, eagerly grasps at any straw to "prove" that the Christian is only an Israelite after all. Let us say firmly, that the name Israel in the New Testament never means the Church. There is no such thing as a spiritual Israel in this day. When the nation of Israel is finally blessed when Christ sets up His earthly kingdom, and Jerusalem becomes the center of God's government for the earth, Israel will be born again (see Eze. 36); and they will all know God from the least to the greatest (Jer. 31:34).

Dr. Bass rejects the truth that God will yet fulfill His promises made to Abraham to establish Israel on the earth. Let us paraphrase a question Paul asked of King Agrippa, Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should keep His promises? Is it not presumption to question God's faithfulness to His pledged word? How then does this opponent get around the difficulty he creates? Here is his answer: "The historic faith has held that the kingdom was not postponed, but fulfilled in the church, and will come to its consummation in the millennial reign." p. 33. This statement is absurd on the face of it. God had promised to send Elijah to recall Israel to their God preceding the coming kingdom (see the close of Malachi), and then John the Baptist came in that very manner; but they rejected him. The Lord Himself said, "And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come." Matt. 11:14. The Messiah's forerunner was rejected and so was the Messiah. The kingdom promised was offered by John and the Lord, but summarily rejected by the Jews. In Matt. 12, the Lord disclaimed relationship with Israel; and in chapter 13, He went out to the seaside and spoke of sowing something new. In this chapter the mysteries of the kingdom are mentioned, for the kingdom of heaven in this form is a sphere on earth where an absent and rejected king is supposedly owned; it is Christendom. If Christendom is the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, then God's work is a failure, speaking reverently. Dr. Bass's whole plan belittles God's purpose and promise, and lowers the Church from its heavenly calling to a mere earthly adjunct to Judaism.

This leads him to denounce the distinction between law and grace. On page 35, Dr. Bass says, "dispensationalism has constructed a system in which law and grace work against each other, not conjointly." Will he prove his point that grace and law are adjuncts? "The law... was added because of transgression." Gal. 3:19. It came in by the way. It NEVER gave life to anyone. Paul says that it slew him (Rom. 7:11). "The law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Rom. 5:20. There was sin before the law was given, but the giving of the law made it worse, for it then became an offense. God did not give the law that sin might abound-far be the thought-but that it would take on its awful character by one's breaking the law. But where sin abounded, grace over abounded, not merely where there was the offense, for then grace would have been limited to Israelitish law breakers- Gentiles were never under the Mosaic law. Is it not therefore clear that Dr. Bass and those of his school mutilate both law and grace? They are mutually opposed to each other. If you mix them, "grace is no more grace," and "work is no more work."

Dispensational Truth: Dr. Bass and Mr. Darby

Dr. Bass asserts that, "the presupposition of the difference between law and grace, between Israel and the church, between the different relations of God to men in the different dispensations, when carried to its logical conclusion will inevitably result in a multiple form of salvation-that men are not saved the same in all ages." p. 34. Here he goes into the bog. Let him first state his premise, and prove it by Scripture, that men are saved by law now, or that those before the death and resurrection of Christ were saved by the proclamation of salvation through His finished work on Calvary. Obviously the gospel of God concerning His Son was reserved until after His death and resurrection. God could then say, "Come; for all things are now ready." Luke 14:17. Could that message have gone out earlier? No! And was any Jew (under the law) ever saved by the law? Never. If there is one principle on which all men are saved, it is faith. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice." He may only have seen vaguely and indistinctly; but he had faith in God, and by his offering acknowledged that he could only be accepted by God on the basis of an acceptable sacrifice. All through the Old Testament times, God looked for faith that acknowledged Him. Some people have said that men were saved in those days by the efficacy of a sacrifice, but it is not possible that the blood of hells and goats could take sins away (Heb. 10:4). David, after his heinous sin, desired God to cleanse him; but he added, "Thou desiredst not sacrifice; else I would give it." Psalm 51:16.

Now lest any misunderstand our point, we say, everyone who is saved owes all to the death of Christ; but before it was accomplished such a proclamation could not have been made. God looked at a man's faith, and did not raise the question of soul salvation at the time. There is one verse in Rom. 3 which solves the riddle of God's forbearance with men of faith who lived before the death of Christ: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past." v. 25. God did not raise the issue with the poor bankrupt sinner, but passed by the sins of those who had faith; for He waited until the death of Christ, which would fully glorify Him in the matter of sins, would vindicate Himself in such passing over the sins that had taken place before. The atoning death of Christ is the basis of every blessing for the sinner, and also that which has glorified God. Some dispensationalists may have been faulty in answering the charges of the non-dispensational school about our having a multiple basis of salvation. But it is the anti-dispensationalists who err and create confusion. When once the dispensational dealings of God with men are overlooked, or rejected, the whole of the Bible is thrown into confusion for those who do so.

Another note from the book we have reviewed is the author's rejection of the period of the great tribulation. He says, "Historic premillennialism knows nothing of the Great Tribulation, which according to dispensationalism has a special purpose relating to the Jewish kingdom." p. 41. And yet the Lord spoke clearly about that time of trouble which is to come which will be unparalleled in the world's history. This period will be seven years in duration, divided into two equal parts-the latter half being more strictly the great tribulation. At this point Dr. Bass also assails Dr. John Walvoord and the Scofield Bible for following Mr. Darby's dispensationalism.

Dr. Bass says: "The basis for teaching such a tribulation is the over-all system of dispensationalism, rooted in the ever present distinction between Israel and the church. The pretribulation rapture [of the church] grows out of this concept, since the church must be removed before the remnant of Israel is gathered. The dichotomy between law and grace as multiple ways of divine dealing with man also lies behind this concept." p. 42. Therefore, we reply, if that writer is wrong (as we know that he is) by trying to blend Israel and the church, and law and grace, then his whole attack on the tribulation and our being first gathered to be with Christ is extreme folly. If his premise is wrong, all his deductions are likewise wrong.

Anti-dispensationalists refuse to see that in 1 Thess. 4 we have the Apostle giving assurance to those dear saints that those of their number who died will not lose out by not being present when He comes in His glory, for He will bring all His saints with Him. (This was foretold in the Old Testament.) Then in chapter 4:1.5-18 we are given a parenthesis which tells how the saints get to be with Him in order to come back with Him. He is coming for us Himself. This is in perfect accord with the Lord's own promise: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2, 3. Dr. Bass rejects the word in 1 Thess. 4 without apology, but merely says it does not mean what dispensationalists take it to mean, or to be more exact, it does not mean what it says. Regarding John 14, let us ask, What does it mean? Are we to wait here for Him to come and join Israel and the Church, and to give them an earthly glory? No, definitely no; for He says plainly, I will come for you so you can be with Me where I am. Is He not to head up all things in heaven and on earth? Emphatically so! And to reject His own word that He is coming for us, is to be devoid of a suited response to His promise. The Bible closes with the assurance to His Church that He Himself is coming for her, and the Spirit and the bride respond with a call for Him to come.

Dr. Bass's frequently recurring phrase, "the historic faith," as though anything that broke with the vagaries and mistakes of the so-called church fathers, and their legion of successors, would be bound to be wrong, brings to mind the great revolution which was wrought in Martin Luther, and which by God's grace was wrought in the professing church. He was vainly following the course of the ages, and the follies and superstitions of men, until God brought him back suddenly to the truth of the Word of God which had long lain dormant in the church.

On three different occasions he was struck with that verse: "The just shall live by faith." On the third occasion, Luther was ascending "what is called Pilate's staircase" on his knees in penitential folly, when the Lord spoke loudly to his soul by that one verse. J. H. Merle D'Aubigne, the great historian of the Reformation, wrote: "It was by means of that word that God then said: 'Let there be light, and there was light.'" p. 171 of the 15th edition. The great historian adds: "It was thus that Luther discovered what hitherto even the most illustrious teachers and reformers had overlooked. It was in Rome that God gave him this clear view of the fundamental doctrine of Christianity. He had come to seek in that city of the Pontiffs, the solution of some difficulties concerning a monastic order; he brought back in his heart, that which was to emancipate the Church." p. 173.

Surely this upset tradition and entrenched church dictums, but was it not the truth of God which was shown to Martin Luther? And when God later brought forth the "midnight" cry to arouse the saints of God to the long-forgotten and equally neglected truth of the Lord's coming, and the heavenly calling of the Church, Dr. Bass cries in substance, Heresy, because it had been so long

lost. Is there not a parallel?

Twenty-eight pages of Dr. Bass's book are devoted to Darby's Doctrine of the Church. This, needless to say, he challenged; for he believes that Mr. Darby's dispensational doctrine has its roots in his doctrine of the Church. The truth of the heavenly calling and character of the Church do not seem to be agreeable to the opponent. But a worldly church which meddles in the affairs of the world has ever been the bane of the Church, and is the devil's artifice. Men want a church that is relevant to the world's space age problems; they want a socially conscious church which aims to improve the world. They look with disgust on what they call "other-worldly" attitude, and regard the imminence of the hope of the Lord's coming-that blessed hope-as merely a retreat into a storm cellar. Dr. Bass says: "The world awaits Christ's community, the church. It awaits with its frustrations, fears, complexities, and doubts. The church exists to stand in prophetic judgment against the injustice, disharmony, arrogance, greed, pride, unbrotherliness, and sin of the world. Any theological system which causes a part of the church to withdraw from the larger fellowship in Christ and, by isolationism and separatism, to default its role, is wrong."

In other words, Dr. Bass wants the whole church to be active in improving the world. Did not Christ say, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"? But the whole system of anti-dispensationalism lowers the Church to the level of the world, both as to its character, its aims, its hopes, and its allegiance. This may be denied, but a check will prove our statement to be correct. May we also add, we believe that this attitude is what is causing many to attack dispensationalism, and many to give it up. But the world is heading for divine judgment, and well meaning attempts will not avail any more than Lot's did to clean up Sodom before its doom.

This book also attacks Mr. Darby's statement that the "church is in ruins." But any Christian willing to face the facts will have to admit that this is true. Look where you will, and apostasy is rampant. Many are becoming blind leaders of the blind in saying, "I do not believe that the church is in ruins." This is but to deceive. But those who are willing to go along with the great ecumenical drive must reject the truth. God has plainly told us what the last days would be. Reader, the only hope for the true believer is the coming of the Lord. Conditions in the world and in the professing church are bad, and are getting worse. Our only way out is up to be with Christ before the judgments fall.

Another secret of these attacks against the present hope of the coming of the Lord is to be found in Dr. Bass's book. He accuses Mr. Darby of promoting a doctrine divisive in character, and says that those who still hold this truth are practicing the spirit of division. But did not the Lord Himself say that He had come to bring division? (Luke 12:51). Are we to go on with the evil which abounds in Christendom and call it charity? Mr. Darby is attacked for saying that separation from evil is God's principle of unity. But does not God call on those who would be faithful to come out from among the unclean and be separate?

We will quote a few more lines from Dr. Bass to reinforce our statement and judgment: "The 'heavenly church' idea in dispensationalism comes from several sources. These include an exegesis of passages concerning the church, particularly the Ephesian references, which contrast the church with the earthly Israel; Darby's church-in-ruins concept, which led him to teach that Christendom is apostate; and a strong emphasis on the doctrine that the church is in the world, but not of the world." p. 144. He is evidently ready to reject the fact that the Church is heavenly, and not of the world. Then speaking against the statement that the church is in ruin, this man says:

"Almost every scholar of repute would not only deny the charge, but vigorously contend that the church is militant, though at times showing evidence of the influence of worldliness, and is proceeding in the plan of God, earnestly awaiting the completion of His purposes in her.... The separatist spirit and exclusivist attitude toward truth is one of the tragic aspects of the development of Darby's doctrine of the church.... What ever evaluation history may make of this movement [how about God's evaluation?], it will attest that dispensationalism is rooted in Darby's concept of the church -a concept that sharply distinguishes the church from Israel,... gives the church a heavenly title and futuristic character,... and maintains unity through separation from evil." p. 127.

The jacket on Dr. Bass's book says, "At all times he [Dr. Bass] makes an effort to deal fairly and objectively with the ideas and events that come into view." Our judgment is that his effort often signally failed, and his personal animus appeared. He is a special pleader for his cause.

Dr. Bass's willingness to quote unsavory remarks against Mr. J. N. Darby's translation of the Bible brings him into an awkward position, to say the least. Of this excellent translation he quotes from *The Sword and Trowel*: "Suffice it to say, that some renderings are good, and some of the notes are good; but, taken as a whole, with a great display of learning, the ignorance of the results of modern criticism is almost incredible. And fatal upsetting of vital doctrines condemns the work altogether as more calculated to promote skepticism than true religion-the most sacred subjects being handled with irreverent familiarity." Also, "Endless blunders, errors, mistranslations, confounding of moods, tenses and preposition-do not surprise us." p. 59.

After quoting this crude and untrue criticism, he admits that "such criticism is extremely harsh, and it is certain that the author is as passionately prejudiced against Darby as Turner [one who wrote approvingly of the translation] is for him." pp. 59, 60. But if Dr. Bass had not wanted to bring the J. N. D. translation into disrepute and disfavor, he would not have quoted such extreme vituperative slurs. But let us check another facet of Dr. Bass's one-sidedness.

In his introduction he says: "I wish to express my appreciation to Professor F. F. Bruce, Rylands Professor of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, University of Manchester... for very valuable aid in obtaining primary materials." p. 10. Now let us quote from a book by Professor F. F. Bruce on *The English Bible*:

"Another private version which embodies the results of the new textual knowledge available in the second half of the nineteenth century is John Nelson Darby's *New Translation* (New Testament, second and revised edition, 1871; Old Testament, 1890). Darby, one of the leaders of the Brethren movement, translated the Bible into German (the Elberfeld version) and French (the Pau version) before his English version appeared; indeed, his English version was left incomplete when he died in 1882 and was completed on the basis of his German and French versions. In the New Testament especially it is based on a sound critical appraisal of the evidence, and was consulted by the company which prepared the Revised New Testament of 1881. The version was equipped with a full critical apparatus at the foot of each column of the New Testament which set forth in detail the evidence on which particular readings and renderings were adopted. This version, however, falls short in regard to English style-which would surprise no one acquainted with Darby's voluminous prose writings." (italics ours)-*The English Bible*, pp. 131, 132.

Perhaps Dr. Bass forgot to discuss this translation with Professor Bruce. Many dear Christians scattered throughout Christendom have been helped by the J.N.D. New Translation, but its true defense will have to await the judgment seat of Christ, where its opponents (if Christians) will also appear.

Richard Francis Weymouth, M.A. D.Lit., whose work produced one of the earliest modern English versions, *The New Testament in Modern Speech*, said in his preface (1906 edition) that if one is bent on getting a literal translation of the original texts, he could find such "in the Revised Version, or (often a better one) in Darby's New Testament" (italics ours). P. XI. What a different attitude toward Mr. Darby's translation than that expressed by Dr. Bass! And surely Dr. Weymouth had no ax to grind that caused him to write favorably of the J.N.D. Translation, even to the extent of favoring it above the Revised Version; for Dr. Weymouth was not a dispensationalist, as his expository notes plainly indicate. Mr. Darby's translation preceded the Revised Version, and according to Professor F. F. Bruce it was consulted by the company which prepared the Revised Version.

Another one who paid respectful reference to Mr. Darby's New Translation was F. H. Scrivener, M.A., L. L. D.-1813-1891. He was Rector of St. Gerrans, Cornwall, England. He was a conservative member of the New Testament Revision Committee of 1870. He gave six lectures, on the text of the New Testament, which were compiled in book form in 1875. This noted man said that he gave thirty years of happy devotion to these studies. In one of his lectures he made the following reference to Mr. Darby and his translation:

"Nor am I much encouraged by the representations of a pious and learned person, who has recently labored, not quite unsuccessfully, over a new version of the inspired writings, and who frankly uses the following language in describing his own impressions respecting this kind of work: 'In the translation I could feel delight-it gave me the word and mind of God more accurately; in the critical details there is much labor and little food'." [This is found in the preface to the J. N. D. New Testament.]

Dr. Scrivener continues: "Much labor and little fruit is no cheering prospect for anyone, and I should utterly despair of gaining the attention of my hearers after so plain an intimation of what they have to expect, unless the experience of a lifetime had assured me that this good man's opinion is the very reverse of the truth." It seems to us that Dr. Scrivener misunderstood Mr. Darby's remarks and mistook his not finding food for his soul in the critical work for his not finding fruit for his technical labors. There is a difference; one can nourish the soul while the other leaves it comparatively barren.

As for Dr. Bass's question of whether Mr. Darby's dispensational teaching came first, or the New Translation preceded it, we can answer that. The doctrine came from a spiritual insight into the Holy Scriptures, and the translations into German, French, and English came later, as the need for better translations became more apparent.

Dr. Bass summarizes and paraphrases the teachings of the early brethren, but in doing so he discloses his lack of understanding of the points covered. We have neither the time nor the space to take up the many instances of this, perhaps unintentional, misrepresentation. It is well-nigh impossible for one to grasp another's meaning well enough to paraphrase it and convey the

thought accurately, especially when the one doing it is thoroughly predisposed against the thoughts presented.

Here is one example of Dr. Bass's carelessness in presenting what he claims is Mr. Darby's teaching; this is about the church: "The church is heavenly, not earthly: the individual believer is not baptized into a church here on earth, but into a heavenly relation with Christ." p. 46. Now note what Mr. Darby did write and teach concerning baptism and the individual's entrance into something: "Baptism presents the doctrine that I, a living sinner, die to sin, and arise again to be accepted in Christ's name, as alive unto God in the power of His resurrection.... Hence by it we are received into the assembly on earth [italics, Mr. Darby's]-the house builded on earth for a habitation of God- not into the body. In this [the body] we are looked at in scripture as seated in heavenly places in Him the Head.... Baptism receives into the house.... We enter into the outward visible body by that ordinance, which signifies our dying and rising again.... Baptism has, even as a sign, nothing to do with the unity of the body. 'By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body'-not by water."-Letters of J.N.D. (Stow-Hill), pp. 277-282. Could Dr. Bass's charge be further from the truth? Mr. Darby unequivocally states that baptism brings into the house on earth, not into the body; and that in the body aspect we are looked at as in Christ in heavenly places. This seems like a plain case of irresponsible reporting.

Dispensational Truth: Dr. Bass and Mr. Darby

On page 112 of *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism*, confusion is everywhere. Think of Mr. Darby's being made to say of a Christian, "he is the body of Christ" (italics, Dr. Bass's). Does Scripture so speak? Would Mr. Darby use such an obviously wrong statement? We have searched for any such slip and have not found it. We do find where Mr. Darby uses, "Ye [plural] are the body of Christ." He adds, "The assembly at Corinth represented at Corinth that one and only unity, that of all individuals united to Christ in one body by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Everything had a connection with the one body, composed of all the members of Christ. There was no action which did not relate to the whole body." In this article, *What is the Unity of the Church?*, found in Mr. Darby's *Collected Writings*, vol. 20 (Stow-Hill), pp. 296-306, Mr. Darby was answering a Mr. F. Olivier, a Frenchman, who was attacking the principles of those gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus. A reviewer of such an article should recognize that in this type of writing one may refer to something the other man has said, without any approval whatsoever. And so on page 113, Dr. Bass says: "Darby does not refer to the assembly as a formal organization." (Compare this with quotation of J.N.D. earlier in this paragraph.) Such statements are misleading, but are found abundantly in Dr. Bass's book. It is confusion heaped on confusion. But it would be impossible to pin down all of the inconsistencies, because one would have to search all of Mr. Darby's 34 volumes of *Collected Writings*, 3 volumes of *Letters*, 5 volumes of *Synopsis of the Bible*, and much more to prove that he did not make little statements attributed to him. But we challenge Dr. Bass's book for inaccuracy of reporting and for bias and prejudice in the conclusions reached. He seems determined to destroy, if he can, the image of the man J. N. Darby in an effort to bring ridicule on his able expository works, defining the heavenly character of the true Church of God--by that we mean of all believers according to God's plan--for the purpose of making the professing church earthly-minded, not looking for her Lord, but trying to improve the world just as doom is about to overtake her and the world which she loves all too well.

Dr. Bass's unsubstantiated charges that "John Darby was subjected to the temptations common to all religious innovators- that of continually advancing new 'revelations' of 'spiritual' truths to attract and maintain his following" (p. 98) is absolutely without foundation, and not one shred of evidence can be adduced to support it. It is as vicious as it is untrue. The burden of proof falls upon the man who makes the charge, but on one who is ill-prepared to understand, much less to delineate, the position of those who are rooted and grounded in the truth of dispensationalism.

The uncharitable doctor seizes on every controversy among brethren to discredit the whole movement, and he advances many arguments which were set forth by opponents. He would whitewash the gross error of a B. W. Newton, and in the end advocate a going on with just about anything. He flings the charge of "separatist" at Christians who, seeking to do the will of God, withdraw from iniquity. Separation, it appears, is an anathema to him.

We would mention that Dr. Bass assails brethren as though "new birth, the historicity of the resurrection, the validity of the virgin birth, or any other cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith" were disregarded (p. 99), while points of ecclesiastical doctrine became the test. Mr. Darby wrote one large volume against F. W. Newman's Phases of Faith, or more correctly, Phases of Infidelity. Mr. Darby did a great work for the Church of God by his careful analysis of Newman's infidelity, entitled, The Irrationalism of Infidelity. His counter attack covers 598 pages (Morrish edition) of volume 6 of his writings. Newman had attacked the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation. Specifically, Newman attacked 21 Old Testament and 15 New Testament books. He had imbibed German "Higher Criticism"; he ridiculed the miracles, and held the virgin birth up to scorn. Will Dr. Bass dare to assume that such vital truths were sidetracked? Were they not maintained with vigor? Where will he find in all Christendom more able and energetic defense of truth against error than in the writings of J.N. Darby, William Kelly, and others of their persuasion?

In spite of Mr. Newman's infidelity which caused his old friend J. N. Darby to attack his writings, Dr. Bass felt free to use the following criticism by Mr. Newman: "Over the general results of his action I have long deeply mourned, as blunting his natural tenderness and sacrificing his wisdom to the Letter, dwarfing men's understandings, contracting their hearts, crushing their moral sensibilities, and setting those at variance who ought to love: yet oh! how specious it was in the beginning! he only wanted men 'to submit their understanding to God,' that is to the Bible, that is, to his interpretation" (italics by Dr. Bass). p. 58. Now we ask, in all fairness, Would such a man, who turned away from God and His Word and sought to make infidels out of people, be a credible character witness against a man of God who withstood him and his infidelity? Evidently, Dr. Bass thinks so, and he is willing to emphasize his charges against Mr. Darby (because it suits his purpose) even to the point of adding emphasis to what Mr. Newman wrote. We believe that Dr. Bass displays himself in his hook, not to his credit, but to the opening of the eyes of the unbiased.

In contrast to all the unsavory things that Dr. Bass collected against Mr. J. N. Darby, we recently found a book published by Pickering and Inglis of England and Scotland, which, while giving a biography of Alfred H. Burton, B.A., M.D., happens to throw a little light on Mr. Darby. Dr. Burton edited the Advent Witness until 1934, and was chairman of the Prophecy Investigation Society. The book is authored by F. W. Pitt, a close friend and colleague of Dr. Burton's.

Mr. Pitt said, "I know that Mr. Darby is regarded by many as a sort of religious dictator, but Dr. Burton and others who knew him well have told me that he was the most courteous and humble of

men, gracious and sympathizing, counting the fame and riches of the world as naught.... J. N. Darby died in 1882 holding Dr. Burton's hand." pp. 27, 28.

We are well aware that Mr. Darby would not wish us to attempt any defense of himself or his ways, for he would much prefer to leave it until the judgment seat of Christ, when all will be manifested in the light of Him who is "the righteous judge." But inasmuch as Dr. Bass chose to make an issue of the character, traits, and teachings of the venerable servant of Christ, in a bold attempt to bring the whole character of the Church of God clown to the level of the world, and to undermine the blessed truth of the Lord's coming for His people before the tribulation, it seems incumbent on us to call our reader's attention to the basic plan of attack taken by this opponent of dispensational truth. The Apostle Paul loathed having to defend himself to the Corinthian saints in his second letter to them; but it became necessary, for an attack on him was an attack on what he taught. We recognize this fact, of course, that Paul was an apostle and spoke authoritatively. Mr. Darby was not and did not. There is this similarity, however, that Dr. Bass thought to bring the whole truth of the heavenly calling and hope of the Church into disfavor by attacking the man who was mightily used of God to recover lost truth. Instead of letting doctrine stand or fall on its own merit or demerit, and of judging all truths by the revealed Word of Truth, Dr. Bass's charges, aspersions, and at times almost ridicule, are used to becloud the issues and cast dust into the air-air already cloudy enough with false doctrines of men "speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them."

Dr. Bass has gone to great pains to whitewash B. W. Newton; but that could be expected, since Mr. Newton was a confused man on the subject of prophecy, and held many things in common with Dr. Bass.

And now, reader, we have much more to say regarding Dr. Bass's book, but we close this section in order to avoid wearying you as it has wearied us. But, in closing, we will quote Dr. Bass's scheme and hope for the Church, a plan which we abhor and utterly reject as totally false. We quote:

"Dispensationalists, who insist that the purpose of the church is to call out the 'heavenly body' from the world, and that this body will be ultimately raptured away from tribulation, have forgotten that the church was placed in the world so that through it Christ's message might come to the world." p. 148. This in itself misrepresents things, for it is God's purpose, not the Church's, to call out a heavenly people. Dr. Bass continues:

"The church does have a responsibility to the culture in which it finds itself. This responsibility involves communicating the teachings of Jesus so that they will have an impact upon the moral and social problems of society. [Any rank modernist could concur in this.] The church is in the world for more than merely calling out a heavenly body: it has a mission to the world itself." Dr. Bass continues:

"The mission of the church to the world is to reflect the ethics and ideals of Jesus, through personal salvation, into the culture of society so that that culture may be changed [let this man produce one verse in its proper context that affirms this]. The principles of the Sermon on the Mount must be translated by the church into practical principles of Christian living. This is not to suggest that the church will ever ameliorate the sinful world to the extent that it becomes a perfect

society, but it is to emphasize that the church cannot escape its mission by repeating that it is 'not of the world and not for the world.' Dispensationalism would withdraw the church from its impact on the world, contending, as does the Scofield Bible that... 'the Sermon on the Mount in its primary application gives neither the privilege nor the duty of the Church,' because it is a part of the gospel of the kingdom" (italics ours). Dr. Bass calls Mr. Darby "a tortured and confused man" (p. 98), but we would like to reverse the charge, and let it fall on the head of him who made it. He further continues his statement of what he believes concerning the earthly character of the Church:

"Has not the evangelical church all too long defaulted the proclamation of the gospel to the 'world'? Does not God yearn for His church, which has the true gospel, to carry the message of this gospel to the problems of the culture in which it lives? Has not dispensationalism contributed largely to this default of the church's mission, and made it a detached, withdrawn, inclusively introverted group, waiting to be raptured away from this evil world?" Is the "true gospel" the "ethics and ideals" of Jesus? NO! That kind of gospel never saved anyone. It is as sterile as the sayings of Confucius.

"Is it too much to ask the evangelical church of today to stand in its world and let Christ minister through it to the world? The church needs to throw off the mantle of 'in but not of detachment and apply itself vigorously to the spiritual and social problems of its world.'" pp. 148, 149. Christ ministers to His Church, but nowhere is it suggested that He ministers to the world.

We make bold to say, that everything which Dr. Bass says on these two sorry pages could be said by an unconverted religious man. Not that we say he is not saved, but he surely puts himself in dubious company. Think of talking of the church's world! and of throwing off the "in but not of" the world. To do this would necessitate discarding John 17, where we have that memorable prayer of the Lord to His Father, as He was about to leave the world and His own in it. He said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Was that true or false? The Lord said that He did not pray for the world, but for His own who were still in it. Reader, we prefer to believe Christ's words.

Think of being told to cease our worldly detachment and make an impact on the world. If every Christian lived the separated life that was seen in the early Christians, there would be an impact on the world. Christianity proper did not begin until the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2); but where, oh where, do you find the Church being told to apply itself to the problems of the wicked world of the old pagan Roman Empire! We do read, however, that the early Christians turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6). This they did, not by social contacts and a patronizing subservience to the world, but by walking apart and far off from its customs and ways. They turned to God from idols and waited for the Lord to come back, and it got the whole world talking. O for Christians of that stamp today! Did Paul, John, or any apostle, or the Lord Himself, attempt to remove the plague of slavery? Did not Paul send a runaway slave back to his owner and offer to pay for any default by the slave? (See Philemon.) Did any apostle declaim the great moral depravity of the world, and so try to raise its moral standards, and improve society? Never once! But they did tell true believers in the Lord Jesus that those things belonged to their past, and that they were to live in holiness. The God to whom they had turned was holy; therefore, they were to be holy.

Dr. Bass's proposals on these pages of his book offer nothing but the same old "social gospel" that dragged down the whole professing church at the beginning of this century. Now he wants all

Christians to give up their separation, and mingle and meddle with the world. May God keep the feet of His saints from such a slippery and wrong path. Titus 2 outlines practical Christianity and tells Christians how to live in this world-"soberly, righteously, and godly"-first, with ourselves; second, toward the world about; and third, toward God and before God. Then it is added "in this present world," while looking out of it for "that blessed hope" which is the coming of the Lord. The glorious appearing is another thing and will follow when He comes back with His saints.

We forthwith reject and despise such attempts as Dr. Bass's to pull the Church down to the level of the world. It is the same thing which took place in the days of Pergamos-Rev. 2- where the Church fell down to the level of the world, as did Eutychus in Acts 20, when he wearied and went to sleep while Paul was preaching. He fell three stories, to the level of the earth. And when the teaching given us by God, through Paul, of the heavenly calling, portion, and hope of the Church is given up, the Church will fall, or rather has fallen, to the level of the world, down from the third heaven, in principle, to the corrupt and corrupting world.

Ecumanicalism: the Editor's Column

"Brethren, the time is short." 1 Cor. 7:29. The coming of the Lord is at hand. This is the only solution for the multitudinous problems facing Christians in the great profession of Christianity. (There are, however, sufficient instructions for us in the Word of God to direct our pathways until that moment comes.) Iniquity is abounding, and Christ's lambs and sheep are impoverished; nevertheless building of edifices, supposedly in the honor of Christ and for His service, goes on at an unequaled rate. Apostasy abounds, while the march that will end in the formation of Babylon the Great accelerates.

In our April, May, and June issues we mentioned the great flood of ecumenical sentiment in Protestantism, the apostasy within it, Rome's interest in union, and her increasing apostasy. Now some of the suggestions made by Dr. Eugene Carson Blake concerning union are coming to pass. He proposed that the Episcopal Church in the United States combine with the Methodist, and his United Presbyterian, and the United Church of Christ. Then the United Presbyterian General Assembly voted to support Dr. Blake's proposal for interdenominational merger. The Episcopal Unity Commission announced it would submit to their Detroit convention in September a resolution calling for discussion of the merger that would bring together about 18 million "Christians."

The merger of the Congregational Christian Churches (itself a merger of the Congregational and Christian Churches) with the Evangelical and Reformed Church into the United Church of Christ was held up for some years by suits in the civil courts to block it; but with the dismissal of the court action by a U.S. district court, the culmination of 21 years of negotiation was reached. This brought together 6,422 congregations with 2 million members. The delegates came together in a manner that suggested something akin to the Israelites' shouting "so that the earth rang again" when the ark of God came into their camp (1 Sam. 4:5). According to Newsweek, July 17, 1961, the jubilant delegates burst into song, singing, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." The Israelites, on that occasion, learned to their sorrow that things are not always what they seem to be; and God allowed the ark to be taken by the Philistines.

The president of the new United Church, Dr. Ben Mohr Herbster, commented:

"If the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church, with all the differences of background, polity and traditions could come together and demonstrate such a spirited unity as is evident here, there are few if any Christian denominations that cannot take such a step."-Time. July 14, 1961.

Then the new General Synod in its first meeting invited the Disciples of Christ to join them. This further union would give the union 4 million members in 14,000 congregations. But nowhere is any mention in such news of faithfulness to the Word of God. or a staunch stand for the basic truths of Christianity. Statistics, wealth, members, and sentiment seem to be the guiding factors.

Next, the Disciples of Christ immediately responded and suggested to. start conferences in a few weeks to work toward that merger.

Nor is this all that happened to emphasize the sentiment of the day. The delegates voted to respond to Dr. Blake's proposal for union with the Presbyterians, Methodists, and Episcopalians.

And then President Herbster said:

"We promised in the beginning to be not only a united church but a uniting church."-Time.

The trend is so marked, and the pace so fast, that elderly Christians who know the mind of God concerning things to come, and who have been looking for the Lord to come, scarcely expected to see these developments before that time. Things that are taking place before our eyes in Christendom are so marked, as leading up to the great world-church which will be cast into great tribulation, that the blessed moment of our departure to be with Christ must be right at the door. Let us then take courage and press on in faithful allegiance to our absent Lord, while warning sinners-religious or irreligious-to flee from the wrath to come. Jonah had a simple warning message from which he was not to deviate to please Ninevite sinners. He had a very short sermon-"the preaching that I bid thee"-yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

We might add that the United Church delegates then launched into world affairs with pronouncements on various subjects, even to urging of United States' recognition of Red China and its inclusion in the United Nations. Thus the seeds of that which will in the end completely destroy the world-church-Babylon the Great-are being sown with the new plants.

On the other side of the globe the currents are the same. The Church of Scotland-the home of John Knox-threw its caution and suspicion of the Roman Catholic Church aside, and directed its moderator to visit the Pope next spring when he journeys to Rome. Here is a report showing the state:

" 'For too long', said the Rev. Dr. Roy Sanderson of Glasgow, 'the separated churches-our own among them-have sought to defend themselves smugly behind ecclesiastical curtains. Today the curtains are being parted, little by little.' Hailing the ecumenical leadership given by Pope John XXIII and the retiring [now retired] Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Geoffrey Fisher, Dr. Sanderson added that a summit meeting between the Roman Catholic and the Scottish Church would be an 'example and symbol of hope to the world.' "-Newsweek, June 12, 1961.

There was opposition from some of the gathered clergymen, but Newsweek says:

"The angry debate was drowned in prolonged applause, though, as the assembly firmly approved Dr. Sanderson's motion."

And so the tide increases! If the real believers in the Lord Jesus were removed today by the Lord's coming, then lifeless, empty profession would swarm into the folds of Rome. Everything is ready for the formation of "Babylon the Great." Then the great edifices, the liturgy, and all the accouterments of religion, which today abound, will lull the doomed profession into a stupor until destruction comes upon them.

And here is a note which shows the clever way in which ecumenicalism is aiming to carry the Christians in denominational folds who are fearful that all is not well in the welding together of anything that even nominally bears the name of Christ.

Prior to the completion of the United Church merger, Dr. James E. Wagner, president of the Evangelical and Reformed Church called on the National Council of Churches for a series of "quiet, unpublicized, prayerful consultations aimed at restoring confidence and communication between what he defined as 'classical orthodoxy' and more 'liberal orthodoxy.'" -Eternity, July, 1961.

Note the words, "quiet, unpublicized, prayerful." Is not this a bid for keeping the bait hidden from those for whom it is intended? And how was this to be done? He explained:

"Let our publications be so clearly grounded in the Bible and in biblical faith, so patiently interspersed with pertinent Bible references, that he who runs may read and the wayfaring man, though a fool, may readily discern that we are no less 'people of the Book' than are those who so stridently claim that they are, and they alone."-Eternity, July, 1961.

Scripture quotations are to be used to convince any sincere doubters that there is divine warrant for preparing for the world church. Is this a part of what we read in 2 Timothy about the last days, when people will heap up teachers because they have itching ears and wish to hear pleasing things? Or is this the temper of the Israelites of old who said to the prophets, "Speak unto us smooth things"? (Isa. 30:10.)

Some of our readers may think that the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury may have resulted from disapproval of his visit to the Pope late last year, but this apparently is not so. The new Archbishop, Dr. Arthur Michael Ramsey, is also "deeply concerned with the prospects of Christian unity and he is currently giving short radio talks on the subject."-Newsweek, Jan. 30, 1961.

Another indication of the latest trend in England is that the new archbishop said that it would not do to campaign for "disestablishment"-separation of church and state-but that he wished the church would be so annoying that the state would take the action to separate them. This would further rather than hinder the Church of England's going over to Rome. But there is not much vitality in the Church of England when of 53 million people in Britain, of which 27 million have been baptized by it, less than 3 million are enrolled on the parish rolls.

When the World Council of Churches convenes their third assembly in New Delhi, India, in November, they will have more than the admission of the Russian Orthodox Church to consider. Another eight churches have submitted applications, two of which are Pentecostals in Chile. This just points up a little more of the world-wide scope of the clamor for union.

And, significantly, the Roman Catholic Church has agreed to send six observers to the W.C.C. world conference. They are definitely interested, but they need not be anxious; for, as we pointed out before, they have but to bide their time, and the ripe fruit will fall into their hands.

As the real, vital Christianity loses ground, the Word of God is no longer the sole arbiter of either truth or conduct; liturgy has moved into the churches increasingly, so that the members are moved to religious feelings by many inventions of men, and some of the things of Judaism which had an appeal for men in the flesh.

A certain man who had been in the armed forces returned home to find his home church had changed during his absence. He wrote to Eternity Magazine as follows:

"I discover that my home church has become very liturgical. Prayers are read out of a book, the congregation confesses in unison and absolution is granted by the minister. I would appreciate your opinion since I am greatly disturbed by this."

Dr. Herbert Henry Ehrenstein answered his question, and we quote in part:

"There is nothing wrong with the use of printed prayers or a liturgy, provided that the minister's performance and the congregation's entrance into it are not perfunctory and matter-of-fact. A liturgical service can be a beautiful act of worship if participated in with a proper spirit.... Any type of service can meet a real need..."-Eternity, July, 1961, p. 38.

Now, Christian reader, where is the warrant in Scripture for reading printed prayers? The Pharisee could have had one when he prayed with himself; but the publican certainly had none when he said, "God be merciful to me a [the] sinner." Luke 18:13.

Some may cite the so-called Lord's prayer to bolster such a thought as having printed prayers; but that was a disciples' prayer, and was suited to their present state, not to Christians. Full forgiveness was not known in it; it was not asked in the name of the Lord Jesus; nor was it by the Spirit. Is reading a prayer, "praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20)? Or is a formulary of religious service, worshiping God "by the Spirit" (Phil. 3:3)? The woman of Samaria (John 4) could refer to the liturgy of the temple, or even to that of Mount Gerizim; but the Lord told her that those who worship God must do so in spirit and in truth. A Jew of old did not need new birth to enjoy embellishments of the temple and its carnal service; nor does a person today need new birth to have a religious awe come over him by the grandeur of form and ceremony. But God seeks worshipers who worship "in spirit and in truth."

Now another word about Protestantism's open and avowed departure from the faith-its apostasy. The Princeton Theological Seminary graduates heard Harvard Divinity School's dean, Dr. Samuel Howard Miller, say:

"Christianity may be at death's door, and that its spiritual legacy is more likely to push it through the door than the atheism of the present."-Time, June 16, 1961.

Dr. Miller then went on to state the great impasses of the present world with which religion seems unable to cope. True these things are great, and religion as such is sterile; but the facts are that man has departed further and further from God. He does not want God, nor know Him. Dr. Miller's remarks demonstrate these facts. Dr. Miller further said:

"If religion cannot illuminate these three [which he named] dark areas of modern life, 'it should get out of the way so that men will not be tripped by its frumpery or fooled by its solemnity. There is serious work to be done, lest the world descend into darkness deeper than we have ever known before'."

Think of a graduating class of men, destined to lead the world religiously, being sent out with such instruction. Now to follow Dr. Miller further:

"If atheism marks the honest recognition of insufficient representations in the light of new dimensions of reality, then atheism is not by itself an irreligious stance. It is a movement of the spirit by which religion itself may be saved from itself."-Time.

Truly the wise men of the world are dismayed, they have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them (Jer. 8:9)? The exigencies of the present are great indeed; and none of the world's religions, not even of the devitalized Christianity, has the solution for the present distress. Nor can Dr. Miller's idea of atheism come to the rescue. The only solution would be the course followed by Nineveh in the days of Jonah-repentance before God, but perhaps it is even too late for that. Judgment is on the way. Escape is only possible for individuals who repent and accept the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, retiring at this time from Union Theological Seminary, spoke in a similar vein:

"The insecurities of our age strongly tempt this generation... into any kind of storm cellar of religious security, whether this be Biblicism of eschatological irresponsibility... -an end-of-the world insistence on Christian detachment from society."-Time, June 6,1960.

Another great mind which has wound up in the morass is that of Harvard's great theologian, Paul Tillich. Let us note:

"Faith, according to Tillich, is not belief in God, but 'ultimate concern.' Hence an atheist is a believer, too, unless he is wholly indifferent to the ultimate questions. Doubt is an inevitable part of faith. Sin is not something one commits, but a state of 'estrangement' from one's true self.... The religious man can 'fearlessly look at the vanity of religion.' Tillich can rejoice with Nietzsche that 'God is dead'-the God of theism-and write of looking beyond him to 'the God above God.' "--Time, March 16, 1959.

So much for his blasphemy! But God is NOT mocked, and Professor Tillich and all of his kind will find that out to their eternal loss and damnation. This, Christian reader, is the character of Protestant apostasy which will drown men in destruction and perdition. The road to hell is paved by high sounding phrases and commendations of "great minds" and "great thinkers." The human mind apart from the grace of God is at enmity with God; and all its reasonings only exalt man for the present to debase him to hell in the end. Is there any wonder that what is known as Christian religion has no relevancy to the present turbulence? The only way that this world will ever be made suitable for Christ's kingdom and righteous rule is to have it first cleansed by His unsparing judgments. They are dreadful to contemplate.

But is Roman Catholicism far behind in its apostasy? This same issue of Time that sets forth the great Tillich's daring unbelief and disregard for the God in whose hand his breath is, quotes a noted Catholic theologian, Gustave Weigel, a Jesuit, as saying:

"The sustained brilliance of Tillich is amazing, and his incredibly wide knowledge matches his brilliance. Any witness of the Protestant reality looks for someone to give a unified meaning to the whole thing. I believe I have found that man [in] Professor Paul Tillich."

Such commendation of a rank unbeliever coming from a Catholic source puts Catholic orthodoxy on the same low level of Protestant apostasy.

God's judgment fell on proud, boastful, arrogant Babylon in the past; on the Assyrian Empire, on Egypt, on Greece, and on the great Roman Empire of the past. He judged Israel in His righteous indignation. Shall the Western world escape? shall Christendom, with more advantages than any

other people, go unscathed? No. No portion of the world has ever received such terrible outpouring of divine wrath as apostate Christendom will. And everything points up its imminence. The only thing we are sure will come first, is for the Lord to call His blood-bought people home to the Father's house.

The New English Bible, published by Oxford and Cambridge Bible houses, is chiefly the product of the ecumenical-minded denominations of Great Britain. Its deference to Romish doctrine in the New Testament (already available) makes it a congenial partner to British ecumenicalism. The Revised Standard Version in the United States is owned by the National Council of Churches, the ecumenical leaders here. We also understand that another new version is in the process of preparation by Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish scholars. This is to be made acceptable to all three groups. What a conglomeration of equivocation, adulteration, and perversion that will have to be. With that announced goal, exactitude and faithfulness to the inspired Book will of necessity be given up. According to a report in the U.S. News & World Report of last October 31, the publication will be in 30 paperback volumes, which are to begin circulation in January, 1962. Well did a godly man of a century ago say: "If a man had the governing of this world he could not endure its wickedness for a single day." O the patience and forbearance of God! But the time of His grace is fast running out.

We purpose, the Lord willing, to combine the April, May, June, and August editorials into a pamphlet on ecumenicalism.

Ecumenicalism

We propose to take a look at the religious climate and religious trends in the world about us; that is, in the Western world. We have "the sure word of prophecy" concerning the events to take place shortly after the Church receives its home call; but the question we ask ourselves is, What are the portents of that which is to be seen on almost every side in Christendom? What do they suggest to us?

What was once only a trickle of opinion, later became a rising river, and has now almost reached the proportions of a tidal wave. We refer to the preachment of the urgent necessity for religious union-ecumenicalism. At first only a handful of theological liberals espoused the proposal; but today large, and enlarging, segments of the professing church have been caught in the great swell. Protestants of nearly every persuasion, and of no persuasion, and even Catholics are much interested in promoting a great world church that they suggest would greatly increase the "Christian" world testimony.

The National and World Councils of Churches are in the forefront of this great effort of man, and it may be assumed that there is some connection between them and some branches of the United Nations. There are those who propose a super world government, and those who propose a super-world religion. In some ways their propositions overlap. It is to be feared that the spirit that animated the builders of the tower of Babel and the spirit moving the builders of the world colossi today are the same and from the same source. Although today the advocates of super-government probably fear being swept away by overwhelming power in the hands of ruthless dictators, while the proponents of a world-wide, all-embracing Christian church fear the overwhelming force of communistic materialism and scientific naturalism, although both of these elements are in the forefront of the ecumenical drive.

But from whatever source, here are some facts: As the National Council of Churches'-an organization composed of 33 denominations-representatives were gathering in an Francisco early in December for their fifth triennial general assembly, Dr. Eugene Carson Blake preached in the pulpit of Grace Cathedral at the request of Bishop James A. Pike of the Episcopalian diocese. This was on the Sunday before the general assembly meetings were to open. Dr. Blake, who was formerly a president of the National Council, is the executive head of the newly combined United Presbyterian Church; and his well-planned and well-timed bomb went off with utmost precision and produced the desired effect. He made a concrete proposal that the Episcopal Church, together with his United Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the recently forged United Church of Christ come together and form one great denomination of 17.8 million communicants. (The United Church of Christ was formed in 1957 by merging the Evangelical and Reformed Churches with the Congregational Christian Churches.)

Editor Harold Fey of the independent, liberal Christian Century was in attendance at this historic service and said that one might go to church for a decade, or maybe for this century, and not see such an unusual and important service. Needless to say, Dr. Blake's suggestion was heartily

endorsed by Bishop Pike who knew in advance of his "sermon." Some reactions from other leaders included a remark by the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, the Rt. Rev. Arthur Lichtenberger, that the proposal was of tremendous importance to the whole church. Also, Dr. John Wesley Lord, the Methodist bishop of the Washington Area, said, "that such a re-united church would make a tremendous appeal to... a growing number of people who stand aghast at the sin of denominational overlapping."

The heads of the United Church of Christ also expressed interest and a willingness to examine Dr. Blake's proposal. And so the swell increases as more and more churchmen talk mergers and consolidations.

Here are some comments from Eternity magazine:

"It was plain that San Francisco set a new watermark in the flood of feeling for church union in the United States—at least as far as the leaders of American Protestantism are concerned. The flood waters virtually swept away the lingering concept that somehow the denominations could work together in a loose sort of federation.

"Dr. Blake and others following his lead seem to feel that in the merger of churches, such as he proposed, spiritual forces of renewal will be released and the church will again possess the sort of witness that once turned the world upside down."

Eternity further says:

"But there is a greater impetus for church union. Bible students can point to the words of our Lord Himself: 'that they all may be one... that the world may believe that thou hast sent me' (John 17:21). These words have been neglected far too long even by those who swear their loyalty to God's Holy Word."

Again we quote from Eternity:

"It is plain that today Christians must search their Bibles and study more diligently the revealed truth of God about the nature of the church. Many Christians have been more concerned to study the prophecy of the future than they have been to study what the church of Jesus Christ is to be right now."—Feb. 1961, pp. 27, 28.

It is easy to see the present attitude of Eternity and its editorial staff. Its late editor-in-chief, Dr. Donald G. Barnhouse, led the way. At one time he departed from the National Council of Churches and its conglomerate of modernism and often apostasy, but in late years he went back to it, expressing his regrets for having ever left it. He then spoke over the air under its aegis, and in his magazine wrote disparagingly of those who depart from iniquity. Shortly before his decease, he spoke out against what is called dispensationalism; and in combating a servant of the Lord who taught it said,

"I do not believe that the church is in ruins."

And yet on every hand the evidence is overwhelming of the diseased and ruined condition of the outward testimony of the Church of God on earth. Now his successors say,

"Conservative Christians who have been preoccupied with the doctrine of the Scriptures must now concentrate on the doctrine of the church."-p. 28.

Is not the doctrine of the Church a part of the great body of scriptural doctrine? How can it be separated? Is not the truth of the Church of God on earth simple, and easy to be understood by those who are willing to practice it? The difficulty lies in the preconceived ideas of professing Christians to have it (the Holy Scriptures) the way they prefer it to be!

But what dissonant sounds would come from the diverse elements which Dr. Blake would put together in one house with all the various forms and machinery, liturgy and ceremonies. Dr. Blake, however, seems to have the answer even for this; that is, to find the lowest common denominator which will allow all so-called Christians to blend in a uniformity without too much strain on conscience or predilection. Here is his suggestion of a compromise formula:

A "visible and historical continuity with the church of all ages before and after the Reformation."

Here is something to blend the Catholic position (first, as it is held in the Anglican communion; second, in the orthodox bodies of the East; third, perhaps as held in Romanism) with the churches that came out of the Reformation whose position and doctrinal truths were bought at the price of the blood of the martyrs.

Acceptance of "the historic Trinitarian faith received from the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds."

3) Belief in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion) as the "true means of grace and not merely a symbolic memorial," no matter what the precise operation of the sacrament may be (e.g., whether the Communion wine is believed to turn into the actual blood of Christ or not).

This is to appeal to the Lutherans and Catholics at a later date, and others now.

Then Dr. Blake suggests these:

Agreement that "God, speaking through the Scriptures, must be able to reform the church from age to age."

This sets the basis for complete change in existing church arrangements to suit the new super-church to the accommodation of all participants. A democratic form of church government.

This will assure present leaders and lay activists that they will not be brushed aside by some new top-heavy organization. A greater sense of brotherhood among and between members and ministers.

This must be done to get the needed financial support from wealthy members and the active cooperation of the laity to superimpose this great church on their local organizations.

A broad theology and a flexible pattern of church service.

The new great step toward "Babylon the Great" will suit the local church whether it maintains some semblance of orthodoxy or rejects all the revealed and supernatural truths of Scripture; whether it wishes an ornate building with greatest liturgical arrangements, or a modest building such as John Wesley might have decreed.

So here is the great blueprint which will allow much filling in to be done on the local level. Church members will be able to do or to hold anything they please, or nothing, just so long as it is not disruptive of outward union. Fidelity to Christ and to God's Holy, unchangeable Word would sow discord and would not be tolerated. We live in a day when non-conformity to the view of the masses will not be tolerated, and yet the word "toleration" is often used. Those who would be faithful may yet suffer real persecution by the high and mighty, pretentious, so-called Church of Christ. Great changes are in the making. And how soon will they fructify? Let us note the following:

"Noting that it would take ten years to shape and approve the details of the Blake plan, the Rev. Dr. Theodore Gill told a panel of the council that church union cannot wait that long. Because of the 'silliness' of church competition at the local level, 'the gun is at the church's head,' said the Presbyterian president of San Francisco Theological Seminary."-Newsweek, Dec. 19, 1960, p. 50.

It must be done with all dispatch; urgency is in the air. Things are moving, and delays will not be allowed. Here is what Eternity has to say on this point:

"The interdenominational organizations of evangelicalism have little time left to decide whether they are going to align themselves with the separatists [a word of disdain for any who do not go along with the trends] who believe hopefully that the 'church' can be made 'pure,' or with the majority of Christendom moving in the growing ecumenical tide." p. 28.

We probably should mention a few things concerning the actual meeting of the National Council of Churches of Christ which was held in San Francisco, California following Dr. Blake's Christendom-shaking proposal of church union. The proposal from Dr. Blake had not been on the agenda of the general assembly, but proceeded it and set the stage for increased activity by all the ecumenical-minded delegates. It gave a sense of urgency to union. When the business meeting got under way, they received a report that American churches "have never been healthier" than they are now. The secretary of the council, Dr. Roy G. Ross, gave a "state of the churches" report to the delegates for their 33 Protestant and Orthodox bodies. The report said that "a rising tide of religious interest in the United States" is evident by the statistics which show church membership at an all-time high. Church building reached a one billion dollar a year rate, and a very high level of members' participation in church activities was noted. Not a word was said about how many people repented of their sins and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Only externals were mentioned and boasted in.

One may well ask, Were there any real Christians present? If there were, Where was there any evidence of their loyalty to Christ and the truth of God? Would not the words of Isaiah reprove any true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of all the carnal boasting? "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.... They are shepherds that cannot understand." Isa. 56:10, 11.

Could any description of worldly success by the profession of Christianity more aptly fit the Holy Spirit's last description of the professing church on earth as found in Rev. 3:15-17? "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I AM RICH, AND INCREASED WITH GOODS, AND HAVE NEED OF NOTHING; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Proud, boastful Christendom

has indeed reached the last stage of her testimony on earth. She is to be spewed out of Christ's mouth as something nauseous to Him. Her plight today is like that of the Israelites who had forsaken their God, but could boast of their religiosity and long background when they saw the ark of God come into the camp in the days of the apostasy of Eli's sons. At that time they boasted and shouted until "the earth rang again" (1 Sam. 4:5). Their shout was but empty pretension (the ark was taken and they were despoiled), and the Lord gives the same verdict to Laodicea's boasting.

If this article should fall into the hands of any true believer who took part in the sickening lukewarmness of the San Francisco convention, we say to him in true Christian charity: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," or "shine upon thee." Eph. 5:1•.

The ecumenical builders work on a wrong premise; that is, that all professors of Christianity are truly Christ's sheep, when by and large the majority today will not stand up to such a test. The wheat field has become a "tare" field, where mere professors abound; they are not Christ's sheep, and are destined to hear Him say to them, "I never knew you." There is an article in Eternity for January, 1961, by Walter R. Martin. (This is the man who sought to persuade the orthodox believers of today to welcome into their midst the Seventh-day Adventist fellowship.) In his article Mr. Martin sees only "scandalous" sheep and good sheep-or "obedient and disobedient" sheep. He rejects entirely the word of the Lord to come out from among unbelievers "and be separate" (2 Cor. 6); he says it does not apply to separation from professing Christians in churches. But the verse does apply to unbelievers inside or outside of the professing church involving any unequal yoke. How can a believer and a modernist infidel worship God together? It is impossible according to truth.

The promoters of an ecumenical church cite the success that has been achieved in Canada since 1925 when the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists came together to form the United Church of Canada (and later, the Polish National Catholic Church-not Roman-was admitted). According to the glowing reports it must have been one continual love feast, with such a testimony to the unchurched that the example is well worth emulating. But external union, so often achieved at the sacrifice of the principles of the truth and of loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word, is not always what it seems to be. Skeletons are often hidden away in great houses, and family loyalty forbids that they should be mentioned to outsiders. One thing we do know is, that much modernism and even apostasy has been housed in this church union experiment. But what does the Lord Himself, who stands amidst the seven golden candlesticks of church profession, think -thou it? He is judging of the profession, and perhaps He has written over it, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Rev. 3:1. One thing is sure, the Word of God does not countenance the mingling of the holy and the unholy, of the saved and the unsaved, in one great testimony, no matter what the aim may be of the promoters or of the doers of this strange work.

We might add that as of 1950 the United Church of Canada had 2,500,000 communicants, almost 6,500 houses of worship, and \$100,000,000 worth of property. It played a large part in forming the Canadian Council of Churches, and is a member of the World Council of Churches. Dr. Willard Brewing of this organization said,

"It was the first large-scale translation of ecumenical theory into practice."-Newsweek, June 26, 1950, p. 12.

At that time they started a program which is still in the making to unite the United Church with the Church of England in Canada, and it is said that the "rank-and-file" members favor it. And today's primate of the Anglican Church of Canada says,

"Nothing less than the reunion of all Christendom should be our goal." And, "Anything that limits the completeness of the fellowship men find in their common allegiance to Christ is sinful."-Weekend, vol. 10, no. 47, 1960.

Remember that he says "men"---saved or unsaved---must be joined together in a great profession; but to achieve these supposed notable ends, loyalty and faithfulness to Christ must be cast aside. Well did the last hook of the Old Testament speak of a similar time when Israel had turned from God in heart and ways, but were boastful: "And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." Mal. 3:15.

But how beautiful is the next verse: "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine... when I make up My jewels." What an encouragement to faithful children of God in this age to walk in separation from the unholy and the unclean, although it may be acclaimed by all the world as the will of God and the work of Christ. Do we "fear the Lord"? then let us speak of Him to them who are like-minded. We can leave our cause in His hands, who is "the faithful judge," and let men call us what they will. "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious"-the greatness of the professing church which accommodates itself to the world has no attraction to the heart that finds Him precious.

Ecumenicalism

In the parable of the sower sowing the seed of the Word, some seed was lost to the fowls of the air, who devoured it, which the Lord explained was "the wicked one" catching away the seed sown in the hearts of the hearers. Then in the parable of the mustard seed, that which had a very small beginning (which the tiny mustard seed portrays) later became a tree, and the fowls (wicked spirits) lodged in its branches. (See Matt. 13:31, 32, 3-19.) This prefigures the growth of Christian profession into a thing of such size that wicked spirits can find a lodging within it. Then the last stage of the great profession is found in Rev. 18, where it is not merely that wicked spirits find lodging in profession, but "Babylon the great is fallen, and is become... a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." This will precede God's final overthrow of that which He hates---false, empty profession which dares to attach the name of Christ to all forms of evil, coupled with a rejection of the truth. It will be a cage full of iniquity. Can it be that that which began so brightly, with only 120 persons on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), would as to its outward profession have this ultimate end? Yes, and God has forewarned us; but ere it reaches that final state of apostasy the Lord will come and take all true believers to Himself (Matt. 25:1-10; 1 Thess. 4:15-17).

God bore long and patiently with Israel, but finally He gave them up. Then He gathers in from among the Gentiles a people for heaven. And has He not been most gracious and patient with Gentile profession? But although judgment is His strange work, it will surely come.

While the Christian profession today is boasting as never before, and is marching faster and faster to the great ecumenical (world-wide) church, the evident characteristics of its final apostasy are apparent and are gnawing away at its vitals. Ecumenicalism is on its way; in fact, we say it is here. It is in the atmosphere which today surrounds most of Protestantism as well as Roman Catholicism. No young man seeking a place in most Protestant circles today can expect to make much, if any, headway unless he falls in with this trend. Here are the words of Dr. Ivan Lee Holt, retired Methodist bishop of the St. Louis and Dallas area: "as the missionary movement was the great religious program of the 19th century, so in this 20th century no minister can expect any leadership in the church of today who is not ecumenically minded." -Christian Beacon, Oct. 15, 1959.

We have previously spoken of the church union experiment as seen in the United Church of Canada, which is now engaged in making plans for further union. Now let us see something of the apostasy that is interwoven with this step toward the cage of Babylon. Not long ago a 126-page book was published by this amalgamated church's Committee on Christian Faith and Order. It is entitled, "Life and Death-A Study of the Christian Hope." This book denies the damnation of the lost. It says:

"It is not God's will to save individuals apart from the rest of creation, but along with it.... We must acknowledge the strain of universalism in the New Testament-the note of hope that at last all men shall be saved."

This is plainly a denial of the eternal punishment of the lost; it is the false doctrine of Universalism. And what does the book have to say about the Romish doctrine of purgatory? Here it is:

"The Bible gives no support to the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory." But also, "We threw away too much when we threw purgatory clean out the doors. We threw out the baby with the dirty water of its bath."

Then in another place, Life and Death states:

"It can be doubted that the dead were so suddenly and completely transformed at death as to put them beyond all need of grace or of our prayers. We believe that serious and sympathetic consideration should be given to the point of view of those who believe in prayer for the dead." p. 60

Here is plainly the doctrine of purgatory, call it what they like. This modern apostasy also teaches the abominable lie that there is salvation for the lost after death; just a little more religious tranquilizer to keep men and women happy and unconcerned on their way to doom. Here is a bald denial of the Christian's being with Christ at death, and of the sealed doom for those who die in their sins:

"And if the Christian's ultimate destiny is not determined at death, why should we think the possibility of salvation for the non-Christian ends at death?"

We could go on and on, but we add only some comments from the moderator, The Rt. Rev. Angus J. McQueen:

"I have never believed that hell is a place of everlasting fire, and I have never preached it.... I think it is also logical to assume that if we could believe in intercessory prayer for people in this world, then we should believe in it for those in the next. We are as close to God in both."

Shocking indeed is the daring of man, to cast God's Word behind his back and regard as "logical" to "assume" that God did not speak the truth! This man has placed himself in the category of those who take away from the words of God, who will have their part taken "out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Rev. 22:19.

But ecumenicalists have other standards by which to judge. The Primate of the Church of England in Canada speaks in glowing terms of the other great ecumenical experiment in the consolidated Church of South India. He says that

"they have adopted a new liturgy (form of service) which is better than they had in any of their former churches. I attended a celebration of it while at the Anglican conference at Lambeth, England. It is a beautiful liturgy and it was a moving experience to be present."-Weekend, Vol. 10, No. 47, 1960.

No doubt some would have deemed Cain's sacrifice beautiful and moving and much to be preferred over Abel's offering. These "moving experiences" are not to please Christ, but men. He gave no such instruction to His Church, but mere worship "in the Spirit" would not please the taste of the unsaved who rank equally with the believers in modernistic ecumenicalism. But what says the Spirit to real believers who are caught in the meshes of the advancing Babylon the great?-"COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, THAT YE BE NOT PARTAKERS OF HER SINS, AND THAT YE RECEIVE NOT OF HER PLAGUES." Rev. 18:4.

Nor is rank unbelief found only in the Canadian experiment, but it is found throughout Christendom. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, who made the startling proposition for union of four great denominations at the San Francisco assembly of the National Council of Churches, says,

"Today I don't step on a fundamentalist's toes unwittingly. I know."-Newsweek, March 28, 1955.

The story of his rise to prominence tells of his listening to the voice of "neo-orthodoxy" (which is neither new, for it is as old as Eve's twisting the word of God, nor is it orthodox, except in using the old phraseology of orthodoxy, while extracting the vitals) in Reinhold Niebuhr, now of Union Theological Seminary.

And Dr. Blake made his famous plea for union in the cathedral of the Episcopalian archbishop (Rt. Rev. James A. Pike) of the Californian diocese. And what of this colleague?

"He spoke of 'the myth of the Garden of Eden' and of its value in explaining the nature of man. This was, he said, the use of a myth to explain a 'complicated truth.'

"Yet I do not know a single member of the Anglican communion -Bishop, presbyter, deacon or layman-who believes this story literally."-New York Times, Feb. 13, 1961.

The net result of this viewpoint is to place our Lord Jesus Christ in the position of having spoken untruth; for He referred to the creation at the beginning as fact-not fancy or myth. "He which made them at the beginning made them male and female." Matt. 19:4. If you throw away the divine

records of the creation, every other part of the Word of God that makes reference to it as fact is false. But, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." Rom. 3:4. Dr. Pike goes on:

"Another myth, set forth in the creed, is the idea that Christ `ascended into heaven.' Pike asks, Where? We no longer believe in a three-level universe.... The virgin birth is a myth, Pike feels, designed to communicate the simultaneous humanity and divinity of Christ; so is the thorny theological concept of the Trinity."-Time, Feb. 24, 1961.

Bishop Pike tries to relegate the blessed and precious truths of Christianity to 4th century church leaders who were imbued with Greek philosophy. When he speaks of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, he uses the words

" 'Evolver,' 'Healer,' and 'Community Builder'."-Time, Feb. 24, 1961.

If Judas sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver, for what are these modern ecclesiastics selling Him? They are truly "blind leaders of the blind," who will all fall into the pit together. How solemn to think of the thousands upon thousands who are being duped by the enemy of souls until it is forever too late. And this is true, regardless of the book published by the Board of Evangelism and Social Service of Canada's largest church, from which we have before quoted.

And who came to Dr. Pike's defense? Not surprisingly, it was Walter Donald Kring of the All Souls Unitarian Church in New York. Certain southern Episcopalians had brought charges of heresy against Bishop Pike, but Mr. Kring said that the southerners may have been using the charges as a "smokescreen" to cover their strong antipathy toward Bishop Pike's views favoring integration. But the Unitarian minister said that churchmen in New York feel that the charges of heresy will never be aired. He added:

"Bishop Pike did not 'deny the possibility of the miracle of the virgin birth,' and neither would I, but he believes in assuming that Joseph was the human father of Jesus. This is the specific ground on which the heresy charge is based-that he denies the virgin birth. He then goes on to say that he does not believe that Christianity has an exclusive corner on salvation.

"He also says that his idea of God has changed. He first believed in a God who would limit salvation to a 'select group of people who happen to have heard the news and heard it well.' He feels that this is an impossible God. 'As to this God, I am now an atheist,' he says.

"He says specifically," Mr. Kring said, "that he doesn't believe that Christ `sitteth on the right hand of the Father,' that 'Christ ascended into heaven,' or that Jesus was 'conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary'."-New York Times, Feb. 13, 1961.

If Christ did not ascend into heaven, and if He is not now at God's right hand, then the Bible is false and every Christian's trust and hope is vain. If the Lord Jesus was not who and what the Scripture said He was, Christianity is a delusion. The Old and New Testaments are inseparably bound together by indissoluble ties. The whole Bible stands or falls together. The Old Testament told of His virgin birth, of His death as a martyr and as the sinless victim, of His resurrection, and of His being seated now at God's right hand. If He is not there, we Christians have no Great High Priest, or Advocate. And if these who apostatize feel as they say they do, why keep up the mockery any longer? Russian atheism is to be preferred; at least you cannot accuse them of being hypocrites-whatever their doom.

Another defender of Bishop Pike in his denial of the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus was Dr. Martin Rist, New Testament professor at the Iliff School of Theology at Denver, Colorado. Dr. Rist quoted from a book, "The Life and Teachings of Jesus," by Charles A. Laymon, thus:

"Regardless of the means by which Jesus entered the world, the luminous impact of his mind and spirit upon history remains to this hour.... I advise a new minister never to preach a sermon on the virgin birth."-Denver Post, Feb. 4, 1961.

And after all this, he was nevertheless honored at a banquet during the 18th annual Ministers' Lectures at Iliff School the week of the Denver Post report. Is it again as it was in the days of wicked Ahab when there were 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the groves, while Elijah stood alone for God? Elijah learned later that God had reserved 7,000 men who had not bowed down to Baal, but theirs was a rather negative testimony. So today, the prophets that speak falsely are in the ascendancy, and faithful men have become rare. Oh, if only the mass in Christendom could see their awful doom which is soon to come, both here and hereafter!

Christian reader, can blasphemy reach higher? We feel like crying out with some whose words are recorded by God, "How long, O Lord?" If the Lord's coming for His own is not at hand, what is? Of course apostasy will reach deeper depths when we are gone to be with Christ, but then destruction will be at hand. A time is coming when all the profession of Christianity will be rooted out of the earth and completely destroyed by man himself when he wearies of its hypocrisy and mockery. Then cynicism, atheism, communism, and humanism will (with Satan's aid) throw off even the name of God; and then all will go down to judgment under the victorious armies that will come forth with the Son of man when He executes the just vengeance of God. God in love gave His beloved Son for the purpose of saving sinners from their sins; but when He is rejected, judgment must ensue; for God will be no party to His Son's dishonor.

Let us also examine some of the other prominent ecumenicalists at the San Francisco rally. There was Dr. Theodore Gill, former managing editor of the liberal Christian Century. He is now the president of the large Presbyterian Seminary at San Francisco. There was a storm raised when he was appointed to that post, for he had boldly stated that he would not subscribe to the "virgin birth." Is this the voice of the Shepherd or of the wolf? Yet he was at the convention and said that church union could not wait another ten years.

This man, Theodore A. Gill, was also the platform coordinator of a Methodist Youth Convention at Purdue University, attended by 6000 in August, 1959, where "scenes from Broadway plays, jazz, interpretive dancing and singing" were all a part of the program. The Pagan world gave up God, and then God gave them up to all uncleanness (read Rom. 1); and Christendom is fast giving up God and His goodness. The Gentile profession is NOT continuing in His goodness and shall be cut off (Rom. 11:22).

Another top man in the National Council of Churches was there, Dr. Edwin T. Dahlberg. He was pastor of the Delmar Baptist Church in St. Louis, but has been filling assignments for the World Council of Churches for more than ten years. Then he was elected president of the National Council. He made a trip of investigation into the Middle East and came, away with a novel proposal for settling all the problems between Israel and their Moslem neighbors. Here is what he said:

"We would do well to consider the possibility of a series of major religious conferences in Jerusalem including the best leadership of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, with a view to discussing the whole question of the Middle East in terms of the will of God." In another paragraph he says, "Such a daring act of faith, in the name of God." Again, "Shall we conclude that the resources of monotheism have been exhausted, and that the Christ of Nazareth, the prophets of Israel, and Mohammed, the prophet of Allah, have lived in vain? If we, their followers," etc.

What daring! to put God and Allah on the same level, yes, and Christ and Mohammed on another level together! This is treason against the Most High. Dr. Dahlberg's Christ is not the Christ of God, nor is his God the God who has been revealed in the Son. Like Judas, some so-called ministers of the gospel would kiss while they betray Him. The noted doctor went on further:

"One beautiful morning in Midnapore, on India's national Independence Day, I was present at a prayer meeting of three faiths- Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam. It was attended by some three hundred people. As I listened to the readings from the sacred writings of all these religions, and to the prayers of the leaders of the three cooperating faiths, I was overpowered by a sense of the Eternal."-Christian Beacon, Jan. 8, 1959.

It must not take much to overpower some people! Paul was not overpowered by all the religious displays in Athens, but took a bold stand against them. Peter was rebuked for seeking to put the Lord on a level with "Moses the man of God," and the great

prophet Elijah; but what shall we say of a man who would put Him on a level with the false prophet Mohammed? And all this was reported in Presbyterian Life on January 1, 1959, without a protest.

This overpowering emotion evidently came from the combined readings from the Vedas, the Koran, and the Bible. If a Christian has even glanced at the writings of the Vedas and the Koran, he would inwardly revolt at placing them on the same platform with the Word of the living God.

Some years ago this same Dr. Dahlberg said:

"What Baptists and other Christians need most is an up-to-date language.... The modern mind no longer gets any meaning out of such phrases as 'the precious name of Jesus,' 'coming under the blood,' and 'saved by grace'."-Time, Aug. 7, 1950.

Need we comment? Is there a single child of God who reads his statements that does not instantly recoil? Such effrontery needs only to be read to be hated by every lover of the name of Jesus. "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." 1 Pet. 2:7. That is the answer-"Unto you... which believe."

Now just another quotation, from Eternity magazine, which indicates where their sympathies lie:

"When the highly efficient and devoted officials of the National Council of Churches planned the program for the recent General Assembly... they counted on presenting a well-ordered corporate image of 33 denominations working cooperatively in the closest unity and Christian brotherhood....

"Some of the ablest and most respected men in the religious world were included on the program: Billy Graham, Judge Luther W. Youngdahl, Bishop James A. Pike, Dr. Edwin T. Dahlberg, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, Bishop Leslie Newbigin of the Church of South India... and many more."

We have already shown conclusively what the respected Bishop Pike is as to the Christian faith, also Dr. Dahlberg; and we could say much more regarding Bishop Oxnam, for he has uttered some of the most shocking statements to come from a Protestant minister. Let the reader judge for himself where Eternity stands. And for others who may have been there who are true believers, we have this to say, "A man is known by the company he keeps."

Although our voice may be insignificant, we echo the cry with clarion distinctness, "Come out of her, My people."

Ecumenicalism

The Lord Jesus said to the Jews at the close of His earthly ministry, "How is it that ye do not discern this time?" Luke 12:56. And today there are many Christians who do not discern the character of these days-the last days-the days just before He will take all true believers to be with Himself in the Father's house. The grand moment is almost here. Wherever we look: the state of the nations, East and West, North and South; military preparedness; economic alliances; conflicts within men's minds over opposing ideologies; breakdown of morals; lawlessness; everything tells the same story-the end is at hand.

And nowhere is it more in evidence than in that which professes to be the Church of God. Laodiceanism-indifferentism to the claims of Christ and His glory, while boasting of riches and grandeur-is well advanced. Ecumenicalism continues to swell, while neo-orthodoxy (formerly called "modernism"), and new evangelicalism (a watered-down, popular perversion of the gospel of God) help to promote the World Council of Churches. The latest ecumenical achievement is the fruit of fifteen years of negotiations to bring the Russian Orthodox Church into the great fold. When the invitation to the Russians to unite with the W.C.C. was first made, it was rejected; but clandestine and cautious negotiations have been continued. Now at length an application for membership in the W.C.C. has been received, signed by none other than Moscow's Patriarch Alexis.

Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, president of the United Lutheran Church, and president of the World Council's central committee, who is one of the most ardent and active promoters of the world church, has announced the receipt of the request, which, according to all reports, will almost certainly be approved by the world body. This will add stature to the W.C.C., although there will be some objections, because it is well known that anything of religion which is tolerated in Russia is subservient to the dictatorial aims of Russian (international) Communism. It will open the door for further penetration of world religion by the leaven of the communist ideology.

Estimates of the number of communicants which would be added to the World Council by accepting the Russian Church vary from 25 to 50 million. Their request for membership will be voted on by the World Council assembly meeting in New Delhi, India, next November. Dr. Fry says that their reception will be "a major event in the life of the council."-Time, May 5, 1961.

No one should suppose that the end aim of many of the great non-Roman church leaders is only the uniting under a single roof of all the Protestant and orthodox bodies. It is evident that in much of the present thinking, reunion with Rome is included. The National and World Councils are not opposed to allowing part of their membership's going over to Rome in a body. Progress in this direction is perhaps further along than most suppose. Here is a recent report:

"A vice president of the National Council of Churches said... that union between Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians was very close."

He further said that "there was no real difference between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholics and expressed the hope that a joint invitation to unity will come from Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople and the Bishop of Rome, Pope John, 'who has been sent by God to accomplish a holy mission of unity'."

These remarks came from Archbishop Antony Bashir, who is the archbishop of New York and of all North America for the Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Church. He further remarked that Roman Catholic dogma of the infallibility of the Pope poses no real problem to Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic communions.

Archbishop Bashir, when in Detroit to officiate at a celebration in the St. George Syrian Orthodox Church, remarked that on the previous Sunday in his own church in New York, Roman Catholic Cardinal Cushing had been a banquet guest in his church, and "after the Divine Liturgy came into the sanctuary, knelt before the altar, prayed and blessed the committee that invited him."-Detroit Free Press, May 1, 1961.

Cardinal Cushing's action is not to be wondered at, since Pope John XXIII recently ordered and attended a Byzantine-Slavic rite mass in St. Peter's Basilica, and spoke some words in ancient Slavic, to show Rome's solicitude toward Eastern Orthodox churches.

Not many years ago some Christians thought that the Roman Church was at the end of her tether; but today her outreach has lengthened, and the gloved hand is being extended to those whom she formerly opposed. And it would seem still stranger (if we were not acquainted with the Holy Scriptures) to find that hand is being accepted, and in places even sought.

It is not six months since the highest ecclesiastic of the Church 'Of England went to visit the Pope, and exclaimed,

"Your Holiness, we are making history:'-America (R. C. Weekly), Jan. 14, 1961.

After the Archbishop's visit with the Pope, he had another visit with Augustin Cardinal Bea, head of the Vatican Committee for Promoting Christian Unity. At this meeting there was discussion of participation by the Church of England in the Roman Catholic ecumenical conference to be held later, probably next year.

Now in such a short time, the British monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, has been received by the Pope. One may well ask, Where is England going? It is traveling the same roads as most of the Western world, down divergent paths toward infidelity, humanism, and atheism on the one hand, and to Rome on the other. Two diverse and opposing attitudes are at work, and in the end Romanism will at first prevail, only to be destroyed later by these divergent forces, most of which are growing up in a moribund religiosity which clings more and more tenaciously to liturgy and outward form and name.

When the noted English cleric, John Henry Newman, sought to turn the English Church over to Rome during the Oxford Movement (1833-41), there was enough resistance to save the day. Newman then left the Church of England and became a Roman priest; later he was given the

cardinal's red hat. This remembrance suggests that perhaps some of the prominent ecumenicalists of today may yet wear the red hat. There is so little vitality left to Protestantism in England that there can be no powerful force to stay the trend.

The same is true of the Anglican Communion in most other parts of the world. It has gone into the ecumenical conglomerate in South India. The Primate of Canada, as we have before seen, is ready for it, even to expressing the wish that "Nothing less than the reunion of all Christendom should be our goal."-Weekend, Vol. 10, no. 47, 1960.

The head of the Anglican branch in the United States is the presiding bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Arthur Carl Lichtenberger, who said that he "would include the Roman Catholic Church in any moves toward unity," and "The search for a way toward reunion should embrace all churches, including the Roman Catholic."

And the Bishop of Chelmsford, England, wants the Anglican Communion to act as a bridge between the Catholic churches of the East and the non-Catholics of the West, and then to disappear when its function is completed, and merge its identity in the unity of one church.

Fellow-Christians, consider how easily and how quickly the last stage of Christendom can come about in the formation of "Babylon the Great"! And remember that liberalism-Laodicean lethargy-has been and is paving the way for the great apostasy of Christendom. Without profession's having first lost its respect for God and subjection of spirit to His revelation, ecumenical union could not come about. As we have before shown, all religions are treated as of some real value, if not of equal value in most ecumenical circles. Then when the authority of God's Holy Word is supplanted, the dogmas of men, the traditions of the elders, the foibles of so-called church fathers, the decrees of the church which make the Word of God void by the words of mere men-all that is spurious comes in to fill the empty space. At that point, the sacred Scriptures are quoted out of context to prove that "white is black, and black is white."

O Christians who still desire to please God! Come out of the unclean mixture while there is yet time! Ask not directions from those who like Lot sit in the gate of Sodom. "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." Rev. 18:4. Waste not your time in trying to turn back the clock or reverse the trend. "Come out"! "Come out"!

Where is the Church of Rome in all the ecumenical urge? She is holding out an olive leaf; she is offering a little encouragement here and a little there; but after all she is playing it coyly, and biding her time. She has but to wait, and the ripe apples will fall into her hands. Her aim at present seems to be to first get the Orthodox Greek Church with its 130,000,000 members into the fold. Pope John XXIII wants to show the world the Roman Church in its full splendor and then to say to the others,

"You can see, brothers, this is the church of Christ. Come, come!"

One mark of Rome's interest in seeing all Christendom gathered under one roof-her own-is the increased activity of the Graymoor Friars who each year indicate to the Roman parishes how to pray for church unity. They set aside eight days for the observance of the Chair of Unity Octave (Jan. 18-25). With Pope John's approval, the language of the prayers is altered to eliminate any phrases that might seem offensive; for instance, instead of praying for the submission of the

Anglicans to the Vicar of Christ, they now merely pray for the reconciliation of the Anglicans with the Holy See. But there is plenty of evidence that their aims and principles have not changed. We need not name other changes of prayer phraseology of a similar nature, even concerning Moslems and Jews.

The major portion of the Catholic weekly, America, for January 14, 1961, was devoted to discussion of ecumenicalism which will bring all "Christians" into "one fold," and under "one shepherd." America's editorial also comments on the opposition that was raised in 1948 when President Truman sent Myron Taylor to the Vatican as his representative:

"But new winds blow.... Thus, over the same weekend in which the Archbishop of Canterbury visited the Vatican, American Catholic and Protestant religious leaders engaged in the first formal theological colloquy of an official character, at St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn. Their interfaith discussions, organized with the approval of the Holy Office, lasted for three days." p. 454.

Eleven pages of this issue of America are devoted to discussion of the approaches to Catholic and Protestant unity. And there are twelve short articles on the subject of the ecumenical "dialog" by prominent theologians from both sides of the ever lowering fence.

Robert McAfee Brown, Professor, Union Theological Seminary, commented in part:

"Protestant theology can learn a great deal from Catholicism in such areas as the meaning of tradition, the life of the early Church and the relationship of the Church to the world." p. 459.

One Catholic writer does mention a point which in the past has been a very real barrier to unity; namely, "Holy Writ or Holy Church." p. 460.

Avery Dulles, Professor, Woodstock College (he is the son of the former Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, who was himself an active Protestant layman and interested in the W.C.C.), says:

"The goal of our coming dialog should be neither to refute adversaries nor to reach agreements on a basis of compromise. We should aim rather at mutual enrichment through theological give and-take. If all participants are chiefly intent on getting closer to Christ, they will find that they can accept many of each other's best insights without surrendering any convictions of their own." p. 461.

There is also a rather long article on Interchurch, Relations, by Bernard Leeming, S.J., professor of theology at Heythrop College in England, from which we will quote a few excerpts:

"In March, 1959, the Herder-Korrespondenz quote the Holy Father as having said, 'We do not intend to conduct a trial of the past; we do not want to prove who was right or who was wrong. All we want to say is: "Let us come together. let us make an end of our divisions" '." p. 465.

"In August, 1960 Cardinal Bea [head of the Secretariat for Unity of Christians], evidently referring to the fear expressed by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches that unofficial 'dialog' might be restricted, declared that it was most important to continue the unofficial conversations, for such meetings between theologians had already led to a certain amount of agreement. He mentioned the work of the German Una Sancta group under the direction of Archbishop Lorenz Jager of Paderborn. He also noted that a two-way conversation could be

established between his secretariat and the World Council of Churches on some questions connected with the Catholic faith." p. 466.

"The cordiality with which separated brethren are received at Rome, especially by the secretariat, shows the desire to have at first hand the fullest knowledge and understanding of different outlooks." p. 466.

"The initiative of the present Holy Father is merely a normal development of a movement which was proceeding in the Church. Catholic groups and individuals in different countries have for long been studying questions about 'reunion' and have been publishing books and periodicals commending the sympathetic approach." p. 466.

Now lest any readers think that Rome is about to change her stand on all that she holds dear, let us hear from another Catholic paper, *The Lamp*. Under the title of *What is Catholic Ecumenism*, we find this:

"The term 'Ecumenism' is often heard these days: both Catholics and non-Catholics use it but with very different ideas in mind. Yet they converge, in a general way, on the reunion of Christendom as a certain combination of projects, plans and theories looking to unity. From that point on, they differ widely. The term itself, as used in this connection, is a product of this century deriving from the 'Ecumenical Movement,' i.e., the Protestant enterprise which is now embodied in the World Council of Churches. They desire to find a way towards unity and they meet periodically to discuss ways and means of achieving it. The Catholic Church has the answer to their quest and the way it explains this answer is what is called Catholic Ecumenism." p. 8.

"The mystery of redemption... involves... incorporation into one visible society variously called the Family of God, the Kingdom of God, the Mystical Body of Christ, the Catholic Church (different titles for one and the same reality)." p. 8.

"There is no other way to true religious unity than by way of return to the Catholic Church.... It means also the acceptance of those duties which go with being a Catholic, including visible union with the Holy See of Peter. This, then, is Catholic Ecumenism.... She will not corn promise, because she cannot. She is the dispenser, the guardian of the divine deposit, not its owner." p. 30.

In another article it is said that the cause of unity is "close to the heart of Christ and the Immaculate Heart of our Lady."

This is the story of much of today's movement for ecumenicalism; it is not merely that all Christendom is heading for a melting pot, but for Rome's crucible.

But for true Christians who believe God's Word and look for the Lord from heaven, they will have neither part nor lot in the downward course of Protestant profession on the one hand, nor be disturbed by it on the other. They will neither aid nor abet its progress, nor will they try to stem the onrushing tide. Our Lord will soon call us home to be with Himself. May our one concern be to walk in separation from all that defiles, especially religiously, always remembering that He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:14.

If the Lord leaves us here a little longer, we may yet suffer persecution for being faithful to Christ. Protestant ecumenicalism could be very intolerant of all nonconformists. This is a day when non-conformity is scarcely allowed in any quarter.

We might say something of the way the ecumenical leaders in Protestantism threw themselves into the political arena to help elect the first Roman Catholic president in this country. Two of the National Council of Churches headquarters men left the Council to work for the Democratic Party in the religious affairs department in order that the climate might be right for the ecumenical dream of uniting all with Rome. One of the two men who aided this, Mr. James W. Wine, said after the election:

"The climate is right for cooperation and the friendly exchange of ideas; now it is up to individuals-and I think they are ready for it."-Newsweek, Nov. 28, 1960.

He has now been rewarded by the president by being nominated as Ambassador to Luxembourg. Many Protestant leaders came out boldly for the election of a Catholic president as a means of showing broadmindedness. But we are sure that the Lord overruled all and that His will was done. Our only comment concerns the great change in the Protestant attitude toward Rome, and each thing concerning it only points to the nearness of the Lord's coming.

We have notes and clippings from many quarters which show the alarming departure from the truth. Some underline the giving up of the Protestant heritage, and a going back to Rome in regalia, ostentation, veneration of Mary, confessionals, masses, monasticism, acceptance by certain German Lutherans of "miracles" at Fatima and Lourdes, and of a group working within the denomination there resembling the Oxford Movement of 1833-41.

Skepticism, unbelief, and apostasy are not the sole possession of the great Protestant bodies; they are characteristic of these days-the last days. The Roman Church is being honey-combed with men who call the Bible in question. Here is an unbiased, secular report:

"The idea that some Christian Scripture is mythological rather than historical, though held by many Protestant theologians, has kicked up a flurry of controversy around San Francisco's outspoken Episcopal Bishop James A. Pike" (Time, Feb. 24). The issue has its counterpart in Roman Catholicism. Cautious by comparison with Bishop Pike... Catholic proponents of the idea avoid the word myth. But the new idea of the Gospels is highly unsettling to Catholic conservatives, and so widespread among college students, laymen's discussion groups and seminarians that it has provoked a well-modulated blast by a leading theologian.

"Subject of the blast is the theory that the first two chapters of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke are not to be considered as historical, but as what the Jews call a midrash. A midrash is a passage of explanatory commentary on the Scripture-either in analytical, legal terms (Halachal or dramatic, legendary terms (Haggada). Into the latter category the so-called Midrash Theory puts the Gospel narrative of the birth of Jesus."-Time, Mar. 17, 1961.

We will not quote more of this Roman infidelity, but here is sufficient to demonstrate the character of these days. This Midrash Theory is a little less brutal and frank than some statements by some apostate Protestant clergymen. The denial of the very basic facts of Christianity--without which Christianity is a farce-has made inroads into Protestant and Catholic bodies. Catholics will

naturally hold to these key doctrines more tenaciously than Protestants, from the standpoint of their traditions and dogmas; for instance, if the Lord's virgin birth can be disallowed in their system, then the Rosary and all that goes with the veneration of Mary becomes meaningless. But infidelity is infidelity wherever it is, and the more prevalent it is on both sides, the easier it will be to bring about the ecumenical world church.

Very soon the small minority of true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will be taken out of this world-wherever they are -and then lifeless, boastful, arrogant, commercialized Babylon the Great will be as empty and as desolate as the temple was when the Lord Jesus left it-"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Matt. 23:38.

"Keep us, Lord, O keep us cleaving

To Thyself and still believing,

Till the hour of our receiving

Promised joys with Thee."

The Edge of the Wilderness

Exod. 13:20; 15:22

When God communicated to Moses His intention to deliver His people from the bondage of the Egyptians, He spoke of this deliverance in a twofold way. Not only would He "deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians," but He would "bring them up out of that land" (Exod. 3:8). Thus early Jehovah made it clear that He never intended to set His people free from the bondage of Pharaoh that they might remain in Egypt, but expressly to take them out of it.

The Spirit of God has recorded for us, accurately, the occasion on which each of these undertakings was accomplished; for chapter 12 closes with this distinct statement: "The selfsame day,... the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies," while chapter 14 closes equally distinctly with the announcement, "Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians." In this distinct way Jehovah fulfilled in detail His gracious word to Moses on behalf of His captive people; for "God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." Chap. 2: 24.

The first stage in their journeyings from Egypt, under divine guidance, brought the people to Succoth (chap. 12: 37); the second to "Etham, in the edge of the wilderness" (chap. 13:20); a necessary stage, for the wilderness must be entered at some point.

But there were two dangers peculiar to this camping ground. First, it was so near to Egypt that it was a very easy matter to return to that land. Second, there was nothing to hinder their oppressors from following after, to recapture the freshly liberated people.

To secure the two special objects before Jehovah - separation from the land and deliverance from the hand of the Egyptian - yet another stage was necessary; namely, their reaching Marah, wherefore the first time the Israelites were properly in "the wilderness," separated as well as delivered. But between Etham and Marah, what took place? First, the power of Jehovah was marvelously shown in the judgment of the Egyptians.

Second, the deliverance of the people was accomplished.

Third, an impassable barrier effected their permanent separation from the land of the Egyptians.

Under the immediate sense of the final judgment of the oppressor, and their own national deliverance, it is not surprising that the pressure of praise found expression in that marvelous triumph song of chapter 15. There too they celebrate the power and excellency of Jehovah, while they even anticipate triumphs yet to come. "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance." So they sang. Alas! how soon from those very lips came the sad reversal of their passing convictions.

By the Red Sea deliverance, Israel was consequently fairly launched into the wilderness. Their return into Egypt, by the pathway of waters through which Jehovah had brought them, was a

physical impossibility. The waters which rolled over their oppressors, it must be carefully noted, equally rolled between them and the land out of which they had been brought. The identical event that accomplished their liberation, accomplished also their separation from the land of Egypt.

On this latter point, it is noteworthy that the song of redemption is silent. Nor is the reason difficult to discover. As a people, they would have been satisfied, when set free from bondage, to remain in the land "by the fleshpots" and "eat bread to the full," as is clearly proved from Exod. 16:3. Egypt, while truly the scene of their bondage and misery, was also the scene of the gratification of their fleshly inclinations and desires. But between them and the possibility of gratifying these desires, there now rolled the waters of separation, which were also the waters of judgment and deliverance.

It is clear that at the "edge of the wilderness," the experience of the Israelites did not and could not include these three wonderful dealings of Jehovah with their enemies and with themselves. There was consequently a vast characteristic difference between their experiences at "the edge of the wilderness," and "in the wilderness" in its full meaning.

Turning now to the application of the type to the believer of the present day, we read in 1 Cor. 10:6, "Now these things were our examples"; that is, the things that happened to the Israelites -not the Israelites themselves.

There is doubtless, therefore, instruction of a practical and profitable nature beneath these special incidents which befell Israel. May the gracious Lord give us hearts to appreciate, and grace to profit by, the lessons therein contained.

It is clear from the type that our God has no intention of leaving His redeemed ones, after they have been sheltered under the blood of Christ from His own righteous judgment, any longer in this Egypt-world.

This is a point of extreme importance. In the selfsame night of shelter beneath the blood, God brings His redeemed ones out of Egypt (that is, the world) to "the edge of the wilderness." But at this stage, the world, so to speak, is easy of access. There is no apparent barrier lying between the believer and his return to the scene in which all his gratifications have hitherto been found.

Though a necessary stage in the journey, this is no lengthy halting place according to the mind of God.

The three aspects of the Red Sea already alluded to-judgment, deliverance, and separation - are clearly represented in the death of Christ. The scripture in the New Testament for the first two of these is Heb. 2:14, 15: "That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." The scripture for the last is found in Gal. 1:4: "Who [Christ] gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world." For these, among other reasons, the Red Sea aspect of Christ's death is sometimes spoken of.

The blessed Savior has thus completely fulfilled the type, and by His death brought about judgment for the enemy, and deliverance and separation for the believer.

But separation, since it conflicts with natural inclinations and desires in the direction of the world, is not so readily entered into as the two former aspects of Christ's death, which do not fail to furnish ground for praise and thanksgiving.

Nevertheless, it is of immense importance to seek to understand spiritually that the death which accomplishes our liberation according to God also accomplishes our separation. This can only be divinely learned by diligently following the guidance of God, as Israel followed the guidance of the pillar of fire and cloud in the wilderness.

When, under divine guidance, the Marah stage has been reached in the soul's history, the death of Christ practically forms for the believer a real barrier between him and the world. Hence the important difference between "the edge of the wilderness," and "the wilderness" in its full sense.

When the former stage only has been spiritually reached, links with the world are either not yet broken, or are easily taken up by the believer, and that because he has not yet seen his separation from it through the death of Christ. It is sorrowful indeed to reflect upon the years during which the soul has still lingered at "the edge of the wilderness," contrary to God's express purpose and desire, instead of diligently following the distinct guidance of God, by means of which the soul that follows is led on step by step.

If truly at Marah, separation from the world according to the inclinations and desires of the natural mind is practically discovered to be "bitter"; yet the cross of Christ, of which the tree is a symbol, makes the bitter sweet. There is sweetness sensibly realized in that which separates, since it only separates from that which must hinder and mar the soul's enjoyment of God and of His own heavenly resources in the wilderness. It will readily be seen that food and water obtainable from Egypt could only have marred for Israel "the manna and the springing well" of Jehovah's heavenly supplying.

We may well and profitably raise the question with ourselves, How is it with us? Is it "the edge of the wilderness," or "the wilderness"? We have only to ask ourselves, Have we any unnecessary or voluntary link with the world as to its interests, pleasures, principles, or pathway? If so, however long we may have been on our pilgrimage, we are evidently still only at "the edge of the wilderness." The Marah camping is not yet ours in divine reality.

Egypt - Arabs - Syria - Egyptian Pact Broken: the Editor's Column

It has been well said, "Man proposes, but God disposes." Men vainly think that they are masters of the destinies of nations and of men, but in the end it becomes evident that they are as powerless as a feather in a windstorm. God has said:

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring and from ancient times the end from the beginning. the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." Isa. 46:9, 10.

One of the miracles of this generation has been the sudden emergence of Egypt as a world power of note after thousands of years' lying in poverty and lethargy. The greatness of the Egypt of the Pharaohs was only a memory to taunt her recent leaders.

Then came that eventful time in 1948 when to the astonishment of the world the tiny nation of Israel was born. Her past history had been dismal ever since the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar conquered her people and ravaged the land about 606 B.C. Later she had a partial resuscitation under the Persian kings' gratuities, and was permitted some autonomy under the Greeks and the Romans, until that fateful day in A.D. 70 when Titus crushed the resistance of Jerusalem. From then on they were scattered among the nations, although retaining their ethnic and religious distinctness, which was a miracle, although plainly foretold in the Scriptures. Many Christians thought that Israel as a nation would never rise again, although the Word of God is explicit regarding their still future greatness and grandeur.

The Arab nations surrounding Israel were violently opposed to any revival of Israel, and they immediately launched attacks against her. Egypt then assumed an important part in the attacks on Israel. They had been supposedly arming against this very contingency, and Arab solidarity had been heralded as the thing which was sure to lead to Israel's destruction. On the contrary, however, Egypt's armed might and Arab solidarity proved to be a mere myth or, at best, wishful thinking. Israel emerged victorious, thus changing the United Nations' plans for dividing the old "promised land."

Out of Egypt's humiliating defeat at the hands of the fledgling nation of Israel came a disgruntled, poverty-stricken army major who was to change Egypt's history. Gamal Abdel Nasser felt (rightly or wrongly) that corruption and graft in King Farouk's government had cost Egypt the victory. Much of the armaments which Farouk's Egypt had purchased abroad turned out to be defective, and this contributed to their rout. This army major set about to organize a military clique which would overthrow the king and seize the power. This was not long in coming to pass.

Under Nasser's strong hand, Egypt forced Great Britain out of Egypt where they had been guiding, helping, and directing the impoverished land and people. Christians who understood the prophetic scriptures long knew that England would in the end lose any place in Egypt's affairs, so this was a preparation for the events of the time of the end. Nasser's successes spurred him on, and after a while he nationalized the Suez Canal, and seized it from its owners. This gave him great stature in

the eyes of the Arab world; and he talked of a united Arab world of some 60 million persons, and probably visualized himself as a latter-day Pharaoh controlling all the Arab world, in fact, all of the Middle East, including that portion held by Israel.

Nasser's rise to world eminence has not been without some setbacks, for Egypt's second defeat, in 1956, by the Israeli armed forces, offered a roadblock to his string of successes. But, being an astute politician, he parlayed with the East and the West alternately, and successfully gained material support from both sides in the cold war.

One of his master strokes, however, was cajoling the Syrians into throwing in their lot with him and thus, in 1958, forming the United Arab Republic. In this way he spread his power from the south to the north of hated Israel, and was in a better position to threaten her. It also enabled him to in some measure enrich his poverty-stricken land by drawing on the comparative wealth of Syria. Syria has only about 4,500,000 people, compared to Egypt's roughly 26, 000,000.

But what does the Word of God indicate in all this? Is there to be one Arab power controlling the lands both north and south of Palestine? Is there to be a confederation at the time of the end which will encompass all of Israel's enemies? Is there to be any confederation against Israel at all? We will attempt to answer these questions, and to set the present situation in the light of known coming events.

First, we will state that Israel is in the unenviable position of being surrounded by nations of hostile intentions of varying degrees. Her position today is somewhat analogous to what it was in the years following the death of Alexander the Great, when his four generals divided up his world empire (as had been foretold in Dan. 7:6-"four heads"- 8:21, 22; 11:3, 4). Two of these generals proved to be enemies of Israel and of each other. This is described in such detail in Dan. 11:5-35 that infidels have tried to place a later date on Daniel and his writing, for the express purpose of saying that such accuracy could not have been prophecy; so Daniel must have lived at a later time and written history rather than prophecy. This, however, is disproved by the fact that the Septuagint Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament was made before these things were fulfilled, and it contained the whole as we have it in our Bibles.

In those days the Seleucidae dynasty of Syria frequently fought the Ptolemy dynasty of Egypt, both using Israel as the battle ground. Now the Word of God says expressly that in the end of this age-just before Christ comes to reign-Israel is going to be in a similar situation; that is, between enemies on her north and on her south. Between the 35th and 36th verses of Daniel 11 is a long parenthesis-from the days of the Maccabees of old down until the days of the antichrist -of the future. "And the king" of the 36th verse is that very antichrist-"the false prophet" -the idol shepherd of Zechariah 11. This is the false Messiah in Jerusalem who will make a covenant with the head of the soon-to-be-revived Roman Empire for Israel's protection for a period of seven years (Dan. 9:27).

"At the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him"-the false Messiah in Jerusalem-"and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over... and the land of Egypt shall not escape." Dan. 11:40-42. This, Christian reader, is coming.

And here is the word of the Lord to those rulers of Israel in that coming day: "Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement [a sad way of describing the Western world, now generally known as the Christian world]; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.... And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge [the northern enemy] shall pass through, then shall ye be trodden down by it. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report." Isa. 28:14-19.

From these scriptures we perceive that Israel will again be the object of attack, both from the south and the north, as in the days of the Seleucidae and the Ptolemies, but that Egypt of the future will be the lesser of the antagonists, and will be on the receiving end of a military incursion. There will not be one pan-Arab state as visualized by Egypt's Nasser, and certainly he will not be the leader of the Arab world. We speak now of what Scripture says concerning the time of the end, remembering at the same time that other events may take place in the interim. We can speak positively of the end, for God has spoken; but there may be intervening events between now and then, although we are firmly persuaded that we are approaching the very end. We are seeing things develop today that assure us that the coming of the Lord is at hand, and very shortly after the Lord's coming for His own, there will be "the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

Another question we raised previously is, "Is there to be... a confederation of Israel's enemies?" We answer this with an unequivocal "yes." But these will be the old Asiatic and not African enemies. Let us read part of the 83rd Psalm:

"Keep not Thou silence, O God: hold not Thy peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, Thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate Thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against Thy people, and consulted against Thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance [the name by which the nation is known again]. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against Thee: the tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes; Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tiro; Assur also is joined with them: they have helped the children of Lot." vv. 1-8.

Here we find most of the names of the old enemies of Israel: Edom, the descendants of Esau; the Ishmaelites, the descendants of Ishmael the son of Hagar; the Moabites were early oppressors of Israel; the Hagarenes, perhaps a larger family than merely the Ishmaelites; Ammon and Moab were descendants of Lot, and a similar name is still in use in the Middle East, for Amman is the capital city of Israel's neighbor, the kingdom of Jordan; Amalek was the first enemy of Israel after they left Egypt, for he fought them in the wilderness; the wars with the Philistines are recorded for us by God; and Assur is the old Assyrian power which took the ten tribes captive. Thus we know that the old enemies are there and will reappear in the great Arab confederacy in Asia against Israel.

The head of this confederacy is mentioned in Dan. 8 "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark

sentences [or a dealer in the occult of Oriental mysticism], shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many [this indicates great treachery]: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand." vv. 23-25. He will also attempt to fight against Christ when He comes forth to put down His enemies. The beast of the Roman Empire and the apostate king in Jerusalem will do this first, and be cast into the lake of fire without trial (see Rev. 19:20). Another verse that lets us know that this head of the Arab world will meet his doom at the hands of the Lord is Isa. 30:33: "For Tophet [a name evidently referring to the lake of fire] is ordained of old [that is, it was prepared for this wicked man who in treachery destroys many]; yea, for the king [the apostate head of the apostate Jews at that time] also ["also" belongs there according to better translations] it is prepared; He hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, Both kindle it." ("The king" of this last verse is the same man called "the king" in Dan. 11:36-38, where he honors "the God of forces," or the Roman beast.)

Other scriptures could be added to the ones already mentioned, but the Word of God is plain:

An apostate Israel with their king will be in their land when Christ comes to reign. The godly remnant will have fled when the idol, or image, of the Roman beast is set up in the temple; this will be according to the Lord's word for them in Matt. 24:15-21.

The Western, or Roman, world will be in league with an apostate Israel, and will itself be apostate Christendom.

Israel's enemies on her north and east will form an Arab league (perhaps with Russian backing) and will attack her.

Egypt will be an independent country and will attack Israel from the south, only to reap the whirlwind when the confederated peoples on their north attack Israel and then Egypt herself.

Christ as King of kings will come in power and great glory with the armies of heaven following Him, and will be attacked by the Western world to their own utter destruction. The head of the northern Arab confederacy will also attempt to fight against the Lord, to his destruction.

The three leaders—the Roman beast (the first beast of Rev. 13), and the apostate king of Israel (the second beast of the same chapter), and the head of Israel's northern neighboring confederacy, will be summarily cast into the lake of fire. No trial is needed for those taken in open-handed rebellion. All this brings to mind part of the second Psalm:

"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." vv. 1-6.

Surely we may say again, "Man proposes, but God disposes." His counsel will stand, and He will do all His pleasure. He will have the wise and great of this world in derision, and His Son will "dash

them in pieces like a potter's vessel." The world is rushing madly on to certain doom. May we warn men to "flee from the wrath to come."

Early in October, 1961, the boasted United Arab Republic ceased to exist. In just a few hours the Egyptians were ousted, and President Nasser was notified that Syria was all through with any merger with his Egypt. At first Nasser attempted to fight back, but, seeing that his cause was lost beyond repair, he rescinded his orders. Thus a union of Syria and Egypt, which was not in line with future events according to God's Word, came to nothing. In fact, it was worse than that; for Nasser lost stature in the world arena, and his virulent attacks on neighboring powers by means of his Radio Cairo will be taken less seriously. In an attempt to regain prestige lost in the Syrian debacle, Nasser invited Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia and India's Nehru to a conference of so-called neutralist leaders. This conference took place in Cairo on November 27, 1951. The actual results were nil.

We would refer our readers to the Christian Truth issue of April, 1958, where we looked at the Egyptian-Syrian merger, and went over some of Syria's history, and of the future concerning the nation, especially in her relation to Israel. At that time we pointed out the alignment for the time of the end, and commented about the United Arab Republic that the merger could easily be broken. We scarcely expected it to happen so easily as it did, nor perhaps this soon, but it had to come. The bound volume of Christian Truth, No. 11, for 1958, is still available from the publishers at \$2.00 each, plus postage. We might also add that these bound volumes contain much valuable ministry that is not likely to ever be printed again.

While Israel may be somewhat relieved to have the United Arab Republic dissolved, yet her potential danger from hostile enemies remains, and may burst into flame again at any time. Arab world politicians know that one of the best ways to rally support for themselves is to rain invectives on Israel, and thus seek to divert the peoples' minds from Arab deficiencies and center them on the perennial object of hatred -Israel. Sometimes we may not see just what part some event may have in bringing God's purposes about, but the end will show that He has ordered behind the scenes according to His own will.

The End of the Lord: Grace

There is no possibility of fellowship with God on any other ground than that of grace -no matter when or where. There never was. True, there have been many dealings of God to prove this; but there never could be communion between God and man except in grace. No dealing of God with sinners could have been anything but rejection, unless He met them on the simple ground of grace. This principle runs through everything - God's providential dealings and the like. It is stamped upon all. Our hearts are never right with God unless we are standing on this ground of grace. Even in chastening us, it is the patience of God's grace that is manifested in taking all possible pains with His children. If I as a parent meet only with that which is pleasant in my child, it is easy for me to act in the way of love and blessing toward it; but to go on patiently dealing with a disobedient and rebellious child, is the greater proof of much love. If in chastisement, in our desires after holiness, or in anything else, we do not realize our standing in grace, we get off the only ground of fellowship with God.

It may be difficult at first sight to see how God can deal in grace with a sinner; but in His dealings with Adam at the outset, this is brought out. There was no symptom of repentance in Adam. He was charging the fault on God, and on the woman-"The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." God immediately comes in on the ground of grace, saying that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3). When no promise could be made to man, as man (for no promise could be made to the flesh), grace comes in and sets us in fellowship with the seed of the woman.

Just as it is said of our blessed Lord, that He "increased in wisdom and stature," so is the Christian expected to grow in grace and in the experience of God. Now the old nature that is in us, which Satan addresses, seeks to hinder us here; and therefore the dealings of the Lord apply themselves to it. Through the evil of our own nature, circumstances without come to be connected with that which is within, and thus produce conflict; then comes the secret working of God. Thus that which may be the exercises of our hearts in struggling against Satan, may become identified with the chastening of God.

Our blessed Lord Himself learned obedience by the things which He suffered. But then He began at quite a different end from ourselves. Because we are disobedient, we have to learn this lesson; in suffering, temptation, and trial (patience having in Him its perfect work), He practically learned obedience in a way in which He never could, had He not humbled Himself, and taken upon Him the form of a servant.

What we want to know more of is that faith which, having made proof of the Lord's care, can fully confide in Him for all things; as the Apostle says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." There is all the difference between knowing this as a principle in the beginning of our course, and being able to say, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound." We know experimentally that we have not all "learned" this, though as an abstract truth we may know it. I repeat, there is a great

difference between a young Christian saying, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," and such a one as "Paul the aged" saying, "I have learned." He could say it in practical fellowship with Christ; he had passed through all these trials, and had proved the sufficiency of the Lord's grace in them.

What hinders the development and manifestation of holiness in the saints? The old nature remaining unmortified. Well then through chastening and discipline God brings us practically into fellowship with "His holiness." He deals with our hearts, causing us, by the very conflict which He puts us into, to own, in the full consciousness of our own evil, that One is good, even God.

What was the effect of the striving against sin that these Hebrew Christians were called to? That of drawing out the evil of the flesh. The world called them to walk as the world. Satan found them as rebels in his kingdom; their temptation was to be frightened at his terrors. The Lord suffered all these trials and exercises to come upon them, that the evil nature of their hearts might be discerned in its tendencies, and that they might be matured into separation from evil, as well as matured in fellowship with God. What was it that produced this "striving against sin"? Conflict with Satan and man. But it tended to the discovery of that which was within themselves.

The effect of presenting temptation to Jesus was to show that He was perfect in everything. In us it is the discovery of that in ourselves which would blunt the edge of our spiritual service, and hinder our maturity in holiness. A person may walk a good while in the fullness of fellowship with God, and evil may have no actual power, or there may be the discovery of sin, and it may be struggled against; but where there are things indulged, because we do not discern what their real tendency is, there comes in the Father's chastening. We may look at it as the contradiction of sinners, or as the power of Satan (and so it may be); but after all it is the constant exercise of the Father's love, in order that we may be partakers of His holiness.

Let patience then have its perfect work. There is not one of our souls that does not need this. If trouble or conflict exercise us, let us see if it is not because our own wills have been crossed. We have to be patient with circumstances, doubtless; but we have also to be patient with God's working, which is perfect. Elihu's reproach to Job was, that he had chosen iniquity rather than affliction. God had His own end in His dealings with Job; He is "very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

It is said, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." If man exalts himself, he will be humbled; when God exalts a man, there is no danger of this. Christ humbled Himself under the mighty hand of God in drinking the bitter cup which was given Him to drink; therefore, God also hath highly exalted Him. If we would deliver ourselves, and get out of this path of trial, it must be by some bypath; and we shall lose blessing. We must remember it is added, that in due time God will exalt us-not a minute after the time. When He has wrought the whole purpose of His love, then He will exalt us.

A Famine of the Word of God

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it." Amos 8:11, 12.

In time of plenty, who thinks of famine? But famine sometimes succeeds plenty. It was so in Egypt. There were first seven years of plenty, and then seven years of famine; and all the plenty was forgotten when the famine consumed the land. So it is sometimes with the ministry of the Word of God. At a time when many honored servants of the Lord are actively engaged in ministering Christ to souls, there are few perhaps who consider the possibility of scarcity following the plenty. It may be that the greatest blessing that God gives to souls on earth is a plentiful and seasonable ministry of His precious Word which testifies of Christ; and yet some of us can look back and see place after place where this was so, which has now become little more than a state of desolation and almost famine of the Word, so that those who are the children of God are barely existing instead of being in holy liberty devoted to the Lord.

Some believers may be ready to say about this, If we are deprived of all the Lord's "gifts," we still have the Bible. True, but there is another side to this, How many are there who read the Bible as a routine and get nothing for their souls? Why is this? Are we not told that Moses and the prophets were read in the Jewish synagogue every Sabbath day? so that with the Scriptures in their hands, and read at stated intervals, there was such a famine of the Word of God, that they knew not Him of whom the Scriptures w h i c h they read spake, but actually fulfilled the same in condemning Him.

Was not Nicodemus well instructed in the facts and letter of Scripture? yet was he not ignorant of the foundation truth that a man "must be born again" either to "see" or to "enter into the kingdom of God"? And is it not in the present day most appalling, with so many Bibles and so many readers, to find so few who declare with divine certainty, founded on God's Word, their present possession of eternal life; and fewer still who speak of God's Word, because it testifies of Christ, being the daily food of their souls?

Is there not at this moment with many, and in many places, a famine of the Word? As in the time to which we have referred, those only who in their need had to do with Joseph had bread, so it is now. Christ is our Life-sustainer; and many are faint, and in perplexity -and uncertainty, because they do not go to Him to be nourished by His truth. As in olden time the people came to Joseph, saying, "Give us bread," so all believers have to learn that there is a famine everywhere apart from the blessing of the greater than Joseph. We are told, "There was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine.... All the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence?" Gen. 47:13-15.

Jacob was a man of faith, and he bitterly felt the lack of food. He wanted bread, and knew that it could only be obtained from one who was over all the land of Egypt whatever the instrumentality might be that brought it. This Joseph was a remarkable type of Christ risen and glorified. He had been hated by his brethren, sold by them, falsely accused, put into a dungeon, and after he had been taken out of it was highly exalted. Then it was he became, by God's ordering, the dispenser of bread to preserve life—a striking type of the Lord Jesus, our Life sustainer, Jacob and his sons were objects of God's love and care, and they fainted for lack of "corn." They hungered for bread; nothing less than the bruised corn of wheat could satisfy and sustain them; nothing else could meet their need. Have it they must, for they were famishing; and it could be had only from the typically dead and risen Joseph. May we never separate the Scriptures from Christ of whom they testify.

Are we, dear Christian readers, panting and longing for more of Christ? Is it Christ or something else we are so desiring? Is it with us a settled truth that Christ, whom we have joyfully known as the Savior of sinners, is the only food and Sustainer of our souls? And can this be enjoyed without personal intercourse with Him through the Scriptures?

It is a good sign when the believer hungers and thirsts for more of Christ, and has to do with Him where He now is for present blessing. Such prove that "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." Isa. 40:29. We may be sure that it is only by personal intercourse and communion with Him that we can be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6:10); "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:1); "strong in faith, giving glory to God" (Rom. 4:20).

Truly the famine is sore in many parts of Christendom. Many of God's children seem to be lean and just existing, without any power to step out in the ways of faith; and there is no hope of reviving in their souls but by having personally to do with Christ where He is. It is to be feared that many seldom read the Scriptures, and others make the serious mistake of reading the Bible as a formal routine, and rest in having done so, instead of through the Scriptures having intercourse with the Lord Jesus where He is - "THE OLD CORN OF THE LAND." What then becomes us but to go to the true Joseph, saying, "Give us bread." Let us go to Him hungry, faint, and needy; and He will not send us empty away, for it is still true that He filleth "the hungry with good things," and exalteth "them of low degree."

Like dear old Jacob, you may not be in utter destitution. You may have some balm and honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds; but these things are not "corn," nor can they supply its place. You may perhaps see beautiful things in Scripture; you may have committed to memory some of the sweet incidents there found, be familiar with many of its remarkable historical records, have received solutions of what many call difficult passages of the Word, and know that you belong to God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Jacob knew that he was an object of divine love and care; but he also keenly felt that, good as "balm" and "honey," "spices" and "nuts" were in their proper places, they were not "corn," and could not satisfy his pressing need. He therefore said, "Go again, buy us a little food." Gen. 43:2. But about this the patriarch, like many now, made a grave mistake; for he did not imagine it was to be had "without money and without price." It is true that, through the tender mercy and care of Joseph, it did not hinder food reaching them; nor did any of them conjecture why the money was returned in every man's sack. When, therefore, they

next went for food, Jacob said, "Take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present,... and take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight." Gen. 43:11, 12. All this shows how little they knew the heart of Joseph, or the goodness of God in sending him before them to preserve life. And is it not often the same now? Does not a legal spirit so invest some minds in having to do with our Lord Jesus for present blessing, as if His goodness could only flow to us on condition of something worthy of it on our part? But, like Jacob and his sons, such have to learn that He does not feed and sustain us because of our goodness or ability, but because-

" 'Tis His great delight to bless us:

Oh, how He loves!"

Yes, He freely and lovingly strengthens and cheers those who wait upon Him, and returns all thought of creature righteousness into their own bosom. All He wants is a heart to have to do with Him; as He said, "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Rev. 3:20.

Be assured, beloved Christian reader, it is not discovery of beautiful things in Scripture, the solving of intricate questions, but it is Christ, of whom the Word testifies, who is the food of our souls. It is not "a little balm" or "honey," "spices" or "myrrh," "nuts" or "almonds" that can sustain and nourish our souls, but "the old corn of the land"-having personally to do with Christ Himself, who is now crowned with glory and honor, and soon coming to receive us unto Himself.

Most surely we believe that with many the famine is sore in the land. The unbelief as to the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth, our need of Him, and the supposed competency of the natural mind for searching, receiving, and communicating the deep things of God, close the door of access to the true Joseph's store. It is when men and the world are rightly considered by us according to Scripture, and it is settled by us that there is nothing for our souls in what is seen and temporal, that we are in a state for looking to the fullness of Christ as the only source of supply for our spiritual necessities. When this is not clearly held, the believer easily glides into the refinements of the world for present comfort; such as literature, the fine arts, or its so-called innocent amusements which are often steppingstones to the coarser and more absorbing and soul-damaging departments of the world socially, commercially, politically, and religiously.

Our first pursuits in the morning generally indicate where our hearts are. The children of Israel had to gather their daily food before sunrise, or they would be too late; and if the believer can rise from his bed and go about the business of this life before he has looked up to the Lord, and turned to the Scriptures which testify of Him for renewal of the inward man, it is more than probable that his heart has gotten away from God. Nothing can possibly make up for a lack of food, for "Christ is all"; and those who really live upon Him can say farewell to cold and dry formality and routine, can detach themselves from worldly religiousness and every false way, and say,

"None but Christ to me be given,

None but Christ on earth or heaven."

Do not many of the religious books of the day bear evident marks of a famine of the Word of God? After reading pages, we have sometimes said, There is no ministry of Christ here; where is food for souls? And why do we thus speak? Is it merely to expose the barrenness of the pages? Far be the thought, but rather to warn Christian writers and readers against wasting their time and energies and money in that which neither honors the Lord nor feeds souls. We are sometimes reminded of the prophet's words, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Isa. 55:2. O the untold blessedness of looking up without a veil to our Lord Jesus Christ on the Father's throne, who is Head over all to the Church which is His body, and finding joy, sustainment, and comfort in the contemplation of the infinite perfection of His Person, work, excellencies, offices, fullness, and glory, as revealed in Holy Scripture! Then our earnest cry will surely be,

"Oh, fix our earnest gaze

So wholly, Lord, on Thee;

That, with Thy beauty occupied,

We elsewhere none may see!"

We are convinced that it is not charity to refrain from looking the weighty subject fairly in the face. That Christians generally are longing after more of Christ, and that many of the books of the present day give a solid ministry of Christ to souls, we fear is far, very far, from being true; but until such is the case, all the efforts and devices put in action, and all supposed improvements as to organization, must utterly fail to supply that which personal enjoyment of the Lord Jesus Christ only can give. The inspired prophecy of Amos to God's ancient people is very solemn: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord Goo, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it." Chap 8:11, 12.

Brief Outline of Galatians

There is a character of truth in the Epistle to the Galatians very seasonable at this present time, and very strengthening to the soul at all times.

It teaches us to know that the religion of faith is the religion of immediate personal confidence in Christ. This truth is seasonable in a day like the present, when the provisions and claims of certain earthly church forms, and a system of ordinances suggested by the religious, carnal mind, are abundant and fascinating. To learn, at all times, that our souls are to have their immediate business with Christ is comforting and assuring. To be told afresh at such a time as the present is needful.

The Apostle is very fervent in this epistle-naturally and properly so-as we all should be, as we all ought to be, when some justly prized possession is invaded-when some precious portion of the truth, the dearest of all possessions, is tampered with.

In this epistle, in the first instance, as at the beginning, the Apostle lets us know with great force and plainness that he had received his apostleship immediately from God- not only his commission or his office, but his instructions also --that which he had to minister and testify, as well as his appointment and ministry itself. He was an apostle immediately from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; and what he knew and taught he had by direct, immediate revelation.

And, in connection with this, he tells us, that as God had thus dealt immediately with him, so had he, in answering confidence, dealt immediately with God. For, having received the revelation, having had the Son revealed in him, he at once withdrew from conversing with flesh and blood. He did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before him, but down to Arabia, carrying, as it were, his treasure with him- not seeking to improve it, but as one that was satisfied with it just as it was; that is, with the Christ who had now been given to him.

This brings to mind the Gospel by John; for that gives us, before this time of Paul, sample after sample of the soul finding its satisfaction in Christ. Every quickened one there illustrates it. Andrew, and Peter, and Philip, and Nathanael, in the first chapter -afterward the Samaritan and her companions at Sychar-and then the convicted adulteress, and the excommunicated beggar. All of them tell us, in language which cannot be misunderstood, that they had found satisfaction in Christ, that having been alone with Him as the Savior, they now free-having had a personal immediate dealing with Him as the Savior, they looked not elsewhere. Arabia will do for them as well as Jerusalem, just as in the experience of the Paul of the Galatians. They never appear to converse with flesh and blood. Ordinances are in no measure their confidence. Their souls are proving that faith is that principle which puts sinners into personal contact with Christ, and makes them independent of all that man can do for them.

How unspeakably blessed to see such a state of soul illustrated in any fellow sinner, in men "of like passions" with ourselves, like corruptions, like state of guilt and condemnation. Such things are surely written for our learning, that by comfort of such scriptures we may have assurance and

liberty.

And what is thus, in living samples, illustrated for our comfort in John's Gospel, is taught and pressed upon us in this fervent epistle of Paul to the Galatians. Having shown the churches in Galatia the character of his apostleship, how he got both his commission and his instructions immediately from God, and was not debtor to flesh and blood, to Jerusalem the city of solemnities, or to those who were apostles before him, for anything; and having discovered, as it were, his very spirit to them, telling them that the life he was now living was by the faith of the Son of God, he begins to challenge them; for they were not in this state of soul.

He calls them "foolish," and tells them they had been "bewitched." For how could he do less than detect the working of Satan in the fact that they had been withdrawn from the place where the Spirit and the truth, the cross of Christ and faith, had once put them. But then he reasons with them, argues the matter, and calls forth his witnesses. He makes themselves their judges, appealing to their first estate. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

He cites Abraham in proof that a sinner had immediate personal business with Christ, and through faith found justification. And he rehearses the character of the gospel which had been preached to Abraham, how it told of Christ and of the sinner and blessing being put together and alone. "In thee" (Abraham's seed, which is Christ) "shall all nations be blest." Precious gospel! Christ and the sinner and blessing bound up together in one bundle! And he goes on to confirm and establish this by teaching them how Christ bore the curse and, therefore, surely was entitled to dispense the blessing.

Surely these are witnesses which may well be received as proving the divine character of the religion of faith, which is the sinner's immediate confidence in Christ.

But then, he does further and other service in the same cause. He goes on to tell us the glorious things faith works and accomplishes in us and for us. "After that faith is come," he tells us in chapter 3:25-27, "we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children [sons] of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Here are precious deeds of faith! It dismisses the schoolmaster; it brings the soul to God as to a father, and then it clothes the believer with the value of Christ in the eye and acceptance of God. And "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Chapter 4:6.

And we are redeemed from under the law (v. 5). Can any more full and perfect sense of an immediate dealing between Christ and the soul be conceived, than is expressed and declared by such statements? Brought from under the law- the schoolmaster, and, with him, tutors and governors are gone-we are "sons" at home in the Father's house, and have the rights and the mind of the first-born Himself put on us, and imparted to us! Can any condition of soul more blessedly set forth our independence of the resources of a religion of ordinances, and the poor sinner's personal and full connection with Christ Himself?

But Paul finds the churches in Galatia in a backsliding state. They had turned again to "weak and beggarly elements." They were observing "days, and months, and times, and years." It was all but returning to their former idolatry, as he solemnly hints to them, doing "service unto them which by nature are no gods," as they had been doing in the days of their heathen ignorance of the true God

(4:8). What a connection does he here put the Christianity that is merely formal and observant of imposed ordinances into? Is it not solemn? Was it not enough to alarm him? And does it not do so? "I am afraid of you," says he to the Galatians in this state, "lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain."

But, man of God as he was, gracious, patient, and toiling, according to the working of Him who was working in him mightily, he consents to labor afresh-yea, more painfully than ever-to travail in birth again of them. But all this was only to this end, that Christ might be formed in them-nothing less or more or other than this. He longed for restoration of soul in them, and that was that they and Christ might be put immediately together again; that faith might be revived in them-the simple, hearty, blessed religion of personal and direct confidence in God and Christ Jesus; that, as in himself, the Son might be revealed in them; that, regaining Christ in their souls, they might prove they needed nothing more.

How edifying it is to mark the path of such a spirit under the conduct of the Holy Ghost! How comforting to see the purpose of God, by such a ministry, with the souls of poor sinners! How it lets us learn what Christianity is in the judgment of God Himself! The going over to the observance of days and times, the returning to ordinances, is destructive of this religion; it is the world. "Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" the same Apostle says in another place. Confidence in ordinances is not faith in Christ. It is the religion of nature, of flesh and blood; it is of man, and not of God.

And surely it carries in its train the passions of man. Man's religion leaves man as it found him-rather, indeed, cherishes and cultivates man's corruptions. This showed itself in Ishmael in earliest days- and in Cain before him-but in Ishmael, as the Apostle in this same epistle goes on to show. And he declares that it was then, in his day, the same; and generations of formal corrupt Christianity in the story of Christendom declare the same. "As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." Man's religion does not cure him; he is left by it a prey to the subtilities and violence of his nature, the captive still of the old serpent who has been a liar and a murderer from the beginning.

The decree, however, has been pronounced. It was delivered in the days of Isaac and Ishmael, of Abraham and Sarah; it is rehearsed and resealed by the Spirit Himself in the day of the Apostle Paul; and we are to receive it as established forever. It is this: "Cast out the bondwoman and her son." v. 30.

What consolation to have this mighty question between God and man settled! And, according to this consolation, we listen to this further word: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Chap. 5:1.

All, surely, is of one and the same character. The Holy Ghost, by the Apostle, is preparing the principle, the great leading, commanding principle, of divine religion. It is faith; it is the sinner's personal and immediate confidence in Christ; it is the soul's finding satisfaction in Him, and in that which He has done for it; and in such a religion as this, the believer in possession of this faith is set, as I may express it, next door to glory. The Apostle quickly tells us this, after commanding us to stand fast in the liberty of the gospel, for he adds, "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." v. 5. The hope is the glory that is to be revealed-"the glory of God," as a

kindred passage has it (Rom. 5:2). We do not wait for any improvement of our character, for any advance in our souls. Should we still live in the flesh, only fitting will it be to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." But such things are not needed in the way of title. Being Christ's by faith, we are next door to glory. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified"

(Rom. 8). Being in the kingdom of God's dear Son, we are "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12). As here, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, we wait only for glory; glory is the immediate object of our hope, as Christ is in us the hope of glory, and is the immediate confidence of our souls.

It is all magnificent in its simplicity, because it is all of God. No wonder that Scripture so abundantly discourses to us about faith, and so zealously warns us against religiousness. The "persuasion," as the Apostle speaks, under which the Galatians had fallen, had not come of God who had called them; and the Apostle sounds the alarm, blows the blast of war on the silver trumpet of the sanctuary, uttering these voices in their ears-"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"; again, "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." (vv. 8, 9, 18).

And in the happy structure of this epistle, as I may also speak of it, the Apostle ends with himself as he begins with himself. We have seen how he told them at the first of the peculiarities of his apostleship, how he had received both his commission and his instructions directly from God, and how he had then, with a faith that was an answer to such grace, at once conducted himself in full personal confidence in Christ, and independently of all the resources of flesh and blood. And now, at the close, he tells them that as for himself he knew no glorying but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world was crucified to him, and he to the world; and he tells them further, that no one need meddle with or trouble him, neither fret him nor worry him, with their thoughts about circumcision and the law, or the doings of a carnal religiousness, the rudiments of a world to which he was now crucified, for that he bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus. He belonged to Him by personal individual tokens, impressed on him by the appropriating hand of Christ Himself; and no one had any right to touch the Lord's treasure.

Precious secret of the grace of God! Precious simplicity in the faith of a heaven-taught believer! It is not, beloved, knowledge of Scripture, or ability to talk of it from Genesis to Revelation-.it is not the orderly services of religion-it is not devout feelings-but, oh! it is that guileless action of the soul that attaches our very selves to the Lord Christ in the calm and certainty of a believing mind.

Grace First, Last, and All the Way

The foundation truth of Christianity is that God has done with mere dealing with the flesh. He has another man, even a new Man, Christ risen from the dead; and the Christian has received Hint. This is practically what God has to make good in the heart of the Christian. "Walk ye in Him." A young Christian may be cast down after receiving Christ, through the sense of evil he finds in himself. He wonders how this can be. He knows how Christ deserves to be served, and is conscious how little he serves Him as he ought; he is filled with grief and sorrow about himself, and perhaps begins to doubt whether he is a Christian at all. He has not yet learned his lesson. He has not mastered even what his baptism set forth, the value of having a Savior who is dead and risen. He is occupied still with something of the old man; he looks at it and expects to get better, hoping that his heart will not have so many bad thoughts, etc., as he used to have; whereas the only strength of the Christian is being filled with Christ, with all that is lovely in Him before God.

The saint, in proportion as he enjoys Christ, lives above himself. There is the exercise of that by virtue of which the Christian is said to be dead and risen—the new life which the Holy Ghost communicates to all who believe. Only the believer feels what is unlike Christ; but he rests in what Christ is to God, and this makes him happy. When he becomes engrossed with what takes place within him, he is cast down. It is not that he should not judge himself for what is contrary to Christ, but that he should treat it as vile and bad, as that which flows from man and not from Christ; and then, having confessed it to God, he should turn away resolutely from it to the Savior. The believer has acquired the title in Christ not to be cast down because of what he finds within him—not to be disheartened because there dwells no good thing in his flesh. Is not this what the revealed Word of God tells him so constantly? And yet how many go on months and years, expecting some good thing to come out! I do not, of course, mean that they are not born of God; but they are so under the effect of old thoughts and notions, acquired by catechisms, books of divinity, and sermons, that they do not enter into the full liberty wherewith Christ makes free.

Nothing can be plainer than the Holy Ghost's decision in the matter. He shows that the very smallest insisting on the law, in any shape, brings you in a debtor to do the whole of it; and if so, where are you before God? You are lost and hopeless, if you have a-conscience. The question of the law generally comes up now as connected with sanctification. In the case of the Galatians (chap. 5), it came out strongly in the matter of justification. But the Christian has no more to do with it in one form than another. In verses 1-4 it is connected with justification. In the latter part of the chapter its link is with sanctification, which is the connection, and the only connection, in Rom. 6, where justification is not touched upon, but only the believer's walk. As to this, he is not under law, but under grace. What a blessed thing it is to stand in this true grace of God!

If I look at my salvation, it is all His grace; and if I think what is to give strength to my walk and service, it is just the same. Grace is the spring all through. God does not alter, now that He has revealed, the fullness of grace in Christ. Launched into that ocean, He will riot go back into what had to do with exposing and scourging the old man, needful as the task was. Is He not rejoiced to

have done with that which never wrought anything else, as far as man was concerned, but the mere crushing of those that had a conscience, and an opportunity to make out a self-righteousness for those that had none; those that were conscientious, groaning and miserable; and those that were not, full of themselves and of their fancied goodness? God justifies sinners. What a glory of God! "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness."

How is it, then, one may ask, that any ungodly are not justified? Because they do not believe that God is as good as He is; because the gift of Christ is too great for them; because their confidence is in themselves, or at least they have no confidence in God. And the reason why they have none is, from not believing what Christ is for the sinner. When I know His glory and His cross-that He has turned it all now into the scale of the poor soul who goes to Him because of his sins -then I see that it is impossible that God could not save him who stands in the same scale with Christ; and this is what the soul does that believes in Christ. He may be as light as a feather, but it is not his own weight that he depends on, but on what Christ is and what Christ has done. God has confidence in the work of His Son, and he has; that is faith. A man is a believer who no longer trusts in his own works, nor in his own feelings, but in God's estimate of the cross of His Son, God being not only gracious but righteous in that very thing.

I want to know that I have got through Christ that whereby God is glorified in thus blessing me. And therefore He is what He is-righteous in justifying my soul. If I have Christ, God is equally righteous in justifying me, as He would be in condemning me if I had Him not. The righteousness of God that would condemn the sinner is the very thing that in Christ justifies the sinner; but, then, it also secures holiness. It is not merely a robe over him, but there is a new life as well; and I receive that new life in receiving Christ; in a word, we have justification of life in Him. And of what character is this life? Not the same as Adam's. That would not do, because Adam fell after he had life. But Christ laid down His life, that He might take it again in resurrection; and hence we never lose the life that He has given us-a life stamped with His victory over the grave; in fact, our life is Christ risen from the dead. No wonder, then, that it is everlasting, and that we can never perish. It is the life of One risen, over whom death has no more dominion. And such, consequently, is the position of the believer. Of course there may be the physical act of passing through death, but we are speaking about the life God communicated to the soul; and that life is the everlasting life of Christ, after He had put away our sins on the cross.

The Ground of Peace

"When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Exod. 12:13.

It is most needful to be simple and clear as to what it is which constitutes the groundwork of peace. So many things are mixed up with the work of Christ, that souls are plunged in darkness and uncertainty as to their acceptance. They know that there is no other way of being saved but by the blood of Christ; but the devils know this, and it avails them naught. What is needed is to know that we are saved- absolutely, perfectly, eternally saved. There is no such thing as being partly saved and partly lost; partly justified and partly guilty; partly alive and partly dead; partly born of God and partly not. There are but two states, and we must be in either one or the other.

The Israelite was not partly sheltered by the blood and partly exposed to the sword of the destroyer. He knew he was safe. He did not hope so. He was not praying to be so. He was perfectly safe. Why? Because God had said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." He simply rested on God's testimony about the shed blood. He "set to his seal" that God was true. He believed that God meant what He said, and that gave him peace.

If an Israelite had been asked as to his enjoyment of peace, what would he have said? Would he have said, "I know there is no other way of escape but the blood of the lamb, and I know that to be a divinely perfect way; and, moreover, I know that the blood has been shed and sprinkled on my doorpost; but somehow I do not feel quite comfortable. I am not quite sure that I am safe. I fear I do not value the blood as I ought, nor love the God of my fathers as I ought"? Would such have been his answer? Assuredly not. And yet hundreds of professing Christians speak thus when asked if they have peace. They put their thoughts about the blood in place of the blood itself, and thus, in result, make salvation as much dependent on themselves as if they were to be saved by works alone.

Now the Israelite was saved by blood alone, and not by his thoughts about it. His thoughts might be deep or they might be shallow; but, deep or shallow, they had nothing to do with his safety; he was not saved by his thoughts or feelings, but by the blood. God did not say, "When you see the blood, I will pass over you." No; but, "When I see." What gave an Israelite peace was the fact that Jehovah's eye rested on the blood. God saw it, and that was quite enough.

The application of this to the question of a sinner's peace is very plain. Christ's blood has been shed as a perfect atonement for sin, and God's testimony assures the believer that everything is settled on his behalf. All the claims of justice have been fully answered, and the full tide of redeeming love rolls down from the heart of God along the channels which the sacrifice of Christ has opened for it.

To this truth the Holy Ghost bears witness. He ever sets forth the fact of God's estimate of the blood of Christ. He points the sinner's eye to the accomplished work of the cross. He declares that all is done; that sin has been put far away and righteousness brought nigh-so nigh that it is to all them that believe. Believe what? Believe what God says because He says it, not because they feel

it.

Now we are constantly prone to look at something in ourselves as necessary to form the ground of peace. We are apt to regard the work of the Spirit in us rather than the work of Christ for us, as the foundation of our peace. This is a mistake. We know the operations of the Spirit of God have their proper place in Christianity, but His work is never set forth as that on which our peace depends. The Holy Ghost did not make peace, but Christ did. The Holy Ghost is not said to be our peace, but Christ is. God did not send "preaching peace" by the Holy Ghost, but "by Jesus Christ" (compare Acts 10:36; Eph. 2:14, 17; Col. 1:20).

The Holy Ghost reveals Christ; He makes us (who are sheltered by the blood of Christ) to know, enjoy, and feed upon Christ. He bears witness to Christ takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us. He is the power of communion, the seal, the earnest, the unction. In short, His operations are essential. Yet, notwithstanding all this, the work of the Spirit is not the ground of peace. He is not our title, though He reveals our title, and enables us to enjoy it. He is the author of every right desire, every holy aspiration, every pure and heavenly affection, every divine experience; but His work in us and with us will not be complete until we have left this present scene and taken our place with Christ in glory. Not so the work of Christ for us. That is absolutely and eternally complete.

It is of the utmost importance to distinguish between the Spirit's work in us and Christ's work for us. Where they are confounded, one rarely finds settled peace as to the question of sin. The type of the passover illustrates the distinction very simply. The Israelite's peace was not founded on the unleavened bread or the bitter herbs, but upon the blood. Nor was it, by any means, a question of what he thought about

ill^o blood, but what God thought about it. This gives immense relief and comfort to the heart. God has found a ransom, and He reveals that ransom to us sinners, in order that we may rest therein on the authority of His word and by the grace of His Spirit. And albeit our thoughts and feelings must ever fall far short of the infinite preciousness of that ransom, yet, inasmuch as God tells us that He is perfectly satisfied about our sins, we may be satisfied also. Our conscience may well find settled rest where God's holiness finds rest.

He ... Hath Seen the Father

Truly wonderful and infinite is the blessing which is opened out for us in the 14th and following chapters of John.

We will notice first, the commencement of all, the way to the Father: "I am," says Jesus, "the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." There is no way but through Him- through His blood-the new and living way now made open for us into the holiest of all, even the presence of God. The point of connection between this and verses 1 to 3 is that they who have access or entrance to the Father by Him have of course entrance also to the Father's house.

We next learn the blessed truth that, by coming through Jesus, we not only come to the Father, but we get the Father. "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him." The poor weak heart, ignorant of its full blessedness in Jesus, would embody its soul in that language, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Only let me know that the Father too is mine, and it is enough-it is all. And that satisfaction is nigh at hand: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." We cannot separate between the two; we cannot get Jesus without getting the Father, because the Father was and is in Jesus. If by faith we have looked upon Jesus crucified and risen for the forgiveness of our sins; if we have thus seen Jesus, we have seen the Father; if we have thus got Jesus, we have got the Father. Too much have these things been separated between; Jesus has been looked at as an averter between us and an offended God, so that the love of Jesus has been honored, to the disparagement of the love of the Father that gave Him (John 3:16), that raised Him up from the dead when His work was completed, that our faith and our hope might be in God (1 Pet. 1:21).

It was the Father's love that provided the Son's satisfaction; the sheet is let down from Him and takes us back to Him (using the simile found in Acts 10).

Surely therefore here we find full satisfaction. Blessed truth! to know that God's, even our

Father's countenance ever rests upon us now in love (2 Cor. 4:6). It can never in reality change. As Christ is, so are we; and His position now is blessedly opened to us in spirit (Psalm 21:6). And the Lord says, "Ye know Him." What a nobility there is in the saint! It is not only that our sins are forgiven, and we are in an acceptable relation to Him.

The poorest saint can say what the proudest and most lofty among men cannot say with truth by nature, "I know God." And surely this is eternal life in its truest sense, to know Him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. "I know Him," I suppose, constitutes the full blessing of our portion.

The Heart's Occupation With Christ

I have lately much enjoyed reading of Abigail, the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. Think of the precious faith of that blessed woman whose whole heart was fashioned by God's revelation about David, though everything that was seen belied it. But so it is still. Everything here gives the lie to God's revelation of the glory and preciousness of Jesus; and only in the simplicity of faith, and in singleness of devotion to Christ, can we walk apart from the current of this world's thoughts in the liberty of the Spirit's manifestation of Jesus.

Connected with this, the record of David's worthies was most heartwarming to me in 1 Chronicles. Their "faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains." O that Christ had more of such helpers!

See too Amasai's magnificent answer to David: "Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse," etc. When our joy is not full, it is because we are taken up with our poor miserable selves and not with this glorious Son of David, or rather with David himself; for David is sweeter as a type than even Solomon -David, the Lord's anointed, rejected of man, in holes and dens of the earth, but fighting the Lord's battles, and the center of attraction to every heart that sought God and His glory.

Jesus in the Days of His Flesh

There was no "loitering" in the path of the Blessed One through the world; no seeking, as we may seek, for ease. Life with Him was taken up with the untiring activities of love. He lived not for Himself. God and man had all His thoughts and His service. Did He seek for solitude? It was to be alone with His Father. Did He seek for society? It was to be about His Father's business. By night or day He was always the same-on the mount of Olives, praying; in the temple, teaching; in the midst of sorrow, comforting; where sickness was, healing. Every act declared Him to be the One who lived for others. He had a joy in God man cannot understand, a care for man that only God could show. Never do we find Him acting for Himself. If hungry in the wilderness, He worked no miracle to supply His own need; if others were hungering around Him, the compassion of His heart flowed forth, and He fed them by the thousands.

Jews — Messiah — Gems: the Editor's Column

There is currently running in the Jewish newspaper, B'nai B'rith Messenger, of Los Angeles, a series of articles on the Jewish religion. This is entitled, "Know Your Religion," with a subtitle, "An Authoritative Discourse On All Aspects Of Our Jewish Religion." During the month of January, three issues were devoted to the subject of the Messiah. Now because this theme is central in Judaism, we propose to take a look at this "Authoritative Source" to see what mid-twentieth century Jewish thinking is on a matter which was of old definitively set forth in the Holy Scriptures-the Old Testament.

It seems apparent from this series of articles that the modern Jew is still aware of the Messianic hope on the one hand, but that it is watered down and accommodated to almost any whim of unbelief or prejudice on the other. It can be translated into almost anything, or nothing. In one place the article says, "The Jew seldom dwells on the Messiah theme. His Rabbis rarely discourse on the subject from their pulpits." This is probably due to the fact that it would cause embarrassment to both Rabbi and people, for it is indeed a touchy subject necessitating the skirting of the Messiahship of Jesus. Furthermore, the Jews, especially in this land, are living in comparative comfort and luxury; a Messiah to deliver them does not have much appeal under these circumstances.

The writer of these articles does make a point of a certain resentment of the Jewish people against what they have seen and heard of the Messiah from professing Christians who have at times inflicted horrible atrocities on them. This can only be admitted with sorrow, and God's hand has been providentially against those Gentile nations which have inflicted them. But these tragic sufferings should not becloud the truth of their own Scriptures concerning the Messiah. Christians have likewise suffered untold horrors and persecutions from the days of pagan Rome down to the present hour for their faith in Christ, and some of the worst tortures ever invented by human beings against other human beings have been done in the name of Christ- against Jews and Christians alike. Therefore it is no just plea to use their sufferings as a basis for turning from the hope of a Messianic age.

There are probably almost as many forms of unbelief and infidelity in Judaism today as there are in Christendom. The Word of God is lost in the babble of the multitude of human conjectures, with each proponent seeking to be heard. The only authoritative voice is unheeded and despised.

One thing is sure, according to this discourse on Judaism, that all Jews [except those who have accepted the Lord Jesus and become Christians] of all distinctions are agreed upon one point; namely, that Jesus of Nazareth certainly was not their Messiah. That He was, and is, is categorically and forthwith rejected. The Rabbi who wrote the article admits that there is a certain re-appraisal of the matter yearly by those Jews living in Western lands, but says, "They are impelled to this annual assessment of the Messianic eschatology first of all, because as the children of Israel who are faithful to and believe in the One God, their unequivocal rejection of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah involves a reaffirmation of their critical, historical dissent from

Christianity."

In another place this writer quotes an Anglo-Jewish scholar, who said, "Those who believe in a superhuman nature of Messiah are guilty of idolatry." This is nothing new, for the Jews said to the Lord Himself: "For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God." John 10:33. They who had the Holy Scriptures knew the full implications of what He said, and what He claimed to be; it remained for Christendom's infidelity to deny His deity on the basis of the allegation that He never claimed it.

If it were not that we have been told by the Old Testament Scriptures that the Messiah would be rejected when He came to Israel, we might well find the mystery of their blindness insoluble; for their own Scriptures affirm time and time again that their Messiah would be God as well as man. How can that message be misunderstood: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel"? Isa. 7:14. We shall not discuss the matter of the word virgin, which the Rabbis now insist means only a young (married) woman; for the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, which was a Jewish made translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek before the birth of Christ, gave it virgin. They understood it aright before prejudice against Jesus swayed them. But consider this, that His name would be Immanuel, which means, "God with us." Was it not therefore predicated of their Messiah that He would indeed be God Himself among them? We might go into many such references, but we will name one more. In Mic. 4:2 it was foretold that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem in the land of Juda (this last designation being particularly specified because there were other towns named Bethlehem in other places), but it is added of this coming Messiah, "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

We should not overlook Isa. 9:6, where the Child to be born to Israel was to be called, "Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father [or, Father of Eternity], The Prince of Peace." It is easy enough for people to attribute the title "Prince of Peace" to the Messiah, but these other names and titles are also His. He is "The mighty God."

Again we quote from this Rabbi's article: "While refusing to recognize the man Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, and appalled by his apotheosis [deifying Himself] as an intolerable heresy repugnant to their beliefs in the One God, the adherents of Judaism continued to await the true Mashiah." This probably quite accurately describes the Jewish attitude toward Him whom we confess and adore as "the Christ of God" and our Savior. ("Messiah" means anointed and is from the Hebrew; "Christ" is the same name, or word, from the Greek; and "Mashiah" is the way the Jews spell it today in English.)

Here is another newspaper statement: "The human Messiah, albeit more sage than Solomon but not quite measuring up to Moses, would not raise the dead nor disturb nature with his magical powers." So whoever penned these words expects the Messiah to be greater than Solomon, but not as great as Moses; but Moses wrote, "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken.... And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him." Deut. 18:15, 19. Here is One to come, and some of the Jews in the day when the Lord was here said of Him, "This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world." John 6:14; see also 7:40. And is it not plainly stated that this Prophet will be greater than Moses? The Lord Himself said to the Jews that Moses wrote of Him; hence they did not believe what

Moses wrote when he wrote of that Prophet. The so-called "Sermon on the Mount" is the Lord's declaration of what will be suited to His kingdom; and He quotes Moses over and over, but always adds, "But I say unto you." He was the One to come who would be greater than Moses, and whose word was to be final. The general thought throughout the discourse was that Moses judged actions, but He would look into the heart and judge what was there.

And as for Solomon's being a sage, he likewise cannot be compared with the true Messiah; for Solomon judged after the sight of his eyes and the hearing of his ears. The case of the disputed mother of the child is proof of that, but when Messiah reigns, "He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid," etc. Isa. 11:3-6. Now who is this great One? Is it Solomon? or Moses? or David? This is One greater than any or all of these-Israel's true Messiah. It is further said, "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse." Yes, this is Israel's long-awaited, but once rejected Messiah. And will any mere man fulfill the descriptions found here in Isa. 11? Impossible! Let any Jew read Isa. 11 and say that a man can do these things! It would be blasphemy. This One will be great David's GREATER SON, the Lord from heaven.

Another reason given for Jewish skepticism today is the fact that many imposters have come and gone who in their days claimed to be messiahs. Does this in the slightest degree reflect against the coming of the true Messiah in His day? Not at all! Imposters are counterfeits, but does a counterfeit piece of money prove that there is no real money? To ask this question is to expose the folly of which the metaphor speaks. The Lord in His day warned His disciples that false Christs would arise; but more than that, He said: "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." John 5:43. Israel will accept a false Messiah, a false Christ-the antichrist-in the not-too-distant future. The very form of present Jewish unbelief prepares the way for the acceptance of the false Messiah who will come in his own name; he will not claim to be sent from God, but will be every whit a man and nothing more. We read about him in a number of Old Testament scriptures. He is the "idol shepherd," or "shepherd of nothingness," whom God in righteous judgment will give Israel for their rejection of the true Messiah when He came. Read Zech. 11, and see how God commissioned Christ as the Shepherd of His people, and how He was treated; even the amount for which Judas sold Him is mentioned, and then God decreed that He would give them "a shepherd in the land, which... shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces."

The antichrist is also spoken of in Dan. 11; and in John 10, he is the "hireling" who will flee when he sees the wolf coming-he will leave the flock in the day of their dire need according to Zech. 11:17. The Jews of today are looking for A MAN, and that is what they will have shortly-a man who will be in league with the soon-to-come head of the Western confederacy, which will be the last condition of that which was at one time the Roman Empire. It will be the Old European territory of the empire and its peoples united in a common defense pact in view of Russia's expanding might. The antichrist in Jerusalem will divide the land for gain with this Western "beast" (Dan. 11:39); and in the final stage this apostate head will be in league with the devil himself; for he, the Roman beast, and the devil will form a triumvirate of wickedness.

But God will yet set His King upon His holy hill in Zion, and He will have all the forces of evil in derision-read Psalm 2. Everything that man has built or done will come down "when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isa. 2:19).

There is one Psalm-110 which is frequently quoted in part in the New Testament, and which contains the passage that silenced the unbelieving Jews when the Lord was here. It says: "The LORD said unto my Lord [or, Jehovah said unto adon], Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." Now this is obviously a reference to the Messiah, and who but One who is God could sit at God's right hand? The Lord asked His opponents whether the Messiah would be David's son. They answered, Yes. Then He quoted this verse and asked them, How could David refer to his son as his Lord? They could not answer it then, nor can the learned Rabbi today answer it correctly. The one and only way to answer this question is to admit that for David's son to be his Lord, He must also be more than a man; otherwise it would be folly, if not worse, for David so to speak. But since He is deity, all difficulty in the passage disappears.

Another piece of Jewish unbelief concerns the work of the atonement by the Messiah when He came the first time, and yet their whole God-given system of worship abounded with types and shadows of the work of the atonement. Adam's and Eve's coats of skin spoke of it -also Abel's sacrifice, and Abraham's saying to Isaac his son, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." Gen. 22:8. All the sacrifices of the book of Leviticus present Christ's sacrifice in one aspect or another, and it takes them all to present one complete picture of His perfect sacrifice. That the Jews today do not offer the sacrifices, does not change the fact that those of old pointed on to the Lord Jesus Christ. How blind are those who cannot see Christ in those offerings!

Notice this remark of the Rabbi: "As for the singular Redeemer, whose base ethic will have him suffer our burden? How depraved and barbarous our heart to expect relief and expiation outside of our own self-purgation and atonements. Where is this Messiah?" This is radical infidelity which rejects the whole tenor of the Old Testament sacrificial commands as given by God. Where does one find "self-purgation and atonements" in the Old Testament? Was not Abel accepted on the basis of an acceptable sacrifice? was not Cain rejected when he attempted to approach God on the basis of his own works or deeds? And did not David say, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psalm 32:1)? Did David cover his own sins? No; he said, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." Psalm 51:2. Did he propose to cleanse his sins himself? No, he besought God to do it. And God passed over those sins in view of the coming work of Christ on Calvary's cross; Rom. 3:25 is explicit on this point.

Isa. 53 will be the language of the heart of the remnant of Israel who will in the latter day accept Him-when the Lord Jesus comes back to reign, and shows them the wounds in His hands and side. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not... But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." (vv. 3, 5). They will appropriate the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus to themselves, and rejoice in it.

And how does Isa. 53 close? "And He was numbered with the transgressors [crucified between two thieves]; and He bare the sin of many [not of all, but only of those who believe on Him to the saving of their souls], and made intercession for the transgressors [who cried out, 'Father, forgive

them; for they know not what they do]." (vs. 12).

But there is another Old Testament scripture to which we wish to call attention. It is Hos. 5:15 and 6:1, 2. The Lord there prophetically speaks of His rejection and going away, thus: "I will go and return to My place." If He were only a man going from earth to heaven, He could not have said, "return to My place." He had been there before; His goings forth had been from eternity, and it was His own place to which He was returning. But He did not stop there, because He is coming back to bless Israel. Then what will mark the time of His return to them is also stated-"till they acknowledge their offense, and seek My face." Yes, the remnant of Israel will return to Him and acknowledge their offense. They will mourn and be in bitterness for Him when they look on Him whom they pierced, and realize that the Jesus they once rejected was indeed their Messiah (Zech. 12:10-14).

This verse in -Hosea adds, "In their affliction they will seek Me early." The article we have reviewed discounted the time of tribulation that is to precede His return to Israel, but Jeremiah speaks of this period of trouble as "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7).

The first verse of Hos. 6 is then their language; they will say, "Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up." They will return to their once-rejected Messiah and, after confession and humiliation, will have confidence that He will heal them.

They will also say, "After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight." What a time that will be for Israel! But first there will be the awful deception of the antichrist, and the judgments of God, before they return to Him who smote them in His governmental dealings.

There is much in John's Gospel that has a prophetic character to it. We would call our reader's attention to the 4th chapter. There the Lord leaves Judea and goes unto the Samaritans. This is different than in Matthew where He is presented to Israel as their Messiah, and instructs His disciples not to go to the Samaritans. In John's Gospel He is seen as rejected by Israel in the first chapter; then in the 4th chapter He leaves them and goes to a race really outside of Israel's blessing. The Samaritans receive Him during His absence from Israel. He remains away two days, and when He returns He finds a nobleman's son about to die. This will be Israel's dire condition when He returns to them -ready to perish. When He was here before, they demanded signs; in the coming day they will not ask for signs, for their condition will be critical. Then He heals the son with His word, and the fever left the son at the seventh hour. Will not Israel's blessing come about in the Millennium of which the seventh hour no doubt speaks? Do not the two days of His absence in Hosea and John refer to the same period-these 2000 years while salvation is being offered to Gentiles? We submit these thoughts to our readers for their meditation and, we trust, profit.

And should these lines fall into the hands of a son or daughter of Israel who until now has seen "no beauty in Him," we would beseech you to search out the Old Testament references herein made, and ask the God of your fathers to enlighten you. Why wait until those awful days of trouble to return to Him? Do it at once, for He is waiting to receive you now. And be not fearful of Judaism's contention that the revelation of the three Persons in the Godhead as found in Christianity is at variance with the revelation of the one true God in contrast to the multitude of heathen gods as recorded in the Old Testament. True, the Trinity was not revealed then; but an honest perusal of

the Old Testament will discover it hidden away there in place after place. Take the very first verse of the Old Testament, where we have God-Elohim-a plural name combined with a singular verb. How can that be explained apart from the Trinity? And in Isa. 48:16 we read, "The Lord GOD [1], and His Spirit [2], hath sent Me [3]."

There is not one word of anti-Semitism in this review, for that people are "beloved for the fathers' sakes."

Some Thoughts on John 2

In the first part of this chapter, we have a type of the marriage of the Messiah with His earthly people; and in the second part, we have the judgment, which follows, by the Messiah Himself, for the purification of everything before He can reign. The vessels of purification which serve for the cleansing of filth, in order to their being brought nigh to God, will one day be filled with excellent wine; that is, with millennial joy. Joy could not be known by Israel while they were under law, but the Messiah reserves for them the fullest joy under His reign.

From verses 13 to 17 we have judgment. This market in the temple was established for the convenience of foreign Jews, that they might find there their offerings and the exchange of their moneys. But Jesus, filled with the zeal for the interests of His Father, purifies the temple by expelling from it all who profane it -a figure of what shall be when He comes in His glory. Then He will purge the kingdom of all the workers of iniquity, and afterward He will reign. In verses 18-22 Jesus promises the Jews a sign of His divine authority, but such a sign as, when they have got it, will be too late for them; for they will have already put Him to death. He calls His body the temple of God-that of the Jews was no longer God's temple.

The last three verses belong more properly to the next chapter. Many are said to have believed in Jesus because of the miracles which He did. This faith was not the true faith, but a faith of human opinion which did not separate from the world nor from the things of the world. This faith, resting only on the sight of the miracles, is worth nothing; the conscience is not touched. There is a faith which man can have of himself; it is not divine; it is not that which is the gift of God. Therefore the Lord does not trust them. They may be sincere and have a true conviction, but Jesus does not see in them the work of God; and what is of man is worth nothing before God- sooner or later it disappears. This may be said of every conviction received from education or in any other way whatsoever; it is only what is in man and of man. Of this class are those described in Heb. 6:8, 4-6. These people are more advanced; they have received all the blessings there are in the church; as it is said, "The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and... beareth thorns and briars is rejected... whose end is to be burned." This means that in these persons there was no internal change-their consciences were not affected-the work is purely external and, therefore, they may fall away and never be restored.

Joying in God and Waiting for Christ

2 Thess. 3:5

There are two things which constitute the joy of a Christian. The first is the hope of the coming of the Lord; the second is present communion and fellowship with God the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these two cannot be separated without loss to our souls, for we cannot have all the profit without both of them. If we are not looking for the coming of the Lord, there is nothing whatever that can separate us in the same way from this present evil world; neither will Christ Himself be so much the object before the soul; nor yet shall we be able, in the same measure, to apprehend the mind and counsels of God about the world.

Again, if this hope be looked at apart from present communion and fellowship with God, we shall not have present power, the heart being enfeebled from the mind being too much occupied and overborne by the evil around; for we cannot be really looking for God's Son from heaven without, at the same time, seeing the world's utter rejection of Him, and that the world is going wrong; its wise men having no wisdom and all going on to judgment; the principles of evil loosening all bonds, etc.; and the soul becomes oppressed and the heart sad. But if through grace the Christian is in present communion and fellowship with God, his soul stands steady, and is calm and happy before God, because there is a fund of blessing in Him which no circumstances can ever touch or change. The evil tidings are heard, the sorrow is seen, but his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, which carries him far above every circumstance. To walk steadily with God, we need both this fellowship and this hope.

I do not believe that a Christian can have his heart scripturally right unless he is looking for God's Son from heaven. There could be no such thing as attempting to set the world right if its sin in rejecting Christ were fully seen; and, moreover, there never will be a correct judgment formed of the character of the world until that crowning sin be apprehended by the soul. To a Christian who is looking and waiting for Christ to come from heaven, Christ Himself is unspeakably more the object before the soul. It is not only that I shall get to heaven and be happy, but that the Lord Himself is coming from heaven for me and all that are His with me. It is this that gives its character to the joy of the saint. As Christ Himself says, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" - when I find My delight, then shall you find yours also, I with you, and you with Me-"forever with the Lord."

You may think to find good, or to produce good, in man; but you will never find waiting for Christ in man. In the world, the first Adam may be cultivated; but it is the first Adam still. The last Adam Will never be found there, being rejected by the world. And it is the looking for this rejected Lord which stamps the whole character and walk of the saints.

Then again, there is another thing connected with my waiting for God's Son from heaven. I am not yet with the One I love, and while waiting for Him I am going through the world tired and worn with the spirit and character of everything around me; and the more I am in communion with God, the

more keenly shall I feel the spirit of the world to be a weariness to me, although God still upholds my soul in fellowship and communion with Himself. Therefore Paul says in 2 Thess. 1, "To you who are troubled rest with us." So then I get rest to my spirit now in waiting for Christ, knowing that when He comes He will have everything His own way. For the coming of the Lord, which will be trouble to the world, will be to the saints full and everlasting rest. Still, it is not that we are to be "weary and faint" in our minds. It is not a right thing to be weary of the service and conflict. Oh, no! rather let us be steadfast every day. Still, it is not rest to be fighting.

However, when walking with God, it is not so much thinking of combat, as joying in God Himself.

This I shall know all the better when I am in the glory; my soul will be enlarged and more capable of enjoying what God really is; but it is the same kind of joy I have now as I shall have when He comes to be glorified in His saints- only greater in degree then. And if this joy in God is now in my soul in power, it hides the world from me altogether, and becomes a spring of love to those in the world. For though I may be tired of the combat, still, I feel that there are people in the world that need the love I enjoy; and I desire that they should possess it, as it is the joy of what God is for me that sustains me and carries me through all the conflict. So our souls should be exercised on both the fellowship and the hope; for if I look for Christ's coming apart from this fellowship and communion with God, I shall be oppressed and shall not go on. When the love of God fills my heart, it flows out toward all those who have need of it-toward saints and sinners according to their need. For if I feel the exercise of the power of this love in my heart, I shall be going out to serve others, as it is the power of this love that enables me to go through the toil and labor of service, though through suffering for His sake. If my soul is wrapped up in the last Adam, attachment to Christ puts its right stamp upon all that is of the first Adam.

When this love has led out into active service, then the conflict, doubtless, will be found as in 2 Cor. 1, where it is present blessing in the midst of trial. But in 2 Thess. 1, it is tribulation, and not rest, until the Lord comes; "that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer." In 2 Cor. 1:3 and 4 there is present blessing in the midst of the trial - "who comforteth us in all our tribulation" - so that if the sufferings for Christ's sake be ours, there are at the same time the comfortings of God in the soul. How rich a spring of blessing is this in return for this poor little trouble of mind! I get God pouring into my soul the revelation of Himself; I get God communicating Himself to my soul; for it is really that. I find it to be a present thing; it comes home to me, to my heart, the very joy of God, God delighting in me, and I in God. He identifies Himself with those who suffer for Him.

There is no time for God's coming into a soul like the time of trial, for in no way does He so fully reveal Himself to the soul as when He is exercising it in trial. There is astonishing power in this; for the amazing power with which Christ is to us present power and consolation is by His coming in, in present living power, even while these poor mortal bodies are unchanged. Ours are not yet redeemed with power, though they are bought with a price. But we have in Christ the life and the power; and, in spite of all, God is pouring in these consolations when we are in tribulations, showing the kind of power in Christ by which I am lifted up above every circumstance of trial. "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."

The Judgment Seat of Christ

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. 5:10.

Many real Christians get troubled in mind about this passage. Perhaps they have found peace from such a verse as John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [or judgment]; but is passed from death unto life." You remember the joy it gave you when you could say for the first time, "Thank God, I have His own Word to tell me I shall never come into judgment." Then you came across this verse, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," and it seemed to upset the other altogether. So you began to think that, after all, you would have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and the question of your sins be raised again. Then fear came into the soul, and you wondered whether you would find yourself at last on the left hand of the Judge.

Now all that comes from your taking it for granted that the judgment seat of Christ in this verse refers to one distinct day or time, whereas it does nothing of the sort.

The verse before us does indeed say that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ"; and that seems to contradict the thought of the believer never coming into judgment. But we may safely say that Scripture cannot contradict itself. So 2 Cor. 5:10 does not contradict John 5:24. Still, when it says, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," it means all-both converted and unconverted.

"Well," a person naturally exclaims, "when you say that, do you mean that the good and bad will stand together before the judgment seat of Christ?"

No, because the "judgment seat of Christ" is a very wide term. There are three distinct occasions, all of which might be called the judgment seat of Christ. We will look at them presently.

How do we know that this 10th verse of 2 Cor. 5 applies to the unconverted? We have only to read the 11th verse to see that-"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." What does "the terror of the Lord" mean?

Ah! the Apostle thinks of what a solemn thing it will be for the unconverted sinner to appear before God, with all his sins to answer for. He trembles, but not for himself. There is no terror for him. Jesus has taken away all fear of judgment from his heart; but he persuades men, as they value their own souls, to escape from coming wrath. This shows that when the Apostle said "all" must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, he had the wicked, as well as the saints, in mind.

Let us now look at the three distinct occasions which may be justly spoken of as "the judgment seat of Christ."

First. In 2 Tim. 4:1, we read, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word."

The judgment of the quick, or living, you will find in Matt. 25:31. We know this parable of the sheep and goats is often brought forward to prove that there is to be a general resurrection. All good people are said to be the sheep, and all bad people, the goats. But this passage does not speak of any one being raised. There is no resurrection mentioned in the chapter. It is the judgment of living nations, or Gentiles, on earth, who will be living when Jesus comes back as King in glory. Observe another thing. In verse 40: "The King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Now it has been very wisely said, "If the sheep are all the good people, and the goats are all the bad, who are these brethren?" You will see that will not fit in at all. Well, the brethren spoken of here are supposed to be certain Jews that will be faithful to Jehovah after the Church has been taken up. They will go out and preach the gospel of the kingdom that we read of in Matt. 24:14. These Jewish messengers will preach the gospel in very much the same way as the disciples did when the Lord was here on earth; and as the Gentiles reject or receive them, so they will be either blessed or sent into everlasting punishment. This, then-the judgment of the living-might be called the judgment seat of Christ. He judges the quick at His appearing and kingdom.

Let us now look at the judgment of "the dead." Turn to Rev. 20 In the 12th verse we read, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." This judgment takes place not in time, but in eternity. I think it is very important to notice that the earth, as we see it at present, will have vanished away. Having served its purpose, it will be as a thing that is done with. But the unconverted sinner is not gone-he is not annihilated. No! The man who dies in his sins will stand in his body before the great white throne; he will be judged as a man, and will receive the things done in his body. And who will be the Judge? The Lord Jesus. The Apostle Peter says, in Acts 10:42, "And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." The One who might have been their Savior, will then be their Judge.

Notice the words, "The books were opened." These are what we might term the books of responsibility. A business man keeps books that he might know all that is owing to him, and all that he owes. And for what purpose are we told that God keeps books? Surely it is that we may remember that nothing is forgotten by Him. Man now thinks that he can commit sin after sin, and tries to persuade himself that God keeps no account. But it is not so. There, on the pages of those books, every man's name is recorded. There, as it were, after the name of So-and-So, professing Christian, follow his privileges-had the Bible all his life, heard the gospel preached Sunday after Sunday, and so on-and then a list of sins, sins, sins; and the last condemning sin of all, "rejecter of the Christ of God." I should not like my name to be written in those books.

Let us remark here that great account is taken of privileges. We see this taught in Luke 12:47, 48: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be

much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." There is a poor heathen who never heard the blessed gospel of God's grace - he will be beaten with but few stripes. There is a man living in England who has heard the gospel, and has had every privilege, but he has turned his back upon Christ; he shall be beaten with many stripes. You remember how the Lord upbraided those cities in which most of His mighty works were done: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tiro and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." The very thought of it is enough to make a sinner tremble.

But there is another book. It does not say that the sinner is judged out of the book of life. The book of life is a record, so to speak, kept by God, in which is written the name of every one of His own beloved people. "Then what is the use of opening the book of life at the great white throne?" one might inquire. Simply to see, as a last chance, if his name is written therein; but it is not.

Here, then, is the final judgment seat of Christ for the unconverted. The Apostle Paul had this in mind when he said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." 2 Cor. 5:11. What Paul did, we may do also. He had no fear for himself; the question of his sins was settled; but the terror of the Lord, and the love of that blessed Savior who gave Himself a ransom for all, that all who trust in Him might be sheltered from that coming judgment, constrained him to persuade men.

Now we come to what is our chief purpose in writing this article. We have seen the judgment seat for the living in Matt. 25, and for the dead at the great white throne in Rev. 20. But what about believers? When will they stand before the judgment seat of Christ? It will be sometime between the coming of the Lord Jesus to take them to heaven, and His appearing with them when He comes back to this world in glory to set up His kingdom.

What is the next thing that may happen for believers? It is what the Apostle Paul tells us about in 1 Thess. 4:16, 17: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." There is nothing that has necessarily to take place before the Lord comes into the air (not to earth) to take His own to be with Himself forever. Much will happen before He can appear in glory with them. This is often very puzzling to people. I remember reading a book in which the writer declared that it was a most remarkable thing, which he could not attempt to explain, that the early Christians appear to have been looking for the Lord to come at any time; and yet it was evident that many things must happen before He could return to this earth, and he could not reconcile the two things. This difficulty is solved in an instant when we see that before the Lord appears in glory He is first coming for us, so that when He appears publicly in glory, all His saints will be seen coming with Him. The last time the world saw Jesus, He was alone upon the cross; but the next time the world sees Jesus, will He be alone? No! He will come with all the trophies of His victory; He will come with all His saints.

I daresay some reader will be saying, "Is everything to be manifest at the judgment seat of Christ? If so, how do you reconcile that with a verse in Heb. 10? We read there that God has said, 'Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.' " Well, let us look at the passage. Read first the third verse: "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year." The

meaning of that is, that every time the year came to an end, God raised the question of sins again; and there had to be fresh sacrifices. Now compare that with verse 17: "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." What does this mean? It means that when once we believe in Christ, and trust Him for salvation, the question of all our sins is settled forever before God, on the ground of the eternal efficacy of the blood of Christ; and He will never raise it more. You may raise it in your own soul many a time, and so may I, but God never will. Our sins may come out before the judgment seat, but the question of their being imputed will never be raised.

But what leads us to believe that everything will come out at the judgment seat of Christ? Let us turn to Luke 12. At the close of the first verse the Lord says to His disciples: "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops." There is a sweeping statement. Think of all the things that are covered up, the secret sins that are committed, things concealed from the ears and eyes of men. All will come out. There is nothing (and nothing means nothing) covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known.

You may say, "Do you mean that all I did before my conversion will come out before the judgment seat of Christ?" I ask, Why do you shrink from that thought? Do you not care to think that all you have ever done will be made manifest in that day? Then I fear you have never laid hold of the wonderful fact that all you have done, and all that you are by nature, has already come out at the cross. "Yes!" you may say, "I know my sins were put away there." I would ask you, How many of them? Not some, but all. "What! my sins after I was converted?" There is no such thing in Scripture as sins put away before and after conversion. A good many people have said to me, "I know that my sins were put away up to the time I believed, but my trouble is that I have committed sins since then-what about them?" When Jesus bore your sins and mine, they were all future, every one of them. The Lord laid them all upon Him. It is wonderful to think of it! God laid them on the One who is going to sit on the great white throne. The Judge has come before the judgment day, and in grace and love has charged Himself with all our sins, so that He might have nothing to judge us for in that coming day.

Does any reader say, "Well, if the question of our sins cannot be raised, why do we stand before the judgment seat of Christ at all?" One thing we shall be there for is this-it will then be settled as to rewards for faithfulness to the Lord during the few years we are down here. All we have ever done for the blessed Lord will then be seen. Every bit of service that the Lord Himself has given us power and grace to do for Him, He will then give us credit for as if we had done it of ourselves. Perhaps things we thought nothing of here will be so magnified by the Lord in that day that He will, as it were, say, "Look what you did for Me." Some will receive rewards, and alas! there are those who will suffer loss, but they themselves will be saved, yet so as by fire.

And we must remember the solemn side as well as the joyful side of that coming day. There is such a thing as a man professing to serve the Lord here, whose work in that day will not stand; it proves to be nothing but wood, hay, stubble (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

I would say one thing, by the way, which, although very old, is very true, and will be a help, I think, in looking into our subject. Whenever it is a question of grace, and the value of Christ's work, then

it is the Lord's coming from heaven to take us up to be with Himself forever that Scripture speaks of. This has nothing to do with work for the Lord, or service. But when it is a question of service, or faithfulness, or our responsibility as Christians, then it is always the Lord's appearing with us in glory that is looked at.

Instead of the judgment seat of Christ being a dreadful thing, it is a very blessed one to the believer. You need not be afraid. When you stand before that judgment seat, you will be like Christ Himself. You will have said goodbye to all that you were as a lost child of Adam, you will have dropped every link with the old creation. When you look back you will see, it may be for the first time, how really bad you were when God picked you up. We shall look at it all, but we shall be able to say, "That is not what I am, but what I was." Even now the believer can say, "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." How much more when we have dropped the last link with this old creation! Perhaps we should never understand, except for that day, how the Lord had to deal with us; how we might have been killed before we were converted; how He spoke to us-perhaps in a dream, or through some sickness-how He kept us from harm along the way; how He preserved us all the way through, up to the very last moment. What, think you, will be the result of seeing all that? Trembling and fear? No, I believe it will produce nothing but praise. It will be like the ending of the Psalms, which, after all the trials, sorrows, exercises of soul which are there set forth, close with Hallelujah! So it will be in that day.

"When this passing world is done,

When has sunk you radiant sun,

When I stand with Christ in glory,

Looking o'er life's finished story-

Then, Lord, shall I fully know,

The Lamb of God

John 1:29

The great truth that underlies the Gospel of John is the Godhead of that Man who was walking on the earth. I do not mean merely in its explicit statement of Him, but in that which implies it constantly, and is ever more wonderful to him that attentively weighs the Word of God. Thus His divine glory comes out in the most indirect ways and unexpected forms; hence souls grow in strength by that infinite display of love--Jesus nowhere more truly God than when a man.

He was indeed a man; but this was little or nothing in itself, unless He were God. Then what a truth and what a love! What humiliation on His part! What infinite blessing to man, at least to the souls who believe! The Word became flesh, but He was the true God; and hence it is that we find, whenever He speaks or acts, by whatever the Spirit of God traces Him, Godhead is there behind the veil.

John the Baptist's testimony here has quite a different character in itself and another effect on the soul from what we find in the other gospels. Where else does He treat of Him as the Lamb of God? The Messiah, the coming King, the perfect Servant engaged in the work of God, the woman's Seed and Son of man--these we do find elsewhere. But here we have Him as the Lamb of God in a far more comprehensive relation than with the old and favored people. He is the Lamb of God who "taketh away the sin of the world." Thus it is that He is presented in a universality of blessing through His work that could not be in any one but a divine person. Certain it is that He is shown here habitually in this character. "This is the Son of God."

Hence it is that in the Gospel of John it is not a question of the dispensations that disappear or succeed one another, but of what is vital and unchanging because divine. Hence too, therefore, it is when dispensations have passed away that the full meaning of such a word as this is realized. It is not particularly now, nor in the age that follows, but in the eternal state, that it will be manifest that He is the Lamb of God who "taketh away" (not our sins as believers but) sin in its totality. We know how it is usually quoted for a sense altogether different. The expression does not really refer to that which we are found in and have been forgiven by faith in His blood, but to when the world shall be fully cleared of it all. Sin will be banished wholly from the universe. What a testimony to His glory, who by His work effects it all! I refer to this prevalent error the more plainly and pointedly, because souls may be suffering under the influence of this too common confusion in things which so materially differ. It is not a question of the saint on earth in whom the Spirit of God dwells. The error helps on the delusion of Satan, not alas! outside, but in Christendom. There is the subtlest snare for man. It is Babylon.

What is Babylon? Is it not the cage of every unclean bird and beast? What havoc is not there, particularly of the truth? God has been most of all dishonored there. It may be, as in the present case, by only one letter; but that makes all the difference between truth and error. Christendom says or sings, Christ is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. How blinding is

worldly religion! I know scarcely a more injurious error than this if logically carried out. Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin," not the sins, "of the world." One is a blessed truth, the other is a mistake with the gravest consequences. It is to enfeeble or destroy the peace of the believer, and to pillow unbelievers with hopes that work ruin to themselves, with dishonor to God and His Christ.

How full and refreshing the testimony of God-Christ as His Lamb taking away the sin of the world in due time-the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost (vv. 29, 33)! They are the two works of the Lord Jesus, in the words of John the Baptist-His great earthly and His great heavenly work. We must not confound the bearing of our sins in His own body on the tree with taking away the sin of the world, as He will, for the new heavens and the new earth. When it is a question of sin bearing, it is "our" sins (1 Pet. 2); when it is a question of taking away, it is the world's sin. This is the ultimate effect of His work. The Spirit looks onward by John in the full sense of what Christ was eventually to accomplish, an immense work in connection with His divine glory. He "appeared to put away sin" by the sacrifice of Himself. Heb. 9 speaks of His purpose to put away sin. It is not the time when it was to be done, but the end for which He appeared. The work was effected on the cross, but the full results of the cross are not yet manifested.

A Little Child

The Lord's reply to the question asked in Matt. 18:1, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" is full of practical instruction for us in these last days when lukewarmness is everywhere prevalent. In the preceding chapter there had been given them a glimpse of the "Son of man" coming in His kingdom—a little foreshadowing of His glories which, as Son of man, are yet to come. Would one who gazed thereon seek to place any being on an equality with Him? Yes, but no sooner was the proposal made than the voice of the Father was heard interrupting the vain desire. "This is MY BELOVED SON, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye HIM." From the excellent glory He is thus declared beyond comparison, glorious and beloved, the center of all, greatest and highest. Thus Peter's voice was hushed; and though there with Him and the eyewitness of His majesty, as he afterward declares, yet He is God's Center, the only One who in Himself has title to be there. In the day of the manifestation of that glory, we who believe will be with Him too, our voices hushed in the contemplation of Him who is God's Center—a day which will see the fulfillment of His prayer in John 17: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

Descending from the glory where they had heard the testimony of the Father as to the Son of His bosom, they asked the question already quoted, Which of us shall be next to Him? And what a reply comes from those gracious lips—a reply for each heart to weigh the import of then, and a lesson for us to ponder still. Does He deny that there is such a place? Does He assert that we shall be all equal in that day? No, He does neither; but, exposing by contrast their love of self with what will be the true ground of exaltation, personal love, and devotedness to Himself, He replies, "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." We cannot understand a little child humbling itself, because one who is in the place, who is that, needs not to come down to it; for already he is a little child. The Lord's words are rather, You must become as this little child if you desire the highest place in the day of My kingdom glory. This expression of infant helplessness, a "little child," is the same as the Apostle John delights to use in his first epistle, chapter 2, when distinguishing "fathers," "young men," and "little children" (babes). This is the word he uses in verses 13 and 18. It describes the infant, the youngest in the household.

Such is the attainment, my reader, which the Lord Jesus proposes to each of us to aim at and to reach—a "little child." Do we ask why? It is because we are not in heart and spirit, and ways and affection, such; the disciples betrayed it in their question; and do we not betray it in ourselves day by day? May I then draw your attention to two or three things seen prominently in the model before us, seen in a "little child"?

Watch him in the nursery (picture of this world wherein we grow up, and where the child of God now is); not a fear, not an anxiety, not a care has he! Dependent for food, and shelter, and raiment, and everything he wants or possesses, on another, while in himself without plan, or

thought, or resources, and with no ability to make his wants known save to one who alone can understand the baby language that he speaks-such is our model. Is he happy? Generally he is. (Sometimes he may be neglected by human hands and have cause to fret. Our God never forgets or neglects His own.) But while his feebleness is thus before us, we must remember that he has a consciousness, young as he is -a consciousness that only deepens and increases with the lapse of years-that consciousness is that he is beloved, beloved by one to whom he belongs. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love. That person who loves fills the whole range of his vision-a person, my reader, not a place. And is it so today? Is it so with each of us? One, as He walked on this earth, has borne the marks of it. "One thing I do... that I may win Christ, and be found in Him." "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." A Person filled the sphere of Paul's vision. He was beloved, and he knew it. He "loved me, and gave Himself for me." Reader, do you know it? Can you say it? and has it power over you as it had over him?

But the nursery time is passing away with all of us. Let our model, a "little child," be brought then from the nursery into all the light and brilliance of that day of the coming glory for which we wait. Let the assembled company stand back to make way for the approach of a "little child." "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 19:14. Why amid the brilliant throng does the eye of a little child wander timidly from one to another? Is there not enough in the grandeur of all around to engage his attention? No; the place is naught to him, while all the grandeur and all the dignity do but distress him. He seeks for one whose heart's affections are twined around him, and whose love he has learned and proved; passing by all else, he hastens to the arms and bosom of love.

And thus it shall be in the day of the kingdom glory; and THUS has the "little child" reached the highest place, even the bosom of that One to whom it shall be confessed in that day, that fast-coming day of His glory, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Rev. 5:12.

Reader, who will occupy the place of the little child? If you occupy it now, He declares you shall occupy it then. O for more of the spirit of a little child!

The Lord Our Shepherd

Psalm 23; John 10:14

The Lord has made and does make Himself known to us in many ways, all precious to our souls, supplying our temporal and spiritual needs. He has made Himself known to us first of all as our Savior; and the knowledge of His love to us, in that He died for our sins upon the cross, gave us much joy and caused us to love Him. Those who believe in Him should be certain of having eternal life, of having the forgiveness of sins, of being complete and accepted in Him, and they may be sure of being with Christ forever in glory (John 10:27-29; Eph. 1:6, 7).

This is a settled matter and is now, and ever will be, our theme of praise. Besides this, it is blessed to know and enjoy Him as our Shepherd, supplying from His fullness all our needs, and meeting us in all our varied states of soul. There are at least two things noticeable about the Lord as our Shepherd, and His ways with us, "the sheep of His hand."

First. The Shepherd's loving care for His sheep.

Second. The Shepherd's presence is with His sheep in all the circumstances of their whole journey through this world to their home with Him.

Perfect, gracious, and complete is the Shepherd's care. We are all loved by Him with an eternal love; and He calls us, "My sheep"; none but Himself can call us that, and He forgets not the least nor the feeblest. In fact, the weakest are the special objects of His care, for He gathers them with His arm, carries them in His bosom, and gently leads them (Isa. 40:11; John 10:27 John 4:10; Rom. 8:28-30). What confidence in Him it gives us to be assured from His own lips that He knows our names and goes ahead of us, meeting every danger and every trial along the way before we come to it.

"He calleth His own sheep by name,... He goeth before them." John 10:3, 4. Many a snare laid by the enemy of our souls to entrap us, He has seen and thrust aside. Many a pitfall His watchful eye detects, and carefully He leads us safely over them. Many a bypath, which would have taken us out of the way, He has conducted us past, and led us safely along the straight and narrow way. Such is our Shepherd's loving and faithful care of us.

With such a Shepherd we shall not want. He tends His sheep; He does not leave them to a hireling. We are His flock, and not the flock of any man. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." These pastures are not an enclosure built on man's opinions and doctrines; and neither the intellect and natural mind, nor the pursuit of worldly pleasures and pastimes are green pastures.

The Lord our Shepherd makes us to lie down where we can feed upon His love, His grace, His goodness and glory, yea, upon "the things concerning Himself" from the Word of God, which the Holy Ghost delights to show to us, because we are beloved of Him. It is important to heed the exhortations, inspired by the Holy Ghost, of the apostles Peter and Paul - "As newborn babes,

desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 1 Pet. 2:2. "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." 1 Tim. 4:15, 16.

The place where the Shepherd guides His flock is "beside the still waters." The Lord would not have us to be unhappy and restless; He would have us enjoy His peace under all circumstances. "My peace I give unto you.... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," He has said (John 14:27). In these perilous times, how much we need that word. What restfulness of spirit and what contentedness of mind it gives us to lean confidently upon His love and care. Nothing can separate us from His love. And if, because of sorrows and roughness of the wilderness journey, or by reason of the rapid progress of infidelity and worldliness, our spirits have drooped in sadness, and we have become discouraged, let us cheer up; there is enough in Him to make the heart rejoice. He is the all-powerful, loving, gracious, and tender Shepherd. His glory has not been tarnished a bit. He is the Brightness of Eternal Glory.

"He restoreth my soul," or rather, the meaning is, "He invigorates," or reviveth "my soul"; it is like a good tonic to a person whose health is run down-it invigorates. The Lord can do this when we get discouraged, as He revived the two disciples on the way to Emmaus and restored their souls-first, by drawing out all that was on their heart, and then, in His love, removing their mistrust and banishing their discouragements by ministering the Word and comforting them, causing their hearts to burn within them, as He spoke to them by the way (Luke 24).

We have another instance of this when Paul was imprisoned in the castle, and in the stillness of night "the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." Acts 23:11.

Occupation with our circumstances will not invigorate us, because they are variable; nor can we turn to ourselves, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing"; and the heart, the Lord has told us, is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9). Although all things, even the foundation of the earth and "the heavens... shall perish" and "wax old like a garment," the Lord our Shepherd is the eternal and unchangeable God.

The second thing we notice is

THE SHEPHERD'S PRESENCE

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Psalm 23:4. Many believers, it is feared, do not come to that valley, in the which the conscious presence of the Lord is realized and enjoyed, until death; but we should, and if we go on in daily communion with Him we will find this world to be the valley of the shadow of death. Nothing can affect our standing in Christ, thank God!-not even our state of soul can ever affect our standing. But we ought to live according to our standing. May we be more like Christ, and less earthly-minded! It is often only when a saint has to depart from earth that the world is given up. It is a glorious privilege, as well as a blessed responsibility, a s saints of God, to be counting ourselves, as we are in God's sight, dead with Christ; this would separate us from the world altogether, just as though we were dead to it; and it would then be to us the valley of the shadow of death. But we shall have His presence with us in it, and be able to say, "I will fear no

evil." This is the confident expression of one who realizes the Shepherd's sustaining presence.

We are in God's sight dead and risen with Christ, just as though we had passed out of this world altogether, and are left to live here on earth as a heavenly people waiting to be taken up to heaven where Christ is. This world is like an inn to the believer to tarry in as a pilgrim and a stranger for a little while, at the expiration of which the Shepherd will take him to His home, which is our eternal dwelling place. In the meantime we have His presence with us, for He will never leave nor forsake us; and we need not fear, and "goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

The Lord's Day

The Lord's day, far from being the Sabbath, is the first day of the week, not the seventh, and rests on quite different foundations. When you come to test the would-be teachers of the law, their zeal is soon seen to break down in practice; and they are easily convicted of introducing changes and modifications in order to suit the time, country, climate, and people; that is, to suit themselves in the things of God. This theory of mitigation, and of a flexible law, can never stand a fair scrutiny. On the other hand, those who hold that the Lord's day is a new thing, in no way connected either with creation or with the law, are under no difficulty, because they see that the same God who sanctified the Sabbath originally, and gave the law to Israel, was pleased to put special honor on the first day of the week, in commemoration of redemption accomplished in the death and resurrection of Christ; but they see it as having its own proper character, and not as confounded with the Sabbath. The Lord's day calls for no mere rest which you may share with your ox or your ass; and so far from its due honor consisting chiefly in bodily quiet, I believe that if a Christian were on that day enabled to walk twenty Sabbath-days' journeys on special services for the Lord, he would not only be at liberty to do that work, but it would be most acceptable to the Lord. Each day is separated from other days by divine authority; but in other respects they differ as decidedly as law from grace, or the old creation from the new.

There is a peculiar solemnity about the Lord's supper, as about the Lord's day. He who pretends that the Lord's day is the Sabbath, and that the Lord's supper resembles a Jewish ordinance, does not know what the two most characteristic Christian institutions mean. The Lord's day differs from every other day, the day of grace and resurrection (the Sabbath being the token of creation and of law). So with the Lord's supper; in it the Lord sets before the believer his perfect deliverance, the blood and the broken body of Christ, and gives the witness to his soul that he is free from all condemnation.

Luke's Gospel: Luke 4-5

There are two great subjects in the life of the blessed Lord which Luke brings out: the fulfillment of promise, and the revelation of God in grace in the "Son of man." These are presented to us in the history in a very interesting way. I will notice this as displayed in chapters 4 and 5.

In chapter 4 the Spirit of God has shown us the Blessed One led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, victorious in trial, as the first man had failed in it. He returns in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, having first bound the strong man. Let me remark here, in passing, how faithfulness in trial and temptation shows the power of the Spirit as much as the energy of action. Jesus was led by the Spirit to be tempted, overcame Satan by the Word through the Spirit, and returned in that power, working miracles and casting out demons. But the power had been exercised all through the temptation, only in standing fast (see Eph. 6). Therein He had overcome Satan, baffled his power, really bound the strong man, and then had only to spoil his goods. He used too the weapon we have to use, the Word of God; only we must remember that we learn from Ephesians 6, that to use the Word, we must first have all the defensive armor; that is, the state of the soul must be right. Christ, of course, was perfect, and used it perfectly. In the measure of our spirituality and uprightness we shall be able to wield this blessed weapon. But here even the sword was a defensive weapon. He met the wiles of Satan by it. Whatever reasonings or scriptures Satan may use, if we are spiritual enough to use it, the Word of God suffices to confound him.

But to turn to my more direct subject. The Lord now stood as man, anointed of the Holy Ghost, having overcome Satan, to make good the grace and goodness of God among men, and specially first among the Jews; but the glory of His divine Person was not to be hid. But first He presents Himself as the anointed Man, fulfilling all that had been promised in grace. I must remark another point. The Lord looks for rejection; and this it will be seen is the case in both the characters in which He presents Himself. First, then, as the anointed Man. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Thus He presents Himself as the fulfiller of promise, announcing the favorable and gracious time of God's mercy in His own Person. "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." But at the same time He tells them that He will be rejected. A prophet has not honor in his own country. But He adds that grace, as grace, passed beyond the limits of the Jews; that God was sovereign in His goodness, and of old had sent help to two Gentiles, while many remained in sorrow in rebellious Israel. This the haughty Jews would not bear; and, gracious as His words had been, they are now ready to destroy Him for preaching a grace which Israel might lose all part in, as rejecting Him, and the Gentile get blessing by. They are ready to destroy Him, but it was not the time; and He passed through the midst of them.

Now see the character in which the demons owned Him; how it meets this character in which He was really come. How sad a picture! Demons perforce own Him; men reject Him with hatred. It is remarkable how these evil spirits own Him according to the truth (as we may remember the spirit of divination did Paul), but surely only as dreading and, if they could have done so, avoiding His power. "Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God." It was the reluctant owning of a power they could not avoid. The time was not come to cast them into the pit, but to deliver man. He came out of the man at Jesus' word. But this title was a prophetic one of Jesus-and this title as summing up all the mercies of God. It is unfolded in Psalm 89. The word "mercies" in the first verse of that psalm, is the same as "holy one" in verse 19. "Holy One" in verse 18 is quite different. Mercy was to build up forever, the psalm declares. How? "Thou spakest in vision of" (not to, I think, but about, as we see that of the prophecy, Psalm 72, "A Psalm about Solomon") "Thy holy one," Thy gracious One, in whom help and mercy is summed up. "I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David My servant," etc. Here, no doubt, the immediate subject is David; but in the mind of God, a greater, even Christ, is here. The evil spirit owns that this Holy One is there in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth. Help was indeed laid upon the Mighty One who, having overcome Satan wholly, could have delivered man from all the miserable fruits of his power, even death itself; but man would have none of Him. He must be redeemed or remain lost.

Next, in this fourth chapter, when healing many, the demons who were cast out own Him as the Christ the Son of God. This was owning His title as promised to Israel in Psalm 2, but which also witnessed to His rejection. Thus the power of present delivering goodness, in the promised One, was there. He is owned the Holy One of God, in whom mercies came to Israel; as the Christ and Son of God spoken of in Psalm 2. But in His own country He is not received. The prejudices and passions of man rise up against grace and this gracious One, while the demons own Him, but through dread-a strange but solemn picture. They could not but know Him. But what is knowledge when only such? Those He really came to would not receive Him.

In chapter 5 He is seen in another character. He reveals, and is, Jehovah. In the miraculous draft of fishes He makes Himself known to the conscience of Peter. He sees the Lord in it, and acknowledges himself a sinful man, unfit for His presence. This is always the effect of the revelation of God to us, and indeed of nothing else. Jesus speaks words of grace: "Fear not." From henceforth he should catch men. In what follows, He heals the leper, which was Jehovah's work alone. But there was a special circumstance connected with this, full of blessed significance. The leper recognized His power, but was not sure of His goodness or willingness to help him. "Lord," he says, "if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." The Lord does not merely say He is willing, He puts forth His hand and touches him. Now, if a man touched a leper he too was unclean, and must be put out of the camp. But here was a divine Person come down, Jehovah, who could cleanse. One who could say "I will"; "be." One who could not be defiled, but for that very reason came down to touch the defiled one, and remove the defilement. He was Jehovah, come as man, to touch, so to speak, the sinner in grace. Jesus was one whose holiness was so perfect, as God become man, that He could carry divine love to the vilest; carry it wherever a need or a sorrow was, and as love touch the defiled, not to become so, but to heal. It is a wonderful picture of what Christ, Jehovah, present to heal, was in this world. Thus revealing Himself to the

conscience, and doing a divine work in love, in what was a figure of cleansing from sin, mark Him out as Jehovah in the world in grace.

He withdraws Himself into the wilderness and prays; ever the dependent, as the obedient and victorious Man. But other elements of divine grace are yet to be observed here. He was sitting with doctors of the law, who were ready to object to grace, and were ignorant of how the Son of God had in manhood visited this sinful world in the power and title of divine grace. One sick of the palsy is brought to Him by faith. He goes to the root of all sorrow, and says, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." The question is not here how through the precious death of Christ forgiveness was consistent with divine righteousness and glorified it. What is here revealed, is Jehovah present in full unmingled grace. As the testimony and witness of this, the Lord does what is ascribed to Jehovah in Psalm 103, along with the forgiveness of sins. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.

Last, the Lord shows, as the friend of publicans and sinners, that He had come in sovereign grace to gather, in the power of good, not looking for it in man. But thus also He must be rejected. This new wine, for it was so, could not be put into old bottles; Judaism could not receive and be the vessel of sovereign grace; nor could those who were used to Judaism easily receive the new wine of the gospel and Spirit of God. And so it ever is in all ages.

A Man in Christ

In Old Testament times God had called a people into a special relationship with Himself. This people was "the commonwealth of Israel"; and to it belonged the knowledge of God, the birth of the Messiah, the covenants of promise, and the outward mark of circumcision. In Old Testament history they had been His favored, though rebellious, people. In Old Testament prophecies they were the center of all His dealings. The glories of the Messiah were to be displayed in their midst, and no promise of blessing was made to the Gentiles save through them.

But in Ephesians we find that God was now performing a work entirely distinct from anything recorded in Old Testament narrative, or predicted in Old Testament prophecies. The Apostle therefore calls upon the Ephesian believers, who were of Gentile origin, to remember that they had no title such as the Jews might claim, not having one of those marks, which the Jews possessed, of relationship with God. They had been "in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands." Moreover, they were at that time "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:11, 12). But though the Gentiles had no title founded on covenant, promise, or national connection, God was now bringing them in by His own sovereign grace.

The Jews, who had a direct interest in the Messiah, had rejected Him and shed His blood. This had caused them, as a nation, to be set aside, and had ended, until their restoration, all those purposes to which the covenants and promises referred. God had therefore turned, as it were to another object. "The blood of Christ," which caused the national rejection of the Jews, was made the means of bringing people nigh. But in this sovereign and wonderful action of grace, God was no longer confined within the channels traced out by prophecy. All the prophetic blessings were postponed, because the nation in whom they centered was rejected. A new class of blessings, richer, higher, and with no restriction of nation or class, was thus brought in.

Hence the Apostle says, "Now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." v. 13. Thus Gentile believers were brought nigh by that very blood, the shedding of which caused the rejection of the Jews and the postponement of their national blessings. And not only was the blessing entirely different from what they as Gentiles could have enjoyed if the covenants of promise to Israel had then been fulfilled. It was of a far higher order than the Jew himself could have enjoyed under those covenants. For these Gentiles were now brought nigh "in Christ Jesus," which is a standing never spoken of in Old Testament prophecy. In this wondrous place the believing Jew and the believing Gentile were blended together, all earthly distinctions disappearing in the new character of blessing into which both were now introduced. Christ not only had made peace for them, but was their peace, and had "made both one," having "broken down the middle wall of partition"; and "having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace." vv. 14, 15.

This passage conclusively shows that Christianity is not the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, but something brought in while this awaits its fulfillment. In the fulfillment of the prophecies, the Jew will receive the place of pre-eminence which the covenants of promise assign him; and his blessings will be of a national character. The blessings here named are not national, but individual, and require the setting aside of all national distinctions for their accomplishment. Moreover, the passage speaks of both Jew and Gentile being made in Christ into "one new man." Understood literally, this could have no meaning; but understood figuratively, its sense is at once clear and beautiful. The Church is the body of Christ; and the Church and Christ are the "one new man" here spoken of. Language such as this is wholly foreign to the old prophets. It implies a nearness of relationship which the Old Testament never contemplates, and which indeed would be entirely inconsistent with the character in which the Messiah will be known by His earthly people.

But this nearness of relationship is the blessed portion of the believer, without distinction of Jew or Gentile; for Christ's object was, "that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." v. 16. The cross has not only obtained for us forgiveness of sins, it has ended our standing in the flesh. As "dead with Christ," earthly and fleshly distinctions cease; and in the new creation (that is, in Christ Himself), there is neither Jew nor Gentile, circumcision nor uncircumcision. By the cross we are dead, and the enmities of the flesh are slain with us. Thus both Jew and Gentile are reconciled "unto God in one body." This body is, of course, the body of Christ, the Church, which stands therefore entirely outside all earthly distinctions or covenant relationships. Hence peace can now be preached alike, says the Apostle, "to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh" (v. 17). For those that were nigh having forfeited their claim, and those that were afar off never having had any claim, both are now dealt with on the same footing of sovereign grace. They are brought not into the position which as a nation the Jews had lost by their rejection of the Christ, but into an entirely new position; "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." v. 18. Jehovah is the name and character in which Israel will yet know God. But under the new order of things introduced by grace, the believer, whether Jew or Gentile, knows God as Father.

The result is that old distinctions altogether vanish. "Now therefore ye" (the Gentile believers) "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints" (that is, believers generally, whether Jewish or Gentile), "and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." vv. 19, 20. Both Jewish and Gentile believers are transplanted from their old ground and placed in entirely different soil. They are "fellow citizens," but not of an earthly country; for "our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven." They are of the "household of God"-a closer relationship than the Jew will enjoy when his national blessings reach

their highest point. They are built into a new and wonderful structure, of which "Jesus Christ Himself" is the chief corner stone; and "the apostles and prophets" are the foundation course.

In Eph. 3 we read that the mystery of the Church was in other ages "not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." v. 5. This shows that the prophets here spoken of in connection with the apostles were not the Old Testament prophets. In the times of the Old Testament prophets, the mystery was not made known. To the prophets here named, as well as to the apostles, the mystery was made known. In

this epistle "prophets" are only named three times, and each time in connection with "apostles." Both apostles and prophets are spoken of as gifts of an ascended Christ. The prophets therefore here mentioned as forming part of the foundation on which we are built are not the Old Testament prophets, but the prophets to whom this mystery was now first imparted.

But the figure of our oneness with Christ is still strikingly continued; for after speaking of Him as "the chief corner stone," the Spirit adds, "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." vv. 21, 22. Strictly speaking, it is not correct to say that a building grows, or that the various materials added are built together, in the corner stone. But this very departure from strict accuracy only shows with greater vividness the prominence in which the Spirit seeks to set the thought of our standing "in Christ." In another epistle Paul writes, "As the body is one, and hath many members and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." 1 Cor. 12:12. Here the Church is the body, and Christ is the head; but the two are looked upon as so identified that the body itself, as well as the head, is spoken of as "Christ." It is the same blending together of Christ and the Church that we find in the passage before us. Christ is the corner stone, and believers are the rest of the building; but so bound up are they with each other that the whole is spoken of as in Him, and is said to be builded together in Him "for a habitation of God through the Spirit."

This is God's building, consisting only of real believers, who are built together in Christ, and form, as thus constructed, a suitable dwelling place for Himself. It must be carefully distinguished from the building raised by man on the same foundation—a building in which all sorts of worthless material is brought in, and which will therefore be tried by fire. A confusion between these two buildings has been the source of very much and very lamentable error.

Thus we have two remarkable figures of the Church, in both of which its oneness with Christ is very strikingly set forth. Considered as a body, it is the body of Christ—a thing necessary, as it were, to His own completeness. Considered as a temple, a dwelling place for God, it is "builded together" in Christ, He Himself being the chief corner stone, all believers being reared upon this foundation, and the whole growing up to completeness in Him.

To Paul was especially entrusted this truth concerning the new thing which God was bringing in. For this cause he was a prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles, having had given to him a "dispensation of the grace of God" toward them. He had received "by revelation" a mystery—or secret purpose of God—not disclosed in past times, "That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel" (chap. 3:1-6). That the Gentiles should be "fellow heirs" with the Jews was a new thing not only in fact, but in the revealed purposes of God. Still more marvelous was it that they should be "of the same body"; for this was something which neither Jew nor Gentile had ever heard of. They were made "fellow heirs" with each other by being made fellow heirs with Christ; they were made "of the same body" with each other by being made members of the body of Christ. It was thus that the Gentiles became "partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." According to covenants and prophecy, Christ was the special hope of Israel. But the promises of blessing in Christ went far beyond Israel, and were wide enough to embrace God's present work, in which Jew and Gentile are blended together, as well as that work to which the covenants and prophecies of the Old Testament look

forward.

Paul therefore had before him two objects. As a servant of the gospel he had "this grace given" to "preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (vv. 7, 8). And as the one to whom the mystery was revealed, he was "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." vv. 9-11. This is a wonderful passage. God, as creator of all things, had shown His wisdom. But there was a still more marvelous display which this wisdom was to receive, a display contemplated in God's counsels from all eternity, but now first brought to light. When all His earthly purposes seemed to be frustrated, when Satan seemed to have succeeded, God's manifold wisdom displays itself by turning this very apparent defeat into the crowning victory of His grace.

The great seeming triumph which Satan achieved at the cross, the temporary setting aside of all the revealed purposes of blessing and glory through Christ, only gave occasion for God to put a higher glory on Christ, and to introduce a richer and more unrestricted blessing than any before revealed. Thus the manifold character of God's wisdom shows itself, and not only to men, but to the principalities and powers in heavenly places. "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" when they beheld His wisdom in creating the world; but they see its manifold nature and its brightest display in His ways concerning the Church.

This leads the Apostle to a very remarkable prayer, which closes the third chapter. In the prayer which concludes the first chapter, Christ is looked upon as man, as the One who was raised from the dead. The prayer is, therefore, addressed to "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ." In the prayer of the third chapter, the subject is not our standing in Christ, but Christ dwelling in our hearts. Christ is looked upon not as the man raised from the dead, but as the One who accomplishes the purposes of God, and manifests His love. It is more as the Son revealing the Father, than as the Man glorifying God and glorified by Him, that He is here presented before us. The prayer is therefore addressed not to "the God," but to "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 14). While the earlier prayer, moreover, is that we may understand God's purposes and power, this carries us into a still higher region. The Apostle prays that we may, according to the riches of God's glory, "be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (vv. 16-19).

Here we have the indwelling of the Holy Ghost as the source of strength, and that "according to the riches of His [God's] glory"; Christ taking His abode in our hearts by faith; the soul, "rooted and grounded in love," able to enter into the vastness of God's ways; "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of those purposes which His grace has formed for His own glory, as well as for our blessing; and, finally, ourselves taught to know, not indeed in its extent-for in this it passes knowledge-but in its nature, the wondrous love of Christ Himself, that we may "be filled with all the fullness of God." This last expression is beautiful in its very indefiniteness. That we can be filled to God's fullness is, of course, impossible; but this is, as it were, the measure in which God is willing

to supply, and the only limit of the Holy Ghost's desire for us. Full as we may be, there is still infinitely more beyond, so that there is no limit to what is placed at our command.

And then, after bringing out all God's wonderful purposes, His power and His grace- after showing His manifold wisdom, as displayed in the Church-the Apostle concludes by an outburst of praise to Him. "Now," he says, "unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." vv. 20, 21. It is surely meet that He who has displayed His wisdom and grace in calling the Church should throughout eternity derive glory from it. Such is the Apostle's desire, and such should be the desire of every believer brought into this marvelous place. It will be fulfilled in the ages to come; but just in proportion as our hearts enter into the spirit of this prayer will it be their desire that, as far as may be, it should be fulfilled now.

Man's Wickedness and God's Answer

The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world not only as a man, but as the heir of promises; and they rejected Him in whom these promises were, as the promised Seed. But He has secured the promises by the cross, and also laid the foundation for all the purposes of God in His death and resurrection. He who came with all the promises of God in His hand was rejected and killed. Salvation on God's part is the answer to this wickedness on man's part. It was not merely that man was a sinner, but all that God would do for a sinner was refused-"Last of all He sent unto them His Son." My soul and conscience are cleared by the very blood which was the proof of my sin and guilt. The purpose which existed before the world was, can now be brought out; for righteousness has come in, and Christ as man has got a place in the glory of God, because He deserves it! This is the righteous foundation of the purposes of God, and He is there too in a work done for us.

The Merchantman and the Pearl

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Matt. 13:45, 46.

Some of us used to read this parable upside down. We thought the pearl of great price was the Lord Jesus, and the merchantman none other than the seeking sinner, who having found the priceless pearl, parted with all he had to make it his. Many, no doubt, still read it thus, or, rather misread it; for assuredly such is not its meaning. The indifferent sinner is very far indeed from seeking goodly pearls; and when awakened by the Holy Spirit of God to some concern about his soul, he learns sooner or later that Christ is not like a jewel put up for sale in the market square. The Savior is God's "unspeakable gift," and salvation is without money and without price. Besides, what has the sinner to give in exchange for the pearl of great price, supposing Christ to be it? His righteousnesses are but as "filthy rags." Of what value then are they? And if his best things are thus described, what can be said of the rest?

If we turn the parable around the other way, we shall see how simple and beautiful is its meaning. The Lord Jesus is the Merchantman-the seeker of goodly pearls. How frequently is He spoken of as a Seeker! No sooner had Satan achieved his malignant triumph in the garden of Eden, and the fallen pair hidden themselves behind the trees, than we behold God fulfilling this gracious mission. "Adam,... Where art thou?" is a cry that reveals a seeking God; and in those "coats of skin" with which He afterward clad the guilty pair, we see the earliest emblems of a guilty sinner being clothed suitably for the paradise of God on high, in the midst of which blooms the tree of life (Rev. 2:7).

Who of us, too, does not remember those gracious words that justified the joys of God's salvation being shed abroad in the heart of one who was not only a publican, but chief among that odious class? "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10. Many a hard heart has been broken by the grace that shines in that simple saying.

"I am so happy now," said a poor woman as she grasped the hand of her visitor and drew him aside into her little parlor. She had been long in great distress about her soul, and often had the visitor sought in vain to comfort her. "Thank God!" said he; "but what makes you so happy?" "It was a text I heard last Sunday," she replied. "It was nothing the preacher said in his sermon; but in the midst of it he quoted a text which I am sure I must have heard thousands of times before, but I never before thought what it meant. He seemed just to be looking at me; and as his eye fell on me, he said, 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.' It was that word 'seek' that went home to my heart. I thought I had been seeking for God for years, but here was a new idea to me; the truth that He had been seeking me. I looked up as the tears ran down my cheeks, and said, 'O my Lord, are you looking for me? What! looking for a poor wretched sinner like me?' As the thought laid hold upon my heart, I was filled with an unspeakable joy; and I felt as if I must shout out there and then and glorify the Good Shepherd whom I seemed to see looking everywhere, if only He might find a poor sinner like me."

The Good Shepherd! How in that office He shines as the unwearied Seeker! He leaves the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and goes after the one that is lost until He finds it. The wandering sheep seeks not the fold from which it strays. It lacks the sagacity which some other animals possess, and every step is likely to take it farther afield. So with the sinner. Therefore the Shepherd in painstaking love seeks His wandering ones. Why does He do this? It is because they are precious in His sight. Herein is a marvelous thing. We were worthless in ourselves, worse than worthless, for we were "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." Titus 3:3. Yet the Son of God has loved us and laid down His life for our sakes. And now from the glory of God, where He dwells, He seeks His lost ones until He finds them; and when found, He lays them on His shoulders rejoicing! (Luke 15).

So then the Lord Jesus is the Merchantman seeking goodly pearls.

But the parable speaks of "one pearl of great price"- not of many, but of one. What is that pearl? It is the Church. Most precious is she to Christ. There is but one Church. It is composed of all believers on the face of the earth-all who are truly saved. It is strange, passing strange, that He should speak of her as the "one pearl of great price." But so He does, and a great price has He paid to make her His. "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it." Eph. 5:25. His cross and His sufferings attest the greatness of His love, and show the wondrous price paid for her redemption.

It is only as we understand the place we have in His heart, that He will acquire a larger place in ours. Love begets love. Nor is it humility to take a lower place than love assigns. We may marvel much that we should be so dear to Christ, so beautiful, and of such worth in His eyes, but let us never doubt it. Believing it we shall rejoice; and as we do so He will become more precious to us, yea, altogether lovely!

Ministry

What can be more valuable in its place, and for God's ends by it, than Christian ministry? It embraces rule as well as teaching, pastor ship as well as preaching. There are those that can teach who have not the power of ruling; there are others who rule well, having great moral weight, who could not teach. Some again have the gift of preaching who themselves need teaching, and are not at all fit to lead on, clear, and establish the Church of God. Nor does a gift for ministry in itself carry moral weight for rule. Thus Scripture teaches, and so we see in the facts of every day. Christian ministry was founded by the Lord who died for us; but the spring flowed when He went up to heaven. If He gave gifts to men, it was after He ascended on high (Eph. 4:8-11).

Mount Sion

Then the eye is fixed on the assembly of first-born ones- the Church. They belonged not always to heaven, as the angels did, but their names are written there; grace has inscribed them on heaven's scroll according to God's eternal purpose. Then it is to God we have come. He is seen as the Judge of all-Supreme-to whom every creature is responsible.

Another company also has its place in this vast circle of glory-the spirits of just men made perfect, the blessed dead of a former dispensation who await the glory they shall share at the coming of the Lord.

Finally, Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, is spoken of-that covenant yet to be made with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, and the blood of Jesus which is the basis of all blessing and glory for sinful men.

To all this we have come in contrast to mount Sinai, which justly demanded a righteousness we could never render, and as justly shut us up under condemnation and despair. But these things are so vast that we need to pray for enlargement and for that teaching which only God's Spirit can give in order to take them in.

"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." Heb. 12:22-24.

In saying that we have come to mount Sion, the Apostle does not mean the actual, literal mount. We have come to that of which mount Sion speaks, in contrast to mount Sinai. Sion speaks of grace, of blessing, and deliverance from God when everything on man's side had given way. We have come to that vast sphere of blessing yet to be established. and which is named here in its various parts. Now, mount Sion is only the center of the earthly system; there is also the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. Our thoughts are thus taken to heaven, and there we find ourselves in the midst of the inhabitants of the unseen world, the innumerable company of angels.

Gleanings From the History of Naaman: Part 1

"Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valor, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel. And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

"And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha." 2 Kings 5:1-9.

A remarkable illustration of the principle of grace is here set before us in great precision and minuteness of detail. Divine purpose makes itself evident in every line of the chapter. The ministry of Elijah had not succeeded in effecting any radical improvement in Israel's condition (1 Kings 18:37; 19:

14). Elijah, in the great scene on Carmel, had summed up the whole case for Jehovah as against Baal; and the people had there confessed the supremacy of Jehovah. But their more deliberate and formal answer we see disclosed in the message of Jezebel to the prophet. The heart of the nation was not really turned back again; it was unchanged. But in the chapter now before us the question is, Had the grace which found its expression in Elisha's ministry softened their heart and turned it again to the Jehovah of hosts, the God of their fathers? Clearly it was not so. Yet it pleased God in His infinite wisdom to furnish this magnificent exposition of the way in which grace delights to act, with its characteristic methods, and its fruits, as also of its own essential principles. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world," etc. (Titus 2:11-14). In 2 Kings 4 we have seen how this grace is inexhaustible. "So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the LORD." v. 44.

But a more serious question than that of poverty comes now into view; namely, of sin in all its guilt and uncleanness, for "many lepers were in Israel"; yet were they indifferent to this manifestation of it in their midst. The Lord Jesus in the day of His visitation of His people witnessed to the

excellence and efficacy of that grace in which He came to them as the sent One of God, when, coming to Nazareth and entering their synagogue, He read from the prophecy of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord Goo is upon Me," etc., and said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21). Yet their hearts were closed against Him, their consciences were not awakened, they refused to acknowledge their guilty and defiled condition and their own deep need. "Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus [Elijah] the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath." (Luke 4:16-29.) They stumbled at the sovereign grace of God. So it was in our Lord's days, and so it is now. "For as ye [Gentiles] in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their [the Jews] unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy." Rom. 11:30, 31. The meaning of the latter clause is that the Jews refused the mercy shown to Gentiles, so that in the end they may come in also on the basis of pure mercy.

Grace displays itself to the unworthy where there is the confession of our sins and the submission to the righteousness of God instead of the establishment of our own (Rom. 10:3), and the acknowledgment of the Lordship of Christ. The fact that there were many lepers in Israel in Elisha's time was a testimony to the uncleanness of the nation in God's sight. But instead of exercise of heart before God about it, there was none. Had Jehovah not said: "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD Thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee"? Exod. 15:26.

From the time that sin found an entrance into this world, God has never ceased to plead with man, testifying to divine goodness in Himself, but to ingratitude and rebellion in the creature. The many uncleansed lepers in Israel in Elisha's day; the great multitude, in the days of our Lord, of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the waters of Bethesda's pool; the ten lepers of Luke 17; all alike bore unequivocal testimony to the real state and condition of the nation, and the insufficiency of ceremonial which, while contenting the people, did not meet the gravity of sin before God. So with Elisha, as we have seen, there was a similar testimony to the low estate of the people; yet was there the sovereign and waiting goodness of God for any truly confessing their need. The great in Israel discerned it not; yet, nevertheless, it could be known in its freeness and efficacy by the "stranger" who came in the expectancy of blessing.

This blessing was in the land of Israel - there to be found - for it did not travel outside of its own proper sphere as yet. God was not then making generous overtures to the Gentiles outside the land, however sorely Israel might provoke Him to do so. The Lord Jesus, of whom Elisha was but a type, would not allow Himself, as sent to the lost sheep of Israel, to depart from the path of obedience; nor would He distribute (without a protest) the children's food to dogs. For "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to Thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto Thy name. And again He saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud Him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust." Rom. 15:8-12.

God, in blessing Jew or Gentile, is ever true to Himself. The foolish conceit of the Gentile no more will be allowed a place than the unbelieving pride of Israel. We get both in this our chapter; and we find the prophet so instructed in the ways of Jehovah that he rebukes• the one (v. 8), and refuses to acknowledge the other (v. 10).

A few words as to the leprosy itself may not be out of place here. Its moral significance is plainly enough set before us in Scripture. No doubt leprosy was more or less prevalent in Egypt and the East, and perhaps particularly so in Syria. But God could not tolerate its presence in the camp of Israel, as we learn from Numb. 5:1-4. God had taken the people at their word and had consented to dwell among them (Exod. 15:2; 25:8). His presence could not but judge all that was opposed to His holy nature. He would not be a consenting party to His own dishonor. So too, when the ark of God was taken into Dagon's temple, Dagon was judged (1 Sam. 5:4). They are commanded therefore to "put out of the camp every leper," etc. Everything unsuited to His presence as in their midst was to be put out of their camp, "for the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp."

Before very long, the children of Israel were called upon to put this word into operation in regard to a very specific case of leprosy which appeared in one of their three leaders (Mic. 6:4). "And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.... And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again." Numb. 12:10-15. She who had led the women of Israel in song after the passage of the Red Sea (Exod. 15) is stricken by the just judgment of Jehovah with leprosy, and is shut out from the camp. We know that Aaron the priest was himself guilty likewise, although for obvious reasons not dealt with in the same way. Still more awful was the divine visitation upon Uzziah, king of Judah, recorded in 2 Chron. 26

These scriptures are sufficient to show that the infliction of leprosy was the expression of God's righteous judgment of sin, and also of His rejection of man - religious man - in his fleshly pretensions and assumed competency to draw near to God, and in the refusal of the truth of his actual condition. Sin, in its inward workings as known to God, made to appear outwardly in all its repulsive, revolting character, is what is shown by leprosy. Its manifestation in the flesh of the leper occupies the greater part of Lev. 13, while the next chapter sets before us "the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing." What is within displays itself in outward acts; yet it is not these but the principle, or working, of sin itself that is signified by leprosy. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;.." and "the judgment was by one to condemnation," yet the law dealt with sinful acts and condemned them. It failed to condemn sin in the flesh. Had it done so, it would have had nothing more to say, for man is that and nothing else. But when the holy One was upon the cross a sacrifice for sin, then sin itself was condemned. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness [righteous requirement] of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:3, 4. The believer now knows to his comfort and deliverance that as surely as Christ "was delivered for our offenses," so too He "was raised again for our justification." Death and resurrection are God's remedy for sin, and He requires submission to Christ (see Rom. 4:25; 14:9 Cor. 5:14-21).

It must be evident that when it is a question of what sin is before God, there can be no distinction between Israel and the Gentiles. "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him."

"He is a leprous man, he is unclean: the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean; his plague is in his head. And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in

him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be." Lev. 13:44-46. What God now calls for is the soul's bowing to His judgment of our state, and of our sins, in

Christ's death. Heart belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the abiding efficacy of His precious blood that cleanses from every sin, gives eternal forgiveness and peace.

Gleanings From the History of Naaman: Part 2

The cleansing of this Syrian leper was indeed a wonderful witness to the sovereign grace of the God of Israel - a witness not without blessing to the Gentile, even if disregarded by His people. "The law of the leper in the day of his cleansing," as set out in Lev. 14, was no longer known in Israel; for though there were many lepers in the land, none of them was cleansed. And where was either priest or sacrifice that God could own? The ministry of Elisha was outside the nation's ritual, such as it then was. The altar of Elijah had testified in its day (1 Kings 18), but where afterward do we read of it? It is a serious thing when the ordinary channel of blessing, because of its defilement, can no longer be made use of; for grace must maintain its own character of holiness, and will be neither hindered nor defiled by human interference. So, as we review the miracle now before us, we cannot but feel that for this reason it was that Elisha avoided reference to the Mosaic rite.

Let us now examine for a little the details of our chapter as affording a representative case. "Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valor, but he was a leper." 2 Kings 5:1. Here we have an experienced soldier, an able general, a successful man, justly esteemed, honored, and rewarded, by his master. His name signifies "agreeableness," and Jehovah had used him to bring victory to Syria in chastisement of His own guilty people.

We read, again and again, how in the time of the judges God was grieved for the misery of His people, and raised up one and another to deliver them from their oppressors. Not because Israel deserved deliverance, but because He pitied them. So here the distressed condition of the Syrians had appealed to the tender mercy of Jehovah. God had permitted Israel in the reign

of Ahab to defeat the Syrians repeatedly (1 Kings 20). "And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD." v. 28. Three years later, however, when Ahab attempted to recover Ramoth-gilead out of the hand of the king of Syria, Israel was scattered and Ahab slain. Jehoshaphat, in guilty league with Israel's wicked king, was nevertheless delivered, "so as by fire." Subsequently recovered, Ramothgilead appears again in the possession of Israel, who used it as a military center.

Coming back to our chapter, however, we read that Jehovah had granted deliverance to Syria by one that was a leper. However great the victory, yet Naaman could not get away from the bitterness and sorrow of his being "a leper." This marred everything. Man in his best estate betrays the sin of his nature, and the dreaded, inevitable end is constantly in his thoughts, and casts its shadow on all earth's glory. Death!

And after death, the judgment! The greatest measure of worldly success and prosperity cannot shut out the gloomy prospect from the soul. Indeed, they only increase its terror; for, while death

itself may come as a relief to the wretched and the poor, the wealthy and honored naturally cling to what vainly satisfies them here, with nothing beyond but eternal judgment!

The soldiers of Naaman had brought into their lord's house one who was indeed a messenger of mercy. A captive out of the land of Israel, this little maid waited on Naaman's wife. "And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy."

Seldom indeed is the heart of a proud rebel against God softened or improved by adversity. Much less is found a nation, or any great part of a community, truly humbled by reverses. Of such it can be said, "They cry not when He bindeth them." Job. 36:13. And again at a later day it is written, specially of Israel when suffering defeat at the hands of the same enemy, where we have doubtless a prophecy of the yet more acute tribulation of the last days: "The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel. And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars. Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join His enemies together; the Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth.... For the people turneth not unto Him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts." Isa. 9:8-13.

The gracious ministry of Elisha, overlooked and despised by the great ones in Israel, had found a response in the heart of one of Jehovah's "little ones" - the unmistakable evidence that God had been at work. The "still small voice" bore witness that "His mercy endureth forever," and had found its way to the heart of the little maid that was "of the land of Israel." Grace with her had borne fruit, both for God's glory and man's blessing. Naturally she might have brooded over her wrongs, over the loneliness and misery of her now daily life. For although in the midst of affluence and splendor, she might naturally have regarded her lord with aversion, as being the direct expression of the power of the enemy in the havoc wrought in Israel, separating her too from her home and friends.

Would it have been surprising if, instead, she had presented an impassioned appeal for mercy that would give her back to the land of her birth, to her friends, and to her home? Yet, on the contrary, her earnest desire was that her master, and not herself, were with the prophet that is in Samaria! How perfectly does grace deliver the soul from selfishness or self-occupation. How it enlarges the heart and elevates the downtrodden and oppressed! Who can doubt that there shone more true nobility of spirit in her than in her master, or in the king of Syria? Grace, in that early day, foreimpressed its own character upon the heart of the receiver (Titus 2:9-14). Surely, she had either witnessed with others, or proved in herself, the power of grace to change the heart. For it was not a studied part which she was acting, with selfish desires for her own ultimate good, nor yet a mere submission to the inevitable, but a truly simple, yea, almost passionate expression of what occupied her heart. Even for how long previously, we cannot say. But we may say of her likewise, "She hath done what she could."

For whom was it done, as regards her feelings and intelligence? was it for Naaman only? Was not the glory of God before her, however little she might be conscious of it? Whatever brings true blessing to the soul, has God for its source and its object. God's greatest and best gift has been His beloved Son. When that Blessed One was about to leave the world, having finished the work

(as to His service of grace) given Him to do, we find the Spirit of God bringing together and connecting the beginning with the end of His course, thus giving us the object, the method of realization, and the results of His presence in the world in relation to God, to man, and to Satan. "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper," etc. John 13:1-4.

Blessing from God received by man in faith, returns to God in worship. So too the Apostle Paul, after tracing and expounding the ways of God with Israel and the Gentiles, brings us to the same conclusion. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." Rom. 11:33-36.

There was then a purpose of blessing for Naaman in the heart of Jehovah. The leper was to be cleansed, but his heart was also to be renewed by grace, so that he might be brought to God as a worshiper. The first link in the chain of blessing seemed weak indeed, and all who were used in the work seemed to have been chosen of God with a view to humbling the pride of the Gentile. Man is slow to admit that there is any barrier between God and himself but what he can set aside. The faithfulness and simplicity of the little maid were admirable. The principles which guided her were in effect those upon which the great Apostle of the Gentiles took his stand.

The same power and grace were active in each case. "And I, when I came to you, brethren, came not in excellency of word, or wisdom, announcing to you the testimony of God. For I did not judge it well to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling; and my word and my preaching, not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith might not stand in men's wisdom, but in God's power." 1 Cor. 2:1-5; J.N.D. Trans.

Gleanings From the History of Naaman: Part 3

It might be deemed only natural that the king of Syria, on hearing of a possible cure in the land of Israel for the leprosy of his servant, should address himself to the king of Israel; but he need not have ignored the prophet so entirely as to frustrate the mission, but for the overruling providence of God. Would not the king of Israel (if anybody) know all about it? And considering how recently Naaman had harassed Israel's land and people, he must have thought a little diplomacy was, doubtless, called for. "A man's gift maketh room for him." Pro. 18:16. Certainly he did his best to get on good terms with the one whom he thought most likely to help him in the matter, and we cannot be surprised at this. The infidel spirit, however, shown by the king of Israel, was inexcusable; but God is pitiful and was working in spite of hindrances. How many there are today who, in touch with the people of God and familiar, it may be, with truth in its outward expression, are found to be the greatest strangers to its power and reality. "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him," and are enemies of the cross of Christ. Here, in the case before us, is evidently set forth the present unbelieving state of the Jewish nation. God is owned in a way-"Am I God, to kill and to make alive?"- but the witness and vessel of grace is ignored-Elisha was forgotten. The "poor man," who by his wisdom delivered the city, was not remembered by any one (Eccles. 9:14, 16). The prophet's ministry stayed the hand of God in judgment, yet Israel's king ignored the prophet.

Although the king of Israel's words did not go so far as the attempt of Elymas "to turn away the deputy from the faith" (Acts 13:8-10), they were yet the outcome of the ceaseless activity of the devil in seeking to hinder souls from getting blessing. But Jehovah interfered by His servant Elisha who "sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." 2 Kings 5:8-10.

With the real or imaginary grievances of Israel, Elisha had nothing to do. But he could not allow it to be said that Naaman the leper had come into the land of Israel asking blessing and cleansing, and had returned disappointed. It was not, however, the testimony for the moment that God dwelt in Israel; for Jeroboam, its first king after the division, had cast the God of Israel behind his back and discarded the priests of Jehovah. It remains for a yet future day for the testimony to go forth (to the terror of all enemies) that the name of the city shall be, from that day forth, "Jehovah is there." Naaman should indeed own that (v. 15), but the measured utterance of the prophet was, strictly speaking, more correct than the language of the one who had but just learned what it was to have to do with God in grace.

Jehovah had been cast out of Israel, and had not returned to the nation. He had not, however, cast away His people on that account. On the contrary, He had sent His servant in grace that it might be manifest that there was a prophet in Israel. Man's way had proved distinctly disappointing, but

God graciously opened up a prospect of deliverance and blessing, just as despair had, for the moment, taken possession of Naaman. A like experience we see in the case of God's redeemed people at the beginning of their history (Exod. 14), and indeed all the way through, as they will own in a future day in words especially prepared for their use in Psalm 107 (see Hos. 14:1, 2). The word of God through the prophet to the king, arrests Naaman in his perplexity, and-in its form of invitation, "let him come now to me"-is suggestive of the present invitations of grace: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." John 7:37. "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17.

It is the more necessary to press these generous invitations at the present time, since the god of this world is blinding the minds of them that believe not, lest the glory of Him who invites, and their own deep need should be discerned. For the time is near when the leper will be left in all his uncleanness in the outside place, and the sinner who dies in his sins will be raised in order to appear before the great white throne for eternal judgment. "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:10-12. "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20:11-15.

Naaman responded to the gracious invitation in a very ungracious spirit, only to find that pride must be humbled. He might make a display of glory and self-importance at the king's palace, but it was altogether out of place at the door of the house of Elisha. He might be a "great man with his master, and honorable," but Elisha was not affected by the display of this world's glory. He saw in him who stood at his gate an enemy of the people of Jehovah, an unclean leper to whom he could not come out, seeing he was not a priest (Lev. 14:3). And he had a sense of what was due to God, of what alone could be efficacious for the leper. It is only in God's presence and in subjection to His Word that we realize how completely sin separates us from God and from His people. The thoughts of man are all wrong, both in regard to sin and its remedy. The brief message of the prophet to Naaman was a disclosure of what his real condition was in God's eyes. "And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." Unclean, he needed to be cleansed. Up to this point everybody had spoken of "recovery" (vv. 3, 6, 7, 11; compare with Lev. 13:45). The thoughts of men today, and especially of religious men, are set upon recovery, improvement, reformation, whether by moral or scientific means. But the Christian has learned that the flesh cannot be improved. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." John 3:6. "The carnal mind is enmity against

God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. 8:7. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." Gal. 5:6. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Cor. 5:17. How humiliating for the proud Syrian to hear the words, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times." The remedy was simplicity itself-"Go and wash." Yet did it imply that he was in his leprous condition unclean, so that the man of God could not tolerate him in his presence.

Gleanings From the History of Naaman: Part 4

"But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." 2 Kings 5:11-14. It was not alone the simplicity or the brevity of the message sent out to Naaman which stumbled that "great" and "honorable" man; but Elisha refused to acknowledge the glory which distinguished him among men as of any account before God. His gifts, too, which would have made way for him in his own sphere, were altogether valueless in the presence of God.

It is a great and fundamental truth of the gospel, and that which staggers the pride of man, that "there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." As long as man keeps away from God, differences can be made and maintained for whatever they are worth; but God has decreed that no flesh shall glory in His presence; and where a soul is consciously in the presence of God, there is as little inclination as there is power to maintain the conventional distinctions of men. The light of God entering the soul gives it to bow to the truth of God's Word and to own its authority. "Then Job answered the LORD, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further." Job 40:3-5. "Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech Thee, and I will speak: I will demand of Thee, and declare Thou unto me. I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Chap 42:1-6.

Only in one of two positions can man stand in God's presence-either as a repentant sinner bowing to God's righteous judgment of him, or as a worshiping saint justified by faith. All attempts to establish a character or a righteousness to satisfy even oneself must break down. The instructions as to leprosy in Israel (Lev. 14) illustrate this, as we have seen before; but what is so exceedingly important and interesting to notice in the cleansing of Naaman is that in the absence of all ritual God yet required that which signified the entire submission of the soul to death, and the obedience of faith. Israel has long ceased to be the executive of God's righteous government of man in the world, and it refuses the mercy and grace in which the blessed Son of God came to them. The present testimony is one of sovereign grace, and addresses itself to the whole world. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (which He had promised afore by His prophets in the holy Scriptures,) concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord,

which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name." Rom. 1:1-5.

But if God has rejected the fleshly confidences of Israel (Jer. 2:37), still less could He regard with favor the boldness of religious profession which would ignore the difference between Israel and the Gentiles, and, taking advantage of the unbelief of the former, would at least claim equality with, if not superiority to, anything of which Israel could boast. Nothing among Gentiles has ever had the shadow of divine authority to plead in justification. The objection of Naaman witnessed that the carnal mind is indeed enmity against God, that it entertains nothing but contempt for what God may have established or for what meets with His approval upon earth. Naaman was disposed to prefer the waters of Syria to those of Israel. We may be sure there were no inherent qualities in either for cleansing from leprosy. All such virtue rested in the word of God, and this demands the obedience of faith.

The river of Jordan doubtless had its typical import, but then was not the time to reveal it. We who now know something of the precious truth that in the death of Christ we have also our death to sin might be disposed to dwell somewhat on this part of the history; but, as the 6th of Romans has its typical counterpart, not here but in Josh. 3 and 4, we pass on and would seek to learn the purpose of God in dealing thus with this Syrian leper. Do not the words of the leper himself supply the answer? "Behold. I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage." We see here how ready the human mind is to reason about the divinely simple but efficacious way of blessing for man's deep need, instead of bowing thereto in simple trust in God's unerring wisdom and gracious means. Naaman attached importance to his thoughts-how vain are the thoughts of man (Psalm 94:11) -and (lid not disguise his contempt for the people and land of Israel. He betrayed the very same spirit which in an earlier day had brought the judgment of God upon his nation (see 1 Kings 20).

The mind of the flesh is enmity against God, and displays itself in this way-that, where obedience of faith is required, intellectualism is ready to question. But "He [God] giveth not account of any of His matters" (Job 33:13). The gospel is preached among all nations "for the obedience of faith," and the simple and lowly receive it and get the blessing. So in the case before us it was the servants of Naaman who, by their remonstrance with him as he turned away, helped their master; and so also had the little captive maid been used of God at an earlier stage.

The simple, cogent reasoning of the servants proved its superiority to the vain thoughts of Naaman, disclosing at the same time their affectionate solicitude for their master's welfare which was truly touching. They put before him how he had nothing to lose, but everything to gain, by complying with the prophet's instructions. The very simplicity of the gospel is what first stumbles the soul. The "Wash, and be clean" of this chapter strikingly points to the "Believe... and thou shalt be saved" of the New Testament. There is a kind of desperation of soul, the result of trying human schemes of reformation, only to be disappointed, in which the Spirit of God works for the bringing of the soul to give up its own thoughts and way, and unreservedly cast itself upon the mercy of

God. If not, indeed, faith of an exalted order, yet still it is faith. "If I perish, I perish," said Esther; so similarly, the answer of the twelve apostles to the Lord's challenge exhibited the same character of faith. "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." John 6:66-69. Peter confessed his faith in Christ, and his love for Christ; but it was not knowledge or intelligence which held the disciples. They could not better themselves elsewhere. "To whom shall we go?"

By whatever means the sinner is brought to believe in God and to cast himself upon Christ for salvation, the result is ever the same. It was not the healing virtue of the waters of Jordan which Naaman proved, but the virtue of the prophet's word, and that Israel's God was indeed a Savior God. "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" Numb. 23:19. "His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth." Job 33:25. That which washed away the leprosy of Naaman cleansed his soul from its unbelieving utterance. Dipping "seven times in Jordan," his lowly submission was complete; so was his cleansing. "His flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

Gleanings From the History of Naaman: Part 5

"And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant. But he said, As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused. And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD. In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing. And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way." 2 Kings 5:15-19.

It is not to be supposed that the man of God was ignorant of or indifferent to the struggle that had been going on in the heart of Naaman, between faith and unbelief. It was in reality a conflict between God and Satan for the possession of a soul. The Spirit of God had brought it to a happy termination. Human instrumentality, insignificant and unpretentious in this case, had been largely made use of; but the chief actors had not, up to this point, discovered themselves. We cannot but admire the wisdom and propriety with which Elisha carried himself all the way through, standing aside while the conflict was in progress, as a servant that "knoweth not what his lord doeth." He has but to deliver Jehovah's message without addition or diminution, as becomes one entrusted with a ministry of reconciliation. But the mind of man reveals its disappointment and dissatisfaction with the gospel of the grace of God, and manifests, as in Naaman's case, its open rebellion against the means prescribed by God to induce the sinner to give up his own thoughts and the reasoning of unbelief. The ambassador has faithfully to deliver the message committed to him, and to leave the result with God. It is not his to try and make it palatable by giving up what arouses opposition. He knows that at all times God is well pleased when His beloved Son is well spoken of, and the gospel faithfully preached. "For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." 2 Cor. 2:15-17.

A spirit of earnest sincerity, witness of a love that seeks in order to save and bless, underlies the gospel, which in itself rarely fails to attract. "Let him come now to me," awakened hope in the heart of Naaman; but the more peremptory command, "Go and wash," destroyed those hopes which had been wrongly placed. "Behold. I thought," revealed the pride of a corrupt heart which in the matter of salvation would dictate terms to God; but the light of God had nevertheless truly dawned upon him, and so eventually we hear his confession of it in the words, "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." What an amazing discovery! And in what a way of grace to make it! The only God in all the earth had been found of a poor Gentile leper-found too in Israel's land, while certainly Israel's king acknowledged Him not. "But Esaias is very bold, and

saith, I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me. But to Israel He saith, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Rom. 10:20, 21.

Well might the great Apostle of the Gentiles, with a heart full of love for his brethren after the flesh, seek to use such a marvelous fact for the blessing of some of them. "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them." Rom. 11:13, 14.. And will not God use it effectually in a day which is yet future, in answer to the prayer of an afflicted and repentant remnant (Isa. 64:12; 65:1)? Then will assurance and certainty, as the result of God's work in the soul, take the place of "vain thoughts," fruits of a darkened understanding which had repelled grace and insulted Jehovah and His servant. "Better things... and things which accompany salvation," we may say, were now to appear in the case before us; and these were wonderfully similar in character to those fruits which rejoiced the heart of the Apostle Paul as he marked their development in his beloved Thessalonians. "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father." 1 Thess. 1:2, 3. The Thessalonian converts had believed the gospel which Paul preached, responding heartily and in all simplicity to the grace presented. They had borne fruit in like character to that divine grace which had visited them. And, in its measure, it was so with Naaman. One hardly knows which to admire most—the generous devotion of the cleansed leper pressing his gifts upon Elisha, or the faithfulness in which the latter refused all that was offered, declining to enrich himself by compromising the testimony of that free yet sovereign grace of which he had been the channel.

The tribute of the Gentiles has been rendered to God's earthly people in the past, and will yet again be rendered to Israel in the future (compare 2 Chron. 9:23, 24. with Psalm 72). These gifts shall come with acceptance to the earthly dwelling place and altar of Jehovah. But at this time Israel was unbelieving and contemptuous of the grace represented by the ministry of Elisha, so that no glory could in truth accrue to Israel, or indeed to any but to Jehovah Himself. It would be better and more excellent for the Syrian to return to his own land, and build an altar to Jehovah there, as in coming millennial days when God shall have accomplished all that He has ever promised for Israel, it shall be said, "In that day there shall be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD." "In that day there shall be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance." Isa. 19:19, 23-25. Truly God has given in His Word many a pledge and guarantee of blessing which awaits not only Israel, but the world, when there shall be the universal acknowledgment of Jehovah, and subjection to His order then established in power on the earth.

How perfect is divine workmanship! He who had but a little before spoken disparagingly of "the waters of Israel," now begs for two mules' burden of earth! Had it been suggested to him earlier as an essential condition to his cleansing, he might have regarded it as an unnecessary incumbrance; but in his altered state of mind, the very soil of the land of Israel was sacred to him,

where he had come to know God as Jehovah Rophi-"that healeth thee" (Exod. 15:26). When God is known thus as a Savior God, to build an altar to Him (in a manner of speaking) is the suited thing to do. Now ' that Christ has come, God can only be truly owned and worshiped as a "just God and a Savior" when He is known as One who, in the death of His Son, has laid a righteous and adequate basis for the everlasting deliverance and blessing of man. So also did Jacob, at an earlier day, when bidden by God to "Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee." "So Jacob came to Luz,... that is Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar, and called the place El-bethel; because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother." Gen. 35:1, 6, 7.

Grace manifested in Christ removes man's abilities, sets before him an object to be worshiped, and supplies both motives and methods such as God can acknowledge and accept. To have learned only that "there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel" could but bring sorrow to Naaman; for he dwelt not there, but in Syria. But this was not all that he had learned. He had learned the true character of God Himself, who had established him in the position of a worshiper, cleansed, accepted, and welcome to draw near, even as the heirs of promise. Naaman was to go back to his own land with all the riches he had brought. They had been refused, but he had been cleansed and accepted. The same God who had delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt and set Himself before them as the one object of worship, had been revealed to Naaman with the same result. To Israel, He had given the ten words which proclaimed His holy jealousy against all false gods; and then he adds, "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." Exod. 20:24.

"And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor, 'Sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD. In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon,... the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing." vv. 17, 18. The revelation of God as He has declared Himself, the association of His name with the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, is that which gives the character of truth to worship; while the passing away of all forms and ceremonies now rendered obsolete by the death of Christ requires that worship rendered to a God as now revealed in Christianity should be spiritual. "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." John 4:21.24.

.t, The question then arises, Who are they who are thus

Elisha could but stand aside and refrain from hindering where he had no authority to sanction. For such a work was quite outside the revealed ways of God with Israel, and apart from all that had hitherto been made known, whether of leprosy and its cleansing, or of worship and its essential requisites. Yet surely Elisha was here a type of God's righteous Servant who, when here on earth, in the same place and in similar circumstances, acknowledged the faith which God had wrought in

the heart of a stranger and accepted the worship (as unconventional as that of Naaman) which was rendered to Him by the cleansed Samaritan of Luke 17:11-19.

Gleanings From the History of Naaman: Part 6

While grace thus manifested its presence and character by positive fruits in a way acceptable to God and cheering to the heart of His servant, the evidence of an exercised conscience bore convincing testimony to the reality of the change which Naaman had experienced. The circumstances before us are not the portrayal of the case of one breaking with old associations, or departing from evil habits, but of one returning a changed man to his responsible position in the service of the king of Syria. Worship of Jehovah, and obedience to Him, would not be easy in the midst of idolatrous surroundings; and already, before his return to Syria, Naaman contemplated in a very different way to formerly the circumstances and requirements of his honorable position. To be closely associated with his royal master on all state occasions, and to take part in the worship of Rimmon, had hitherto been congenial to his feelings, and indeed flattering to him as a distinguished courtier. But the very thing which formerly ministered to his pride is now distasteful, and becomes an act of sin calling for judgment if not pardoned. "And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way." 2 Kings 5:19.

What had changed? Only the heart of Naaman. What made the difference? The light had broken in upon his soul. A new moral standard was set up within him. "The entrance of Thy word giveth light," and all outward action must conform to the purity of that which had established its own authority within him. It was not a law from without, requiring obedience under promise of blessing, or putting a restraint upon him with pain and penalties in case of disobedience. Nor was it only the divine authority of that word to which he had reluctantly submitted, but the revelation had been one of grace. Jehovah, the only God in all the earth, had interested Himself on his behalf-himself, a miserable, unclean Gentile leper-and when the great ones of Israel would have sent him away, Jehovah had sent His servant with the message, "Let him come now to me." Obedience of faith receives the blessing, and grace impresses its own character upon the receiver. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:11-14.

In Naaman's case there was but a limited display of grace, and personal to himself, having reference solely to his own bodily condition. It was not calculated to lift him out of himself, and did not set before him a "blessed hope." But the grace which came by Jesus Christ, and is now in the presentation of the gospel, has appeared in all its fullness, bringing salvation for all men, and opening up a prospect of glory and blessing of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the center and effulgence. It is impossible that such grace should visit the soul and leave it unchanged. Once received, it teaches; and so it was with Naaman. Divine wisdom characterized Elisha's reply. He neither sanctioned a relapse into idolatrous practices, nor imposed the law of Moses upon a Gentile. "Go in peace," left him free to follow the leading of that light and grace which had entered his soul. The display of grace was perfect according to God's own character and way. But now we

are given to see the counter working of the adversary of God and man.

"But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well? And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him. And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed. But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow." 2 Kings 5:20-27.

A solemn picture indeed! needing but little in the way of explanation. We have seen that the same malignant power of Satan was actively working in many ways to prevent the reception of the blessing. Defeated in that, he uses the most suited instrument to his hand to give God the lie, and to rob Him of His glory. That instrument was found in the service of the man of God—one who dwelt in his house and had doubtless seen many other displays of grace, but who was himself absolutely indifferent to Jehovah's glory, and unaffected in heart by all that he had been privileged to witness. He only saw in this recent example an opportunity of enriching himself at the expense of the testimony. See how contemptuously he speaks of the one whom God had blessed! and how profanely he makes use of Jehovah's name to sanction the infamy which he proposed! "Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought; but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him."

As we have before seen, grace received imparts its own character to the receiver; and not only so, but having its source and spring in God's love as now manifested in Christ, it takes its course of blessing through the saints, making them channels of blessing to others, and returns to God in worship. This is true now of saints individually (see John 7:37-39), as it will also be manifested corporately in the Church's relations to the millennial earth, as we see in Rev. 22:1-3.

The reverse of this is to be seen in the case of such as have become familiar with truth as to its outward expression and the present ways of God in grace, while themselves strangers in heart to the power and reality of either. Just as Naaman had exhibited the fruits of grace received in tenderness of conscience and devotedness of heart, so did the unrenewed heart of Gehazi display itself in all the horrible repulsiveness of nature. Satan works most readily and effectively upon the religiously instructed mind. It is those who have learned about God or the Lord Jesus Christ. and who have thus some knowledge of the truth, that are more efficient servants of the devil than are those who have not such knowledge.

The sin of Gehazi has been the sin of Christendom. In the early days of the Church's history, the new testimony to the name of Jesus was maintained with such power and earnestness, and so abundantly blessed by the Holy Ghost in this same city of Samaria, that there was great joy in that city. Grace was there again asserting itself, and also maintaining its own proper character. But just as the covetousness of Gehazi betrayed him into the hands of Satan for the corrupting of the testimony, so in that early day the same evil principle manifested itself in New Testament times in one who had the reputation of being called "the great power of God," who also "believed" and was baptized, and was admitted into the Christian profession. Such was Simon Magus (Acts 8), a professed believer, but who was proved to have "neither part nor lot in this matter," for his heart was not right in the sight of God.

These tactics of the devil are more effective than open opposition-interfering with the action of grace, and corrupting the motives and testimony of such as proclaim it. But there was in the early history of the Church the spiritual power and energy of the apostles, which exposed and judged these evil ways, and for the moment restrained its fuller development as manifested in later days. The natural man is ever ready to turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and to use the Christian profession as a means of exalting and enriching himself, holding godliness to be a means of gain; and the lordship of Christ is practically, if not formally, denied. With Gehazi it was not alone the cupidity disclosed, nor the falsehood and deception practiced, that exposed the offender to the withering rebuke of the prophet and the swift and solemn judgment of God, but the occasion-"Is it a time to receive," etc. God had drawn near to His revolted people in grace, which could neither be monopolized by Israel, nor patronized or purchased by the Gentile. Elisha as a spiritual man entered fully into the mind of God and refused the gifts Naaman would have pressed upon him. Yet his servant had thought it a time to enrich himself by grasping at that which his master had refused.

The moral application to the present day is obvious. It is not here unbelieving Israel forbidding that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, but the corrupt professor, the wicked servant, doing his utmost, and using his knowledge and position as a servant in the house, to counteract the work of God in the soul, and mar the testimony of grace so as to belie its true character. No sin is more heinous and deadly than sin against the grace of God, as seen in those who deny the Lord that bought them, and who bring upon themselves swift destruction. There were many lepers in Israel when Naman was cleansed. One more was added to the many. "And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow."

Nehemiah and Jude

There is one striking correspondence between the book of Nehemiah and the epistle of Jude. In the former we read, "Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded." Chap. 4:17, 18. In the latter, Jude, in the commencement of his epistle, exhorts us to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"; and at the end, "building up yourselves on your most holy faith." vv. 3, 20. He would have us like Nehemiah's builders, with the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other. The reason is found in the character of the times. Certain men had crept in unawares, and apostates abounded. It was no time for peace, therefore, when the foundations were being assailed. In the face of such dangers God would have His people valiant for the truth. The sword, it should be observed, is for defense as well as for attack; but conflict must not be shrunk from when the faith once delivered to the saints is in question. But while prepared for, and even in the midst of conflict, we must also be diligently occupied with the edification of ourselves, and of one another, that we may be the better prepared to resist the attacks of the enemy.

A NEW New Testament: a Word of Warning

The New Testament part of the so-called "NEW ENGLISH BIBLE," published jointly by the Cambridge University and the Oxford University Presses, was released for sale to the general public on March 14. The Old Testament and the Apocrypha are to come later, and are at present being prepared. The brochures for this new work state that the New Testament is the product of 13 year's labor by scholars and literary advisers from various parts of Great Britain. Its sponsors include most of the large Protestant groups in the British Isles. It is due to receive much publicity and wide acclaim.

This present article is not intended as a detailed report of our examination of it, but we hasten into print with a word of warning. This new translation is simply not to be trusted. Certain unbecoming liberties have been taken with the Word of God by these translators. They have frequently used paraphrases by which their own thoughts here injected; paraphrases are interpretations and not merely translations. In our judgment there is a lightness and lack of reverence about it which is to be condemned. We wrote a review of the Revised Standard Version when it came out, in which we pointed out its unsuitability for use; but this new one from England is worse.

Think of the new book giving Matt. 16:18 thus: "You are Peter, the Rock; and on this rock I will build my church." The R.S.V. gave it correctly, "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church." The R.S.V. added a note that "Peter" in the Greek was "petros," while the "rock" on which the Church would be built was in Greek, "petra." The former is only a fragment of the rock, while the latter is the rock foundation- Christ Himself as the Son of the living God according to Peter's confession of Him. No, Peter is NOT the rock on which the Church is built; it is Christ, and Him alone. What a poor foundation failing Peter would be! The new translation is putting forth the doctrine of the Church of Rome. Even the Catholic "Confraternity" translation gives the text correctly, although their note would compromise the truth by applying the foundation to Peter; but even then the note says: "Of course the strength of the foundation comes from Christ." The rendering in this new translation can only come from bias, not from learning.

Notice this new translation of Jas. 2:16-"Good luck to you, keep yourselves warm, and have plenty to eat." How inappropriate! "Depart" or "depart in peace" is translated into modern idiom which borders on slang. "Luck" is never mentioned in Scripture, nor is the thought of it to be found there.

The translation of John 1:1, 2 is certainly inferior to most other translations. These translators have avoided saying "the Word was God," by skirting it with "what God was, the Word was." Perhaps it may be argued that they have still kept within bounds, but WHY abandon the actual truth as found in a simple statement? Was novelty and change the object? or is there a deeper significance?

That blessed gospel verse of Matt. 11:28, where the Lord Jesus bids the storm-tossed, sin-burdened soul to come to Him and receive the REST that He gives, has been distorted to a mere invitation to get "relief." Why should anyone weaken the force of "rest"?-complete satisfaction that entirely removes labor to appease God. The "rest" He gives was only made

possible by His suffering and death, so that the believer can sing, "Rest my soul, the work is done, done by God's beloved Son." Relief may be a mere temporary alleviation of pain or anxiety. Many troubled souls have found the "rest" He gives, and rested in His own invitation and gracious gift. We have checked twelve other translations of this verse, and not one of them departed from the word "rest."

We do not believe the NEW translation of Matt. 27:50 gives the mind of the Spirit; the new rendering, "Jesus gave a loud cry, and breathed His last," is not commensurate with the dignity of His Person. He was the only one who could lay down His life; others might take their lives, but He could and did lay His down. "Breathed His last" is a phrase that belongs to a human being's death.

The translation, "a means of sharing in the blood" (1 Cor. 10:16), approaches the doctrine of the mass. Partaking of the Lord's supper is a remembrance of His death and has NO connection with a means of procuring blessing through the blood of Christ. The memorial cup is not a "means" of sharing or receiving anything.

Acts 3:15 reads in the King James Version, "And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead." But the NEW translation reads, "And killed Him who has led the way to life." Of the Greek word *archegos* Mr. J. N. Darby says: "*archegos*, a word difficult, not to understand, but to render in English. It is a 'leader,' but it is more. It is used for one who begins and sets a matter on... 'the origin,' or 'originator,' though the word is harsh in connection with life." He who was killed by them was not the one who led to life, but the very originator of it. How far short of setting forth His true glory this NEW translation is!

And why dispose of the term "God's righteousness" in Rom. 1:17 for "God's way of righting wrong"? This is not translation, but wrong interpretation. God's righteousness is His perfect consistency of all His attributes with Himself. God found a way to bring the guilty sinner to Himself while at the same time maintaining His holiness, His hatred of sin, His love and compassion. All meet in the work of His beloved Son on the cross.

Another item in this very brief look at the NEW New Testament: The translators generally discarded the word "saints" for "God's people." Now "saints" is the right translation. It means "holy ones." The Roman Christians became saints by God's call (Rom. 1:7). Of course, the saints are God's people; but the original Greek word is "*hagios*" which is the word used for "holy" and is so translated in "Holy Ghost," or "Holy Spirit," and of the Lord Jesus in "that holy thing which shall be born of thee" (Luke 1:35). Is this juggling the result of failure to comprehend that believers are made "holy" now, or is it an accommodation to the Roman practice of making saints by canonization?

The translators have committed a grave error in John 2:4, and again in 19:26. They took the license of rendering the Lord's reply to Mary thus: "Your concern, mother, is not mine"; and

in speaking to her in chapter 19:26: "He said to her, Mother, there is your son." Even the Catholic translations-Douay, Ronald Knox, and Confraternity-did not go so far as to change "woman" to "mother," though their doctrine which teaches her communicants to worship Mary, and which falsely says she was taken to heaven in her body, where she is now "Queen," would have benefitted by such a translation. We have now noted four places where the translators have shown deference to the Roman Church. We will recapitulate:

In the way they translated Matt. 16:18 to make Peter, and not Christ, the rock on which the Church is built.

By inserting the false doctrine of the mass, in changing 1 Cor. 10:16, regarding the Lord's supper, to read: "a means of sharing in the blood of Christ," and "a means of sharing in the body of Christ."

By generally removing the term "saints" (as applied to living believers) from the vocabulary of their New Testament, they have helped clear the way for approval of the Romish practice of making saints of dead people by canonization.

They have paved the way for Mariolatry by putting the word "mother" into Christ's mouth twice.

Such obeisance to Rome is easily understood, for the great ecumenical leaders are working hard to promote a reunion of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.

One thing for which there seems to be no explanation is the disappearance of the word "Christ" (except in one case) from the four gospels. It has been replaced by "Messiah," and once by "anointed." But in every case it was a translation from the Greek word Christos, and not from the Hebrew word, mashiyach. They were not translating from the Hebrew Old Testament, but from the Greek New Testament. While both the Hebrew and the Greek words convey the thought of "the anointed," yet why go contrary to good procedure and break with established custom? Was it just to be different?

We certainly do not recommend the purchase of this New Testament; we advise against it. It will only confuse many readers and help none. And as for a reliable, faithful, and reverent translation as a real help for reference, we strongly recommend Mr. J. N Darby's translation of both Old and New Testaments.

O and O or H and H

A few years ago a dear Christian, whose avocation (traveling for a large English firm) necessitated his going all over the world, had to go into a district in the Far East where he had not been previously. He was earnest and devoted in the Lord's work, in his own quiet way buying up opportunities. Knowing an earnest young Christian who was well acquainted with the district into which he was going, he asked him if he would kindly give him some names and addresses of the Lord's people in those parts. He replied, that he certainly would. When the list was received, the older one was puzzled on looking it over at seeing either "O and O" or "H and H" opposite each name. He asked the other whatever "O and O" or "H and H" meant. The one who made out the list answered, "Some are only 'Half and Half' Christians, and others are 'Out and Out' ones; and I put those marks to distinguish them."

Dear reader, are you the Lord's? If so, which are you, "O and O" or only "H and H"?

The time is short, and remember "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich" (in all the glory which He had with the Father before the world was), "yet for your sakes He became poor" (even to the shedding His precious blood on Calvary's cross to make us His own and fit us for Himself), "that ye through His poverty might be rich."

Object Lesson

While God was teaching earthly truths and government, the Jew was His subject; but, when heavenly truth became the theme, Christ and His grace in the Church became the subject.

God established upon earth the counterpart and witness of what was in His counsel for the heavens—a Church; and the word of God's grace was about that Church; see Paul's conversion. In connection with the Church, the individual believer found his position, his privileges, and his responsibilities. It was to be on earth as a widow, Christ-expectant, and serving the living and true God until the Savior and Lord came back.

Our Joy in Heaven

Luke 9:28-36

Let us look a little at this scripture as showing what our joy in the glory will consist of. We have the warrant of 2 Pet. 1:16 for saying that the scene represents to us the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is what we wait for. Our souls are not in a healthy state unless we are waiting for God's Son from heaven. The Church is not regulated in its hopes by the Word and Spirit of God, unless it is looking for Him as Savior from heaven (Phil. 3:20, 21). And this passage (Luke 9), as disclosing to us specially what will be our portion when He comes, is important to us in this respect. There are many other things in the passage, such as the mutual relations of the earthly and the heavenly people in the kingdom. These it may be very instructive to consider; but this is not our present purpose, which is to consider what light is here afforded on the nature of that joy which we shall inherit at and from the coming of the Lord. Other scriptures, such as the promises to those who overcome, in Rev. 2 and 3, and the description of the heavenly city, in Rev. 21 and 22, give us instructions on the same subject; but let us now particularly look at the scene on the holy mount.

"And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening." It was when Jesus was in the acknowledgment of dependence-"as He prayed"-that this change took place. This then is the first thing we have here-a change such as will pass upon the living saints when Jesus comes.

"And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias." They were with Him. And this will be our joy; we shall be with Jesus. In 1 Thess. 4, after stating the order in which the resurrection of the sleeping and the change of the living saints will take place, and that we shall both be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, all that the Apostle says as to what will ensue is,

"And so shall we ever be with the Lord."

But in this passage there is not only the being with Christ, but there is also familiar intercourse with Him. "There talked with Him two men." It is not that He talked with them, though this was no doubt true; but this might have been, and they be at a distance. But when we read that they talked with Him, we get the idea of the most free and familiar intercourse. Peter and the others knew what it was to have such intercourse with Jesus in humiliation; and what joy it must have been to have the proof that such intercourse with Him would be enjoyed in glory!

And then it is said by Luke that they "appeared in glory." But this is secondary to what we have been considering. We are told that they were with Him, and then that they appeared in glory. They share in the same glory as that in which He was manifested. And so as to us. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Col. 3:4. "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one. even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in

Me. that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." John 17:22, 23.

But there is still another thing. We are not only told that they were with Him, that they talked with Him, and appeared in glory with Him, but we are also privileged to know the subject of their conversation. They "spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." It was the cross which was the theme of their conversation in the glory-the sufferings of Christ which He had to accomplish at Jerusalem. And surely this will be our joy throughout eternity, when in glory with Christ-to dwell upon this theme. His decease accomplished at Jerusalem.

We next read that Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep. It shows us what the flesh is in the presence of the glory of God. Peter made a great mistake, but I pass on.

"While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son: hear Him." Peter tells us that this voice came from the excellent glory. "For 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. We are admitted of God the Father to partake of His satisfaction in His beloved Son.

"And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone." The vision all gone-the cloud, the voice, the glory, Moses and Elias-but Jesus was left; and they were left to go on their way with Jesus, knowing Him now in the light of those scenes of glory which they had beheld. And this is the use to us of those vivid apprehensions of spiritual things which we may sometimes realize. It is not that we can be always enjoying them and nothing else. But when for the season they have passed away, like this vision on the holy mount, they leave us alone with Jesus, to pursue the path of our pilgrimage with Him in spirit now, and with Him in the light and power of that deepened acquaintance with Him, and fellowship of the Father's joy in Him, that we have got on the mount; and then to wait for the moment of His return, when all this, and more than our hearts can think of, shall be fulfilled to us forever.

Peace - My Peace

Two things are brought before us here. The first is the fact of peace, though there may not be earthly blessing and prosperity, like that of the Jews, but trouble outwardly; the second is that which characterizes the peace. "My peace" is what He has Himself, and the extent of it. Being thus characterized, it implies that they had it not while He was with them. He could speak peace in the forgiveness of sins; but this peace, His peace, was not given before to His disciples.

Peace shuts out trouble, as to the realization of it. It is not peace of conscience with God here, but that which could not be disturbed by the knowledge of God. It is not peace without God, and it is independent of all circumstances. As much trouble as there is in circumstances, the peace could not be secure if it could be altered by them.

This peace is the possession of such quiet as to be undisturbed about other things. It is peace with God in the sight of His righteousness and His holiness; and it is an absorbing thing. Suppose I am at peace with someone I do not care much about, I may be troubled enough about other things. The peace does not absorb my affections. When we have the peace itself, we may acquaint ourselves with God. The soul, so satisfied with the peace which it has, desires nothing else. It knows God, and finds nothing to disturb it in God or out of God.

This peace will keep God between the trouble and us, instead of the trouble coming between us and God. Such is our danger, and such the remedy.

Mark the extent of the peace-"My peace"; and how thoroughly well He knew what He had, that He could give it them! He had been tried, rejected, had suffered; He had "not where to lay His head," hunted like "a partridge in the mountains," the "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"; and yet He knew so well the blessedness He had that He could speak of it to leave it to them. There was an unclouded rest in God, and God was an unclouded source of blessing to Him in all His path of sorrow and trouble, unlike that which anyone else ever had. But "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee," etc., was known experimentally by Him; and was there ever uncertainty as to whether His Father heard Him? No; there was unclouded certainty. Nothing could bring it into question. He need not put it to the test by throwing Himself down from the temple; this were tempting God.

The two expressions in the verse explain each other: "peace," and "My peace." "Let not your heart be troubled." I am giving you My own "peace." What we have, we know to be His - not the knowledge of what we are with God, but what He is to God. We cannot have peace if we have the thought, when I come to know God, what will He think of me? I must know God in order to have peace.

If the Lord came this moment, would you have peace and be able to say, "This is our God; we have waited for Him"? If there is anything not given up in the will, there cannot be peace; if you have peace, then if God came in, your peace would stay.

Peace is never imperfect; there can be no flaw in it. If anything comes in and produces an uncertainty, it cannot be peace. Water in a dirty pool may look clear at the surface; but, if it is stirred up, the dirt comes to the surface- and so with the heart.

Christ gives us His peace; and can wrath disturb it? Did He not know the wrath due to our sin? Yes, He bore it all perfectly. Did He not know God? He came forth from Him.

How can we have peace? Because He has made it "by the blood of His cross." He has expiated sin. The question that agitates your heart, He settled between Himself and God, not on His own account, but for us. He was the Son of God. In the presence of wrath He settled it; in the presence of holiness, too, He made His soul an offering for sin. God spent His Son for us, and can He fail to claim us as the objects of His love? He has bought us at an unspeakable price.

He has seen the sin, judged the sin, put the sin away in Christ. Peace is made, peace is given, peace is known by the "blood of the cross." Is it a thought of mine about my getting the peace? No. He says: "My peace I leave with you." He knows what God's wrath is; what God's righteousness is; what God's holiness is; what all His requirements are; and we have the assurance of His peace from His own mouth. Have I earned it? No; He has earned it. Can He deceive me? What is my warrant for expecting the favor of God? If I have believed what wrath is, I will value the favor of Christ. Christ would rather give up His life than God's favor for us.

If Christ is your peace, He is as sinless for you as He was in Himself. He is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

Perfection As Found in Four Scriptures

You must take the right place before the Lord Jesus Christ-the Savior. The epistle to the Hebrews, I may say, puts you there.

In early days, God Almighty set Himself before Abraham when Abraham had taken up confidence in Hagar, confidence in the flesh, confidence in something other than the all-sufficiency of God. "I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect." Gen. 17:1. This was a rebuke. Abraham was not then perfect in his generation. He had lost the power of the name or revelation of God. The state of his soul did not answer to that in God which was dispensed or made known to him. That is, Abraham was not perfect, failing in confidence when God was with him as the Almighty.

In the days of the ministry of the Son (revealing Him who makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good), perfection of another order was looked for, as we read in Matt. 5:44-48. There the Father, in all the full, free bountifulness of paternal goodness, is set before us by the Lord; and perfection is imitation of Him. Confidence was perfection when the Almighty was revealed, or stood before the soul; generosity, that counts only on the need and not on the worthiness of its object, is perfection when the Father stands before us.

So, in the day of the same ministry, perfection again takes another form, as we may see in Matt. 19:21. The Lord Jesus had been on the heavenly hill, in the glory that belonged to that place, with Moses and Elias (chap. 17). He was, in an eminent sense, the Stranger-the self-emptied heavenly Stranger here-and standing before the rich young man, He speaks to him of a perfection suited to such a one: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me." Matt. 19:21. This is a high order of perfection indeed-imitation of the fully emptied heavenly Jesus. And nothing less than this is the living, practical perfection that suits the heavenly calling. "I have overcome the world," says Jesus. Perfection is the taking of that place with Him, which this dispensation opens and shows to us. Paul had much of it realized in his soul when he uttered Phil. 4; and the Hebrew saints knew a good deal of it, as we see them in Heb. 10:32-34, in the day of their illumination.

But, beloved, we must not stop here. Good it is to look at all this, and discern these forms and character (different as they are) of perfection in the people of God. But God looks to be glorified in us in a still different form of perfection, and we find this precious secret in the epistle to the Hebrews.

There, the Holy Ghost summons our conscience into the presence of Christ as a Savior. His perfection for us sinners is there made known to us. The law never provided in Moses, or in Aaron, or in Joshua, or in the victim on the Jewish altar, or in all these put together, a perfect Captain of salvation, or Author of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9); but God has given us such a one in His suffering Son; and the conscience of the sinner is called into His presence, summoned to stand before Him, and to take of the perfection which is there revealed to it, by enjoying peace and

cleansing and consequent boldness of access into the divine presence.

Here is your perfection, beloved, obtained by the gaze of faith at the Lamb of God. It is not the perfection of confidence which knows God's all sufficiency for the circumstances of life, nor the perfection of generosity which acts after the pattern of paternal goodness, nor the perfection of imitation of a heavenly Jesus; but it is that form of perfection that glorifies God more than all, because it glorifies Him in that grace that has dispensed a remedy to our deepest necessity, and healed a breach in the tenderest place—the conscience of a wretched, ruined, good-for-nothing sinner.

And God would have this perfection, the principle and power of all others. If we trust in God, if we imitate the bountifulness of the Father, if we walk in the steps of a heavenly, self-renouncing Master, it must be because we have been "illuminated" by the sight, or rather by the clear, full, and gladdening light of Him who has perfected Himself for our salvation. He is perfected for you. though you may be weak in looking at Him.

Pharisaism and Faith

Religion is a thing that specially comes in between the conscience and God. Now what God is working is to bring the conscience to Himself, without religion or anything else between. Until that is done, nothing is done. God is dealing with realities. He detects that which is in the heart, in order that He may make known complete forgiveness, that there may be entire and eternal removal of everything that would mar our fellowship (see Heb. 9 and 10). This is grace. Nothing is more simple, though the heart of man is insensible to it. God may use man as an instrument in effecting this; but the object of the preacher of the gospel is to bring the conscience of the sinner and God immediately into contact. If his notion stop short of that, it is only setting them in opposition. We may merely like the truth, but that is all nothing; if a man is not brought to God, if he be not in conscience standing in the presence of God, he is brought no nearer than he was before; he has only got, so to speak, further from God, for he has more between his conscience and God.

Now it is this that is shown out in Matt. 15:1-28; we have the whole history of the feelings of the heart of man, until the Lord brings it down to the place of faith-I say down, because it is brought to the confession of its own nothingness, to say, I am a dog. And then the Lord says, "Great is thy faith." We shall never find great faith in a man's soul if he does not confess that he is a sinner, having no title to anything at all.

"Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem." v. 1. The scribes were persons learned in the law, and the Pharisees were religionists of the sect most esteemed in religion; as Paul says, "After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee" (Acts 26:5); and they were "of Jerusalem," the very center of God's polity, so that everything that could give the weight of authority to "religion" was there.

And they do come with authority; they say to Jesus, "Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." v. 2. But Jesus puts both scribes and Pharisees and their tradition in direct contact with God. He says to them, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" v. 3. He does not go round about and battle the question of this tradition; it might be right enough in some sense; at all events it was reputable in the eyes of man, sanctioned by the learning of the scribes as well as by the religiousness of the Pharisees, and comely in Jerusalem. But He says, You are flying in the face of God by your tradition! He at once closes the point, dropping elders and all besides. Man may plead tradition, the authority of antiquity and the like, but the fact is, he does so but to clothe himself with it. To the Pharisees, this tradition was the tradition of the elders; but to Christ, it was "ye" and "your" tradition. He takes hold of them. They were using it to accredit themselves unto men, not to lay the conscience bare before God. Religiousness and ceremonial holiness accredit us with men, but faith lays us bare before God.

Then He goes on: "For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say" (it was their tradition that said it, but He substitutes "ye"), "Whosoever" (no matter who, or how he says it) "shall say to his father or his

mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by by me; and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." vv. 4-6. It was for their profit; it matters not whether it was money or something else; religion is always turned to a selfish end in man's use of it. He clothes himself with it in order that he may give himself weight before men.

And now the Lord thus sets the condition of the whole people before them: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth" (they were not sinners, in the common sense of the word; that is, irreligious, without any profession of thought about God. Quite the contrary, the thing stated of them here is, "This people draweth nigh unto Me"), "and

honoreth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me." It was not the sincerity of conscience, and yet the Lord could use the expression, "draweth nigh." "But," He adds, "in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (vv. 8, 9.) All this religion and religiousness is at once disposed of. There might be the semblance of what was according to God in the washing of hands, for the Lord Himself uses water as the emblem of purity; but it was to answer their own ends, and the Lord says that, whatever it was, it was a commandment of men—that was all. And it was in vain. There is a worship which is worshiping of God in vain.

It is thus that Christ disposed entirely of what may be called "religion"; God's order, God's commandments, God's will, have been set aside by man in his drawing nigh in his own way to God. If he thinks to draw nigh with his heart, such as it is, what would be the consequence? This the Lord goes on to show. And here we see the awful character of religion without the conscience before God. "Out of the heart," He says, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." These are what come out of the heart. Man may talk of drawing nigh to God with the heart, but with what kind of heart? How can he draw nigh when "out of the heart" proceed all these things? There is the difficulty. If man will speak of drawing nigh to God, if he will have his forms of religion, his scribes and Pharisees, his Jerusalem, what is it all? Just what the Lord said; the drawing nigh with the mouth, the honoring with the lip, but with heart far from God. Religious forms, the intricacies of ceremony and tradition, even though in the abstract according to the truth of God, are to our hearts now what Jerusalem was to these Pharisees. All that was known of God, all that God had revealed, and He had revealed much in the figures of the law, foreshadowing better things, was there; but the flesh cannot be bettered by ordinances; and if it was a question of drawing nigh to God, while the heart was what it was, and while the whole character of their religion was that of self, Jerusalem was nothing whatever but a blind to the consciences of men.

Have not millions been going on in the same way, with additional truth, no doubt? They may have liked the truth Christianity has introduced, because it had no power in the conscience and on the heart; yet in principle it was the same thing. The craft and lie of Satan is to take all these things, and to say that a man can draw nigh to God through them, while with his heart he does not. This has ordinarily been Satan's way; he acts more by subtlety, and upon the ground of the truth of God, than by open and simple lie. Religion is the thing he uses, and what meets it in the heart of man is the supposition (after all, clearly hypocrisy) that man can approach God, put off God with these things, when in truth he is merely seeking to satisfy his own conscience. Satan's lulling

conscience asleep through forms of religion, is a very different thing from God's awakening the conscience by the power of truth. There may be the form of truth, and that much insisted on; but where God has not awakened the conscience, religiousness and religion are only put between the conscience and God to hide from God.

Having spoken of religion in the flesh-the heart's religion, as well as of its sin-the Lord now takes up what the heart itself is.

"And He called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." vv. 10, 11. There is deep instruction here. One might have begun and have argued with a man about Jerusalem until the end of time, using the most specious arguments, such as that it was God who had established Jerusalem, it was God who had set up the sacrifices (for the sacrifices were in themselves, as to form, true), and the like; and there we might have stood. The Lord sets all this aside. He calls up the "multitude"-no matter who or what they might be (we find it stated, chapter 9:36, that they were "as sheep having no shepherd") -and He addresses Himself directly and completely to what is within. He passes by all that which Satan had known how to use to the blinding of the conscience, and He goes at once to the root of the matter-to this fact: You know that what comes out of the heart is not of God. The Lord addresses Himself to the conscience. If the conscience had been before God, they could not have concealed this truth from themselves. They did not require Pharisees for that; they did not require scribes for that; their own hearts could answer it. The conscience of the simplest man, though hitherto led by ten thousand evil Pharisees, when it is before God, can understand that it is that which cometh out of a man, that which is himself, that defileth a man.

"Then came His disciples, and said unto Him, Knowest Thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?" v. 12. No wonder! all man's system of Pharisaism is good for nothing, when it comes to be a simple question about why all this evil goes out of the heart of man. No wonder, therefore, they were offended. Man has persuaded himself into the belief that he is not so really lost to what is good as God says he is, and that all this attention to ceremonial observances and the externals of religion is very holy and excellent. But, as it is explained here by our blessed Lord, both leaders and led are "blind"- a simple thing, as the prophet expresses it. "The leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed." Isa. 9:16. "But He answered and said, Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." v. 13. There may be the "form of godliness," but if it is not of the Father, if not planted of God, it will be rooted up. God must have realities for eternity, and therefore nothing is eternal that God has not planted. "Let them alone"-a terrible saying, a terrible thing to hear the Lord of love uttering such a word as that. And I do not know that it is ever said about any but religious people. We never hear that lip of love saying, "Let them alone," or words of the kind, to any but hypocrites; He does not say so to the poor Gentile woman mentioned in the after part of the chapter, though her circumstances were those of the greatest evil. If He must put the heart of such a one to trial, He will do it; but He does not so speak. "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." v. 14. Jesus must be occupied with "the poor of the flock," so He turns and feeds the multitude.

"Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Declare unto us this parable. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?" vv. 15, 16. We see here a hankering after hearing something new, instead of the conscience before God—a step lower clown, so to speak, of Pharisaism. He is their "Rabbi." They are looking at Him in this character and, therefore, their conscience not being in the presence of God, they cannot understand such a simple thing—the simplest thing that can be—that it is not that which goeth into the mouth, but that which cometh out of the mouth that defileth a man.

And what else proceeds out of the heart? Why, really, when we come to the heart of man, it is like what we have in Deut. 28 about the law of God. When the details are entered into there, where are the tribes for blessing? We read only of the curse. "No doubt," people say, "bad things come out of the heart of man; but are there not good things also?" There is not a word about them here. "Out of the heart proceed" the evil things mentioned, and these are what God sees. It is not that we are denying that there are amiabilities of nature and the like; there are, but then we see them in irrational animals, as well as in man, with this difference: that there is no pride in the heart of the former about them, while there is in the heart of man. What man is morally in the sight of God is the question. Here the Lord closes with man. We have his history traced down from the scribes and Pharisees to what he is in himself. He is seen, in all the comeliness of "religion," to be completely setting aside the commandments of God; and it ends in the sad catalog of what comes "out of the heart."

Pharisaism and Faith

Now we get, in what immediately follows, the other side of the picture—the opposite of all this—the heart of God in its own eternal fullness of grace, brought out in the Lord's dealings with (not scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem, but) a woman of Canaan.

"Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tire and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him." vv. 21, 22. Tire and Sidon were anything but Jerusalem; they were places proverbial for their wickedness. The Lord selects them as such when He says (chap. 11), "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tire and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." v. 21. He holds them up as two of the vilest cities He could have named. Again: this woman, as a woman of Canaan, not only was a Gentile, a "dog" (v. 26) —that was her character in the eye of man, yes, and according to the truth of God also, so far as regarded the outward condition of things at that time—but a woman of that people concerning which God had said, "Cursed be Canaan" (Gen. 9:25).

So here we get evidently the very opposite to, and that which stands in greatest contrast with, the scribes and Pharisees (the religious persons) of Jerusalem, and indeed with everything that could claim authority in religion, or even the appearance of a fair show in the flesh, a woman of Canaan, out of the coasts of Tire and Sidon.

But after all, how does this poor woman come? Her need brought her to Christ; so far all was right. But to have our need supplied, we must take the place that befits us. God cannot, so to speak, deny supplying our need; but He will deny till we take our true position. This is the great principle we have to learn here. She cried unto Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of

David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

But He answered her not a word." vv. 22,23. It was a case apparently greatly calling for the Lord's intervention, and she was entreating Him to interfere. Her daughter was grievously vexed of a devil, and He had come to destroy the works of the devil. She knew what His compassion was, but does she come simply on that ground? No; had she done so, she would have had the closest sympathies of the Lord. But she says, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David"! Here was faith. She knew what mercies He had brought among the Jews, but had she anything to do with Him as the "Son of David"? No; none but a Jew had any claim on Christ in that character.

The poor woman doubtless thought that, recognizing and confessing Him to be what He was, she might count on the blessing. She came in the way of promise. She owned the very truth of God contained in the promises, and she recognized Jesus as being the One who had come according to those promises. That was the case, and that was the simple reason why the Lord had nothing for her at all.

We may talk about the promises of God, and go away empty. When we talk about promises, they must be promises made to us—promises respecting which we can lay hold upon the truth of God as the ground of His dealing with us. Now, suppose we come to God as though we were called by the most gracious promises, the moment we confess ourselves sinners, we say that we have title to nothing.

A sinner has title to nothing; therefore, if we come otherwise, we are on the wrong ground, just as was this poor woman.

These are promises made for sinners, but there are no promises made to sinners as sinners. Like this Syrophenician woman, we may linger about the promises and not have a word. We must come as simple sinners, without any title at all but our need; that is the only title He admits. He will assuredly bless; for He has said, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." But He will do it by making us know that the depth of our need is just the reason why He does so.

When she cries, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David," her own language binds Him to exclude her; she has not, and cannot have, any claim or title to Him on that ground; He does not know such a person. Here is the point. And therefore, when the disciples come and beseech Him saying, "Send her away; for she crieth after us" (only wanting to get rid of her as a troublesome beggar, as if they had said, Give her what she wants, and have done with her), He answered, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He holds to God's order. (See also chapter 10:5.)

It is a most important thing to remember that promises are not found out of Christ. There are most precious promises to the Christian, without which he could not get on for a day; but then "all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." 2 Cor. 1:20. You may see a person going on lingering about promises, and, until the soul is humbled to the place of faith, until it submits to the truth and righteousness of God, the end of the story will be as the beginning, "I cannot realize them."

"Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me." v. 25. Now this is a good deal more truthful, and it brings out an answer. Her first appeal had truth in it, but then it was (as we have

seen) on a ground to which she had no title; it was just as much as to say, Do not answer me. Now she gets an answer. But then the answer shows that Christ cannot go out of the way of the promises, out of the way in which God has sent Him. He says, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Here is a terrible thing-a terrible thing to be told by a person in whom she had confided-to be turned away as a dog. And are not hearts now to be found in this condition? They have been sent to Christ for help; they feel their sorrow, and they go to Him looking for promises, and do they say, I have got peace, I have got joy in God? No, they come back saying, I got nothing! They have not come down to the place where God gives help.

They are, like this poor Syrophenician woman, Canaanites of Tire and Sidon; and they have been talking to the Son of David as though they had something to do with Him, and something to expect from Him.

"And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." v. 27. Here is her place; she abandons all title and claim in herself, but her need casts itself on pure bounty. The Lord's eye has all the while been watching the process of humbling that was going on in the heart; and now that He has brought her down to her real condition, He can accede to her every desire. It is not now, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David," neither yet, "Lord, help me"! Until she gave up that ground (for He could not give it up), He tries her, saying, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." But when she says, I am a dog, yet?-going upon what God Himself is in Christ, she gets upon the simple ground of the infinite fullness of God's love; and all is clear.

Her faith has pierced through dispensations; it has arrived at what God is. She can say, Truth, Lord, it is to the Jews that the children's bread belongs; I make no pretense to the children's place; I am a poor, wretched sinner of the Gentiles; I know all this; I know that I have title to nothing as regards promises; but there is plenty of help in God to meet my case; these dogs that are without eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. What can the

Lord say more?-There is no help in God for thee? Impossible! "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith." There is no need of being a Jew to have faith; the Gentile that believes in Jesus has reached up to the place whence even the children are fed. No matter what a man is, when it is a question of what there is in God for his need, the case is simple. When there is the truthful admission that we have no ground of title whatever, when we meet God in the way of goodness, on the ground of what there is in Himself, all is well; for that goodness is in God.

The Lord is not now looked at in the way of promise (be that never so true); and He cannot deny what God is, and what He is in Himself. He says, "O woman, great is thy faith," and then, what more?

"Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Whatever request she may have, based on the simple fact of the goodness that God had even for a Gentile dog, He cannot help answering. "And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

Such is the difference between Pharisaism and faith. The poor, wretched sinner who comes to God, as he is, simply on the ground of being nothing -a sinner without any title at all-gets plenty of blessing. Then rest and peace are found. We prove Him to be love and nothing else. The soul turns away from self altogether, and feasts on the eternal fullness of grace that is in Christ. It

draws on all that is in Him; its need is just its title to all that is in Him.

Even if we are not Pharisees, is it with us as with the disciples, a question of "parables"? There are no parables in the conscience. When a man meets God in his conscience, that man knows himself; he cannot help it. It is not a parable when the conscience is touched; it is what we ourselves are in the sight of God. Let our state be what it may (perhaps an evil one into which we have got by sin, no matter what it is), if we have been broken down, in the humbling consciousness of what we are, to the place of our own nothingness, the only question that remains is, What is God toward us? And He is grace, and to be proved to be such exactly in proportion to our need. Need but becomes then the occasion of displaying the suitability of His grace.

All comes to one single point-if we are before God as what we really are, God is always what He really is- grace.

This is, in a certain sense, hard work-to live in the continual sense of our need, and of God's delight in supplying it. What constant watchfulness does it argue! what walking in the Spirit! what abnegation of self! The Lord grant us the continual sense of our emptiness, and also the continual sense of His fullness, that we may take our true place as dependent on His grace and bounty.

Philosophy Opposed to Faith

The false principle of all human philosophy is that the powers of the mind of man are the measure of that which he can know or acquire. This is based on the utterly false thought that he cannot be acted on; that there is no superior power capable of acting on him; that susceptibility of impressions, or receptivity, is measured by active power, which is wholly false. And if the superior power be good, that receptivity is a surer way of truth than mental power, because will does not, per se, mix itself with it. Now, this thought of philosophy is merely the pride of self-importance, which will take itself, that is, its own mind, as the measure of everything. It makes man the superior measure of everything which is supreme, which is morally despicable folly. And this is man's mind always now as departed from God, because he is so departed; and philosophy, which may be entertaining as to what is subject to man, or even the investigation of faculties-though here man is capable of very little [and] as always false-if it bring Him in-it is religion- the principle is wholly changed; man receives and does not give or measure. Hence the profound truth of the Lord's remark, "Whosoever receiveth not the kingdom of God as a little child, cannot enter therein." This is so in the very nature of things.

A child always undergoes influences, is meant to do it; and if the influences are true and good, or, as far as they are true and good, it is a great mercy. There are always, and even in manhood, influences- why, the very state of the atmosphere affects my mind- acting on us. They cannot give true, that is, divine faith, but they can remove or anticipate obstacles, and put me, without a positive hindrance from false influences, or natural working of unbelief, in presence of revelation. My conscience and His work have to do with one another, as if God spoke there; and if He has spoken there, that is a great mercy. It is not divine faith, but it puts me with right human thoughts- rather with conscience instead of thoughts-in presence of the object of faith; and conscience only (and the heart) is receptive of divine truth; not mind, because mind actively judges, and that in its nature puts God out of His place. Conscience may so far give me a right thought of God, for it holds out to me evil and good- good so far as the nature (not the rule) of the faculty goes, and that is like God. "The man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil." But the moment man begins to reason there from, he is in error, because he cannot measure God rightly; for He is supreme, and man subject. Conscience refers to Him as above it, as under obligation; mind does not, cannot.

The Word of God acts on the conscience which is in man, and allows no reasoning- judges man, is not judged by him-must take that ground, if it be God's Word, or it would not be in its place- may reason in grace, and does, for God is love, and shows Himself so, but never gives up His claim-it would not be grace or truth. But there is no rest except in conscience, for there the true relationship is established. "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did," gave intelligence to the woman, and that only. "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet." The word of the Convincer of conscience has, all of it, divine authority over the soul. It is not, You have now told the truth, but You are a prophet. So it always is.

A Question Asked and Answered

"And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Luke 10:25.

We are not disposed to regard this lawyer as a straightforward man asking an honest question, and we should but delude ourselves were we to view him in that light. There is no reason to look upon him as an anxious inquirer, to whom eternal life was a priceless prize for the sake of which he was willing to surrender everything. Had he been so, he would have come in a different state, and received a different answer. But he stood up to tempt the Lord. Miserable and impious occupation! Ignorant of the common condition of man, and therefore of his own -ignorant of grace and of his personal need of it-he proudly asks at what point in a life of good works his title to eternal life would be established. Coming on such a ground, and in such a way, the Lord could only refer him to Moses. "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" The man answering said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." The Lord replied, "Thou hast answered right," adding significantly, "This do, and thou shalt live."

Al! but had the lawyer done this? and was he doing it then? The answer may be gathered from his further question, "And who is my neighbor?" This betrays an uneasy conscience, whose condemning voice he fain would silence if he could. But bringing the matter nearer home, I would venture to inquire of you, my reader, whether you know anyone who has always loved God supremely, and his neighbor as himself. And were the circle widened until it embraced the whole earth, do you think, among its many millions, there could be found one individual who had done this? The question happily is not left for us to answer; it has been answered already. Here it is: "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God." And with what result? "Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Psalm 53:2, 3. If then the keeping of the law were the only means of life, who would ever inherit it? All would be shut up in hopeless condemnation, seeing that none have rendered, nor can render, what the law requires.

Yet the law is holy and just and good. It could not be otherwise if God be the giver of it. It supposes evil in man; for why forbid coveting if there were no disposition on our part to covet? But while recognizing the sinful tendencies of our nature, it makes no allowance for them; the holiness of the law would be gone if it did.

Here let me briefly deal with a common fallacy, that inasmuch as we are unable to fulfill the requirements of the law, we cannot be justly condemned for our failure. Stay, stay, dear friend; by what road do you reach such a conclusion? Were you thrown out of employment, and had no means of paying your rent, would you tell your landlord, that seeing you were not in a position to pay, you were therefore clearly not responsible? Surely that plea would not prevail. Would you not rather own your responsibility, and cast yourself upon his grace?

The claims of the law are inexorable. It never relaxes them on account of human weakness. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Gal. 3:10. Thus runs its dread sentence, and who among thoughtful men imagines he can make good any claim for eternal life on such a ground? If eternal life is to become ours, it must reach us some other way; and this way the Lord proceeds to unfold in the parable that follows. Let us quote it:

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought

him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee." Luke 10:30-35.

There is little need to ask who is meant by the man that went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves by the way. Humanity at large may see itself in him. From the gates of Eden to the flood, from the flood to Sinai. from Sinai to Calvary, from Calvary to this hour, it has been a going down. Men are far from God; individually they are so. They have gone down and fallen among thieves, who, after wounding them, have flung them mercilessly into the ditch to die. Satan has deceived men, sin has pierced them through with many sorrows, the world has played them false; everything is gone, and life itself is flowing away. But see! here comes a priest; perchance this holy minister of the law may help. "He, he, priest, help; a dying man is here!" The priest sees him, and pursues his way as if he heard no call. A Levite now draws near; perhaps this representative of the law in its less exalted functions may afford some help. "He, he, Levite, help; a dying man is here!" He comes and looks, and passes by as the priest before him had. For such the law had no help, and priest and Levite stalk silently away. Yes, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." No help then may the sinner look for from the law; it promises life to those who walk in its precepts perfectly, and its curse rests on those who do not.

People seek salvation on the principle of law, as if the commandments and the ceremonies and services of "the Church" were so many rounds in the ladder by which they were to climb to the heavenly city. Now Scripture speaks expressly that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." How so? Because no one ever kept it; no one has continued in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them (Gal. 3:10). And is not this the very teaching of our parable? Did priest and Levite, the exponents of the law on its moral and ceremonial sides, bring salvation to the dying man? Did they lift him out of the ditch? Nay, but they passed him by without one pitying look or sympathizing word. The law had nothing for such a man save its curse, nor has it aught else for you.

Grace, and grace alone, grace as opposed to law, grace pure and unmixed, is the sinner's only hope. If the state of the dying traveler is a true representation of our own, then we need the

Samaritan to look upon us, to have compassion, to come to us where we are, to bind up our wounds, to lift us out of the ditch, and to take care of us- someone who will of and by himself do everything. Such a One we have in Jesus. In Him the soul may find an answer to its every need, may find it now. If one is under the solemn sentence of a broken law, it is written, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Gal. 3:13. Is one troubled about his sins? It is written, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." 1 Pet. 2:24. Does one feel the exceeding sinfulness of sin? It is written, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Mark 2:17. And if one fears he is too bad to come to Jesus, it is written, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. God has provided a Savior for sinners.

It is to be observed that the Samaritan, after having bound up his wounds, did not leave the man where he was. He set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him, and finally gave special charge concerning him to the host. To the very end, salvation is of the Lord. Alas! the thought is too common, that after divine grace has saved us we may break down and ultimately perish after all. Break down, we surely may, but ultimately perish is another matter. Saved by grace as far as past sins are in question, and then put under law, so that salvation may be retained and heaven reached at last-such is much of the Christianity of the day! But this is not Christianity. Those whom Jesus saves He keeps, keeps to the end. None shall pluck them out of His hand, nor separate them from His love. Moreover, they are brought to God, and made members of the body of which Christ is the Head. Godliness is indeed enjoined, and abhorrence of evil of all kinds; but while insisting on this, we must hold fast the doctrine of free grace.

Relationship First

In divine things people forget (what they see every day and which is as simple as possible in human things) that duties flow always from the relationship in which we are already placed; putting a person into a relationship, puts him as naturally as possible into the duties belonging to that relationship. If the place is a constant one, the duty is a constant one, as with parents and children, husband and wife. The statement often made, that if I am saved I may do as I like, is thus disposed of. Can my child say that because he is my child he may do as he likes? No; the duty flows from the relationship. If I am a child of God, duty is always there. I may fail in it and be chastened as a naughty child-quite true-but the duty is there. That is what redemption does; on the total failure of man under responsibility, it brings me the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus. Thus praise, service, obedience-whatever belongs to the child of God-flows from it.

A Rich Man and a Poor Man: Part 1

Luke 18:15-43

In this chapter we have brought before us two most interesting characters, the one contrasted with the other—a very rich man and a very poor man. As a prelude to the consideration of these two, we find the Spirit of God bringing before us the lesson from the infants who were brought to Jesus.

The mothers brought their little ones to Jesus that He might touch them. If you are a parent, you can readily understand that statement. It is according to the nature of a mother to wish the very best for her small bundle of life. Here was One in their midst who combined in His Person all that was lovely. The mothers felt instinctively that the mere touch of His holy hands upon the head of a little one would do it good. So they brought the children to Him.

How different was the judgment of the disciples! They would stem the tide of love in the heart of both the mothers and the Lord. But our Lord would not brook their interference. He told out the love of His heart 14 centuries ago, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." He invited them to come. You and I in our self-complacence are disposed to discount the work of God in the hearts of the little ones. But may we not learn something from them? When we talk to the children about the Lord Jesus, we do not find it necessary to reason with them. They do not require a multitude of proofs as to the inspiration of the Scriptures, or of the deity of Christ. We repeat the story in simple words such as a little child can comprehend. Those little eyes look right into our eyes, and we can discern that they believe what we tell them.

The Lord invites the children to come unto Him. I wonder if perhaps we have made a mistake in overlooking them. One has very little sympathy with that disposition on the part of some who would raise objection to a special effort to take the gospel to the children. I believe it has proven a most blessed service, and God has owned it. Let us continue to bring the gospel to the little ones while their hearts are young and tender. "Forbid them not."

In connection with the incident of blessing the children, our Lord goes a step further and announces that "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." The little child comes in all the simplicity of unquestioning faith. How did you come? How did I come? Surely not in the sense of personal merit. Not in virtue of a breast decked with badges, ribbons, and medals. No! nor with a list of degrees after my name. How did we get into the kingdom of God? If we entered at all, it was through that lowly gate of childlike faith. "A little child shall lead them." There are no private entrances, so we must all come through that narrow gate of faith.

This is no doubt the reason why: "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are

not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence." 1 Cor. 1:26-29.

But we are a generation of boasters. We are self-confident. We like to bring forth our strong reasons. We resent being placed in the infant class. So it is when you take the gospel to those who are of great station in life, that you meet with opposition immediately. You find yourself in an unfriendly atmosphere. You are conscious of what is called in the business world, "sales resistance." What a contrast we find to this when we get a group of little children together to talk about the Lord Jesus. We are immediately conscious of the simplicity with which they listen to the sweet story of God's love in sending His Son to die for them.

Let us turn now to the case before us in Luke 18-the rich young ruler. He is a rare character. He is a rich man, a cultured man, a man of position. Further, we gather that he was a fine man of estimable character. There are not many men in Scripture who are pictured in a more favorable light than this young Jew; so much so, that the Lord Jesus looking upon him, loved him. You have met such characters, perhaps a young man whose name you do not know; yet his bearing and demeanor are such as to arrest your attention. His presence bespeaks refinement and courtesy. His very speech reflects nobility of breeding. "Oh," you say, "I wish that man were a Christian." You have the consciousness that he is a stranger to the grace of God. Yes, we have met people like that. Well, here is such a one, "A certain ruler."

We all like to be rulers. None of us like to be ruled. We enjoy a position of leadership. The world is one vast arena where men struggle for the honors. Whether it is nations or individuals, organizations or cartels, there exists ever the struggle for priority, for mastery. Yes, men love to rule. So here we have a man who is a ruler.

This admirable young man comes to Jesus with a question: "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He came to the right Person. Yes, he came to the right One. And everyone should weigh that expression: eternal life. O what a term it is! This expression, eternal life, is found only twice in the Old Testament, but in those places it does not mean what it does in the New Testament. There it is millennial life on the earth. So perhaps this young man's question did not contemplate anything beyond the Old Testament concept of everlasting life here on the earth.

This earth could be a wonderful place for those who have plenty of money, if it were not for the flies of death in the apothecary's ointment (Eccles. 10:1). So-called "Death Valley Scotty" lived out there in comparative luxury for years, but the one thing that ruined his outlook was the fact of death at the end of the road. His valley was well named, "Death Valley." Another man, Mr. Randolph Hearst, built himself a palace in California. He spent a million dollars a year in entertainment. but was always embarrassed at the thought that at the end of his good time was death. He was offended if anyone mentioned that word "death" in his hearing. His close friends knew this and avoided the dreaded word. It was the end of the way that troubled him. I believe he had a fifty thousand dollar funeral; but, you know, that only took him to a hole in the ground, or perhaps a crypt in a mausoleum; money cannot carry beyond death.

In our chapter here the young man asked, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He came to the right Person, but he did not couch his question intelligently. There is a measure of self-confidence in that question. What shall I DO? This is innate in the human heart. And all religions of which man boasts are built upon that concept: What shall I DO? The thought that a salvation has been

purchased and is offered on the terms of doing nothing, never seems to enter the heart of men. That is the reason that the plan of salvation as we find it in Scripture did not have its origin in this earth; it came from heaven. Man knows practically nothing of grace. It is not of works. It has its origin in the great heart of God, coming to man, not with a demand, but with an offer. God comes out with both hands full. He offers to man the best He has. He says, "Come... and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isa. 55:1. Yes, the wine of the joy of salvation is offered free. Come and get it from a giving God, from a God who is anxious to bless. How few there are who accept the offer! It is the old story of the fisherman trying to give away herrings on London Bridge. "Herrings for nothing," but he could get no takers. Everybody thought they were spoiled or that something was wrong with them. Herrings at a bargain. a dozen for a penny, that would be all right; but, herrings for nothing, no! God has come out in grace and is offering man salvation.

This young man said, "Good Master, what shall I DO?" Before the Lord Jesus answers his question, He corrects another blunder in his approach. He accosted the Lord as "Good Master." Now those terms are not correlative. Good-ah, what a word that is! If we turn to the 14th Psalm we find God canvassing this world for someone that was good, but He found none, not one who was good.

The Lord corrects the young man. If you call Me good, you will have to give Me the rest of the title. There is none good but God. Now notice: The Lord does not say, Young man, you are mistaken, I am not good. No, no; He does not say anything resembling that. How different it was with Paul and Barnabas when preaching to the pagans. These latter were accustomed to believe in demi-gods--gods come down from heaven in the form of men. They rushed out into the street with the priest and the offering to do them sacrifice, saying, These men are gods come down in human form. How stirred the apostles were! They ran in among them and tore their clothes and said, Do not this foolishness. We are men with like passions as you. We are just like you poor heathen-not a bit better. Do not sacrifice to us.

But with the Lord Jesus, no such rebuke is given. All He asks is, if we call Him good, which He was in the most absolute sense, we have to recognize that He is also God. No doubt this young man did not take in what our Lord meant. So the Lord goes on to say, "Thou knowest the commandments." The young man was religious. He had not been brought up in ignorance. The Lord repeats the commandments, "Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother." He replies, "All these things have I kept from my youth up." Yes, there are men like that. Surely there are. There are many men who have lived an exemplary moral life. They have never killed, stolen, etc. The Lord does not question his integrity nor his sincerity. "All these things have I kept from my youth up." The Lord marveled at the fine character that stood before Him. Our Lord's heart was filled with longing and pity for this fine young man standing there before Him so sincerely. Jesus replied, "Yet lackest thou one thing." Is it not true that until grace has wrought in our hearts, that is where we all are-"Yet lackest thou"? There is a void in every human heart, and there is only One who can fill it. Until He comes into the heart, we can say, "Yet lackest thou." He had everything else. Some men have gone very high in this world, in wealth, in honor, in position. As an example, take a man like Ghandi of India. He had much to commend him, and there are hundreds of millions of people who regard him with a veneration near that of a god, now that he is gone. But it was true of Ghandi, "Yet lackest thou one thing."

So our Lord's test to this dear young man was, "Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me."

Is it possible to make deposits in the bank of heaven? Oh, yes; and we can do it daily. We do not have to wait until the end of the year. We can make a deposit today, and if we are left here we can deposit more tomorrow. In that marvelous 16th of Luke we read this verse: "Make to yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it fails ye may be received into the eternal tabernacles" (J.N.D. Trans.). How wonderful to be let into the secret of a divine alchemy like that, so that by a mysterious metamorphosis we can take the humble things of life and transmute them into that which is the current coin of heaven. We can send on ahead a deposit in the bank over there. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Matt. 6:20. Our Lord would not tell us to do this unless it were possible, and our account stands today as the sum total of all the little deposits that we have been sending up along the way.

Why did our Lord tell this young man to sell all that he had? He did not permit him to keep even ten per cent for himself. I do not recall that the Lord ever proposed this to anybody else. Why single out this poor man? It is because the Lord is acting here in the capacity of a skilled physician. When such is giving an examination, he finally puts his finger on a certain part; there is a wince and a groan; ah, that's it-he has located the trouble.

Our Lord is here diagnosing the case. He is going to make plain to this young man something about himself of which he was not conscious. In spite of all that lovely personality-that beautiful exterior-down beneath, there was a hidden malignancy at work. The Lord exposed it-COVETOUSNESS! Yes, there it was. With all its ugliness covered up by a beautiful veneer, there it was. That is the reason for our Lord's prescription to the young man to go and sell all that he had and give to the poor. Come, follow Me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.

Saviour of the Body

"We await the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory, according to the working of the power which He has even to subdue all things to Himself." Phil. 3:20, 21; J.N.D. Trans.

Glorious prospect! How precious for the weary, suffering pilgrim who feels the burden of his poor crumbling tabernacle! The Lord is at hand. The voice of the archangel and the trump of God will soon be heard, and then mortality shall be swallowed up of life. Till then we are sealed with that blessed Spirit of God who is the earnest-not of His love, which we possess, but- of the inheritance for which we wait.

Some Ways the Spirit May Work

There is need of building by the Word, but the earliest fruit of an awakened soul will be feeling, not knowledge; and this will become feeble and unhealthy if not fed by Christ and the Word. But this process went on at first, and has given us the Epistles; but we see the weakness which may accompany it—the Galatians would have given their eyes, but did not hold fast justification by faith. All this needs the continual work of the ministry, not to make a fuss about the first feelings, the flowers which precede the fruit, but to labor therein to feed the soul.

Some persons have inquired concerning people being saved by the singing of a hymn; this is not at all unscriptural. If the truth is in the hymn and is spoken of with divine affections for souls, affections expressed respecting a truth already outwardly admitted, it is quite within the ways and operation of the Spirit of God to act on the soul in a quickening way by it, not without truth, but by truth so addressed to the soul.

I do not say that the work will be there as deep, or the foundation as solidly laid at the moment for after exercises, as if it were the direct application of the Word by the Holy Ghost to the conscience; but the heart receives Christ convincingly and lovingly so as to live. I have ever said that the smallest atom of Christ suffices for the Holy Ghost to quicken by, if it be really Him. No doubt a profound conviction of sin by the Word casts off a mass of imaginings of the flesh by a deeper inward work which such a conversion leaves undiscovered. But if God works, He will do His own work, and bring it to a good issue.

Lectures on the Song of Solomon

Chapter 8

The 8th chapter is a kind of conclusion to the book, as the 1st chapter is a kind of preface; but still there are some important words in it, and I will endeavor just to say briefly a little upon them before I close.

"O that Thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should find Thee without, I would kiss Thee; yea, I should not be despised." There the bride expresses the love that she had expressed from the first. Here again is a proof that, as yet, the marriage had not taken place, because there would be nothing to be ashamed of when it did. But you see here it is different. You see how the marriage not having yet taken place, and she having no right, if I may so say, from a settled relationship, this is her feeling. We have, therefore, a kind of going briefly over the ground that we have traversed before, as a conclusion of the whole matter.

"I would lead Thee, and bring Thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me." v. 2. I need not, of course, repeat what I have already said. "I would cause Thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate. His left hand should be under my head, and His right hand should embrace me." And then, for the last time, comes her charge. "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until He please. Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness?" But is He now simply "like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?" Chap. 3:6. No. There is another object. It is now "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" Here we see that it is not now the Bridegroom, but she has a vision of herself-of herself united to the Bridegroom. Before, it was rather His coming to her, or for her; but now, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" She sees the bride, as it were, in spirit, and the Bridegroom.

"I raised thee up"-here is His answer. "I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth; there she brought thee forth that bare thee." v. 5. We saw the apple tree, or the citron tree, in the 2nd chapter. Here we have it again; and the meaning appears to be that, instead of Israel's being viewed, or rather, instead of the bride's being viewed, according to her former associations, it is not the bride connected with being brought out of Egypt. We find that, historically, was the case. Israel was brought as a vine out of Egypt. Is that the case here? Oh, no. Again, it is not mount Sinai. It is not that there she was brought forth. Not so. It is no longer deliverance from Egypt. It is no longer being put under the covenant of law. It is under Christ. It is Messiah in the new covenant now. It is there that she is found, and there only. It is under the citron tree. That is the great spring of all fruit- of all real fruit for God-the one source of all true fruit bearing. And so He answers, "Set Me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm."

Then comes another word which might not be easily apprehended, but on which I must say a little. "We have a little sister" (v. 8). Now who is this little sister-this little sister that was not yet grown like

the bride? It is the ten tribes, not the two. It is not Jerusalem, it is Ephraim. It is the house of Joseph. And why is it the house of Joseph? I refer to it now particularly to guard you from those nauseous publications that are floating about, talking about the lost ten tribes, as if that was anything for a Christian, as regards our connection with it. I hope there is not a single heart here that meddles with such trash-such delusive trash. Why, beloved friends, I think I can say that I never saw a more lowering, debasing, worldly thing in its character than a pamphlet that was, I suppose, sent for my edification only last night. Just turning over the leaves of it I found the one object to be the glory of man as he is now- the dragging down people from the heavenly place which they have got-the heavenly place in Christ-to glorify themselves because they have got a big city like this, and an active commercial country like this; to think that these are the glories of the ten tribes of Israel! I can hardly conceive anything more debasing to Christian persons than that kind of thing; and you will excuse me, therefore, if I speak in these strong and peremptory terms of it, because it is not everybody that is able to discern the character of a thing. But if the Lord gives me any light at all on spiritual or scriptural subjects, I am bound to say that that is my judgment of what I have seen and read of this foolish, absurd, and groundless attempt to trace the ten tribes of Israel in the Anglo-Saxon race.

Well, here we have Ephraim according to God, and not according to these terms of men. This is the way in which the Lord speaks of her-as a little sister. Why? Because she was undeveloped. Oh, the wonderful grace of God! Why were the Jews-the two tribes-developed, and why not Ephraim or the ten? Ah, the Jews had dealings with the Messiah. It is always the Messiah that develops either good or ill. If the Messiah be approached in unbelief, oh how terrible! And so it was with the Jew. But so it will not be in the day that is coming.

They will, therefore, have had the double experience-the bitter experience of incredulity, with all its horrors, and the destruction that it brought upon them, and the blessed experience of those whose heart has now been drawn to Him before He comes. For the Lord will give them that; and this book of the Song of Solomon is the drawing of the heart to the Messiah before He appears in glory-the fitting of them to receive Him, for it is quite a mistake that the Jew will be converted when the Lord appears in glory-quite a mistake. The Jew will be established when the Lord appears in glory; the Jew will be blessed and accepted when the Lord thus appears, but conversion and dealing with the affection and with the conscience in the remnant, the Jerusalem that we are speaking of here, the bride- all this will have preceded His coming. But with Ephraim it will not be so. That is the reason why she is spoken of as this little sister that was not yet marriageable. She had gone through none of this experience. She remained just a little one. There was nothing to draw her out, so to speak, either in good or ill. There she was in her littleness-in her want of understanding-in her want of experience in every way. It is she that is referred to, but then the Lord will bring Ephraim out of the hiding place and will allure her, as it is said, into the wilderness-will deal with Ephraim there. That is fully entered into in the prophets, and so it is alluded to here. The book would not be complete, as we can see, without showing this.

Just one word more. If we apply the Song of Solomon to the Church, pray who is the little sister? You see the thing does not hold for one moment; but when you have Jerusalem as the bride, then Ephraim is indeed the little sister. If it is a question of Ephraim's dealing with the Gentiles, Ephraim will be the warrior, so to speak; but if it is in relation to Christ, then Jerusalem is viewed as the grown sister-the spouse, "My sister My spouse." Ephraim is the little sister. It is in relation, of

course, to Christ's love. So here then it is entered into briefly.

But finally "Solomon," we are told, had a vineyard at Baalhamon-a remarkable expression. The meaning of the word "Baal-hamon" is "lord of the peoples." And I think it is a very important expression at this point. The children of Israel -the Jew-ought to have been, I will not say, "lord of the peoples," but truly to have been a blessing to every nation under heaven. Were they so? "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." "In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." Was that true of Israel-the Jew? The very reverse. They lost the blessing themselves because they refused Christ, and they have been the great spreaders of incredulity against Christ wherever they have gone, to this day. There are no such decided enemies of the gospel, for they bear the same character as in the early days of Christianity, and they do the same work, because the same unbelief prevails to this moment. But when He comes-when Solomon, the true Solomon comes-He will have a vineyard, and His vineyard will be fruitful indeed. And here we find it with its connection. The vineyard is at Baalhamon. It is in relation to all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, that the blessing of Christ will surely come.

The blessing may have tarried, as the vision has; but as surely as the vision will come and not tarry, so the blessing will flow like rivers to every nation and tribe and tongue, but not till that day. It is at Baal-hamon, and it is in connection with Solomon-for this is the point. It is the Lord Jesus and not the Church that is to be the true means of blessing to all nations. I admit that it will be when the Church is with Him assuredly. I admit that it will be when the Jew is converted to Him, loves Him, knows Him, most surely. But the one that causes all the difference is not the Jew, and it is not the Church. It is Christ. And it is Christ then come-Christ as King. That is what is spoken of here, and why He is spoken of as Solomon. "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver," because there will be blessed fruit in that day. Everything will flourish.

It will be the day when, if it is the figure of a net cast into the sea, there will be all sorts of fishes (not small ones, too, but great), and the net will not be broken. Now the net is broken. There may be, no doubt, a plentiful catch, but everything fails. The net is broken, and the ship would sink entirely if it were not for Him; but here in the passage before us, nothing fails. That will be its character. "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me." This is the language of the bride-of Jerusalem - because she too has a vineyard. "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred." She wishes to have no vineyard apart from Him. She is identified with Him. The Jew will have no pleasure, no joy, no fruit, except in connection with Christ.

What a change! How blessed to think that that long-settled love, that disappointed love of the Savior, will then be found, and will have awakened a love that flows from His own, and will be according to His own, in its measure, in the heart of her who was loved so long, and was so long unbelieving! But the unbelief will pass, the failure will pass, and the good will abide. Good is destined to triumph. Even now we know that God overcomes evil with good, but in that bright day there will be no evil even to overcome. Good will have its own bright and unalloyed way, and that will be forever.

And so this beautiful book closes with the call of the bride, "Make haste, my beloved, and be Thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." She desires, earnestly desires, that

He shall come.

The Spiritual Man Is an Unworldly One

I think that very often we are more careful to acquire spiritual ideas and feelings, than we are to see that nothing in our manner of life should hinder their growth and expression. Truly the light is sweet, but I must remember that if I do not protect it and use it, it is literally of no use to me.

What would be the gain of a man filling his garden with rare and valuable plants if, from his neglect, he never derived any benefit from them; but, where he thought he had a treasure, when he looked again, he found his garden waste, and with the bitter, humbling feeling that what he had acquired he had lost by carelessness and inattention- not considering the tenderness and value of the plants. Better for him to have planted his garden with less valuable plants, and to have felt more dependent on it-for "Much food is in the tillage of the poor" (Prov. 13:23) -than to have acquired with expense what through neglect he had lost.

It has often struck me how much one needs the "honest and good heart" (Luke 8:15) in receiving the Word of God -an honest and true purpose of heart to carry out into expression every idea communicated to one. To such, more would surely be given. I cannot be spiritual without becoming practically unworldly.

The life of Jesus in me saps, if I may so say, the principles of the world in me, so that they lose their influence on me almost imperceptibly, but yet very manifestly; and then I am enjoying the power which displaced them. The beautiful plants are yielding to me their value and sweetness; they connect me with their own region and atmosphere; and the more at home I find myself there, the more quietly and easily, because seeking nothing here, do I pass through the contrarities of this evil scene. The Christian who can listen to, and enjoy for the moment, the beauties of the heavenly kingdom, and yet, in spirit, seek this world, is worse than if he had never known of them; for tastes awakened and never fed must, if the experiment be repeated, decline and ere long he utterly dormant.

Love the spiritual idea, and be prepared to give it expression, and you will have the joy, the light, and the strength of it in your soul; and better still, you will be given more; and the more you have, the more you will realize your place with your absent Lord.

Spiritual Slothfulness

Knowledge is not faith, and principles are not power. It is a mistake to think the one or the other, however much the Holy Spirit may use the knowledge of the Word and principles of truth for our guidance and blessing. The Laodicean element, alas! so rife on every hand, is what we have most to dread. And while Laodiceanism is lifeless profession-"wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"-the spirit of it is indifference to Christ and His claims; and it may-alas, does-cast its blight over true saints of God. Many of God's children are suffering in their souls from lack of spiritual acquaintance with God's mind as revealed in the Scriptures of eternal truth; but this is not the root of the palsied state of a large number of those who profess to be God's saints. God be praised for those who know, on the infallible authority of His Word brought home to their hearts by His Spirit, that they are "sons of God" by faith in Christ Jesus, and abound with praise and thanksgiving because of it.

When reading the epistles carefully, we are struck with the fact that the first thing which attracted the eye of an inspired apostle, when considering the state of the saints in any place, was not the amount of knowledge they possessed, but what their condition was as to "faith," and "love," and "hope"; and, after thus considering their state, he then sought to correct and instruct them as to principles and knowledge of the truth. Look, for instance, at the first epistle to the Thessalonians. He says: "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ," etc. And in the second epistle to the same assembly, he wrote first of all: "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly and the charity [love] of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth." (1 Thess. 1:2, 3; 2 Thess. 1:3.) Then in each epistle instruction as to the knowledge of God's truth followed. In Ephesians he says: "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you," and then prays that the Father of glory may give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him... that they might know what is the hope of His calling, etc. (Eph. 1:15-23.) What a serious mistake then such make who place "knowledge" on the foremost ground instead of faith, and love, and hope!

Again, if we turn to the epistle to the saints at Colosse, the same inspired Apostle says, "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven," etc. He then prays they may "be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." He has also great conflict, or agony, lest they should come short of the apprehension of the mystery of God; and he sets before them great principles of truth as to their being in Christ. Jesus, with the view of delivering them from the philosophy and traditions which threatened to undermine their faith. He clearly showed them that, as being in Christ Jesus, filled full in Him, and holding fast Christ the Head of the body, they would be delivered from rationalism on the one hand and from ritualism on the other, and walk worthy of the Lord.

Our present object, however, is not to trace this further in the apostolic writings, important as it is, but to inquire whether the Laodicean state, so nauseous to our Lord, is not being rapidly brought about by spiritual slothfulness; and whether it does not call for great searchings of heart, as to how far any of us may be helping on this closing phase of the apostate church. For it is clear that, in the apostolic epistle, we are enjoined to be "diligent," and warned against being "slothful." We are taught to give "all diligence" to add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly love, and love; and in this way we should be neither idle nor unfruitful as regards the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But where this diligence is lacking, such are blind, shortsighted, and have forgotten they were purged from their old sins. We are also exhorted not to be "slothful," but to show the same "diligence" to the full assurance of hope unto the end, as if the enjoyment of our "hope" were connected with diligence in the service and ways of the Lord. (2 Pet. 1:5-11; Heb. 6:11, 12.) Happy those who are diligently exercised before the Lord as to their growth in faith, and love, and hope! (Rom. 15:13.)

Perhaps one of the earliest outward marks of inward decline in a Christian is the readiness to excuse oneself from devotedness and diligence in the Lord's service. Difficulties not heard of before are spoken about, and dangers too are feared, so that the manifest neglect is both accounted for and excused, when such "will not plow by reason of the cold," and say, "There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets." Pro. 20:4; 26:13. The human mind can easily imagine or invent obstacles to unselfish and God-honoring service; and when this is yielded to, instead of abiding in the truth at all costs, a place of ease is readily found. When we lose the authority of the Word on our conscience, that "unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake," we can easily think of our present temporal advantage and personal ease in this passing scene, glide away from wisdom's ways of pleasantness and peace, and become weak and helpless as to divine things. "The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth." Pro. 26:15. Such have not only left their first love, but turn away from those who stand for God's truth at all costs. A drowsy state has taken hold on them, so that their spiritual movements are little more than mechanical, "as the door turneth upon his hinges"; and such become as indolent in caring for their souls' welfare, as a slumbering man who grieves at the trouble of bringing again his hand to his mouth. (Pro. 19:24.) He so slumbers that, while knowing all that is going on around him, he has no power to bestir himself. Yet, strange to say, with all this declension and indifference to the honor of the Lord, "The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason." Pro. 26:16. What an appalling state! Such can only pride themselves on their desires, while their souls are dry and drowsy, so that the scripture is fulfilled that "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing" (Pro. 13:4); and again, "The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labor." Pro. 21:25.

Another mark of a slothful man is that he roasteth not that which he took in hunting (Pro. 12:27). He may associate with God's saints, hear the Word ministered with freshness and power, and may even be struck with its blessedness and suitability to himself; but when he retires, he is so absorbed with earthly things that he takes no further interest in it. Like the huntsman's prize, it is of no real benefit to him, because he is too indolent to occupy himself with it by meditating on the truth for his present profit. How strikingly this describes the state of many in this day! To read or to hear the Word is one thing, but to "meditate on it day and night" for our soul's profit is another thing. A clean animal, under the law, not only gathered up food, but it chewed the cud-so that it

was not only received but digested for renewal of strength and personal profit, and connected too with a walk suited to it (Lev. 11:3).

We are also told that "The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns." A spiritual and earnest Christian finds something almost impenetrable in the endeavor to approach such. Greatly as those who care for their souls desire it, they find communion in the things of the Lord to be out of the question, and conclude that God only can break through the "hedge of thorns." (Pro. 15:19; 12:24.) How truly too it is said, "He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster." Pro. 18:9. We are familiar with it in earthly matters; but is it less true as to the things of the Lord, and our daily walk and testimony? Opportunities of honoring the Lord are missed and never return, and the means entrusted to our stewardship are wrongly used; time is misspent, and health and strength wasted in the routine or amusements of this present evil age. What is the harm of this or that? saith the slothful man, little thinking that one who is practically alive unto God, and seeking His glory, would never ask such a question.

The truth is that, when we fail to enjoy the love of God to us in Christ, when Christ Himself is no longer the object and hope of our hearts, when meditation on the Word of God becomes irksome, and closet prayer declines, when private praise and making melody in the heart to the Lord ceases, and we no longer overflow with love to our Savior God, to His ways, His people, and His service, we begin to be slothful Christians; and, oh, how serious is this state! for "Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger." Pro. 19:15. Let it be noted that it is a deep sleep; alas! so deep, that ordinary means utterly fail to awaken them. How humbling and depressing is this divinely drawn picture of sleep, and yet how true! Can anything account for what we see around us associated with the name of the Lord but slothfulness touching the things of God? And, if so, how solemn and searching is the warning admonishing us to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. The thought of some is, "I know I am saved," "I know I have eternal life," and the like; but do we consider, as we ought, that if the Spirit of God is grieved or quenched by our life and walk, we may lose the comfort and enjoyment of such precious truths, and even forget that we were purged from our old sins?

The scriptures we have been looking at have mostly an individual application, so that it may be asked. What about the assembly, looking at it as God's corporate witness on earth during our Lord's absence? We need not say to many how terribly it has failed as such; so that instead of its being, as at first, the expression of the Spirit's unity, and of the unselfish love of Christ "the Head" of the one body, division and false doctrine abound on every hand. Still the obligation of even two or three to be faithful as gathered to the Lord's name is as true as ever, and such are greatly encouraged by the Scriptures of truth (2 Tim. 2:20-22). As, therefore, God's assembly is made up of individuals, it is impossible to be right with God in a corporate sense unless we are so individually. An assembly gathered to the Lord's name will always manifest the moral qualities of those who comprise it individually. Here again Scripture reminds us that "By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through." Eccles. 10:18. Nothing is clearer than that, where there is earnestness in our Lord's service, and faithful walk by those who look for His coming, there is generally found comfort and blessing collectively. But where knowledge of Scripture is the first thing, with lack of earnest and united prayer, little spiritual care for Christ's members manifested, the Lord's coming as our only future dropped, there you will find not only the absence of the increase of God, but the life, and power, and union, once known,

"decayeth," and the assembly discomfort is like a house which "droppeth through."

Again, we are admonished as to this by the wise man. He says: "I went by the field of the slothful,... and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down." Here we see "thorns," the emblem of God's displeasure, instead of the trees of His own planting; "nettles" instead of fruitful branches; and the "stone wall" of separation, once so decided and solid, now "broken down," so that evil associations are easily found within, and evil intruders not excluded. All this is traced to spiritual indolence. "Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man." (Pro. 24:30-34.)

But we may well look up and encourage our hearts in God, while we commend one another "to God, and to the word of His grace." His fatherly love has not abated. The Lord is still with us, and all His resources are open to faith.

So we may exhort one another to be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. 15:58.

Strong in the Lord

Moses, that beloved man of God and honored servant of Christ, sought to encourage his fellow laborer and successor, Joshua, in reference to all that was before him. "Ye shall not fear them; for the Lord your God He shall fight for you." Thus, too, did the blessed Apostle Paul encourage his beloved son and fellow servant, Timothy, to trust in the living God; to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus; to lean, with unshaken confidence, on God's sure foundation; to commit himself, with unquestioning assurance, to the authority, teaching, and guidance of the Holy Scriptures; and, thus armed and furnished, to give himself, with holy diligence and true spiritual courage, to that work to which he was called. And thus, too, the writer and the reader can encourage one another, in these days of increasing difficulty, to cling in simple faith to that Word which is settled forever in heaven.

True Service

Servants of the Lord are apt to fall into the subtle mistake of calling the work mine instead of His. It is working for one's own credit rather than for His glory. It is attracting or trying to attract to me, not altogether to Him. And where shall we go for the remedy? It must be to Him. It must be found in the renewal (without one cloud, without even the cloud of our own restless activities coming between our souls and our sight of Him) of the views of the fair beauty of the Lord, and of the blessedness and pleasantness of our lot and part in Him.

Service is all the happier when it is not the source of the man's happiness. The source and secret of all happiness is Christ, and that secret acts equally, whether marked success attends action or speech, or apparently no success at all; whether the servant be put by the Master into the front rank of action in the harvest field, or told to sit down in a corner and sharpen the sickles of others; whether he be called to speak to a multitude in spiritual power, or to lie still on a bed of sickness.

It is one of the deepest and most sacred laws of the life of the children of God that their activity has its root in passivity; their strength has profoundly much to do with weakness; their rising up and going on, with giving way and sinking down, with that opposite of positive effort which is yet so fruitful of work—"Yield yourselves unto God."

I would most earnestly plead then, in the interests of true Christian service, for what in the hurrying times we need so much—a deeper entrance of our souls into the secret of the presence of the Lord. Work is not food for the spirit any more than for the body. Amidst a multitude of works the worker's soul may wither, and the works will feel the difference in due time. We must see to it, because we are bond servants and not contractors, that we are living and serving Him, not only so as to get through a great deal of action, but so as to be vessels meet for the Master's use, in His way, and not our own. And for this we must live, so to speak, behind our service; we must live in a blessed sense independent of it. We must live upon Christ, not upon energy, not upon success, not upon praise, not upon notice. God forbid! And to live upon Him in service, we must in the rule and habit of life watch over times of solemn, sacred intercourse with Him in secret. Thank God, the picture is not a visionary one. It is the secret of many a life of steadfast, humble, Christ-reflecting service in the Church of God.

Unanswered Prayers

We desire to say a little about unanswered prayers; it is a subject of interest. Not a few could say, if they were asked, "I have prayed for years about a certain thing, and the answer has not come yet." And they want to know why. That question we will endeavor to answer.

In the first place, some prayers never will be answered—at least, not in the form in which they are presented. There is the well-known case of Paul. He besought the Lord thrice that the thorn in the flesh might depart from him, and yet the request was not allowed. It was better for him that it should not be granted; and so it may be in your case. David's history affords another instance. He greatly desired to build a house for the Lord. It was a right thought, and he would only have been too glad to obtain permission; but it could not be. And yet both Paul and David did receive answers—Paul received grace so that he could glory in his infirmities, and David had the satisfaction of knowing that Solomon would build the Lord a house. The answers came in unexpected ways. May it not be so in our case? We have received an answer, but the answer assumed a somewhat different shape from the request; and for want of attentiveness we failed to recognize it. John Newton describes an experience akin to this. He says:

"I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith and love and every grace,
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek more earnestly His face.
" 'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And He, I know, has answered prayer;
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair."

Our prayers then may have been answered, though differently from what we anticipated. But there are cases where no distinct answer in any shape has come. We may have asked for a thing that would not be good for us, or that is unreasonable, or altogether beyond us. Of this class is the prayer of the mother of Zebedee's children. She made request that her two sons might sit on the right and left hand of Christ in His kingdom. The Lord had to say to her, "Ye know not what ye ask." Doubtless she thought how fine it would be for her two sons to occupy such an exalted position, where they would be ministered to. The Lord shows her that a greater thing, is to minister.

But perhaps we have prayed for right things, such as the conversion of our children or relatives, and many other matters; and still no answer seems vouchsafed. This leads us to mention another reason why our prayers are unanswered. There may be some fault in ourselves. There was a Christian lady whose husband very much tried her in one particular. Instead of conducting family

worship, as she considered he ought, he was in the habit of taking exercise on horseback every morning. This went on for a long time, and had been the subject of many prayers. At length a servant of the Lord had occasion to stay in the house. The wife complained to him, told him how often she had made it a subject of prayer, and said she could not understand why God did not answer her prayers and put her husband right. To her intense surprise she was told that it was she who needed putting right, and that doubtless God would have answered her prayers long ago but for something in herself. Accepting the rebuke, she earnestly set about to discover what it was in her that was hindering her husband; and as the result, she soon had the joy of seeing God working with him and bringing him to be of one mind with herself. This is frequently a reason why our prayers remain unanswered; there is something to set right in ourselves. It is ever in accord with God's mind for us to seek the blessing of others, but He loves us too much to bless others and leave us unblessed; for His way is, "I will bless thee" and then "make thee a blessing." And if blessing is withheld, it is a loud call to us to first of all "search and try our ways," and then "turn again to the LORD." Unanswered prayers are often but a reflection of our own state.

The Apostle James gives us another reason why we do not get what we ask for; he says, "Ye ask amiss." "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (pleasures). How searching this is! With all our asking and all our seeming devotedness, we are after all seeking only our own pleasure! If God were to answer our prayers, we should only use the answer to plume ourselves. Is it any wonder we have many unanswered prayers? It may be the answers will not be long delayed if we are willing for God to have all the glory.

Another reason is that we may be withholding from God, or even from others, what is their due. This undoubtedly is a very frequent cause of our prayers meeting with no response. For example, in Mark 11:24-26 we find the Lord, in speaking about answers to prayer, connects the thought of forgiveness with it. "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying forgive." Are any of us cherishing an unforgiving spirit? It will prove a great hindrance to our prayers being answered. And the same thing will probably happen if we keep for ourselves what should be given to God. There is no man so poor as the man who is always saving. It is well to remember the words of the wise king: "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." And while it is always true that God in His grace deals with us far above what we deserve, yet in government He deals with us very much as we deal with Him and with one another, "With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful; with an upright man Thou wilt show Thyself upright; with the pure Thou wilt show Thyself pure; and with the froward Thou wilt show Thyself froward." Psalm 18:25, 26.

Our prayers sometimes remain unanswered because we ask unintelligently. This is particularly the case in regard to spiritual matters. In the spiritual world, as well as in the natural, there are certain laws and processess; and if we run counter to these we cannot reach the end we desire. For want of knowing this, or remembering it, many have been seeking for years what may seem as far away from them as ever. You may have prayed for a certain blessing many times, and yet the request has not been granted. If the truth were known, it is probable that this matter which is now so great a mystery could easily be explained. These prayers were in the wrong form, or you are looking entirely in the wrong direction.

The case of the Syrophenician woman illustrates this very thing. She comes to the Lord in her deep need about her daughter, and says, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." "But He answered her not a word." Now this was not coldness on the part of the Lord toward her, any more than it is toward you because He may have not answered your prayer. This woman had prepared her request on entirely wrong grounds. The Lord did not send her away, as He does not send you away; but He has something to teach you, perhaps, before He can grant your request, as He had her. She addressed Him as Son of David, a title which gave a Gentile no claim whatever. The Lord could not consistently respond when thus addressed; to have done so would have ignored the distinction God Himself had made. But when she addressed Him simply as Lord, He could listen to her. He is Lord of all. And when, further, she casts herself entirely upon His goodness and mercy, asserting no claim. He cannot refuse her. "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

May not we, in regard to other matters, be making the same mistake, in principle, as this woman? Take, for instance, the question of the forgiveness of sins. Are there not many earnest, devout people in the world who are praying for forgiveness, and have been doing so for years, and who, if they were asked today if they are forgiven, would sadly shake their heads and say, No; or at best, they have nothing more than a doubtful hope. We are not dealing now with confession of sin in prayer, when a sinner first comes to Christ, or afterward when he has failed; but we are dealing with those, and there are many, who are continually asking for pardon, and ignoring the fact that God is ready and willing to forgive, and overlooking the ground on which He can righteously do so.

If I am continually asking a person for something that person is offering me, and I overlook the offer, is it any wonder if I miss getting what I want? This is just what thousands of people are doing in regard to forgiveness of sins. They think that forgiveness is to be had by asking, whereas it is to be obtained by TAKING; they think it is to be obtained by prayers and sighs and tears, or religious observances, whereas it is to be obtained by FAITH. They plead with God about it, and do not see it is something God offers them. "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe [not ask] are justified from all things." And what mean the words of our Lord Jesus Christ when He rose from the dead-"Thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"? (Luke 24,:4b,47). The weary, sin-stricken soul needs to learn that God can never forgive on the ground of asking, but on the ground that Christ has once suffered for sins, and through faith in Him.

Perhaps others have prayed for more faith. This is a common delusion as if some day they would become suddenly conscious of a great increase of that commodity. It cannot be too clearly stated that God does not work in this way. He does not deal out faith to us in bulk. It would be harmful, rather than helpful, if He did. Faith, like money, is increased by circulation; or, like seed, it grows and gathers strength as our physical frame does by exercise. When the disciples on one occasion said, "Lord, Increase our faith," the Lord Jesus in His reply laid down a fundamental principle which holds good for all time, and which we do well to ponder. He shows it is not the quantity of faith, but just exercising what we have; and He mentions one of the smallest things, and tells them what they would accomplish with just so much faith. "If ye had faith," He said, "as a grain of mustard seed."

There are two reasons. A grain of mustard seed is very small in itself, but under certain conditions of soil and atmosphere and sun there is within it possibilities of development. So with faith. And then the least faith brings in all the resources of God. It is not then by asking for more faith that it increases, but, given certain conditions, it will grow as surely as a grain of mustard seed. In Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians he says, "Your faith groweth exceedingly." How is this accounted for? By what he is able to say about them in his first epistle. He speaks of their "work of faith." Faith was in exercise, and consequently it grew exceedingly. (Compare 1 Thess. 1:3 and 2 Thess. 1:3.) Had they been blindly asking for more faith instead of seeing the divine principle that governs the whole matter, their faith would rather have diminished than increased.

In the same way, how often have we prayed to God for more patience. But God does not deal out patience, any more than faith, in lumps. And the sooner we learn that patience can only become ours by a certain process, the better. It is an immense gain when we see that faith and patience and such like qualities are not given at random or arbitrarily, but stand in the relation of cause and effect. They do not become ours by asking, but by a principle as unerring as the law of gravitation. How then do we become patient? There is one simple answer. By the knowledge of God. In support of this assertion we can only just refer the reader to Col. 1:10, 11. By increasing in (or by) the knowledge of God we are "strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness."

Do we underrate prayer in this way? No; but we learn to pray for the right thing, and also to seek it in the right way. We learn that the real thing we need is the knowledge of God. We are impatient because we know Him so little; and if we only seek to deal with the impatience, we are not going to the root of the disease, but dealing only with a symptom. No medical man would act in this way with regard to the diseases of the body, nor must we with that which is infinitely higher and more complicated, the diseases of the soul. Let us pray that God would make Himself known, and seek to know Him by studying His Word; and patience will come.

It is not otherwise with regard to rest. How often we are weary and burdened! Perhaps we have often sought rest by simply praying for it. There is One who offers it to us, and tells us how we may find it. We can only have it on the same principle on which He had it; that is, entire submission to the will of God. What God had ordered, He knew was best for Him; and He rested there. And so when He offers rest to us He says, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." "Meek and lowly in heart"-here is the secret of all rest.

If the reader will carefully weigh what has been said, he may discover the reason of many an unanswered prayer. While we are privileged at all times to make our requests known to God, yet the one condition of our prayers being answered is asking "according to His will" (1 John 5:19, 15). Of course we may have asked according to His will, and the time may not have come for the answer. God often delays the answer. Prayer was made continually by the church for Peter, but it was only a few hours before the execution was to take place that he was liberated. But while this is true, yet our prayers are often unanswered for the reasons already given. We have been asking for something that would not be good for us, or we have asked amiss, or at random, and overlooked the real thing to be asked for- not patience, but the knowledge of God; not rest, but to be meek and lowly in heart. If we grasp these principles, many of our prayers may yet be

answered.

The Unbroken Net

In Luke 5 is seen the remarkable manner in which the Lord called Simon Peter and his companions, already disciples, to be fishers of men. There was then a miracle wrought which acted powerfully not only on the mind and the affections, but on the conscience. After a night's toil in which they caught nothing, the Master spoke; and at His word they let down the nets. This done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes; but their nets were breaking, and their partners came to help them, and filled both their boats so that they began to sink. It was the beautiful picture of the gospel work to which they were thenceforward called, where they apart from Him could do nothing; and His power wrought. But yet He allowed the weakness of human responsibility to be felt, for the nets were breaking and the boats sinking under the weight of the very blessing given.

Here at the sea of Tiberias, after His resurrection, we see them at Peter's instance again fishing; and this night too they took nothing. "But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered Him, No, And He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship, (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus showed Himself to His disciples, after that He was risen from the dead." vv. 4-14.

This was not a miracle only, but a sign, as indeed is ever the case in the fourth Gospel, and in special connection with the two foregoing manifestations of the risen Lord, which give the key to what has just been cited. The first was when the Lord made Himself known to the disciples gathered on the first day of the week, His own very resurrection day, when He breathed on them, and said, Receive the Holy Spirit. It was His risen life communicated in the power and character of His resurrection, His blood already shed, peace now given, and themselves sent on a mission of peace. It is the type of the Christian and the Church.

Eight days after was the second manifestation, when Thomas, who had been absent before but was now present, was convicted of unbelief; as the Lord took up his words of doubt and bade him reach here his finger and see His hands, and put his hand into His side, and be not faithless but believing. The slow disciple could only answer, My Lord and my God! just as the converted Jews will say at the end of this age. Indeed the Lord intimated the same thing when He said to him,

"Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed [as Israel will do by-and-by]: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"; which is the proper faith of the Christian now.

The third manifestation is equally notable. "After these things Jesus showed Himself again to His disciples" in Galilee of the Gentiles. It is not said to be on the first day of the week, nor eight days after; but simply after what foreshadowed His work in bringing Israel out of their unbelief. Now He sets forth Himself for their millennial work of bringing to Him from the sea of the nations, in which converted Israel will be honored by His grace. Here there is no breaking of the nets, no sinking of the boats. The net is drawn to land full of great fishes, as becomes the type of that vast ingathering. Whatever be the ruin of the Gentiles deceived by Satan at the end, there will be no failure among the blessed among the nations any more than in Israel. This is no small contrast with all that has been seen since Pentecost. And it is not without a bearing on that new day for the earth, that they found a fire of coals there, and fish on it and bread. Those, who are used of grace for bringing in of the Gentiles on a great scale, learn that the Lord has wrought a work before them, and that they are invited to enter into the communion of His love in that previously hidden work; for eating here, as elsewhere, is its well-known figure. They partook of the fish ashore before what they had just caught on a larger scale.

Is not Jesus a wondrous and unwearied Savior? Think of it in all these three manifestations of Himself after He rose. What was it to the disciples who forsook Him and fled? What was it to Thomas so gloomily denying the good tidings? What will it be to a Gentile remnant, and to all the nations in the future day?

Unto All Pleasing

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." Col. 1:10. Here I am called today and tomorrow to walk worthy of the Lord-nothing that I do, say, or think, which should not be worthy of Christ Himself. Here it is all growth; I have got the life. I say to a child, You go and walk worthy of your family; but if he has no sense of what his family is, it is no use telling him to walk worthy of it. But if he has the sense of the integrity and standing of his family, then he knows how to walk worthy of it. "In everything commending ourselves as God's ministers" (2 Cor. 6:4; J.N.D. Trans.).

You get the word worthy in three ways. In Thessalonians, "Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory." In Ephesians, it is the same thing practically: "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

Here in Colossians it is, "Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." Did He ever do His own will in anything? No; He did. His Father's. Are you content never to do your own will, but to take Christ's will as that which is to be the spring and motive of all you do? Then communion is not interrupted; and it is joy and blessing beyond all human thought. You say, Am I never to do what I like? Like! Do you not like to be always with Christ? This detects the workings of the flesh.

Then comes the activity, the growing acquaintance with God, "increasing in [or rather, by] the knowledge of God." The full joy of heaven is the knowledge of God. If I am going after the world, will this be increasing by the knowledge of God? It tests what I like. Do you like to be away from God, and do your own will sometimes? But He says, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. Do you delight to do it? Oh, what a thought it is, that in this dark world God has perfectly revealed Himself in Christ; nay more, that He dwells in us! "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." 1 John 4:15. There is God by His Spirit.

Now mark how this works. "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power." I shall find plenty of difficulties in the way, and temptations of all kinds-possibly death, as has often been the case in some countries- but I am strengthened with all might. There is the strength. I have been brought into close relationship with God, and there I get this power. Unto what? "Unto all patience." This sounds like a poor thing, but you will find it is just what tries you. "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Jas. 1:4. And again, "The signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience." 2 Cor. 12:12. Are you always patient? do you not need divine power for it? I may want setting right in the

Church of God, or in the Lord's work, or in a thousand things; but I must have patience. I must wait on God. Supposing my will is not at work, there comes meekness and gentleness. I can take things gently and meekly and quietly with others; and, then he adds, if that is the case, my life is in full display before God, and there is the enjoyment of God. I enter into all this blessedness, and am not merely "made meet," but "giving thanks," because I am in the positive and blessed enjoyment of all. When I am walking in patience of heart and longsuffering, my soul is with God. I

get the blessed enjoyment of what He is, and I grow by the knowledge of Him; "Unto every one which hath shall be given." If I am honest, I say, I do not know what His will is-perhaps there is something in myself that I have not yet detected. Here I have all these exercises; but it is in the sense of the divine favor resting on me with consciousness of my being a child of God. The more a child is with his father, and delights in him, of course the better he will grow up, understanding what his father likes. It is so with us before God.

The Veil Rent, Not Removed

"And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubim shall it be made. And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver. And thou shalt hang up the veil under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony: and the veil shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy." Exod. 26:31-33.

Very precise are these directions about the veil; its substance, its colors, its place, and its use are all described, leaving nothing to be supplied by the wit of Aholiab, the device of Bezaleel, or the wisdom of Moses. And as God instructed Moses, so Solomon, four hundred years afterward, made a veil for the house which he built, of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wrought cherubim thereon (2 Chron. 3:14). To divide between the holy place and the most holy was one great use of it; but also, while it hung there in its pristine completeness, it marked the limit of approach for the sons of Aaron to the presence chamber of the Lord God of Hosts. Before that veil in the sanctuary, and up to it, each priest, when in the holy place, could go; but behind it none could venture except the High Priest, once every year on the day of atonement. Within it was that chamber where, after the death of Moses, unbroken silence reigned, except when the High Priest passed behind the veil.

While Moses lived, at times, as we learn from Numb. 7:89, the silence which characterized that chamber was broken by the oral communications to the mediator from the Lord Jehovah. When he died, those communications ceased; and, though daily the holy place must have resounded with the footsteps of the officiating priests accomplishing the service appointed them, no sound from within that curtain broke on their ears who were without. Yet God's throne upon earth was within that veil. He dwelt between the cherubim, and the bright cloud of glory - the Shechaniah - betokened His presence in the sanctuary (Lev. 16:2). How solemn must that stillness have been to the priests as they went about in the holy place! They knew the character of the chamber within, but heard no sound of life proceeding from it, though the living Lord Himself made His earthly throne the mercy seat. In thick darkness He dwelt, and in an atmosphere which was not to be disturbed by the presence of those who caused din and discord without; for when Aaron entered, he entered only as the type of the High Priest of the heavenly sanctuary, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Very jealously did God guard the entrance into the holiest. Redeemed by blood, as the children of Israel were, they never could get beyond the brazen altar in the court of the tabernacle. Consecrated though the sons of Aaron had been, in accordance with a ritual of divine appointment, they could never get behind the veil, within the holiest of all; and Aaron, though privileged by virtue of his office to enter that innermost sanctuary, could only pass within by blood, having first taken in a censer filled with sweet incense, but lighted with live coals from off the altar that was before the Lord (Lev. 16:12), that the cloud of incense might cover the mercy seat from which shone out in brightness the only light of the holiest.

For hundreds of years did this condition of things continue; namely, a nation in relationship with God, owned by Him as His people, yet never allowed access into His immediate presence; for the veil, stretched across the full width of the sanctuary, proclaimed that there was a spot on earth on which even the feet of God's priests could not tread. Very clear and very marked was the message conveyed thereby from God to man-that as yet the way of the holiest had not been made manifest, though the typical meaning of the veil itself, and the typical teaching as to its colors, were subjects all that time unrevealed. That a way would one day be opened, could be learned from Aaron's periodical entrance on the great day of atonement; but how that way would be opened out, and when, remained for all those centuries a close, an insoluble mystery.

At length the day and the hour arrived when that mystery was to receive its solution; and as, by divine teaching, Israel had understood that no child of Adam could remain in God's immediate presence, so, by a divine act on the part of Him who directed the erection of the veil, the way and the ground of access to Him were disclosed in a moment of time.

But God's thoughts are not like our thoughts, nor His ways like our ways; for that which in accordance with all human thought would have sealed man's doom forever, and taken away irrecoverably all hope of being before God without the fire of His judgment descending on him-namely, the death of God's Son on the cross- was the efficacious ground on which He could righteously act in the fullest grace to sinners, and permit what had never before been known-the soul to enter with boldness into His very presence and be at rest before the throne. All that men could do to express their hatred of God, and of all that savored of God, that they had done. Jesus hanging on the cross, and there at that moment dead, betokened what a man must be, whose hands were stained with the blood not merely of a righteous man (for that was nothing new in this world's history), but of the Holy One, the first and the only, in the fullest sense, faithful and true witness for God upon earth.

"Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom." Matt. 27:50, 51. Never before had men such an opportunity for showing themselves to be unworthy of favor from God, and they did not miss it. For Him who went about doing good (Acts 10:38), they had thus openly rejected; and though no charge worthy of death could be substantiated against Him, they had not paused for one hour in their restless activity till their wish had been gratified, and the plans of Satan carried out in the ignominious and agonizing death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.

Beyond that they could not go. All that they could do against Him personally, that they had done; but death, to which they had delivered Him, barred all further pursuit of the object of their hatred, and demonstrated that the outward actors in that scene were but creatures, and creatures of very limited capacity. They could judge Him to be worthy of death; they could urge the governor, as permitted by God, to wield the sword of judgment against the Lord; but death, to which they delivered Him, shut them out from further ill treatment of Him. Their power as men was limited, though they might, as they did, put forth all their strength.

But when they had done all that they could, having put out of the world by death the Prince of life Himself, God began to work to manifest what He is and what He could do. He rent the veil-a fact narrated in a very few words- an act done in a moment of time-but a fact and an act of great and abiding importance; and as such, it is three times over stated in the Word. Matthew, Mark, and

Luke narrate it-the first two in its historic order in relation to the other events of that day-the last in a moral order, in accordance with the plan often to be traced in the Gospel which bears his name, bracketing together, as it were, the supernatural events of the crucifixion, the great darkness over the land, and the rending of the veil in its midst. At the ninth hour, the hour for prayer, the Lord died; and, at the same time, the veil was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

God, in accordance with whose command the veil, through all the changes and vicissitudes of the tabernacle and the temple, had divided the holy place from the most holy, and screened from the gaze of the priests, as morning and evening they burned incense on the golden altar before it, the ark and the mercy seat; God, I say, by His own act, without the intervention of a single human creature, rent the veil -a testimony, as was afterward explained, to the opening up of a new and living way into His presence. And this divine act was one of immense significance. It spoke of an evening sacrifice, at length offered, which was perfectly acceptable to God. It told of the character and purpose of the death of God's Son on the cross, who gave Himself to die as the sin offering, and to make atonement for sinners. It bore witness, likewise, that God could now allow men to enter into His presence, while He maintained at its full height, by the way of approach, the standard of His holiness.

God rent the veil. We should mark the word. God did not remove it Himself, nor did He authorize its removal by others. He did not withdraw it, nor did He roll it up from the bottom, nor lower it from the top like a curtain. He rent it in the midst. And perhaps the priest who ministered that afternoon at the golden altar of incense, or, certainly, those who entered the sanctuary shortly after its occurrence, must have seen the veil still hanging up on some of the pillars or hooks to which it was attached, but with a way into the holiest at the same time displayed by the rent made in its midst. "A new and living way." A new way it was, for no high priest had in such manner entered the holiest before. Year by year, as often as they observed the ritual appointed for the day of atonement, they must have passed behind the veil; but, now that it was rent, such a way into the holiest was unneeded. A living way it was, and is. For, whereas none of the sons of Aaron could penetrate within the veil, save the high priest, and then in the prescribed manner, else death would have awaited them and him; now that the veil has been rent by God, there exists no barrier on His part against the entrance of His people, who are a holy priesthood unto Him, into the place where He is on. His throne. But, let it ever be remembered, they can enter only through the veil.

The way opened, but opened in this manner; and the veil, as we learn in Heb. 10:20, being a type of the Lord's flesh, the typical meaning of its colors can be discerned as well as the teaching about the veil itself. Christ died, then the veil was rent; and that of which there had been no type was immediately disclosed. Types there were of the Lord's death as the voluntary offering on His part, as well as the sinner's substitute. Types, too, there were of Him as a man upon earth; nor were there wanting in the ceremonial law those which had respect to His resurrection (Lev. 14:6, 7; 23:11); but no type could there be to illustrate the way into the holiest, to be opened up by His death. Of this the rending of the veil is the only illustration; and that, once rent, was an operation which could never be repeated.

The ground on which the entrance would be based was typified as often as the high priest went within the veil with the blood of others; but, as the way was to be through the veil-the flesh of Christ-the same veil could only be rent once, if the truth as to the death of Christ once for all was to

be taught to and maintained by His people. He died, and God's immediate response to the voluntary surrender of His Son to do His will on the cross, and to be the sinner's substitute, was the significant rending of the veil. Till He died, none born in sin could go with boldness to the mercy seat; but, when He died, before ever He was taken down from the cross, men, we learn, were no longer to be kept out of the innermost sanctuary, if only they would approach through the rent veil.

And now, as to the typical meaning of its various colors, etc.: there was but one veil, into the fabric of which different colors were introduced. And, since that veil was the type of the flesh of Christ, the different colors of blue, purple, and scarlet, with the fine twined linen, and cherubim of cunning work typify certain things, which in combination are to be met with only in the virgin's Son, conceived by the Holy Ghost. The heavenly Man He was (1 Cor. 15:47); so blue is the first color mentioned. Purple, the royal color, suitably finds a place in that veil which was the type of the flesh of Him who was born King of the Jews (Matt. 2:2; see also John 18:37); and, though rejected as such by the representatives of the nation (John 19:15), He will be set by Jehovah as His King upon His holy hill of Zion (Psalm 2:6; Luke 1:32, 33), Rev. 19:12 and 16 showing us, moreover, that there will be "many crowns" on His head, and that He will be "King of kings."

Scarlet is the emblem of worldly glory, and Psalm 8 tells us that all things will be put under Him, as well as that He will be crowned with glory and honor. Solomon's reign typifies that time as having all worldly glory and magnificence connected with the kingdom. Then we have the fine twined linen, declarative of His spotless holiness-"That holy thing which shall be born" (Luke 1:35). Last, since cherubim are mentioned in Scripture in connection with the judicial action of the throne (Gen. 3; Psalm 18; 99 Eze. 1; 10 Rev. 4; 5), how fitting that the cherubim of cunning work should be wrought on the fabric of that curtain, indicating that the One of whom it was the type was appointed by God to wield the power of His throne, all judicial action having been committed to Him as Son of man (John 5:22, 27).

But not only do we read of the veil being erected and, subsequently, of its being rent. These are historical facts of which the Word informs us, but facts too with the practical bearing of which every Christian should be acquainted. Hence we read in Heb. 10 the exhortation to make use of the road so graciously made for us into God's presence. We approach on the ground that Christ's blood has been shed, but through the veil-His flesh. Thus, while God has opened up for us one way in His grace, He would impress surely on our hearts that no other road can lead us into His presence, if divine judgment is not to overtake us. And as we are indebted to His grace for opening up the way, we are indebted likewise to His goodness for acquainting us with it. Those to whom the sacred writer wrote about it were those best acquainted with the meaning of the veil when unrent; and he would have them, and have us who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, to make use of the way which Christ has consecrated, or dedicated, for us through the veil-that is to say, His flesh.

Believers then may now with boldness enter the holiest of all, for it is to believers that the exhortation is addressed. For, as of old none but the priests could enter the sanctuary, so none now but those who believe in the Lord, and as such are members of the "holy priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:5), can enter the holiest of all, and then only through the rent veil -that which, as rent, reminds us of divine judgment poured out on the Son of God's love.

Truth this is, suited for Christians of all times, and most needful in this day when lax views are abroad concerning God and His grace. Grace is free to all who accept it; and a man's former state

and ways are no hindrance, if he is a believer on the Lord, to his entering the holiest now. But when he enters, and by the way he enters, he bears witness to the holiness of God while sharing in the riches of His grace. He enters by a road which speaks of judgment borne for him by God's own Son. He enters on the ground of the value of Christ's precious blood. He enters, by means of His death, through the veil- His flesh. Merciful and gracious God is, but never at the expense of His holiness. One road, and one only, has there ever been made by which we could enter into His presence. God rent the veil, and by it teaches us the need there was for His Son to become incarnate, but the imperative necessity too of His death. As incarnate, the veil unrent was a type of Christ; but, as such, showed that then no way to enter the holiest had been made manifest. It was the rending of the veil which disclosed the living way into it. Incarnation and crucifixion were both necessary before that way could be made known.

How simple a fact like this, and the divine teaching about it, preserves the soul from being led away by human thoughts and men's erroneous conclusions! To be brought into God's presence, in a way in accordance with His mind, while refusing to believe in the mystery of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, is thus shown to be impossible. To profess to believe in His incarnation without bowing to the truth of His atoning death, will shut out a soul from God's presence as completely as the sons of Aaron, the priests, were excluded from all entrance into the holiest. The thought that God is too merciful to punish sinners is refuted by the fact that the Holy One of God had to die before the way into the holiest could be made manifest. Divine judgment has been executed on Him. God has shown at the cross what His holiness demands, while displaying there also what His love could give.

And though believers on the Lord Jesus, and they only, have permission to enter the holiest because of the efficacy of His atoning blood, the very road upon which they must travel to reach the mercy seat and the throne, attests both the necessity and the validity of His death. The need of the incarnation and the death of Christ, believers bear witness to when they enter the holiest; and, entering through the rent veil-the flesh of Christ-they own that every other avenue by which men would seek to make a way into God's presence, is barred as effectually as ever; for one way, and one only, has ever been opened, and that by God Himself-that true and living way which declares in clear, solemn language, that only because His Son had died to make atonement, could He rend the veil. For gracious and merciful though He is, He never can be gracious, He never will be merciful, at the expense of His holiness.

Wake up Thou That Sleepest: "Wake up Thou That Sleepest"

In the New Translation of J.N.D., this verse stands thus: "Wake up, [thou] that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee." Hereby are we warned that it is possible for a saint to be asleep among the dead; and, alas! not only is it possible, but how many instances do we see around us, and how easily might we ourselves be overcome by this deadly stupor. In that unhappy case, he hears not, sees not, nor can he communicate aught to others; and though he be not a dead man, yet, so far as these things go, he is as good as dead. Is not Samson asleep on the knees of Delilah a striking and solemn illustration? How soon he lost the locks of his Nazariteship! And then, with his eyes put out and himself bound with fetters of brass, he was made to grind in the prison house. What a pitiable spectacle! Nor was this all, for when the lords of the Philistines gathered themselves together to do honor to their god, and their hearts were merry, Samson was called from his prison to make them sport. To such humiliating and degrading depths may a man descend who sleeps among the dead. What a warning to us! Is any Christian in that state? An earnest voice bids him wake up and quit that company. To be asleep is bad enough; to be asleep among the dead is worse. Not only is there the arousing call, but with it the exceedingly gracious promise, "Christ shall shine upon thee" - not a mere gleam of light, but Christ shall shine full-orbed upon the soul. This is grace indeed! Such we understand to be the meaning of this verse.

Watch

The flesh in the saints is as bad as any flesh; therefore, watch, continue in prayer, be clothed with humility. Live no more by memory than by sense, but live by faith, forgetting the things which are behind, and pressing forward. It was not when Paul was in communion with the glory that he was in danger of being puffed up, but when he came down in the memory of it. Memory has its own work, and so has sense; but conscious, present communion with God is the power and glory of the saint, and his special privilege. Here he gets everything, for here he has God; and here he has everything safely, for he has everything in God-with God.

When Christ is working in a heart, there will be the tenderest consideration; there will be straight paths made for lame feet.

Wherever you go, endeavor to carry with you a sense of God's presence, His holiness, and His love; it will preserve you from a thousand snares.

Satan tempts saints to unholy wrath (Luke 9:55), and they do not know and little think where they had their coal from to so heat them till Christ tells them, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of."

Use the bridle in the quantity of your words; incline rather to sparing than using them lavishly; for "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin." Pro. 10:19.

We want to have the God of peace with us, so as to have humbleness about evil, affections occupied with good.

What Is a Jew? the Editor's Column

It may seem strange to many of our readers that a dispute arose in the Nation of Israel during 1958 over the question of "Who is a Jew?" The controversy was related to identity cards for Israeli citizens. At the first, a mere declaration by the applicant that he was a Jew was sufficient for him to be listed as a Jew; but the Israeli Orthodox Rabbinate strongly objected to this method. Their objection was that it allowed children of mixed marriages to claim Jewish nationality without being converted. The argument caused a political crisis in Israel which was solved by a compromise suggested by Rabbi Jacob Moshe Toledano, the Minister of Religious Affairs.

The acceptable formula included an understanding that "The identity cards would not necessarily be the exclusive criterion when the question of the bearer's religion might be raised in the religious courts and the Chief Rabbinate would have the authority to call for additional proof in cases of doubt."

On this basis "Adults who declared in good faith that their parents were Jewish would be registered as Jews."-B'nai B'rith Messenger, Los Angeles, Jan. 30, 1959.

Another change in the rules eliminated the naming of the minor children's religion on the father's identity card; then when the children reach the age of 16, they must apply for their own cards. At that time their claim to being Jewish will be established, and will be based not on the father's, but on the mother's being Jewish. For, according to the Jewish Talmud, children of a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father are considered to be Jewish, while children of parents of reverse order are considered to be non-Jews, unless they become so by conversion to Judaism.

It may astound some orthodox Jews when they study their genealogical tree to find such rules were not enforced in the days of Israel's history up to the time of David their king. The very genealogy of the Messiah was blotted in this specific way on several occasions. And while the average Jews today completely reject the Lord Jesus as their Messiah, if they are careful to study their own scriptures, they must admit that the genealogy of the Messiah as given in Matt. 1 must of necessity be the genealogy of their Messiah, whoever he is; for God decreed that the Messiah would be the direct descendant of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, and of David. And in this genealogy, there was Tamar (v. 3; Gen. 38:12-26), and in all likelihood she was a Canaanite, as was Judah's wife Shuah (Gen. 38:2). Hence Phares (the son of Judah and Tamar), in the direct line of the Messiah, would not have been a Jew according to present rules.

Then Boaz, the mighty man of wealth of the book of Ruth, had a Gentile mother, and her name was Rahab, commonly referred to as "Rahab the harlot." Boaz married "Ruth the Moabitess," and thus not only brought into Israel, but into the Messianic line, a descendant of Moab, in direct opposition to the Word of God: "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD forever." Deut. 23:3.

Nor was that all. Their son Obed, who according to Talmudic regulations would not have been considered a Jew, became the father of Jesse, and grandfather of David the king. Thus the second generation ascended the throne of Israel. How little Israel realizes that they have little or nothing to boast of after the flesh; the grace of God should alone be their boast, and it will be so in the day of their coming prosperity under great David's greater Son.

A still further blot on Israel's genealogy is that Solomon was the son of David and Bath-sheba--not a very savory episode in Israel's history. Whether Bathsheba was a Gentile is open to question, but her husband, Uriah, was a Hittite; so in all probability she was also. The Hittites were a numerous and warlike race who inhabited Palestine even after Israel possessed it; they were descendants of Canaan, and hence of Ham. At one time, many critics of the Word of God claimed there had been no historical evidence that the Hittites ever existed, but later discoveries disproved their willful error.

But to return briefly to Israel's rejection of Jesus as their Messiah, we might cite a verse from Psalm 110: "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." (vs. 1). Notice the difference in the type of letters used in the two places--"LORD" and "Lord." The first is Jehovah, and the second is the coming Messiah. The Lord Himself when He was here confounded the Jews by asking a simple question: "What think ye of Christ?" (or, the coming Messiah) "whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The Son of David." This was correct according to many Old Testament scriptures. Then the Lord asked them, "How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool?" Matt. 22:42-44. How could David refer to his son as his Lord? This question stopped the Pharisees of old, for it would have been improper for David to call his son his Lord; the simple and only answer then and now is that the Messiah is not only David's Son according to the flesh, but actually the Son of God, hence David's Lord. The solution is very simple and correct according to the Old Testament, but blind unbelief will not accept it.

Now the problem that is vexing not only the Jews in Israel, but the Jews throughout the world, especially in the United States, is closely akin to the one, "Who is a Jew?" or probably more correctly now, What is a Jew? Time magazine put it succinctly: "Is Jewishness a religion, a nationality or a peoplehood? In sum: What is a Jew?"-May 19, 1961. The present agitation with all its attendant complications promises to be around for a long time. Premier David Ben-Gurion brought it to the fore by an attack on Zionism, especially Zionists who are willing to help finance the State of Israel, but who have not immigrated to it. Just what his motive and purpose was is hard to discern; but he has always been a rather enigmatic individual who generally thinks ahead of his contemporaries, be they enemies or friends.

Mr. Ben-Gurion chose the 25th World Zionist Congress meeting in Jerusalem last December to attack the position of the Jews living outside of Palestine for their failure to immigrate to Israel. He quoted a passage from their Talmud: "Whoever dwells outside the land of Israel is considered to have no God." His theology was promptly denounced by some prominent rabbis living in the United States. The prime minister's contention amounts to saying that Jews cannot be practicing Jews and live away from their native land. One thing that he fails to consider is that the Jews living in their God-given homeland are not practicing Jews in the sense as found in the Torah-the Pentateuch, or the five books of Moses. For instance: Where is their temple and all the ordinances

of divine services as laid down therein? Where is the place in their land where the Lord has chosen to place His name, and to which they were to bring their offerings and sacrifices? Where is the Ark of the Covenant with its mercy seat? And where is the yearly shedding of the blood for their atonement? Truly Judaism has continued as a religion two millenniums after their final dispersion by the Romans, but it remains an empty shell with all the vitals removed.

For a Jew like Saul of Tarsus who is brought low before the Lord Jesus and acknowledges Him as his Savior and Messiah, he will find that what were vital parts of Judaism of old were really only types and shadows of the blessed reality found in Jesus of Nazareth, the virgin's Son, the Seed of the woman, the Son of God and Son of Man. Who would occupy himself with shadows when the reality is so easily possessed?

Furthermore, if a Jew today would have a proper Jewish attitude, he would according to the Book of Deuteronomy bow before God and acknowledge that his dispersion and subsequent suffering are the direct result of the government of God upon that favored people for having turned away from Him. Such a repentant Jew would also, according to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, "make supplication unto" God and say, "We have sinned, and done perversely, we have committed wickedness." He would also, like Daniel of old, pray unto God "toward their land." (1 Kings 8:44-53.)

However, there is a greater sin at their door than the idolatry for which God gave them into the hands of the Chaldeans. The present guilt is that of rejecting their Messiah when He came to shepherd His sheep. There are two sections of Isaiah which close with the pronouncement of "no peace." The one ends with the last verse of chapter 48. Leading up to that, God by the prophet detailed their sin of idolatry, and closed with "There is no peace, saith the LORD [or Jehovah], unto the wicked." Israel was to have been God's witness on earth to the one true God, in contrast to the multitude of heathen deities; but when Israel followed these deities, judgment was pronounced against them by Jehovah -it was Jehovah the God of Israel in contrast with idols. The other section details Israel's rejection of their Messiah-the 53rd chapter is in this section-and closes with "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Chap. 57:21. It is God whose Son was rejected and cast out, so God deals with them on that account.

During the present Jewish controversy, Dr. Horace M. Kallen, writing in the Jewish Digest, said that his people had a wonderful library in the Bible which belonged to all the Jews, not to a class only. He called this a "Portable Fatherland" which could be practiced anywhere, as "rules of righteousness and justice in human relations." Perhaps as far as "human relations" is concerned, this is true; but the basic ingredients concerning man's relations with his God are not sufficient. God said plainly to them, "without shedding of blood is no remission." Now where in Judaism today, either in the fatherland of Israel or Israel's portable fatherland, is that obtainable for a Jew? If he would only get his eyes opened he would see that Jesus Christ came, and His blood was shed-"the precious blood of Christ"-thereby giving God a righteous basis to forgive their sins on their confession and repentance.

We read in their "Portable Fatherland," "I will go and return to My place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek My face." Hos. 5:15. Here One is speaking who has been here, but has gone to His place awaiting Israel's repentance. Their own sacred book, of which they boast, also says that a time is coming when that One who was rejected and has gone back to His place "will pour upon

the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon ME whom they have pierced, and they... shall be in bitterness for Him." Zech. 12:10.

What seems to be troubling the famous Premier of Israel is that while millions of dollars have been contributed by American Jews to the founding of a stable government and economy in Israel, less than 250 American Jews move to Israel each year. Israel has a population of only slightly over 2,000,000 persons, while there is a Jewish community in the United States of approximately 5,500,000. The Jews of this country are affluent and are to be found in every walk of life. They are in the President's cabinet, in Congress, are governors of some states, are outstandingly important in the scientific, financial and commercial world. These have no desire to return to Israel and face the hardships of pioneering. Those Jews who returned to Israel were mostly those from countries where their life was hard, and they do not represent the highly educated and greatly wealthy to the degree which is found in this hemisphere. But Mr. Ben-Gurion sees the Arabs growing steadily in military might and with no diminution of purpose to eventually exterminate Israel. Russia and her satellites have been supplying large stores of arms with men to train the Arab hordes in the use of those arms. It is evident that all this is unnecessary for any simple defense; it must be for offense, and Israel is the only potential enemy, as they see. So, the Premier would like to get some millions of highly trained and very wealthy Jews to move to Israel to bolster his position in the Middle East. As we see it, this is probably the basic underlying cause of the present turmoil about "What is a Jew?"

On this subject, it would be well to keep in mind the distinctions between three terms that many seem to think are synonymous; namely, "Hebrew," "Israelite," and "Jew." The first time we find the word Hebrew in the Bible is in Gen. 14 "And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew." v. 13. One Jewish writer-writing in the B'nai B'rith of September 26, 1958-says that the name comes from Eber, the grandson of Shem. This conclusion is doubtful, although Abraham is the first Hebrew mentioned. We prefer the position taken by a Bible Dictionary published in London by G. Morrish. This book says: "There were five generations between Eber and Abraham, so by this derivation many others might have been called Hebrews." Between Eber and Abraham were Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, and Terah (see Gen. 11:17-27). Besides these five there were all their brothers and sisters, which in those days of great longevity would produce numerous families and tribes- all Hebrews-so the designation to Abraham would not mean much.

The root word from which Hebrew comes is "to pass over." Now Abraham was called by God out from his father's house and country and to pass over to the land to which God called him. He would therefore have been a stranger living among the Canaanites, and the designation of a stranger who has passed over the land and the rivers to reach there might well be characteristic of him and his posterity. But neither Ishmael nor Esau were so called. They could scarcely have been called wanderers or sojourners in Palestine, for they took up residence wherever they chose.

Then the name Israelite came only after Jacob, for God changed his name-meaning "supplanter," his name in nature-to Israel, or "prince with God." This is definitely God's designation of that people who were chosen by Him. "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." Rom. 9:4. This name belongs to all of the twelve tribes. It is remarkable that when the present

Jewish state was formed, it was called Israel.

The term "Jew" is never mentioned in the Old Testament until after the division of the kingdom into two parts-Judah and Benjamin of the first part are often spoken of only as Judah, while Ephraim and the other nine tribes are often spoken of jointly as Ephraim. The ten tribes were taken captive by the king of Assyria about 115 years before the two tribes were taken captive to Babylon. The first was by Shalmaneser in about 721 B.C., and the other by Nebuchadnezzar about 606 B.C. After this the name Jew comes more prominently into the divine record, especially in Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Jeremiah. Hence, we may justly conclude that it was originally meant to designate those of the tribe of Judah (Benjamin was allied to Judah but was a very unequal partner, being a very small tribe at that time); although one must allow for the world outside to use such distinct designations with a lack of discrimination. Even some Israelites who should have known better used "Hebrews" for God's official term, "Israelites." See King Saul's carelessness about this (1 Sam. 13). Sad to say, "Jew" today often has a disrespectful connotation about it, but "they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." Rom. 11:28.

In checking the names of those who returned from Babylonian captivity, we find that they were chiefly of Judah and Benjamin, plus the Levites who were not given a possession in the land. Very little is known of the ten tribes which were taken to Assyria. Suffice it to say that God has His eye upon them, but the Israelites we see today are generally of that part of the tribes which were probably correctly referred to as Jews. We do know that there were a few of the ten tribes scattered among the "Jews" when the Lord Jesus came; for Anna, a prophetess, was of the tribe of Asher (see Luke 2:36).

Generally speaking, all the Jews we know today are from Judah, Benjamin, or Levi. We understand that one of the most often-found names in the New York City telephone directory is Cohen, and it comes from a word meaning "priest." We might suppose that this is carried down from the tribe of Levi.

What we have already stated perhaps answers the first question raised in the Israeli dispute; namely, "Who is a Jew?"-both in its lax usage and in its more exact meaning.

But this leaves the question still unanswered, "What is a Jew?" "Is it a religion, a nationality or a people hood?" One noted anthropologist, Dr. Harry L. Shapiro, himself a Jew, says that "The Jewish people do not constitute a race." Perhaps this is so in a strict sense, for they are but one branch of the Semitic people. This makes the term anti-Semitism, as applied to prejudice against the Jewish people, a misnomer. The descendants of Ishmael and of Esau, although so closely akin that one might expect friendship and not antagonism, are avowed and bitter enemies of the Jew today, although they are also of the Semitic family. But to say that the Jews are not a distinct people in the main is a mistake. This anthropologist contends that the Jewish people "absorbed elements of every tribal and ethnic strain that had entered the country."-B'nai B'rith Messenger, July 8, 1961. He does not seem very well acquainted with their history as a whole; for it was said at the beginning, Israel "shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." Num. 23:9. Jehovah chastised them time and again for being guilty of intermarriage with the Gentiles. Their separation is deeply ingrained into them; and in spite of grace that brought Gentiles even into the royal line, there has never been any other people who so disdained intermarriage, and who have in the face of the severest hardships kept from being assimilated by their captors or

friends. And despite all arguments to the contrary, the characteristics of the Jews are the marks of a people—a distinct people.

Truly Israel is "a nation scattered and peeled [or ravaged]" (Isa. 18:2), but the people have retained their distinct identity.

Witness any other people who immigrated to the United States; in a few years they became indistinguishable from others. Their identity was soon lost in the general blending of various strains. (Only those who lived to themselves like a colony of, say, French, retain their distinctive marks for a generation or two.) But the Jews have not been absorbed here in the great melting pot.

Mr. Ben-Gurion warns that the favorable conditions of the American Jews might be a "kiss of death," for it might lead to assimilation. The three million Jews in Russia are deprived of all means of keeping their distinct Jewishness alive, either in language, religion, or marriage. They have been plainly told by Russian authorities to assimilate. It is the only place where forcible assimilation is being attempted.

The noted English historian, Arnold Toynbee, has had much to say about the Jews. For one thing he praised their "original" monotheism and calls Christianity and Mohammedanism only derivative forms of it. He suggested that the Jews intermarry and thus spread their religion. But "Orthodox Jews exploded. To them, intermarriage is anathema."—Time, May 19, 1961. Thus in spite of most cruel persecutions, which assimilation would have forestalled, and many other advantages of sinking their identity, they have an ingrained determination to retain their Jewishness as a people. A people they definitely are.

And has the Word of God given any hint about this great phenomenon—a people put through every form and process of intermingling over 2000 years, and yet being as distinct now as before? Yes, it has. We all know the account of Cain's murdering his brother Abel, as given in Gen. 4. Cain and Abel were brothers, the sons of the same father and the same mother; but one day Cain killed his brother. God entered the scene and asked Cain, "Where is Abel thy brother?" God held him accountable for his brother. Later God sent His Son into this world with this thought: "I will send My beloved Son: it may be they will reverence Him when they see Him." Luke 20:13. But the husbandman (a plain type of the keepers of God's vineyard of Israel) "cast Him out of the vineyard, and killed Him." Now God inquires of man generally, and of the Jew particularly, Where is My Son?

To go back to Gen. 4, we find that Cain complained that his punishment was too great, and that people would kill him.

So "the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him." (vs. 15). And have we not here an indication in type that that people to whom the Son of God came according to the flesh should have a mark upon them and not be suffered to be exterminated? God will have His own special way of dealing with them in the soon-coming day. And down through the ages, God has dealt very severely with those who have attempted to liquidate the Jew. All their evil machinations will fail, for God has decreed what He will pass them through before a remnant of all twelve tribes will be restored.

Their survival in their present form as a distinct people is a monument to God's overruling hand. It is a greater mystery among men than any other sign. We have often heard of the European monarch who years ago asked his Prime Minister to give him a very brief reason for believing that the Bible is true. His reply was, "The Jew."

At the present time there is a very real attempt being made to revive Nazism. There is a growing organization called "Anti-Semitic International." They claim to have been well financed, and Mr. Oswald Mosley of England has been giving lectures in various parts of Europe promoting this anti-Jewish campaign. Perhaps the Lord may allow more persecution to shake them out of their nests in foreign lands before they will be willing to return to Israel. We merely say, perhaps. But woe be to those who take up the cudgels against them.

All around, there are evidences that we are at the time of the end. "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus."

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